

Huckleberry finn and the use of satire assignment

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Despite the fact that many critics have accused Mark Twain's novel of promoting racism, through close analysis of the text, it becomes remarkably clear that Twain is satirical in his writing as he ridicules slavery and the racist attitudes prevalent in his day. *The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn* was written shortly after the Civil War, in which slavery was one of the key issues. But while Mark Twain's father had slaves throughout his childhood, Twain's eyes did not always view white supremacy as wrong: In my schoolboy days, I had no aversion to slavery (Bell 126).

I was not aware that there was anything wrong about it. No one arraigned it in my hearing; the local papers said nothing against it; the local pulpit taught us that God approved it; fifth slaves themselves had any aversion to slavery they were wise and said nothing. This comment, made by Twain, exemplifies that he was just as guilty of racism and supremacy over the blacks, although he grew up not knowing any better. Many scholars argue over the idea of Mark Twain being racist. *Houck Finn* is America's best pieces of ironic fiction, but many oversee Twain's use of satire.

Some of the book's main achievements are its realistic portrayal of hypocrisy of life along the Mississippi and its satirical attack on slavery. James Leonard and Thomas Tunney encourage that "it is difficult to teach irony, to overcome the literal, to show that a book may mean the opposite of what its words me to say" (Leonard 9). Their statement is right; many people do not recognize the use of satirical language, but only those of perspective, insight, and maturity, hence, why many think that Twain is in fact racist.

There are many conflicts and clashes in Huckleberry Finn, such as Huck's morals and Jim's fight for freedom, and, as Charles Nichols believes, "Twain conveys this sense of conflict, contradiction, paradox and ambivalence through irony and satire" (208). Scholars, such as Philip Butcher and Julius Lester, disagree with the statement that Mark Twain was racist. Butcher concludes that "Negroes were people to Mark Twain, people who had been wronged by his forebears and still unjustly treated by his contemporaries... Twain wanted to make amends for his ancestors".

Twain uses Huck Finn to illustrate slavery in the south, to show how they were treated and what he saw, and to use satirical language in doing so. But doing this, was not always so easy. Julius Lester claims "to Twain, slavery was not an emotional reality to be explored extensively or with love" (202). In order for Twain to exemplify the racism and hate, he told a story of 'true' events, those that one would have actually encountered post-Reconstruction time, such as the use of the word 'Niger'. But on the other hand, many scholars would agree with the idea that Twain is racist.

One scholar with a strong opinion on this idea is John H. Wallace, who asserts that "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is the most grotesque example of racist trash ever written" (16). Although I strongly disagree, he believes that Twain's soul purpose in writing Huck Finn is "for no other reason than [to] ridicule blacks (23). For this reason, and those of Twain "perpetuating racial stereotypes" and his use of "Niger", many recommend his book be banned from schools as it has raised very boisterous criticism to anti-Huck opposes (Henry 32).

But in fact, this book should not be banned, because Mark Twain is a very credible author. Bernard Bell writes an essay on minstrelsy and claims that Twain enjoyed it culturally. Twain writes, "To my mind [minstrelsy] was a thoroughly delightful thing, and a most competent laughter-compeller and I am Sorry it is gone" (128). From this statement, One can conclude that Twain did enjoy some aspects of racism. On the other hand, one can also notice that Twain is credible; he was not biased, but rather saw both sides of the story.

Another example of satire we see is in the headphone of the book itself. Twain writes "PERSONS attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot" (Woodard 141). Twain literally tells readers to not search for a moral in this book; Twain did not make *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* a book with morals in it. Before the book even begins, Twain literally states that this book has no morals, plot, or dive; how satirical is that?

Through the character of Jim, and the major moral dilemma that followed Houck throughout the novel, Twain mocks slavery and makes a strong statement about the way people treated slaves. Miss Watson is revered as a good Christian woman, who had strong values, but she is a slave owner in the story. She owns a slave called Jim, who runs away upon hearing that Miss Watson might sell him to New Orleans. Twain uses satire to show how hypocritical a "good Christian woman" can be when it comes to owning slaves as property. In Chapter 40, Twain mocks Houck when he says he "knows Jim] as white inside! '.

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