

History 498
Spring 2018

Response #3

The narrator of *Huckleberry Finn* is a fourteen-year-old boy. He speaks (and, arguably, thinks) like a fourteen-year-old boy. Yet, as many critics have observed, having the story told in Huck's "voice" enabled Twain to transform a "boy's tale" into a masterpiece of American literature. It also allowed him to critique his own society "indirectly" – particularly on matters of race.

How does telling the story through Huck's voice allow Twain to poke fun at and seriously criticize various late nineteenth century institutions, cultural traditions, hypocrisies, and prejudices?

In considering this question, discuss three specific passages in which Huck's narration seems particularly effective in getting readers (both in the 1880s and now) to see the shortcomings of the society in which Huck lives.