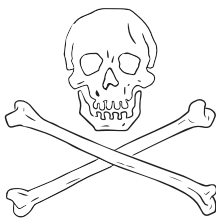


WORLDVIEW GUIDE

TREASURE ISLAND



Douglas Wilson





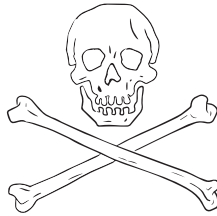
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INTRODUCTION

Mark Twain once defined a classic as a book that everyone wants to have read, but nobody wants to read. By that cute definition, *Treasure Island* is not a classic at all. It is a book that is preeminently readable, and not only so, but it is readable by a demographic group not known for its prowess in the literary arts—viz. young boys. This is a book that is pitched almost perfectly to the imagination of a young boy, and on top of that it serves as a rollicking good story for everyone else. It is the archetypical pirate story.



WORLDVIEW ANALYSIS

Treasure Island is certainly a story of treasure (and greed and ambition), and on top of that it is a rollicking good swashbuckler, a true adventure story. But the central treasure “gained” in the book is that of Jim’s courage and maturity. This is a coming-of-age story come in the form of an adventure story.

When the story opens, Jim is a timid boy. By the end of the book, he has outwitted pirates, killed Israel Hands, set his mother up financially for life, and made a truly courageous decision for the sake of keeping his word.

In addition to being a coming-of-age story, it is also a “quest” story. The quest is to recover Flint’s treasure, and there are various obstacles or guardians in the way. These guardians include the pirates at the Admiral Benbow Inn, the machinations of Long John Silver, and the helpful “obstruction” of Ben Gunn.

When the book opens, Jim has lost his father, and in the course of him coming of age, he grows to the point

where he does not need a surrogate father—although various fathers are “offered.” Among the contenders would be Squire Trelawney, who is too foolish, Captain Smollett, who is too strait-laced, and then, at the other end of the spectrum, Long John Silver, who is preeminently likeable, but is also unfortunately a scoundrel. Apart from his wickedness, he would have been a great dad.

So, to recap, a boy finds a treasure map, and together with some trustworthy friends, goes in search of that treasure. Some pirates, whose treasure it was, find out about the expedition and insinuate themselves into the crew, in the hopes of getting their hands on the swag again. A rollicking good time is had by some of the characters, and certainly by the reader, and who but an astounding *dullard* would think of trying to write a “worldview guide” for something like this? The next thing you know, someone is going to put out worldview study questions for the *Tintin* comic book series.

Part of our problem is that we tend to think we are turning everything into a “subject.” As a result of that, we think we are becoming increasingly studious and scholarly. What is actually happening is that the current is running the opposite direction. The entertainment imperative is creeping into everything. It used to be that to have an entertaining book like *Treasure Island* incorporated into the *curriculum* would have been scorned by schoolmasters from here to Timbukthree. In school you studied “the greats” and you entertained yourself with well-written