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Close Reading of Pap’s Rant in *Huck Finn*

**Directions:** Read through Pap’s explanation of the government. Highlight important areas, which show Pap’s character.

"Call this a govment! why, just look at it and see what it's like. Here's the law a-standing ready to take a man's son away from him—a man's own son, which he has had all the trouble and all the anxiety and all the expense of raising.  Yes, just as that man has got that son raised at last, and ready to go to work and begin to do suthin' for *him* and give him a rest, the law up and goes for him.  And they call *that* govment!  That ain't all, nuther.  The law backs that old Judge Thatcher up and helps him to keep me out o' my property.  Here's what the law does:  The law takes a man worth six thousand dollars and up'ards, and jams him into an old trap of a cabin like this, and lets him go round in clothes that ain't fitten for a hog. They call that govment!  A man can't get his rights in a govment like this. Sometimes I've a mighty notion to just leave the country for good and all. Yes, and I *told* 'em so; I told old Thatcher so to his face.  Lots of 'em heard me, and can tell what I said.  Says I, for two cents I'd leave the blamed country and never come a-near it agin.  Them's the very words.  I says look at my hat—if you call it a hat—but the lid raises up and the rest of it goes down till it's below my chin, and then it ain't rightly a hat at all, but more like my head was shoved up through a jint o' stove-pipe.  Look at it, says I—such a hat for me to wear—one of the wealthiest men in this town if I could git my rights.

"Oh, yes, this is a wonderful govment, wonderful.  Why, looky here. There was a free nigger there from Ohio—a mulatter, most as white as a white man.  He had the whitest shirt on you ever see, too, and the shiniest hat; and there ain't a man in that town that's got as fine clothes as what he had; and he had a gold watch and chain, and a silver-headed cane—the awfulest old gray-headed nabob in the State.  And what do you think?  They said he was a p'fessor in a college, and could talk all kinds of languages, and knowed everything.  And that ain't the wust. They said he could *vote* when he was at home.  Well, that let me out. Thinks I, what is the country a-coming to?  It was 'lection day, and I was just about to go and vote myself if I warn't too drunk to get there; but when they told me there was a State in this country where they'd let that nigger vote, I drawed out.  I says I'll never vote agin.  Them's the very words I said; they all heard me; and the country may rot for all me—I'll never vote agin as long as I live.  And to see the cool way of that nigger—why, he wouldn't a give me the road if I hadn't shoved him out o' the way.  I says to the people, why ain't this nigger put up at auction and sold?—that's what I want to know.  And what do you reckon they said? Why, they said he couldn't be sold till he'd been in the State six months, and he hadn't been there that long yet.  There, now—that's a specimen.  They call that a govment that can't sell a free nigger till he's been in the State six months.  Here's a govment that calls itself a govment, and lets on to be a govment, and thinks it is a govment, and yet's got to set stock-still for six whole months before it can take a hold of a prowling, thieving, infernal, white-shirted free nigger, and—"