
The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn: Racism, Prejudice, And Stereotypes

Racism, Prejudice, and Stereotypes. They all play a role in showing a theme, or at least main ideas, in the novel *The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. Racism is discrimination directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's race is more superior, Prejudice is a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience, and Stereotype is a widely held but fixed image/idea of a particular type of person or thing. They all have such close meanings that you might even get them mixed up but they all have different definitions. Twain exposes the South and how very wrong all three situations are in the 1800's using the characters in the novel. I believe the biggest theme in *The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn* is racism. Considering that the novel did take place in the 1800's, it captures just how mean people were and even some people still are! The difference between then and now is that people now are starting to accept color, race, gender, and etc. People believed in the 1800's that just because of someone's skin color it makes them unequal or unimportant to someone else. People who weren't even slaves to begin with were starting to get taken and put to work at a house or a plantation.

Racism, prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior, in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, one example is the relationship between Huck and Jim. Huck is young, a male, and white, while

Jim on the other hand is African American and a slave. The book describes Huck as kinda more privileged than Jim is depending on the situations. The white people in the novel call blacks "niggers". The n word can be seen throughout the book here and there, but the black people can't do anything about it. I think that Twain expressed the use of the n word as much as he did, so he could show the reality of what happened in the 1800's. I would say that the n word is an important example of racism in the novel. Twain published the novel in the 1860's when slavery wasn't abolished yet and Jim, is a slave of Widow Douglas. Slaves were very likely to be seen or heard of in the book, most of the black people were slaves. This quote by Pap shows his opinions about black people being able to vote and being free. "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 aint 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 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." (Chapter 6; Page 29; Paragraph 1) This quote shows what Pap and his personality are really like and how racist he is to black people.

Prejudice, preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience, in *The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn*, one example is Twain showing how Huck is prejudice in the early meetings of Jim. The meeting of Jim in the beginning of the novel shows how prejudicial

Huck thought his character was but then the true depth of Jim's character is revealed later on in the novel. When reading about Huck, you can also learn about Jim and what a character he is. Huck is completely overwhelmed in the society that is prejudice towards blacks, at that time, so he has never really learned to see Jim differently as everyone else does. Jim is enslaved and has a family that he can't support. While him and Huck are on the journey, there are times when Huck thinks about turning Jim in because himself helping Jim escape is wrong for people, living in the 1800's, eyes. Jim is close to being free and Huck learned things about black people that could help or break Jim's dreams of being free and saving/supporting his family once again. One example in the book is "It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger; but I done it, and I warn't ever sorry for it afterwards, neither. I didn't do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn't done that one if I'd a knowed it would make him feel that way" (Chapter 15; Page 89; Paragraph #6). This example shows how Huck is considering how Jim feels and is getting more comfortable being around him and what he has to say.

Stereotype, a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing, in *The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn*, being that the novel was written in the 1800's and all some people could see was color, not personality or interests they had in common. One example from the novel is " 'Shucks, it ain't calling you anything. It's only saying do you know how to talk French.' 'Well, den, why couldn't he say it?' 'Why, he is a-saying it. That's a Frenchman's way of saying it' 'Well it's a blame' ridicklous way, en I doan' want to hear no mo' 'bout it. Dey ain' no sense in it.' 'Lookey here, Jim, does a cat talk like we do?' 'No, a cat don't.' 'Well, does a cow?' 'No, a cow don't nuther.' 'Does a cat talk like a cow, or q cow talk like a cat?' 'No, dey dont.' 'Its natural and right for'em to talk different from each other, ain't it?' 'Course.' 'And ain't it natural and right for a cat and a cow to talk different from us?'... I see it warn;t no use wasting words--you cant learn a nigger to argue. So I quit." (Chapter 14;Page 82-83; Paragraph #1). This example shows a stereotype with Jim and how narrow minded he is and how he thinks French people can't speak any English.

As you can see Racism, Prejudice, and Stereotype all play very important themes, or main ideas, in *The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn*. It shows how differently people look at each other from the 1800's to the modern day now. It shows how accepting more people are becoming with each other. I learned that many people didn't choose to be racist, prejudice, or even stereotypical but maybe friends or even families had them grow up with a certain idea in their head, about one of the themes used in this essay.