

Racism: the great pestilence essay sample



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Many vectors transfer the usual disease, some of them being: Ignorance of culture, adherence to code, and the fear of losing power, all of which are blights of civilization. Just as a mosquito feeds off of the blood of the host, and transmits malaria, the scourge of racist points of view settles over the consciences of good honorable people like a nebulous cloud of acid rain. After reconstruction, many bitter grudges were held against the liberal policies of “ Them Yankees”. Many southerners still believed that they held the high ground and would not submit to the fact that theirs was the low road. Although some would say that there are traces of racism in every man woman and child, which manifests itself as a sense of self-approbation that should not give one the ability to think any less of any man regardless of race, color, or creed.

While the contagion festers within the body, it spreads by way of ignorance. If one is uneducated about another’s culture and way of life then they will fear them. This becomes evident on page one hundred and thirty six. The children go with Calpurnia to church. When they get there, they encounter a recalcitrant Lula, whose lack of education causes her to hate even the innocent white children, although they have done nothing to promote their racial superiority. This is this same Ignorance that breeds fear and hatred for another person. Up until the Jim Crowe laws were enacted, Negroes were treated not as equals but as lesser beings in light of education. Losing sight of what is true versus what has been previously accepted can be very deadly.

Likewise, adherence to code causes the citizens to become subjugated by what is deemed “ acceptable” rather than what is truly right and just.

Mayella's fear of becoming isolated caused her to change her story. On page Two hundred and thirty one it reads " she has committed no crime, she has merely broken a ridged and time honored code of our society,". As a result of the code a group of people are deemed " unclean" and set aside from the rest. This fallacy is known as composition. Since some members of the Negro community have made mistakes, it does not mean that they are all bad people. Because Mayella broke the time honored code, she saw fit to use the stereotype that had been thrust upon the Negroes to appeal for sympathy. Although the sins of some have consequences, those consequences do not fall upon an entire race. This can be related to the Jewish people and the Nazis reaction of the holocaust. Because Hitler was upset with some Jewish people, he blamed the whole race and committed mass genocide. By placing the blame on many for the sins of a few you create a sense of composition.

The fear of losing power makes people put others down to reassert their position and prestige. Mrs. Dubose says on page one hundred and seventeen: " your father is no better than the n*****s and trash he works for!". As a result of Mrs. Dubose realizing that Atticus is becoming a better person than she is, she faults him for helping the lowest of the low and places him in that category so that she can gain power. The Egyptians held the Hebrews captive for four hundred years because they saw them as unworthy or as slaves when in fact they were God's chosen people. The Egyptian oppression of Hebrew slaves would have in the 18th Egyptian dynasty. Demeaning others causes a sense of pride and makes the individual doing the demeaning feel as though they are elevated when in fact they just stoop to the level of the ones they thought were lesser.

The vessels of racism are these: Ignorance of culture, adherence to code, and the fear of losing power. Like a parasite feeding off of a host, they feed off of the weaknesses of the human conscience. Great civil rights activists have taken dire action and made the ultimate sacrifice. To quell racism it will take more than just the acts of a few. What will you do, remain sedentary and feed off of the effects of change, or become the archetype for it.

Works Cited

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