

After you my dear
alphonse essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Racism is being prejudiced towards another group of people who are distinguished differently to you. The most common way to spot different races is skin colour. The short story After You My Dear Alphonse written by Shirley Jackson in 1943 America shows how that in the 1940's racist attitudes were (and still are) influenced by children's parents, and how stereotypical the view was regarding African-American's. Mrs Wilson asks about Boyd's family with hesitation.

She is uneasy about asking because she feels it will embarrass Boyd to say that his family's poor, and that his dad has a demeaning job, if he has one at all. When Johnny points announces that Boyd's father works in a factory, Mrs Wilson immediately assumes that he's a manual labourer, and she feels quite disappointed that her stereotypical views were wrong, and that Boyd's father is in fact the foreman. This suggests that even if African-American's did have a job in the 1940's, they were still expected to have very basic, low-paying jobs, where no special expertise was required.

This demonstrates just how narrow Mrs Wilson's view of the world around her was. Johnny does not share the narrow-minded views that his mother has towards the African-American's. Johnny is too young and innocent to recognise the ulterior motives behind Mrs Wilson's actions towards Boyd. When Boyd turns down the clothes offer from Mrs Wilson and is told, " I'm not angry, I'm just disappointed", he is confused and doesn't understand what he did to upset her.

This suggests that at such a young age, Boyd and Johnny had not yet conformed to society's stereotypical negative way of life; they are merely

interested in being good friends, and having fun. This demonstrates that racism is not something you are born with, it's an idea passed down by your parents and influenced by society. When Johnny and Boyd entered the house and Boyd was carrying wood, Mrs Wilson was upset that Johnny had made him carry the wood.

Unaware that Johnny did not understand the stereotypical roles African-American's were supposed to play doing manual labour, she assumed that Johnny was being discriminative, and despite the fact that she herself is racist, she tries to think of herself as sympathetic towards the 'struggle' the African-American's have been plagued by. When Johnny informs Mrs Wilson that the wood is in fact Boyd's Mrs seems quite surprised that Boyd has something and Johnny doesn't, she can't comprehend that Boyd has the same, if not better opportunities than Johnny.

This suggests that the stereotypical views surrounding African-American's in the 1940's still suggest that they are poor, starving, helpless, and in desperate need of white people's 'charity'. This shows how the views displayed towards Boyd by Mrs Wilson are a direct representation of the views expected, and accepted of society, that African-American's are poor people with big families, and no evidence to suggest they are equal with whites.