

The display of pre-civil war america in the novel "the adventures of huckleberry ..."

[History](#), [American History](#)



The novel “ The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” has proven time and time again to be one of the highlights, if not the beginning of modern American literature. The american classic has fought against being banned, and heavily criticized however its context has never been so heavily analyzed as well. Mark Twain’s “ The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn” takes place in Missouri on the Mississippi River, prior to the Civil War. The story’s two protagonists Huck Finn, and Jim both seek freedom from their current situations. Huck is desperate to free himself from the social norms of society, as well as his drunk father. While Jim’s freedom is much more literal, as he escapes from slavery.

Throughout the adventures in the novel the two learn from one another, and challenge the constraints of society. Huck Finn’s character of him being a good or bad boy is often been the topic of debate for many scholars. The argument that Huck Finn is a good boy is much more believable. As flawed and as imperfect that Huck displays depth of empathy, and compassion that is impossible for a bad person to feel. Huck Finn’s ability to have strong direction between right and wrong is what guides him through various hoops in the novel.

Huck’s strongest empathic action is after it is clear he done with participating with the King and Duke’s scams. He does this when learns of their plan to scam the Wilk’s daughters from their late father’s inheritance. When he goes to Mary Jane, it is an act of compassion rather than self-interest. This compassion is shown when Huck says, “ Them poor things was that glad and happy it made my heart ache to see them getting fooled and

lied to so". When specifically looking at Huck's decision to turn in Jim, he does feel it would be the correct thing to do. This decision is not a question of ethics, but a decision that is location based. Being apart of the Widow Douglas's home, when they tried to 'civilize' him this includes agreeing to structural racism. Although Huck does not see Jim as property, he knows that is how society treats him.

Pre-Civil War America would see Jim as the property of Miss Watson. After the knee-jerk decision, Huck feels "clean of sin". This cleansing comes from his upbringing, but not his own heart. After he reveals where Jim reminisces on all the times Jim showed him kindness, unlike many other people in Huck's life. This reflection brings Huck to the conclusion that he needs to emancipate Jim. This innate ability to work through conflict, and empathize combats the idea that his change of heart is not irrational. If Huck was weak willed, it would mean he would not have the ability to reason.

Finally, it is imperative to assess Huck the same way people judge children. Huck is only thirteen, or fourteen tops meaning that he is not fully grown and his mind is changing. To determine him to be a bad person solely on his child-like behaviors, and what some perceive as weak willed is foolish. Throughout most of the novel Huck is often battling what he has been brought up to believe, and how to think. Huck's choice to see Jim more than simply property shows a great deal of growth. It is intrinsic for parents, or mentors to want to see themselves in their child, but for the child it is essential for them to be better versions of their mentors. Huck does this when he is able to adapt his own beliefs prior to meeting Jim.