

One important theme within *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is the struggle between good and evil as experienced when Huck's personal sense of truth and justice come in conflict with the values of society around him. These occurrences happen often within the novel, and usually Huck chooses the truly moral deed.

One such instance occurs when Huckleberry realizes that he is helping a runaway slave. His moral dilemma is such that he is uncertain whether he should or should not turn this slave, named Jim, over to the authorities. Society tells him that he is aiding a criminal, and that is against the law. However, he has grown quite attached to Jim, and is beginning to realize that Jim is a really good person. He would also never hurt him. This illustrates the concept and symbolism of Jim's freedom and society's influence on Huck.

At one point, Huck convinces himself that the next opportunity he receives, he will turn Jim in, and clear his conscience. The opportunity became available when slave hunters meet them on the river. Huck had an absolutely perfect chance to turn him over. However, he made up a story that his father was sick and needed help and asked the slave hunters for help. They immediately assumed that his father had smallpox, and he wanted nothing to do with Huck or his father. Thus, he had saved Jim, and actually felt good about it. Further along in the book, Jim becomes a slave again. Huckleberry, with the aid of Tom Sawyer, frees Jim. Once again, Jim's escape and freedom are more important to Huck than society's viewpoint.

The river is also important. The river is symbolic of freedom. It is also symbolic of good. When Jim and Huck are rafting down the river, they are free of society. They have no laws. This is not to say that they are lawless, however, the laws they obey are their own. This is in direct contrast to being on land, where society reigns supreme. Land is evil. This contrast also seems to make the river a character in itself. It's at times calm and relaxed, and at other times fast and dangerous, and sometimes foggy and confusing. However, it's always moving. Always taking Huck and Jim to new adventures, and to new places. It is their backbone.

So you see, that the concepts of escape and freedom within the book and the ways in which these concepts are symbolized are extremely important. They not only define what this book really is about, they single-handedly make the book worth re

