

In the book of Matthew, the Bible states that the second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself. When a person holds on to stereotypes and resentments towards his fellow man he cannot possibly love them to the degree called for. Both William Faulkner and Mark Twain show their characters struggling to progress past their stereotypes and the consequences of clinging on to them. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain and *Intruder in the Dust* by William Faulkner the authors show that stereotypes often lead to the inability to see the situation as a whole as well as the internal conflict when these stereotypes are questioned.

The stereotypes that a person harbors can often result in the inability to see the "big picture" in a situation. Twain showed this result through the duke and king when they are staying at the Wilk's house. The duke and king pose as the brothers of the deceased Harvey Wilk's in order to claim the fortune that he left behind. Wilk's will tells them of a bag of gold in the cellar. When they find the bag, they offer it to the daughters of Harvey Wilk's; however, the daughters suggest that the money would be safer in the hands of the duke and king. The duke and king hide the money behind a curtain in their room, but then the duke thinks that they did not hide the money well enough. Huck observes them hiding the money and describes it. "They took and shoved the bag through a rip in the straw tick that was under the feather bed, and crammed it a foot or two amongst the straw and said it was all right, now, because a n\_\_\_\_\_ only makes up the feather bed, and don't turn over the straw tick only about twice a year, and so it warn't in no danger of getting stole, now." (Twain 235). The reasoning behind the duke and king's action shows the stereotype that they have towards the Negro slaves. They think that a Negro will never do a more than adequate job. Turning over the straw tick represents a job that only a Negro slave would attend to. The duke and king could not see anyone else turning the straw tick in the near future. After the duke and king leave the room, Huck recovers the money and hides it from them. The stereotype that they have prevents them from seeing Huck as a suspect in the theft of the money. The duke shows the result of this stereotype when he says, "It does beat all how neat the n\_\_\_\_\_s played their hand. They let on to be sorry they was going out of this region!" (Twain 182). The duke thinks the Negroes deceived him. The duke's stereotype prevented him from blaming anyone else except the Negroes; because the duke thought that the only people who would be around his straw tick would be the Negroes. Ironically, by overlooking Huck, the person closest to them, as the culprit, the duke and king allowed the bulk of the Wilk's estate to slip through their fingers. This same type of stereotype occurs in Faulkner's novel when Charlie runs home to tell his uncle the story of Vinson Gowrie's murder according to Lucas. His uncle, Gavin Stevens, responds to Lucas' story by saying "That's exactly what I would claim myself if I were Lucas - or any other Negro murderer for that matter or any ignorant white murderer either for the matter of that," (Faulkner 79). This comment shows how Uncle Gavin stereotyped Lucas' story as a typical, or even banal alibi. This stereotype prevented Gavin from seeing that Lucas was truly not guilty of the murder. Gavin finally acknowledges that Lucas did not kill Vinson when he answers Charlie's father's roar of disapproval of not being informed of the whole situation. "It took an old woman and two children for that, to believe truth for no other reason than that it was truth..." (Faulkner 126). Here, Gavin states for the first time that Lucas did not commit the murder. The stereotype that Gavin had of Lucas' story made him slow to accept and react on the truth. Only after Charlie points out the truth is he certain enough to act upon it.. Gavin's stereotype blinded him from looking past Lucas' color to the truth that Lucas, and eventually Charlie, knew. Twain shows an identical situation when he depicts the Grangerfords feuding with the Shepardsons. When Buck describes the feud to Huck, the Grangerfords' stereotype of the Shepardsons surfaces. "...a feud is this way: A man has a quarrel with another man, and kills him; then that other man's brother kills him...But it's kind of slow, and takes a long time." (Twain 111). When Huck asks how long this feud has been going on, Buck cannot give

a straight answer, instead, he says "It started thirty years ago, or som'ers along there. There was trouble 'bout something..." (Twain 111). These remarks show how Buck blindly clings to the stereotypes that have become part of his life. He does not know what they feud is about or how it started, he just fights the Shepardsons because his family has done so for years. This ignorant stereotype led to the explosion of the feud when Miss Sophia, a Grangerford, ran off to marry Haney Shepardson. Both families, seeing this as intolerable, renewed the fight with new tenacity. Twain uses pathos to show how this incites the downfall of both families. "...then I covered up their faces, and got away as quick as I could. I cried a little when I was covering up Buck's face, for he was mighty good to me," (Twain 118). Huck covers up the face of his friend who dies because he could not look past the stereotypes of his elders. The stereotype that said the Shepardsons were the enemies of the Grangerfords prevented them from realizing that there was no reason for both families to fight as they did. Faulkner shows the theme of stereotypes resulting in the inability to see the big picture in the character of Mr. Lilly. Mr. Lilly stereotypes that a black man such as Lucas found in the given situation must be guilty. Mr. Lilly's attitude falls short of the American ideal that a person "is innocent until proven guilty." This stereotype prohibits him from seeing that Lucas did not commit the murder. He responds to the possibility of a lynching, by saying "That sonofab\_\_\_\_\_ ought to have thought of that before he taken to killing white men..." (Faulkner 49). Mr. Lilly shows here how he views the situation. He immediately assumes Lucas as guilty and feels that he has no one to blame but himself if the Gowries lynch him. Mr. Lilly thinks Lucas executed the murder solely for the reason that he is black and Vinson is white. Gavin responds to this by speaking how Mr. Lilly probably does not even hate Negroes. He then explains how Mr. Lilly would be among the first to donate money to Lucas' widow and children if he had them (Faulkner 49). Mr. Lilly's stereotype prevents him from looking past the obvious, and from seeing the bigger, more important, picture. Faulkner sums this idea this when he says "...no man can cause more grief than that one clinging blindly to the vices of his ancestors" (Faulkner 49). As seen in these two novels, that stereotypes that a person possesses can prevent him from seeing the larger picture.

When a person holds the stereotypes of his ancestors, there comes a time when these must be questioned to see if they apply to the individual at all times, and in all situations. William Faulkner and Mark Twain both place their characters in these situations in their books. When placed in these situations, the characters are forced to step back and reexamine their stereotypes through internal conflict. Twain shows his protagonist, Huck, fighting this internal conflict in two instances. First, two men that are looking for runaway slaves confront Huck on the river. The men ask Huck if anyone else is on the raft, and if so what color is he. Huck hesitates with an answer because he feels loyalty to Jim but also because the "right" thing to do is to turn in Jim. This hesitation becomes apparent when Huck says, "I didn't answer up promptly. I tried to, but the words wouldn't come. I tried for a second or two to brace up and out with it, but I warn't man enough - hadn't the spunk of a rabbit. I see I was weakening; so I just give up trying, and up and says: 'He's white'" (Twain 94). Huck's stereotype tells him that allowing Jim to escape is the wrong thing to do, resulting in his hesitation. When he returns to the raft after the two men leave, Huck shows his frustration with himself for not doing the right thing. "...feeling bad and low, because I knowed very well I had done wrong..." (Twain 95). Due to the stereotype of Huck's upbringing that said all Negroes should be enslaved, Huck could not see that Jim was human as he was and should not be a slave to anyone. Huck's feeling of regret for not doing the right thing shows the internal conflict of right versus wrong. According to Southern society, the right thing is to turn in Jim, and Huck, having been brought up in the midst of it, feels this way as well. Twain places Huck in a situation that forces him to step back, look at the stereotype and apply it to his current situation. Through this situation, Huck comes to terms with his stereotype and begins to realize that it can not apply to all people and situations. This growth in Huck continues when he is again driven to examine his stereotype. This

conflict arises when the duke and king sell Jim to the Phelps. When Huck learns of this, he must decide whether or not to rescue Jim. Huck starts an internal conflict, because he knows that, according to his stereotype, rescuing Jim is the wrong thing to do; however, Huck reexamines his stereotype towards Jim.. Huck tries to appease this internal conflict with writing a letter to Miss Watson explaining the situation but decides that he cannot live with himself if he takes this way out. Huck believes that freeing Jim will result in him going to hell, and must make his decision on this assumption. When Huck decides to rescue Jim he says, "All right, then, I'll go to hell!" (Twain 210). The fact that Huck even thought of freeing Jim as wrong shows the stereotype that Huck has towards Negroes. Ironically, society committed the only wrong by enslaving Jim. This stereotype starts the internal conflict in Huck. If Huck has no stereotypes towards the Negroes, then he could not view the liberation of Jim as morally wrong. Twain shows that when Huck's stereotype finally applies to his present situation, it causes him to reconsider the logic behind it, and make an action that goes beyond what it says. Huck finally breaks free of his stereotype through this action. Faulkner's protagonist, Charlie, faces this same conflict. Charlie's stereotype presents itself when he sees Lucas in the marketplace after the death of Lucas' wife, Molly. Their encounter upsets Charlie because he thinks that Lucas does not remember him at all. Only later does Charlie realize that Lucas "...was grieving. You don't not have to be a n in order to grieve..." (Faulkner 25). This stereotype shows that Charlie barely even thought of Negroes being able to show a basic human emotion such as sadness. Charlie's stereotype of Lucas leads to an internal conflict of whether or not to help Lucas. Charlie knows that helping Lucas in this situation could be dangerous to both of them. In this manner, Charlie ends up having to scrutinize his stereotype towards Lucas as a Negro, which leads to his conflict. Faulkner gives Charlie an escape from the pressure of this decision. Charlie is tempted to saddle up Highboy, his pony, and ride out and back to avoid the questioning of his stereotype. Charlie thinks "...turn him in a straight line...and ride in that one undeviable direction for twelve hours...and then ride the twelve hours...but at least all over finished done..." (Faulkner 41). One side of him wants to help Lucas, yet the other side wants to run away and shirk his responsibility since Lucas was a Negro. Charlie almost thinks of the situation that Lucas is in as unimportant to himself, but Charlie must decide what holds more importance to him: his obligation to Lucas or his own comfort. For the first time, Faulkner forces Charlie to analyze his stereotype and apply it to his situation. Helping Lucas would be a very costly action in Mississippi during this time period, yet Charlie must examine his stereotype and the logic behind it. His analysis of the stereotype leads to the internal conflict. Later in the novel, Faulkner forces Charlie to examine another of his stereotypes. When Charlie falls in the creek while hunting, Lucas pulls him out and tells him to follow him. Inside Lucas' house, the first thing that catches Charlie's attention is the smell. Faulkner describes Charlie as "...enclosed completely now in that unmistakable odor of Negroes..." (Faulkner 11). This observation shows how Charlie views Lucas' home. He sees it as a strange and uncomfortable place, and Faulkner places him here to desensitize him to Lucas. As Leslie Fielder states in her literary criticism of Faulkner, "the tenderest feelings he evokes...are between...a boy and an old man, whether a white hophead and Indian hunter or a proud Negro..." (Fielder 150). This statement rings true in the relationship between Lucas and Charlie as well. As Charlie overcomes his stereotype of Lucas as a Negro, his uncle recognizes it first. Seeing that Charlie has finally progressed past it, Gavin says "Some things you must always be unable to bear. Some things you must never stop refusing to bear. Injustice and outrage and dishonor and shame." (Faulkner 206). When Gavin states this, it is his recognition that Charlie has come full circle in his growth. A conflict on the validity of his original stereotype ignites in Charlie, Charlie can no longer hold this stereotype because he knows that it does not apply to all situations and all times. Through this conflict, Charlie is able to develop beyond a simple stereotype of Lucas to a friendship. Twain places Huck in a situation that addresses his similar relationship with Jim. While hiding out on Jackson

island, Huck tries to play a trick on Jim by placing a dead rattlesnake in the foot of his bed. When Jim walks into the cavern he finds a rattlesnake lying there and kills it. Then he takes the dead snake and curls it up at the foot of Jim's bed. Huck waits until that evening for what he expects to be some fun (Twain 59). In his literary criticism, Chadwick Hansen states that Huck "...expects, of course, that Jim will react like any other stage Negro. His eyes will bug out; his teeth will chatter; his knees will knock together; and Huck will have a good healthy laugh. But we are dealing now with someone who is more than a stereotype" (Hansen 3723). Hansen's observation shows how Huck had stereotyped Jim as a typical Negro. Through this action, Huck begins to realize that his stereotype does not apply to his present situation. Huck begins to fight an internal conflict about his stereotype of Jim. He knows that Jim is more than what he previously thought him to be and Huck must come to terms with this epiphany. This realization is complete when Huck apologizes to Jim for the trick in the fog. Huck says "It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a n\_\_\_\_; but I done it..." (Twain 90). Huck rids himself completely of his stereotype when he allows himself to apologize to Jim. By having to confront his stereotype, Huck is able to think past it and overcome it as well. In both novels, characters must confront their stereotypes and try to understand the logic and reasoning behind them.

As seen in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain and *Intruder in the Dust* by William Faulkner, stereotypes can lead to restricted understanding as well as internal conflict. In the Bible, God calls for the love of your neighbor as yourself, and nothing less. This kind of love is impossible to exhibit when a person holds fast to stereotypes. Perhaps through confronting these stereotypes a person can analyze them sufficiently enough to understand, and eventually dissolve them.

