

Huck's Struggle Between Morals

In the novel "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain, the protagonist, Huck, undergoes a series of developmental changes in his character. He is often torn between the ideas of society and those of his friends. This can all be very confusing for a boy who is about 14 years old. Huck also has a drunken pap who doesn't care at all for him. Huck is then forced to live with Widow Douglas and Miss Watson. Throughout the story we see Huck represent the morals of the innocent prevailing over those of society. In his "adventures," he learns the meaning of true friendship and what's really important in life.

In the story, Huck makes the decision to escape from his "family." This is a decision that goes against the morals of Huck's society, church and state. Children aren't supposed to run away from their parents. Also, his decision to help Jim escape goes against the same morals. In his "adventurous" escape down the Mississippi, he begins to feel truly free. This is a feeling that is contrasted acutely of society's "oppression" of freedom, basically when he is on land. In Jim's and Huck's escape, they are able to build their trust and friendship for each other. However, at the same time he must leave behind societies ways... getting "sivilized, money, and "family."

Along Jim's and Huck's "adventure," they have many conversations along the way. These conversations consist about their freedom, money, and superstition. In the story, they both have their own opinions about various things, like Solomon.

"'Well, but he was the wisest man, anyway; because the widow she told me so, her own self.'

'I doan' k'yer what de widder say, he warn't no wise man nuther. He has some er de dad-fetchedes' ways I ever see. Does you know 'bout dat chile dat he 'uz gwyne to chop in two?'

'Yes, the widow told me all about it.'

'Well, den! Warn' dat de beatenes' notion in de worl'? You jus' take en look at it a minute. Dah's de stump, dah-dat's one er de women! heah's you-dat's de yuther one; I's Sollermun; en dish yer dollar bill's de chile. Bofe un you claims it. What does I do? Does I shin aroun' mongs' de neighbors en fine out which un you de bill do b'long to, en han' it over to de right one, all safe en soun, de way dat anybody dat had any gumption would? No; I take en whack de bill in two, en give half it to you, en de yuther to de yuther women. Dat's de way Sollermun was gwyne to do wid de chile. Now I want to ast you; what's de use er dat half a billl?-can't buy noth'n wid it. En what use is a half a chile? I wouldn' give a dern for a million un um.'"

As you can see from this dialogue between them, they had a distinct contrast in thinking. Huckleberry, being the young and innocent boy, believes and conforms to the ideas of Miss Watson and others of the dominant white society. Huck would believe just about anything that comes out of a white person's mouth, and argue it against the words of a "nigger." Jim on the other hand was much older and a lot smarter, for he could think for himself. Jim knows better than to go with the ideas and beliefs of society, which are wrong. Such a conversation leads to a very strong point made by Twain in its own irony; the story shows of how the white people are dominant over the blacks, but yet they couldn't think for themselves. Whereas, on the other hand, the oppressed "niggers" are thinking things through using logic, instead of simply conforming to what others think. Jim later goes on to talk about superstition, which totally goes against the society in which Huck was raised. "God" was the almighty and made everything and controlled everything; that's what Huck was raised to believe. However, on the other hand, Jim was able to not correspond to the ways of the church, but made his own beliefs. Jim even had ideas about signs and stuff.

"'Ef you got hairy arms en a hairy breas', it's a sign dat you's a-gwyne to be rich. Well, dey's some use in a sign like dat, 'kase it's so fur ahead. You see, maybe you's go to be po' a long time fust, en so you might git discourage' en kill yo'sef 'f you didn't know by de sign dat you gwyne to be rich bymeby.'

'Have you got hiary arms and a hairy breast, Jim?'

'What's de use to ax dat question? Don't you see I has?'

'Well, are you rich?'

'No, but I ben rich wunst, and gwyne to be rich ag'in. Wunst I had foteen dollars, but I tuck to specalat'n', en got busted out."

Huck was more easily convinced about Jim's story this time, because there were no "white" signs like it. He had no argument from his society that said otherwise, so he believed Jim. This conversation shows the vulnerability of a youth with innocence. Such a youth takes on the beliefs of others and defends them as his own. Furthermore, if there had been an even more ridiculous story acquired from the words of a white man, Huck would in no way have believed Jim. Such actions of a "whiteboy" shows the assumptive and gullible attitudes of a very conforming society.

In conclusion, Huck's "adventure" was filled with many decisions, decisions which were very revealing to the reader of the attitudes of the time. He showed us many good decisions against the morals of society, such as escaping from his pappy, escaping the ideas of society to start new ones of his own, and to leave the worries of money behind him. However, at the same time, he makes bad decisions against his society. Huck had left his "family" and avoided getting "sivilized." In his quest for true "freedom," Huck was able to grow considerably and mature, yet, he was still not mature enough to formulate ideas of his own. Nonetheless, no matter how Huck's ideas and morals change, he will always remain a true friend to Jim. Adventurous or not, this book was great in showing that the white's weren't always right and blacks could also be great in many respects.

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