Huck And Morality Essay, Research Paper

Huck Finn and Morality

Throughout the incident on pages 66-69 in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Huck fights with two distinct voices. One is siding with society, saying Huck should turn Jim in, and the other is seeing the wrong in turning his friend in, not viewing Jim as a slave. Twain wants the reader to see the moral dilemmas Huck is going through, and what slavery ideology can do to an innocent like Huck.

Huck does not consciously think about Jim s impending freedom until Jim himself starts to get excited about the idea. The reader sees Huck s first objection to Jim gaining his freedom on page 66, when Huck says, Well, I can tell you it made me all over trembly and feverish, too, to hear him, because I begun to get it through my head that he was most free-and who was to blame for it? Why, me. I could get that out of my conscience, no how nor no way. Huck is hearing the voice of society at this point, not his own. He does not see a moral dilemma with Jim being free; he is opposed to the fact that he is the one helping him. This shows Huck misunderstanding of slavery. Huck does not treat Jim like a slave when they travel together, this shows the reader that Huck views Jim as an equal in most ways. Huck sees having a slave only as owning the person, not actually being a slave to someone. Therefore, when he helps Jim runaway it would be like stealing. This conscience is telling him that Miss Watson, Jim s master, never did anything wrong to him and that he shouldn t be doing a wrong to her by helping Jim escape. This is a totally different view of Miss Watson from Huck s perspective. Huck always disliked Miss Watson, but now that this society voice plays a part in Huck s judgment his views are changed. This society views allows Huck to see Jim, a friend, only as a slave and Miss Watson, almost a foe in his young views, as a dear friend. Twain is showing the reader the gross injustices of slavery in this little incident, as well as his moral opposition to slavery. Twain wants the reader to see how slavery ideology changed people, even those who didn t understand it fully. Twain wants the reader to see how unfair slavery was in how it could even change Huck s thinking, whom the reader had never before seen voice ill conceptions about black people. When Huck s mind can be so radically changed to such opposing ideas and morals, the reader sees these horrors plainly and knows Twain s opposition to slavery is right.

Twain does not let the reader thing badly of Huck for very long, though, having Huck s true voice shine out by the end of the confrontation. By page 67 Huck is almost loathing to go and turn Jim in, seeing the act as an obligation rather than a moral right. He says, Well, I just felt sick. But I says, I got to do it-I can t get out of it. Twain wants the reader to see Huck s change in judgment. The reader is able to see Huck s newfound reluctance, brought on by Jim s words of appreciation. These words bring Huck back to the realization that Jim is a friend, not property. And even though Huck still consciously says he must turn in Jim, the reader does not believe he will do it anymore. Huck s confrontation with the slave hunters and his scheme to protect Jim prove the reader correct in his assumption. Huck has now subconsciously decided to protect Jim at all costs. This is the second voice that Jim hears. This voice tells him that, s pose you d a done right and give Jim up; would you felt better than what you do now? Now, says I, I d feel bad-I d feel just the same way I do now. Well, then, says I, what s the use you learning to do right, when it s troublesome to do right and ain t no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same? Even though these are Huck s thoughts at the end of the incident, the reader knows this was Huck s subconscious battle before he decided to help Jim. Twain wants the reader to see how hard it is to break out of society s ideas, but someone has to be willing to do it. Twain wants the reader to respect Huck s great moral conversion, even if it is hidden behind Huck s lie to do whatever come handiest at the time because the reader knows Huck will always choose Jim as handiest now. Twain is telling the reader to do what is handiest but also to remember whom it affects, friend of foe? Because, above even society s views, should come friends.

Twain s morals are clearly shown through this short, but hugely important, passage. I think his morals were bold for his time and I respect him in the highest revere for his braveness at expressing them in a time period when blacks in the south were still very much hated. This fact in itself should spur others on to do something against the grain of society and voice their true opinions. It is a lesson that can be appreciated by all time periods because I know I do.