

Choosing right over wrong

Literature, American Literature



Maturity is knowing when to do the right thing and following up on one's commitment even when he or she is tempted to do wrong. Huck Finn, in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, is faced with such temptations and situations where he is able to make the right choice and mature physically, mentally, and spiritually. He is able to avoid bad decisions, which leads him to become a more mature, established young man. Although Huck Finn finds himself acting immature at times, he still fully demonstrates maturity by the end of the novel. Throughout the novel, Huck is able to recognize what is wrong and decipher what should be right. Huck realizes that the King and Duke are taking advantage of the girl's inheritance money. He realizes that what they are doing is incorrect and something should be done. This is first demonstrated when Huck states, "It was enough to make a body ashamed of the human race" (175). This shows that Huck is developing a conscience and that he is able to recognize that what the Duke and King are doing is morally wrong. He determines that taking and robbing from innocent people is not what humans are supposed to do. This is also evident when Huck states, "I say to myself this is a girl that I'm letting that old reptile rob her of her money!" (188). This thought established by Huck shows that he can distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. Huck also shows maturity by allowing negative situations to pass by and misdirected conversation to stop, by not arguing more excessively than necessary. This is recognized when Huck states, "Well, I couldn't see no advantage in going where she was going, so I made up my mind I wouldn't try for it. But I never said so, because it would only make trouble, and wouldn't do no good" (11). Although Huck does not agree with what Miss

Watson is saying, he does not act immature and argue and become enraged by her; instead, Huck drops the conversation and continues with what he was doing. Huck's maturity in being able to control his actions is also demonstrated when he states, " If I never learnt nothing else out of Pap, I learnt that the best way to get along with his kind of people is to let them have their own way" (137). Huck realizes that if the outcome of a conversation is not important to him, then it is not worth arguing over and getting upset about. He learned to keep his ideas and thoughts to himself, unless it was a topic he strongly disapproved of. Although Huck stalwartly demonstrates maturity throughout the novel, he also has glimpses of immaturity. Because every man is not perfect, Huck does choose wrong over right in some situations. One such circumstance is demonstrated when Huck states, " Well, then, says I, what's the use of 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? I was struck. I couldn't answer that. So I reckoned I wouldn't bother no more about it, but after this always do whichever come handiest at the time" (104). This shows that Huck is not able to resolve and determine a right decision in a mature manner if conflict and struggle are pushed his way, rather he would take the easy way out. Another example of Huck showing immaturity is demonstrated when Huck states, " I see what he was up to; but I never said nothing, of course" (173). This shows lack of commitment because Huck sees something wrong, but then he does nothing about it so as not to get involved. Although Huck is immature in some situations throughout *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck shows great maturity in an area that may be very difficult for some. Huck is able to

acknowledge and recognize that blacks are equal to whites. This acknowledgement is demonstrated when Huck states, " It was fifteen minutes before I could work myself up to go and humble myself to a nigger- but I done it, and I warn't ever sorry for it afterwards, neither. I didn't do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn't done that one if I'd a knowed it would make him feel that way" (98). Once Huck is able to get the strength to go against what everyone is telling him, he is able to talk to Jim man to man, and realizes that there is nothing different between Jim and him. Therefore, Huck comprehends that black people, too, have feelings just like white people. This appreciation is also demonstrated when Huck states, " I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks does for their'n" (167). He realizes that there is no difference between black people and white people and; therefore, blacks should not be treated differently. Collectively throughout *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck has greatly matured mentally and spiritually. He is able to find his true self and make his own personal, mature decisions toward what he is faced with. Although at times he may show signs of immaturity, he bounces back with a greater, more mature response than he would have previously.