



The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Analysis Essay



Although Mark Twain warns us that anyone caught trying to analyze his novel will "be shot" it is obvious that Twain speaks on several moral issues through the self-reliant character of Huckleberry Finn. Write an essay that analyzes how Huck develops in relation to Lawrence Kohlberg's six stages of moral development. Use evidence to support a thesis which traces changes in his morals throughout the novel.

Kohlberg's Six Moral Stages

Level I: Preconventional/Premoral

Moral values reside in bad or good acts. The child responds to rules and labels, but views them in terms of pleasant or unpleasant consequences of actions, or in terms of the physical power of those who impose the rules.

Stage 1: Obedience and punishment orientation

- *Avoid Trouble
- *Defer to superior power

Stage 2: Naively egoistic (centered on self) orientation

- *Right actions satisfy individual need and sometimes others' needs if done for mutual gain
- *Orientation to exchange and reciprocity

Level II: Conventional/Role Conformity

Moral values reside in performing the right role, in maintaining the conventional order and expectancies of others.

Stage 3: Good-boy/good-girl orientation

- *Orientation to approval, to pleasing and helping others
- *Conformity to stereotypical images of majority or natural role behavior
- *Action is evaluated in terms of intentions

Stage 4: Authority and social-order-maintaining orientation

- *Orientation to "doing duty" and to showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order
- *Regard for expectations of others

Level III: Postconventional/Self-Accepted Moral Principles

Morality is defined in terms of standards, rights, or duties apart from authority. The standards are internal, and decisions are based on an inner process of thought and judgement concerning right and wrong.

Stage 5: Contractual/legalistic orientation

- *Norms of right and wrong are defined in terms of laws or rules which seem to have a rational basis
- *When conflict arises between individual needs and law or contract the individual believes the latter must prevail because of its greater functional rationality for society, the majority will and welfare

Level III Continued

Stage 6: The morality of individual principles of conscience

- *Orientation not only toward existing social rules, but also toward the conscience as a directing agent, mutual trust and respect, and principles of moral choice involving logical universalities and consistency
- *Action is controlled by internalized ideals that exert a pressure to act accordingly regardless of the reactions of others in the immediate environment
- *If one acts otherwise, self-condemnation and guilt result



Rubric

Introduction Hook, connector, and thesis statement	___/10
Body Organization Answer the prompt completely with organized paragraphs that support the thesis.	___/20
Incorporation of evidence Quotes, symbols, and paraphrases of events	___/20
Analysis All evidence is analyzed in detail in relation to the thesis	___/30
Conclusion Restate what was proved; end with final thought	___/10
Follows Directions Min. 2 pages; 1-inch margins; 12-point font, double spaced; cite pages; MLA Format	___/10
Content Total	___/100
Grammar Total	___/100