

*proofread*  
Reflection

When I began to ponder the Huck's moral development in *Huckleberry Finn*, I found the most powerful examples in his stay at the Phelps' home. Mark Twain makes particularly clear during this time Huck's abundant skepticism as he challenges Tom's wild and often perverted ideas about the "true" prisoner. Huck conforms to his own, natural moral code along his journey instead of society's whims and ideals.

Unfortunately, Huck's trip down river did not only reveal such positive results. In the very last sentence of the novel, Huck sighs, "I reckon I got to light out for the territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally, she's going to adopt me and civilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before"(294). As he comes of age, Huck develops an instinctive fear of any controlling influences, beginning with Pap and including Miss Watson, the widow, and countless other adults. In fact, the only grown-up that Huck trusts is Jim, the one man that he can never have. *explain what you mean* His constant flee from authority manifests itself in his journey itself, and also the miserable conclusion to the book. Finally, Huck's residence at the Phelps' house revealed a true change in character in relation to his old comrade Tom, in terms of his maturity. For, despite the pleasure he derives from childish romanticism, Huck develops a mature sense of morality only by turning from the pleasant illusionment ✓ it provides. Although this fact becomes abundantly clear in Huck's reluctance to participate in Tom's antics, particularly Tom's dream of scaling the lightning rod, ✓ the turning point in Huck's development occurs earlier in the novel as he debates whether or not to turn in Jim: "he was so grateful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world, and the *only* one he's got now; and then I happened to look around and see that paper...[I] says to myself 'All right, then, I'll go to hell' – and tore it up"(214). Huck's

letter, which alerts Miss Watson to the whereabouts of her slave Jim, represents the pinnacle of society's influence over Huck; it drives him to go against a higher sense of right and wrong and obey the corrupt laws dividing men by skin color. Huck though, conditioned by his journey and not by childish stories and authoritative adults, disobeys these directions and decides to protect Jim despite the evils in society he may face. Huck suddenly becomes aware of all the consequences he could face for his actions, particularly hell. In this event Huck realizes the evils in society, both in race relations and the "truths" spread in the Christian word about suffering in the afterlife. Huck experiences a stark disillusionment with the traditional boyhood romanticism<sup>ization</sup> of humanity – something I can connect with. *good.*

The turning point in my childhood regarding my relationship with the goodness of mankind was in first grade on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. It was early in the morning during the second week of school I noticed that in the back of the classroom my dad was lurking in the doorway. I was promptly excused from the class for the rest of the day and my dad and I hurried over to my sister's third grade classroom. I didn't understand what was going on at that point, and I was smiling, talking, and just about doing everything I can to make sure the entire school knew that they all had to stay in class until 3:00 whereas I was going home right then. I wasn't until I reached my parent's room and saw the video on the news that I knew something was amiss. The shot replayed over and over and over in front of my face, as two airplanes rammed into two enormous towers I had never seen before in my life. All I knew was that this wasn't supposed to happen. People were not supposed to fly planes into buildings and buildings should NEVER topple like that – especially when I knew that there were so many people inside. It was then that I knew

that not everyone was as smiley and nice as my Kindergarten teacher or my Mom and Dad. I may have taken the day off from school, but I learned a very painful lesson that day. - some of our most significant lessons ~~come~~ happen out of the classroom

I illustrated this change experienced by both Huck and I in my poem *Youth (and its Demise)*. By using the extended metaphor of a road of life upon which one being walks, I contrasted the dull safety of childhood with the attentive pride of adolescence. In the beginning, by depicting the road as a smooth surface free of stones and obstructions I displayed life as the easiest path, but I forced the protagonist (myself) to stare only straight ahead along this road to protect myself from any infiltration from the evils surrounding it. Then, in the 7<sup>th</sup> stanza, I depict the consequences of exposure to the outside world in a sort of Pandora's box scenario, where my natural curiosity, similar to Huck's, overcomes my need for security and I open myself to evil and evil floods in. Yet there is a certain pride that manifests itself in both my life and in Huckleberry's, for knowing that you understand society does aid one in their fight against it. Beyond this, I browned and burned the edges of the paper as well as wrote the poem in iambic pentameter to give it an older feel, because I do believe this coming of age tale permeates time and remains a pertinent event in the lives of all humans. Despite time or place, the relinquishing of innocence allows for the development of morality.

strict form → society



Youth (and its Demise)

I walk along the road I call my life  
My bare feet treading on the harmless ground  
Yet I stare straight for fear I glimpse the strife  
Which on the roads along mine can be found

My bliss lies unperturbed by hate and fear  
Which permeate so many other souls  
And all the petty loves I hold so dear  
Warm my heart and smooth land beneath my soles

Unfortunately I cannot stay as  
The boy that I am at the present hour  
For my hopes change as surely as the tides  
And my old sustenance I won't devour

I try to keep my head up straight with might  
But now I see the dull march before me  
And glimpses at life to my left and right  
I use to feed my curiosity

I tell myself "there must be more than this"  
I won't accept a fight to no avail  
I know the answer lies in the abyss  
Of which I have heard many haunting tales

With a great inhalation I find strength,  
And courage that the great task must require  
To twist my neck a microscopic length  
And there behold the truth that I desire

Before my conscience can make me "behave"  
It is done and my barren, safe retreat  
Falls crumbling beneath evil's breaking wave  
Leaving greed, suffering, and hate at my feet

My bubble has burst and I am nothing  
But another victim of this deluge  
A flood of hurt and a flood of being  
Knowing I share pain, not run to refuge

My pride inflates; my mind greatly expands  
For I now see the world in natural light  
I see good, bad and both I understand  
And I take the next bound ahead to fight

Yet I wince with each step that I endure  
As my sole falls on unforgiving soil  
But I lift my foot, smile, and am assured  
That my integrity grows from this toil

