Moral Values and Morality in Huckleberry Finn

The history about adventures of Huckleberry Finn is famous and well-known in the world. It must be clear that, as any high-quality story, it must have some moral. It is important that the moral of the story still stays interesting for the researchers. One can notice that they are interested not only in the main moral of the whole story but more about the moral of the main character. The case of Huckleberry Finn seems to be quite interesting, taking into account the factors that have an impact on him. Reading the story, one can notice that Huckleberry is surrounded by the common morality of his time and environment. However, when it is time to act in some way, Huckleberry behave in the way that seems to be right for him and the modern readers, not for the sources of common moral that could affect him. In this way, considering the sources of Huckleberry’s morality, one can notice not only different external sources but also his own feelings about right and wrong.

Considering the moral values and the source of morality for Huckleberry Finn one can pay attention to the article written by Schinkel, who cited Copeland (2002), writing that “whereas Miss Watson tries to get Huck to behave by telling him 'all about the bad place,' the widow, in a more Stoic frame of mind, teaches Huck to pray for 'spiritual gifts,' which means, as Huck says, 'I must help other people, and do everything I could for other people, and look out for them all the time, and never think about myself' [. . .].” Considering the following behavior of Huckleberry one can say that widow's morale had more impact on him. One can also suggest that Huckleberry's own representations of morals, even they were not strictly formulated, was closer to widow's moral. At least he definitely agreed with the idea of helping other people, particularly his friends and people who
were kind to him. Independence is an important feature of Huckleberry Finn. However, he, like any other person, can not avoid an impact of environmental factors. Thus, he can accept or not the morals which Miss Watson and the widow tried to instill him. However, except these two women, there is one more source of morality that had an impact on Huckleberry Finn.

One of the main points related with moral of Huckleberry Finn is his interaction with his friend, fugitive black slave Jim. One can notice that in this relationships moral of Huckleberry Finn became the clearest. On the one hand, “in his earliest years, Huck wasn’t taught any principles, and the only ones he has encountered since then are those of rural Missouri, in which slave-owning is just one kind of ownership and is not subject to critical pressure” (Bennett). In this way, whether he accepts it or not, an environment has an impact on Huckleberry. On the other hand, Huck allows Jim to escape and helps him if their following travel. This fact clearly shows that except the common rural Missouri moral Huckleberry have another one, that makes him act the way he did it, helping Jim.

Considering the moral issue of Huckleberry Finn, Schinkel wrote that “Huck somehow has to deal with two alternately dominant manifestations of the concerned awareness we call conscience” (515). The researcher pays attention to the fact that “one of them is articulate, taking its standard from conventional morality; the other is mute and has no articulable standard to go by – Huck cannot articulate any standard on this side, because the whole of his moral vocabulary is in service of the first” (Schinkel 515). In this way, the researcher emphasizes and shows the issue of two morals that Huckleberry has. On the one hand, he has the moral that society and certain people tried to instill him. On the other hand, Huckleberry has his own moral, own feeling about right and wrong behavior and actions. What is more important, even the second type of moral is not articulable, this moral, not the first one, makes Huckleberry act in the way he acts and helps Jim. In this way, considering sources of Huckleberry’s morality, one can consider not only the different external sources such as society in general or
particular people who have the impact on Huckleberry but also his own feelings about right and wrong.

In this way, there are different sources of Huckleberry's morality. There are two women, Miss Watson and the widow, who tried to instill him their morality. One more source is the common morality of his time, which can impact on Huckleberry from the different people and different sources, but he in any way could not avoid it. However, actions of Huckleberry are not caused by any of that morals. Thus, the sources of Huckleberry's morality can be separated in external and inner. One can notice the inner feelings and understanding of right and wrong is the most important for Huckleberry and it causes his behavior, not the common morality of his time or people who tried to instill their morality to him.