

Huck Finn the Inverse Akratic: Empathy and Justice

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Abstract: An inverse akratic act is one who believes X , all things considered, is the correct act, and yet performs $\sim X$, where $\sim X$ is the correct act. A famous example of such a person is Huck Finn. Huck, growing up in the slave-driven south, is torn between his morality and his conscience. He believes it is morally wrong to help Jim, and yet continues to do so. In this paper I investigate Huck's nature to see why he performs such acts contrary to his beliefs. In doing so, I explore the nature of empathy and show how powerful Huck's empathic feelings are. Drawing from Martin L. Hoffman, I show the relationship between empathy and a principle of justice. This relationship leads Huck to act virtuously as Rosalind Hursthouse maintains.

Introduction

Greek philosophers have been interested in the relationship between one's reason and desires. The latter is certainly not always subject to or in line with the former. The center of this discussion is called *akrasia* or weakness of the will. An akratic act can be seen when a person believes performing X , all things considered, is the correct act, and yet she performs $\sim X$. On the other hand, an inverse akratic act is one in which someone believes X , all things considered, is the correct act, and yet performs $\sim X$, where $\sim X$ is the correct act. A case of inverse *akrasia* that has been discussed in philosophical literature is that of Huckleberry Finn. I will examine Rosalind Hursthouse since she has addressed the issue of inverse *akrasia* and Huck. In addition, I will draw on Jonathan Bennett's helpful analysis of Huck's sympathy and morality. Furthermore, I will reference Nancy

Snow's article on empathy, in addition to Martin L. Hoffman's empirical psychological work on the relationship between empathy and justice. My aim in doing this is not to examine the literary character of Huck Finn, but, instead, to use the figure of Huck to investigate moral psychology, especially moral and emotional phenomena, such as sympathy, empathy and compassion.

In the first section, I will use Huck to examine the nature of inverse akrasia. Furthermore, I will show how Hursthouse answers the complexities of Huck Finn as an inverse akratic. In section two, I will explore the nature of empathy and show how it can provide insight into inverse akrasia through Huck Finn. In section three, I will develop the relationship between empathy and justice. From this, one will see that Huck Finn's empathic feelings are closely related to a principle of justice. In section four, I will agree with Hursthouse that Huck is a virtuous agent (not fully virtuous), on the path to a virtuous life.

I

Inverse akrasia can be described as an act by an agent who believes she is performing the wrong act, and is actually performing the correct act. What makes such an act unique? First, it seems counter-intuitive that one truly believes she is performing the wrong act, and at the same time, follows through with the act. Most people, I believe, act because they feel it is right. However, the inverse akratic is unaware that she is performing the correct act. Second, for the inverse akratic, her weakness of will is superior to her judgment. The notion that an agent's will, contradicting her reason, is not uncommon; however, to say the will has directed one to perform the correct act, unlike reason, seems very odd. The ancient Greeks have developed the notion, following

through the virtue ethics tradition, that if desires are in accordance with one's reason then one will perform the correct act. However, this is contrary to the inverse akratic.

Hursthouse recognizes the complexities with this issue. She addresses it in her influential work *On Virtue Ethics*. Here, Hursthouse explains the problems of how an inverse akratic can also be virtuous even though she believes her acts are wrong. I will show how Hursthouse accounts for virtue within the inverse akratic; however, I must first explain a well-known case of inverse akrasia, that is, Huck Finn.

Huck Finn, in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, is an adolescent boy growing up in the slave-driven south. He is a very complicated character who seems to be naïve to his surroundings and, in some ways, he certainly is. However, that in itself does not make him worthy of blame. Huck becomes friends with a runaway slave named Jim. He believes it is his duty, from what he has been taught, to turn Jim in. In not performing this act, he believes his actions are morally blameworthy. He had numerous opportunities to give him up, but never follows through with them. Instead, Huck follows his heart, so to speak, and remains friends with Jim for the duration of their trip. From the very moment he had met Jim, until the time they had parted ways, Huck has an internal conflict. On the one hand, he believes it is only right to hand Jim over to the authorities. On the other hand, his compassion enables him to take extreme measures to save him. In other words, Huck has a conflict between his reason and desires—where he believes the former is correct and the latter wrong. Inverse akratics follow their desires, even though they believe their desires are wrong. However, in doing so, they have performed the correct act.

Hursthouse provides her interpretation of Huck insofar as it fits her model of virtue. She does not want to say that Huck is a fully virtuous agent, and yet she recognizes the virtuous qualities he displays. Huck is very loyal and courageous. Both of these qualities are manifested in the same action; that is, not returning Jim when given the opportunity. Consider the scene in the book when two white men approach Huck and ask him about the color of the man's skin on the raft. Huck, trying to answer according to his reasons, can't, and thus responds: "He's white" (Bennett 1974, p. 126). If Huck had been caught lying, he would have faced horrific repercussions; thus, such an action is virtuous. Likewise, by Huck not telling the truth, and ultimately keeping Jim from being turned in, he has shown loyalty to his friend. Hursthouse grants that Huck is acting V, where V is the virtuous act being performed *qua* that virtuous act.

To help clarify Hursthouse's position on what it means for an act, V, to be *qua* that virtuous act (e.g. courageous or loyal), I would like to consider an example. Imagine a person who saves another from a burning building. Furthermore, let's assume, all things considered, the act is courageous. Consequently, according to Hursthouse, we can say this person has performed a virtuous act (namely, saving a person from a burning building) *qua* courageous (not *qua* virtuous). She finds this claim significant because it precludes any false preconceptions that one must be fully virtuous in order to perform such an act. Thus, one may be courageous, perform a courageous act as the courageous person would, and yet not possess all the virtues. Moreover, this can be applied to Huck insofar as he has performed virtuous acts *qua* courageous and loyal, without being fully virtuous.

Huck has certainly performed a virtuous act, but one must ask why? Most people would say: slavery is immoral, Jim deserves the same opportunities as a white man, or we have an obligation to protect those who are oppressed. However, none of these thoughts are explicitly expressed by Huck; as a matter of fact, he continuously states that he has a moral obligation to do otherwise. Hursthouse believes it is enough to say that Huck acts for X reasons based upon his loyalty and displays of friendship to Jim. We do not have access to the exact reasons why Huck has protected Jim since he continuously says he is doing the wrong thing. However, that does not hinder him from providing Jim a safe haven, to the best of his ability. This leads Hursthouse to conclude that Huck saves Jim because his ‘heart is in the right place’ (Hursthouse 1999, p. 152). She does not develop this any further, but one can assume, by this, she means Huck has a natural state of compassion that believes Jim ought to be freed. This can be seen when Huck is paddling away in the canoe; he, once again, considers turning Jim in. However, at the last moment, Huck continues to paddle and Jim responds with gratitude. Huck thinks to himself: *I got to do it—I can’t get out of it* (Bennett 1974, p. 126). This statement—*I can’t get out of it*—refers to Huck’s never-ending compassion to keep Jim safe. The only option Huck follows is one that will benefit Jim. He knows that he cannot get rid of those feelings to help Jim. However, he cannot figure out why he has not turned Jim in, but feels the pressures of society telling him to do so. Regardless of the situation, his desire obliges him to not report Jim. Huck performs the correct act because he feels ‘something’ inside him—something he cannot describe—guiding him to perform the correct act. This is why, according to Hursthouse, Huck performs for X reasons; where X

represents Huck's compassion to free Jim. Therefore, we can say that Huck acts V for X reasons.

In saying Huck acts in such a way, Hursthouse does not want to grant that he is fully virtuous. However, he is 'morally motivated' insofar as he has performed the correct act because his heart is in the right place. Moral motivation, according to Hursthouse, entails the agents having "explicit, occurrent thoughts about the rightness of what they are doing" (Hursthouse 1999, p. 151). Hursthouse grants that Huck certainly does not possess such thoughts, at first glance; however, she further writes that this does not preclude him from acting because it is right. There is certainly much to be said for this.

Huck always considers the action he is about to perform and that which he has already done. Even though he never explicitly says 'I am doing the right thing by helping Jim become free,' his continuous ponderings after every action shows he is constantly thinking about why he helps Jim. Bennett provides us with a line that, perhaps, indicates Huck has more explicit thought than we may give him credit for. Huck says to himself after lying to the white men in search of Jim: "So I reckoned I wouldn't bother no more about it, but after this always do whichever come handiest at the time" (Bennett 1974, p. 131). Here, Huck hints at the fact that he is acting for a particular reason—namely, the one that is handiest. Furthermore, if we combine this with his lines of compassion, we can see Huck's thoughts are occurrent insofar as he acts with a compassionate, pragmatic purpose. This, in turn, allows Hursthouse to grant that Huck is morally motivated.

Hursthouse concludes that, although Huck believes he is doing wrong, he still acts V for X reasons. In other words, he has performed virtuous actions of loyalty and

generosity *qua* loyalty and generosity because he is compassionate. However, Hursthouse remarks that he is not as virtuous as a fully virtuous agent because he never explicitly says his actions are right, since that would require knowing he is acting correctly (Hursthouse 1999, p. 152). Hursthouse maintains that although Huck never knows he is performing the correct act, he still acts virtuously by following his heart.

Hursthouse argues that this merits Huck worthy of praise. In saying Huck's praiseworthy, she believes her account is meeting the demands of Arpaly and Schroeder's 'whole self.'¹ She writes that "they claim, rightly, that not only the actions but also the motives of the three agents [Huck] merit praise" (Hursthouse 1999, p. 151). In other words, Hursthouse's standard of praise entails that of Huck's actions and motives, namely, Huck's whole self. Consequently, she believes it is essential to show that Huck performs V for X reasons. Upon showing Huck acting virtuously for the correct reasons, she believes she can assign praise to Huck's whole self. She has argued, I believe rightly, that Huck performs V for X reasons. We see glimpses, into the future, of the possibility of Huck's virtuous character, but, according to Hursthouse, that does not imply that he is fully virtuous. Since Huck is not fully virtuous, Hursthouse does not praise him in the same manner she would if he had known his actions are correct.

In summary, Hursthouse argues that Huck Finn has performed the correct actions for the right reasons. His reasons, according to Hursthouse, come from the heart. There are a number of passages that bolster her claim. For example, Huck says he just can't

¹ The whole self theory, put forth by Arpaly and Schroeder, says "an agent is more praiseworthy for a good action...the more the morally relevant *psychological factors* underlying it are *integrated* within her overall personality" (Arpaly and Schroeder 1997, p. 172, my italics). In other words, an agent's motives and action are interconnected; furthermore, the closer they are interconnected, the more praise or blameworthy an agent becomes. Moreover, by psychological factors, they are referring to beliefs, desires, emotions, or any other psychological entity that influences an agent to perform an action. Furthermore, a well-integrated belief or desire is one that is (1) deep and (2) not in opposition to another belief or desire. In Huck's case, his desires run deeper than his belief. Thus, one can praise Huck's whole self.

give Jim up, but never gives a reason why. This passage implies a feeling in Huck that helps guide him to perform the virtuous act. Huck's empathic feeling with Jim must be explicated in order to understand why he empathizes with Jim. Before I delve further into such matters, I must explain the nature of empathy and how it applies to Huck.

II

Snow begins her discussion on empathy by defining it and showing how it differs from sympathy. Empathy, in general, means having a feeling with someone. There are three criteria for Huck, H, to empathize with Jim's, J, emotion, E, of wanting to be free: (1) J feels E, (2) H feels E because J feels E, and (3) H knows or understands that J feels E. There is a further condition that can be applied to higher cognitive levels of empathy which states that (4) H understands that H feels E because J feels E (Snow 2000, p. 68). Snow states that the fourth condition is neither necessary nor sufficient for empathy, but, as I have stated, shows a higher cognitive form of it. Sympathy, on the other hand, is merely having a feeling for someone. If Huck sympathizes with Jim then Huck feels sad *for* Jim. However, he actually empathizes with Jim since he experiences *with* Jim what Jim feels. The difference between these propositions seems minute, but has big implications. If Huck is merely sad for Jim, it still allows for Huck to be sad about the situation, and not understand what Jim is going through. In other words, if Huck feels sad for Jim because he is not free, Huck is only sympathizing with Jim. As the conditions show this is far from empathy.

I believe Huck empathizes with Jim because: Jim has a feeling of wanting to be free, Huck feels Jim wants to be free because Jim feels it and Huck knows or understands Jim wants to be free. Jim's feelings are very complicated since his desire for freedom

entails many other emotions (e.g. joyful, scared, sad, etc.). Huck considers Jim's emotion of becoming free: it made Jim feel "trembly" and "feverish;" moreover, Bennett writes of Jim: "Pooty soon I'll be a-shout'n for joy, en I'll say, it's all on accounts o' Huck I's a free man" (Bennett 1974, pp. 126-7). These two passages indicate the complexity of Jim's feelings. I point this out because it could not possibly be demanded of Huck that he experience or understand every emotion that Jim experiences, but rather have a basic sense of why and how intense Jim's feelings are to be freed. There should not be much controversy over the first condition—Jim wants to be free—since this has been shown throughout the paper. However, I want to investigate conditions two and three since they will help explain why Huck wants to see Jim free.

After Jim tells Huck that he is the only white person he could trust, it had begun to take a toll on Huck, and decides not to paddle ashore. By not paddling ashore, Huck has aided Jim to continue his quest for freedom. There are a number of inferences, which satisfy conditions two and three, respectively, that can be made from this event.

Condition two, H feels E because J feels E, is meant to express mutual feelings between H and J—where the feelings expressed by J spark the emotion by H. It can be seen that Huck feels the emotions that Jim feels. Jim can finally taste freedom knowing that he has a white person that is loyal to him. Likewise, Huck can feel that same emotion—namely, Jim's desire for freedom—that is why he proceeds down the river rather than paddling ashore. Furthermore, condition three, H knows or understands J feels O, can also be seen in the above event. If Huck has no understanding of what Jim has undergone then he would not have taken it upon himself to make sure Jim has rightfully earned his freedom. Huck is always reminding himself that his actions are wrong because society tells him so.

However, his actions show that he understands what Jim is feeling, and that he must ultimately act on his own feelings in order to help Jim.

Huck is not merely a naïve adolescent who is unaware of his surroundings and especially that of Jim's. One may be quick to object to this position arguing that Huck is certainly not correct when he tells himself that he has an obligation to turn Jim in. I agree Huck cannot be praised for stating such a belief. He is a young boy who has known only one belief growing up, that is, racism. However, not only does he not comply with those teachings, he defies what those teachings stand for. If Huck had been unaware of what the correct act should have been, he would not have had thoughts such as: he [Jim] *was* most free—and who was to blame for it? Why, me (Bennett 1974, p. 125). Here, Huck acknowledges the belief he has been taught, namely, to help a slave is immoral.

However, he, in no way, acts on the belief because he recognizes, through his own compassion, that racism is immoral. This shows that Huck understands what Jim is going through and will take whatever means necessary to help him.

Huck's actions, as Hursthouse correctly writes, are virtuous, and even more so, his whole self merits praise. Huck, unlike a fully virtuous agent, does not have a virtue relevant goal; thus, he is unaware that his actions (or empathic feelings) are correct, and not his beliefs. In other words, his inverse akratic nature has forced us to examine Huck differently than a fully virtuous agent. For the latter, one only needs to investigate her motivations and occurrent thoughts; this, in turn, will explain why she has performed the virtuous act. On the other hand, Huck never explicitly says what those motivations are, and yet his heart has led him to perform the correct actions. My task, then, will be to show how his empathic feelings (of compassion) are linked with a principle of justice.

Justice, in accordance with compassion, is the foundation by which Huck performs the correct actions. Even though Huck does not realize he is upholding such a principle, I will explain the close connection between his empathic feelings and justice. This will help explain why Huck performs just acts.

The essence of empathy can be a study unto itself; however, I am interested in it as a prosocial motive—as Hoffman calls it. By this, I mean a person’s empathic feelings lead her to act in such a way that helps another in distress. Thus far, I have explained the nature of empathy and why Huck can be considered empathic. However, for the purpose of this paper, I am interested in exploring empathy as a motivational tool—one that guides Huck to perform just acts. Hoffman states, according to his definition, that empathy entails a psychological process that makes one’s own feelings “more congruent with” someone else’s experience than one’s own (Hoffman 2000, p. 30). In other words, the empathizer must concern himself with the victim’s feelings and experiences more than with oneself. Hoffman uses this as the framework to show how empathy can be used as a prosocial motivation. In Huck’s case, his empathic feelings have helped him to perform the correct actions since he is concerned with Jim’s feelings more than his own. Since Hoffman is an empirical psychologist, I will be drawing a great deal from his findings in empathy as a prosocial motive for moral actions. This will provide insight into Huck’s character, and ultimately show why he helps Jim. Insight into Huck’s character, in turn, will shed light on the general question of how empathy with others can facilitate the performance of virtuous actions.

III

In this section, I am interested in showing the relationship between Huck's empathic feelings and justice in order to illustrate a general connection between empathy and justice. Huck's empathy will guide him to perform just acts. Huck develops empathic anger, a prosocial motive, with Jim because of the way he is treated. Empathic anger, as Hoffman writes, occurs when the "victim is angry at the abuser and the observer picks up that anger...and feels empathic anger" (Hoffman 2000, pp. 98-9). In this case, Jim is a victim of unjust southern laws since they punish him for his skin color rather than his actions and character. Huck never damns southern laws, but his empathic feelings with Jim show his problems with them. Huck recognizes the disparity between himself and Jim because he has been taught to treat Jim differently; yet, on the other hand, he sees Jim as a good person and cannot understand why one with good character should be treated in such a way.

A similar phenomenon is seen in a study done by R. Coles that is explicated by Hoffmann. In this study, a 14 year old southern white boy witnesses a black boy, his age, being harassed in school. Furthermore, that same boy also harassed the black boy for weeks. One day the white southern adolescent began to see this boy as a kid, and not one who should be victimized. He even defended him against those who felt differently. After defending him, the white boy looked at him and said, "I'm sorry." Later, the boy had been asked by Coles why he changed his attitude, and the boy gave two responses: (1) no matter what had been done to the black boy he always behaved and (2) something in the white boy began to change (See Hoffman 2000, pp. 107-8). He never said what it was that changed, nor did he explain how he changed. However, what we know is that he

had a change of heart that likely resulted from empathy. There is much to be said for the feelings this southern white boy had for one of his peers.

Huck, unlike the schoolboy, never believes it is right for him to say “I’m sorry” to Jim, but, his actions speak louder than words. Huck asks himself on the raft if he would feel better if he had given Jim up, and he responds, “No, says I, I’d feel bad” (Bennett 1974, p. 131). Then, what is Huck, like the southern white boy, sorry about? I believe Huck is angry about the way Jim is subjected to southern laws. He did nothing morally wrong, and this provides Huck the motivation (his empathic feelings) to keep helping him even though he cannot understand why he continues to do so.

Let’s work through Huck’s developmental process to see if we can figure out what his motivation is for helping Jim. Huck’s feelings begin as empathic distress since Jim is under great pressure to flee the south to gain his freedom. Empathic distress, as Hoffman correctly points out, is associated with helping, but always precedes it (See Hoffman 2000, pp. 30-6). In Huck’s case, he has empathic feelings of distress with Jim, and thus helps him. Huck reminds himself over-and-over that helping Jim is wrong; therefore, if Huck had lacked such empathic feelings then he would not have helped Jim. I believe Huck’s empathic feelings of distress eventually turn into empathic feelings of injustice. This transition allows Huck to continue helping Jim even though he does not see why; likewise, it also explains why the schoolboy in Cole’s study had a sudden change of heart. He could not explain what it was that made him change, but it was something inside—namely, seeing the injustice brought upon his peer. Like the schoolboy, Huck’s compassion recognizes that Jim is being treated unfairly, and because of the unfairness, performs acts that are contrary to what he has been taught and even believes. In other

words, Huck has empathic feelings of injustice because he sees the lack of reciprocity between Jim's character and the actions, and their consequences.

Reciprocity, as Hoffman writes, relates to justice and fairness such as being treated equally or rewarded for what one deserves (Hoffman 2000, pp. 241-2). Hoffman also says reciprocity itself is not a prosocial motive, like empathy, but is a significant factor in helping to develop empathic feelings of injustice. Let's apply this model to Huck. First, Huck has empathic feelings of distress for Jim. He empathizes with many of the struggles Jim experiences. Furthermore, he also recognizes the lack of fairness between the way Jim is treated and his character. This is Huck's recognition of the lack of reciprocity. From this, Huck has empathic feelings of injustice with Jim. Keep in mind, Huck—an inverse akratic—recognizes the lack of reciprocity different than most people. His recognition is derived from empathic feelings and not knowledge. Notice Huck does not begin with an understanding of reciprocity, and conclude with injustice; rather, he begins with empathic distress, and through a lack of reciprocity, concludes with empathic feelings of injustice.

The lack of reciprocity is derived from Huck's moral principles being violated. On the surface, this appears to be the problem with Huck—namely, he does not challenge southern laws. Since this is the case, it would seem fair to attribute immoral principles to Huck. However, I am reluctant to do such a thing. These immoral principles have been inculcated in him since birth, but he never acts on them. His lack of overtly challenging the laws does not preclude him from possessing moral principles. Furthermore, I would like to attribute moral principles to Huck in accordance with his compassion. The moral principle that Huck possesses is justice. As I suggested above, empathic feelings of

injustice follow empathic feelings of distress. However, in order to have such feelings of injustice one must have a principle, or at least some understanding, of justice.

Hoffman says, in reference to the white schoolboy, that one may be exposed to a principle of justice at a young age. From this, the boy is able to recall the principle and apply it to the given situation (Hoffman 2000, p. 239). I believe much of the same can be said for Huck. I would suggest that Huck had been taught from early age how to treat others with respect and praise those with good character. He should be, and is, confused by the double standard; since, on the one hand, he has been taught to praise people based on one's good-nature, and yet, on the other hand, people were punishing Jim even though he is good-natured. Jim's character did not give any suggestion that he ought to be punished. Furthermore, his likeable personality had been one of the reasons Huck's compassion leads him to help Jim during the most difficult times. Moreover, his compassion is able to ignore the beliefs that Jim should be treated differently regardless of his character, although, he never understood why. I believe this lack of understanding can be attributed to his natural capacity to empathize.

Even though Huck and the schoolboy have been exposed to a principle of justice, their actions are extremely rare for their times. I believe one cannot merely say that they were taught the meaning of justice at a young age and able to apply it when the situation had presented itself. If that is all it takes then many more people would have been forth right in their efforts to stop injustice. Keep in mind, Huck and the schoolboy have not been taught to treat blacks equally, and yet they manage to do the right thing. I believe this shows Huck has a natural empathic capacity that allows him to feel (not necessarily know) right and wrong against all odds. If he had known right and wrong, he would not

question his actions. Therefore, Hursthouse correctly labels Huck's whole self as virtuous, and not fully virtuous.

IV

Let us return to Hursthouse's analysis of Huck Finn. Huck is a very complicated character because he has an on-going commitment to the belief that his actions are wrong. Thus, we label him as an inverse akratic. Hursthouse believes, at most, we can say Huck is on the path to a virtuous life. Huck lacks the epistemic criteria of knowing that he is doing the virtuous act; thus, we cannot call him fully virtuous. Hursthouse sums up Huck's case by saying that he acts V for X reasons where V is a virtuous act and X is compassion. How do my discussions in sections II and III help bolster Hursthouse's claim and deal with the complexity of Huck's character?

As I said at the end of section III, I believe Huck has a natural empathic capacity that helped him perform morally right actions. Hoffman cites a study done by Sigelman and Waitzman, where they examined age difference (kindergarten, fourth grade and eighth grade) and their distributive justice reasoning (productivity, democratic ideals and social responsibility). They found that with age, children become aware of norms based on: (1) productivity in reward for work, (2) democratic ideals looking for equality and (3) social responsibility for those in need. They concluded that the "hallmark of distributive justice reasoning...[is] an ability to choose and apply the principle of justice most appropriate to the demands of the situation at hand" (Hoffman 2000, p. 251). This study shows that as children become older they are able to reason about distributive justice, rewarding people based on production (youngest) to those in need (oldest).

The figure of Huck also illustrates this finding. Huck is a prime example of one who has shown that he can apply the proper form of justice according to the given situation. As Hoffman points out, it is not that simple to say a person is in this age group, and thus she should be able to take certain things into account and make the proper judgment. Many adults, much less children, have trouble properly applying the correct form of justice. However, I believe Huck has shown the “reasoning” (more properly, following of the heart) to apply the right form of justice given the circumstance. He has displayed the reasoning of (2) insofar as he believes Jim ought to be treated as any other person who has good character. However, he should be most prominently known by (3) since he not only treats Jim as equal, but continues to go out of his way to help him attain freedom. In other words, Huck believes he has a responsibility to help Jim because he is in need. However, Huck does not understand why (due to his inverse akratic nature) he should help Jim since it is against his beliefs, but, regardless, he continues to help him.

Since Huck has applied the correct form of justice given the situation, he is morally praiseworthy. He has shown at a young age what following your heart can do, that is, help restore justice to those who face injustice. Huck’s inescapable problem is an epistemic one. He believes, throughout his journey with Jim, that he is doing the wrong thing by helping him. I agree with Hursthouse that this lack of knowledge precludes Huck from being called a fully virtuous agent. However, Huck has certainly displayed actions that merit praise, and even more so, his character is worthy of praise. Thus, like Hursthouse, I believe Huck’s whole self is morally praiseworthy. His actions show that his commitment to help Jim runs deeper than his unchallenged racist beliefs. Therefore,

we can say Huck is virtuous. There are two claims that must be noted about this statement: (1) Huck is on the path to a virtuous life and (2) he is not fully virtuous.

I believe Huck has met Hursthouse's criteria to be considered a virtuous agent, that is, he has performed V for X reasons. His compassion has led him to perform virtuous acts of justice and loyalty. He never strays from Jim's side regardless of his beliefs. Moreover, his empathic feelings of injustice guide him to perform the just acts. Huck does not have moral principles outside his compassion that would guide him to do just acts. However, as Hoffman writes, moral principles do not need to come purely from teachings since, when combined with empathy, they gain motive properties (Hoffman 2000, pp. 256-7). In other words, Huck's empathic feelings combined with his caring to help Jim, guide him to perform virtuous acts; ultimately, we are able to attribute virtue to Huck's whole self.

V

An inverse akratic is a person who believes that she is performing the wrong act, but is actually correct. A well-known case of inverse akrasia used in this paper is Huck Finn. He faces a moral dilemma—on the one hand, he believes he should not be helping Jim, and yet, on the other hand, he cannot figure out why he continues to help him. Hursthouse believes, based on the whole self demand, Huck's whole self merits praise. However, she will not go as far as to say that he is fully virtuous. I am in full agreement with her; however, I believe her position could be further developed. Following her position, I explained the nature of empathy and how it differs from sympathy. Moreover, I applied the definition of empathy to Huck in order to show that Huck empathizes with Jim. From this, I used Hoffman's book on empathy and justice. Like Hoffman, I use

empathy as a prosocial motive; this guides Huck to perform the right action. As I have shown, Huck begins with empathic feelings of distress upon witnessing Jim's struggles. Then, Huck sees the lack of reciprocity between Jim's good character and the way he is treated by southern laws. This results in Huck having empathic feelings of injustice. These feelings help explain Huck's motivation to continue helping Jim earn his freedom. These actions, along with Huck's empathic feelings, merit him moral praise.

From analyzing Huck's case, some general lessons can be learned. First, empathy can motivate an agent to perform virtuous action, even without the agent's knowing or believing she is performing the correct act. Second, empathy can influence an agent's whole character. That is, we can attribute virtue to a person's whole self because of the role that empathy plays in producing her virtuous actions. Empathy, then, is an important contributing factor on the path to full virtue.

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