

# The adventures of huckleberry finn



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The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, by Mark Twain, includes countless examples of satire and irony. Irony is a literary technique that presents an event or idea that is completely opposite of what you'd expect. Satire is defined as the use of humor, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize people's stupidity or vices.

Twain uses these writing strategies to his advantage, utilizing them to make social commentaries on the time he wrote it in, despite the book being set nearly fifty years before its release. He even begins the book with a satirical line; before the table of contents is even shown, Twain states, NOTICE: Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot, (Twain, 0) Many of these satirical moments revolve around slavery, in particular, as well as some commenting on religion and the absurdity of human nature.

Twain uses irony quite a bit around slavery, particularly using the character Jim, as he is a slave. One example of this is when Jim demonstrates the innocence and humility in slavery by stating, Yes-en I's rich now come to look at it. I owns myself, en I's wuth eight hund'd dollars. I wisht I had de money, I wouldn' want no mo, (Twain, 63). Through this quote, Twain shows the audience what little economic care or education is given to Jim. He doesn't understand that eight hundred dollars is not a lot of money, or understand the concept of him being worth that little amount of money. Twain is showing the humility in being a slave, as Jim feels as though eight hundred dollars could buy him the world; or at least his freedom.

Twain's satirical writings in *Huckleberry Finn* around religion mostly focus on the hypocritical side of not just religion itself, but religious people in general. He does this through use of Huck's perspective, using his funny ways thinking and contemplating over people's morals and actions. One example of this is when Huck lived in the Widow Douglas' home, and his interactions with Miss Watson, the Widow's sister. She attempts to instill religion into Huck, Then Miss Watson took me in the closet and prayed, but nothing came of it, (Twain, 14).

However, we begin to see the irony in the supposed freeing beliefs as she begins to use scare-tactics, Sometimes the widow would take me to one side and talk about Providence in a manner that would make my mouth water; but the next day Miss Watson would take hold and knock it all down again, (Twain, 15). The irony here is that while they try to impose religion as a righteous and blissful belief, they use terrifying thoughts to make Huck believe there's no way out of believing in it. The irony in Miss Watson's character is also seen as she accomplishes nothing through her constant prayer, as well as owns slaves, counteracting the good person she is trying to display herself as.

Overall, however, I believe that Twain uses satire and irony most to describe the absurdity of human nature and American society. Religion and slavery could arguably fit into this category in a wider spectrum, considering those are human constructed ideas that Twain constantly satirizes. He shows that people are hypocritical, they counteract themselves often. One example is when Huck says, Miss Watson she kept pecking at me, and it got tiresome

and lonesome. By-and-by they fetched the n\*\*\*ers in and had prayers, and then everybody was off to bed, (Twain, 3).

This brings up the idea of slavery in general. The United States was built on the idea that all men are created equal, and slavery itself completely counteracts that construct. Twain sees the stupidity in this and many other things in American culture, and him commenting on and satirizing them in what many see as an insensitive manner is what has caused this book to be banned in many places across the country.