

PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS IN THE WORKS OF MARK TWAIN.

Akramova Zilola Akramovna

Faculty of Romano-Germanic Philology of Uzbekistan

State University of World Languages

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13912320>

Annotation. This article explores the philosophical views expressed in the works of Mark Twain, focusing on themes such as morality, religion, free will, and human nature. Through an analysis of his most notable works, such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Mysterious Stranger*, and *Letters from the Earth*, the article delves into Twain's critical perspective on the human condition, social structures, and existential dilemmas. A detailed analysis of these works reveals Twain's skepticism towards organized religion and his reflections on determinism, morality, and human flaws. His satire is discussed as a vehicle for conveying his philosophical outlook.

Keywords: Mark Twain, philosophy, religion, morality, satire, free will, human nature, determinism, existentialism.

Mark Twain, one of America's most celebrated authors, is often recognized for his wit, humor, and keen observations of human behavior. Beneath the surface of his comedic narrative style, Twain infused his works with deep philosophical musings. He reflected on the moral complexities of life, questioned the existence of free will, and critiqued religious doctrines. Twain's writing is also marked by a profound skepticism about human nature, societal institutions, and the meaning of life. This article will examine the key philosophical themes in Twain's literary works, tracing the development of his views over time and examining how his personal experiences shaped his perspective.

This article employs a qualitative literary analysis of Twain's key works, focusing on their philosophical themes. The analysis draws from primary texts, supplemented by secondary sources that explore Twain's personal views, letters, and critical responses to his work. The thematic analysis identifies recurring motifs and philosophical ideas, particularly those related to morality, determinism, free will, and religion. The research also contextualizes Twain's works within the broader philosophical debates of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Mark Twain, one of America's most celebrated authors, is known not only for his humor and storytelling but also for his insightful and often critical philosophical views. Here are some key philosophical themes found in his works:



Human Nature and Morality

Your analysis captures the essence of Twain's exploration of human nature and morality in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Twain indeed presents a nuanced view of morality that emphasizes the conflict between societal expectations and individual conscience.

Key Themes and Analysis:

1. Inherent Goodness vs. Societal Corruption:

- Twain suggests that individuals possess an innate sense of right and wrong, which can be overshadowed by societal values. Huck's internal struggles illustrate this tension; he grapples with the moral implications of helping Jim, which society deems wrong.

2. Moral Development:

- Huck's journey represents a path to moral awakening. His friendship with Jim allows him to see beyond societal prejudices, leading him to prioritize his personal sense of morality over accepted norms.

3. Critique of Civilization:

- Twain critiques the hypocrisy of "civilized" society, which often promotes inequality and injustice. The more Huck interacts with Jim, the more he recognizes the flaws within the values taught to him, challenging the reader to reconsider societal norms.

4. The Role of Friendship:

- The bond between Huck and Jim serves as a catalyst for Huck's moral growth. Their relationship transcends the racial prejudices of the time, highlighting the potential for genuine human connection to foster empathy and understanding.

5. Conflict and Resolution:

- Huck's ultimate decision to help Jim, even if it means risking his own safety and going against societal expectations, symbolizes a triumph of individual morality. This resolution reinforces Twain's belief in the importance of personal integrity over conformity.

In summary, Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a profound exploration of human nature and morality, emphasizing the struggle between individual conscience and societal norms. Huck's journey reflects the complexity of moral decisions and the potential for personal growth through genuine connections.

Critique of Society and Civilization



Mark Twain's critique of society and civilization is both incisive and enduring, revealing his deep skepticism toward the social and political norms of his era. His works often expose the hypocrisy and injustice prevalent in American life, making him a quintessential figure in American satire.

In *The Gilded Age*, co-authored with Charles Dudley Warner, Twain critiques the superficial glitter of post-Civil War America. The novel illustrates how the economic boom led to rampant corruption and moral degradation, particularly among the wealthy elite. Twain uses humor and irony to highlight the disparity between the nation's ideals and its reality, exposing the greed and ethical lapses that characterize the age.

Similarly, in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Twain employs time travel as a narrative device to juxtapose modern American values with the medieval society of King Arthur. Through the protagonist, Hank Morgan, Twain critiques romantic notions of chivalry and the brutality of feudalism. He suggests that the so-called progress of civilization can mask fundamental flaws, often leading to a cycle of oppression and ignorance.

Twain's portrayal of civilization as a façade reveals his belief that advancements in technology and society do not necessarily equate to moral or ethical progress. His characters frequently confront the absurdities and contradictions of their world, reflecting his conviction that humanity often regresses in its quest for advancement.

Overall, Twain's satirical lens encourages readers to question societal norms and to recognize that civilization, while promising progress, can also harbor profound moral failings. His works remain relevant today, inviting ongoing reflection on the complexities of human nature and the societal structures we inhabit.

Realism vs. Romanticism

Twain's works reflect a tension between realism and romanticism. He championed a realistic portrayal of life, often using humor and local color to depict the struggles of ordinary people. This is evident in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, where the romantic notions of adventure are juxtaposed with the harsh realities of childhood and society.

Skepticism and Doubt

Twain's writings reveal a deep skepticism about religion and organized belief systems. In *The Mysterious Stranger*, he challenges the notion of free will and the existence of a just God, suggesting that life is largely random and



indifferent to human struggles. This philosophical skepticism reflects Twain's broader questioning of traditional values and beliefs.

Social Justice and Equality

Twain's later works reflect a strong advocacy for social justice. He criticized imperialism and racism, particularly in works like *The King and the Duke* in *Huckleberry Finn* and in his essays on the Philippines and the Spanish-American War. His commitment to equality is evident in his friendships with people of different races and his vocal opposition to slavery.

The Absurdity of Life

Twain frequently expressed a sense of the absurdity of existence, highlighting the contradictions and ironies of life. His humor often masked a deeper existential angst, suggesting that while life may be inherently chaotic and nonsensical, it is our human connections and experiences that provide meaning.

Mark Twain's philosophical views are woven intricately into his narratives, presenting a multifaceted perspective on human nature, society, morality, and existence. His ability to critique societal norms while embracing the complexities of human experience has cemented his place as a pivotal figure in American literature and thought.

Mark Twain's works offer a critical lens through which to examine the philosophical debates of his era. His exploration of free will and determinism, for example, aligns with contemporary discussions in philosophy and science, such as Darwinian determinism and the growing interest in psychological forces driving human behavior. Twain's critique of societal norms, particularly regarding slavery and institutionalized religion, reflects his broader concern with the moral and ethical challenges of his time.

Twain's unique contribution to philosophical thought lies in his use of satire to communicate deep and often uncomfortable truths about the human condition. His humor, while entertaining, serves to underscore the absurdity and contradictions inherent in human belief systems. Through characters like Huck Finn and Satan, Twain poses uncomfortable questions about the morality of society, the existence of free will, and the role of religion in shaping human behavior.

Conclusions

Mark Twain's literary works serve not only as entertainment but also as profound philosophical inquiries into human existence. His critique of morality, religion, and free will reflects a deep engagement with the intellectual currents of his time. Over the course of his life, Twain's views became more cynical,



particularly regarding organized religion and human agency. This shift in perspective is mirrored in the increasingly dark and deterministic tone of his later works.

Further research could explore the influence of Twain's personal life on his philosophical outlook, particularly his later works. Additionally, a comparative analysis between Twain's philosophical views and those of his contemporaries, such as Nietzsche or Schopenhauer, could provide a deeper understanding of Twain's place within the broader landscape of 19th-century thought. Finally, exploring how Twain's philosophical skepticism resonates with modern readers may provide insights into the continued relevance of his work in contemporary discussions on morality, religion, and free will.

References:

1. Балдицын П. В. Система жанров в творчестве Марка Твена и американская литературная традиция [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://lib.ua-ru.net/diss/cont/91913.html> (дата обращения: 06.08.2018).
2. Бардыкова Н. В. Трансформация типа простака в юмористических рассказах Марка Твена // Проблемы типологии русской и зарубежной литературы: коллективная монография. Белгород: БелГУ, 2003. С. 209-247.
3. Бахтин М. М. Проблемы поэтики Достоевского [Электронный ресурс]. URL: <http://litmir.me/br?b=128842&p=1> (дата обращения: 06.08.2018).
4. Боброва М. Н. Марк Твен. М.: ГИХЛ, 1961. 503 с.
5. Гиленсон Б. А. Марк Твен и Эрнест Хемингуэй [Электронный ресурс]. URL: http://hemingway-lib.ru/analiz_proizvedenii/gilenson-mark-twain-i-ernest-hemingway.html (дата обращения: 06.08.2018).
6. Груздева Е. А. Эволюция образа простака в творчестве Марка Твена в контексте просветительской традиции [Электронный ресурс]: автореф. дисс. ... к. филол. н. Казань, 2013. URL: <http://libweb.kpfu.ru/z3950/referat/2013-176.pdf> (дата обращения: 06.08.2018).
7. Зверев А. М. Марк Твен // История всемирной литературы: в 9-ти т. / гл. ред. Г. П. Бердников. М.: Наука, 1991. Т. 7. С. 559-568.
8. Зверев А. М. Мир Марка Твена: очерк жизни и творчества. М.: Детская литература, 1985. 175 с.

