

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO



MARK TWAIN

马克·吐温

FORREST G. ROBINSON 编

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马克·吐温

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出版前言

《剑桥文学指南》是上海外语教育出版社从海外引进的一套研究、介绍外国文学的丛书，内容涉及作家、作品、文学流派、文学史等诸多方面。作者均为在该领域有着较深造诣的专家、学者。

《马克·吐温》是该丛书中的一本。

马克·吐温是美国最孚众望的幽默小说家。他早年丧父，因家境贫困而中途辍学。13岁就在印刷厂当排字学徒工。后又当过密西西比河上的船员。艰难的生活和丰富的阅历，赋予他同情弱者、关心劳苦大众命运的正义感，给予他取之不尽的创作灵感。马克·吐温早期以创作短篇小说为主，《竞选州长》是这个时期的代表作。他的早期作品善于运用极度夸张的手法，犹如一面哈哈镜，将事物的丑恶面加以放大，让人看得格外分明。由于作者在这一时期对美国民主社会的前途抱着乐观的态度，因此他的幽默具有欢乐、诙谐的特色，读来较为轻松。自19世纪70年代起，吐温开始了长篇小说的创作。他的《镀金时代》、《汤姆·索亚历险记》、《哈克贝利·费恩历险记》、《王子与贫儿》、《亚瑟王朝廷上的康涅狄格州美国人》、《傻瓜威尔逊》等就是这一时期的作品。这时期，马克·吐温随着思想认识的深化，作品的基调由夸张幽默逐

渐转向辛辣的讽刺，字里行间常常流露出对现实的不满和对黑暗势力的抨击。

本书是一本马克·吐温研究文集，收集了近年来在马克·吐温作品评论方面最有影响的学者所撰写的 11 篇文章。这些文章视角新颖独到，观点发人深思。有的论述了马克·吐温的妇女观，有的论述了马克·吐温的政治和文学观，有的分析了马克·吐温对于种族和奴隶制的态度，有的剖析了作者游记文章中所流露的心路历程。也有的归纳了这位美国偶像经久不衰的影响力及其渗透于社会各领域的印迹。本书提供了著名评论家对这位美国文学史上久负盛誉的作家及其作品的最新思索，既具强烈的时代感又具较高的学术性，对读者深入理解马克·吐温的创作很有指导意义，对马克·吐温研究者亦有较大的参考价值。

本书的读者对象为大学外语教师，外国文学研究人员，外国文学专业的研究生、博士生，以及具备了较高英语阅读能力的外国文学爱好者。

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PREFACE

In the 1939 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production of *Huckleberry Finn*, starring Mickey Rooney in the title role, much is made of the fact that Jim (played by Rex Ingram) conceals from Huck that pap is dead. When Jim asks what he would do in the event of his father's death, Huck replies that he would return to St. Petersburg and that he would take the runaway slave back with him. Jim's worst fears are thus confirmed. The white boy's sole motive for fleeing downriver is fear of his father. Jim is acceptable as a companion, but Huck is hardly an abolitionist and would dutifully restore the slave to Miss Watson were the way clear to his doing so. Later, when Jim at last tells the truth about pap, Huck calls him an ungrateful "thing" and runs away in anger. Though we are finally brought around to the obligatory happy ending, this old movie nonetheless brings us closer to tragedy than any of the more recent popular productions of the story.

It took the critics almost thirty years to catch up with Mickey Rooney. The prevailing view of *Huckleberry Finn* until the mid-1960s cast the boy-hero as a figure of "instinctive humanity" who without hesitation joins Jim in his "quest for freedom."¹ James M. Cox, in *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor* (1966), was the first to challenge consensus, arguing that "a quest is a positive journey, implying an effort, a struggle to reach a goal. But Huck is escaping. His journey is primarily a negation, a flight *from* tyranny, not a flight toward freedom." Huck "is certainly not a rebel," Cox adds. "The role of Abolitionist is not comfortable nor comforting to him and in turning over to Tom Sawyer the entire unpleasant business of freeing Jim, Huck is surely not acting out of but remarkably *in* character."²

Cox's sharp break with critical tradition gave rise to a major overhaul of accepted opinion on America's favorite novel. The image of Huck has been transformed. He is more uncertain and troubled, more divided against himself, than he used to be. Jim has also become more complex. We are reader now than in the past to glimpse a mingled array of feelings and motives behind the mask of the docile slave that he presents to the world.

Jim has fears and desires that he does not share with anyone, not even Huck – who scorns abolitionists, plays dirty tricks, and wavers terribly when the chips are down. Such major interpretive shifts have in turn drawn attention to the dynamics of audience response. How is it that we have overlooked so much for so long? How has it served our cultural and ideological agendas to settle for such partial and incomplete readings? Other, related questions have arisen in tandem with those that attach directly to *Huckleberry Finn*. We are now more than ever alert to Mark Twain's attitudes toward women, and to the female characters in his work. His later writings, concerned as they are with major social and political issues, and fascinating as studies in the thematics of form, are also very much with us in this lively – if also rather sobering – reassessment of our leading author and national icon.

The Cambridge Companion to Mark Twain faithfully mirrors the trajectory of recent developments in the field. This is true in good part because most of the scholars represented in the volume have had a role in the formation of the broad new critical consensus. I was also guided in my selection of topics by an ambition to provide responsible coverage of the subjects currently of most interest to students of Mark Twain. Several essays address aspects of race and slavery in his work. Others deal directly with women, religion, humor, and class. The travel writing, strategies of performance, and Mark Twain's enduring popularity are also discussed. In all, we have approached our materials with a wide-ranging audience of specialists and nonspecialists in mind. I have urged the contributors to proceed with freshness and originality as their leading objectives. Throughout it has been our goal to be lively and thought-provoking, not merely comprehensive or somehow standard.

As editor, I have been the happy beneficiary of no little support and cooperation. The contributors – a stellar company of scholars – were generous in consenting to undertake this work, very able in its commission, and unfailingly tolerant of my appeals for brevity, clarity, and what Mark Twain must have referred to somewhere as promptitude. I am grateful to Eric Sundquist for asking me to serve as editor and for his valuable counsel along the way. Julie Greenblatt and T. Susan Chang, humanities editors at Cambridge University Press, have been superb colleagues, patient with my inexperience, and always ready with advice and good humor. Finally, I count as chief among my blessings a large, loving family. Special thanks as always to Colleen, Grace, Renate, Emma (to whom the book is dedicated), and Marie for their unflagging support of my many and curious enterprises.

PREFACE

NOTES

- 1 Leo Marx, "Mr. Eliot, Mr. Trilling, and *Huckleberry Finn*," in *Huck Finn Among the Critics*, ed. M. Thomas Inge (Washington: USIA, 1984), p. 115. The essay first appeared in the *American Scholar* 22 (1953): 423-40.
- 2 James M. Cox, *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 172-3.

CHRONOLOGY OF TWAIN'S LIFE

- 1835, Nov. 30 Samuel Langhorne Clemens, sixth child of John Marshall Clemens and Jane Lampton Clemens, born in Florida, Missouri.
- 1839 Clemens family moves to Hannibal, Missouri.
- 1847 Father dies.
- 1848 Works as printer's apprentice on the *Missouri Courier*.
- 1849 Finishes education.
- 1851 Serves as journeyman printer and journalist on brother Orion's *Hannibal Journal*.
- 1852 "The Dandy Frightening the Squatter" appears in the Boston comic weekly, the *Carpet-Bag*.
- 1853-6 Leaves Hannibal and works as a printer in St. Louis, New York, Philadelphia, Keokuk (Iowa), and Cincinnati. Serves as a correspondent for brother Orion's *Muscatine (Iowa) Journal* and other local newspapers.
- 1857 Becomes an apprentice ("cub") Mississippi River steamboat pilot under Horace Bixby.
- 1859 Receives pilot's licence; is steadily employed on the Mississippi until the outbreak of the Civil War.
- 1861 Serves briefly in a volunteer Confederate battalion; leaves for Nevada with brother Orion; seeks fortune in mining.
- 1862-5 Works as a reporter and humorous writer for the *Virginia City Territorial Enterprise*, the *San Francisco Daily Morning Call*, the *Golden Era*, the *Californian*, and other newspapers in Nevada and California. Adopts pseudonym "Mark Twain." "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog" is published.
- 1866 Serves as a correspondent for the *Sacramento Daily Union* in Hawaiian Islands; begins career as lecturer;

CHRONOLOGY

- contracts as correspondent for the *Alta California* and leaves for New York.
- 1867 *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and Other Sketches* is published. Works as a correspondent for the *Alta California* in Europe and the Holy Land.
- 1868 In Washington, D.C., serves as secretary to Senator William Stewart of Nevada and correspondent for several newspapers; in California as lecturer, journalist, and travel writer.
- 1869 *The Innocents Abroad* is a great commercial success. Commences friendship with William Dean Howells.
- 1870 Marries Olivia Langdon. Becomes part owner and associate editor of the *Buffalo Express*. Son Langdon is born.
- 1871 Moves to Hartford, Connecticut; goes on extended lecture tour.
- 1872 Daughter Olivia Susan (Susy) is born. Langdon dies. *Roughing It* secures his reputation as America's leading humorist. Makes first visit to England.
- 1873 *The Gilded Age* (co-authored with Charles Dudley Warner) is published. Travels with family in Europe.
- 1874 Daughter Clara is born. Mansion in Hartford is completed.
- 1875 "Old Times on the Mississippi," a series of seven articles, appears in the *Atlantic Monthly*.
- 1876 *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is published.
- 1878-9 Travels with family in Europe.
- 1880 Daughter Jean is born. *A Tramp Abroad* is published.
- 1881 *The Prince and the Pauper* is published.
- 1882 Travels on the Mississippi.
- 1883 *Life on the Mississippi* is published.
- 1884-5 Goes on lecture tour with George W. Cable. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is published.
- 1889 *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* is published.
- 1891 Leaves Hartford for a decade (spent mostly in Europe).
- 1892 *The American Claimant* is published.
- 1894 *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* is published. Failure of Paige typesetting machine results in bankruptcy.

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I

LOUIS J. BUDD

Mark Twain as an American Icon

That Mark Twain parades on as a prominent American icon is obvious – visually, audibly, and palpably. The fact is validated by the most dynamic force in the United States – the profit-driven economy. To reassure customers who worry that “this country is running out of natural gas,” a corporation prints a full-page ad depicting a bushy-haired, white-suited, cigar-smoking Twain under the heading “The reports of my demise are greatly exaggerated.”¹ To highlight the case against reregulation, the Association of American Railroads disseminates a photograph of a solemn Twain, holding a book rather than a cigar but again in basic whites, under his maxim “Loyalty to petrified opinion never yet broke a chain or freed a human soul.” In a newspaper ad, a bank (“We frown on get-rich-quick schemes, but we are not opposed to helping people make money”) features his “I’m opposed to millionaires, but it would be dangerous to offer me the position”; the experts in subliminalism at its ad agency reinforced this with a Huck Finnish boy fishing. But a cemetery, selling “dignity and simplicity in a setting of great natural beauty” through a full-page spread in the *Los Angeles Times*, understandably prefers a close-up of a solemn, elderly Twain along with his epitaph for Susy Clemens.

Of course, he also serves in more hedonistic venues. Stretching a thin link, a bureau of tourism croons, “Experience Mark Twain’s Hawaii.” Elliott’s Amazing Fruit Drinks prints his maxims inside the bottle caps. (In 1991 “The Popular and the Private: 100 Years since Twain [Moved out of Hartford],” mounted at the Mark Twain House, displayed an extreme variety of such knickknacks.) Yet since even Twainians doubt that many people will buy those fruit drinks for the maxims, they suspect a fellow enthusiast in the bottler and other local entrepreneurs. Surely the Tom Sawyer Painters of Durham, North Carolina, were pleasing themselves as much as they were hoping to attract business. Some enthusiasts grow emulative. The Asheville, North Carolina, Cleaners and Dyers’ ad depicts a Twain frowning and holding a turkey drumstick, his white suit soiled; its headings, “Grime

Marches On” and “Gravy Twain,” lead into “Though Mark Twain was fond of fowl, he liked his suits snow-white. We’d have drycleaned those foul stains.” Twain surpassed most professional humorists in patience with amateurs. He would, as they assume, have felt no offense to his dignity.

Fully committed to the rising sun of publicity, he tolerated – for decades, gratis – commercial uses of his face and either of his names. However, though a futurologist before that craft was organized, he would boggle today at the weedlike spread – thicker in relevant locales but liable to spring up anywhere – of banks, hotels, golf courses, and other enterprises that billboard him or his most famous characters. A motel in Oregon that keys its rooms to specific authors has a Mark Twain suite; the luxurious *Delta Queen*, which stops at Hannibal, often promises a Twain expert for its excursionists. Clearly, the go-getters believe that he triggers a positive response; while riverboats like Marietta, Ohio’s *Becky Thatcher*, with H. B. Finn’s Restaurant & Temperance Tavern aboard, are inevitable, *Mark Twain’s Sure-Fire Programmed Guide to Backgrounds in American Literature* (1977), with a comic drawing of its mentor on practically every page, cuts a barely plausible path. By now no Twainian is surprised when turning a corner or page to find still another marker of his popularity.

Or apparent popularity. It is snatched up as a weapon in the always hotter battle for a piece of the public’s attention and so gets reinforced. Television commentators doing “color” segments for the National League playoffs in 1990 noticed the *Huckleberry Finn*, a riverboat at Cincinnati; one result was a *Newsday* story, “Twist of Twain Spices Series,” that featured his interest in baseball. The author of a book on self-publishing gets reporters to repeat his grabber: “What do Mark Twain, George Bernard Shaw, Edgar Allan Poe, and [his own name] have in common?” Regularly, the detective-story pulps dangle such titles as *Huckleberry Fiend* (Mysterious Press, 1975) and *The Mark Twain Murders* (Dell, 1989). No niche is too small now, but neither is any too large, too commercially valuable for its experts to bet on his appeal. An inquisitive Mark Twain complicated the final segment of the 1991–2 season of *Star Trek*; indeed, he was made a bridging character who would figure in the first segment in the fall.

In strictly terrestrial culture, Twain functions as commonly shared knowledge. Characters in the “Pogo” comic strip quarrel about attributing a quotation (“Well, ever’body talks ’bout the weather but nob’dy does nothin’ ’bout it – as the feller says”) to Mister Twain as against Mister Clemens; when Mole hears that friends thought him dead, he chuckles, “As another great humorist once remarked: That remark is a great exasperation,” and starts another squabble. Twain and his books enter into not just “Peanuts,”