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## The Flawed Greatness of *Huckleberry Finn*

Read an article by MU's Mark Twain scholar, who retires this year.

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The following essay by Tom Quirk, professor of English, is scheduled to appear in the Fall 2013 issue of American Literary Realism.

**H**erman Melville complained in a letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne that “all my books are botches,” and, elsewhere, he said of *Moby Dick* in particular that he had written a “wicked” book but felt “spotless as a lamb.” William Faulkner was most fond of *The Sound and the Fury* but conceded that it was a “magnificent failure.” Mark Twain expressed a similar if somewhat more tame defiance when he wrote to William Dean Howells about *Huckleberry Finn*, “I



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shall *like* it, whether anyone else does or not.” <sup>1</sup> All three of these books are flawed, of course, though most would judge they are great nevertheless. But when it comes to flaws (or what I shall call anomalies), *Huckleberry Finn* trumps them both with ease. Even Homer nodded, of course, but Mark Twain appears to have fallen asleep with his face in the soup.

I will offer a brief and partial inventory of these anomalies in a moment, but I want to emphasize that I am not interested in the exercise of fault-finding so much as I want to suggest that perhaps we have been looking for the greatness of *Huckleberry Finn* in the wrong places.

Before getting to particulars, let me make a few general remarks. One of the first curiosities to note is that the Huck Finn of *Tom Sawyer* is not the same boy in the book that bears his name. In *Tom Sawyer*, we are told that Huck cusses like a sailor and is described as “conscience free.” Huck’s excessive use of the N-word may give the sense of a certain coarseness of language in the boy, but otherwise I have difficulty imagining him cussing at all, though he has plenty of reasons for blowing off steam. As for him being “conscience free,” well, his agonizing over Jim in Chapter 31 alone argues for a rather different conception of his character. Though many claims have been made about *Huckleberry Finn* being at least a candidate for the Great American Novel, whatever that phrase might mean, one should also remember that Twain doesn’t call the book a novel; in fact in threatening ways he points out that this book has

neither motive, nor moral, nor plot and refers to it as a “narrative.” Willa Cather, more delicately, answered critics of *Death Comes for the Archbishop* who thought her book hard to classify and insisted that it did not qualify as a novel at all. Her open reply was “why bother” to try to classify the book and that she too preferred to call it simply a narrative. Cather added that it seemed to her that a novel “is merely a work of imagination in which a writer tries to present the experiences and emotions of a group of people by the light of his own.”<sup>2</sup> In that sense we might safely say *Huckleberry Finn* is a novel. Finally, Twain began *Huckleberry Finn* in idle amusement in the summer of 1876; it was experimental because the author could afford to indulge himself, and this helps to explain vacillations in tone and the freewheeling mixture of burlesque, satire, tall tale, and many other improvisations of technique and purpose. Over the extended period of composition, Twain’s political, social, and philosophical attitudes changed as did his attitude toward Huck’s narrative. Nearly seven years later, when he recognized that *Huckleberry Finn* was a commodity to be published by his own publishing company, Twain’s view of his material became more commercial.

A few more general observations are in order. First, the two most obvious anomalies have been the subject of continued critical debate. Why on earth, one wonders, would Twain have a runaway slave escape into the deep South? And second, what possessed the author to bring Tom Sawyer back into the novel in the closing chapters and to have him superintend what

Tom calls the “evasion” over the perhaps too mild objections of Huck Finn and at the expense of whatever sort of dignity Jim might claim under his difficult and compromised circumstances. The first question is typically answered in biographical terms. Sam Clemens could not take the pair up the Ohio River and toward Jim’s ultimate freedom simply because he was not familiar with that river, whereas he knew the lower Mississippi like the back of his hand—its towns, manners, reefs, cuts, points, and most importantly its dialects. The answer to the second question is a bit more difficult to address because it remains a “problem” for many readers and a debate among critics. One might oversimplify the issue by merely remarking that both Lionel Trilling and T. S. Eliot accepted a narrative conclusion that essentially disregarded whatever moral growth and social seriousness the narrative had acquired in favor of rather trivial burlesque on the grounds that there was a certain consistency and “aptness” to the gesture. Leo Marx took issue with this position and these men in particular because he believed Twain had lost his nerve, that he refused to “acknowledge the truth his novel contained.” That truth, for Marx, had to do with social and ethical considerations bound up together with a sympathetic quest for freedom. For Trilling and Eliot, formal coherence extenuated the author’s decision; for Marx, there was implicit in the work a kind of political and ethical coherence that Twain shied away from. Actually, as early as July, 1883, Twain had come to think of *Huckleberry Finn* as a “kind of companion” to *Tom Sawyer*, and early the next year, when he knew that

the book would be published by his own company, Twain considered bringing the two books out as companion volumes.<sup>3</sup> The popularity of *Tom Sawyer* might help sell the novelty of *Huck Finn*, and in any event there were commercial reasons to bring back Huck's comrade that had little to do with a failure or nerve or an artistic consistency. In fact, contrary to prevailing opinion, when Twain decided to bring Tom back into his narrative, he may have been looking for an opportunity to reunite the comrades. Twain overstated the case when he claimed in his "Notice" that there was no "motive" in the book, but it was true that his motives were several and sometimes conflicting. But the real point I wish to make is that critics and readers have willingly served as apologists for and accusers of the novel and its creator but seem not to have entertained the notion that there might be other reasons for the book's greatness, no matter how many warts one might discover in it. And there are warts aplenty.

Twain was exaggerating when he said there was no plot in his novel, but it is noteworthy how cavalierly he treated the matter. Again and again, he introduces highly plotted episodes and then simply walks away from them, or rather he has Huck escape the situation and thereby makes it impossible to round things off. Did those star-crossed lovers of the feud chapters, Harney Shepherdson and Sophia Grangerford, make it across the river and get married? We will never know. Colonel Sherburn, true to his promise, shoots Boggs at one o'clock, drops his pistol on the ground, and walks home. The townsfolk reenact the scene and

before long decide the Colonel should be lynched. At the end of Chapter 21, the reader is led to expect vigilante justice; what one gets in Chapter 22 is the Colonel giving the crowd a merciless tongue-lashing until they hurry away. They had made two mistakes, according to Sherburn—they hadn't brought along a "man" to do the dirty business; and they didn't come masked in the dark. We will never know if the mob reconsidered its position and followed Sherburn's recipe later that night. In the Wilks chapters, the duke and the dauphin impersonate the heirs to the Wilks fortune more or less successfully until another pair of claimants arrive on the scene. Are these second claimants on the up and up? A tattoo on the breast of the late Peter Wilks will settle the matter; they dig up the coffin to find out and at a critical moment Huck takes his opportunity to get away from there. We know nothing about the ensuing events. Nor do we know what the Shepherdsons did to Buck Grangerford's body after they killed him. In this case, Huck knows what happened but refuses to say anything more than that the event troubles his sleep.

More curious than what information is withheld is the information that is disclosed. Huck is running away from a brutal father and Jim is running away from the impending possibility that Miss Watson may sell him down the river. Those are the principal if not sole motives for the escaping pair. Yet we learn in the last chapters that the Miss Watson is dead and set Jim free in her will and that Pap is the dead man on the floating house. In other words, this perilous journey was unnecessary virtually from the start. Jim's

original plan was to escape to Canada, work for wages, and buy his family out of bondage, but in the final chapter we learn that Tom Sawyer has some ideas of his own for their future. The three will go out to the Oklahoma Territory for some “howling adventures amongst the Injuns.”<sup>4</sup> Twain was talking up his planned sequel to *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* without regard for Jim’s plans. These, as I say, are generalizations. Here are some particulars—a bare list of anomalies.

As Walter Blair pointed out long ago, the mere existence of Huck’s narrative is implausible. When was Huck supposed to have written of his adventures, since he proposes to travel west to the Oklahoma Territory, not to go to New York to find an agent? Likewise, Bruce Michelson notes Huck refers to the novel *Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain in the first paragraph, but the setting of *Huck Finn* is 1835–1845, *Tom Sawyer* isn’t published until 1875, and Clemens didn’t become Mark Twain until 1863. In an email to me, Louis J. Budd wrote that the leading improbability, for him, is Huck’s trying to write poetry like Emmeline Grangerford, and adds “I can’t imagine why he would try or (if it’s not the same thing) why Mark Twain would have him try.” Budd also found Tom’s plan to “reward” Jim for putting up with the evasion dubious, noting, “Historians who comb newspapers for how life went day to day object that the slaves in Twain’s St. Petersburg have unrealistic mobility. Free to move around locally, they could gather for a ‘torchlight procession,’ to honor Jim.”<sup>5</sup>

And it was Louis Budd, too, who pointed out to me that Colonel Grangerford's hair changes from gray to black between chapters. But maybe in the world of *Huckleberry Finn* time moves faster, because Pap breaks his arm in two places at the end of Chapter 5, but the beginning of Chapter 6 says "pretty soon the old man was up and around again" (*HF*, 29). How long does it take to recover from a double break? Pap is certainly well enough to catch and "thrash" Huck soon after. Here is another implausibility. When it appears Sherburn is going to make good on his promise to shoot Boggs, someone says to go get his daughter. Now Boggs has come into town from the "country," and on a horse, a fact that suggests that he doesn't live nearby. But they fetch the daughter within fifteen minutes. I suppose she could live or work in town, but there is no evidence of that. In short, it is unlikely that they could have gotten the daughter to town that quickly.

Canoes seem to invite anomalies as well. When Huck at last gets a canoe and therefore can begin traveling north up the Ohio River with Jim, the first thing he does is to paddle ashore and go berry-picking. Then of course the King and Duke come along and effectively commandeer the raft, and the chance is lost. Likewise, when Jim is in the swamp, instead of asking the slaves to find him a canoe, he busies himself repairing the raft. Similarly, when Huck, Tom, and Jim are running away from the Phelps farm, they all three take a canoe to Spanish Island, pulling like fury. But when Huck seeks and finds a doctor, the man won't get in such a small boat with Huck and goes by himself.



Another sort of anomaly has to do with Huck making generalizations, observations, and judgments beyond his experience and his years. Huck knows the river far too well. Unlike Sam Clemens, he has not apprenticed himself to a riverboat captain to learn it, and who would deign to teach a river-rat much of anything? Huck also describes the habits and pleasures of the Bricksville loafers as though he has known and studied them a long time. He knows what will “wake them up all over” — setting a dog on fire or tying a pan to its tail. Making these sorts of generalizations are simply out of character, both in terms of Huck’s sensibility and the brief acquaintance he has with these people. It seems to me that this kind of slip happens more often in the second half (i.e., those parts composed in the 1880s) than in the first burst of composition. He speaks in a tone that is practically jaded of Pikesville as a “shabby village,” and the Phelps farm as just another “one-horse cotton plantation”; “they all look alike” (*HF*, 276). When the king tries to talk like an Englishman, Huck says, “he done it pretty well, for a slouch” (*HF*, 208). How many Englishmen has Huck met or heard? Similarly, in Chapter 26 when the Wilks girls serve supper they keep apologizing for it. Huck comments on “all that kind of humbug talky-talk, just the way people always does at supper, you know” (*HF*, 221). When would Huck have heard anyone apologize for supper? Surely the Widow didn’t apologize to him; she made him sit up straight.

Yet another sort of anomaly can be attributed to the illustrator or the type-setter. One may not necessarily

hold the author responsible for these sorts of errors; even so, Twain superintended the production and marketing of this book with sometimes furious attention. Among other things, he worked the illustrator E. W. Kemble hard and complained of those first drawings of Huck that he was too “Irishy” about the mouth. In Chapter 26, Joanna Wilks, the “hare lip,” is fourteen years old, around Huck’s age, but in the illustration, Huck’s feet don’t even touch the floor, and she looks to be at least 18 inches taller than Huck. The next to last illustration in the book has Tom Sawyer looking at the bullet removed from his leg and made into a watch guard, but the caption reads “Tom’s Liberality,” clearly in reference to Tom’s plan to pay Jim for his lost time. Another illustration in Chapter 9 shows Jim telling something to Huck in animated fashion, and Huck is bug-eyed and his mouth is open in awe. This one fascinates me because it is a part of a nest of anomalies that needs to be explained.

Surely in that illustration the features of the two do not indicate the reaction to Jim’s insistence to Huck that the birds tell you when it is going to rain which one would infer from the printed text. More likely, the illustration was drawn in reaction to the excised episode in which Huck asks Jim to tell him a ghost story and gets a grotesque and somewhat lurid story about Jim warming up a cadaver in a medical college so that a medical student can later dissect it. This possibility is interesting in itself because it suggests Twain left that episode in the manuscript for a very long time, seven years in fact, before deciding to

remove it, since Kemble would have to have read it when he was doing the illustrations. Interesting to me as well is that Twain felt that he had to build that cave to tell the story in. In Chapter 9 of the novel, Jim and Huck go up to a cave on Jackson's Island. It's 40 feet above the banks, and the cavern is "in the rock" (*HF* 58), and as big as 2 or 3 rooms. Now this doesn't sound geologically possible. Glasscock's Island, the original for Jackson's Island, was made of alluvial soil, otherwise it wouldn't have washed away several decades ago, but the cavern Twain describes would have had to be the result of a large outcropping of rock or some escarpment, neither of which obtain in this case I think. Why did Twain need that cave? Did he need a dark and stormy night setting to tell his ghost story? Was it another reference to Robinson Crusoe, who also takes shelter in a cave during a hurricane? I simply don't know.

More interesting though are other events in Chapter 9. The parallels and inverted parallels to the story of Noah are intriguing: birds that carry messages, tame animals everywhere, a fierce storm and subsequent flood, a floating house, and, most important, a naked dead man within. You will recall that after the flood, Noah got drunk and fell asleep, naked, in his tent. His son Ham, the father of Canaan, had the misfortune to see his father's nakedness and told his two brothers Shem and Japheth, who backed into their father's tent and covered their father's shame. Upon awaking, Noah realized what had happened and cursed the tribe of Ham to become servants of servants, and he blessed Shem and Japheth forever after. In

*Huckleberry Finn*, Jim won't let Huck see the dead man, and he covers him with some old rags. Of course, we eventually discover that man to be Pap, the vilest, drunkest, most bigoted character in the book. The episode is a rather sly satire on, among other things, the scriptural justification for slavery, and the particularly favored justification in the antebellum South and one that Sam Clemens had heard as a child in Hannibal. Mark Twain might feel satisfied with himself for smuggling this bit of satire into the book, for the ironies are delicious. If he did, however, he quite forgot about it when he came to finish the novel. In chapter the last, Jim finally tells Huck that Pap is dead, "Doan' you 'member de house dat was float'n down de river, en dey wuz a man in dah, kivered up, en I went in en unkivered him en didn't let you come in?" (*HF*, 361–62). Of course, Jim did cover Pap and Huck did go in and he gives a detailed description of the things in the house that suggest it might have served as a bordello.

I suspect that there was more of this sort of satire of, if not Christianity itself, misplaced Christian sentiment, particularly in the first half of the book. The feuding Sheperdsons and Grangerfords attend the same church and keep their guns handy while they listen to a sermon on "brotherly love." After Boggs is shot in Chapter 21, the townspeople take the dying man into a drug store and place one large Bible under his head and a second on his chest. Since family Bibles in the nineteenth century could weigh as much as eighteen pounds, the gesture was perhaps divinely sanctioned but it was unnecessarily cruel as well: "He

made about a dozen long gasps, his breath lifting the Bible up when he drew in his breath, and letting it down again when he breathed it out—and after that he laid still; he was dead” (*HF*, 186). Emmeline Grangerford’s unfinished picture of the young woman standing on the rail of a bridge ready to jump off, with her six arms provisionally drawn—reaching up, out, and clasped together in a way that made Huck think she looked all “spidery” may be another instance. In the 1855 Methodist Episcopal catechism there is an illustration of a Hindu god, presumably Siva, with ten arms used to drive home the point that “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” I don’t know that Twain ever saw this illustration, but surely just as Emmeline adores the mere idea of death, the Grangerfords have made Miss Emmeline’s room into an altar and worship her memory in ways that make her, too, a false god. But I do not want to stray from my subject and only mention this detail not as an anomaly but as one clue to why we as readers might accept the flawed greatness of *Huckleberry Finn*. Unlike Melville, who to some seemed to trample upon Christian pieties in scandalous ways, Mark Twain could satirize Christian sentiment with evident impunity because of the sheer playfulness and good-natured fun he had in doing it.

Simply put, we indulge Mark Twain the same way that aunt Polly indulges Tom Sawyer. That observation in no way takes us any closer to understanding the so-called greatness of *Huckleberry Finn*; after all Twain makes Sawyeresque mischief in all his books. In one of his travel books Twain somewhere writes “that

reminds me of a subject not at all related to what I was talking about,” and he’s off in that direction. We wouldn’t put up with this sort of transition in most writers, but we take it with Twain, and in fact want more. Mark Twain takes us on a joy ride, and we are willing make the trip with him for ... well, for the sheer joy of it. And a glance at the Working Notes for the novel disclose that had Twain followed his fancy, the trip could have become another Mr. Toad’s wild ride. Included in those notes are unrealized episodes – a quilting bee, a candy pulling, a dog fight, a lynching, and, most improbably, Huck escaping “somewhere” on an elephant. Twain developed the techniques that might permit him to coordinate heterogeneous elements, but, judging from his Working Notes, he had no particular narrative plan. *Huckleberry Finn* is largely an improvised work, a performance akin to jazz, in which the author could alternately express great angers or sorrows and indulge in the sheer joy of creation.

Another avenue for understanding the greatness of Twain’s novel may be offered by the British poet Stephen Spender, who in *Love-Hate Relations: English and American Sensibilities*, observed that, more than British writers, American writers allow their subjective consciousness to permeate the objective world. And for this reason, biography is more relevant to our understanding of American texts. At any rate, our appreciation of this novel certainly profits by some acquaintance with Twain’s biography. The most poetic and memorable passages in *Huckleberry Finn* are those when Huck’s (and

sometimes Jim's) subjective consciousness permeates the world—Huck's description of the sunrise on the river or Huck and Jim's accounting for the creation of the great number of stars in the heavens are instances. But that consciousness is Huck's (or Jim's), not Twain's. And that points to yet another angle into the book and its flawed greatness. Mark Twain often submerged himself in and submitted to the voices of his created characters, the lowliest of the low, a "community of misfortune" as he later called the pair, and let them speak for themselves. In other words, *Huckleberry Finn* is the supremely democratic novel, at least it is when Twain stays out of the way.

That said, however, we can't maintain that the democratic sympathies of the book are pie-eyed and sentimental. Gertrude Stein somewhere once shrewdly noted that when Mark Twain killed a character, that character stayed dead. This is very true. But when they are alive, they are very much alive, and Twain liked his creations. In conversation James Cox once insisted Twain had some sympathy for each and every one of the characters in *Huckleberry Finn*, no matter how cantankerous, treacherous, fatuous, or cruel they might be. I disagreed at the time, because I thought he would not willingly disarm his satirical arsenal on such flimsy grounds. I have begun to rethink my position. Early and late, Twain believed we might be better than we are, individually and collectively, had we the training and opportunity to be so. It was the business of a democracy to create those opportunities.

Critics and readers alike will be sorely disappointed if they search for the greatness of *Huckleberry Finn* in some kind of formal coherence or patterned architecture or veiled cultural critique or semiotic cleverness. My advice is don't go down that road; the bridge is out. Hemingway claimed that all modern American literature came from *Huckleberry Finn*. Perhaps that is so, but the fact remains that Mark Twain was very much a nineteenth-century writer addressing himself to nineteenth-century readers. These days, if we allow the existence of an author at all, it is an implied author, but it was not always so. "Camerado," wrote Walt Whitman in *Leaves of Grass*, "this is no book. Who touches this, touches a man." Whitman was not shy about advertising himself and alert to the ways of self-marketing. He knew readers craved some felt presence sustaining a literary text from behind as it were. But even a more retiring writer, such as Hawthorne, was likely judged by a detected personal quality, an achievement of tone. Poe remarked upon Hawthorne's "tranquil" literary manner and named it "repose." Margaret Fuller responded to his "tranquil elegance." Even Melville, who believed he detected a darker presence behind Hawthorne's works than most readers, was struck nevertheless by "the still rich utterance of a great intellect in repose." Henry James, somewhat condescendingly, said of Hawthorne that "there has rarely been an observer more serene, less agitated by what he sees and less disposed to call things deeply into question." As different as these writers were, they nevertheless discerned the same essential quality in Hawthorne. Willa Cather, who was a modern writer



but in many ways a nineteenth-century reader, shared their perception. She named *The Scarlet Letter*, Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, and *Huckleberry Finn* as the three American books that were assured of sustained interest and long lives, for they more than any others she could think of "confront time and change so serenely."<sup>6</sup>

In the case of Mark Twain, the fact of the matter is that we are more apt to accept the flaws in even his greatest works because the author stands behind them as an animated and amiable presence. That presence is often cagey, evasive, or antic, and his persona as Mark Twain is itself a mask. Nevertheless, in *Huckleberry Finn*, the author sometimes yields entirely to the voice and sensibility of its young narrator, and when that happens there is magic in the book. As often, when Twain is indignant or contemptuous, he speaks through other characters or works through sly subterfuge, having Huck describe events that may merely puzzle a boy who has no sense of humor much less an appetite for satire but that adult readers understand all too well.

Against this list of subtractions, complaints, defects, and diminishments identified in Twain's masterpiece, one can offer testimonials to its greatness, from professional writers mostly. Many of those statements are extravagant: "Take out Tom Sawyer and [*Huckleberry Finn* is] the greatest book ever written" (Sinclair Lewis).<sup>7</sup> "There are, indeed, incoherencies in *Huckleberry Finn*. But the book survives everything ... all is absorbed into a powerful mythic image" (Robert

Penn Warren, *DLB*, p. 281). *Huckleberry Finn* belongs in the company of *The Odyssey*, *Don Quixote* and other world classics (T. S. Eliot, John Barth, H. L. Mencken). It is an American epic and one that supplies an understanding of the country (Waldo Frank, W. H. Auden). The figure of Jim is the first fully rounded African-American character in our fiction (Sterling Brown, Ralph Ellison). *Huckleberry Finn* is the foundation for modern vernacular writing (Somerset Maugham, Ernest Hemingway), and its author is the father of the modern novelist (Faulkner). “[*Huckleberry Finn*] is a jerky, uneven, patchwork tale. ... yet it is the crown of our literature” (Herman Wouk, *DLB*, p. 283). “I believe that *Huckleberry Finn* is one of the great masterpieces of the world. ... To say that some of the plotting of *Huckleberry Finn* is imperfect or that some of the episodes are unconvincing is as irrelevant as it would be to complain, as one critic did, that Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner* was ‘improbable’” (H. L. Mencken, *DLB*, p. 279).

These are remarks about the book’s greatness, flawed as it is. But, as I have already said, the author and his book are bound up together. Mark Twain took some pains and expense to make that clear in the production of the volume. In addition to prefacing the novel with his menacing “Notice” forbidding readers to find motive, moral or plot in the book and signing that “Notice” “By Order of the Author,” he also included his “Explanatory,” identifying the care he had taken in reproducing the several dialects in the novel and again signed it simply “The Author.” If

those proprietary claims were not sufficient to link Mark Twain with a narrative he once casually referred to as “Huck Finn’s Autobiography,” he also had tipped in as a frontispiece a picture of a bust of himself made by Karl Gerhardt with Mark Twain’s signature printed below. If, as he did in his later years, Twain sometimes published works anonymously or decided they could not be published at all until after his death, and if he was sincere when he wrote Howells that he was indifferent to public reception of *Huckleberry Finn*, he would nevertheless proudly, even insistently, preside over the book as its creator.

One question remains, however. What kind of writer was Mark Twain and how do we take the measure of his greatness in the creation of *Huckleberry Finn*? Joseph Wood Krutch perhaps offers the most straightforward and succinct accounting: “Decidedly Twain does not belong with the Flauberts and the Henry Jameses who fussed and labored to remove every slight flaw. He belongs instead with Balzac and Dickens, the great restless creators who never strove for one kind of perfection because perhaps they had something better to do. They had energy and originality and gusto. Our first impulse is to say of them what Dryden said of Shakespeare: “Here is God’s plenty” (*DLB*, p. 281).

1. *Mark Twain-Howells Letters*, Henry Nash Smith and William Gibson, eds. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960) 1:435. Contrary to prevailing opinion, it is at least possible that Twain’s chief difficulty during the last stint of composition was finding a

- way to bring Tom back into the narrative instead of merely contriving the sort of burlesque ending that the evasion episode dramatizes. ↵
2. *Willa Cather on Writing: Critical Studies on Writing as a Craft* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press. 1988) pp 12–13 ↵
  3. *Mark Twain-Howells Letters*, 1:435. ↵
  4. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Victor Fischer, Lin Salamo, and Walter Blair eds. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), p. 361. Hereafter, references to this edition will be included parenthetically in text with the abbreviation *HF*. ↵
  5. Contained in an email from Louis Budd to me. ↵
  6. *Willa Cather on Writing*, p. 58. ↵
  7. Quoted in *Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A Documentary Volume*, Tom Quirk, ed. (Columbia, South Carolina: Brucoli, Clark and Layman. 2008), p. 281. Subsequent quotations drawn from this volume will be indicated parenthetically with the abbreviation *DLB* followed by the page number. ↵

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