Mark Twain’s Geographical Imagination

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Edited by

Joseph A. Alvarez

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Mark Twain's Geographical Imagination, Edited by Joseph A. Alvarez

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And, most importantly, I dedicate this work to my loving and patient wife of forty-two years, Sue Tate Alvarez; my children, Joseph Anthony Alvarez IV and Tate Alvarez Duncan; and my grandchildren: Elias, Caleb, Gabriel, and Lily Duncan, and Oscar Daniel Alvarez.

—Joseph A. Alvarez

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—J. A. A

INTRODUCTION

MINING LITERARY ORE FROM PHYSICAL AND IMAGINATIVE TRAVELS

JOSEPH A. ALVAREZ

> The human imagination is much more capable than it gets credit for. This is why Niagara is always a disappointment when one sees it for the first time. One's imagination has long ago built a Niagara to which this one is a poor dribbling thing. The ocean "with its waves running mountain high" is always a disappointment at first sight; the imagination has constructed real mountains, whereas these when swelling at their very biggest and highest are not imposing. The Taj is a disappointment though people are ashamed to confess it. God will be a disappointment to most of us, at first. I wish I could see the Niagaras and Tajs which the human imagination has constructed, why then, bless you, I should see Atlantics pouring down out of the sky over cloud ranges, and I should see Tajs of a form so gracious and a spiritual expression so divine and altogether so sublime and so lovely and worshipful that—well—St. Peter's, Vesuvius, Heaven, Hell, everything that is much described is bound to be a disappointment at first.
>
> —*Mark Twain's Notebook*[1]

Almost everyone knows Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) traveled as much as or more than most people of his time. His earliest books enlarge, by use of his imagination, Europe and the Holy Lands (*The Innocents Abroad*, 1869) and the American West (*Roughing It*, 1872). Later he tried to recapture his youth in the geography of his beloved Mississippi Valley when he wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *Life on the Mississippi* (1881), and, of course, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885). Europe, especially parts of Germany and Switzerland, found their way into his geographical travelogues through *A Tramp Abroad* (1880). Sojourns in England contributed to his imaginative reconstruction of older times in *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881) and, of course, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889). His round-the-world speaking tour, on which he embarked in the 1890s to relieve the moral obligations of his financial

bankruptcy, generated the accounts of his last major travels, *Following the Equator* (1897). In the early 1900s he and his wife, Olivia (Livy), took up residence for a short time in Italy, in hope of ameliorating her illnesses, which attempt was, unfortunately, unsuccessful, culminating in her death near Florence, Italy, in 1904. Unlike Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose novel, *The Marble Faun*, resulted directly from his stay in Italy as a government emissary, no literary account of any importance came from Twain's Italian travels. Perhaps, his grief over Livy's death stunted his incentive to write about Italy.

Of course, he did mine ore from his other travels, ore that was later refined into stories and novels, many of which I have already named. But what about his speculative journeys into the psyche and other fantasy spaces, works mostly produced during his last years, such as "Three Thousand Years among the Microbes," "The Great Dark," and *Extracts from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven*? And how about his "historical" time travel to find the sparkling gems, now known as *The Diaries of Adam and Eve*, and *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (the latter less sparkling, but beloved by his children, anyway)? We can assert from these references that Twain's imagination sometimes outpaced his pen, leaving great ideas unfinished or in several stages of completion; here, I am thinking particularly about *The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts*.

Tom Quirk says what I am trying to capture here better than I could:

> Mark Twain and his creations are always getting lost. They lose their identities; they lose their fortunes; they lose their minds. They get lost in caves, in the fog, in snowstorms, even in the darkened room of a German Inn. They get lost on the river and on the ocean; they get lost in time and in space. They get lost on rafts, on mules, on foot, on icebergs set adrift in the sea; they get lost beneath the surface of the earth and above it in a hot air balloon. . . .At any rate, Twain spent a good deal of imaginative energy domesticating imponderables and humanizing the incomprehensible.[2]

If Quirk is right, and I think he is, we can begin to understand the mind behind these imagined and real spaces that Twain used to further his plots (such as they are, at times) and place his characters in peril. Later, in the same essay, Quirk continues noting Twain's explorations of space:

> He did not. . .appear to share in the modern dread that the vastness of space is terrifying and that one cowers, rather insignificantly, on the abyss of the unfathomable. Instead he delighted in trying to make the unthinkable vivid, even palpable.[3]

An aside: Obviously, I have employed an old trick here: if you can't think of the best thing to write, find someone who has already written it. Or, similarly, if you can't tell jokes, use jokes that the best comedians have written and delivered.

Indeed, Twain's "geographical imagination" takes him back more than two thousand years with the Adam and Eve diaries. It also delves in speculative or fantasy fiction with time (and space) travel in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. That it knows no bounds can be seen in *Extracts from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven*, "Three Thousand Years among the Microbes," "The Great Dark," and an essay Quirk discusses, "Was the World Made for Man?" The title character of *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger tells* August Feldner, the narrator,

> that there is no other life than that which he is living now and that *nothing*—including 44—exists outside of August's dreams except August himself and empty space.[4]

Of course, this idea is not new; a version of it resides in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave." Philosophers have argued ever since they could argue about reality, to no final conclusion, of course. The mental picture of the Monty Python sketch on arguments clouds my brain as I write these words. You know the one, where people can pay money to argue, except that in the sketch, the character—played by Michael Palin, as I recall—who is paying for the argument (with John Cleese in his usual supercilious role of authority figure) is claiming all that he is getting is contradiction (and he's right, of course). Wink, wink, nudge, nudge, know what I mean?

But I digress. So back to business.

This collection is not about race, nor does it try to construct or reconstruct Mark Twain into something or someone he was not. It most certainly evades any discussion of the Mark Twain-Samuel L. Clemens personality split. In fact, most of the authors use the names interchangeably, as if no controversy exists over the "duality" suggested by Samuel Clemens' use of Mark Twain to vent his spleen upon the world, with a great deal of humor, parody, burlesque, and satire, of course. It does, on the other hand, acknowledge and celebrate his complexity—especially his creative use of time and space—but does not try to transform him into Superman, or more accurately "Super-writer-man." It does place him in his own literary, historical, and cultural milieu, not our twenty-first century, and, finally, it does build upon past explorations of how geography (the Mississippi River, Quarry Farm, Dollis Hill House, the Hawaiian—or Sandwich—Islands, Europe, the "Holy Land," London

Bridge, and, yes, the state of confusion—see John Bird's essay) played a major role in his work.

One more thing about this collection: as you read these essays, you will find the occasional cratylism, omphalos, and conflation; but the authors—even those who used the theory terms and concepts—wisely tried to present reasonable hypotheses and readable explanations. Some of them actually have used some—Gasp!—humor.

The collection begins with John Bird's interpretation of Twain's fictitious account of his brief service in the Civil War (or the War of Northern Aggression, as many of my fellow southerners like to call it), titled "Metaphors of North and South, East and West in Mark Twain's 'The Private History of a Campaign That Failed.'" Bird accurately shows us that the would-be soldiers were a motley crew of confused men. As Bird asserts,

> In fact, it is about *confusion* over directions, and even more deeply, about confusion over war in general and war writing in particular. Despite Twain's comic tone, he was making a profound corrective statement to his predominantly Northern, Eastern audience.

You'll have to read the essay to see how Bird's concept of confused geography unfolds.

Next, alphabetically, John Davis immerses us into the ugly world of London Bridge in the sixteenth century, a world that includes a mass of swarming humanity of all classes, in his essay, "Bridging the Gap: The Twin Kingdoms of *The Prince and the Pauper*." Davis maintains that the Bridge is the boundary between dream (and shadow) and reality for the major characters: [Prince] Edward, Tom Canty, and Miles Hendon.

Horace Digby then explores some of the use of geography in *Roughing It* in a folksy essay titled, "*Roughing It*: Mark Twain's Geography of the West, Imagined and Real," that includes Digby's visit—with "a carload of drunken lawyers and two business men [he] was to entertain"—to one of the Nevada sites in the book (where Twain was the butt of a joke robbery attempt), Gold Hill.

David Kesterson, in "Revisiting the Significance of Mark Twain's Hawaiian Sojourn," explores the influence of Twain's first trip to the Sandwich (Hawaiian) Islands in 1866, and claims that

> Twain's life and career were forever changed by the four-month exposure to island culture and geography, for his experience in the islands helped create an eclectic author and citizen of the world, the likes of whom was rare for a western American in the nineteenth century.

Of course, in typical Twain fashion, this island paradise, as he all too soon found, swarmed with mosquitoes, scorpions, centipedes and other pests. Welcome to the tropics, Mr. Twain!

Sandra Littleton-Uetz locates the city of Alton, Illinois, a site of an ignominious federal prison for captured southern soldiers during the Civil War, as a potential specter to the former riverboat pilot, soon to be a short-lived Confederate militiaman, Mark Twain. Littleton-Uetz illuminates a part of Twain's life bound up in the geography of the river and of the massive Alton prison high above the banks of the river that suggests a different dimension of the influence of the Mississippi River and its communities than has previously been explored.

Charles Martin writes a fascinating piece about how cultural concepts shape our geographical knowledge, or lack thereof: "Tom Sawyer's Lessons in Geography; or, the Holy Land as Flapdoodle in *Tom Sawyer Abroad*." Martin shows that we take for granted concepts such as longitude, latitude, even the colors used on maps and globes, but these standards are somewhat malleable and conceptual; indeed, they help shape our (mistaken) knowledge of geography.

Janice McIntire-Strasburg, using concepts of place posed by such writers as Barry Lopez, in her essay, "Mark Twain, Huck Finn, and the Geographical 'Memory' of a Nation," examines the river in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* with a fresh perspective of how geography shapes our cultural senses.

Jeffery Alan Melton, in "Seeing the River: Mark Twain's Landscape Imagination," also explains how important the Mississippi River was in Twain's geographical constructions. He also introduces us—at least me—to the Claude Glass, a device used by seventeenth-century Europeans to view natural landscapes through a framed piece of glass. His point is how our perceptions are shaped by cultural values, in this case, that reality is filtered through the looking glass, or, rather, the Claude Glass, and is actually preferred to the unfiltered and uncontained view. I guess twenty-first-century Americans are not much different; we like our reality filtered through a different sort of glass, the CRT tube, or now, the plasma or LCD screen of television.

Mark Woodhouse, in his essay titled, "The Stranger in Paradise: Dollis Hill, Florence, Dublin and Samuel Clemens' Creative Imagination," explores the influence of hilltop vistas in specific locations on Twain's *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger* (and other versions of it). Interestingly, the geographies Twain seemed to favor echoed that of Quarry Farm, especially its expansive view of the Chemung River Valley. Over and over again, Woodhouse quotes Twain's remarkably similar descriptions of the

titular locations, especially the sweeping views they provide.

Finally, Tracy Wuster traces (no pun intended; well, maybe it is intended) the confluence of a traveling baseball exhibition and Mark Twain in the late 1800s. A picturesque title quotes Twain, "'Interrupting a Funeral with a Circus": Mark Twain, Imperial Ambivalence, and Baseball in the Sandwich Islands," and also suggests—but does not directly state—how the "national sport" became an Althusserian Ideological State Apparatus through promotion of white, masculine imperialistic values. Twain's participation involves a speech delivered at a Delmonico's dinner in New York City celebrating the touring players and reinforcing white male cultural imperialism, except that Twain's speech satirized, rather than supported, those ideals.

If you don't believe my biased views about these essays, please read the essays and learn. I think that you will find them intriguing and educational. To quote an old television commercial, "Try it, you'll like it!"

Notes

1. Mark Twain, "Imagination," *Mark Twain's Notebook*, quoted in *Mark Twain Quotations, Newspaper Collections, & Related Resources*, ed. by Barbara Schmidt, http://www.twainquotes.com/Imagination.html.
2. Tom Quirk, "Mark Twain in Large and Small: The Infinite and the Infinitesimal in Twain's Late Writings," in *Constructing Mark Twain*, eds. Laura Skandera-Trombley and Michael Kiskis, 191-92.
3. Ibid., 193.
4. Paraphrased in R. Kent Rasmussen, "*No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*," in *Mark Twain A to Z: The Essential Reference to His Life and Writings*, 339.

CHAPTER ONE

METAPHORS OF NORTH AND SOUTH, EAST AND WEST IN MARK TWAIN'S "THE PRIVATE HISTORY OF A CAMPAIGN THAT FAILED"

JOHN BIRD

Mark Twain's semi-autobiographical narrative of his aborted Civil War experience seems on first reading to be very straightforward, so straightforward, in fact, that some readers have taken it as memoir and missed its strong fictional element. "The Private History of a Campaign That Failed" is clearly a narrative about North and South, but it is also about the other main compass directions, East and West. In fact, it is about *confusion* over directions, and even more deeply, about confusion over war in general and war writing in particular. Despite Twain's comic tone, he was making a profound corrective statement to his predominantly Northern, Eastern audience. As the narrator says in the first paragraph of the piece, in a tone of apology, but also using figurative language, "Surely this kind of light must have some sort of value"[1]

The context in which Twain wrote the piece in 1885 is important; he was asked to contribute to the *Century* magazine his war experiences, to be part of a popular series, "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," which included accounts from generals such as Grant, McClellan, Longstreet, and Beauregard. Recognizing the incongruity of his narrative with the others, Twain begins with, as I say, an apology:

> You have heard from a great many people who did something in the war; is it not fair and right that you listen a little moment to one who started out to do something in it, but didn't? (863)

This introduction sets the tone, and "The Private History" has almost always been read as an apology–which it clearly is.[2] But the next paragraph serves as a kind of second introduction, and one that frames

another theme, which we can see most clearly if we consider its metaphorical nature.

The second paragraph begins by highlighting direction, but also highlighting *confusion* over direction: “Out West, there was a good deal of confusion in men’s minds during the first months of the great trouble” (863). The narrator continues, “[A] good deal of unsettledness, of leaning first this way, then that, then the other way. It was hard for us to get our bearings” (863). The phrase “out West” implies a “back East,” an East that is the home of Twain’s main audience, and an East that was, indeed, his home—he wrote this piece when he was living in Hartford. The rest of the paragraph sets up a sort of metaphorical map, drawing on all four compass directions, and in constantly highlighting confusion over those directions, reveals the narrative’s main theme.

The narrator tells us, “I was piloting on the Mississippi when the news came that South Carolina had gone out of the Union on the 20th of December, 1860” (863). That sentence contains all four directions–south and north explicitly, but east and west implied by the river, bisecting the country into east and west as it runs from north to south. The river is a cross over the country and a cross over the beginning of the narrative. The rest of the paragraph describes the confusion over direction this map establishes. The narrator continues,

> My pilot-mate was a New Yorker. He was strong for the Union; so was I. But he would not listen to me with any patience; my loyalty was smirched, to his eye, because my father had owned slaves. (863)

The next sentence stands out with metaphorical irony:

> I said, in palliation of this dark fact, that I had heard my father say, some years before he died, that slavery was a great wrong, and that he would free the solitary negro he then owned if he could think it right to give away the property of the family when he was so straitened in means. (863)

Dark fact, indeed. The strength of that image comes from its concentration as a figure. Both a metaphor and a metonymy, it contains great power. Metonymic in its association with the slave’s color, metaphoric in its comparison to the darkness of slavery as an evil, the phrase “dark fact” sits ominously over the whole piece, especially when it becomes clear that there is total confusion over the direction to follow in the aftermath of the dark fact of slavery, confusion highlighted in this paragraph, then in the whole piece, just as it was before, during, and after the war. Embedded even in “palliation,” in its Latinate root, is another

figure, for cloaking—with the connotation that it is, as the dictionary says, "to cover with excuses: conceal or disguise the enormity of excuses and apologies."[3] "Palliation" is precisely what the narrator is up to.

The paragraph continues the confusion: "A month later the secession atmosphere had considerably thickened on the Lower Mississippi, and I became a rebel; so did he" (863). They have literally as well as figuratively moved South, but direction is just as confused with the pair of friends: "

> He did his full share of the rebel shouting, but was bitterly opposed to letting me do mine. He said that I came of bad stock [another powerful figurative term, again both metaphorical and metonymic]—of a father who had been willing to set slaves free. (863-864)

By the end, they have split, the friend "piloting a Federal gunboat and shouting for the Union again" (864), and the narrator in the Confederate army. The pull in this opening between North and South metaphorically maps out the confusion over direction that informs the whole piece and underscores a deeper point about the war and the cause. Just exactly what is this "great cause" everyone was fighting for if allegiances can shift so rapidly and so totally?

Finally**,** the militia is formed, as the narrator tells us that "[s]everal of us got together in a secret place by night and formed ourselves into a military company" (864). At this point in the narrative, a literal map is introduced, "The Seat of War." The river roughly defines north and south, with the "campaign" roughly mapping out east and west. The crude, hand-drawn map is surely part of Twain's satire and comment on the *Century* series, "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," which all included elaborate battle maps. Comparing Twain's crudely drawn map with the "real" map is humorous to us, but must have been both humorous and somewhat startling to his contemporary readers.

The company's initiation into the cause comes with a speech from a veteran, notable for its confused metaphorical language, and also for the parallel confusion of the listeners:

> We stacked our shabby old shot-guns in Colonel Ralls's barn, and then went in a body and breakfasted with that veteran of the Mexican war. Afterwards he took us to a distant meadow, and there in the shade of a tree we listened to an old-fashioned speech from him, full of gunpowder and glory, full of that adjective-piling, mixed metaphor, and windy declamation which was regarded as eloquence in that ancient time and that remote region; and then he swore us on the Bible to be faithful to the State of Missouri and drive all invaders from her soil, no matter whence they might

come or under what flag they might march. This mixed us considerably, and we could not make out just what service we were embarked in; but Colonel Ralls, the practiced politician and phrase-juggler, was not similarly in doubt; he knew quite clearly that he had invested us in the cause of the Southern Confederacy. (868)

THE BATTLE OF BENTONVILLE.

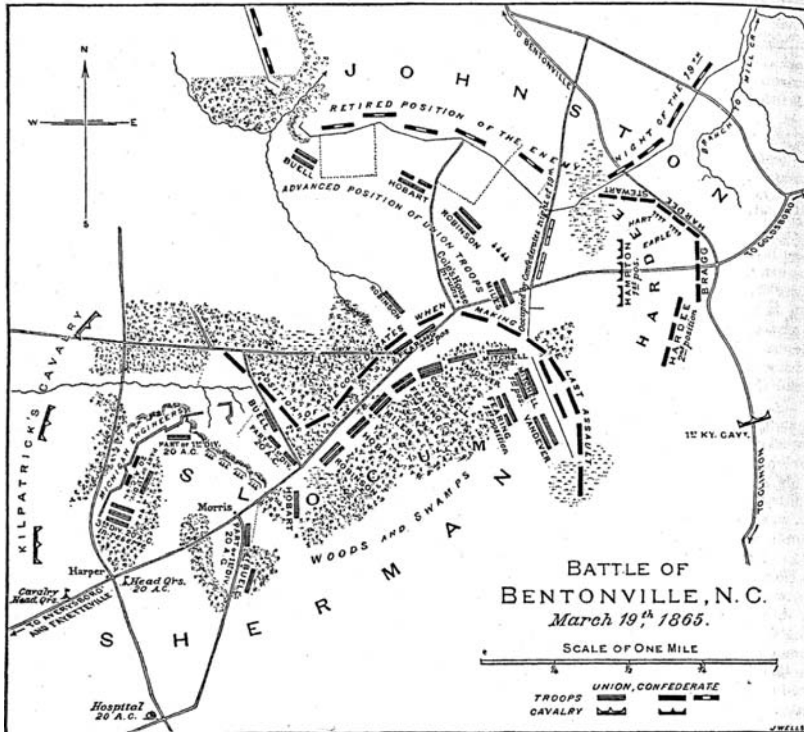

Fig. 1-1 The Battle of Bentonville

Fig. 1-2 The Seat of War

Again, so much for the glorious war and the cause. The young soldiers are just as mixed, just as confused, as the colonel's metaphors—and that confusion reigns over the whole narrative. Examples of this kind of confusion abound. No one will cook, since they all consider it beneath them. When they finally get hungry enough, they *all* do the work. The narrator tells us:

> Afterward everything was smooth for a while; then trouble broke out between the corporal and the sergeant, each claiming to rank the other. Nobody knew which was the higher office; so Lyman had to settle the matter by making the rank of both officers equal. (870).

In such an army, all is confusion, especially direction, as when they argue over which way to retreat—retreat being the only course of action they consider when they learn of an advancing enemy:

> The question was which way to retreat; but all were so flurried that nobody seemed to have even a guess to offer. Except Lyman. He explained in a few calm words, that inasmuch as the enemy were approaching from over Hyde's prairie, our course was simple: all we had to do was not to retreat *toward* him; any other direction would answer our needs perfectly.

> Everybody saw in a moment how true this was, and how wise; so Lyman got a great many compliments. (871)

"Any. . .direction would answer our needs": that phrase becomes a metaphor for the confusion of the whole piece, and a statement in itself, about war and its purpose.

The subsequent retreat is a masterpiece of absurd, slapstick comedy:

> The route was very rough and hilly and rocky, and presently the night grew very black and rain began to fall; so we had a troublesome time of it, struggling and stumbling along in the dark; and soon some person slipped and fell, and then the next person behind stumbled over him and fell, and so did the rest, one after the other; and then Bowers came with the keg of powder in his arms, whilst the command were all mixed together, arms and legs, on the muddy slope; and so he fell, of course, with the keg, and this started the whole detachment down the hill in a body, and they landed in the brook at the bottom in a pile, and each that was undermost pulling the hair and scratching and biting the rest in their turn, and all saying they would die before they would ever go to war again if they ever got out of this brook this time, and the invader might rot for all they cared, and the country along with him—and all such talk as that, which was dismal to hear and take part in, in such smothered, low voices, and such a grisly dark place and so wet, and the enemy may be coming any moment. (871-872)

When they finally reach Mason's farm, they are greeted by an enemy, but not what they expect:

> [B]efore we could open our mouths to give the countersign, several dogs came bounding over the fence, with great riot and noise, and each of them took a soldier by the slack of his trousers and began to back away with him. We could not shoot the dogs without endangering the persons they were attached to; so we had to look on, helpless, at what was perhaps the most mortifying spectacle of the civil war. (872)

The narrator's tone here would certainly have had a strong effect on contemporary readers, their memories of actual mortifying spectacles still very fresh. But the scene then becomes even *more* absurd, a surreal cartoon:

> There was light enough, and to spare, for the Masons had now run out on the porch with candles in their hands. The old man and his son came and undid the dogs without difficulty, all but Bowers's; but they couldn't undo his dog, they didn't know his combination; he was of the bull kind, and seemed to be set with a Yale time-lock; but they got him loose at last with

some scalding water, of which Bowers got his share and returned thanks. (872-873)

The way he builds that last metaphor is equal to some of the best in Twain's work. He starts plausibly, with the metaphor muted—"couldn't undo the dog"—then more overt, but still subtle, when he mentions the combination. Audaciously, he then compares the bulldog to a time-lock, surely with the hidden extra meaning of "Yale bulldog." The map that accompanies the engagement satirizes real battle maps, with its compass directions and labels, "First position of Dogs," "Second position of Dogs." Curiously, it seems to be almost a replica of the earlier map, with the road in almost the same position as the river. Where are we? What are the directions? Are all maps the same, merely copies of each other?

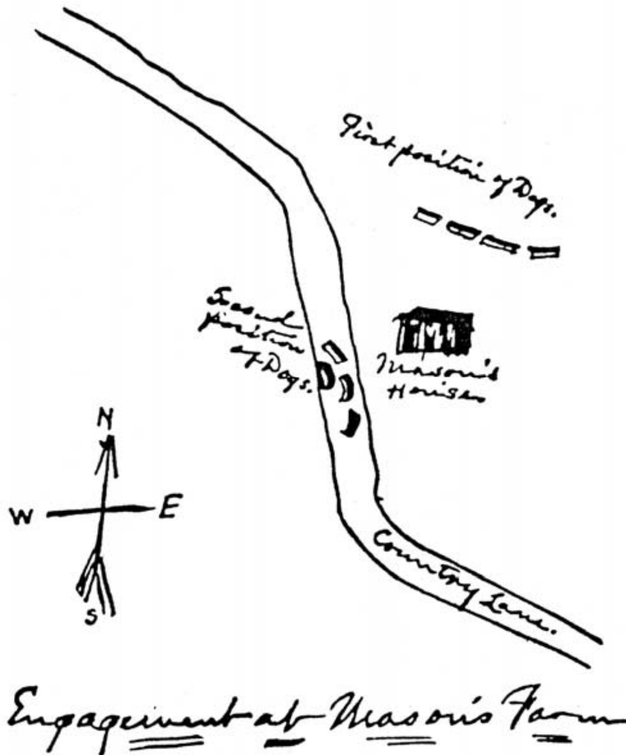

Fig. 1-3 First and Second Positions of Dogs

In *Mark Twain on the Loose*, Bruce Michelson offers a cogent analysis of the satirical and comic layers of Twain's "Map of Paris," and much he says about that absurd map can apply here, including its satire of maps, of a gullible reading public, and of the comic dislocations such absurdities bring. Michelson concludes his analysis with this persuasive argument:

> Maps, names, words, knowing—in the "Map of Paris" funhouse these things become for a flash preposterous, dizzying. Then the dislocated world can stop wobbling, and if we like we can proceed to read, credulously or skeptically, the rest of the daily papers, including perhaps "real" maps on other pages, and talk glibly again about people we have never seen and violence among strangers in unknowable places.[4]

Twain's maps in this narrative do some of the same things, if not as much as the in-the-looking-glass "Map of Paris"; in any case, a map of a battle does abstract all violence out of existence, even the cartoon violence of the "Engagement at Mason's Farm."

To put a nice gloss on the whole affair, Farmer Mason comments sarcastically on the aptness of their name: "Marion *Rangers*! Good name, b'gosh!" The joke hinges, of course, on a slip in the metonymic meaning, with the farmer making the assessment that

> we were a curious breed of soldiers, and guessed we could be depended on to end up the war in time, because no government could stand the expense of the shoe-leather we should cost it trying to follow us around. (873)

The comic confusion continues, with soldiers who refuse to stand picket unless superiors will exchange rank with them, then stand watch as subordinates, and with a mock war in a corn crib, which is serving as a barracks; but, finally, the piece changes radically in tone as the Marion Rangers confront a lone enemy and shoot him down. The description now is very different:

> When we got to him the moon revealed him distinctly. He was lying on his back, with his arms abroad; his mouth was open and his chest heaving with long gasps, and his white shirt-front was all splashed with blood. The thought shot through me that I was a murderer; that I had killed a man—a man who had never done me any harm. That was the coldest sensation that ever went through my marrow.[5]

The piece now becomes as serious as it had previously been absurd and comic, as the narrator continues to ponder his act:

> The man was not in uniform, and was not armed. He was a stranger in the country; that was all we ever found out about him. The thought of him got to preying upon me every night; I could not get rid of it. I could not drive it away, the taking of that unoffending life seemed such a wanton thing. And it seemed an epitome of war; that all war must be just that—the killing of strangers against whom you feel no personal animosity; strangers whom, in other circumstances, you would help if you found them in trouble, and who would help you if you needed it. My campaign was spoiled. (880)

"My campaign was spoiled," the narrator says, not "my campaign was ruined," or even, echoing his title, as a lesser writer might have been tempted to say, "my campaign had failed." The metaphoric overtones resonate, as does the irony: by finally doing exactly what he is supposed to be doing, he fails, which takes us to the heart of the narrative's powerful statement. "An epitome of war," he says, but he could have said "a metaphor of war"—as indeed the whole piece is. And the metaphor that underlies the whole narrative is confusion: confusion of direction, confusion of rank, confusion of cause, confusion of the meaning of war itself. Hidden in what seems a merely comic piece is actually a stinging condemnation of war in general and of the Civil War in particular—and subversively, published in a magazine series that celebrated the battles and leaders of the war, for a national audience that took the war most seriously, North or South. One of those leaders, Grant, the narrator says near the end, he almost met, but characteristically, the narrator was "proceeding in the other direction" (882). That other direction, of course, is retreat. "I could have become a soldier myself, if I had waited," the narrator concludes. "I had got part of it learned; I knew more about retreating than the man who invented retreating" (882).

North and East are pitted against South and West, with South and West seemingly ludicrous, absurd, and shameful, and North and East supposedly serious, rational, and glorious. But the confusion of direction, the metaphor that underlies everything, shows that all war is insane, is as ludicrous as the Marion Rangers, is as pointless as the murder of the stranger. In a comic piece, Twain manages to make a very serious statement about war, a strong and effective statement, even if many of his readers were merely amused or thought he was apologizing. The epitome of war, the metaphor of war, all rides on the irony of war: to succeed is to be wanton, to lose some of one's humanity.

One passage near the end grimly underscores this point, with a key use of metaphor at its core:

> One might justly imagine that we were hopeless material for war. And so we seemed, in our ignorant state; but there were those among us who afterward learned the grim trade; learned to obey like machines; became valuable soldiers; fought all through the war, and came out at the end with excellent records. (877)

That statement is as ironic as any Mark Twain ever wrote, and highlights the irony of the whole piece, and the ultimate irony of talking about "success" in war, of celebrating it in a magazine series. Like a black comedy of the late 20th century, the world is turned upside down: all directions are thrown into confusion; to retreat is to advance; the private history is public; an apology becomes a statement; the campaign that fails is a campaign that succeeds. Metaphor does its work again; this kind of light truly *does* have a sort of value.

Notes

1. "The Private History of a Campaign That Failed" in *Mark Twain: Collected Tales, Sketches, Speeches, and Essays*: *1852-1890*. Edited by Louis J. Budd. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.
2. Everett Emerson, *Mark Twain: A Literary Life*, 167. For critical analysis of "A Private History of a Campaign That Failed," see James M. Cox, *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor*, 190-197; Tom Quirk, *Mark Twain: A Study of the Short Fiction*, 83-85; Peter Messent, *The Short Works of Mark Twain*, 133-151. Messent does an especially good job of setting the piece in the context of its publication in *The Century*. My argument about the confusion of allegiance is very similar to his. Note Messent's focus on the figurative: "The militaristic values that stand squarely behind the whole *Century* series are, to a considerable degree then, metaphorically shot to tatters here" (146). For a discussion of the regional aspects of the story, see Barbara Ladd, "'It Was an Enchanting Region for War': West by South in Mark Twain's 'The Private History of a Campaign That Failed,'" *Studies in American Humor* 10 (2003): 43-49.
3. "Palliate," *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, 1993.
4. Bruce Michelson, *Mark Twain on the Loose*, 14.
5. For readings of this pivotal scene, see Quirk, *Mark Twain: A Study of the Short Fiction,* 84; and Cox, *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor*, 192-195. Disagreeing with Bernard DeVoto, who reads the passage as an example of "lonely realism" in *Mark Twain's America* (114), Cox asks, "But is such power really present in the style? The entire texture of the passage is given over to all the stock responses of the most maudlin melodrama" (194). Cox reads the whole piece as a failure, a failure of Mark Twain to confront the central historical event of his time, an event he evaded. I disagree, as my argument shows, but Cox's argument is, as usual, worth noting and considering.

CHAPTER TWO

BRIDGING THE GAP: THE TWIN KINGDOMS OF *THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER*

JOHN H. DAVIS

Evidenced by readings of histories, listings of antique words, and study of contemporary culture and manners, "Mark Twain took very seriously the task of preparing himself to write his historical novel," *The Prince and the Pauper*.[1] Seeking to increase literary respectability with a book acceptable to genteel tastes, he strove for accuracy as well as artistic merit in a form, here the historical romance, agreeable to both.[2] This research extends to the setting, Tudor London and its southern countryside, with frequent mentions and uses of locations. By the time of writing, Twain had visited London, but he also studied maps of Old London and that countryside.[3] Despite W.D. Howells' "significant" editorial excisions and advice "to cut lengthy descriptive passages,"[4] many references and descriptions remain of historical, actual, even obscure places, such as Cheapside, Old Jewry, Charing [Cross] Village, Dowgate, and more famous locations: the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, especially both the Thames River and London Bridge. For his "most carefully plotted novel"[5] and "finest [structural] achievement,"[6] Twain creates a topographical literary structure based on a vivid milieu and symbolic settings. Split by the Thames into representational and man-made worlds (human imposition of artificial society) in the same space, connected by London Bridge, this pseudo-historical/quasi-fictional construct allows experiencing of parallel worlds, juxtaposing reality and unreality. The structure is geographical, a cartography of discrete, coinciding universes.

With this geography to separate them after they exchange identities, Twain grants his main characters—Prince Edward Tudor and Tom Canty—titles, rank, and land, to dream realms. Although unlike later dream stories, a dream motif throughout emphasizes each boy's experience,

so dream-like, even nightmarish, that he questions its reality, establishing a dream/reality dichotomy.

Twain begins with the boys' geographical dichotomy. Tom lives in a "foul little pocket called Offal Court, out of Pudding Lane,"[7] the latter an actual area near London Bridge. Obviously aware of its butcher shops, Twain names Tom's court "Offal" to refer to animal remains and imply "awful," as "pudding" suggests mud puddle and means animal entrails,[8] both offsetting Edward's royal court and the "rich apartment" where the Prince invites Tom when they meet (40). He has not seen such luxury "except in books" (40), which stimulate and supply his dreams, whose effect had been to intensify sordid reality; dreaming of being "a petted prince in a regal palace" (30). He always awoke to "the wretchedness about him" (34). He soon encounters the confinement of a royal personage ("captive. . .in this gilded cage") and awesomeness of power (Duke of Norfolk's death sentence haunts him) (69). Motivated to switch roles by a wish "to play without rules or boundaries, social or geographical,"[9] ironically granted in a domain of symbolic boundaries, Edward—imagining fun with a "revel in the mud" (44)—also finds reality harsher than he imagined. With a metaphoric dream/reality landscape, Twain underscores Edward's nightmare-like experience, thus, the suffering of real people in a monarchy. Converted to a new view, Edward carries back what he learns when he is restored as king.

With Edward, dressed in Tom's rags, proclaiming himself King of England and Tom, in Edward's clothes, playing that role—the first scorned, the other accepted—Twain plays their experiences against each other by giving each boy a domain, geographically dividing the areas with the Thames River and figuratively separating them by labeling the land of Edward's adventures south of the river the Kingdom of Dreams and Shadows and declaring Edward its monarch.[10] Metaphorically, Tom as Edward is King of England (reality); and Edward as Tom becomes king of an unreal land, ironically one of harsh reality for the king's subjects, a fact Edward verifies while struggling to return. Links between the two kingdoms are London Bridge (presented as a world of its own) for the king-become-pauper and, for the pauper-become-king, the river-pageant (for journeys between palaces without setting foot on either shore where lower-class people live).

The path to Edward's conversion runs from palace and slum across London Bridge into the countryside his adopted protector, Miles Hendon, designates "the Kingdom of Dreams and Shadows" and back across the Bridge into the teeming, close-quartered city. This movement indicates the pivotal significance Twain gives the Bridge. On London Bridge, Edward