PROJECT MUSE®

Mark Twain, Nietzsche, and Terrible Truths That Can Set Us
Free

Patrick J. Keane

The Mark Twain Annual, Volume 11, 2013, pp. 22-41 (Article)

Published by Penn State University Press

➔ For additional information about this article
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/526127>

Mark Twain, Nietzsche, and Terrible Truths That Can Set Us Free

Patrick J. Keane

In a May 1899 review of two translations of Nietzsche titled “Giving the Devil His Due,” G. B. Shaw introduced a concept he expanded on the following year in “Diabolonian Ethics,” published as part of his preface to *Three Plays for Puritans*. In that essay, Dick Dudgeon, the hero of one of those plays, *The Devil’s Disciple*, is enlisted in a Diabolonian tradition whose lineage stretches from Prometheus through the Blake of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* to “our newest idol,” the Nietzschean Superman. In his original review, Shaw included Mark Twain in the tradition, though what he gave with one hand he abruptly took away with the other: “Mark Twain emitted some Diabolonian sparks, only to succumb to the overwhelming American atmosphere of chivalry, duty, and gentility.” The patronizing charge, which preceded Twain’s various Satanic fictions, was repeated precisely two decades later by an admirer of Twain, H. L. Mencken, a satirist as aware as Mark Twain was of how a heterodoxy-hating American public, its “pruderies outraged,” could bitterly turn on a dissenter, “even the gaudiest hero, and roll him in the mud.”¹

Though this brief examination of late Mark Twain will conclude by emphasizing the liberating power that can attend an unflinching confrontation of terrible, even appalling truths, the initial focus is on the decision by the gaudiest and best-loved American literary icon to withhold from publication his most vehement attacks, not only on institutional Christianity and collective hypocrisy, but on the Christian God himself. The charge of Shaw and Mencken that Twain had succumbed to pressure was expanded on and personalized in *The Ordeal of Mark Twain* (1920) by Van Wyck Brooks, who claimed that a beloved and believing Livy tamed her husband, fueling the myth that Twain’s creativity fell victim to a destructive female dominance. Though that overstates the case, there is no doubt that Twain’s wife hated his irreligious and deterministic

treatise *What Is Man?* and that his daughters, Jean and Clara, disapproved of his 1906 reflections on religion, and of his literally “Diabolonian” fictions, including “The Chronicle of Young Satan,” the initial manuscript in what later comprised the Mysterious Stranger papers. That familial disapproval may have become dramatized in Twain’s notoriously divided self as *psychomachia*: an internal and infernal dialogue between Blakean angel and devil. Most of these texts remained unpublished during Twain’s life. *What Is Man?* was not released while Livy was alive, and *Letters from the Earth*, Satan’s devastating account of human folly and divine cruelty, written in 1909, the year before Twain’s death, went unpublished until the year of Clara’s death, 1962, when, at the outset of a turbulent decade, it put a suddenly revolutionary and “relevant” Twain on the *New York Times* best-seller list.

This context of public and familial disapproval illuminates Mark Twain’s most significant self-alliance with, and most guilt-ridden distinction from, the iconoclastic German philosopher who, using his “hammer” not as a brutal sledge but as a philosophic tuning fork, exposed the hollowness of some of our Christian culture’s most cherished “idols.” Dictating to his secretary Isabel Lyon, who saw her employer and Nietzsche as kindred spirits, Twain observed on September 4, 1907:

Nietzsche published his book and was at once pronounced crazy by the world—by a world which included tens of thousands of bright, sane men who believed exactly as Nietzsche believed, but concealed the fact, and scoffed at Nietzsche. What a coward every man is! And how surely he will find it out if he will just let other people alone and sit down and examine himself. The human race is a race of cowards; and I am not only marching in that procession but carrying a banner.²

Though Nietzsche was an enthusiastic reader of the novels of Mark Twain, whose exuberant humor and “fooleries” he embraced as an antidote to Germanic stodginess, Lyon had to push Twain, in August 1906, into listening to and reading passages of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Despite his resistance and gruff dismissals (“Oh damn Nietzsche!” he exploded on August 8), Twain gradually expressed appreciation of Nietzsche’s irreverence. On August 27, he “slapped his leg hard” and shouted “Hurrah for Nietzsche!” when Lyon reported the philosopher’s description of “acts of God” as “divine kicks”—a humorous deflation of the punitive Judeo-Christian God that tallies with similar attacks by Mark Twain.³ The “letters” Twain’s Satan sends back to Heaven reporting

on his visit to Earth—alternately hilarious, racy, and, as the series goes on, increasingly embittered—convey Twain’s satiric j’accuse directed at an unjust and uncaring God: a charge characteristically complemented by sympathy for God’s theologically misguided but suffering creatures.

Whenever tempted to become impatient with the misanthropic pessimism of later Mark Twain, flaunted even before the series of familial tragedies that struck him like a thunderbolt in the final decade and a half of his life, we should remember as well his immense empathy for the innocent who suffer. Many have been able to reconcile the doctrine that we are presided over by a loving deity with the facts on the ground: a long history of natural disaster, human evil, and “divine kicks.” Those able to accommodate themselves to the contradiction include readers of the Bible who choose to ignore unpleasant passages of scripture rather than abandon belief in a benevolent God. There are others, “those to whom the miseries of the world / Are misery, and will not let them rest.” I’m quoting the introduction to *The Fall of Hyperion* (l.148–49) by John Keats, a great and deeply empathetic poet who saw, even in his tragically brief life, too much misery in the world, too much gratuitous suffering, especially by the innocent, to justify belief in a providential Design and a benign God. Charles Darwin felt the same way; so did Mark Twain.

His 1907 note strikes several major themes in Twain’s thinking, not least his characteristic sense of guilt, this time for lacking Nietzsche’s courage. Of course, and more than occasionally, Mark Twain *defied* rather than “succumbed” to conformist pressures. Within two years of Shaw’s 1899 review, outraged by the spectacle of his country shouldering the white man’s burden by wading through the blood of two hundred thousand Filipinos slain in the process of “liberating” them, Twain was emitting more than “sparks,” in fact aiming, in “To the Person Sitting in Darkness,” a satiric flamethrower at an unholy marriage of religion and politics: that noxious American mixture of jingoistic bombast and pious hypocrisy that plagues us still. Given the ferocity of such anti-imperialist protests against U.S. foreign policy (as well as British, German, and Belgian imperialism), Shaw, like those who greatly exaggerated rumors of Twain’s death, would seem to be premature in depicting Mark Twain’s “Diabolonian sparks” as having been extinguished by that smothering “American atmosphere.”

But there is a distinction between politics and religion when it came to what Twain was willing to reveal and to conceal. Politically, he sometimes spoke out, risking his cherished and long-cultivated reputation with an adoring public by exposing American complacency and hypocrisy. He did so with a potent mixture of satiric wit and relentless honesty: a powerful challenge reminiscent of Jonathan Swift, whose scathing political satire in *Gulliver’s Travels* he admired

and echoed. Excoriating American imperialism cloaked in crawl-thumping religious piety, Twain stood up courageously and publicly to the powers that be in “To the Person Sitting in Darkness” (1901). Unfortunately, he *did* acquiesce in a single editorial rejection of his brief but devastating satire, “The War Prayer” (1905)—posthumously published in *Harper’s Weekly* during World War I, appropriately re-situated among the poems of soldiers who, having experienced the gas attacks, rats, and carnage of trench warfare, bitterly rejected the old Horatian lie that it is sweet and fitting to die, or to kill, for one’s country.

When the targets are God and religious hypocrisy, Twain’s attacks are less Swiftian than Nietzschean. And yet Twain begins his self-contrast with the German philosopher by claiming, “I have not read Nietzsche . . . nor any other philosopher,” choosing to go instead “to the fountainhead,” that is to say, to “the human race.” In a convenient reciprocity, he insists that “every man is in his person the whole human race,” and that “in myself I find in big or little proportion every quality and every defect that is findable in the mass of the race.” This sounds remarkably like Twain’s fellow American and Nietzsche’s mentor, Ralph Waldo Emerson, on the paradox of originality and the immersion of even the most self-reliant individual in a pool of shared ideas, a literary form of the Transcendentalist “Over-Soul.” At the same time, it allows Twain to maintain his independence. In fact, in asserting from the outset that he had not “read Nietzsche,” Twain was anticipating a notably defensive Freud, who insisted that he (Freud) avoided Nietzsche.⁴

Unlike Freud, Twain was not a covert student of Nietzsche; yet his note displays genuine insight into the philosopher he claimed not to have read: the recognition that Nietzsche had dared to say aloud what many in his age were thinking but refused to acknowledge, most notably the terrifying as well as liberating ramifications of the Death of God. This refusal amounted to an individual and collective act of “bad faith” and “repression” (a concept Nietzsche preceded Freud in delineating). In an act of sanctimonious hypocrisy that disgusted him, people (Nietzsche accused) continued to pay pious lip service to a creed in which they, consciously or unconsciously, no longer believed. It was a “lie.” “By lie,” he said in *The Antichrist*, “I mean: wishing *not* to see something that one does see; wishing not to see something *as* one sees it.”⁵ This modern Great Refusal amounted to a craven repression of the realization, one shared by late Twain, that institutional Christianity was a “slave morality” threatening individual independence, binding “free spirits” and their instincts to an authoritarian moral code dominated by a simplistic and guilt-inducing distinction

between conventional good and evil. The “natural” or “healthy” instinctual morality celebrated by Nietzsche⁶ is embodied in Huck Finn, in his own novel and in *Tom Sawyer Abroad*, where he explicitly endorses instinct: “for all the brag you hear about knowledge being such a wonderful thing, instink is worth forty of it for real unerringness” (337). And Huck’s instinctual morality is also “Diabolonian”; it leads him to famously choose damnation rather than betray Jim: “well, then, I’ll go to hell.”

Twain may conclude his contrast with Nietzsche (carrying that “banner” in a procession of cowards) with a characteristic final twist of “humor,” yet the passage as a whole is nothing if not serious. In 1907, when he wrote these words, Twain knew all too well what it meant to “sit down and examine himself” and then to courageously stand up to the powers not only of the state but of the church (Livy and his clergyman friend Joseph Twichell were particularly distressed by Twain’s emphasis on the role of Christian missionaries in enabling and cheering on American and European imperialism). He did so by wielding his chosen weapons of humor and satire, laughing his targets off the stage, but always expressing authentic indignation. He then published the truth as he saw it—or *tried* to publish, or, yielding to the external or internal resistance he faced in his efforts to tell the truth, elected not to publish at all. Those in his vast audience who had always wanted “their” Mark Twain, rigged out exclusively in cap and bells, were surprised or disappointed when, during his most creative decade, he ventured into still funny but *serious* territory in *Huckleberry Finn* (1885), *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* (1889), and *Pudd’nhead Wilson* (1894). But he knew, or was made to know by family and friends, that the public would be unwilling to follow him when, in quest of the truth as he saw it, he emulated his most beloved character by “light[ing] out for the Territory.” Determined to break free of those who would “sivilize” him, Huck, at the end of *Huckleberry Finn* (MT, 296), sets forth to seek freedom beyond the restraints of Christian civilization. Though Mark Twain shared that impulse, he understood his own commercial value and enjoyed being loved. Nevertheless, out-Hucking Huck, he was headed into the heart of darkness itself, in the form of those troubling late “dream”-and-disaster-voyage manuscripts he chose not to publish, and more often than not was unable or unwilling even to finish.

Despite Twain’s final self-deprecating phrase, his 1907 note reveals that he is, in spirit, *with* Nietzsche. To employ a Joycean portmanteau adjective singularly apt when it comes to Mark Twain, he may be “jocoserious” in depicting himself carrying that “banner.” But, hyperbole aside, the self-indictment is *genuine*. Twain’s skepticism about institutional religion was hardly a secret to readers of

some of his irreverent tracts. However, for all his bravery and irreverence, he was reluctant to publish his considered verdict on the *ultimate* power. When it came to his most vehement assaults on free will, immortality, and the God of Christianity, Mark Twain behaved with something resembling the cowardice he attributed to himself in comparison with Nietzsche. Though he worked on them for a dozen years (1897–1908), he never put into final form the subversive, literally Diabolonian Mysterious Stranger manuscripts, in which Young Satan and No. 44, both of whom genially but potently ridicule Christian hypocrisy, also pronounce the human race cowards and sheep, especially those who attack in public what they themselves believe in “their secret hearts.” And he deferred to posthumous publication his Satanic fiction *Letters from the Earth* as well as his assault on God’s “all-comprehensive malice” in his reflections on religion, jotted down in 1906, the same year he had 250 copies of *What Is Man?* printed “anonymously” and for private circulation among friends.

In fact, in his prefatory note to *What Is Man?* Twain says of these papers (which he had been brooding over for a quarter century) that “every thought in them has been thought (and accepted as unassailable truth) by millions upon millions of men—and concealed, kept private. Why did they not speak out? Because they dreaded (and could not bear) the disapproval of the people around them. Why have I not published? The same reason has restrained me, I think. I can find no other.” Ten years earlier (Notebook, November 10, 1895), finding it strange that the world was “not full of books” scoffing at the “useless universe” and “violent, contemptible human race,” Twain wondered, “Why don’t I write such a book? Because I have a family”—a “family” he wished not to outrage, or to injure, and, presumably, to continue to feed by not alienating the vast audience that bought his books. Whatever the role of Livy, and his determination to ease her final years, in this remark, and in the preface to *What Is Man?* Twain anticipates the self-censorship he would acknowledge a year later in numbering himself among those who agreed with Nietzsche on religion but concealed the fact. Though he had confided to his wife (and to Joe Twichell) that he did not believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, described in 1906 as “the most damnatory biography that exists” (“Reflections on Religion,” 191), Twain did not want to hurt Livy. But she had died in 1904, and he *still* chose not to publish his most blasphemous attacks.

In his 1919 *Smart Set* essay, Mencken concluded that Twain’s dread of disapproval was partly internal since “his own speculations always half-appalled him. He was not only afraid to utter what he believed; he was even a bit timorous about *believing* what he believed.” This last assertion seems to me dubious, or at

least less true of Twain than of Nietzsche, whose relentlessly inquiring spirit led him to the discovery of dark truths he himself believed were “terrible”: truths—as he plaintively remarked in an 1885 letter to his friend Franz Overbeck—he wished in vain “somebody might make . . . appear incredible to me.”⁷ But Mencken’s pointed but affectionate judgment seems generally on target:

Mark knew his countrymen. He knew their intense suspicion of ideas, their blind hatred of heterodoxy, their bitter way of dealing with dissenters. He knew how, their pruderies outraged, they would turn upon even the gaudiest hero and roll him in the mud. And knowing, he was afraid. He [and here Mencken quotes Twain himself from his prefatory note to *What Is Man?*] “dreaded the disapproval of the people around him.” And part of that dread, I suspect, was peculiarly internal. In brief, Mark himself was also an American, and he shared the national horror of the unorthodox.⁸

Though Mencken finds some pusillanimity in Twain’s role in deferring to posthumous publication some of his most shocking documents, I prefer his critical but more empathetic stance to Shaw’s arch dismissal of Twain’s insufficient emission of Diabolonian sparks. If Mencken goes too far in that final phrase about Twain’s alleged timorousness in actually “*believing* what he believed,” the rest of his charge seems confirmed by Twain’s own admission in the preface to *What Is Man?* and in his private placing of himself, carrying a banner no less, in that procession of cowards that scoffed at Nietzsche, even though they believed, or disbelieved, more or less as he did.

Of course, Nietzsche is not merely an iconoclastic naysayer. For all his bleak determinism, atheism, and existential loneliness, he insisted that his was an essentially affirming spirit. His terrible truths were countered by an exuberant embrace of *amor fati*, *gaya scienza*, and what W. B. Yeats described, with remarkable tonal accuracy, as that “strong enchanter’s . . . curious astringent joy,” transformed by Yeats into the “tragic joy” of such late poems as “The Gyres” and “Lapis Lazuli,” which ends with the mountain-climbing sages having achieved a Zarathustra-like prospect: “On all the tragic scene they stare,” and “their eyes, / Their ancient glittering eyes are gay.”⁹ For Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, the enemy of the “spirit of gravity” is “laughter.” Twain’s Satan, in “The Chronicle of Young Satan,” recommends the same corrective to man’s humorless tendency to contemplate folly with “petrified gravity.” Faced with such examples of “colossal

humbug” as papal infallibility, “only Laughter can blow it to rags and atoms at a blast. Against the assault of Laughter nothing can stand” (*MSM*, 164–66).

But there was of course a more-than-satiric function of elevated spirits and balancing humor. When an interviewer asked him on Thanksgiving Day, 1905, “What is it that strikes a spark of humor from a man?” Twain responded: “It is the effort to throw off, to fight back the burden of grief that is laid on each one of us. In youth we don’t feel it, but as we grow to manhood we find the burden on our shoulders. Humor? It is nature’s effort to harmonize conditions. The further the pendulum swings out over woe the further it is bound to swing back over mirth.”¹⁰ He had survived the trauma of Susy’s death in 1896. In a passage intended for “The Death of Jean,” but omitted from that moving Christmas Eve 1909 essay, Twain (sounding remarkably like Emerson when his nineteen-year-old wife, Ellen, died) acknowledged that “my temperament has never allowed my spirits to remain depressed long at a time.”¹¹

A similar oscillation and final affirmation can be found in Mark Twain’s conflicting and conflicted attitudes toward “truth.” At times, as in *What Is Man?* it is subjected to the most extreme skepticism. Elsewhere, the hard truth can be seen as terrifying, yet liberating us from facile optimism and religious delusion. This is most dramatically projected in the Mysterious Stranger manuscripts, in the much-discussed and disputed Chapter 34, designated by Mark Twain himself in 1904 as the “Conclusion of the book.” These memorable pages were subsequently and fraudulently tacked on to a truncated version of “The Chronicle of Young Satan” by Paine and Duneka in 1916 and, far more convincingly, appended to “No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger” by John S. Tuckey in the 1960s.¹² A number of critics have found light in the cosmic and seemingly nihilistic darkness of this powerful and haunting finale. In the foreword to his own 2003 reproduction of the 1969 Gibson text of the third manuscript (*No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*), Tuckey observes that “August is guided by 44 in exploring unknown possibilities of life that may be attained through the higher powers of mind,” and describes the novel as “a psychic adventure, a journey into the deeper mind and beyond—into the realm of the unconscious and of dream experiences, and on at last to that appalling void which one must brave in order to become whole” (x). A particularly perceptive discussion of the ambiguous but potentially positive ramifications of the “Conclusion” occurs in Ryan Simmons’s 2010 online essay, “Who Cares Who Wrote *The Mysterious Stranger*?”¹³

Simmons poses a philosophic thought experiment. We can imagine that God exists, in which case the world is “meaningful,” though, given human limitations, we

are unable to perceive how it is “all part of God’s perfectly coherent and beneficent plan.” Conversely, we may imagine that “those who are honest” conclude that the “God we have assumed, and even worshipped, cannot exist”—the position, though Simmons never mentions him, of Nietzsche. The “Conclusion” of the Mysterious Stranger manuscripts would seem to urge *us* to “conclude” that God either does not exist or is so sadistic that it would be *better* if he didn’t: a God who “cursed” his human “children with biting miseries and maladies of mind and body”; who “mouths” justice and mercy and yet “invented hell” (MSM, 405). If such a God did not exist, has the world, Simmons asks rhetorically, “truly become meaningless in his absence?” Or is it that, in delegating responsibility to God, we have “failed to take responsibility for events ourselves.” It may well be the case that “the meanings of the world are opened up, more available to us, if we remove the putative ‘author’ of the world, God, from the equation.” Rather like the “evil demon” in Descartes’s *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Twain’s Mysterious Stranger, by “demonstrating that people’s foundational convictions are in error,” forces us “to acknowledge what, at some level, we must already suspect: that the world is a less just, less orderly, less happy place than we typically pretend,” and that we ourselves are cosmologically “inconsequential.”

Simmons does not develop the deeper comparison–contrast between what is *provisional and temporary* in Descartes (the “methodological doubt” that leads him, initially, to strip everything down to the bedrock of the cogito) and what is *final and permanent* in Twain’s “Conclusion”: the reduction of August to a mere “Thought.” And yet Simmons’s argument takes a quasi-Cartesian, constructive turn. *The Mysterious Stranger*, he insists, “troubles knowledge not finally in order to advocate a radical skepticism,” but to discover whether such “impoverished abstractions” as the “moral sense” can “be filled with meanings.” Nietzsche, who pronounced the world intrinsically meaningless given the Death of God, also believed that we humans can “create meaning.” The song he sang on the train returning him to Basel after his complete mental breakdown in Turin in January 1889 is interpreted in this spirit by the character Walter Berger in Malraux’s *The Walnut Trees of the Altenburg*: as a “sublime” revelation as “strong” as life itself, proof that “the greatest mystery is not that we have been flung at random between the profusion of matter and of the stars, but that within this prison we can draw from ourselves images powerful enough to deny our nothingness.”¹⁴

Consider the final nihilistic vision presented by the mysterious and semi-Satanic No. 44 to August Fendler at the climax of Twain’s final, fragmentary novel: “*Nothing* exists: all is a dream. God—man—the world—the sun, the moon, the wilderness of stars: a dream, all a dream, they have no existence. *Nothing exists*

save empty space and you,” with August himself, “flung,” as it were, “at random,” reduced to a Cartesian cogito, a “*Thought*,” a vagrant, useless thought “wandering forlorn among the empty eternities.” Tonally, this is even more reminiscent of the Nietzschean madman’s famous description of the emptiness of a vertiginous universe bereft of the God we have murdered—“Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night and more night coming on all the while?”—than it is of the literary source actually echoed in Chapters 33 and 34 of *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*. I refer, of course, to Prospero’s beautiful but nihilistic assertion that “we are such stuff / As dreams are made on,” and that the “great globe itself, / Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve, / And, like this insubstantial pageant faded, / Leave not a rack behind.”¹⁵ And yet the Death of God, though devastating to the radically spiritual thinker who felt compelled to announce it, also initiates the liberation of humanity; and Prospero, an agent of liberation, is himself “set free”—first by Ariel and, finally, in response to his “Epilogue,” by the prayers and applause of the audience in the theater. The play’s final words are “set me free.”

Many, perhaps most, readers understandably see the finale of *The Mysterious Stranger* as a reflection of the anguished loneliness of Twain’s final years (Tom Quirk has made this point most poignantly), even as a retreat into solipsism. But, as already noted, there have been affirmative readings, beginning with Tuckey, the scholar who first exposed the Paine–Duneka text as fraudulent, and ending, almost a half-century later, with that of Simmons, who re-embraces that text. Other recent commentators concur. In their 2011 essay on “Twain and Nietzsche,” Gabriel Noah Brahm, Jr., and Forrest G. Robinson note that “Satan [they mean No. 44] is careful to highlight the liberating significance of his message”; and two of the contributors to the 2009 *Centenary Reflections*, John Bird and David Lionel Smith, stress the unflinching *affirmation* of that existential loneliness and the “imaginative freedom” that ensues. I myself would emphasize the impact of *The Tempest*, not only Prospero’s speech, but the dominant motif of the play: being “set free”—even if the reality into which we are liberated is painful. Responding seven weeks after Livy’s death to Twichell’s question about how “life and the world” were looking to him, Twain, having just completed the “Conclusion,” described *himself* as “that thought” to which 44 reduces August, everything else in the universe being only “a *dream*, evolved from the frantic imagination of that insane Thought . . . And so, a part of each day Livy is a dream, and has never existed. The rest of it she is real, and is gone. Then comes the ache.”¹⁶

If, to quote Tennyson’s *In Memoriam A.H.H.*, a poem that deeply affected both Twain and Livy, it is “better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all”; and if reality (I ache, therefore I am) and truth, however

painful, are better than dream and delusion, Twain's "Conclusion" should not be reduced to a retreat into solipsism. Instead, this dark text—in which 44 presents August with terrible truths which nevertheless, he claims, have "set you free"—seems above all a frank and, finally, fearless inquiry into hard truths, philosophic and personal, that must be confronted, and to which we ought to respond proportionately. As in Nietzsche, a nontheistic determinism may, ironically enough, be liberating. For Simmons, a "significant but seldom-remarked" aspect of *The Mysterious Stranger* is the "possibility that an anti-humanistic message will, ironically, lead to moral and humanistic behavior—that, in distinguishing ourselves from gods, people will remember to act like moral humans." Does the vision conveyed in the "Conclusion" simply condemn us to accept the inevitability of our own annihilation, or is there a *value* in the recognition of terrible truths? In instructing his readers to "dream other dreams, and better," the Mysterious Stranger does not necessarily "detonate" the world—as De Voto (228–30) had claimed Twain had done in order to remove his own personal sense of "guilt and responsibility." Instead, Simmons concludes, Twain "opens it up radically to new and demanding possibilities, possibilities that deprive us equally of our delusions and of an excuse."

But the opening of those possibilities demands that "we recognize the truth," the truth that can set us free. An acknowledgement of proportion, of the place we humans truly occupy in the vastness of space, microscopic as well as cosmic, is at the cognitive, imaginative, moral, and therapeutic heart of Mark Twain's final fantastic voyages—"Three Thousand Years Among the Microbes"; his 1897 short story "Which Was the Dream?" expanded into the extraordinary, surrealist, and unfinished text "The Great Dark," governed by a Satan-like "Superintendent of Dreams"; and culminating in the assertion by Twain's ultimate Superintendent of Dreams, No. 44, that "it is all a Dream, a grotesque and foolish dream," with August reduced to a "Vagrant Thought . . . wandering forlorn" and forever through empty, interstellar space in an endless recurrence. This is the bleak but somehow bracing vision whose truth August acknowledges in the final sentence of the "Conclusion" to No. 44, *The Mysterious Stranger*: "He vanished, and left me appalled for I knew, and realized, that all he had said was true."¹⁷ This shock of recognition parallels Nietzsche's acceptance of the terrifying doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, that psychological test of the mettle of any potential *Übermensch*. I will conclude by returning to this question of truth: the courage it takes to face it, however difficult it may be, and the liberation, however limited *that* may be, that attends

an unflinching confrontation of available truths, especially when they are “terrible truths.”

In a 1904 letter to his friend William Dean Howells, Mark Twain acknowledged that no matter how closely he—or an authorized biographer and others in the Family Circle—might monitor the official and flattering story line, truth would out: “An autobiography is the truest of all books; for while it inevitably consists mainly of extinctions of the truth, shirkings of the truth, partial revealments of the truth, with hardly an instance of plain straight truth, the remorseless truth is there, between the lines, where the author-cat is raking dust upon it which hides from the disinterested spectator neither it nor its smell . . .—the result being that the reader knows the author in spite of his wily diligences.” Along with Twain’s affectionate observation of the sanitizing and camouflaging efforts of cats, one detects a grudging admiration for the relentlessness of truth.¹⁸ In an earlier, unpublished letter to his brother Orion, written in 1880, precisely between *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (which Huck kicks off by specifically accusing the author of *Tom Sawyer* of mixing with the truth some “stretchers”), Twain prophesied: “I perceive that when one deceives as often as I have done, there comes a time when he is not believed when he *does* tell the truth.”¹⁹

Increasingly in his final, “dark” years, Twain felt there was a “truth” he *had* to tell—a *hard* and *lonely* truth. Isabel Lyon, reading the “What Is Man?” manuscript in 1905, and adopting Twain’s “Gospel” as her own Nietzschean “gospel,” thought that, for at least “some,” it could “put granite foundations under them and show them how to stand alone.” On the morning of August 31, 1905, after she had played the orchestrelle for him, Twain invited her to his upstairs study, where:

he read aloud to me a part of his Gospel—his unpublishable Gospel. But Oh, it is wonderful . . . full of wonderful thoughts—beautiful Thoughts, Terrible Truths—oh such a summing up of human motives—and if it belittles . . . does it belittle?—every human effort[,] it also has the power to lift you above that effort & make you fierce in your wish to better your own conduct—such poor stuff as your conduct is—” (in Trombley, 63–64).

Few of us will find in *What Is Man?* as many wonderful or beautiful thoughts as Isabel Lyon did. True, beneath the rigid determinism that demands to be

accepted, lock, stock, and barrel, and the relentless critique of altruism, there is the Old Man's moral admonition to "train your ideals upward . . . toward a summit where you will find your chiefest pleasure in conduct which, while contenting you, will be sure to confer benefits upon your neighbors and the community."²⁰ It was to this "conduct" that Lyon was probably referring when she said that *What Is Man?* had the potential "power" to "lift you above" yourself in a "fierce" wish to "better your own conduct." But what she most emphasized were those shared pitiless truths Lyon felt made Nietzsche and Twain kindred spirits—"Terrible Truths," which could, for some, "put granite foundations under them and show them how to stand alone."

That seems, consciously or not, an endorsement of the celebrated insistence, in *Twilight of the Idols*, that "what does not destroy me makes me stronger" (*The Portable Nietzsche*, 467). Nietzsche presented himself as a prophet who (a point to which the Nietzschean Lyon may be alluding in making Twain's her own "Gospel") brought his own "glad tidings," antithetical to the Christian "gospel." Few have looked deeper into the nihilistic abyss than Nietzsche, and yet he called himself, in *Ecce Homo*, a "man of calamity" who remained an affirmer: "I contradict as has never been contradicted before and am nevertheless the opposite of a No-saying spirit. I am a bringer of glad tidings like no one before me." This is Nietzsche's conscious "opposite" to the supposed glad tidings of Christianity—itsself, according to Nietzsche, "the opposite of that which *he* had lived," he being Jesus, the "evangel" who "*died* on the cross," only to have the noble example of his life subverted by his disciples into the "*ill* tidings" of that "*dysangel*," Christianity. As it happens, Twain explicitly agreed with Nietzsche that the last Christian died on the cross. "There has been only one Christian. They caught him and crucified him." This 1898 entry in Twain's Notebook seems tantalizingly close to Nietzsche's more celebrated assertion, published three years earlier: "The very word 'Christianity' is a misunderstanding: in truth, there was only *one* Christian, and he died on the cross."²¹ When August Fendler, fearing for 44's soul, urges his companion to try to "become a Christian," 44 shakes his head, claiming, "I should be too lonely. . . . I should be the only one" (*MSM*, 302).

In emphasizing the capacity of "truth" to "set us free," I am not just putting a positive spin on what Twain intended to be the "Conclusion" of his Mysterious Stranger manuscripts, in effect joining Albert Paine, who rearranged the text to end on that positive note. I have no desire to ally myself with the man who romanticized and bowdlerized the manuscripts in 1916 and remained committed for a decade more (as he told his contact at Harper's in

a franchise-protecting letter of 1926), and well beyond *that*, to guarding and preserving the hagiographic “traditional” image of Mark Twain. My intention, instead, is to stress the paradox of freedom within constraint, and to connect what No. 44’s young interlocutor agreed was appalling but “true,” with the words Jesus spoke to those who came to believe in *him*, rather than in what Nietzsche and Mark Twain would agree was the falsification that followed: “And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). In turn, that *setting free* became for Shakespeare the verbal formula of the ultimate “project” of *The Tempest*—as I think Mark Twain realized in the course of writing the *Tempest*-influenced finale of *The Mysterious Stranger*.

For in his final decade, at the end of his life and tether, this most iconic of public figures, speaking “as Samuel Clemens rather than as Mark Twain,” made, as Hamlin Hill has noted, a rare “attempt at complete honesty” (xxiii). A desperately lonely truth-seeker often feeling defeated in a world of mendacity, he would have been pleased by Isabel Lyon’s image of him providing, in the form of “Terrible Truths,” “granite foundations” on which a select few might “stand alone.” Despite their shared determinism and denial of free will (though not “free choice”), neither Mark Twain nor Nietzsche approaches the sublime pinnacle of lonely *thought*, the ghostly solitude, of Spinoza, that “precursor” revered by Nietzsche. And yet, Nietzsche (and, at the end, Mark Twain) was even lonelier. Spinoza’s “way of thinking,” Nietzsche told Franz Overbeck in that important 1885 letter, “made solitude bearable,” since he “somehow still had a God for company,” while “what *I* experience as ‘solitude’ really did not yet exist. My life now consists in the wish that it might be otherwise with all things than I comprehend, and that somebody might make *my* ‘truths’ appear incredible to me.”²² No one did. And, in Twain’s case, when it came to his philosophy of mechanistic determinism as rigorously presented by his Old Man, he was not, despite the dialogue form of *What Is Man?* even open to counterargument.

Many would like to think that that was *not* true of the divided Mark Twain himself. And yet in the very last of his works to be written for publication, the first in a projected series of essays from notable figures asked to identify “The Turning-Point of My Life,” Twain rejected the titular premise and reaffirmed his deterministic philosophy. In his case, he insisted, there was no *one* pivotal moment that led him to his literary career; every event was a “link” in an inexorable “chain,” not only in his own life, but traceable back to the dawn of history. There was no singular event, nor any willed plan; everything was determined by the combination of external “circumstances” and one’s innate “temperament,” over which one has no control. Writing just a few months before his death,

Twain leavened the grim determinism of *What Is Man?* with an entertaining narrative and genuine humor. All would have been changed had there been a different couple in Eden, he concluded his essay. His “disappointment” in Adam and Eve, was “not in *them*, poor helpless young creatures—afflicted with temperaments made out of butter; which butter was commanded to get into contact with fire and *be melted*.” But what he “cannot help wishing is, that Adam and Eve had been postponed, and Martin Luther and Joan of Arc put in their place,” that “splendid pair equipped with temperaments not made of butter, but of asbestos. By neither sugary persuasions nor by hellfire could Satan have beguiled *them* to eat the apple.” Twain concludes: “There would have been results! Indeed, yes. The apple would be intact today; there would be no human race; there would be no *you*; there would be no *me*. And the old, creation-dawn scheme of ultimately launching me into the literary guild would have been defeated.”²³ “Results,” indeed! In this, Mark Twain’s final display of balancing “humor,” the pendulum, swung out over “woe,” swings back over “mirth.”

Spinoza, that “sublime spirit” revered by Nietzsche, found freedom within “human bondage.” A disciple of Nietzsche, W. B. Yeats, basing himself on Kant’s Third Antinomy (thesis: necessity, antithesis: freedom), pronounced creative spirits “predestinate *and* free,” and Nietzsche’s own mentor, Emerson, deliberately juxtaposed “Fate” and “Power,” the first and second essays in his late masterpiece *The Conduct of Life*. In reading Yeats and Emerson, and certainly in reading Nietzsche and Mark Twain, we should address rather than evade the profound questions they raised. Rather than sinking into what Yeats called, in his great poetic sequence *Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*, “the half deceit of some intoxicant / From shallow wits” (*Poems*, 253). we should confront the dark, deterministic regions of the mind they illuminated. We might then, with what Isabel Lyon would call their “Terrible Truths” and “granite foundations” under us, work toward something resembling, if nothing so grand as a new birth of freedom, a series of individual liberations with the potential to set others free as well. Of course, there is no need to repair to Lincoln or Lyon. Twain’s own Mysterious Stranger tells Man, in the immediate form of young August Fendler, that “I your poor servant have revealed you to yourself and set you free”—precisely the role played by Ariel, the liberated servant who goes on to set his master free, triggering Prospero’s renunciation of “vengeance” in favor of “virtue” at the turning point (V.i.14–32) of *The Tempest*. No. 44 may be speaking, but he is, after all—both in his most dismaying utterances and here, in offering the chapter’s sole glimpse of a possible freedom beyond the solipsistic and nihilistic nothingness—a theatrical mask amplifying the voice

of his creator, the self-divided, skeptical, but still truth-seeking Sam Clemens/Mark Twain. The same is true of “contradictory” Nietzsche, who—despite his radical insistence that all “truths” were perspectival, a matter of “optics,” and that there were “no facts, only interpretations”—also burned his candle at the altar of “truth,” and deplored “lies,” a word that appears frequently in his work, especially in *The Antichrist*. That ironic German, Thomas Mann, insisted in a 1947 lecture that Nietzsche—who was, like Mark Twain, as drawn to God and religion as he was repelled by the available versions of both—had crucified himself on “a cross of truth.”

For all their affinities, and despite the badgering of Isabel Lyon, Twain read little of Nietzsche, while Nietzsche, who loved his American humor and cant-puncturing “laughter,” devoured every work of Twain on which he could lay his hands, though always cherishing, as his favorite, the novel his mother had read to him, to spare his eyes, in 1879, when he enthusiastically recommended *Tom Sawyer* to his friend Overbeck.²⁴ In his essentially vegetative life after his complete breakdown a decade later, Nietzsche, now mentally a child, was once again in her care. “On his good days she took him on walks and let him play the piano. Sometimes she read to him, ‘in a soothing monotone,’ from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.”²⁵ It seems a final instance of *rondure*. Mark Twain came in and went out with Halley’s Comet lighting up the sky, though, at the end, “he had,” as Paine said, “slipped out of life’s realities, except during an occasional moment” of lucidity.²⁶ In the case of Nietzsche, there was a decade-long mental eclipse with no illumination at all, let alone any final burst of celestial light. All the more reason, therefore, for us to be strangely moved to learn that his early favorite among Mark Twain novels was there again at the end—still being read to him by his mother, but this time to a person sitting in darkness.

Notes

1. Shaw, “Giving the Devil His Due,” iii. “Diabolian Ethics,” in Shaw, *Bernard Shaw: Complete Plays with Prefaces*, 3:xliv–li; Mencken, “Mark Twain,” *Smart Set*, October 1919, reprinted in Joshi, *H. L. Mencken on American Literature*.

2. Autobiographical Note, in *MTP*.

3. Isabel Lyon Diary, in *MTP*.

4. Freud feared co-optation by a psychoanalytically precocious precursor who might leave him with no worlds to conquer. He admitted his anxiety of influence in 1931: “I rejected the study of Nietzsche although—no, *because*—it was plain that I would find insights in him

very similar to psychoanalytic ones.” Quoted by Peter Gay, *Freud*, 46. But Freud’s claimed ignorance is belied by many of his own remarks about Nietzsche, who had, he told his biographer Ernest Jones, “a more penetrating knowledge of himself than any man who ever lived or was likely to live” (2:344.) Freud’s denial of serious reading of Nietzsche is belied as well by, for example, the traceable impact of Nietzsche’s *On the Genealogy of Morals* on his own *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

5. *The Antichrist* §55, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 640.

6. “Every naturalism in morality—that is, every healthy morality—is dominated by an instinct of life . . . *Anti-natural* morality—that is, almost every morality which has so far been taught, revered, and preached—turns, conversely, *against* the instincts of life: it is a condemnation of these instincts. . . . All that is good is instinct—and hence easy, necessary, free” (*Twilight of the Idols*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 489–90, 493–94).

7. *The Portable Nietzsche*, 441. Though this letter (July 2, 1885) is not among those in Christopher Middleton’s *Selected Letters*, the crucial phrase appears in a footnote (244, n. 57). His translation is almost identical to Kaufmann’s: “My life now consists in wishing that everything may be *different* from the way in which I understand it, and that someone may make my ‘truths’ incredible to me.”

8. Mencken, “Mark Twain,” 31.

9. *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*, 379; *Poems*, 340, 342. Both poems are “Nietzschean.” According to Zarathustra (in the passage Yeats is recalling in the final movement of “Lapis Lazuli”), “Whoever climbs the highest mountains laughs at all tragic plays and tragic seriousness” (*Zarathustra* 1.7, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 153).

10. *Mark Twain: The Complete Interviews*, ed. Sharnhorst, 522–23.

11. Cited by Paine, *Mark Twain: A Biography*, 4:1552. The passage began, “Shall I ever be cheerful again? Yes, and soon. For I know my temperament. And I know that the temperament is *master of the man*. . . . A man’s temperament is born in him, and no circumstances can ever change it.” Though Emerson realized that he would “never again be able to connect” the beauty of nature with “the heart & life of an enchanting friend,” his “one first love,” he acknowledged his own “temperament,” one that has made many judge him to be unfeeling. Five days after Ellen’s death, he wrote in his journal: “This miserable apathy, I know, may wear off, I almost fear when it will. . . . I shall go again among my friends with a tranquil countenance. Again I shall be amused, I shall stoop again to little hopes & little fears & forget the graveyard.” Emerson, *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*, 3:226–27.

12. See Tuckey, *Mark Twain and Little Satan*; and “*The Mysterious Stranger*” and the Critics.

13. His title is explained by the fact that, swimming against the tide, Simmons prefers, as does James M. Cox, the 1916 version of the *Mysterious Stranger* papers as cobbled together by Albert Bigelow Paine. Paine was faced with three unfinished and partially overlapping manuscripts. However brazen his editing of the material and the emasculation of Twain’s polemic against God as conventionally conceived, he and his collaborator at Harpers, Frederick Duneka, *did* succeed (as Mark Twain hadn’t) in producing, not only a commercially viable book, but a coherent and readable text, one which, says Simmons, “despite its problematic history, is in my view the most interesting and significant variant for critics to address.” Perhaps; but their book, which jettisons the villainous priest Father Adolph and deletes the final polemic against God, is not Twain’s book. Still, though he refers almost exclusively to the 1916 text, Simmons is still focusing on the chapter that concludes the Paine–Duneka version (with “44” changed to “Satan”), the Tuckey restoration, and the manuscripts as presented in William M. Gibson’s scholarly edition, published in 1969 as *The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts*.

14. Malraux, *Les Noyers de l'Altenburg*, 99; my translation. The song was Nietzsche's poem "Venice." In the novel, Walter assists Franz Overbeck in bringing Nietzsche back to Basel.

15. *The Tempest* IV.i.146–58, and Epilogue; Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* §125 (*The Portable Nietzsche*, 95); *MSM*, 404, 405. In a footnote to his introduction (pp. 31–32), Gibson credits Coleman Parsons with having first suggested *The Tempest* and Prospero's speech as part of the "background" of Twain's final chapter. I see both chapters as influenced by that speech and by what immediately precedes it. Chapter 33 ends when 44 abruptly terminates the procession of the dead he has been parading past August, just as Prospero, suddenly recalling Caliban's conspiracy, abruptly brings the curtain down on the magical masque he has put on to entertain Ferdinand and Miranda: "our revels now are ended . . ."

16. For the dating of the "Conclusion," see Tuckey, *Mark Twain and Little Satan*, 62–65; Tuckey quotes this July 28, 1904, letter to Twichell in his introduction to *Mark Twain's Which Was the Dream?* 24. He doesn't cite Twain's moving reference to Livy in this letter, but Tom Quirk, in *Mark Twain and Human Nature*, emphasizes the pain of her loss. In general, Quirk thinks the critics have made rather too much of Twain's "Conclusion." Beyond the sense of "an overwhelming and appalling finality," it is "difficult to see what, if anything, it is supposed to mean." Read in an autobiographical context, especially in the aftermath of his wife's death, it is the final act in "a drama not of thought but of feeling; it is really a tall tale of loneliness" (274). For the citation from the Brahm–Robinson essay, see Robinson, Brahm, and Carlstrom, *The Jester and the Sages*, 22. David Lionel Smith's "Samuel Clemens, Duality, and Time Travel" and John Bird's "Dreams and Metaphors in No. 44, *The Mysterious Stranger*," are both in Csicsila and Rohman, 187, 197, 198, 213–15.

17. *MSM*, 405. For all the other late texts mentioned, as well as the longest of the dream fictions, "Which Was It?" (1899–1902), see Tuckey's *Mark Twain's "Which Was the Dream?"*

18. Twain to Howells, March 14, 1904, *MTP*. In *The Author-Cat*, Forrest Robinson uses this image to explore Twain's inadvertent disclosure in fiction of painful truths, usually involving guilt and denial, which he tried to evade in his autobiographical writings.

19. This December 1880 letter is quoted by Csicsila and Rohman in their introduction to *Centenary Reflections*, 4. I am indebted to Ann Ryan for a relevant anecdote. As a teenager in Hannibal, Clemens, showing off, pretended to be under the spell of a traveling hypnotist. His mother was completely taken in and when, years later, he tried to confide in her the truth of his antics, she refused to believe him: "And so the lie which I played upon her in my youth remained with her as an unchallengeable truth to the day of her death." *Huckleberry Finn* is cited from *MT*, 9.

20. Joshi, *Mark Twain: What Is Man?* 55.

21. Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, in *Basic Writings*, 783. *The Antichrist* §39, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 612. The statement is often reduced to the even more succinct "The last Christian died on the cross." *The Antichrist* was published in 1895, a half-dozen years after Nietzsche's breakdown.

22. *The Portable Nietzsche*, 441. Four years earlier, Nietzsche had told Overbeck that he was "delighted" to discover a "precursor, and *what* a precursor!" in Spinoza, who had made "my lonesomeness . . . at least a twosomeness," since that "lonely thinker is closest to me in these points precisely; he denies free will, purpose, the moral world order, the nonegoistical, evil" (postcard of July 30, 1881, in *Selected Letters*, 177). Nietzsche invariably spoke of Spinoza with reverence, praising his pure, simple, and sublime spirit.

23. *MT*, 779–80. First printed in *Harper's Bazaar* (February 1910).

24. The letter appears in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 73.

25. Griffin, "American Laughter," 141. The internal quotation—the affecting detail about the mother's "soothing monotone"—is taken, Griffin tells us, from Krell and Bates, *The Good European*, 51.
26. Paine to Mr. and Mrs. William H. Allen, April 25, 1910, quoted in Hill, *Mark Twain: God's Fool*, 265.

Works Cited

- Brooks, Van Wyck. *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1920.
- Csicsila, Joseph, and Chad Rohman, eds. *Centenary Reflections on Mark Twain's No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2009.
- Descartes, Rene. *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*. Ed. David Weissman. New Haven: Yale UP, 1996.
- De Voto, Bernard. *Mark Twain at Work*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1942.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Ed. William H. Gilman et al. 16 vols. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1960–82.
- Gay, Peter. *Freud: A Life for Our Time*. New York: Norton, 1988.
- Griffin, Benjamin. "'American Laughter': Nietzsche Reads *Tom Sawyer*." *New England Quarterly* (March 2010): 129–41.
- Hill, Hamlin. *Mark Twain: God's Fool*. New York: Harper Colophon, 1975.
- Jones, Ernest. *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*. 3 vols. New York: Basic Books, 1961.
- Joshi, S. T., ed. *H. L. Mencken on American Literature*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 2002.
- . *Mark Twain: What Is Man? and Other Irreverent Essays*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2009.
- Keats, John. *The Fall of Hyperion*. In *The Poems of John Keats*. Ed. Miriam Allott. New York: Norton, 1970.
- Krell, David F., and Donald Bates. *The Good European*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1996.
- Malraux, Andre. *Les Noyers de l'Altenburg*. Paris: Gallimard, 1948.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Portable Nietzsche*. Trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Viking, 1954. Includes *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *The Antichrist*, *Twilight of the Idols*, and letters to Franz Overbeck.
- . *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche*. Trans. and ed. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Modern Library, 1968.
- . *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Trans. and ed. Christopher Middleton. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1969.
- Paine, Albert Bigelow. *Mark Twain: A Biography*. 4 vols. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912.
- , and Frederick Duneka. *The Mysterious Stranger: A Romance*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1916.
- Quirk, Tom. *Mark Twain and Human Nature*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2007.
- Robinson, Forrest, G. *The Author-Cat: Clemens's Life in Fiction*. New York: Fordham UP, 2007.
- , Gabriel Noah Brahm, and Catherine Carlstrom. *The Jester and the Sages: Mark Twain in Conversation with Nietzsche, Freud, and Marx*. Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2011.

- Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. Ed. Frank Kermode. The Arden Edition. London: Routledge, 1964.
- Shaw, George Bernard. "Giving the Devil His Due," *Saturday Review* 8 (May 13, 1899).
- . *Bernard Shaw: Complete Plays with Prefaces*. 6 vols. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1963.
- Simmons, Ryan. "Who Cares Who Wrote *The Mysterious Stranger*?" (2010). <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/lit/summary/v037/37.2.simmons.html>.
- Trombley, Laura Skandera. *Mark Twain's Other Woman: The Hidden Story of His Final Years*. New York: Knopf, 2010.
- Twain, Mark. *The Mark Twain Papers*. Bancroft Library, University of California–Berkeley. Cited in text as *MTP*.
- . *Letters from the Earth* (1909). In *Letters from the Earth: Uncensored Writings by Mark Twain*. Ed. Bernard De Voto. New York: Harper-Collins, 1962.
- . *The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts*. Ed. William M. Gibson. Berkeley: U of California P, 1969. Cited in text as *MSM*.
- . *Tom Sawyer Abroad*. In *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Tom Sawyer Abroad, Tom Sawyer, Detective*. Ed. John C. Gerber, Paul Baender, and Terry Firkins. Berkeley: U of California P, 1980.
- . *Mark Twain: Huck Finn; Pudd'nhead Wilson; No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger; and Other Writings*. New York: Library of America, 2000. Includes "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," "The War Prayer," and "The Turning Point of My Life." Cited in text as *MT*.
- . *Mark Twain: The Complete Interviews*. Ed. Gary Sharnhorst. Tuscaloosa: U of Alabama P, 2006.
- Tuckey, John S. *Mark Twain and Little Satan: The Writing of "The Mysterious Stranger"*. West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 1963.
- . *The Mysterious Stranger and the Critics*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1968.
- , ed. *Mark Twain's "Which Was the Dream?" and Other Symbolic Writings of the Later Years*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1968.
- , ed. *Mark Twain: No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2004.
- Yeats, W. B. *The Letters of W. B. Yeats*. Ed. Allan Wade. New York: Macmillan, 1955.
- . *W. B. Yeats: The Poems*. London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1990. Includes "The Gyres," "Lapis Lazuli," and *Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*.