

Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor


By James Melville Cox

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The Description for this book, Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor, will be forthcoming.

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Editorial Review

Review

"One of the great strengths of James M. Cox's challenging study lies in his demonstration that Mark Twain' was not the writer's alter ego but a gesture, the meaning of which was to continue emerging through Samuel Clemens's life'. . . . On the identity of Mark Twain' and on other matters of primarily biographical interpretation, few scholars have been so illuminating."—*South Atlantic Quarterly*

"Professor Cox's study of Mark Twain and his writings is a major contribution to our understanding of America's most popular writer. On such perplexing biographical questions as Olivia Clemens's influence upon her husband's work, Cox is clear and convincing. On such thorny critical questions as the ending of *Huckleberry Finn*, 'the authority of the printed version of *A Mysterious Stranger*, ' and the appropriate form of presentation for the *Autobiography*, ' his opinions are judicious and authoritative. His book, however, deserves even higher praise, for it is something more than a study of one author; it is a model discussion of the psychology of humor. Its distinctions between humor and satire and its clarification of the relation between the humorous and what critics unthinkingly call the serious' will be of interest and value to every student of the comic."—*Virginia Quarterly Review*

"This is the kind of book that reads as if the subject had scarcely been touched, a book that is at once wholly basic and wholly new."—*New England Quarterly*

"Mr. Cox with few false steps has followed a difficult path to its inevitable conclusion, and has produced the most thoughtful—though serious—and most thought-provoking study of Mark Twain of his generation."—*Southern Review*

"*Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor* is . . . a model of literary criticism: sensitive, judicious, beautifully written. . . . He joins that small group of writers—Paine, Brooks, DeVoto, Smith, Andrews, Blair, Kaplan—who have contributed most to our understanding of Mark Twain."—*Nineteenth-Century Fiction*

From the Publisher

For this edition of *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor*, the author has written a new introduction showing how and why Mark Twain remains a central figure in American life; he has also appended an essay disclosing why *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* will always be a hard book to take.

About the Author

James M. Cox is Professor Emeritus of English at Dartmouth College. He is the author of *Recovering Literature's Lost Ground: Essays in American Autobiography* and the editor of the Penguin edition of Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi*.

The **Mark Twain and His Circle Series**, edited by Tom Quirk and John Bird

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