



Mark Twains Geographical Imagination

Joseph A. Alvarez

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As early as the 1850s, when Samuel L. Clemens (before he became Mark Twain), as a teenager, traveled from his hometown of Hannibal, Missouri, to the east (Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and New York City) and south (St. Louis). In the 1860s, he traveled west to Nevada, California, and The Sandwich Islands (Hawai'i). He also traveled east to Europe and the Middle East. In between these early travels and his 'around the world' lecture tour in the 1890s, he lived for periods of time in Europe. From these travels and sojourns abroad, Clemens often found that the imagined geography differed significantly from the reality. And, as most people know, he drew on his real and imagined 'home' geography of the lower Mississippi River region to produce several works, including his masterpiece, 'Adventures of Huckleberry Finn'. Although much has been published about his travels, this collection of essays marks a different approach to Twain's use of geography and geography's influence on Twain. The eleven essays use Twain's concepts of space (geography) to help us understand (or to complicate our understanding of) some of Twain's works, including 'Life on the Mississippi', 'Adventures of Huckleberry Finn', 'The Prince' and the 'Pauper', 'Roughing It', 'A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court', 'No. 44 The Mysterious Stranger', 'Tom Sawyer Abroad', and 'The Private History of Campaign that Failed.' The contributors include veteran Twain scholars as well as a graduate student and a non-academic humorist. Their critical perspectives range from the biographical and historical to Althusserian Ideological.

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