

Adventures of Tom Sawyer and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (87, Jan. 1972, 69–74) is sound and illuminating, although she ignores the fact that Huck is his own narrator and that *his* perception of Tom changes notably in the course of his book. The extent to which Huck is a persona for Mr. Clemens-Twain is a question worth exploring further.

It has been pointed out frequently that Huck's decision not to return Jim to slavery is his coming of age. "All right, I'll go to hell" is the declaration of independence with which he marks his passage of the rites of puberty. Less attention has been paid to the fact that his subsequent encounter with Tom is the stuff of tragedy, not comedy. It is not just the uncomfortable encounter of the grown-up adolescent with the still-childish one that makes the ending so awkward; what Huck finally sees in Tom is unendurable, and if the function of art is to make us endure the unendurable, it is still hard to do it in a book for boys. Louisa May Alcott, who managed to make the intolerable position of women in her society suitable material for the entertainment of adolescent girls, was quite right when she advised the Concord Public Library that Mr. Clemens' book was too strong for children.

Huck has always accepted humbly and unquestioningly the view that society is right and he is wrong. Mark Twain, however, never allows the reader to share Huck's view of himself; at every point in the story the boy's naïve and uncritical observation is used with the bitterest irony to show us the viciousness and stupidity of the society which rejects him.

When he and Tom meet again it may be that Tom also has grown up; his fantasies are no longer acted out by willing children at play but by reluctant men who endure real pain, terror, and humiliation for his pleasure. Tom is much more than Huck's friend; he is his hero, his alter ego (the point is made explicit by the confusion of identities in the final scenes), his bridge to respectable society. When Huck is forced to realize that Tom is cruel, dishonest, and incapable of the sort of human feeling which has developed between Jim and himself, there is nothing left for him but dropping out. Nevertheless, his valedictory line: "Aunt Sally, she's going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can't stand it. I been there before," is lamentably weak as compared with "All right, I'll go to hell."

This weakness has puzzled critics ever since the book began to be thought a subject for serious criticism. Miss Fetterley's identification of Huck with his author suggests an explanation which carries us out of the self-contained world of the novel. In the letters to Howells which she quotes, Clemens was clearly identifying with Tom. If in *Huckleberry Finn* he does partially identify with Huck, he is forced back at the end of the book to the painful realization that this dichot-

omy can exist only in his imagination. In spite of the insight and the wish so clearly expressed in his nom de plume, the author cannot in real life be separated from the man, and if Clemens has submitted to being "sivilized," the twain must suffer the consequences.

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Mau-Mauing the Epiphany Catchers

To the Editor:

I cannot agree with all the specifics of Sidney Feshbach's argument in his comments (in "Hunting Epiphany-Hunters," *PMLA*, 87, March 1972, 304–06) about Robert Scholes's letters on epiphany. But I share what I gather is Mr. Feshbach's basic view: that epiphany is central to understanding James Joyce's art and Stephen Dedalus' "manner of looking and chronicling . . . events" (p. 305).

Curiously, however, Mr. Feshbach commits an error which weakens what would otherwise have been a stronger argument. For in his examination of three related incidents in the *Portrait*,¹ he is forced to say that "although two of the three passages are not included among [Joyce's original manuscripts of] the Epiphany-texts, they resemble the one that is" (p. 305). The "one that is" is Epiphany No. 5 in *The Workshop of Daedalus*.² But immediately after the passage in the *Portrait* based on that epiphany (p. 68) occurs the third of the three related scenes in this section of the novel, and as a matter of fact it too is based on a manuscript epiphany (No. 3 in the *Workshop*, p. 13): that epiphany begins, "The children who have stayed latest are getting on their things." The parallel passage in the *Portrait* begins, "In the hall the children who had stayed latest were putting on their things" (p. 69). As I have shown elsewhere, this epiphany was adapted by Joyce (both for *Stephen Hero* and for two passages in *Portrait*) with extraordinarily interesting and subtle variations.³

In any case, the importance of this epiphany within Joyce's novel does, I think, tend to support Mr. Feshbach's general claim that Mr. Scholes's negative views of the concept of epiphany would not have been shared by James Joyce.

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Notes

¹ *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Chester G. Anderson and Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1964), pp. 67–70.

² *The Workshop of Daedalus: James Joyce and the Raw Materials for A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed.

Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1965), p. 15.

³ See my *Epiphany in the Modern Novel* (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1971), pp. 90–93. For my own discussion of the issues raised by Robert Scholes's contentions, see the Introd., the ch. on Joyce, and esp. pp. 82–85.

Humanism

To the Editor:

Piers Lewis' response [Forum, 87, Jan. 1972, 105–06] to Maynard Mack's address to the MLA prompts this respectful denial that "humanism in education has had its day." I teach in even more middle, middle America at a college devoted to engineering and technology, and I can report that humanism is at least alive, if not kicking.

I, too, teach required courses to reluctant and even hostile students, most of whom "want only one thing . . . a [good] grade." But they *respond* to literature—to that "repertory of encounters" which brings us "face to face with all that we have been, much that we might be, [and] stands as a perpetual challenge to whatever we become," according to Maynard Mack. That my students come unaware of their capacity to make this response, and may even remain unconscious of its value, I consider justification for accepting my salary—not that its size requires any.

Their response is real. It is fleeting perhaps, but it is felt, it is truth encountered. And while I don't delude myself about the lasting effects since I have no way to evaluate them in any case, I teach from the conviction that I have something to communicate which is very

real and very necessary. If a teacher of literature has lost that conviction, Mack's "faith," his students will be the first to notice, and fundamentally this condition may make "effective teaching in the humanities impossible." It is probably true, as Mr. Lewis puts it, that "few students are prepared for honesty and responsibility or know how to respond to teaching that possesses these qualities." Might not that very fact be the *raison d'être* of all departments of the humanities?

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Thomas Mann to Hermann J. Weigand

In publishing the English translation and original German version of the letter from Thomas Mann to Hermann J. Weigand in the March 1972 Forum (pp. 306–08), we failed to note that the German version had previously appeared in *Wächter und Hüter: Festschrift für Hermann J. Weigand* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ., 1957, pp. 163–64). Harry Tucker, Jr. (North Carolina State Univ., Raleigh) points out two variant readings: (1) *PMLA*—"Unwiederholbares" (p. 307, col. 2, line 10 down); *Wächter und Hüter*—"Unwiederholhaberes [sic]" (p. 163, lines 15–16 down). Mann's original letter contained the *Wächter und Hüter* version. (2) *PMLA*—"Muss ich es denn *alles* irgendwoher haben?" (p. 308, col. 2, lines 4–5 down); *Wächter und Hüter*—"Muss ich denn *alles* irgendwoher haben?" (p. 164, line 12 up). Mann's original letter contained the *PMLA* version.

The headnote to the letter as it appeared in *PMLA* was written by Professor Weigand.