



Mark Twain and the Art of the Tall Tale

Henry B. Wonham

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Mark Twain and the Art of the Tall Tale is a study of a peculiar American comic strategy and its role in Mark Twain's fiction. Focusing on the writer's experiments with narrative structure, Wonham describes how Twain manipulated conventional approaches to reading and writing by engaging his audience in a series of rhetorical games--the rules of which he adapted from the conventions of tall tale in American oral and written traditions. Wonham goes on to show how Twain's appropriation of the genre developed through the course of his career, from *The Innocents Abroad* to *Tom Sawyer*, *Huck Finn*, and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. This eminently readable study will interest Twain enthusiasts and students of nineteenth-century American literature, as well as anyone interested in American humor and oral narrative traditions.

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