The many sides of Hank: modifications, adjustments, and adaptations of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*.

By Cari Keebaugh

"Literature is about the human condition. Regardless of where a story takes place or what happens in it, the characters should still, at heart, be human."

- David Kelly, *Critical Essay on A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

"Am I in my right mind? And if I am, canst tell me where in the hellith I am?"


Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* has been adapted to multiple media since its publication in 1889. The unique meshing of inspiration from historical commentary with varied public opinions on contemporary politics, in addition to his ability to make even the most macabre aspect of human nature into burlesque, one of the most read – and one of the most misjudged – works by Twain. *Connecticut Yankee* often address Twain's sources and historic/political intent, rarely (if ever) the complexity of the novel's characters. Adaptations, moreover, fascinating and complex depiction of the Yankee, Hank Morgan. This essay...
Hank's psychological aspects as they are presented in externalized forms in other characters, and then how these characters and their dynamics were modified, undone by adaptations of the novel to film and comic books.

On November 11, 1885, Mark Twain read an early draft of what would become *A Connecticut Yankee* at the Military Service Institution, Governor's Island, New York. Alt contemporaries praised the work, a close friend expressed concern regarding Twain's humiliating treatment of characters from Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur*, Twain's chief inspiration for his novel. In response to her concerns, he observed in a letter, "The story isn't a satire peculiarity," he explained, "but more especially a contrast" between times and the present. Twain explained that he was only "after the life of that is all: to picture it; to try to get into it; to see how it feels & seems... & I should... the extinction of its old tender & gracious friendships...should lose their tears through my handling," (*Twain to Fairbanks*, 258). But it is true that beautiful characters drawn by the master hand of old Malory" (*Twain to Fairbanks* would draw new breath through Twain's pen. As Twain's new hero was developed, the other characters began to reflect Hank, in ways that were not necessarily true depictions of them in *Le Morte D'Arthur*. Unique interactions with legendary heroes make Hank a deep, complex character, while allowing the reader to more easily access his ambiguities. Ironically, this dynamic is the very element of the novel most often altered in adaptations.

Hank Morgan is packaged and delivered to his audience as somewhat of a paradox; he condemns the aristocracy, but joins their ranks when he earns a title ("The Boss"). But this is not the only issue on which Hank plays both sides; for example, originally appalled Morgan le Fay's cruelty toward her servants and subjects, Hank later appeases her by having her band hung, stating "A little concession, now and then, where it can is the wiser policy" (Twain 155). At the outset a humanitarian, at the end a heartless scoundrel, Hank, observes Fulton, "offered Twain a chance to 'set up man & him & see if he was better or worse than this chaos & rubbish he was made out of,' as [Twain] suggested in his marginalia" (Fulton 94-95). David Kelly notes that Hank of his own flaws," making him perhaps harder for readers to relate to. It is my
Hank's ignorance is exactly what makes him such a timeless character; Twain crafted a hero with contradictory behaviors and beliefs: in short, he created a character who is honestly human.

Hank takes center-stage throughout the novel, eclipsing the other characters. When they appear, they seem shadowy and only present to enhance Hank. But if they are not individual, fully-realized agents of the narrative, what are they? As the book's main theme peaceful revolution coupled with one man's psychological growth and development, I contend that the other characters are reflections of Hank's inner psyche. Externalizations of his psyche control the reader's perception of Hank's contradictory behaviors. By externalizing them, Twain made it possible for "get inside" Hank's head without destroying the humor of the story in the process.

Amyas Le Poulet, or Clarence as he is better known, is left out of most critical discussions of A Connecticut Yankee, yet he plays an important – perhaps even the most important – role for Hank. Homoerotic overtones pervade their first contact. "This [Clarence]," notes Hank, "was an airy slim boy in shrimp-coloured tights that made him look like a forked carrot; the rest of his gear was blue silk and dainty laces and ruffles; and he had long yellow curls wore a plumed pink satin cap tilted complacently over his ear. ... He was preframe [my emphasis]" (Twain 47). In this manner, the reader is first introduced as though he were a fifteen year-old girl. Hank's reaction to Clarence is noteworthy: the homoerotic feelings seem to soon disappear. Perhaps Hank's initial reaction is caused by his dislocation in time and space; in other words, Hank's initial (unconscious) reaction is to identify with one of the first people he meets. Later in the book, we learn had a sweetheart from his own century named "Puss Flanagan" (Twain 114). It is interesting to note is that this conversation takes place between Hank and Clarence, associating Clarence with her. Clarence is also later connected to Puss in a stronger way; Hank exclaims, Fifteen! Break – my heart! Oh, my lost darling!...whom I shall never see again! How the thought of her carries me back over wide seas of memory...many, many centuries hence, when I used to wake in the soft summer mornings, out of dreams of her, and say "Hello, Central!" just to hear her dear voice come melting back to me with a "Hello, Hank!" that was music of the spheres to my enchanted ear. (Twain 142-3)
This statement takes on new meaning for Clarence, as there are two cases in which Clarence replaces Puss at the other end of the wire, once in the Valley of Holiness where Hank and Clarence exchange "affectionate interchanges" (Twain 218) over the phone, and London during Hank and the King's bondage as slaves (Twain 342-43). There is also the fact of Clarence's age; he tells Hank that he was born in 513, and that the present year is 528 (Twain 48), making Clarence the same age as Puss. It is my opinion that Clarence's later connection to the telephone and his age and girlish appearance when Hank met him indicate that when Hank met Clarence, he formed a cathartic bond with him as a defense mechanism. This allowed Hank not only to preserve Puss's memory, but to identify with someone familiar in a strange place. The homoerotic implications of their relations disappear gradually during the course of the book, in conjunction with Hank's change of perception regarding Sandy, who comes to replace Puss as Hank's love interest. Hank is therefore bound to his past and giving him depth as well as breadth.

Sandy is another character of the novel who demands our attention. She begins as merely a nuisance to Hank as he begins his knight-errantry, but eventually proves her value to him by acting as a kind of cultural guide. When he bests several knights in battle (by scaring them with his pipe), Sandy claims them for him and sends them off to King Arthur's in Hank's name — "she was," he observes, "a handy person to have along in a raid" (Twain 135). Hank begins to have an unusual "reverence" for Sandy's use of language, turning to praise as he claims, "it was borne in upon me that I was standing in the awful presence of the Mother of the German Language," (Twain 204). Eventually, Sandy becomes Hank's love interest for Hank (and an actual mother), but this only occurs because of her steadfast faithfulness to him: "this sort of partnership would compromise her, sooner or later" (Twain 372). So, in the interest of propriety — not love — Hank arranges a wedding. Sandy seems to represent Hank's misanthropic feelings during their first adventure together, when he complains, "I was ashamed of her, ashamed of the human race" (Twain 179), and mere paragraphs earlier she was "handy to have along." Because of Hank's slowly changing attitude toward Sandy, and because of the many times he flips back and forth between admiring and being ashamed of her, Sandy must surely represent an externaliz...
Hank's own conflicting emotional growth. This conjecture is supported by Sandy replacing Puss as Hank's love interest; as Hank assimilates the sixth century, he grows and outgrows his desire for Puss. Sandy, acting as a replacement, gives Hank the "perfectest comradeship that ever was" (Twain 372), when he had grown to the point where he could appreciate such a thing as an equal partner in a relationship. But just as Hank is torn away from Puss, he is torn away from Sandy, by Merlin.

Merlin and Morgan le Fay present the reader of A Connecticut Yankee with strange cases. Neither character seems able to stand on his or her own without Hank, but – unlike Sandy – neither represents anything good about human nature, suggesting that they figure instead darker aspects of the hero. For example, Merlin's power in the kingdom rests on his faith in people's superstitions. Although Hank professes to hate this sort of mindless superstition, he engages in it himself by eclipsing the sun with his "power," blowing up Merlin's tower and fixing the well with "magic" that turns out to be merely roman candles. Merlin presents Hank's basic paradox: he embodies the very thing Hank wants to see destroyed in his bloodless revolution, and yet Hank relies on the same power over the people as Merlin did (superstition) in order to institute that revolution.[2] Ironically, it is Merlin who deals Hank his final blow in the sixth-century, suggesting that Hank's failure to be a better man than his enemies is what eventually destroys him.

Morgan le Fay presents an equally odd case. Hank's name seems to insinuate a form of connection between them: Morgan le Fay is a projection of Hank Morgan's darker, less humanitarian side. Her presence in the book seems to suggest some sort of division in Hank's psyche, or perhaps she serves instead to foreshadow his later cruelties. Morgan le Fay also inspires Hank's soliloquy regarding how much of a man is himself, and how much is inherited. He says, "All that I think about in this plodding, sad pilgrimage, this pathetic drift between the eternities, is to look out and humbly live a pure and blameless life, and save that one microscopic atom in me is truly me: the rest may land in Sheol and we I care" (Twain 161). In this passage, Hank seems to be excusing not only Morgan le Fay, also himself, of every heinous crime that has been or will be committed for forward time in the novel. By absolving her, he frees himself to continue employing Merlin's scare-tactics in order to run Camelot.
In 1931, Will Rogers starred in one of the first film versions of *A Connecticut Yankee* (Figure 1). The film added an ingenious new frame narrative; however, this also robbed the story of some of its mystery. Hank Martin, a radio announcer from Hartford, is called upon to deliver a battery to a local patron. Upon arriving, Hank comes upon "a spooky house on a stormy night," where "an inventor has created a machine that is able to hear sounds from the past" (Sindelar, July 5). The storm knocks over a suit of armor and it crashes down on the unsuspecting Hank, rendering him unconscious. On waking, Hank finds himself in Camelot, where King Arthur's daughter, Alisande (Sandy) is held captive by the King's sister, Morgan le Fay. Clarence is love-struck with Sandy, and so decides to save her. Arthur and Hank decide to go in Clarence's stead, as Hank discovers that Clarence is his great-great-great-great grandfather. Merlin conspires with Morgan le Fay to kill the King and Sir Boss, but they are foiled. Bombs dropped on Morgan le Fay's castle during the rescue serve to smash a tower – which falls on Hank, again knocking him unconscious, and bringing him back to the present.

These revisions to Twain's original story call for examination of Hank and his psychological projections (the other characters). Hank begins the story with a bit of a shy side; this is maintained throughout. This is slightly undermined, however, by his sarcasm.
remains fairly true to the tone of the novel. In this setting, Hank is a sarcastic funnyman – playing on Rogers' familiar stage persona – but as in the *Classics Illustrated* comic, he is flat, his darker side sacrificed for the adaptation. Moreover, in the novel it is not after a peaceful revolution that will change England for the better; instead, Hank is interested in becoming rich at the nation's expense. When Arthur asks what manner of magic advertising is, Hank replies, "It makes you pay money you don't have for things you don't want." This sentiment directly contradicts Twain's text, where Hank, for example, to "introduce cleanliness among the nobility, and from there work its way down to the people," (Twain 144-45). The film Hank does rescue from Morgan le Fay's castle during the final scene in Camelot, suggesting that Hank is a humanitarian, but this side of Hank was not well-established before this point.

Clarence is substantially transformed in the film. He is much older than 15, and instead of being Hank's page, he is madly in love with the King's daughter, Alisande – whose important role in the novel is much reduced; she is a damsel in distress, nothing more. Clarence is knighted in order to rescue her, but Hank discovers that Clarence is an ancestor and so insists that he remain safe at the palace. (If Clarence is harmed or killed, Hank reasons, he can never be born.) Clarence has no relation to the telephone or any of Hank's other inventions, with the exception of the air raid that ends up sending Hank back to his own time. But having no connection to the telephone does not damage his association with Puss Flanagan, as in this movie there is no association; Puss is never mentioned. The aspect of Clarence's character that is notably preserved is Hank's first question to him, "Just what is thy sex?" (Rogers 1931). But this uncertainty is then dropped and never re-addressed, nor used to deepen Hank's own character.

Merlin, on the other hand, retains his "my magic versus yours" role throughout. Hank uses a cigar lighter and a cigar to show that he is more powerful than Merlin, saying, "Where I come from, you pretty much have to be a magician to make a living!" (Rogers 1931). In this version, however, Merlin is not the instrument of Hank's demise, and the magician relies on Morgan le Fay for support, enmeshing their characterizations. Although Merlin could possibly still pass for the embodiment of superstition, Hank doesn't rely on him to gain his own power quite as much as in the novel.
Morgan le Fay's depiction in the film presents an interesting and ambiguous case: as Hank's last name is changed from "Hank" to "Martin," the tie between Morgan le Fay and Hank is weakened. Instead of serving as Hank's dark double, le Fay represents a love subplot only lasts for a few minutes, though, and soon we find that Hank is only interested in her for the sake of freeing the King and his daughter.

Throughout the film, then, Hank remains a static character, because the other projections of his psyche— are less complexly realized. His sarcasm is intact, but there is no external measure of his growth (Sandy), no attachment to his past life (Clarence) to reveal his darker side (le Fay), and little to no competition from Merlin. One critic calls Rogers's *A Connecticut Yankee* "a very entertaining rendition of the story" (Sindelar, July 5), but I would contend that this critic does not grasp the deeper relations characters, which are largely lost with this rendition. Machinery and modern inventions pervade the screen, but their original significance—peaceful industrial revolution—sacrificed to forced love stories and a weak characterization of Hank.\[3\].

**Comic adaptations of the novel**

![Figure 2. Kings Classics page 3. Hank and Clarence are shown holding hands as Clarence shows Hank to Arthur's hall. © 1997 King Features.](image)

One of the first adaptations of *A Connecticut Yankee* was a comic book produced by King's Classics. In this version of the story, Hank is portrayed with notable complexity and fidelity to the novel. His humane side is exposed when he frees Morgan le Fay's prisoners, but...
also flashes his crueler side as he throws a bomb at a group of men while he is roaming the countryside. (The men are cast as brigands, not as knights as in the original, perhaps as a way to justify Hank's cruelty.) During the tournament against Sir Sagramore, Hank wields a gun, but instead of shooting the knight outright, he shoots just in front of Sagramore's horse, making him buck and throw his rider. Thus, while Hank's mixed quality of humanitarian/heartless knave is maintained, his cruel nature is very much played down, and in some cases even explained away.

Clarence is presented somewhat differently than one would expect; he offers his services to Hank when they meet, and declares his own name as "Clarence." He also climbs into Hank's cell through a loose stone instead of being the go-between for Hank and the King during Hank's threats to blot out the sun. Although there is no mention of Puss Flanagan, some of the homoerotic overtones of the novel are preserved. In one panel, Clarence begins to drag Hank to King Arthur's court by the wrist, but in the next panel they are holding hands (see Figure 2). Also, Hank observes that Clarence has become an indispensable "secretary" (Kings Classic 8); these devices effectively blur Clarence's gender.

The depiction of Sandy is also different from Twain's original. Where in the novel she is a girl who's a bit of a nuisance, she appears in the comic as a voluptuous woman, and Hank agrees to go on her mission because "On second thought, these women are very pretty..." (see Figure 3). No mention is made of her language, and all Germanic significations of Valley of Holiness are gone. In the end, Hank marries Sandy, but the circumstances of their union appear to be different than in the original; Hank seems to be in love with marrying. This doesn't allow for the externalization of Hank's growth during his stay in the 6th century, as neither one of them seems to change much through the course...

![Figure 3. Kings Classics page 8. Hank agrees to help the king because "the women..."](image)
Morgan le Fay is reduced in the comic to a watered-down version of her former self; she kills no one, only keeps prisoners. She pouts when Hank wants to free the slaves. She has no wrath, only child-like tantrums. (This, coupled with the alterations of Sandy's depiction, suggests a sexist undercurrent of the adaptation.)

If Clarence, Sandy, and Morgan le Fay are notably less developed in the comic, Merlin's character is beautifully rendered, aesthetically and faithfully to Twain's original intentions. All of the strife between superstition and modern science are marked between Hank and Merlin in this edition. Hank observes of Clarence: "I thought it best to go along believing in Merlin's phony magic" (Kings Classic 4). This suggests to the reader the connection between Merlin and unfounded superstition, and also Hank's scorn with regard to such beliefs. He does, however, use the eclipse as a way of saving his life and gaining power in the kingdom, and Merlin is still the one to ensure poetic justice by being the agent of Hank's undoing. In an interesting twist, however, Merlin tells Clarence to finish Hank started, thereby preserving Hank in history.

There are three Classics Illustrated editions of A Connecticut Yankee, published in 1945, 1971, and 1997. The 1945 is rare and exceedingly difficult to obtain, but I had the opportunity to examine the 1971 and 1997 editions, which are nearly identical. In the 1997 edition, Hank's depiction is very flat (his personality, that is; the comics are drawn with notable grace in this version – see Figure 4). This is due to the treatment of his supporting characters. Morgan le Fay, Hank's dark double, is left out entirely, rending Hank mute on the subject of heartless master/humanitarian. Sandy, too, plays a very different role, as she is no longer the mirror of Hank's growth. Their adventure together is struck from this version, and she shows up only to guide Hank to the Valley of Holiness, and once more in the end Hank may marry her. Hank's sarcastic demeanor and jokes are maintained – for example, his quip to Clarence, "you're not more than a paragraph," is preserved – but his darker side is sacrificed, perhaps in order to reach a younger readership.

Merlin is depicted with somewhat greater complexity. After Clarence tells Hank that Merlin cast a spell on the dungeon, Hank thinks to
himself, "I hoped everyone was as superstitious as Clarence," (Classics Illustrated 4) and then tells Clarence to deliver the message to Merlin that he will blot out the sun if not released. In this way, Hank uses Merlin's power against him in that he harnesses the fears of the people; however, this concept is not developed further. The episode at the Holy Fountain is played down, making it seem as though Hank is buying into the power instead of dismissing it, even though he still uses it to his advantage. In the comic, Hank states, "Merlin! That cheap old humbug! He oughtn't to set up for an expert magician when there's a real artist like me around" (Classics Illustrated 11). The corresponding passage in the book is quite different: "Merlin was a magician who believed in his own magic. And no magician can do well who believes such silly things as that!" (Twain, 201). This difference is significant; in the Classics Illustrated version Merlin may still represent the people's superstition, but Hank's reaction to it, and subsequently to Merlin, is changed. Instead of scorning the superstition and yet still playing on it, as in the original, Hank is presented as believing in his own power, thus in a way sinking level. When Merlin causes Hank to sleep until he wakes in his own century, the poetic justice of the scene is lost.

The only secondary character truly exploited in this version is Clarence. Although never stated directly, visual clues in the comic intimate the homoerotic overtones already suggested in the early chapters of the novel. In the first panel showing Clarence (Figure 5), his position and haircut strongly allude to the Coppertone baby. A page later (see Figure 6), Clarence is drawn from the waist up, with an unusually prominent breast for a boy of fifteen. This is emphasized even more later on page 7 and in two adjoining panels on page 9. Towards the end of the story, however, these feminine insinuations diminish, and in a matter of seven pages, disappear entirely (47). It is interesting that these homoerotic messages are maintained only pictorially. Their basis in the original, Clarence's doubling of Puss Flanagan, are nonexistent in the comic.
The 1984 *Pocket Classics* comic differs substantially from the *Classics Illustrated* comic. Where Hank in the *CI* version is simply a sarcastic funnyman, in the *Pocket Classics* he is dry and straightforward. A similarity of the comics, however, is that in both comics Hank's cruelty is less prominent than in the novel. For example, in the *Pocket Classics* version, Hankle Fay is present, but it is she who has both bands hung (26-27). She seems completely isolated from Hank's character, diminishing the importance of their encounters. Sandy is more frequently present in this version than in the *Classics Illustrated* comic, but she still fails to reflect Hank's emotional growth. Here, she is described as a blabbermouth, but that is never resolved, as Hank's "Mother of the German language" soliloquy didn't make it into this version. He does mention that Sandy is useful to have along, as she sends the three "captured" knights to King Arthur. But she is mute through the rest of the comic, appearing only to be wed to Hank and to bear his child. Although she is portrayed with more nuances in this comic than the *Illustrated Classics*, she is still an impoverished version of what she was originally, and with this the complexity of Hank's character is also diminished.

If Clarence most fully realizes his original functions in the
Merlin's character is not only written well, but a very effective use of non-linear paneling throughout the comic gives Merlin a very interesting aesthetic value. Upon hearing Clarence's declaration that Merlin cast a spell on the dungeon, Hank replies, "Merlin! Why, that crazy old man with his silly beliefs!" An aside then gives us Hank's thoughts, "But it suddenly occurred to me that if everyone here was so afraid of Merlin's magic, perhaps I could work out a plan" (Pocket Classics, 12). In this single panel, an entirely different tone is set with regard to Merlin and superstition. In the Classics Illustrated version, Hank seemed to believe in his own power, falling prey to the superstitions which gave him his power. In this version, however, Twain's original conception is followed more closely, as Hank regards Merlin (and superstition/magic) as "crazy," but then decides to use that to his advantage. This hypocrisy is what gives Hank's character its depth in the original. Also, this version quotes directly during the episode at the Valley of Holiness: "Merlin was a magician who believed in his own magic. And no magician can do well who believes such silly things as that!" (Pocket Classics, 35; Twain, 201). As a result, Hank's undoing by Merlin's hand retains significance, for Hank is beaten by the very power he harnessed to achieve greatness in the first place.

Conclusion

Throughout different adaptations of *A Connecticut Yankee*, a common trait is clear: Hank is not the character that Twain originally wrote him to be. Although elements of the original are changed in each adaptation, Hank is generally either dry and boring, or simply a flat funnyman with little humanitarian intent. His connection with Morgan le Fay, is generally omitted in the comic book version.
And it is also clear that the modifications to the other characters affect Hank, as well. Sandy does not parallel Hank (or, when Hank shows no change in perception toward Sandy), his growth throughout the story is diminished; there is little to no character development for Hank in those texts where Sandy plays a more minor role.

In the case of Clarence, the sexual ambivalence of the original is generally lost, and Hank's entire past is ignored, including Puss Flanagan and the conflict between Hank's "lost darling" and his growing feelings for Sandy. Clarence's role in the adaptations generally to guide Hank through the first scene with the King and to bring news to him in his dungeon cell before the eclipse. As Clarence is reduced from a page to a paragraph, to borrow Twain's pun,[4] Hank's corresponding depth of character is reduced. The only way in which Clarence maintains any depth is when he is portrayed, as in the Classics Illustrated version, as possibly gender-crossing.

Changes in the depiction of Merlin have a similar effect on Hank's depictions. Merlin represents the superstition that Hank scorns but uses to his own advantage, and any different treatment of Merlin's character alters Hank's adopted use of this power. Changing Merlin unavoidably changes Hank's original perception of whether or not using Merlin's power is wrong.

None of the comic book adaptations of A Connecticut Yankee capture the complexity and ambiguity of Twain's novel. Generally, each version seems to champion one of the characters in order to challenge or promote Hank's personality. If my analysis sounds overly critical at times, it is only because Twain's original story offered us much material to work with in the first place. Sifting through all the possible variations of how to adapt this story, I came to find that the characters which most radically changed the story – if drawn and written poorly – are Clarence and Merlin. Clarence has the potential to alter Hank's connection to his past, and thus alter his perception of his current situation. Merlin, on the other hand, must embody unquestioning superstition in order for Hank to revolt against such an idea while simultaneously using it to his advantage. In short, each comic captures different and varying aspects of Twain's original tale; however, no two versions are identical in which character is developed in order to support the Yankee. At the end of
offers us a different lens by which to view the novel, whether the lens is Merlin's superstitions, Clarence's offering of a transitional relationship, or Sandy's potential for equality in relationships.

Twain's novel is, of course, only one of countless texts that have been adapted to the comic book medium. Classics Illustrated, Graphic Classics, Pocket Classics, and King's Classics are only a few of the various companies that heavily rely on classic works of literature as source material, and their popularity among comic book aficionados and scholars alike belies the attraction readers feel for these adapted texts. But in most of these cases, the original stories are substantially flattened; they are limited by the physical space they hope to transpose the story (such as the number of pages they have to work with and the comic book's dimensions) and by the projected readership, generally expected to be young readers.

The adaptations of *A Connecticut Yankee* demonstrate why special attention needs to be paid to comics that adapt long prose fiction. Those elements that are excluded because of medial limitations, or to tailor the original to a narrower readership, determine how well an adaptation represents (or resembles) the text from which it borrows. Lenny Kaye discusses the role that Albert Kanter, creator of the Classics Illustrated series, imagined his comic books to serve. He had no intention of supplanting the original literary texts, but instead "he merely wanted to place the original books in a form more accessible to a generation that was beginning to recoil from the linearity of printed matter into more immediate…media" (Kaye, qtd in Sawyer 6). Comics should not be judged by whether or not they successfully stuff a long novel into a comic format (which is surely impossible for many reasons), but by what lens they offer of the original text. Each adaptation provides a different aspect of the original, and these differing lenses may serve to help old texts in new lights, to see, in effect, those aspects of prose narrative difficult because they are present – rather than omitted – or are differently integrated into the system of the work.

Notes

[1] See, for example, Howard Baetzhold, "Well, My Book Is Written – Let It Go…"


[3] Other film adaptations of the novel – Unidentified Flying Oddball (1979), A Kid in King Arthur's Court (1995), and Bugs Bunny in King Arthur's Court (1977) – are so far from original in nearly every respect that "adaptation" is too strong a word for their association with Twain's story. (I believe "borrowed the general idea" is closer to the truth.) Little reason exists to include them in this study, as none of Twain's characters are depicted in these adaptations.

[4] When Clarence meets Hank for the first time and introduces himself as a page, Hank replies "Go 'long,...you ain't more than a paragraph," (Twain, 47).


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