Twain's second comment occurred in a draft preface for *A Connecticut Yankee* in 1888: "Human liberty—for white people—may fairly be said to be one hundred years old this year [. . .]" (*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* [Berkeley: U of California P, 1977] 518). Race is at the forefront of Twain's chronology. The real source of discontent is that readers feel that Huck's determination to go to hell for his friend Jim should be followed by a breaking out. The absence of such a breakout and Twain's immersion of his characters in stupefying burlesque and caricature are certainly what antagonized a reader like Ernest Hemingway and later scholarly critics who describe the ending of the novel as "flawed." Yet such an outcome is foreshadowed by the ending of *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, where Huck, the only speaker to use the word "nigger" in the last several chapters, says he is willing to eat with Uncle Jake, whom Huck identifies as "a mighty good nigger," as long as it is not generally known. Race and class issues are consciously, but unpleasantly, jumbled in Twain's satire, as they still are in American society; Twain's humor is confrontational, and so it brings disquiet to readers who are not properly prepared by experience, intrinsic insight, or good teaching. Great works by many other authors share this characteristic, as is easily proved by the line of freshman readers who appear at my desk to ask if Swift really thought eating babies would solve the Irish hunger problem. Twain's challenge, and ours, as Margolis suggests, is to get past our distress at having our "good intentions" exposed as hollow and to accomplish the social and economic conditions that make "human liberty" as Twain understood it—liberty from absolutist authority and also from economic repression—an actuality. Until then, any accurate reader should be discontented with the conclusion of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, but as a work of fiction, the novel does its work brilliantly.

David E. E. Sloane
University of New Haven

Reply:

Carl F. Wieck calls attention to one aspect of my argument about *Huckleberry Finn*: the connection between the forty dollars handed to Jim at the end of the evasion sequence and the Reconstruction promise to provide the freedmen with "forty acres and a mule." The first time I ever heard of Wieck's work was when *ANQ* sent me his book (*Refiguring* Huckleberry Finn) to review—long after my essay had been accepted for publication by *PMLA*. I confess I was surprised by Wieck's letter, having just submitted a review praising Wieck for tracing structural patterns in the text, like the repetition of the number forty, that have hitherto gone virtually unexamined by critics. But my review also points out that, aside from mentioning the legacy of "forty acres and a mule," he makes no sustained argument about its significance in the novel. It's a shame that Wieck is so wedded to his "results" that he is oblivious to their implications.

Stacey Margolis
University of Utah

The Copyediting of Literary Manuscripts

To the Editor:

M. Thomas Inge opens his "Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship" (116 [2001]: 623–30) by announcing that "[i]t is commonplace now to understand that all texts produced by authors are not the products of individual creators," that they are, in other words, products of "the collaborative process." He immediately adds, however, that "the romantic myth of the author as solitary genius" is a continuing and, in his estimation, an objectionable belief. But are not the two points merely the two sides of the same coin? If one is "commonplace," the other is or should be too. I mean to suggest that I have some trouble understanding the driving force behind Inge's article, which, I hasten to add, does lucidly exemplify various kinds of collaboration. In one way Inge's major and pertinent examples—*The Waste Land*, *Sister Carrie*, various works by

https://doi.org/10.1632/S0030812900166945 Published online by Cambridge University Press