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Humorist; A Century of Criticism; A Humorist's Self-Definition; II: Toward a Discussion of Humor; 2 The Physics of Humor; I; II; III; IV; 3 The Psychology of Humor; Relaxation; Coping; Aggression; 4 The Sociology of Humor; American Humor; The Morality of Humor; Mark Twain and the Natives, at Home and Abroad; III: Early Years: Comic Creations (1851-1872); 5 The Strategy of Counterpoint; The Apprenticeship of a Humorist
The Clash of Contrast and the Stretch of ExaggerationJump-Starting a Career; A Humorist Afloat; The Innocents Abroad; Samson Trimmed, Lightly; Roughing It; 6 Throw in Another Grizzly; I; II; III; IV: Middle Years: The Triumph of Satire (1873-1889); 7 Old Times and New Narrators; "Old Times on the Mississippi"; The Adventures of Tom Sawyer; A Joke for John: The Whittier Birthday Speech; Tramping with Twichell; A Turn to History: The Prince and the Pauper; 8 The Non-Example of Bret Harte; I; II; III; 9 Adventures of Huckleberry Finn; The Joke on Jim
Beyond Jim: The Humor of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn10 Comic Contrast and Violent Humor; Comic and Satiric Contrasts; The Humor of Violence; Satire and Poignancy; 11 The Advocacy of W. D. Howells; I; II; III; IV; V: Later Years: The Humorist as Ironist (1890-1910); 12 The Not-So-Gay Nineties; Busted; A Bankrupt Abroad; Raffish Reviewer; Twain's Twins: Pudd'nhead Wilson; Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc; Gains and Losses; 13 A Subtle Humorist; Recovery; Following the Equator; Vienna and London; Homecoming; Satirist vs. Imperialists; Adam and Eve; The Higher Animals
The Christian Science AutocracyShakespeare and the Law; God and Man; Pessimist?; VI: Remnants; 14 Mysterious Strangers; The Texts; Editorial Pain; Symbols, and a Theory, of Despair; 15 An Uncharted Sea of Recollection; Four Twentieth-Century Editions; The Twenty-First Century Definitive Autobiography; "The Right Way to Do an Autobiography"; Appendix; Books by Mark Twain: A Selected List of American Editions Published in His Lifetime; Tales and Sketches; Posthumously Published Works; Sources; Key to Abbreviations; Other Works Cited; Notes; Index

Sommario/riassunto

Twain is America's best known humorous writer, yet many commentators have thought of humor as merely an attractive surface feature of Twain's writings. Kolb shows that humor is at the center of Twain's talent, his successes, and his limitations, and it is as a humorist that he is best understood.