

**Lesson Plan: Satire/Tone using *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and *The Unknown Citizen***

**Mark Twain Teachers Workshop – Mark Twain Museum**

**Hannibal, Missouri**

**July 23-27, 2007**

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“It is curious that physical courage should be so common in the world, and moral courage so rare.” Mark Twain in *Eruption*

Focus: Satire

- Definition: A literary work in which human vice or folly is attacked through irony, derision, or wit.

Tone

- Definition:
  - **tone**, a very vague critical term usually designating the mood or atmosphere of a work, although in some more restricted uses it refers to the author's attitude to the reader (e.g. formal, intimate, pompous) or to the subject-matter (e.g. ironic, light, solemn, satiric, sentimental).
  - The poet's or persona's attitude in style or expression toward the subject, e.g., loving, ironic, bitter, pitying, fanciful, solemn, etc. Tone can also refer to the overall mood of the poem itself, in the sense of a pervading atmosphere intended to influence the readers' emotional response and foster expectations of the conclusion.

Time Frame – two weeks

Targeted audience -- 11<sup>th</sup> grade honors, American Literature

Vocabulary - Students' selections

Materials

- *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, Chap. 13, “Freemen!”, Mark Twain
- *The Unknown Citizen*, *W. H. Auden*,  
<http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15549>

Technology/Hook

- PowerPoint of Dan Beard's illustrations from "Freemen!" chapter and others

### Objectives (Florida Sunshine State Standards)

The student will:

- LA.1112.1.6.1 - use new vocabulary that is introduced and taught directly;
- LA.1112.1.6.2 - listen to, read, and discuss familiar and conceptually challenging text;
- LA.1112.1.6.3 - use context clues to determine meanings of unfamiliar words;
- LA.1112.1.7.2 - analyze the author's purpose and/or perspective in a variety of text and understand how they affect meaning;
- LA.1112.1.7.6 - analyze and evaluate similar themes or topics by different authors across a variety of literature
- LA.1112.2.1.7 - analyze, interpret, and evaluate an author's use of descriptive language (e.g., tone, irony, mood, imagery, pun, alliteration, onomatopoeia, allusion), figurative language (e.g., symbolism, metaphor, personification, hyperbole), common idioms, and mythological and literary allusions, and explain how they impact meaning in a variety of texts with an emphasis on how they evoke reader's emotions; fiction and nonfiction selections;

### Assessment Options:

Write a poem, piece of short fiction, or essay satirically explaining your view of America. You might also choose to show the view of America that you think a particular person or member of a group would have, rather than your own view. You might consider America today or throughout history. Also write an introduction that explains your purpose and tone.

Background info/Prior knowledge: Ask students what they know of Mark Twain and W.H. Auden. Share brief biographies.

- ❖ Before "Freemen!" discuss what is a freeman and what is a slave? Who have been slaves throughout history? Tell the story of Connecticut Yankee.
- ❖ Before "The Unknown Citizen" ask students what numbers are part of their identity (social security number, student ID, locker number, passport number, driver's license, birth date, credit card, phone, house, PO). Could we function as a society without these numbers?

### Activities

- Provide copies of "Freemen!" Have students find unfamiliar vocabulary words by skimming text. Create class list, assign a few words to each student. Each student will write the word, definition, and context sentence and present to class. Play Bingo to reinforce words.
- Read "Freemen!" in class.  
Divide class into groups of 3 or 4 and discuss these questions. Mark support in texts.

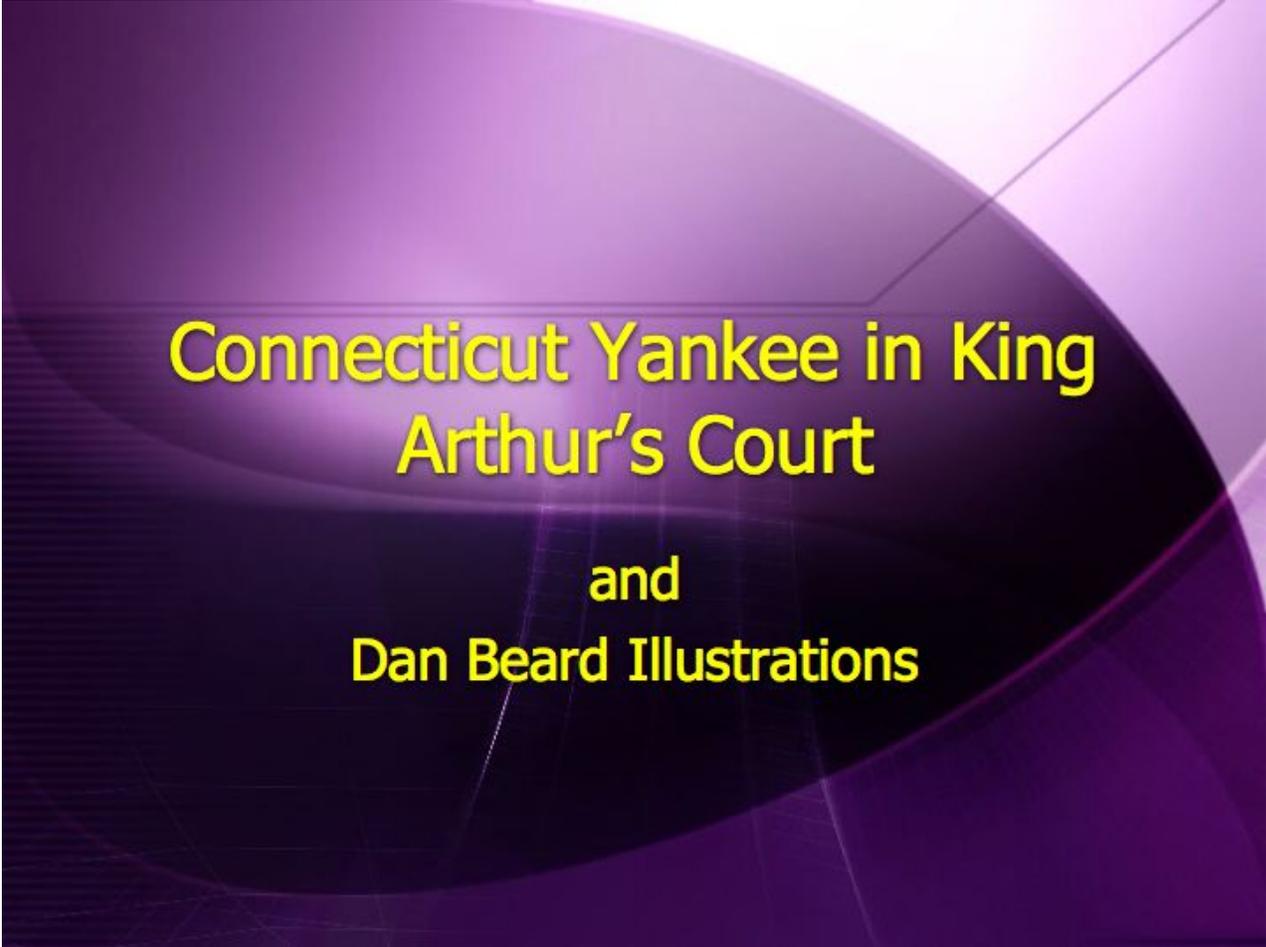
- What was Sandy's reaction when Hank invited the freemen to breakfast? Why?
  - What does Hank mean when he says "they were the nation, the actual Nation?"
  - What are the restrictions of the "freemen's" lives?
  - What was the attitude of the freemen to the Church and nobility?
  - To what is Hank loyal and why?
  - What do you think Hank's "Man-Factory" is like? Support with details from "Freemen!"
- Discuss definition of satire. Find a few examples in the text as a class. Return to groups and create a T-chart with examples of satire and explanation of its effect.

EX: Passage	Effect
these innumerable clams	describing the freemen as clams shows their low nature, silence, inability to speak for themselves

- What is the tone of "Freemen!"
- Read "The Unknown Citizen" aloud. Discuss student questions, unfamiliar vocabulary (Frigidaire?)
- In small groups complete TP-CASTT handouts for the poem and present to class.
- Discussion questions:
  - What kinds of records are kept about the "unknown citizen" and by whom?
  - What do you think is "necessary to the Modern Man"?
  - Would you like to live a life like his? Why or why not?
  - Was he happy?
  - What would make you happy with your life?
  - How does Auden use satire?
  - What is the tone of "The Unknown Citizen"?

#### Follow-up activities

- *I Hear America Singing*, Walt Whitman, <http://www.bartleby.com/142/91.html>
- *I Too Hear America Singing*, Langston Hughes, <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15615>
- "Richard Cory" Poem and song by Simon and Garfunkel
- Put your piece to music
- Attend a rally to support a cause
- Plan a rally for a cause



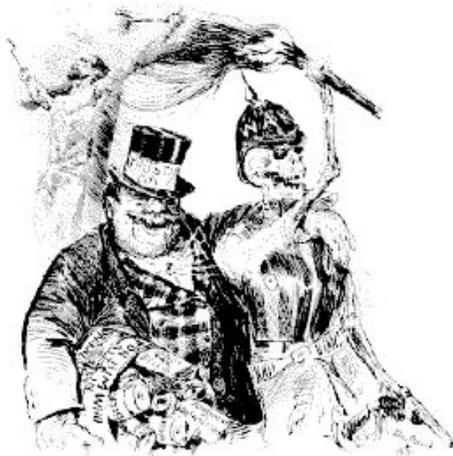
**Connecticut Yankee in King  
Arthur's Court**

**and  
Dan Beard Illustrations**



EFFECT OF THE PIPE ON THE FREEMEN.

- “. . .I lit my pipe. When the first blast of smoke shot out through the bars of my helmet, all those people broke for the woods, and Sandy went over backwards and struck the ground wit a dull th;ud. They thought I was one of those fire-belching dragons they had heard so much about from knights and other professional liars.
- What character trait of the freemen is emphasized?
- How does Beard convey this trait?



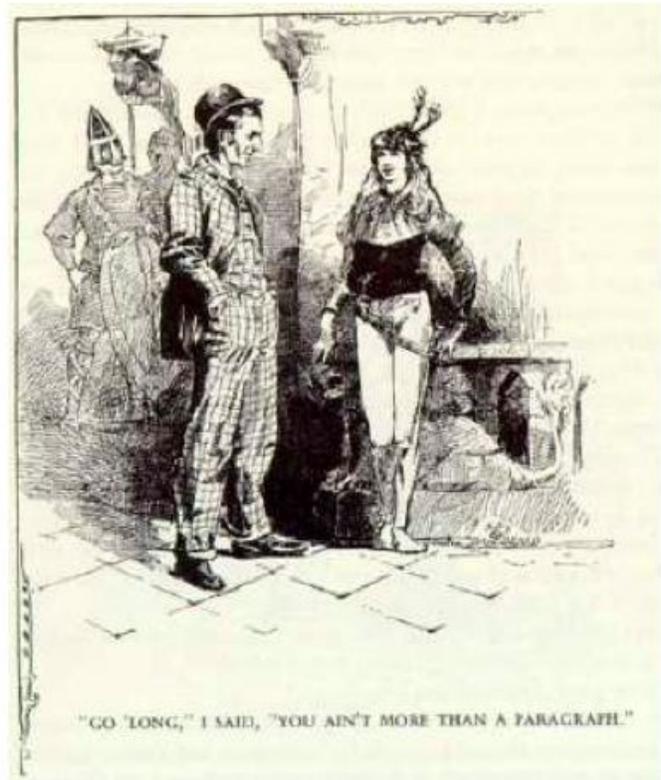
**"A Blood Brotherhood. A big company to grab everything . . . The 'Benevolent Assimilation Company, Limited.'" The barrel is labeled "For Him Who Sits in Darkness." Illustration by Dan Beard from Ernest Crosby's anti-imperialist novel, *Captain Jinks, Hero* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1902). Dan Beard illustrated Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and was later a co-founder of the Boy Scouts. Crosby was president of the Anti-Imperialist League of New York.**

- Who is pictured?
- Why?
- What symbols are used?
- What words are used?



- Who is caricatured?
- How? Why?

- Explain humor.
- Who are characters?
- Effect of background.
- Body posture.



- What adjectives would you use for Sandy based on this picture?
- What details support that?



- Based on Jay Gould.
- Problems for Dan Beard
- Characteristics?  
Details?



- Who is being satirized?
- What does the banner add to the effect?
- What symbols are used?
- What is humorous about the illustration and why?

