

Re-reading Samuel Clemens: Marking the Literary Adventures of Mark Twain

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Introduction

Mark Twain hated to be introduced. He was somebody who stood up in front of a lot of large live audiences and very quickly and very early in his career, he decided to take over the business of introducing himself. In some sense he needs no introduction. Although Mark Twain never really existed; he was after all simply a figment of imagination of a man named Samuel Clemens. During Clemens' lifetime Mark Twain became and to this day he remains one of the best known and best loved of all Americans. He was a country's first true literary celebrity and even in our 21st century, in a society saturated with celebrity images and various cultural and commercial icons with faces that we see on every magazine one month and then seem to disappear the next, even in our time the figure of Mark Twain stands out very vividly in most people's minds. The image of a man in a white suit with that main of white hair with that moustache that seems to need combing with a cigar in one hand and a twinkle in both eyes. Generally, people smile thinking about Mark Twain because the image conjure up all the pleasure people associate with that figure. Advertisers tell us that image is everything but the researcher does not believe that. Image can be a mask which can disguise or hide more than it reveals (Arac 21). The thesis would focus on his public image and how he was seen amongst his contemporaries and the performances he engaged in. The writing in which he cast his 'Mark Twain' persona in the role or protagonist; lectures and speeches in which he performed Mark Twain before live audiences throughout America and around the world (Rasmussen 84). But the thesis will also keep trying to get behind the scene on which this image was being enacted. Not just at how it was being shaped but also at what is being disguised or transformed or lost in the process of its enactment (Harris 19). Throughout the thesis we will be guided by two large questions: a. What has Mark Twain meant to the American audience that made him such a star? b. What did Mark Twain mean to the man who created him, whose name was Samuel Clemens?

What did Mark Twain mean to America? It is a question which can help us appreciate what is found in his texts. This included the obvious pleasure he gave readers by making them laugh. But Mark Twain would have been one of the dozen or so funny men of his time

or one of the thousands of comics and humorous entertainers since if the only pleasure he brought American readers was discharged when they laughed (Benson 22). The researcher would also explicate about the cultural work that he did and the reason why that was so satisfying to his contemporary audience. The thesis will also deal with how he helped America define and assert itself as a nation as a national culture. How his way of being and writing as Mark Twain helped America to locate itself in time and space. He helped his American contemporaries understand where they came from (Rich 76). Whether he was writing his books like *Innocents Abroad*, a travel book about going east or a book like *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, a fantasy about the feudal past about the new world emerged out of and existed historically to revising or writing a book like *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, a novel district act of memory and nostalgia that gave 19th century Americans in a rapidly changing world a permanent connection to a treasured vision of the past. Whether we want to call that past childhood or village life beside the rolling Mississippi river (Hill 22). He helped Americans understand where they came from. At the same time, he gave Americans a wonderful image of what they were or at any rate who they wanted to understand themselves as being. The figure of Mark Twain is a kind of mirror in which they could look to see a best American self reflected back to them. Someone who was funny prepared to take life humorously, prepared to take himself humorously (Cardwell 61). But underneath all that with someone who had deeply serious purposes as a writer, somebody who was both original, brilliant, one of a kind, unmistakably Mark Twain and yet somehow common, one of the people (Hoffman 33).

The Plumas National Newspaper after reviewing the Connecticut Yankee in 1890 wrote: "Mark Twain has come up from the people. He is American to the backbone" (Sagala Center). By representing that image of an American self, Mark Twain helped his contemporaries understand who they were. And in his very success in the arc of his life, they saw a very attractive image of where they were going, where they hope to go individually or where they believed were going as a nation (Robinson 64). Samuel Clemens had been born in the poorly constructed log cast haven in an obscure hamlet in the middle of America. But by the end of his life, as Mark Twain, he had risen to become one of the most famous inhabitants of the planet (Lauber 11). And that idea of this American from the middle of this new world come into prominence on the world stage reflected the idea of America emerging from its own colonial early beginnings toward that destiny that became the 20th century in which America projected itself into the world in the same way as if Mark Twain, Sam Clemens could project himself onto the world. The thesis will explore what did Mark Twain give to the American readers (Blair 29). The best place to find those answers is in his texts. The focus would most specifically be on *Innocents Abroad*, *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

Identity of Samuel Clemens / Mark Twain

But the author should acknowledge right at the beginning that it is impossible to discuss all or even most of what Mark Twain wrote. While constructing the thesis, the purpose of the author is to go deeply into the works that we do talk about and that meant

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making some tough choices about what to leave out (Salomon 71). The other question that will guide the thesis is what did Mark Twain mean to Samuel Clemens? The author confesses that this is the question that is of great interest to the author. Clemens' imagination gave birth to a number of great character: Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, Pudd'nhead Wilson to name just a few but Mark Twain was the greatest of all his fictions (Spengemann 29). Where did he come from? This figure Mark Twain, why did Clemens create him? What needs or desires did he allow Clemens to fulfil. Did Mark Twain bring to Samuel Clemens as much pleasure as he brought to his audiences. Another more slightly theoretical way to articulate this issue is to ask what performances as Mark Twain help us understand about the nature of identity, about the mystery of selfhood (Stone 18). How do people express or enact their essential selves? Is there an essential self apart from the roles that are defined by our relationships to other people whom we are in some sense always performing for? There was Sam Clemens in private and there was Mark Twain in public in the case of this one career is a very spectacular example of what is true for all of us on the smaller stages of our own lives (Budd Social 21). The people we are when we are alone and the performances we put on, the selves that we enact for others. Our best way to find specific answers to this large question will be to keep locating individual texts in the larger context of Clemens' life and the public career of Mark Twain. That is one reason we will take up Mark Twain's works in essentially chronological order from the beginnings of his career as a writer in the mid-1860s through his death in 1910. We watch as he becomes Mark Twain and then go on to explore how when he became a novelist in the middle of his career the whole cluster of issues that can be attached to the drama of being Mark Twain, the issues of performance, popularity, success, identity and then the symbiotic related themes of freedom, autonomy and selfhood. That whole cluster of issues become major preoccupations in his fiction. His novels not only helped America express itself they were also Twain's way to try to understand himself (Sattelmeyer 88). Clemens' way of trying to explore his own story too. It is even possible to connect dots, these two sets of questions, what Mark Twain can tell us about American society and what he reveals about Samuel Clemens' individual quest to be somebody. When it being put it that way to be somebody then one can see the connection pretty quickly.

Being somebody, that is one of the central promises of American democracy. That our place in society is not fixed by birth but upto each one of us to create (Sanborn 77). We can be anybody we want. That is the story and the promise that we keep telling each other and our children, we can be anybody we want, provided we have the resolve, the talent and the energy to make it. Of course, we never enquire too particularly to what it is that we are talking about when we say we can make it. Presumably we will find out what it is when we get there (Willis 39). When we have it made there is also a latent threat in that promise about being somebody. You can be somebody as if you are not somebody already; as if somebody is something you have to create; as if you should become somebody else.

You can hear that concern in the very name that Samuel Clemens took for himself in his quest to be somebody. The name he took for himself, the one that stuck him anyhow as the pseudonym by which the world came to know him within a very few years after he first started using the name in the 1860s: the name was Mark Twain. There are two possible

origins that have been suggested for the source of that name from two different accounts: one that Twain himself has provided and most scholars and biographers accept that account traces the name back to Clemens' days as a river boat pilot on the muddy Mississippi river before the Civil War. On the river boat Mark Twain stood for two fathoms, 12 feet of water is a really nice ambiguity about that depth, 12 feet. Steamboats needed between 9 and a half and 10 and a half feet of water to keep them from running the ground and the last thing you want to do as a pilot was to let a steamboat hit the bottom of the river. It needed about ten feet and 12 feet was just a little bit more, just enough to keep you safely floating what Mark Twain and pen depended a lot on when you thought that water was getting shallower or getting deeper (Wonham 66). If you thought that the water was getting deeper, if as the leadsmen took the soundings each depth was a little bit higher than the depth before. Mark Twain meant easy water, smooth sailing. When you heard that Leadsman cryout *mark twain* then you knew you were past the risk, and you were in a safe place and the rest of the ride would be easy, as least for a while. If you thought the water was getting shallower, if the bottom seems to be coming up each time the leadsmen took the soundings, then *mark twain* was the sign of danger, it was a warning. *Mark twain* meant that bottom was coming up and the boat is about to crash. The reason why that is such a perfect example because Twain makes cultural performance, he was always engaged in it. He was always working at line between danger and safety, between making people uncomfortable and letting them feel as if they are in for a good ride, a smooth time. You can hear all that in that name Mark Twain if you trace it back to the river and in most accounts that is where the name comes from. That is what Twain himself has said several times when he was asked the question why did you call yourself Mark Twain and what does it mean. He cited the above mentioned Mississippi example.

The other account traces the name back to Clemens' days as a newspaper reporter in the Nevada territory and his supposed habit of coming in to a bar so thirsty that he ordered two drinks at a time and so broke that he invariably had to ask the bartender to put them both on his tab. Mark Twain meant chalk up two more, bring me two drinks and put them both on my account. One can choose whatever they like but most scholars would say it is a river boat term but a number of people have argued pretty persuasively that the deeper origin or the more accurate origin goes back to the habit that he had of walking into bars and singing out himself Mark Twain. You can choose depending on which image you prefer or where in American experience you would rather locate the figure Mark Twain, on that river in the middle of the country or in that rougher, wilder frontier west of the mining towns of the Nevada territory. Either way that name can point us in one other direction wherever it came from. There is that association, there is the implication inside those two words themselves. If you read it as a sentence in the imperative tense *mark twain* means 'note the two'. That is what *twain* means 'two'. But by using that word he lets the two into a conflicting relationship, a problematic relationship with each other. Since we hear in English that word most often when we talk about cutting something into two, about something being broken or sundered, cleft in twain, divided in twain. Those are both phrases that appear in a good deal of Mark Twain's writings or that famous proverb never the twain shall meet. Mark the twain, note the two. There are a lot of twosomes in his work to note, the best-known pair is probably those two boys who become linked in the American consciousness Tom Sawyer and

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Huckleberry Finn (Gribben 40). One of the issues that the researcher will explore when the researcher gets to the novels that Twain wrote about them is the intricate way in which Tom and Huck were inter-related in Twain's own imagination. By the end of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, for example, Huck almost steals the novel's attention away from Tom and the thesis will look at that process in later chapters, but reciprocally by the end of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck himself becomes the other Tom as that is the name that people call him by. That is the part that he is playing in the long last section of *Huck Finn* and Tom in some sense steals the story back for himself.

Two Sides of the Same Coin

Twain was fascinated by twins especially the figure of Siamese twin, two personalities trapped inside one body. The original story out of Pudd'nhead Wilson, for example was a farce called "Those Extraordinary Twins" (1894) about this kind of pair, Angelo and Luigi; two legs, one trunk, four arms, two heads, and two very different personalities. The term Siamese twins comes from a real twosome, a kind of curiosity that travelled across America during Clemens' lifetime and exhibited themselves or itself, Twain would keep playing with that ambiguity, to American audiences. Their names were Chang and Eng, for a little while they worked for Barnum for example. In actuality they got along remarkably well with each other. When Twain wrote about the figure of the Siamese twins he gave the two violently dissimilar temperaments so that one was a strict teetotaler and the other an alcoholic; one would drink the whiskey and the other would get the hangover. One was a devout Christian and the other a blasphemous thinker and so on. There are a lot of reasons why Twain would have told that story of Siamese twins that way of course there are a lot of humorous possibilities in the idea of this ongoing war between the two of them and all the different ideas that each can stand for. But the researcher also thinks that these things reveal how often Mark Twain and Samuel Clemens felt to the one person who bore both names like a deeply divided self (Kaplan 23). It was for him a kind of a mirror in which he could see reflected, the split in his own personality. At the end of the thesis the researcher will talk about how far apart those two identities might have grown by the last decades of Twain's career. The face he turned to the public at the end was that of Mark Twain, the beloved humorist. It was one of the most recognizable faces in the world. During those same years in private, a different face. His closest acquaintances sometimes saw it when he talked bitterly about ways of exterminating what he came to call insistently the damned human race, ways of killing off the entire population of mankind and finishing the whole farce that he came to see human existence as being. It was not until quite a while after his death that readers were able to see this side of Mark Twain, this face. In those last years he wrote hundreds of pages of unfinished stories about disaster and despair and the meaninglessness of life (Fetterly 19). He never published any of them for his contemporaries but thanks to the efforts of 20th century scholars and the men and women at the Mark Twain project at the University of California most of that work has now been published (LeMaster 71).

The popular image that people want to have of Mark Twain has yet to take account of the way these late writings complicate the ultimate meaning of Mark Twain (Wecter 45). A

great many people would prefer not to acknowledge that the beloved national humorist had a dark double. In the thesis the researcher will talk about both; in particular we will explore the relationship between them. How the personal anguish at times written to overwhelm him at the end of his life was in some ways a product of his public triumph. How in becoming Mark Twain, Sam Clemens gained a world (DeVoto 90). There are not many people in human history about whom you can accurately say something like that but in Twain's case you can, as Mark Twain. He gained the world but the researcher thinks he came to wonder at times by the end if he hadn't also lost himself. One other thing we should not do in the first chapter on Mark Twain is finish without looking at one example of his art. To quote from one of his early short pieces, the piece is called "An Encounter with an Interviewer" (1874) near the very beginning of his celebrity career. Later he came to like it as one of his favorite platform pieces, he performed it live in the 1880s on a lecture tour and in the Around the world tour that he took in the 1890s. in a late journal entry he suggested that one possible topic for a piece might be Sam Clemens interviews Mark Twain (Ensor 77). He never did write that, though the wish was very much that he had, we all would like to know what questions Sam Clemens had for Mark Twain (Bloom 39). This is not that, this is an encounter with interviewer from a paper but it does raise some of the same questions (Mensh 28). The interviewer himself acknowledges the celebrity status of the person he is interviewing as he says, "You know it is the custom now to interview any man who has become notorious" (Twain libvirginia).

As Twain presents himself in this piece he decides to have some fun with this newspaper man, so he tells him that he is 19 years old but was born in 1836 and the most remarkable man he had ever met was Aron Burn and the newspaper reporter is getting more and more frustrated but this is the note that the interview ends on:

"... Had you, or have you, any brothers or sisters?"

A. Eh! I--I--I think so,--yes,--but I don't remember.

Q. Well, that is the most extraordinary statement I ever heard!

A. Why, what makes you think that?

Q. How could I think otherwise? Why, look here! who is this a picture of on the wall? Isn't that a brother of yours?

A. Oh! yes, yes, yes! Now you remind me of it, that *was* a brother of mine. That's William,--*Bill* we called him. Poor old Bill!

Q. Why? Is he dead, then?

A. Ah, well, I suppose so. We never could tell. There was a great mystery about it.

Q. That is sad, very sad. He disappeared, then?

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A. Well, yes, in a sort of general way. We buried him.

Q. *Buried* him! *Buried* him without knowing whether he was dead or not?

A. O no! Not that. He was dead enough.

Q. Well, I confess that I can't understand this. If you buried him and you knew he was dead--

A. No! no! we only thought he was.

Q. O, I see! He came to life again?

A. I bet he didn't.

Q. Well, I never heard anything like this. *Somebody* was dead. *Somebody* was buried. Now, where was the mystery?

A. Ah, that's just it! That's it exactly. You see we were twins,--defunct and I,--and we got mixed in the bath-tub when we were only two weeks old, and one of us was drowned. But we didn't know which. Some think it was Bill, some think it was me.

Q. Well, that *is* remarkable. What do *you* think?

A. Goodness knows! I would give whole worlds to know. This solemn, this awful mystery has cast a gloom over my whole life. But I will tell you a secret now, which I never have revealed to any creature before. One of us had a peculiar mark, a large mole on the back of the left hand,--that was *me*. *That child was the one that was drowned.*" ((Twain libvirginia))

That is Twain making humour but at a certain point you begin to get uncomfortable with the question that this was raising, who was he and what happened to him.

Stages of Mark Twain's Life

There is a kind of exaggeration that we associate with Mark Twain himself and the tall tales that he liked to tell. It is important to lay the whole thing out in one chronological story to give a necessarily brief overview of 75 years of Clemens' life and the 45 yearlong national career of the writer and entertainer called Mark Twain. The chronology is organized into 6 stages and in order to make it as useful as possible the focus is on each stage's aspect of life that played the most significant role in the writing in the career of Mark Twain. Most of the stages are ten years long but the first is twenty. The twenty years immediately following 1835. It was at the end of 1835 that Clemens was born in Florida, Missouri. He was the third of four children. He had an older brother and a younger brother and a sister. He was not a twin. Before he turned four, the family moves to Hannibal, on the banks of the

Mississippi, moved there in quest of better economic opportunities, which they did not find. When he was eleven, Clemens' father, John Marshall Clemens died (Gillman 10). His father was a very serious man, his chief legacies to his family were ordinary hopes for the future coupled with a series of business failures that left his survivors struggling for subsistence right after his death or as Mark Twain put it about his father in *Roughing It*:

“What to do next? It was a momentous question. I had gone out into the world to shift for myself, at the age of thirteen (for my father had endorsed for friends; and although he left us a sumptuous legacy of pride in his fine Virginian stock and its national distinction, I presently found that I could not live on that alone without occasional bread to wash it down with). I had gained a livelihood in various vocations, but had not dazzled anybody with my successes; still the list was before me, and the amplest liberty in the matter of choosing, provided I wanted to work—which I did not, after being so wealthy.” (Twain *Roughing It*, Telelib)

Because of his father's death, Clemens had to go to work in order to help the family and that took him into printing offices for the first time where he learned the trade of typesetter or compositor. Missouri was a slave state and slavery of course is a major theme in Mark Twain's fiction. Later on, Twain said that as a child growing up inside the system of slavery, he never saw any reason to question its authority. He never heard anybody argue that there was anything wrong with it (David 10). As he says, talking about slavery in one of his late autobiographical dictations, that slavery was a holy thing in the church states that God had approved it. Although he also adds in that discussion of his experience with slavery that he did see a number of examples of slave suffering. In particular, he says he has a memory of seeing a group of slaves chained together and waiting to be sold, waiting to be taken down the river to be sold. He also adds that he remembers seeing one slave stoned to death by an overseer simply for committing an awkward act. As a child too, he spent time with slaves, in particular at his uncle's farm back in Florida. It was from a slave there named Daniel, at least that is the way Twains refers to him, that he first heard some of the stories that he later told especially of the story of the man with the golden arm that became one of the staples of his platform for performances (Cox 19). As a writer of course we all associate Twain with fond recollections of Hannibal which gets renamed St. Petersburg in *Tom Sawyer*. As a young man he was very impatient to leave, he ran away from Hannibal when he was seventeen; ran away because there was a world's fair in New York because that seemed to be the bright center of the universe, where the action was. He wound up spending about a year in the cities of the East, after that he came back to the river but he never did move back to Hannibal. He only returned imaginatively.

The next period of that isolated ten years was from 1855 to 1865. It was the period during which Mark Twain was born, although Clemens was associated with writing from the time that he first went into those printers' offices. As a young adult he was not thinking of literature as a career (Cummings 71). He wasn't sure what he was going to do for a living although he thought he had answered the question in the late 1850s when he apprenticed himself to Horace Bixby as Cub Pilot on a Mississippi steamboat. It took him two years

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under Bixby's teaching to learn the river and then between 1859 and 1861, he was the Pilot Sam Clemens. We don't know a lot about what kind of pilot he was but the evidence suggests that he was a very confident one (Petit 81). He himself wrote in 1874:

"If I have seemed to love my subject, it is no surprising thing, for I loved the profession far better than any I have followed since, and I took a measureless pride in it. The reason is plain: a pilot, in those days, was the only unfettered and entirely independent human being that lived in the earth." (Twain Life Telelib)

And he might very well have remained in Mississippi steamboat pilot if the civil war hadn't broken out and cut the country into two and brought commercial traffic on the Mississippi to an absolute stop (Meltzer 49). He could have joined either army as a pilot, both union and the confederacy had a great need of pilots but he did not. When the war broke out, he left the river. Strangely one of the first thing he did however was to enlist as a volunteer in an irregular Confederate unit in Hannibal among people whom he grew up with. It was a very irregular Confederate unit which figures in no histories of the civil war whatsoever (Steinbrink 27). All we know about that was provided by Twain himself in the humorous autobiographical account of it that he wrote called *The Private History of a Campaign that Failed*. He brought that out after the war and everyone seemed to enjoy it. One of the strangest things about Twain's career is that no one ever seems to have helped his service and desertion from the Confederate army against him (Covici 93). You might have expected that at this time when feelings about the war reigned so high that it would have become something that is stuck to the image of Mark Twain that he once served in the Confederate army. You could begrudge that if you were pro-Union or that he deserted from it, you could begrudge that if you were a veteran of a Confederacy but people took Twain's own account of it as his word that he resigned from the Confederate army because of the fatigue from persistent retreating and never held that part of the story against him (Bridgman 10). After those two weeks mainly to get away from the war he went west with his brother Orion who had been appointed Secretary of the Nevada Territory (Camfield 52).

Clemens himself vowed out west among the silver lines that he would not return home until he was rich. He never had any luck looking for silver or gold but out there in the mining camps of the west he did hear a number of the vernacular stories that he later told as Mark Twain and that helped established his successful career as a humorist (Howells 82). He was in fact a complete disaster as a miner. It was that failure that finally drove him to making his living with his words. He had occasionally published letters in the Virginia city territorial enterprise while looking for silver in the hills and the paper invited him to join its staff as a reporter. He actually hyped because he was too poor to get there any other way (Fishkin 55). A hundred and twenty miles across the desert to become a reporter on the Virginia city enterprise and it was early in 1863 that he began signing the articles that he wrote for that paper, Mark Twain. And that identity he finally had found a way to succeed (Smith 20). Acquiring a local reputation in Nevada and then in California on the strength of the good fun to be furnished. Whenever you saw those words *Mark Twain* at the head of a column in a newspaper and then becoming nationally famous in 1865 when a story that he had written

called, “The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” jumped him into national prominence. He made millions of readers just recovering from the pain of the war and that endeared the image to them from that point on then he becomes the national writer: Mark Twain associated with humour, with entertainment (Michelson 71).

The next ten-year period covers 1865 to 1875. Those were the years in which Clemens came east, came east in a lot of different ways (Fatout 84). Not just geographically but culturally, psychologically came from California to New York, went from the new world to the old world, went from the front here a place where Mark Twain had been born toward the worlds of genteel or bourgeoisie respectability, a place where Mark Twain’s books were going to be found for the rest of his career (Budd Our Mark Twain 102). The best way to symbolize those ten years in his life and career was by the trip that he took in 1867 as a travelling correspondent for a California paper on a cruise, a sight-seeing tour that left from New York for Europe and the Holy Land (Ganzel 24). And the two valuable souvenirs that he brought back from that trip. From the newspapers that he had written while he was abroad on the voyage and had been published in California papers and reprinted elsewhere had already begun to attract a lot of attention, from those newspaper letters Mark Twain derived his first book *Innocents Abroad* which quickly became a bestseller when it was published in 1869 and once and for all it confirmed him in the choice of writing in literature, publishing books as his career (Clemens 74). Also, on the trip he was shown by his roommate a young man named Charlie Langdon an ivory miniature picture of Charlie’s sister. Twain claimed that he fell in love with her at first sight. The name in the picture was Olivia Langdon, the only daughter of a very wealthy merchant family in New York (Macnaughton 24). Not long after the ship got back Clemens met her in person and then preceded very assiduously to court her as a suitor for her hand in marrying. This was a difficult campaign, she was ten years younger, very shy, had been a kind of semi-invalid earlier in her life. She was a little bit intimidated by this figure from the farm west and her parents were not at all convinced that he was ever going to make a good husband for her. but this was a private campaign that did not fail (Budd New Essays 59). He won her heart in part by asking her to undertake her reformation by promising during the courtship that he wanted her to help him become a better man, better in the term that meant in 19th century America which meant specifically a Christian and a genteel, respectable man (Howe 66). He never completed that reform, although he was sincere at the time that he asked her to undertake it. On the other hand, their marriage in 1870 lifted Clemens into the upper class. We can signal that by the house that his father-in-law bought for them to the newly-wed couple in New York, Clemens actually thought that a honeymoon wedding trip they were going to a boarding house (Railton Jim 21). He was quite surprised to find that there was a surprise waiting for him at the end of the journey, this elegant house that his father-in-law had bought and reported in his name and the three servants whom the Langdon family had staffed that establishment were waiting to serve Mr. Clemens (Brooks 40). That was a step upwards; Clemens himself took even a bigger step upward when he moved his family to Hartford and built an incredibly lavish house that needed seven servants at a time to run it. That is another way to think about his coming east: from being a wild man at the frontier to the gentleman of the easter seaborn.

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The next ten years in his life, the years between 1875 and 1885 were the most productive period in Twain's career and probably the happiest in Clemens' life. As a writer he published five books including *Tom Sawyer* and *Huck Finn* (Bloom Huck Finn 19). Permanent solution, most securely read. His family life was full of rewards and pleasures too. Although he suffered not just sadness but a kind of guilt at the death of his first child, a son named Langdon who died in 1882, two years after he was born (Stoneley 20). The period that we are talking about, he doted on the three daughters who were born to him, Olivian Susan, the eldest whom they called Susy; Clara and Jean (Skandera-Trombley 33). Those daughters were born between 1872 and 1880 and in that Hartford house they enjoyed and he enjoyed in their presence, a kind of family idyll, an expensive idyll however. As he confessed to her friend in a letter that his household expenses are something gasping. In one year he needed over a hundred thousand dollars because of the lifestyle that house had pledged it to (Railton Tragedy 29). So, underneath all that professional productivity and personal happiness was a deeper restlessness that led him during these years to start searching for ways to make even more money than he could make as a writer. He began investing much of the income from his books in various speculative schemes including his own publishing company intended to make him much richer. He had about much luck with that as he had looking for silver and gold in the hills out west (Budd Contemporary 28).

The next ten years 1885 to 1895 were years of commercial struggle and collapse. He lost money through a number of ventures, including his own publishing company. But symbolically and financially the central problem, the key factor in his failure was a machine in which he began investing in the early 1880s and by which by the end of the 1880s he was investing sometimes three thousand dollars a week. That altogether he poured over two hundred thousand dollars into (Lynn 40). It was a machine intended to set type, exactly what he had done as Sam Clemens as the boy apprenticed in those printing offices but whereas in the old system you had set each letter in a page laboriously by hand (Baetzhold 61). The page typesetting machine promised to do all of this by a kind of magic that it would be able to do more and better than any man could do. In Mark Twain's paper there are lots and lots of pages on which he is simply trying to reckon up with many zeroes; how rich he is going to become when the machine was perfected and when it swept the market for print. It never got perfected, it wound up financially bankrupting Twain and in 1894 in a very well publicized failure he was forced to declare bankruptcy (Knoper 18). The publishing house that had capitalized collapsed and Twain was in a hundred thousand dollars in debt. During these ten years he wrote essentially under duress; he wrote because he needed to get his books published to make money to make his ventures alive (Sloane 60). But the two novels that he wrote during this decade, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* which came out in 1889 and *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* which came out in 1894 were full of artistic flaws. It can be easily seen that how urgently he was writing them, how much he needed to publish them at the time are his most complex books.

The last fifteen years of his life, the years between 1895 and 1910 are very hard to characterize (Emerson 40). At the end of his life, he recovered but he could not recover emotionally or imaginatively. He turned all his financial affairs over to another man, Henry

Rogers – a high powered executive about standard oil and with Rogers' help he did work his way out of the red and in fact recovered financially fully and he became quite prosperous during his final years. His public image was never brighter or more brilliant as a star he is shown in the constellation of international fame at home and abroad at the end of his life (Messent 29). He was loved as a humourist, admired as a man of honour and character because he paid back all his debts and respected as a writer because he began to lend his pen and the prestige of his name to a number of reformed causes in particular a protest against the imperial powers of Europe and America and their behaviour in the Third World (Fulton 29). That was the public figure. Personally, however two death in his family occurred in this period. In 1896, his favourite daughter Susy dies and in 1902 Livy (Olivia) dies (Lorch 20). They left wounds that never healed. The timing of Susy's death was particularly bad. It is always tragic when parents lose a child who has just reached adulthood and Susy was a young woman just about to step into her own adult identity when she died. But the thing that made it worse was that they left her behind in Hartford when they started off on a lecture tour around the world that was intended to make Twain work Box office by Box office out of that hundred thousand dollars that he was in debt (Lowry 12). It was a very grueling trip. It was very successful and very flattering to find that he was loved all the way around the world and audiences flocked to hear him no matter where he went but it was very exhausting for him to do all of this at his age and also because all the money that he was getting was going to someone else and he had just gotten to the end (Chadwick-Joshua 11). They had reached England working their way around the world, the next stop was going to be Hartford when they received the news that Susy was very ill, Livy got on a boat to try to get back to America before she died but did not make. While Livy was still crossing the Atlantic, Mark Twain in England got a telegram saying that she had died (Long 50). That was a real painful blow to him and Livy's death was after two long harrowing years of illness in which Mark Twain himself was made to feel not just helpless but in the way Livy's doctors felt that his presence excited her and made her frail condition worse. So, for the last two years of her life he was most of the time allowed to see her for only a minute or two each day. That was very hard for him emotionally as well (Leonard 21).

A lot of people cite those deaths when they try to understand why in private Mark Twain was so angry or embittered at the end of his life and it was not like that, they were not crucial in shaping his last years' state of mind in which he lived at the end. But those accounts, as was discussed earlier those other phases that Mark Twain wore in private during these years (Stahl 44). Deaths cannot explain hundreds and thousands of pages of unfinished stories that he was writing, stories about failure and disaster and despair (Leary 77). Clemens himself did not know how to add up this whole life that we have been talking about; one of the projects that he undertook in this last period during the last fifteen years of his life was an autobiography. He decided that it would be posthumously published because when a man is dead, he can tell the truth and he sat down to write an autobiography in which he was at last going to feel free to tell the truth about his life and himself (Cooper 8). He began writing it in the 1890s; in the 20th century he discovered that it was much easier and more pleasant to dictate it. So, in the years 1905-1906 there were sometimes hours every day of dictation to a secretary of events from his life, Chapters in his autobiography (Paine 61). The stories kept

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pouring out of him but they weren't adding up. Mark Twain published parts of his autobiography. It shows how sincere he was since he said he will wait until he was dead to publish it, he could not quite ever imagine himself apart from an audience, apart from a performance and he did in fact publish some chapters of the autobiography in the North American Review only a piece of it (Sewell 19). He never did finish it, he never did make it publishable, it has never been published as Mark Twain wrote it. Although different editors have gone into the stack of papers that he left behind under the general title of Mark Twain's Autobiography and pulled out different editions. There are at least four different published versions of Mark Twain's Autobiography, all put together by other people though, but never put the whole story together himself. Mark Twain, as his career advanced went back in his life (Doyno 39). In fact, the situation is such that the later the book the earlier part of his life he is thinking about. The thesis will deal with this condition also, the way he represents his life. The focus will also be on how he stages his life when he tells the stories of his travels or when he writes those novels about his childhood.

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