

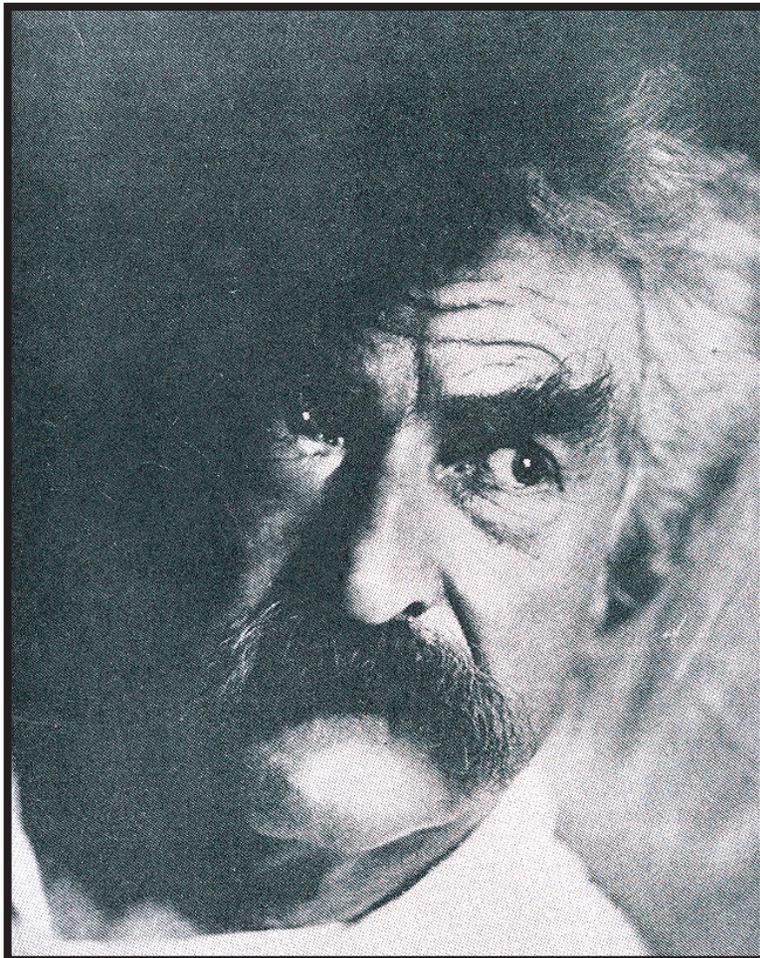


ELMIRA COLLEGE
CENTER FOR MARK TWAIN STUDIES

1983 - 2008

Twenty-fifth Anniversary

A Centennial Symposium on Mark Twain's
"The Mysterious Stranger"



Courtesy Mark Twain Memorial, from Kent Reussen's Mark Twain A to Z.

Mark Twain in a pensive mood around the time he published What is Man?

Elmira College Center for Mark Twain Studies

October 10th and 11th, 2008





- 1. Hamilton Hall*
- Admissions
- 2. Fassett Commons*♣
- 3. Cowles Hall*
- 4. Mark Twain Study*
- 5. Gillett Hall*♣
- 6. Alumni Hall*
- 7. Carnegie Hall*♣
- 8. Koller Hall♣
- 9. Watson Fine Arts♣
- 10. Harris Hall♣
- 11. McGraw Hall
- 12. McGraw Bookstore
- 13. College Post Office
- 14. The Cottages*
- 15. Anderson Hall*
- 16. Columbia Hall*
- 17. Gannett-Tripp Library♣
- 18. Clarke Health Center
- 19. Twin Towers*
- 20. Campus Center
- 21. Speidel Gymnasium
- 22. Gibson Theatre
- 23. Perry Hall*
- 24. Tompkins Hall*★
- 25. The President's Home

* Listed on the National Register of Historic Places
 ★ Dormitory
 ♣ Academic Building

A Centennial Symposium on Mark Twain's
"The Mysterious Stranger"

Friday, October 10th, 2008

Hamilton Hall

6 - 7 p.m. **REGISTRATION**
Please pick up Symposium registration packet in The Mark Twain Exhibit.

COCKTAILS
Enjoy a sampling of Finger Lakes wine, beer, and hors d'oeuvres.

7 p.m. **WELCOME**
Barbara Snedecor
Director, Elmira College
Center for Mark Twain Studies

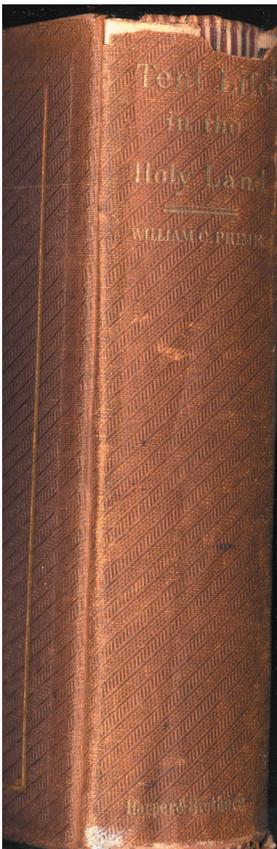
Greetings
Thomas Meier
President, Elmira College

Special Presentation
Barbara Snedecor,
Irene Langdon, and
David Pennock

William C. Prime's *Tent Life in the Holy Land* is gifted in the name of Jervis Langdon, Jr. in recognition of the fine work of the Center for Mark Twain Studies in fulfilling the specific mission for the use of Quarry Farm.

Mark Twain, in one of the letters to *The Daily Alta California* that eventually formed the basis for *The Innocents Abroad*, lists *Tent Life in the Holy Land* by William Cowper Prime among the titles that passengers were instructed to bring with them on the *Quaker City* excursion. That Prime's book influenced the composition of *The Innocents Abroad* has always been clear. In addition to direct references to the title, Clemens minimally disguised the author as "Wm. C. Grimes" in those places in which he is being particularly critical of Prime within *Innocents Abroad*. Now the emergence of Clemens's traveling companion Charles Langdon's copy of *Tent Life in the Holy Land* with its many pages of marginal notes and markings by Clemens makes it possible for the first time to examine Clemens's immediate reactions as a reader to a text that is intertwined with his own first full length and highly successful work.

Mark Woodhouse, Mark Twain Archivist, *Elmira College*



7:15 p.m. **DINNER**
Pumpkin Soup, Flower Salad, Stuffed Tenderloin, and Sauteed Greens;
Cannoli Napoleon

8:15 p.m.

OPENING REMARKS
The Mysterious Stranger Symposium

Joseph Csicsila
Eastern Michigan University
Symposium Co-Chair

KEYNOTE

Alan Gribben
Auburn University at Montgomery

Alan Gribben is the author of a two-volume reference work, *Mark Twain's Library: A Reconstruction* (1980), which he is currently revising and enlarging. Professor Gribben has also edited and written other books and articles about Mark Twain's life, image, and reading. He has been recognized with a Henry Nash Smith Fellowship from the Center for Mark Twain Studies at Elmira College, an honorary lifetime membership in the Mark Twain Circle of America, and additional awards. He has served on the editorial boards of such journals as *Libraries & Culture* and *American Literary Realism*. From 1974 until 1991 he taught at the University of Texas at Austin; since then he has served as head of the Department of English and Philosophy at Auburn University at Montgomery, where he received a Distinguished Research Professorship in 1998 and the Dr. Guinevera A. Nance Alumni Professorship in 2006. He earned his doctorate degree from the University of California at Berkeley.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Barbara Snedecor

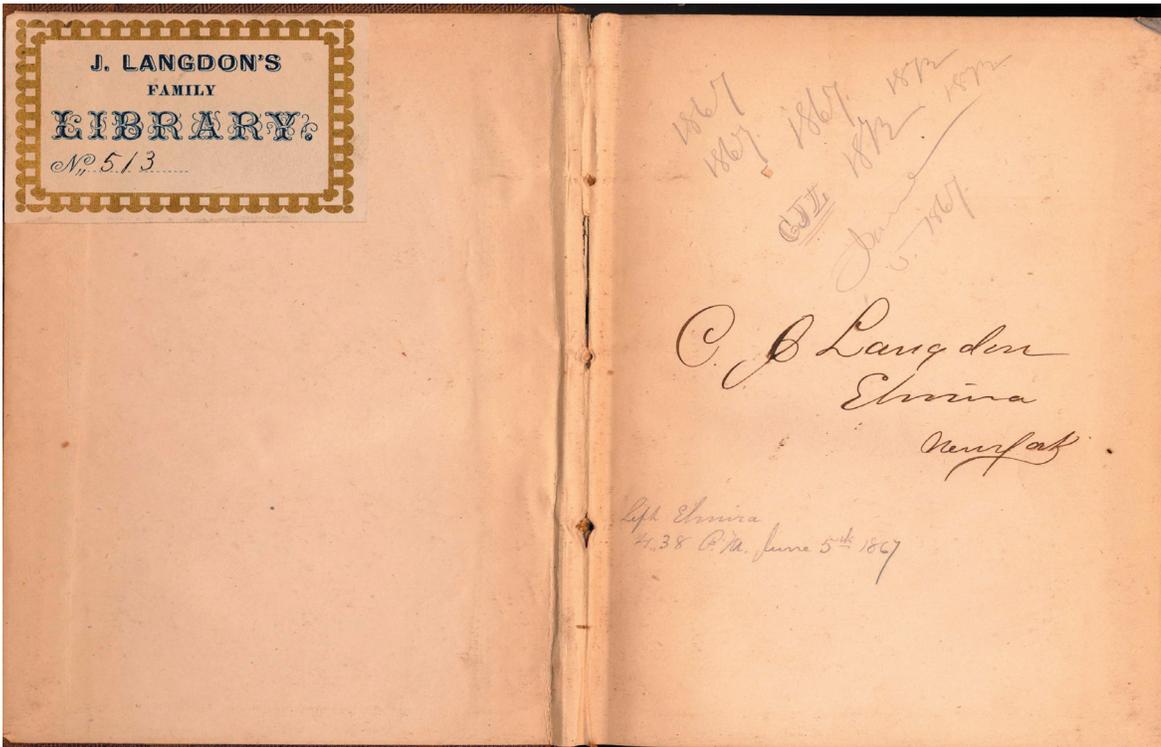
Until 10:30 p.m.

Conversation, wine and beer.

10:30 p.m.

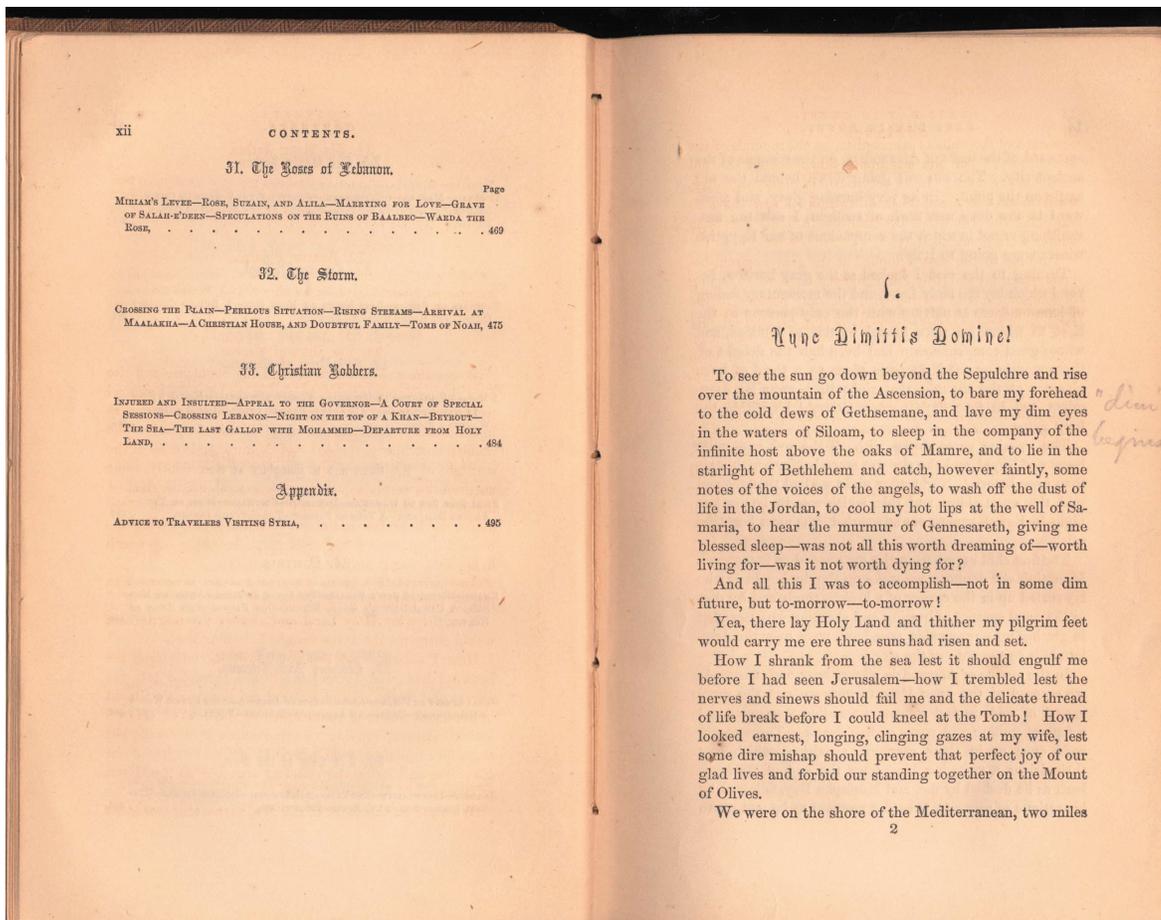
Shuttle departs for Holiday Inn Riverview.

A selection of marginalia from
William C. Prime's *Tent Life in the Holy Land...*



Marginalia:

Inside front cover:
A series of dates including 1867 and 1873; C.J. Langdon Elmira, New York; Left Elmira 4:38 PM June 5th 1867.



Marginalia:

"dim" begins

Clemens repeats his interest in the word *dim* in two other instances of marginalia.

I wrapped him up as carefully as the circumstances would permit, and, giving him such medicine as I thought proper for his case, left him to sleep. Ten minutes afterward his huge form was visible as he crawled aft with my bournoose, or Syrian cloak, which I had left near him, and which he knew I would want in the night air that now came down damp and chilling. I sent the faithful fellow back; and, throwing myself down on my carpet, under the lee of the cabin hatchway, by the side of Miriam, who was transformed into a bundle of shawls and cloaks, with a pair of bright eyes peeping out of it, I talked a little while, and then I dreamed—not sleeping dreams—far otherwise—broad awake dreams, such as God hath in mercy granted poor humanity the power to dream.

In long gone years I had sometimes thought of Holy Land. In my home in the up country, standing by my father's knee, I had heard him tell of the hills of Jerusalem. Lying in my mother's arms, year after year, I had slept peaceful sleep as she sang the songs of Christian story. No other music ever lulled my young soul to slumber; and, in later years, no sound had ever half the power to calm the storms that sometimes swept over the wastes of my life—no other songs the "peace be still" effect those had on the waves of sorrow.

How well I remembered them now! My father's head was white with the snows of three-score years and ten, but his footstep was as firm as mine. But, though I—I—yes, it was even so—I knew it not—I was on the borders of Canaan, my footsteps were entering Holy Land on earth, and his, far away from me, were on the borders of the Promised Land! I was close to the Jerusalem of the cross, he already close to the Jerusalem of the crown—I was going to lave my weary limbs in the Jordan, he was to lie down on the banks of the river of life—I was to go wearily to Gethsemane and the place of death and

the sepulchre, he was passing swiftly to the presence of the Risen Lord.

How well I remembered them! My mother's hand taught my footsteps their first essays on the sad earth; and lo! here, what far pilgrimage they had accomplished! God grant me safe return, to tell her of the hills that are round about Jerusalem, even as the Lord is round about such as she!

The moon rose up above the mists and shone across the stormy sea. I looked at Miriam; her eyes had closed; she was sleeping quietly and peacefully. Such already was the experience of travel, that she, delicately nourished at home, and accustomed to shrink from the least exposure, whom I always wrapped in cloaks of a summer evening when she rode out, and whose feet scarce ever touched the damp earth of America, could already lie on the deck of a ship in a storm, with the spray flying over her, and sleep profoundly.

It was no sad thought that marked my countenance as I looked at her. To have accomplished the pilgrimage to Holy Land was the realization of a hope long cherished almost despairingly; but now that it was accomplished, her presence was the crowning joy. I had a pride and a pleasure that I can not well make my reader a partaker of, in having successfully reached this point in our journey, which so many had prophesied we should never complete. Nor was this pride and pleasure all. He who has known in youth the delight of a beautiful scene, enhanced by the presence of one well beloved, or who in later years has found his own keenest happiness in enjoying the happiness of those for whom he would think the sacrifice of his entire life a very small gift, will understand what I mean when I speak of the happiness with which I saw my fragile little wife sleeping calmly in her bundle of shawls, on the deck of the steamer, when the

*Her husband can lie
anywhere - and long & with
delight at any time!*

*There is no
"Satisfaction"
in this book
but the
sole
object
to do
with
Prine's
book by my friend
a good price to obtain this
book by my friend*

Marginalia:

In response to Prine's page 23, Miriam, "I looked at Miriam; her eyes had closed; she was sleeping quietly & peacefully. Such already was the experience of travel, that she, delicately nourished at home, and accustomed to shrink from the least exposure, who I wrapped in cloaks of summer evening when she rode out, and whose feet scarce ever touched the damp earth of America, could already lie on the deck of a ship in a storm, with the spray flying over her, and sleep profoundly." In response, Clemens' marginalia states: "Her husband can lie any where - and brag & write nauseating drivel at any time!"

Marginalia:

In response to Prine's page 22, Home Thoughts, Clemens writes: "There is no situation in this book that has any but the sole object to glorify Prine."
In response to the specific underlined phrase, "Lying in my mother's arms, year after year," Clemens writes: "It probably did take a good while to wean this sickly infant."

say every Christian, tells him that the very promise of the angels in white apparel that this same Jesus should so come in like manner as they had seen him go into heaven, would keep them ever after on that spot "gazing steadfastly" toward the heaven that had received him. I can not admit the possibility of an error in that locality within three hundred years after the ascension of the Lord.

It was on our return from Bethany one Friday afternoon on horseback that we made a complete circuit of Jerusalem.

Whitely proposed to try our horses on a steady run, with only such interruptions as the ground would make necessary, and this "encompassing of Jerusalem" we accomplished.

We started from the tomb of the Virgin in the valley of Jehoshaphat, where the bridge crosses the dry bed of the brook Kedron, at the corner of the wall of Gethsemane. Miriam sat on a rock under the shadow of the wall of the garden and waited our return. The pace was easy as we ascended the slope of the hill toward the gate of St. Stephen. Turning off to the right we increased our speed as we surmounted the ridge, and passing among, and, I am afraid I must say, over some Moslem tombs, rounded the north-east corner of the walls at a rattling pace, which we kept up till we passed the Damascus gate, in the middle of the north wall of the city. Here the gentle rise and hard road toward the north-west corner gave us a chance for a fair run. We went neck and neck across the highest point of the ridge and turned down the valley of Gihon into the great Jaffa road. Arabs and Christians cleared the way as we approached the Jaffa gate, and we made a terrible scattering among a group of Greek women who sat on low benches in the sunshine that warmed the western wall. As we passed the gateway the guard turned out to see the race,

This terrible hero!

been his own &

They were the tombs of somebody's father & mother - would he have desecrated them if they had been his own?

Marginalia:

In response to Prine's "Turning off to the right we increased our speed as we surmounted the ridge, and passing among, and, I am afraid I must say, over some Moslem tombs," Clemens writes, "They were the tombs of somebody's fathers and mothers - would he have desecrated them if they had been his own?"

In response to Prine's "and we made a terrible scattering among a group of Greek women," Clemens writes, "This terrible hero!"

Saturday morning, October 11th, 2008

8 - 8:30 a.m.

BREAKFAST

Gannett-Tripp Library, lower level

8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

Cultural and Personal Contexts

Tripp Lecture Hall

Chad Rohman, *Dominican University*

Panel Chair



Chamisso's Peter Schlemihl and Mark Twain's Mysterious Stranger: German Literature and the Composition of the Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts

Horst Kruse, *University of Münster*

The Prophetic Imagination, the Liberal Self, and the Ending of No. 44, *The Mysterious Stranger*

Harold K. Bush, *St. Louis University*

Mark Twain and the Accusing Angel: 'The Chronicle of Young Satan' and Samuel Clemens' Argument with the Inscrutable

Michael J. Kiskis, *Elmira College*

10 - 10:10 a.m.

BREAK

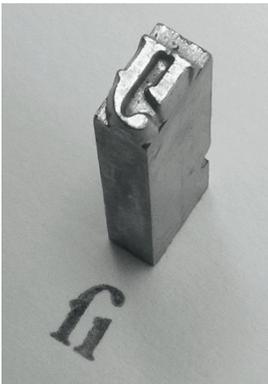
Refreshments available

10:15 - 11:45 a.m.

Racial Constructs and Formal Defects

Joseph Csicsila, *Eastern Michigan University*

Panel Chair



"I ain' no dread being": The Minstrel Mask as Alter Ego

Sharon McCoy, *University of Georgia*

Mark Twain's Last Cakewalk: Racialized Performance in No. 44, *The Mysterious Stranger*

Henry B. Wonham, *University of Oregon*

The Mysterious Stranger as Literary Comedy

David E.E. Sloane, *University of New Haven*

12 - 1 p.m.
el

LUNCHEON BUFFET in Mackenzie's

Campus Center, main level

1:15 - 2:45

Mind and Body

Chad Rohman, *Dominican University*
Panel Chair

Gannett-Tripp Library, lower level
Tripp Lecture Hall



Transcendental Hedonism?: Sex, Song, Food and Drink in No. 44,
The Mysterious Stranger and “My Platonic Sweetheart”
Gregg Camfield; *University of California, Merced*

“Silly creations of an imagination that is not conscious of its freaks”:
Multiple Selves, Wordless Communication, and the Psychology
of Mark Twain’s No. 44, *The Mysterious Stranger*
Randall Knoper; *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

Mark Twain’s *Mysterious Strangers* and the Motions of the Mind
Bruce Michelson, *University of Illinois*

2:45 - 2:55 p.m.

BREAK

Refreshments available

3 - 4:30 p.m.

A Culminating Effect

Joseph Csicsila, *Eastern Michigan University*
Panel Chair



No. 44, *The Mysterious Stranger*: The Final Soliloquy of a “Littery Man”
James S. Leonard, *The Citadel*

“Samuel Clemens, Duality, and Time Travel”
David L. Smith, *Williams College*

“Dreams and Metaphors in No. 44, *The Mysterious Stranger*”
John Bird, *Winthrop University*

Saturday evening, October 11th, 2008

5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

COCKTAILS

On the Porch at Quarry Farm

Enjoy a sampling of Finger Lakes wine, beer, and hors d'oeuvres.

6:30

CLOSING COMMENTS

Chad Rohman

Dominican University
Symposium Co-Chair

DINNER

*Mixed Greens Salad (with a choice of Crumbly Blue or Raspberry Vinaigrette dressings),
Brie and Apple Stuffed Chicken Breast, Wild Long Grain Rice, Buttered Baby Carrots,
and Assorted Dinner Rolls; Apple Dumpling.*

Until 10:30 p.m.

Conversation, wine and beer.

10:30 p.m.

Shuttle departs for Holiday Inn Riverview.



Olivia Langdon Clemens, Elmira College Class of 1864, arrives on campus in June, 2008, to take her place at the intersection of Watson and Kolker Halls. Olivia is a gift of the Class of 2008. Her gaze and gesture encompass both the nearby statue of Mark Twain and his Study across the Puddle. Both Mark and Olivia are the creations of sculptor Gary Weisman of Newfield, NY.

From *The Mysterious Stranger* manuscript...

1905

The Mysterious Stranger

(Conclusion of the book.)

"And you are going away, & will not come back any more."

"Yes," he said. "We have coursed long together, & it has been pleasant — pleasant for both; but I must go now, & we shall not see each other any more."

"In this life, ^{Satan} ~~44~~, but in another? We shall meet in another, surely, ~~44~~?"

Then all tranquilly & soberly he made the strange answer —

"There is no other."

A subtle influence blew upon my spirit from his, bringing with it a vague ^{dim, but} ~~clear~~ ^{incredible} feeling that his words might be true — even must be true.

"Have you never suspected this, August?"

"No — how could I? But if it can only be true —"

"It is true."

The first page of "Conclusion of the Book." Note the interesting detail in the third paragraph. Albert Bigelow Paine has changed "44" to "Satan," thus proving that he knew this conclusion did not belong to the version in which the protagonist is called "Satan."
(Courtesy Robert H. Hirst, General Editor, The Mark Twain Papers, University of California Berkeley)

A Centennial Symposium on Mark Twain's

“The Mysterious Stranger”

Centenary Reflections on Mark Twain's
No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger

Symposium Abstracts
(Alphabetical)

Bird, John. Department of English, Winthrop University.

“Dreams and Metaphors in *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*.”

Dreams frame Mark Twain's obsession with his Mysterious Stranger story, the last he was to try to tell. Like “Which Was the Dream?” and “The Great Dark,” the Mysterious Stranger fragments are dream narratives, with the strange, disjointed logic of the dream state. They have been variously judged by critics, as the final signs of his final despair, or as artistic recovery after a long struggle. I align myself with those who see them as an artistic triumph, but even more deeply, as part of Mark Twain's heroic battle to come to terms with his own unconscious, to win a philosophic battle he had been fighting for much of his career. “Dream other dreams, and better,” Forty-Four tells August near the end; using the ideas of Lacan as he links dreams and metaphor, I argue that Mark Twain was doing just that, and that he succeeded admirably.

Bush, Harold K., Jr. English Department, St. Louis University.

“The Prophetic Imagination, the Liberal Self, and the Ending of *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*.”

Cultural interest in religion and spirituality is a growth industry in early twenty-first-century America, and it is beginning to assert itself in the scholarship of major authors, even those who, like Mark Twain, do not readily appear to have been very religious at all ~ or even, in many cases, are remembered as openly castigating religion. This paper explores how *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger* fits within the forms and conventions of the American prophetic imagination. Part of this essay explores the mode of apocalypse in uncovering precisely how humor works as prophetic utterance ~ a mode used both by the Hebrew prophets as well as by Jesus Christ. But the majority of it considers how *No. 44* depends upon what the theologian Walter Brueggemann has called the work of the “prophetic imagination.” According to Brueggemann, “the task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.” This alternative consciousness, says Brueggemann, is made up primarily of two equally important acts: the act of criticizing the dominant consciousness, and the act of energizing people and communities through the invocation of promise and telos.

Camfield, Gregg. Department of English. University of California, Merced.

“Transcendental Hedonism?: Sex, Song, Food and Drink in *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger* and ‘My Platonic Sweetheart.’”

“Mysterious” and “Strange” are both great words to describe Mark Twain’s *No. 44: The Mysterious Stranger*. It seems so out of the usual groove of Twain’s work, that it has posed multitudes of interpretive problems simply because readers lack easy niches in which to put it. One niche, one category, that helps explain some of what the story does is Transcendentalism. Consider Walt Whitman reading the passages in which August leaves his body, stands inside Marget’s body, and has a spiritual orgasm. The Whitman who wrote section five of “Song of Myself” would, I believe, have approved of this ecstatic spiritual transcendence in sexual union. But *No. 44* also interrogates the degrees to which other ecstatic experiences, including those induced by alcohol, food, and religious ritual, offer the possibility of transcendence. Moreover, the story’s interrogation does not easily settle on the Neo-Platonic idea that transcendent ecstasy heals the felt rift in the human psyche between the present and eternity, between the self with its, to use Thoreau’s words, “vain strivings” and a universal, consistent, coherent, benign spirit. In fact, the story suggests the opposite may be at least as true, that whatever spiritual force transcends the particularities of time, place, and person may be arbitrary, capricious, and amoral. I doubt that even Whitman, the most expansive of American Transcendentalists, would have accepted such premises or even enjoyed such inquiries.

Kiskis, Michael J. Department of English. Elmira College.

“Mark Twain and the Accusing Angel: ‘The Chronicle of Young Satan’ and Sam Clemens’ Argument with the Inscrutable.”

Samuel Clemens began in 1896 looking ahead to a time of paid off debt and a reconstitution of his—and his family’s—financial health. The thunder stroke of his 1894 bankruptcy had subsided, and, though tired from the stress of his world lecture tour, he was looking ahead to diminishing debt and regained strength. Though the speaking tour had not paid well enough to erase the debt, it did help bring the Clemenses within sight of solvency. That is when, like Job, Clemens was laid flat by the actions of a seemingly capricious God. Susy Clemens died on August 18, just as the Clemenses (Sam, Livy, and Clara) settled in England at the end of the world tour. By the fall and winter of 1897, having completed *Following the Equator*, Clemens began to look to writing a very different tale, one that would explore not only the frailty of human life but also the role of the visiting angel in teaching humans the folly of self-importance. Clemens does this by resurrecting his interest in fiction telling: “The Chronicle of Young Satan,” the first developed piece of the quartet that is the *Mysterious Stranger* Manuscripts, begins a storytelling binge tied to Clemens’ identification with the tale of Job and especially with the role of Satan as the inquisitor that ultimately brings humans to a sharp understanding of their place within the universe. During the years stretching from 1897 through 1908, Sam Clemens repeatedly returned to the convention of the accusing angel as he explored the impact of Satan’s visitations on human lives and belief.

Knoper, Randall. Department of English. University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

“‘Silly creations of an imagination that is not conscious of its freaks’: Multiple Selves, Wordless Communication, and the Psychology of Mark Twain’s *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*.”

Mark Twain’s sense of his own double and multiple selves is of course a topic that has been surveyed, and elaborated on, and, perhaps in itself, exhausted. But as Twain reached his last years of life, this persistent and recurrent theme became more and more enriched and complicated by his reading in the burgeoning field of psychology, which shaped his treatment of multiple selves and the kinds of communication, or lack of it, among these selves. My paper demonstrates the intertwinings not only of French neurology, German psychophysics, and Anglo-Ameri-

can psychological research, but also of British mental physiology and American variants and agglomerations of these traditions—and it argues that this wider context helps us better understand Twain’s treatment of multiple selves in the Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts. Inextricable from these notions of multiple selves was a fascination with the ways these selves communed with each other, and with other people’s selves, at various levels of consciousness and unconsciousness, through means ranging from hypnotic suggestion and clairvoyance to what Twain called “mental telegraphy.” In the Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts, as Twain pursued relations between “fleshed” selves and the soul, and between “wordless communication” that had a material basis and communication that transcended the impediments of the flesh, he explored possible relations among body, mind, and spirit in a way that engaged arguments in contemporary psychology and philosophy and pressed them to their limits.

Kruse, Horst. Emeritus Professor of English. University of Münster.

“Chamisso’s Peter Schlemihl and Mark Twain’s Mysterious Stranger: German Literature and the Composition of the Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts.”

During their first extended trip to Europe (from April 1878 to September 1879) Mark Twain and his family attempted a total and deliberate immersion in German culture. In their endeavor to learn the German language, and also to familiarize themselves with German life, they discovered, studied, and learned to treasure the following specimen works of German literature: Eugenie Marlitt’s *Das Geheimnis der alten Mamsell* (1868), Adalbert von Chamisso’s *Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte* (1814), Friedrich Baron de la Motte-Fouqué’s *Undine* (1811), and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Faust* (1808, 1831). The small cluster of books, each volume an appealing classic of its kind, all of them in their totality a complex expression of the German mind, seems to have made a profound and lasting impression on the author, and they served the author in the construction of the protagonist and the development of the theme of the Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts in their various stages of composition, as well as in providing useful appurtenances.

Leonard, James S. Department of English. The Citadel.

“No. 44, *The Mysterious Stranger*: The Final Soliloquy of a ‘Littery Man’”

This paper considers *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger* as a kind of fictional culmination of Mark Twain’s effort in his later writings to take a totally frank and logical look at the human world. From the beginning (that is, from the late 1860s forward), Twain persistently mixed his humorous and fanciful material with attempts to demystify. His frequent exposures, both satirically and sometimes straightforwardly (as in “A True Story, Repeated Word for Word as I Heard It”), of racial injustice (“John Chinaman in New York”), political nonsense (*The Gilded Age*), and illogical/hypocritical belief systems (“The Story of the Bad Little Boy Who Didn’t Come to Grief”) followed this route. This paper explores the hypothesis that the later Twain is not really “darker” than the earlier, but that he is merely more determined to be rigorously, mercilessly logical—to accept no nonsense into his analyses. This is, of course, a tall order when, as is the case in Twain’s writings—early, late, and in-between—there is a predominance of the fanciful and the satirical. But Twain used such settings to bring characters to center stage for the purpose of serious critiques of human beliefs. I examine *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger* in this light, both for the purpose of bringing out the significances of the details of the text itself and to show its place within a coherent understanding of the later (not so different from the earlier, really) Mark Twain.

6

- grotesque + foolish dream. Nothing exists but You. And You are but a Thought - a vagrant Thought, a useless Thought, a homeless Thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities!"

He vanished, + left me appalled; for I knew, + realized, that all he had said was true.

The end.

McCoy, Sharon D. Department of English. University of Georgia.

“I ain’ no dread being’: The Minstrel Mask as Alter Ego.”

Heralded by the ominous clacking of bones, a dreadful and mysterious figure emerges from the depths of the fifteenth-century Austrian castle where Mark Twain’s *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger* is set. The anachronistic intrusion of the blackface figure ironically serves by its very disjuncture to accentuate the minstrel’s place in a historical continuum that connects the social tensions of the nineteenth century with those of the fifteenth century. Supported by a wealth of related imagery throughout the novel, the disruption of *Forty-Four*’s exuberant blackface performance explicitly complicates themes of identity, social class, rebellion and social control while at the same time exposing the ways in which these issues are inescapably racialized in American culture, the ways in which a “real or fabricated Africanist presence [is] crucial” to understanding our constructions of white identity. In the end, the novel’s blackface anachronisms force us to consider the psychic and social cost of racializing the Other.

Michelson, Bruce. Department of English. University of Illinois.

“Mark Twain’s *Mysterious Strangers* and the Motions of the Mind”

This essay suggests how we might read the “Mysterious Stranger” stories ~ all these drafts and iterations together—as an interconnected meditation on the nature and possibilities of consciousness and the dynamics of creative thought, and it explores some additional moments of resonance between some of Mark Twain’s wilder speculations and plot-twists in these stories, and formulations taking shape in the cognitive sciences. In this context, the draft narratives about the Mysterious Stranger might be read as one story, and more specifically as a story about the making of a story; and perhaps also as a story about the biological brain and the mind at work, sometimes at odds, sometimes in harmony, over a span of time and worldly experience ~ again, assuming that the brain and the mind can still be spoken of safely as different entities. In other words, what happens if we try to read the Mysterious Stranger texts as one narrative about the steps and stages by which an imaginative literary work might come into being ~ and also, perhaps, about stages by which a human author, graced or burdened with a physical body and an aging, struggling, active brain, constructs and sustains a personal and professional identity by interrogating its own validity?

Sloane, David E. E. Department of English. University of New Haven.

“No. 44, *The Mysterious Stranger* as Literary Comedy.”

This paper approaches *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger* from the perspective of literary comedy. The story is not funny, but many of the narrative traits within it are true to the comic Twain “voice.” Since the work is located in a town, it shares the negative values of small town life infusing most of Twain’s earlier, “funnier” books, but like *Pudd’nhead Wilson*, human problems are overpowering in such a context. Unlike “Captain Stormfield” and “The Diary of Adam and Eve,” this exploration of religion and ethics contains a tragic structure, taking it out of the realm of literary comedy for Twain’s market, and so it remained unfinished and unpublished. Finally, there was no comic release. The humorist Twain is trapped inside the narrator, and never comes out.

Smith, David L. Department of English. Williams College.
"Samuel Clemens, Duality, and Time Travel."

This paper examines how Mark Twain deals with the issues that derive from time travel. This problem is not unique to Twain's later works, but it takes on new and more vexed forms in the fiction of his final decade and especially in *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*. The problem arises most obviously in the antics of Forty-Four and in the conversation at the novel's conclusion. The novel's mischief and experiments result in anarchy and ultimately nihilism. The troubling conclusions that *No. 44* reaches are linked with time travel, but fundamentally, they derive from the philosophical dualism that has been pervasive in Mark Twain's authorial self-definition. Mark Twain relished the play of binary oppositions, but in order to resolve those tensions, one needs some version of either structuralism or dialectics. Twain did not opt for either. The consequence is both a philosophical and a narrative problem.

Wonham, Henry B. Department of English. University of Oregon.
"Mark Twain's Last Cakewalk: Racialized Performance in *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*."

The novel's repeated evocation of minstrelsy, including dialect, costume, and stage conventions, allows Twain to gesture toward a conception of unmediated, undifferentiated identity in a surprising and interesting way. Racial signifiers, in other words, connote a form of identity that transcends race, and Forty-Four turns out to be neither black, nor white, but something closer to a minstrel performer who encompasses multiple racial designations. This is most apparent toward the end of the novel when Forty-Four appears to August in the image of a minstrel show character, Bones, but that episode only reinforces a pattern of reference to Forty-Four's affinity for African American music and dance traditions, such as plantation melodies, "break-downs," and "the cake-walk." These highly charged racial and cultural signifiers become surprising heuristic tools in Forty-Four's attempt to enlighten August on the possibilities undifferentiated identity and unmediated communication.

Directions to Quarry Farm from Elmira College:

From Elmira College, head east on Washington across the Clemens Center Parkway to Sullivan Street. Turn right on Sullivan. Turn left on East Avenue. Turn left on Crane Road. Quarry Farm will be on your left.

Please drive past the Barn, and then turn left into the driveway immediately following the Barn. Park on the grassy area behind the Barn.



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