RESEARCH JOURNAL OF ENGLISH (RJOE)
www.rjoe.org.in | **Oray's Publications** | ISSN: **2456-2696**
An International Approved Peer-Reviewed and Refereed English Journal
Impact Factor: *8.373 (SJIF)* | **Vol. 10, Issue 3 (July, August& September;2025)**

MARK TWAIN'S FINGERPRINTS

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Paper Received on 21-06-2025, Accepted on 26-07-2025
Published on 28-07-25; DOI:10.36993/RJOE.2025.10.3.319

Abstract:

Though *Pudd'nhead Wilson,* a less-known novel of Mark Twain shows some traits of "frontier" spirit, it is also, in a more intensified spirit, a profound study of human psyche, and furthermore, can be weighed as a piece of narrative dealing with the maltreatment and plight of the slaves, but, upon considerations from other perspective/s, it manifests some definite features to be treated as a piece of crime fiction – the first ever to have capitalized the forensic techniques of fingerprints for criminal identification. It is also the first inverse crime narrative, a prototype rather, proven contrarily to the accepted acknowledgement of R. Austin Freeman's being the first writer of that typical sub-genre.

Keywords: frontier, western, reductive pessimism, accidental detective, fingerprints, inverse crime narrative.

It is hardly utile to labour the point that centres on the speculation pertaining to an author's myriad-mindedness and dexterity, and also his capability with respect to his literary expressions in multifarious arenas if the name of the author be Mark Twain, the well-known *nom-de-plume* of Samuel Langhorne Clemens. The descriptions in use regarding this litterateur, such as, "master storyteller, wry humorist, fascinating lecturer and clever satirist"[1] (Note iii) barely hint at his intricacies. As the days went, Mark Twain grew more pessimistic and cynical and showed some leanings to give out social commentaries on human nature. Well, it is true that literature deals with human passions, thoughts, and various events that influence upon human society, culture and creed; also the ways a certain period expresses itself – but the outlook to present them and interpret them as well is something of significance. Vision changes with the flow of time, and experiences gathered all through one's past years can indubitably colour what one tries to depict in the form of literature. Such changes have been dominant in Mark Twain's authorship, more so if we tend to explore his writings produced in his grey years.

From the telling account of Hamlin Hill, it is understood that an all-persuasive gloom formed the texture of a little-known novel of Mark Twain – *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson* which got published in November, 1894:

Both of the Clemenses were suffering from rheumatism and Olivia Clemnens had a heart condition, which convinced them that it would be both beneficial and economical to close the Hartford house and spend some time in European health spas. On 6 June, 1891, the family left the Unites States, embarking on a nightmare that was to end only with their deaths, and closing the doors of the Hartford residence for what would be the last time as residents.

Throughout the early 1890s, while the girls and their mother lived on the eastern side of the Atlantic, Clemens made frenzied and frequent trips across the ocean to bolster his failing financial condition. This frantic hopscotching was futile in the depths of the Panic of 1893-94, Charles L. Webster & Co. declared bankruptcy (on April 18, 1894). Eight months later, the typesetter failed its trial run and no capital was available for further manufacture. Just turned sixty, Clemens was virtually penniless.

He had just one possible source of substantial revenue – a manuscript for a subscription book on which he had been working for several years he was in Europe – *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Since Webster was bankrupt, he returned to the American Publishing Co., with his new volume and in November, 1894, that publisher published the novel together with its burlesque counterpart, *The Comedy of Those Extraordinary Twins (Dictionary of literary Biography 86).*

According to F.R. Leavis, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* "is very little known" (Leavis 9). In the introduction to the novel which got published in 1955, he points out:

> …it is all the same the masterly work of a great writer. Yet it is very little known. One cannot easily find anyone – English or American, who has read it (at least that is my experience), and it would seem never at any time to have had the beginnings of the recognition that is its due. Its reputation – if it may be said to have a reputation – would not encourage a strenuous search for a copy of the book, unless in an admirer of *Huckleberry Finn* who was curious to look over one of the author's ephemeral productions, one that also dealt in its way with life in Hannibal, Missouri, the village of Mark Twain's childhood (9).

But apart from the novel's being "very little known", it has its own value. In *Pudd'nhead Wilson* too, like *Huckleberry Finn*, the steeped in complexity and troubled Mark Twain achieved wholeness which "is manifested in the nature of the creative triumph" (11). The novel brings together the "strength of naivete" (sic) and the "strength of mature reflective wisdom" (11). The book, as has been said by Leavis, "is a profound study of civilized man" (14). But it is, in a more intensified spirit, a profound study of human psyche. Leavis has tried to depict the novel

attaching "frontier"[2] spirit to it or a spirit of reductive pessimism.[3] The present novel in question bears a number of moral questions and strives to attain some kind of moral maturity. To quote one private utterance of Mark Twain: "We have no real morals, but only artificial ones – morals created and preserved by the forced repression of natural and healthy instinct" (14). Leavis, alluding to the just-quoted speech of Mark Twain associated the cardinal essence of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* with "a sure and profound moral maturity" (14) after the imaginatively recovered vitality of youth got ministered "no more to the spirit of Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar than to nostalgia or daydream, but to the attainment of a sure and profound moral maturity" (14). It has, rather, a strong footing that the beginnings of the truly American in literary tradition came from the frontier and the West. Leavis has called Mark Twain, "frontier" and "Western" as he was brought up in a frontier society and some unmistakable characteristics can be, at ease, descried in his authorship. Likening *Pudd'nhead Wilson* with *Huckleberry Finn*, Leavis has asserted that the former "makes no show of frontier naivete" (sic), but "belongs frankly to sophisticated literary tradition and develops the same preoccupations and expresses the same moral outlook" (15). In a frontier society, we could find out "the squalor of those villages, their moral and material squalor, their dim and bounded horizon, their petty taboos: repression at one extreme, eruption at the other, and shiftlessness for a golden mean" (15). But apart from all these, what Leavis has tried to make us feel is that "frontier" is an insidious term for *Pudd'nhead Wilson* as it suggests cultural deprivation and loss. To try to understand Leavis' stand, we should read the following:

> The comfort, well being and amenity evoked here have more than a material significance; they are the outward signs of an inward grace. Provincial as Dawson's Landing may be, it represents a society that has kept its full heritage of civilization. True, it is provincial, and Wilson's fate – the "Pudd'nhead" and the long failure to make way, against that estimate – figures for us its attitude towards originality of mind (17).

Having thus spoken about what he has felt after reading the novel, including the pride and the allegiance to an ideal of conduct that make personal safety a matter of comparative indifference, Leavis has also expressed, with some contradiction, the keener attitude of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*:

> The attitude of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* is remote from cynicism or pessimism. The book conveys neither contempt for human nature nor a rejection of civilization. It is concerned with the complexities of both human nature and civilization as represented in a historical community – for Dawson's Landing, it may reasonably be said, is one that, at a given time in actual American history, Mark Twain had intimately known (24).

Though W. M. Gibson has echoed almost in the like manner what Leavis has put up, and Cox has dominantly discussed about the subtle nuances of Wilson's pithy sayings

that are replete with humorous tones peppered with some doses of pessimistic attitude, Van Wyck Brooks says much the same as well. Brooks has opined of Mark Twain as the great folk writer of the American West and a "frontier" story-teller who has indeed shown how to raise the art of oral story-telling to an unparalleled pitch and then to transfer its effects to paper.

But what got scantily pointed out by these noted critics are of much concern and significance pertaining to the present novel – and the perspectives with which this article gets supported are altogether different ones, the employment of which may rouse this novel with some veritable uniqueness. Switched at birth by a young slave woman attempting to shield her infant son from the horrors of slavery, a mulatto infant changes places with the master's white offspring. This simple premise is the pedestal of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, a compelling drama holding all the ingredients of a classic nineteenth century mystery: identities hued with inhuman and base transposition, a ghastly crime, an eccentric and accidental detective, and a tense and suspenseful courtroom scene.

All along the course of the novel, the development of the plot bristles with suspense – a surefooted trait of a crime fiction. David (Pudd'nhead) Wilson, a wise but unorthodox lawyer who collects people's fingerprints as a hobby wins back the respect of his fellowmen when he solves a local murder that has falsely accused two foreigners, and, in the end, discloses the identity of the true perpetrator. Witty, entertaining and absorbing, the novel also includes a literary first – the use of fingerprinting to get at the solution of a crime.

Mark Twain's David (Pudd'nhead) Wilson is not only endowed with an unusually original mind but knows when and how to stay calm, honing his abilities and sharpening his grasp upon the studies which he continues despite being relegated to the status of "Pudd'nhead" on account of a chance remark he made when he disembarked on Dawson's Landing, Arkansas, some two decades afore. To the people of Dawson's Landing, he is an acceptable and loveable fellow – but a mere pipsqueak – "he's a lummox, anyway" *(Pudd'nhead Wilson* 4). But a tirelessly persevering fellow, as he proves himself throughout the novel, and in Chapter – XI, we discover him unravel his mettle:

> The sarcasm bit, but Wilson kept himself under control, and without passion:
>
> "I don't practice, it is true. It is true that I have never had a case, and have had to earn a poor living for twenty years as an expert accountant in a town where I can't get hold of a set of books to untangle as often as I should like. But it is also true that I did fit myself well for the practice of the law. By the time I was your age, Tom, I had chosen a profession, and was soon competent to enter upon it." Tom winced. "I never got a chance to try my

> hand at it, and I may never get a chance; and yet if I ever do get it I shall be found ready, for I have kept my law studies all these years." (51)

There is another characteristic which we had better embody. The eponymous character plays the hero and during the gradual development of the plot, Wilson's importance and role manifest growth. Apart from playing the role of a "lonesome and neglected" (31) misnomer, by dint of his peculiar hobby and original, analytical mind, he reveals through his investigation based on fingerprints not only the perpetrator of the murder but also that Tom, between the ages of seven and eight months, was moved from the cradle of a slave to that of a young white master. In order to plead for the twins, he had to play the detective – an accidental detective or sleuth.[4] Wilson's role in the novel, in more than one feature, assumes one of an accidental sleuth. Before the arrival of the "extraordinary twins" at the widow Cooper's house, "affectionately called 'Aunt Patsy' by everybody" (24), to remain as lodgers, Wilson was loved by all but considered to be "of no consequence" (24). Wilson's interaction with other people used to border on mere gossipry and they used to take Wilson for granted, because of his nickname "Pudd'nhead" that he earned, save Judge Driscoll, who has found some substance in the man and in his Calendar. Now, the coming of the twins who "have lived long in the various countries of Europe and several years in the United States" (24) and their being "Italian by birth" (24) has caused a sensation among the villagers of Dawson's Landing. Aunt Patsy's daughter Rowena was full of romantic aspirations, following the receipt of the confirming letter from the twins to stay as paying guests at her place and the "Judge was full of congratulations and curiosity" (25). Neighbour after neighbour, of both sexes came pouring in all through the day and evening. The letter was read and reread until it was nearly worn out – everybody was sympathetic and excited and the Coopers were happy. With respect to the villagers the twins were *sui generis,* and Mark Twain describes them:

> Eleven o'clock came, and the Cooper house was the only one in the town that still had lights burning. The rain and thunder were booming yet, and the anxious family were still waiting, still hoping. At last there was a knock at the door and the family jumped to open it. Two negro men entered, each carrying a trunk, and proceeded upstairs toward the guest room. Then entered the twins –the handsomest, the best dressed, the most distinguished-looking pair of young fellows the West had ever seen. One was a little fairer than the other, but otherwise they were exact duplicates. (25)

The evening on the day next gets too busy for Aunt Patsy as the party to introduce "her fine foreign birds" (27*)* with "her neighbors and friends – simple folk who had hardly ever seen a foreigner of any kind, and never one of any distinction or style" (27*)* takes place. At the party, the young strangers played the piano with e´lan and were kept long at it. The villagers were astonished and enchanted by their performance and in the end, the "company broke up reluctantly, and drifted toward

several homes, chatting with vivacity, and all agreeing that it would be many a long day before Dawson's Landing would see equal of this one again" (30). Judge Driscoll is fortunate to secure them for an immediate drive and shows them the local landmark places — the new graveyard, the jail, the house of the richest man, the churches and so on. The Judge tells them a good many humorous anecdotes and also of the Society of Free-thinkers of which he is the President, calls for the brothers in the evening to attend a meeting of it. Accordingly he calls for them and on the way tells them all about Pudd'nhead Wilson, in order that they may get a favourable impression of him in advance and be prepared to like him. This scheme succeeds, the favourable impression is achieved. The bonding begins to gather some strength and the author puts it thus:

> The hour passed quickly away in lively talk, and when it was ended the lonesome and neglected Wilson was richer by two friends than he had been when it began. He invited the twins to look in at his lodgings, presently, after disposing of an intervening engagement, and they accepted with pleasure. (31)

Later on, after the arrival of the twins, the bond among them gets further solidified:

> The twins arrived presently, and talk began. It flowed along chattily and sociably, and under its influence the new friendship gathered ease and strength. Wilson got out his Calendar, by request, and read a passage or two from it, which the twins, praised cordially. (50)

Thereafter, in the course of the novel, their friendship grows because of mutual respect and good faith. Even after being kicked by Luigi at the rum party before four hundred people, for redress, Tom has had him up in court and beaten him. Wilson has defended Luigi — the first case he has ever had, and has lost it and Luigi has been fined five dollars for the assault. Afterwards, at the duel between Judge Driscoll and Luigi, Wilson plays his second. And the night Judge Driscoll gets murdered, Wilson reaches the house of mourning and in the capacity of a mayor, which he has been elected to be, he examines the finger-marks on the knife-handle and gets adequately sure that none of the twins has made those marks. The twins have been accused of the murder and Wilson once again decides to be their counsel, both due to his proximity with them and his conviction of their uninvolvement. This leads him to prove the twins' innocence and subsequently to discover the murderer — the role of an "accidental sleuth" that he plays in the closing events of the novel.

Not only a loathsome murder, but several other crimes or criminal offences also happen in the present narrative. Switching the babies by Roxana, her thieving of twenty dollars from the table, judge Driscoll's malignation of the twins, taking disguises by both Roxy and Tom, Tom's thieving the neighbour's households, killing his sole benefactor, and, after that, effacing the evidences etc. speak volumes of this

novel's being a crime novel. The referent contexts from the text itself are going to establish this stand squarely.

Talking about David (Pudd'nhead) Wilson in Chapter – II, Mark Twain lets us surmise the particular pivot on which the final revelation is going to turn.

> He had a rich abundance of idle time, but it never hung heavy on his hands, for he interested himself in every new thing that was born into the universe of ideas, and studied it and experimented upon it at his house. One of his pet fads was palmistry. To another one he gave no name, neither would he explain to anybody what its purpose was, but merely said it was an amusement. In fact, he had found that his fads added to his reputation as a pudd'nhead; therefore he was growing chary of being too communicative about them. The fad without a name was one which dealt with people's finger-marks. He carried in his coat pocket a shallow box with grooves in it, and in the grooves strips of glass five inches long and three inches wide. Along the lower edge of each strip was pasted a slip of white paper. He asked people to pass their hands through their hair (thus collecting upon them a thin coating of the natural oil) and then make a thumb-mark on a glass strip, following it with the mark of the ball of each finger in succession. Under this row of faint grease prints he would write a record on the strip of white paper thus:
>
> JOHN SMITH, right hand –
>
> and add the day of the month and the year, then take Smith's left hand on another glass strip, and add name and date and the words "left hand". The strips were now (sic) returned to the grooved box, and took their place among what Wilson called his "records."
>
> He often studied his records, examining and poring over them with absorbing interest until far into the night; but what he found there – if he found anything – he revealed to no one. Sometimes he copied on paper the involved and delicate pattern left by the ball of a finger, and then vastly enlarged it with a pantograph so that he could examine its web of curving lines with ease and convenience. (5-6)

Even a reader of average intelligence normally can figure out that Mark Twain, in this novel, is intent to be "scientific"; and he is going to usher in the forensic techniques of determining the criminal with fingerprints. In fact, this is the first full-fledged story to have used a particular technique of forensic science, i.e., records of fingerprints that unveil the mysteries of switching the children and the murder, apart from Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* (1883), where the author had written about a murder case where fingerprints on a glass were used as evidence. Factually speaking, the first criminal identification with the help of fingerprints took

place in 1892 by Juan Vucetich, an Argentine Police Officer. He identified Francisca Rojas, the murderer of her own two sons. After she committed the murder, she cut her own throat in order to place blame on someone else. Her body print was left on a door post, and it proved her identity as the murderer (See web: onin.com).

Nowadays, as noted forensic scientists Fraser and Willian have put up, DNA and fingerprints are the two main methods of identifying people, alive or dead, and provide evidence that is considered conclusive by the courts. In Mark Twain's time, DNA testing was yet to get employed, and, fingerprints as a reliable means of personal identification was beginning to hold ground. No wonder, Mark Twain has used "Dermatoglyphics" (*derma* skin, *and glyphy* carve), the scientific study of epidermal friction skin (ridges) present on the palm and the sole of human beings, great apes and also on the prehensile tail of some monkeys. According to Wentworth and Wilder, as a modern technique it has got a tremendous application in Forensic Science for personal or criminal identification. So far, the science of fingerprint identification has been serving worldwide for over hundred years to provide accurate identification of criminals. Mark Twain might have heard of Gilbert Thompson and might have read Galton's monumental book *Fingerprints*. In 1882, Gilbert Thompson of the US Geological Survey in New Mexico used the thumb print of his own on a document to prevent forgery. This be the first known use of fingerprints in the U.S. Apart from him, his contemporary, Sir Francis Galton, a British anthropologist and a cousin of Darwin began his observations of fingerprints as a means of identification in the 1880s. He published his aforementioned book, establishing the individuality and permanence of fingerprints and it included the first classification system for the same (See web: onin.com).

In the same chapter, both the prospect of switching the two babies, one of Roxy and the other of Percy Driscoll and the means to detect the crime are on the surface, as the following extract goes:

> "How do you tell them apart, Roxy, when they haven't any clothes on?" Roxy laughed a laugh proportioned to her size and said: "Oh, I kin tell 'em 'part, Misto Wilson, but I bet Marse Percy couldn't, not to save his life."
>
> Wilson chatted along for a while, and presently got Roxy's fingerprints for his collection – right hand and left – on a couple of his glass strips ; then labeled and dated them, and took the "records" of both children, and labeled and dated them also.
>
> Two months later, on the 3rd of September, he took this trio of fingermarks again. He liked to have a "series", two or three "takings" at intervals during the period of childhood, these to be followed by others at intervals of several years. (8)

In Chapter – III, we get to be aware of the first cardinal crime behind which Roxy's shrewd trick works. Mr. Driscoll experiences a theft of a small sum of money

on the 4th of September, for the fourth time, and in order to get to the culprit, he threatens the four negro slaves to sell them "down the river" (10) — an equivalent to condemning them to hell. Roxy reels in her tracks and the colour vanishes out of her face. That night she gets hardly to sleep, as a profound terror has taken possession of her. It is for the ill-fate of her own child and she premonishes that her child may, in future, be sold down the river. Being terror-struck, she plans to commit suicide along with her child, prepares herself by wearing her new Sunday gown and clothes her own baby with Thomas a Becket's snowy long baby gown. Her own child's beauty astonishes her – "I never knowed you was so lovely. Marse Tommy ain't a bit puttier – not a single bit." (12). And then and there, a shrewd trick, formidable and cruel in its design, lights up her brain.

> She stepped over and glanced at the other infant; she flung a glance back at her own; then one more at the heir of the house. Now a strange light dawned in her eyes, and in a moment she was lost in thought. She seemed in a trance; when she came out of it she muttered, "When I'uz a-washin,'em in de tub, yistiddy, his own pappy asked me which of 'em was his'n."
>
> She began to move about like one in a dream. She undressed Thomas a Becket, stripping him of everything, and put the tow-linen shirt on him. She put his coral necklace on her own child's neck. Then she placed the children side by side, and after earnest inspection she muttered:
>
> "Now who would b'lieve clo'es could do be like o'dat? Dog my cats if it ain't all I kin do to tell t'other fum which, let alone his pappy."
>
> She put her cub in Tommy's elegent cradle and said:
>
> "You's young. Marse Tom fum dis out, en I got to practise and git used to' memberin' to call you dat, honey, or I's gwine to make a mistake some time en git us bofe into trouble. Dah now you lay still en don't fret mo. Marse Tom – oh, thank de good Lord in heaven, you's saved, you's saved! – dey ain't no man kin ever sell mammy's po' little honey down de river now!" (12-13)

Roxy's wrong-doing is done and Mark Twain has us aware of it. The braiding of the subsequent crimes will follow as it gets evident from the impropriety and misdemeanour of Marse Tom, the usurper. He proves himself to be an altogether vicious, sadist and ungrateful oppressor, having a filthy temperament. Not only has he showed murderous aggressiveness to Chambers, the real heir; but repulsion and caustic treatment for Roxy also, his mother: the doting and affectionate maid – as he is supposed to believe. He has long ago taught Roxy "her place" (20). Her occasional caress or a fondling epithet in his quarter has been repulsive to him and she has been warned to keep her distance and remember who she is. Roxy sees, "her darling gradually cease from being her son" (20), and whatever is left is pure and simple mastership – and it is not a gentle mastership either. On his death-bed, in the fall of 1845, Driscoll sets Roxy free and delivers "his idolized ostensible son solemnly into

the keeping of his brother the Judge, and his wife" (21). Roxy resolves to go around, chambermaiding and leave her boys who have reached up to their twelfth year and she herself her thirty fifth. She passes eight years chambermaiding on a Cincinnati boat in the New Orleans trade, the Grand Mogul and when rheumatism catches hold of her arms, she feels obliged to let the wash-tub alone. She has had her savings with a bank which, rather unfortunately for her, goes to smash carrying her four hundred dollars with it. She chooses to return to the Dawson's Landing. Time has worn away her bitterness against her son and she holds him with serenity. She puts the vile side of him out of her mind, and dwells only on the recollections of his occasional acts of kindness to her. A sort of longing has arisen in her to see him and she dreams of getting a trifle now and then from him – "maybe a dollar, once a month, say; any little thing like that would help, oh, ever so much" (34). On reaching her old place, she goes to Judge Driscoll's kitchen first of all, is received with great enthusiasm, the negroes hang enchanted upon the great story of her experiences and load her basket stealing the pantry bare. Roxy gets to know from Chambers that Marse Tom is away in St. Louis and stays there mostly. She also gets to know of his gambling habit, of two hundred dollars' debt, his threat of being disinherited by the old Judge and his subsequent forgiveness of Tom. Roxy feels satisfied, and happy and quite sentimental over it. She keeps on coming daily to meet her own son and when she learns one day that he has returned, she trembles with emotion and straightway sends Chambers to beg him to let her see him. This be the first meeting between the mother and the son, after eight long years and the first place where we have a glimpse of Tom Driscoll after he has come of age.

> Tom was stretched at his lazy ease on a sofa when Chambers brought the petition. Time had not modified his ancient detestation of the humble drudge and protector of his boyhood; it was still bitter and uncompromising. He sat up and bent a severe gaze upon the fair face of the young fellow whose name he was unconsciously using and whose family rights he was enjoying. He maintained the gaze until the victim of it had become satisfactorily pallied with terror, then he said:
>
> "What does the old rip want with me?"
>
> The petition was meekly repeated.
>
> "Who gave you permission to come and disturb me with the social attentions of niggers?"
>
> Tom had risen. The other young man was trembling now, visibly. He saw what was coming, and bent his head sideways, and put up his left arm to shield it. Tom rained cuffs upon the head and its shield, saying no word; the victim received each blow with a beseeching "Please Marse Tom! - Oh, please, Marse Tom!" Seven blows – then Tom said, "Face the door – march!" He followed behind with one, two, three solid kicks. The last one helped the

pure white slave over the door-still, and he limped away mopping his eyes with his old ragged sleeve. Tom shouted after him, "Send her in!"

Then he flung himself panting on the sofa again, and rasped out the remark, "He arrived just at the right moment; I was full to the brim with bitter thinkings, and nobody take it out of. How refreshing it was! I feel better." (36)

Next, the cherished meeting of Roxy with her son demeans herself beyond measure and on her turn, she manages to scare him on the pretext of knowing a secret about him which may leave him all desolate and penniless once divulged to his uncle. On account of his acquired dissipation and his being deep in debt again, Tom surmises these things to be his secret. When Roxy tells him that she will let him know what it is that she holds as a trump card, and to see her at ten that night at the haunted house, he agrees with her, and on being told that he himself is nothing but a nigger and a usurper, Roxy's own son and Valet de Chambers be the real heir, Tom springs up and seizes a billet of wood and raises it, but his mother laughs at him and says:

"Set down, you pup! Does you think you kin skyer me? It ain't in you, nor de likes of you. I reckon you'd shoot me in de back, maybe, if you got a chance, for dat's just yo' style-- I knows you, throo en throo – but I don't mind gitt'n killed, beca'se all dis is down in writin'en it's in safe hands, too, en de man dat's got it knows what to look for de right man when I gets killed. Oh, bless yo' soul, if you puts yo' mother up for a big fool as you is, you's pow'ful mistaken, I kin tell you! Now den, you set still en behave yo'self; en don't you git up ag'in, till I tell you. (42-43)

This evidently runs on Tom's mother's correct assessment of her child. Later, as the narrative runs on, we get an impression of Tom as the most mean back-stabber of his benefactor and mother as well.

Mark Twain hints at us once again in Chapter XI about what is going to be the means to catch the perpetrator in the end and who is going to play the key role in unravelling the mystery. The twins arrive at Wilson's and in the midst of their flowing confabulation Tom Driscoll appears and joins them. As if to touch Wilson on the raw and to draw the twins to his discomfiture, Tom refers to Wilson's "scheme for driving plain window-glass out of the market by decorating it with greasy fingermarks, and getting rich by selling it at famine prices to the crowned heads over in Europe to outfit their palaces with" (51). Wilson pays scant heed to his mockery, brings three of his glass strips and says:

"I get the subject to pass the fingers of his right hand through his hair, so as to get a little coating of the natural oil on them, and then press the balls of them on the glass. A fine and delicate print of the lines in the skin results,

> and is permanent, if it doesn't come in contact with something able to rub it off". (51-52)

Later along with the development of a complex plot that includes Tom's selling his mother down the river into the unbearable hell of a Louisiana sugar plantation, Mark Twain draws an end in a dramatic trial and conviction of Tom for murdering his "uncle" in whose house he has been living since his "father's" death. The striking account of the murder in Chapter-XIX provides the reader with everything s/he requires to know the murderer's identity, the victim, the motive and the *modus operandi* of the misdeed before the process of detection, and its culminating point through the courtroom drama. Tom needs three hundred dollars to give to the man who has bought Roxy, her mother; and to buy her free again and for the procurement of the money, Roxy tells him to go to Judge Driscoll to ask him for the money. Tom protests but finding no other way out, he chooses to follow her plan with a variation – he decides not to ask but, to rob his uncle and benefactor, Judge Driscoll, "the old skinflint" (98), as he calls him.

Not before long, the duel between Count Luigi, one of the twins and Judge Driscoll as a means to restore the family pride has taken place, followed by the election for the seats in the aldermanic board. Pudd'nhead Wilson has suddenly become "a man of consequence", because he has been one of the duelists' subordinate, i.e., of Luigi, and consequently has been elected the Mayor. On the other hand, the twins have been "defeated–crushed, in fact and left forlorn and substantially friendless" (90) more so because of the mordant campaign against them by Judge Driscoll than their defeat itself. All these have made the twins and the Judge plain enemies. The twins put forward the call for another duel to Judge Driscoll but he declines to fight with an assassin "in the field of honor" (99). Elsewhere, of course, he has expressed his readiness as the unwritten law of that region requires him or the twins to kill each other on sight. Such a situation has rendered natural suspicion on the twins to be the murderers, especially when the murder weapon Tom has used has been the knife of Luigi which Tom has stolen from him months ago. Tom's aim has been to steal money from a pile of bank-notes that he finds upon glancing in the room of his uncle who has been asleep on the sofa. Tom has disguised himself with a girl's clothes, and armed himself with the Indian knife belonging to Luigi. Desperate and determined, he proceeds toward the room of Judge Driscoll, who at that time, having wearied himself with work upon finances, has been taking rest. The time is past eleven, the twins having gone out for exercise and started a long stroll in the veiled moonlight. The description of the murderous act is masterly and full of suspense. And also Tom's flight after the murder and his planned actions with a view to efface the evidences are reminiscent of a foxy criminal. The readers know them all: who be the murderer, the way judge Driscoll gets murdered and why. The detection begins with Chapter-XIX and the readers are left with grim suspense and intense curiosity as

to how the detective, here the mayor and counsel for the twins gets at the solution of this tricky puzzle – an altogether herculean task, with not a single clue left to show some light. The process of detection begins scientifically, Wilson taking the lead and choosing to play the role of the discoverer with his observant and analytical mind.

> When Wilson reached the house of Mourning and had gathered such details as Mrs. Pratt and the rest of the crowd could tell him, he took command as mayor, and gave orders that nothing should be touched, but everything left as it was until Justice Robinson should arrive and take the proper measures as coroner. He cleared everybody out of the room but the twins and himself. The sheriff soon arrived and took the twins away to jail. Wilson told them to keep heart, and promised to do his best in their defense when the case should come to trial. Justice Robinson came presently, and with him Constable Blake. They examined the room thoroughly. They found the knife and the sheath. Wilson noticed that there were fingerprints on the knife handle. That pleased him, for the twins had required the earliest comers to make a scrutiny of their hands and clothes, and neither these people nor Wilson himself had found any blood-stains upon them. Could there be a possibility that the twins had spoken the truth when they said they found the man dead when they ran into the house in answer to the cry for help? (103)

We see Wilson deeply in thought, analytically weighing every aspect of the case and becoming sure of the twins' guiltlessness. The most dominant side in favour of the twins is only one thing – the fingerprints on the handle of the knife are not theirs, and Wilson knows it perfectly well.

We, the readers already know who the murderer is. In the course of the detection process, as it is natural to occur, Wilson's detection takes a wrong way and he keeps Tom outside his list of the suspects – or suspecting Tom, even after judging several aspects, has not seemed to be of some substance to him.

> Wilson refused to suspect Tom; for first, Tom couldn't murder anybody – he hadn't character enough; secondly, if he could murder a person he wouldn't select his doting benefactor and nearest relative; thirdly, self-interest was in the way, for while the uncle lived, Tom was sure of a free support and a chance to get the destroyed will revived again, but with the uncle gone, that chance was gone, too. It was true, the will had really been revived, as was now discovered, but Tom could not have been aware of it, or he would have spoken of it, in his native, talky, unsecretive way. Finally, Tom was in St. Louis when the murder was done, and got the news out of the morning journals, as was shown by his telegram to his aunt. These speculations were unemphasized sensations rather than articulated thoughts, for Wilson would have laughed at the idea of seriously connecting Tom with the murder. (104)

The author presents us and Wilson a labyrinth through which advancement to the right direction seems almost improbable. Here we tend to feel one with Wilson and our moral leanings wish him every success. The difference between us and the detective lies only in knowing the identity of the criminal and the suspense takes the summit here with regard to how the detection is going to produce justice and the discovery of the offender in a reasonably realistic way.

The courtroom drama begins with the next chapter (Ch. XX); the heaviest day in Wilson's life comes with the day of trial. Meanwhile, despite his untiring effort, he has discovered nothing – no sign or trace of the missing "Confederate", the term which he is using for the mysterious girl who has vanished and escaped and whom the three women (Misses Clarkson) from the house on the opposite side of the lane met just after the murder. Pembroke Howard, the public prosecutor states the case plainly incriminating the twins and avers that the motive is "partly revenge and partly a desire to take his own life out of jeopardy" (107) and that his brother, by his presence has been a consenting accessory to the crime. Witness after witness is called by the State, questioned at length, though the witnesses have produced nothing valuable for Wilson's side. People have felt sorry for Pudd'nhead, his budding career is going to get badly affected by this trial. To add to his uneasiness, the prophetic words of Judge Driscoll once again come to the fore:

> Several witnesses swore they heard judge Driscoll say in his public speech that the twins would be able to find their lost knife again when they needed it to assassinate somebody with. This was not news, but now it was seen to have been sorrowfully prophetic, and a profound sensation quivered through the hushed courtroom when those dismal words were repeated. (107)

On his turn, Wilson, upon cross-examining Mrs. Pratt, gets it to be testified that

> the twins proclaimed their innocence; declared that they had been taking a walk, and had hurried to the house in response to a cry for help which was so loud and strong that they had heard it at a considerable distance; that they begged her and the gentlemen just mentioned to examine their hands and clothes – which was done, and no blood-stains found (108).

The two gentlemen, Rogers and Mr. Buckstone confirm the evidence. Here, we find a compelling impasse expanding its reign over the court proceedings. The twins cannot be charged absolutely, nor has the discovery of the criminal yet been evidentially substantiated, taking in view that the fingerprints on the handle of the murder weapon i.e., the knife have been of the murderer and not of Luigi, the prime accused. Like an astute pleader, we see Wilson pray to the court for some time to be granted. The author lets us have his stand thuswise:

> Wilson said that he had three witnesses, the Misses Clarkson, who would testify that they met a veiled young woman leaving judge Driscoll's

> premise by the back gate a few minutes after the cries for help were heard, and that their evidence which he would call the court's attention to, would in his opinion convince the court that there was still one person concerned in this crime who had not yet been found, and also that a stay of proceedings ought to be granted, in justice to his clients, until that person should be discovered. As it was late, he would ask leave to defer the examination of his three witnesses until the next morning. (108)

And the span "until the next morning" has been set to uncover the puzzle in an unthinkable way, like a hex. Wilson has been, all these days, hard at solving the crime puzzle and has had a hard sledding. Until that evening, he has found it hard to come by, and at the tranquil hours of that night which he has only in his hand, whatever he discloses be something hard to swallow indeed. The entire course during the afterhours of the court proceedings until the next day's compels Wilson to hardly have time to breathe as after getting into his house. Wilson has wanted no supper for he had no appetite. He gets out all the finger-prints of girls and women in his collection of records and examines them with engrossed attention, looking for some vague prospect that that troublesome girl's marks are there somewhere which could have been overlooked. But such thing has not turned up, and Wilson gets immensely dispirited and despaired. He clasps his hands over his head and succumbs to "dull and arid musings" (109). It is at this point, Tom Driscoll drops in, an hour after dark, only to hassle the troubled Wilson with the deadline and his impending defeat in the case. His intention of pouring in at Wilson's place is clearly outlined by Mark Twain in a masterly way that not only delves deep into a criminal's complacency owing to the seeming impossibility of his getting detected and caught but also his taking chance to jeer at his adversary by touching him on the raw.

> Absolutely secure as Tom considered himself to be, the opening solemnities of the trial had nevertheless oppressed him with a vague uneasiness, his being a nature sensitive to even the smallest alarms; but from the moment that the poverty and weakness of Wilson's case lay exposed to the court, he was comfortable once more, even jubilant. He left the court-room sarcastically sorry for Wilson. "The Clarksons met an unknown woman in the back lane," he said to himself – "that is his case! I'll give him a century to find her in – a couple of them if he likes. A woman who doesn't exist any longer, and the clothes that gave her her sex burnt up and the ashes thrown away – oh, certainly, he'll find her easy enough!" This reflection set him to admiring, for the hundredth time, the shrewd ingenuities by which he had insured himself against detection – more, against even suspicion. (109)

They say, "Heaven helps those who help themselves". The further course of the affair establishes this saying all the more strongly. Tom playfully begins to take up one of the glass strips or the other on which the fingerprints of various persons

have been preserved along with the labels showing their names, and chooses to be pseudo-sympathetic on Wilson's approaching defeat in the case which is just a matter of time and derisive on his curious habit of collecting the finger-marks which he calls his records. Tom takes the glass strip showing "old Roxy's label" (110) and as if by Providential Justice, lays his own finger-print on it. He wants an explanation of a line straight across her thumb-print and holds out the piece of glass to Wilson. The bored and weary Wilson tells of a scar of a cut or a scratch as the usual cause by taking the strip of glass indifferently, raising it to the lamp and all on a sudden, his face becomes bloodless, his hand quakes, and he gazes "at the polished surface before him with the glassy stare of a corpse" (110). His trained eyes catch the striking similarities between the fingerprints laid on the handle of the knife with which the judge was killed and the new finger-marks unintentionally left by Tom a few minutes before on Roxy's glass strip.

Tom, sensing that Pudd'nhead Wilson is not feeling well offers a glass of water but Wilson shrinks from him, tells him to take it away and expresses his intention to go to bed as he has been overwrought and overworked for many days. Even before going out, Tom cannot deny himself a small parting gibe and says, "Don't take it so hard; a body can't win every time; you'll hang somebody yet" (110). Wilson cannot choose but mutter to himself, "It is no lie to say I am sorry I have to begin with you, miserable dog though you are!" (110).

Wilson braces himself up with a glass of cold whisky and begins his work again. For the rest of the night up to nine o' clock in the morning the next day, he continues to work on his great and hopeful discovery, in an altogether invigorated way as his all sense of weariness gets swept away. He hunts out the plate containing the fingerprints made by Tom when he was twelve years old and lays it by itself, brings forth the marks made by Tom's baby fingers when he was a suckling of seven months and places these two plates with the one containing this subject's newly and unconsciously made record. The anomaly stupefies him with astonishment as "the baby's don't tally with the others!" (111). Pondering over the puzzle makes his head blocked once again and being tired, he chooses to sleep himself fresh. He sleeps a troubled and unrestful hour and as if in a dream, seems to have gone to the last touching line of his discovery. He suddenly rises up, lands in the middle of the floor at a bound, seizes his records once again and reveals another mystery of twenty-three years; the switching of the babies by Roxy! And previously, "a man in girl's clothes" (111) has occurred to him, unravelling the mystery of, the "veiled young woman leaving Judge Driscoll's premise" (108).

Mark Twain has chosen the present novel to be of scientific nature, of forensic science – to be precise, and, that too with the latest forensic techniques available at that time. Wilson's preparing for the "records" for the next day's courtroom trial settles the fact that the present novel is more a study of criminal psychology and

forensic science than of any other aspect, peppered with the startling investigation processes by an unassuming lawyer, who has kept himself ever ready for the right opportunity, and when it has come, he has made a history. The author also presents before us the techniques of applying the finger-marks with a view to cornering the criminals in the court of law. Chapter XXI begins with the description of his labour all through the night, right up to the next morning's court hour.

The court-room proceedings that follow are of noticeable qualitative superiority and captivating oratory on the part of Wilson. Here, in the court-room, the author not only disentangles the knots one after another by Wilson but also ventures to establish the effectiveness and scientific clarity of the finger-marks. First, he lets Wilson to propound his theory pertaining to the motive and the mode of operation of the murderer and then switches on to the scientific theory of fingerprints. Wilson not only expounds these things to the concerned judge, the jury, the public prosecutor and the people present at the court-room but also relates the things to us – the readers. So far his theory of the murder is concerned; it will not be amiss to put the cardinal points one by one serially:

a) The claim most persistently urged, most strenuously and defiantly insisted upon by the prosecution that the person whose hand has left the blood-stained fingerprints upon the haft of the Indian knife is the person who has committed the murder. This claim is, by all means, worth to be stood by.

b) The motive of the murder is not revenge, but robbery.

c) If the twins have been guilty, they ought to have been running out of the house at the same time Mrs. Pratt was running to that room. The twins have had enough time to escape but they have made no effort to do so.

d) A large reward was offered for the thief of the stolen Indian knife and the thief may have been present himself. There was a person in Judge Driscoll's room several minutes before the accused entered it.

e) Misses Clarkson met a veiled person – ostensibly a woman – coming out of the back gate a few minutes after the cry for help was heard. This person was not a woman, but a man dressed in woman's clothes.

f) The object of that person who has committed the murder was robbery, not murder. He tried to take the tin cash box while its owner slept, probably made a noise, was grabbed by the Judge and had to use the knife to save himself from capture, and fled without his booty for he heard help coming.

Wilson is over with his theory and proceeds to the evidences by which he chooses to try to prove its soundness. He takes up several of his strips of glass and when the audience recognizes these familiar mementoes of Pudd'nhead's old time childish "puttering" and "folly" (115), the house bursts into volleys of relieving and refreshing laughter, including Tom himself. Wilson remains apparently unmoved and goes ahead to explain the scientific applicability of them. By doing so, he has put forward

the scientific theory of fingerprints in a nutshell. Thus, explaining the wonderful scientific aspects of fingerprints to the laymen as all assembled at the court-room that day have been, Wilson assures the court to produce the perpetrator before the clock strikes noon. Wilson proves his mettle as an ace fingerprint expert before the judge, the jury, the public prosecutor and others present at the court room by identifying the real owners of the fingerprints made on the window panes of the room upon his own calling and then progresses towards the uncovering of the identity of the real murderer. Not only Wilson proves the innocence of Count Luigi, the accused, by letting the jury tally the fingerprints writ with blood on the knife's handle with his 'records' that are pantographed and thrown up ten sizes, but also finds the guilty with the same process; along with unravelling the switching of the babies between their seven and eight months and the cruel deprivation of twenty three years of the real Thomas a Becket Driscoll, so far known as Valet de Chambre, negro and slave. Tom, Roxy's own child, the usurper and the base homicide when called to make upon the window the fingerprints that will hang him slides limp and lifeless to the floor – an ersatz of confession, as held by Wilson. Roxy flings herself upon her knees, covers her face with her hands and sobs out the imploration of mercy from the Lord. The clock strikes twelve.

Pudd'nhead Wilson by Mark Twain is not only a unique specimen of its own kind but also impels us to hold the novel with more than one perspective. It is a novel of oppression of the negro slaves by the white masters, a tale of helplessness of the unfortunate section of the society which is destined to bear the brunt, an expression of several moral issues, and contrarily, rather judging from an altogether different outlook, probably the first full-length detective story to have used the forensic techniques of identifying the criminal with the help of fingerprints. Mark Twain presents before us a lawyer and a fingerprint expert in the name of Wilson who, in his curiously outlandish way, solves an intricate murder mystery about which we, the readers, must have felt doubt as far as the detection is concerned. The present novel can be credited with yet another remarkable quality. It is, without doubt, an inverse crime narrative where the emphasis relocates from the reader's assembling the pieces of the puzzle into a revelatory pattern along with the detective to the observation of the investigator arriving at or failing to arrive at the completed puzzle already known to the reader. The critics of detective fiction consider R. Austin Freeman to have written the specific type of detective story called the "inverted detective story" or the "inverse crime narrative" in 1912 for the first time. They would do well if they consider *Pudd'nhead Wilson* as an earlier specimen, probably the earliest of such type of story in modern era. *Pudd'nhead Wilson* got published in 1894 and Mark Twain has shown us how a prototype of an inverse crime narrative can be. We all know who the killer is, and yet plant our footsteps with Wilson to catch hold of him, enjoying his investigation with bated breath and give out a sigh of relief when it is done.

Rosemary Herbert in her *The Oxford Companion to Crime and Mystery Writing*, an elevating and informative work *per se*, has taken side with R. Austin Freeman as the *inventor* of inverted detective story. She chooses to proclaim with John M. Reilly thus:

> The weight of convention and practice shows that crime and mystery writers have found that dramatic effect lies most predictably in narrative plots building toward conclusive revelation. The crime is detailed, clues are sorted, suspects interrogated, and, in a demonstration of the efficacy of investigative method, the story reaches its finish when the detective ties the facts together to expose the criminal. Despite its continued repetition, the design of fiction that deliberately withholds full portrayal of the criminal action until a sleuth is prepared to recount it secondhand seems never to lose its appeal. Yet, as though to prove there are other ways to achieve suspense, a small body of authors has reversed the established way of constructing the criminal story to achieve different effects.
>
> Critical opinion attributes the invention of the inverted detective story to R. Austin Freeman. In stories featuring Dr. John Thorndyke originally written for *Pearson's Magazine* and collected under the title *The Singing Bone (1912; The Adventures of Dr. Thorndyke),*the reader is informed fully about the crime at the beginning through scenes identifying the killer and showing him at work. The body of each narrative is then devoted to Thorndyke's process of discovery. Freeman's evident interest in detective fiction lay in the opportunity it affords for delineation of scientific techniques of detection. His debut detective novel, *The Red Thumb Mark* (1907), for example, presents exhaustive detail of Thorndyke's investigation of a case of forged fingerprints. His innovative creation of the inverted detective story thus became Freeman's means for replacing the human-interest plot of a detective hunting a criminal with an abstract intellectual drama of problemsolving (238).

Pudd'nhead Wilson satisfies all the major traits of an inverse crime narrative and Mark Twain, far before R. A. Freeman, seems to have penned down the prototype of such kind of narrative.

Finally, Mark Twain has not deprived us of the moral issues that his *Pudd'nhead Wilson* has surfaced – as he used to believe that every story must have a moral. The real heir Thomas a Becket suddenly finds himself rich and free and in an embarrassing situation. Roxy who had inflicted upon him such a heinous wrong of accursed deprivation continues to have a pension of thirty five dollars a month owing to his benignant mercy, and her hurts get too deep for money to heal. And as for Chambre, formerly known as "Tom", the usurper and the murderer, having confessed his crime gets sentenced to life imprisonment. But a complication crops up. The creditors who had been partially compensated at only sixty percent at Percy Driscoll's

death come forward and claim that Chambre, a slave, should have been sold much afore to pay them. They claim rightly that had he been sold, the Judge would not have been murdered and for that reason, it is not Chambre but the mistake regarding his identity is responsible for the murder. So, the guilt lies with the erroneous inventory. And Mark Twain ends with his final justificatory pronouncement: "As soon as the Governor understood the case, he pardoned Tom at once, and the creditors sold him down the river" (122).

Providence, the Greatest Justicer forsooth lays His just hands upon everything. The crime that Roxy committed to evade the prospect of her child's being "sold down the river" (10) ominously comes upon him in the end as a condign punishment and appositeness. And in our hearts, the corruscating apothegm echoes out: "Crime does never pay".

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NOTES

1. This tacit expression about Mark Twain appears in the new introductory Note specially prepared for the Dover Edition, first published in 1999. All the extracts from the text have been taken from this edition, i.e., Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894; republication of the standard text. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999). All subsequent references in the text are to this edition by page number. The extracted materials, with subtility, show Mark Twain's mastery in narrating the incidents one after another incorporating some unmistakable vestiges of humour coupled by human foibles satirized.
2. Much of what is commonly classified as "frontier literature" is concerned with the episode of the nineteenth century settling of the western part of the continent, and the term "American frontier" is most often associated with this episode in American history. The "frontier' literature" produces many distinctive prominent themes, characters and dramatic situations constituted by poetry, short stories, novels, dramas and travel accounts by the explorers and surveyors and also by the diaries and letters written by the settlers. To many early writers, the New World has appeared to be the chosen land where laborious and pious people have been destined to build a new civilization purged from the corrupting influences of European society. The struggles leading to the establishment of this new civilization and the gaining control of the

land from the actual inhabitants have presented many of the characters and events depicted in frontier literature. The Doctrine of Manifest Destiny – the belief that the settlement and the subsequent colonization of the continent by the Americans of European descent leading to the subjugation of the native population has been one of the staple elements of frontier literature and by the end of the nineteenth century, the frontier was conquered. During that time, the depiction of frontier experience reached new heights of popularity and literary quality. Apart from these aspects, the literature and mythology of the frontier have been recognised by critics as a major contribution to the development of a national literature in America which has indeed laid a profound impact on the American national consciousness, shaping in particular the American ideals of independence, democracy and egalitarianism. Noted American critic and educator Jay B. Hubbell, an authority on American literature comments on the frontier literature thus: "The frontier, as I see it, has made two distinct and important contributions to our literature: it has given our writers a vast field of new materials, and it has given them a new point of view, which we may call American" (269). He further comments: "If our literature is a reflection of the national character, it should be strongly colored by our experience with the frontier. For it was chiefly the frontier influence which, as Norman Forester has said, 'transformed the European type into such men as Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, or among the writers, Emerson, Whitman and Mark Twain'" (271). See Jay B. Hubbell, "The Frontier in American Literature", *South and South West: Literary Essays and Reminiscences* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1965).

3. Pessimism, as a system of thought, is frequently considered to be endowed with rather a deterministic or self-contradictory nature to withstand serious scrutiny. Reductionism, as more often thought, to be a philosophical position which holds that a complex system is but the totality of its parts, the sum of its constituent ingredients and an account of it may be subjected to reductive treatments to the accounts of individual constituents or fragments. The term "reductive" is understood as simplistic, that reduces a substance to a more simple or basic form. The concept of downward causation poses an alternative to reductionism within philosophy. Robert Douglas is of the opinion that Mark Twain, though considered a humorist of sound traits, has showed some unmistakable hints upon which one can ideate his incipient pessimism. "Perhaps the reason that Twain's pessimism escapes many of his readers is that it is clothed for a majority of his career in books that were not designed to be pessimistic or to give vent to the disillusion he was to experience in his later years. In fact, his writings appear to be in a definite order as if to represent different phases in his life and changing philosophies. First, there is his western series: 'Innocents Abroad' and 'Roughing it'. This is followed by the Mississippi series: 'Tom Sawyer', 'Life on the Mississippi' and 'Huckleberry Finn', which in turn was followed by the medieval period books. 'The Prince and the Pauper' and 'A Connecticut Yankee in

King Arthur's Court'. Then came 'What is Man?' and 'The Mysterious Stranger'. In each of these categories, there is an increase in Twain's use of satire and pessimism, until it finally erupts into the despairing visit of the angel, Satan, who announces, 'There is no God, no universe, no human race, no earthly life, no heaven, no hell. It is all a dream, a grotesque and foolish dream. Nothing exists but you. And you are but a *thought* – a vagrant thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities.'" For more detail, see Robert Douglas, "The Pessimism of Mark Twain", *Mark Twain Quarterly 9* (Winter, 1951), p.1.

For the sake of variations in theories pertaining to pessimism, it can be noted that distinctive categories of several manifestations of pessimism may be delineated and defined. The nineteenth century phenomena in Western American region that caused "frontier literature" to make its solid base also gave rise to a more direct and simplistic kind of pessimism, unlike its cultural, metaphysical and romantic varieties. Reductive pessimism may be considered to have held the primal position with respect to Nietzsche's own brand of Dionysian pessimism which, in the later period, has helped to shape up existential pessimism. Nietzsche's Dionysian pessimism is a perspective on life that can draw sustenance, rather than recoil, from the disordered, disenchanted world left to us after the demise of metaphysics. Whereas Schopenhauer advocated resignation, Nietzsche maintained that a new ground for activity could be found apart from the narrative of reason and progress. A concrete expression of man's anxiety and despair with regard to the pointlessness of his being in the world has evoked out the crisis of being and ushers in the difficulty of coping with the meaninglessness in his own being. In *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, David Wilson, in the main, questions the utility and consequence of his being and tries to get through his confusion by sticking to what he can do the best. He has been analytically simplistic to reach his goal if opportunity arrives and has shown his simple analytical methods to become a man of consequence, neither with rejection nor resignation.

4. According to Rosemary Herbert, as she is worth quoting here:

"Accidental sleuth" is a term applied to the protagonist, who is not a detective by avocation or profession, either amateur, private, or official, but who nonetheless assumes the role of a sleuth. Often a character falls into the role because of his or her proximity to the scene of the crime, whether as a guest in a country house that becomes a murder scene or as an unwilling bystander who observes a criminal act in the mean streets. Accidental sleuths are frequently related to or personally involved in the lives of other characters directly affected by the crime. They may assume the role of detective contrary to personal preference, becoming what is known to readers as the detective in spite of him or herself; or they may find themselves in the role of accidental sleuth with a mission, ... (Herbert 5)

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