

## The invalid' s story

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Mark Twain 1882Author BiographyPlot SummaryCharactersThemesStyleHistorical ContextCritical OverviewCriticismSourcesFurther ReadingThe Invalid's Story, Mark Twain's raucous story about a case of mistaken identity that ultimately kills a man, according to many critics, has no literary value. However, while some critics panned the story, it is often reproduced in Twain's story collections and others have noted that this is a good example of the borderline style of humor for which Twain was known. The story details the unfortunate misadventures of two men on the train who mixed up a box with a gun and a piece of rotting cheese for a smelly corpse in a coffin. The two men try a lot of tactics in an attempt to combat the smell of the corpse, but in the end, all their efforts are fruitless. Topics range from mortality and proper behavior towards the dead, to the power of imagination to overcome the mind. It is believed that Twain wrote this story in the 1870s, about a decade after he began what would be an illustrious career. At this time, American railroads were going through their Golden Age, as people relied mainly on trains for both travel and transportation of everything from coffins to food. First published in *The Stolen White Elephant*, Etc. in London in 1882, the story can be found in Mark Twain's *Signet Classic Book of Short Stories*, published in 1985.Author BiographyMark Twain was born Samuel Langhorn Clemens on November 30, 1835 in a Florida village, Missouri. Although his early life was spent in Missouri, Clemens left home as a young man and traveled around the United States, often picking up temporary printing jobs or other casual jobs to finance his adventures. Travel remained a big part of Clemens' life, and he experienced many of the different types of travel available to people in the nineteenth century. From working as a river boat pilot on the Mississippi, Clemens moved west, traveling on stagecoach. It was in the west that he began to publish his own letters, including his first book, a collection of humorous tales, in 1867. In fact, Clemens's borderline humor has become a hallmark of many of his future publications. The story of the Disabled, which is believed to have been written in 1877, and which was first published as part of *Some Rambling Notes of Idle Tours in a History Collection*, *Stolen White Elephant*, etc... (1882) is a good example. While history takes place in the Midwest, it demonstrates the same raucous humor that Clemens first introduced in his Western stories. The story of the Disabled was also distinguished by another form of travel, which Clemens experienced. Train travel was the dominant form of travel in the second half of the nineteenth century. Throughout his life, Clemens and his family suffered from diseases. His firstborn was element and died of diphtheria, just like the narrator in Clemens' story, who eventually dies of typhoid- as a result in the elements. Clemens (as the more famous Twain) wrote hundreds of works during his lifetime. Some of his most famous works include novels, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Prince and the Beggar*, and the *Connecticut Yankees at King Arthur's Court*. His autobiographical and travel books include *Innocents Abroad*; or, the progress of new pilgrims, *Roughing It*, *The Old Days on the Mississippi*, and after the equator. His stories include the famous jumping frog calaveras County, and other sketches, 1601, and *The Man Who Corrupt hadleyburg*, and other stories and essays. In 2001, one of Clemens' manuscripts entitled *Murder, Mystery and Marriage* was published by *Atlantic Monthly*.Clemens died at his home near Redding, Connecticut, on April 21, 1910, leaving behind the legacy of one of America's most important writers, a distinction that only increased over time. Plot SummaryIn the early Twain Story of the Disabled, the narrator explains what he looks and feels older than he is, and that he was much healthier than he is now. He attributes his decline to the strange events of one winter night in which he drove two hundred miles with a box of weapons. The narrator recalls how two years earlier he had arrived at his home in Cleveland, Ohio, and learned of the recent death of his friend John B. Hackett. Following Hackett's last wishes, the narrator goes to the station to pick up Hackett's body to his parents in Bethlehem, Wisconsin.The narrator finds a white-pine box at the station that matches the description of the coffin. He attaches an address card from Hackett's father, Deacon Levi Hackett, to a white-pine box, and he is loaded into a train by express car - a method for transporting parcels by train that was safer and faster, but more expensive than conventional freight cars. The narrator goes for food and cigars, and when he returns to the area where he first found the white-pine box, the young man attaches the address card to an identical box. The narrator checks to make sure that his white-pine box is still in the express car that he is. At this point, the narrator lets the reader know that the boxes are labeled incorrectly. The first box in the express car, which, according to the narrator, is the corpse of his friend, is actually a box with a weapon, which is designed to go to Peoria, Illinois. Conversely, the second box, which the young man assumes contains a weapon, actually contains the corpse of John Hackett. However, the narrator is unaware of this fact while he is taking the train ride. He settles into an express car where he and an express man hired by an express company to take care of express packages-settle over a long, two hundred miles journey. Just before the train takes off, a stranger enters the express car for a moment and places a packet of ripe Limburger cheese on top Box. Just as neither the narrator nor the expressman, a man named Thompson, know that the coffin box contains weapons, they also don't realize that the package on top of the box contains ripe cheese. Once again, the narrator tells the reader about this fact, but he does not know about it during the train trip. As Thompson begins printing the car against the winter storm that rages outside, so that he and the narrator can warm up, the ripe cheese also begins to heat up, and begins to smell. The narrator notices this first, and errs in Hackett's corpse, which, in his opinion, begins to rot. Thompson starts the fire to help the two keep warm, which only makes the cheese stink even more. Although he's hilarious at the beginning of the trip, singing happy songs, Thompson eventually becomes aware of the cheese stench, and he stops his singing. Thompson also suggests that the stench of a rotting corpse, and he and the narrator begin to talk about it. Thompson notes the smell of the corpse and says that he was transporting people who weren't actually dead, only in a trance, but what he could say in the evil-ology that the narrator's friend is not one of them. In an attempt to get away from the smell, Thompson breaks one of the express car's window panes and sticks his nose outside to sniff the air in a new way. He and the narrator take turns sniffing at the window, and Thompson asks how long the narrator's friend was dead. Thompson does not believe the narrator's claim that Hackett died recently because the corpse could not rot and produce such a pronounced smell for several days. Thompson admonishes the narrator, saying that Hackett's body should have been laid to rest a long time ago. Meanwhile, the smell of cheese got so bad that the narrator suggests smoking cigars to try to mask the smell. Cigars are the first of many failed attempts to try to tame the smell of cheese. After the cigars fail, Thompson invites them to move the box to the other end of the express car. It doesn't work and the two run outside on the express car platform to sweat the air where they discuss their predicament. They can't stay outside or freeze to death in stormy winter weather, but they can't cope with the smell. They eventually get back in the car, once again taking turns getting air out the window. When the train leaves the next train station, Thompson returns to the express vehicle with carbolic acid, a caustic, poisonous chemical commonly used as a disinfectant. He cavs boxand cheese with acid, but it's not to use; Acid only adds a new odor, while increasing first. After they leave the next train station, Thompson tries again, this time starting a bonfire of chicken feathers, dried apples, sulfur and other items. The resulting smell is so bad that Thompson and the narrator decide to spend the rest of the trip on the platform, though it is likely their death from typhoid. An An Later at the next train station, the frozen expressman and narrator are removed, and the narrator is brutally ill for three weeks. It is at this point that he learns about a box of weapons and ripe cheese. At the end of the story, the narrator, once again in the present, explains that the fateful trip has undermined his health, and that he is going home to die. CharactersCapSee narratorMee john B. HackettThe CommodoreSee John B. HackettThe ExpressmanSee ThompsonThe Gen'rulSee John B. HackettThe GovernorSee John B. HackettJohn B. HackettJohn B. HackettJohn B. HackettJohn B. HackettJohn B. Hackett is the narrator of a deceased friend whose body the narrator tries to transport from Cleveland, Ohio, to the narrator and expressman of his train think that Hackett's body is in a box in their car . Illinois, while the narrator and expressman actually carry a box of guns. The absence of this knowledge eventually leads to the ill-fated death of the narrator and, it can be assumed, expressive. Expressman refers to Hackett's body with several military and civilian titles: Colonel, Gen'rul (abbreviated form general), Commodore, and Governor.Deacon Levi HackettDeacon Levi Hackett is the father of the narrator's late friend, John B. Hackett, who sends a message to the narrator informing him of his son's last wishes. Deacon Hackett also sends a postcard with his address, which the narrator attaches to a box of weapons, thinking it is John Hackett's coffin. The narrator of the story, called Cap'n Expresser, is one of two ill-fated victims of the case of mistaken identity, which includes a coffin containing his dead friend-John B. Hackett- and a box of weapons with Limburger cheese on top. The narrator is only forty-one years old when he begins his tale, but he says he is getting old prematurely as a result of his misadventure two years ago. It is at this point that the narrator begins his tale. Motivated by Hackett's latest wishes, the narrator tries to move Hackett's body from Cleveland, Ohio, to the fictional city of Bethlehem, Wisconsin. At the station, the narrator marks a box of weapons, thinking it is his friend's coffin, and loads a box of weapons into his train. He notices a stranger placing a package on top of the coffin but doesn't think anything about it at the time. The package contains ripe Limburger cheese, which both the narrator and the train's expressman, Thompson, are mistaken for the smell of Hackett's corpse. The narrator notices the smell first, though Thompson is the first to take action by smashing one of the window-glass machines to get fresh air. Although Hackett was only dead for one day, the narrator lies down and says he was dead for two or three, in an attempt to explain the smells. The narrator and Thompson are trying to move a box of guns, but it's too heavy. Through a series of erroneous attempts by Thompson to mask the smell with various chemicals and other objects, the smell becomes so bad that the narrator and Thompson decide to spend the rest of the trip off the train on the express car platform. As a result, the narrator falls ill with typhoid fever, which turns out to be fatal two years later when he tells a story. A similar fate is expected for Thompson, although it is never discussed. Throughout the story, the narrator gives his audience information that he did not possess during his adventures on the train, such as the fact that the coffin is actually a box of weapons and a bag on top of the gun box contains smelly cheese. StrangerThe stranger mentioned at the beginning of the story places a piece of ripe Limburger cheese on top of a white-pine box full of guns in an express car, setting off a chain of events that eventually leads to the narrator's death. ThompsonTopson - the ill-fated Expressman, who along with the narrator errs in a box with a gun with a ripe cheese Limburger on top for a rotting corpse. At the start of the train ride, Thompson, fifty years old, sings while he works to insulate the express car from the cold winter weather. His cheerful behavior soon diminishes, however, when he begins to smell rotting cheese. At first he tries to shed light on the situation by talking about other experiences he had by carrying corpses that were not actually dead, but soon he abandons his easy conversation in favor of finding ways to cope with the smell or hide it. He breaks one of the window glass machines to hunt in a fresh way, but it's not enough. He and the narrator try to move the box, but it's too heavy; Since they still don't realize it's a box of guns, Thompson attributes their inability to move the box to be a corpse to stay where it is. At the next two train stations, Thompson picks up a variety of materials to try to mask the smell. First, it tastes carbolic acid, a potent, toxic chemical that has been used as a disinfectant. When it only makes the smell worse, Thompson tries a wild, smelly mixture of chicken feathers, dried apples, a sheet of tobacco, rags, old shoes, sulfur, and asafetida-odifer type gums. The resulting smell is so bad that Thompson and the narrator decide to spend the night outside on the express car platform. While Thompson's fate is never discussed, the narrator contracts typhoid from a night out and dies when he tells the story two years later. During the train ride, Thompson speaks a rustic American dialect, and refers to a corpse in various names of the increasing military and civilian rank-colonel, Gen'rul (short for general, Commodore, and governor. an abbreviated version of Captain, another military title. The young employee, who was mentioned at the beginning of the story, intends to send a box of weapons to the company's shooting company Peoria, Illinois; Instead, when his box is accidentally swapped with a narrator's box, a young guy ships the corpse of John Hackett in Illinois.ThemesMortality From the very beginning of the story, the narrator draws attention to human mortality when he refers to his health, saying he is now but a shadow, even though he was Hale, a hearty man two short years ago. The rest of the story is filled with references to illness and death. In fact, the story's plot centers around a failed attempt to transport the corpse of the narrator's friend, John B. Hackett, from Ohio to Wisconsin, where Hackett is to be buried. In the process, the narrator has many conversations with Thompson, an expressman on the train, who reflects on the inevitability of death itself, saying twice that we all have to go, they don't get around it. Later, after Thompson and the narrator fail to move a box of weapons with Limburger cheese on top, which they take for the corpse of Hackett-Thompson gets a particularly powerful whiff of cheese. His resulting nausea makes him feel unwell, and he proclaims: I am dying; gimme the road! as he runs outside the train platform to get air. Although it doesn't, in fact, die from exposure to cheese, the prolonged exposure to winter weather on the platform - resulting in two men attempting to escape the smell - eventually kill the narrator two years later. This is my last trip; I'm on my way home to die. Although Thompson's fate is never clearly stated by the narrator, Thompson's own words, while they freeze on the platform, mean that he and the narrator have similar fates. This is our last trip, you can make a decision to it. Typhoid fever is what's going to come out of this. ImaginationIn history, Twain explores the power of the human imagination to overcome the mind, and the catastrophic consequences that can occur as a result. At the beginning of the tale, the narrator notes how Thompson closed the window down tightly and then went boisterous around, here and there, and over there, setting things up on the right. Thompson deals only with the weather conditions in the train carriage, and goes to great lengths to make the express car warm for himself and the narrator. However, after they begin to smell the cheese that their imagination tell them is a corpse, Thompson scrambled to his feet and broke the glass and stretched his nose at him a moment or two. This not only cancels out all his hard work, but also makes no sense. Since Twain says Thompson closed the window, the expresser could have just opened it to get some fresh air. However, in a panic created from the idea that the stench of a rotting corpse, he breaks the window. The narrator's imagination is even more powerful, as he knows for sure that his friend was dead only for one day. However, it does not find strange when the smell becomes more bad. By this time the fragrance, if you can name the fragrance, if you can name the fragrance was just as suffocating as possible to it. Imagination continues to work against both men. None of them issues a pack of Topics for further life, the fastest way to send a package was to send it to an express car by train. Explore the ways that shipping companies express during this time period identified and shipped packages to their customers, and compare this with the methods used by modern express delivery companies. Then, using the map, you graph out the steps the package would take when shipping from Ohio to Wisconsin in the 1870s and 2000s. In the nineteenth century, many people were buried in simple boxes, a fact that leads to a case of mistaken identity in history. Follow the development of coffins as far back as you can. Write a one-page account of the history of coffins and create a timeline that includes at least five important events in the design of the coffin. According to the story, a box of weapons should be

sent to Peoria, Illinois. Research the history of gun business, and suggest a theory on why you think Twain decided to put guns in the field rather than something else. Using your theory and research, write a sample of Peoria's newspaper article about inappropriate guns and their purpose. Expressman in history refers to the deceased friend of the narrator on a number of titles, denoting military or civil rank. Research the value of these series and give a one-point description for each of them. For each rank, find a man from the Civil War era who held that rank, and write a short biography about him. Study the history of five different cheeses. Write a short article discussing how, when and where these cheeses were presented to the world. The narrator in the story catches a debilitating disease, which the expressman assumes is typhoid while on his train. Study the history and symptoms of typhoid, and write a two-page report on when and where the spread of typhoid reached epidemic status.cheese on top of the white-pine box, although the narrator noted earlier that someone had put it there. Even when Thompson slips and falls from nose to cheese where the smell is noticeably stronger, he does not think to check inside the packaging. The narrator notes at the end, after he learned that the smelly corpse was indeed a gunbox with cheese on top, that the news was too late to save me; imagination did my job, and my health was constantly ruined. The correct burial concept that Twain explores in this story is the right way to bury a person. When Thompson asks the narrator how long his friend is dead, the narrator lies, saying: Two or three days - in an attempt to explain the stench. Thompson, however, thinks the narrator is lying, and says: Two or three years, you mean. At the moment, notes as Thompson gave it to his At considerable length on unwisdom postponing burials for too long, finally stating that 'Would 'A' bin Doom look better all around if they started it together last summer - StyleHumorThe humor in The Story of the Disabled manifests itself in two forms, contradictory language and action, both of which are made funny by the reader's knowledge of gunbox and cheese. With this knowledge, the reader witnesses two men who valiantly fight against dairy product-funny, strange situations. Without this knowledge the reader will believe that two men really deal with a corpse, and the story will not be funny; instead, it would be sad or painful. The use of language in the story is structured in such a way that it will entertain the reader. For example, after Thompson first begins to notice the smell in the train carriage, he notes about dead people that sometimes it is unclear whether they are really gone or not. He then goes on to explain how he had a few cases where people weren't really dead, they just seemed dead. This usually makes him nervous because these days he keeps expecting them to get up and look at you! However, after a pause, Thompson notes: But he's not in a trance! Having Thompson illustrate the opportunity and then deny it, Twain tries to make the reader laugh by using contradictory language. Thompson says Hackett's body is so rotten and smells so bad that Hackett can't be alive. It becomes a dark humor as soon as the reader can be comforted by what Thompson says about a piece of cheese. Thompson's contradictory language is also funny when it fits with the action. The two men's first attempt to mask the smell in the train car consists of smoking cigars, which Thompson said would be a good idea. It's probably going to change it. However, although the two men puffed gently together for a while, it didn't make sense. Pretty soon, both cigars were quietly dropped, and Thompson notes that they didn't change it worth a cent. The fact is that it makes him worse because it seems to inflame his ambitions. Using part of the dialogue to create an expectation that cigars will mask the smell, the silent action of the falling cigar becomes a ridiculous act. The noise increases with Thompson's admission that cigars didn't help mask the smell, but instead helped make it more powerful. ImpersonationIn history, the two men refer to two inanimate objects - gunbox and cheese, as if they exhibit human qualities, a technique called impersonation. In this case, the impersonation is slightly different from other literature, since the narrator and Thompson think they are talking about a corpse that can be seen as one kind of inanimate object when they really describe two other inanimate objects. As in other cases of impersonation, the arms box and cheese take on their own life. Says the narrator, when he first begins to notice the smell of cheese and it's for his friend: It was something infinitely sad about him calling himself to my memory in this silly, pathetic way, so it was hard to hold the tears back. The narrator does this, it seems that Hackett willingly produces this scent in a nostalgic way, something that a corpse- or gunbox and cheese, for that matter, can't do. Throughout history, both the narrator and Thompson attribute other human qualities to guns and cheese, primarily stubbornness. Thompson notes the futility of their attempts to mask the smell after carbolic acid only makes it worse. He just uses everything we put up to change it, and gives him his own taste and plays it back on us. Ultimately, the corpse, which Thompson calls a number of civilian and military ranks, is another human aspect- wins, and Thompson notes that they can't defeat him and that they'll have to stay off the train all night. The governor wants to travel alone and he fixed so he can out-vote us. ForeshadowingTwain uses the omen to radically change the tone of the story. As noted above, if the reader didn't know that the corpse was really a gunbox with some stinky cheese on top, the story would be sad, not funny. However, when he tells his story, Twain's narrator gives both the causes of the conflict, weapons and cheese. Speaking of a box of weapons, he says that without my suspicion that this huge mistake was made, and that he ended up taking away a box of weapons while the young man got a corpse. The narrator also gives away cheese at the beginning of the story: That is, I know now that it was Limburger cheese. This confession is revealed to the reader before the two men engage in their increasingly humorous and desperate attempts to fight the stench of cheese, allowing the reader to focus on humorous acts. Twain also uses foreshadowing in more subtle ways. Although the narrator reveals at the beginning that he is not healthy and that he has lost his health from a box of weapons, he does not say that he dies until the end of the story. However, it gives clues throughout the narrative that hint at the narrator's demise. For example, when the narrator and Thompson try to move a box of guns, the narrator notes that Thompson leaned over this deadly cheese. Calling the cheese deadly, the narrator means the fact that it eventually kills it. On a similar note, after this moving attempt fails, two men go to the platform of the train to get away from the smell. The narrator notes that we could not stay there in this mad storm; we had to freeze to death. Once again, this language helps foreshadow actual events at the end of the story when two men remain outside in a storm. Later the narrator, and suggests, Thompson-die from the impact of this frosty weather. Historical contextIn the 1860s, a number of railway events came into the In 1869, four years after the end of the Civil War, the Union Pacific railway line was connected to the Central Pacific Line, and the world's longest railroad, the 1,776 miles of steel road, was completed. The transcontinental rail line, which was subsidized with public funds from the Pacific Railroad Act of 1862, took years. The project involved a significant amount of forest demolition, tunneling through the ground and building bridges to complete, but once it was done, it changed the face of transport. Eight years later, in 1877, when Twain wrote The History of the Disabled, the railways in the United States were in their Golden Age and trains were the dominant mode of transportation for people and goods. Initially, this included only non-changing elements. However, in the early 1870s, Gustav Franklin Swift, founder of the meat processing company Swift and Company, began work on a refrigerated car. In his view, that would be a more cost-effective way of delivering fresh meat than the current method, which involved the delivery of live cattle to other parts of the country, which should be slaughtered at the destination. In 1877, however, Swift made the first successful shipment of fresh meat from Chicago to the eastern United States, and more people began to supply perishable items to other parts of the country. With the possibility of sending fresh food, people were less likely to catch food-related diseases. However, the nineteenth century is still a time of small medical progress. Doctors in the nineteenth century are not regulated in their education, so a person's chances of survival often depend on the luck or guesswork of their individual doctor, or on the strength of their body to protect themselves. According to the story, the narrator is taken with a fever for three weeks, but it does not mention that doctors are capable of anything. Eventually, the narrator's immune system fends off his illness for two years, but the disease, which is caused by being outdoors in the cold for an hour- takes his life. It was an ordinary fairy tale in the nineteenth century. In addition to transporting freight by train, in the mid-to-late nineteenth century there was also the development of fast means to send messages throughout the country. In the story, the narrator receives information that his friend died the day before. Since the message travels from Wisconsin to Ohio in less than a day, it can be assumed that it was sent by the Telegraph, one of the major inventions of the nineteenth century. The first telegraph message was sent in 1843, but it was not until the completion of the transcontinental telegraph system that the telegraph came into widespread use in the United States.From 1860 to 1861, before this transcontinental telegraph system was completed, people briefly relied on the Pony Express to transmit messages on the route from the eastern United States (Missouri) to Missouri parts of the United States (California). Although it was short-lived, pony express is famous for some of its famous famous including William Buffalo's Bill Cody. Together with his colleagues, Cody was very quick to transport mail on horseback between one of more than 150 stations along the route. As each rider reached the station, a new rider and a refreshed horse take the mail and ride very quickly to the next station. Thus, the mail can travel continuously, at a much faster pace, than with the help of a single rider who would have to rest himself and his horse at some point. Critical review of the publication Story of the Disabled gives an idea of the general negative critical opinion about this story. Although the story is believed to have been written in 1877 for inclusion in *Some Rambling Notes of Idle Excursions - workCompare and Contrast*1870s: Several people died in the First National Rail Strike of the United States, which threatens to harm the country's trade. The strike was triggered by a 10 per cent pay cut for rail workers, the second such cut in four years. Today: After terrorists use three commercial planes to attack the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, nationwide travel stops. Although people are slowly starting to travel again a few months after the attacks, the tragic events help plunge the country into recession. The transport sector was one of the hardest hit in the 1870s: medicine was largely undeveloped and short-sighted, and medical education was not yet regulated. As a result, people should take precautions against getting sick. This includes staying away from the cold as much as possible, even for an hour in the elements enough to contract an illness that may end up being fatal. Today, modern medicine is interdisciplinary, and doctors can prolong the lives of patients for long periods of time, even patients with life-threatening diseases. As a result, life expectancy continues to increase.1870s: Gustav Franklin Swift makes his first successful batch of fresh meat in a refrigerated wagon, which was developed by his company. A chilled car that works by circulating air across the ice to cool it-revolutionizing the food industry, which can now supply perishable items across the country, where they arrive fresh for the consumer. Today: Fresh meat, dairy products and products come from meatcabin and farms across the country using a variety of cooling and air conditioning forms, most of which rely on liquid chemicals to cool the air. Many local grocery stores across the country carry these products, which are sometimes stamped with expiration dates, so consumers know how long the product will be fresh.that was released in four parts in the Atlantic Monthly in the same year- Story of the Disabled was referred for publication both here and in *Abroad* (1880), until the fairy tale was finally included five years later in 1882's *The Stolen White Elephant Dr....* In his 1966 article in the *Midcontinent American Studies Journal*, critic Floyd R. Horowitz notes the reason why this story was of his original publication, stating that he had been withheld, perhaps for fear of piercing the sensitivity of the reader. This is mild compared to the negative assessments of some critics of the story and its dark humor. In *The True Mark Twain: A Literary Biography* of Samuel L. Clemens, Everett Emerson calls *The Story of the Disabled* one of the catastrophes that Twain created in his short fiction, and calls the humor of this story unspeakable. Some critics point out, as Bernard DeVoto did in *America to his Mark Twain*, that the story was grotesquely awful in its persistence on smells. In her book, *Mark Twain as a literary artist*, Gladys Carmen Bellamy suggests that Twain's story has more than humorous intentions, and that emphasizing the stench of corpses, *Mark Twain*, also seems to emphasize the humiliation of human life. Horowitz notes that history appears to contain, or at least testify about a fairly closely worked Christian symbolic level, which, in his view, is entirely consistent with Twain's later sense of institutionalized religion. According to Horowitz, many aspects become symbols, such as a corpse that is very suggestive of Christ and an express car that looks like the Church. Stephen E. Kemper in his article *Po, Twain and Limburger Cheese* notes the parallels between the story and the gothic fiction of Twain's predecessor, *Edgar Allan Poe*, and suggests that the story is a travesty: *By burlesquing many Po techniques, themes and types of characters, Twain punctures the claims of Gothic. However, some positive notes have been made about this story. For example, DeVoto says that while the sketch is not attributed as a lovely ... this is very true for one kind of border humor and Mark Twain. And Kemper notes that while the tale is preposterous and outrageous, it's certainly hilarious. The relative lack of critical research on The Disabled History - compared to Twain's other works - points to the fact that most of Twain's critics simply ignored the story. Of course, despite the fact that many critics found it unpleasant, Horowitz notes that the Story of the Disabled has survived the test of time, while some Rambling Notes idle excursions - a great work that originally contained it - has not. Modern editors tend to agree with this abdication, perhaps because the literary merits of formal history have triumphed over anecdotal narrative. CriticismRyan D. PoquettePoquette has a bachelor's degree in English and specializes in writing literature. In the following essay, Poquette discusses Twain's use of shifting viewpoints and expressive descriptions to create an enlarged humorous effect in Twain's story. Mark Twain was a master when it came to using different writing techniques for humorous effects. This is certainly true in the Story of the Disabled, a fairy tale, while funny, was almost universally panned by Twain's contemporary critics for his his treatment of the smells of death, which was considered an exercise in poor taste. However, as E. Hudson Long suggests in his *Mark Twain Handbook*, Twain is used to writing such lustful tales that were too enthusiastically received by his readers in the western United States, so the author probably did not fully understand that such things could offend. Long further notes that Twain knew not to cross the line, and that he realized what I was reading next! In *Laughter: A Scientific Study* published in 2000, neuroscientist Robert R. Provin sees humor as a function of social relationships. Using research from various social field experiments and exploring past ideas of such noted psychoanalytic people as Sigmund Freud, Provin presents laughter in all its forms and even distinguishes between laughter and smiles. It also includes a section on nervous disorders that are associated with laughter and the types of laughter therapy used by some psychologists today. Twain was one of the most famous American comedians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when many of his works were published in magazines like *Atlantic Monthly*. In 1925, ten years after Twain's death, Harold Ross founded *The New Yorker* magazine to help define humor in the modern era. In *Fierce Pajamas: An Anthology of Humor Writing from The New Yorker*, editors David Rennick and Henry Finder collect the writings of more than seventy New York contributors, including such noted comedians as Woody Allen, James Thurber, Dorothy Parker, and Steve Martin.Although John Scieszka's *Stinky Cheese Man* and other rather silly tales (1993) are technically parodies, with the help of a mischievous narrator who even parodies the book itself. The Bible according to Mark Twain: *Irreverent Scriptures on Eden, Heaven, and the Flood of America* by a master satirist, published in 1996, collects a series of irreverent Twain's view of institutionalized religion. However, despite the fact that they are set in a humorous context, Twain's parodies of religion raise serious, thought-provoking questions and reveal Twain's deep knowledge of the Bible.Although Twain's dark side usually manifested itself through his biting humor, sometimes the author was just dark. In *The Devil's Race-track*: *Mark Twain's Great Dark Writings*, published in 1981, the author explores less pleasant aspects of humanity, such as illness and death, in a realistic way - without the humor that usually made these themes acceptable to its readers. Some of Twain's stories were not well received by critics because of their raucous and lustful content, which sometimes broke social taboos. In fact, Twain was noted for bad behavior in real life, the fact that appeared in his writings. Book by Mark Twain for *The Boys and Girls*, published in 1995, collects many of Twain's essays, sketches and short stories that elevate misbehavior. *Roughing It* by Mark Twain, published in 1872, is one of his many semi-authoric reports he has written about his travels. In this case, Twain writes about his journey and daily life in the developing American West. The book displays a rustic, Western-style humor that will characterize many of Twain's later stories. Since this is the case, the story of the Disabled can be taken as a deliberate exercise that was intended to entertain rather than offend. By hiring a first-person narrator who periodically draws attention to the reality of the situation and describes smells in increasingly expressive language, Twain pushes the boundaries of humor in *The Disabled Story*. When the narrator of *The Disabled Story* presents his tale, he builds up to it, making it when Twain applies the word sublime to the smell, he tries to express that smell more than anything ever before experienced. Like nature, which often overpowers man in literature, the stench overcomes two men. It seems like it will be a great story, insisting that this is the real truth. Stephen E. Kemper notes in his article *Po, Twain and Limburger Cheese* that this opening style mimics the stories of *Edgar Allan Poe*, which in turn adds extra humor to those readers who notice the parody. In this first paragraph, Twain's narrator briefly mentions the gun box as the reason for his weak state, which he then explains in the second paragraph of his story, where Twain imitates another *Po* technique, explaining the actual secret to the reader by flatly explaining it. It is this explanation of the narrator's huge mistake, the fact that he carries away a box of weapons instead of his friend's corpse, that gives the reader an inner knowledge that the narrator did not have when he embarked on his fateful train journey two years ago. This inner knowledge increases a few lines later when the narrator notes how a stranger set a packet of a particularly mature and capable Limburger cheese on a coffin-box. After he says this, the narrator retreats, drawing the reader's attention to what he didn't know about cheese at the time. He says I know now that it was Limburger cheese, but at the time I had never heard of an article in my life, and certainly was completely unaware of his character. Throughout history, the narrator repeats this tendency to provide inside information, from a specific point of view. Much of the story is told in the first person, from a limited perspective, where the narrator says only what he knew during the fateful events. He tells his story as if he were there, and doesn't know about the future that he's already lived. However, at certain points, the narrator uses the first point of view, allowing it to retroactively influence the narrative and giving the reader the knowledge that the narrator himself was not during the train ride. After these first references to gunbox and cheese, Twain's narrator renews his first-person tale of limited perspective, and waxes about his sadness over the death of his friend, who increases when he smells of cheese and thinks it's his friend's corpse: There was something endlessly sad about his calling himself to my memory in this dumb, pathetic way. However, Twain periodically returns the reader's attention to the reality of the situation - the corpse is actually a box of weapons with smelly cheese on top, so that he can be sure that his audience doesn't start to think that there's a real corpse on the train, as the narrator and Thompson do. If that were to happen, the humorous comedy of errors that exists with gunbox and cheese would change to painful dramas about a poor corpse that torments two men. The next time Twain has his narrator refer to the weapon and the cheese comes after Thompson first notices the smell. He afflict once or twice and then moved to the cof-gunbox, stood over that Limburger cheese part of the moment, and then returned. At this point, the narrator catches himself before he tells the coffin, noting that it is actually a gun with a piece of Limburger cheese on top. Twain needs this link here to break up a long stretch of narrative where the narrator refers to a corpse. The next link comes as two men prepare to try to move a box of guns: We went there and leaned over this deadly cheese and took control of the box. During this touching attempt, Thompson slips, falling down his nose on the cheese. The reader, now once again assured that the smell of cheese, can continue to enjoy the story. The final reference to a box of gun and cheese during a train ride comes as Thompson tries to mask the smell of carbolic acid. As the narrator notes: He sprinkled it all over the place; in fact he soaked everything with him, rifle, cheese and all. With this latest reference, the narrator calls everything as they are in real life without slipping and almost referring to two items as a corpse as he did before. The strategic twin system linking to the arms box and cheese serves a purpose; it allows the reader to participate in the story enough to be amused by it, while pulling them back into reality every once in a while so they still know about the joke. By taking the reader to the edge of decency and then back several times, Twain achieves a great intensity of humor, and a potentially depressing tale will be laughable to the reader. With this sophisticated system in place, Twain then uses increasingly expressive descriptions of the stench on the train that enhance the humorous quality of the smells even more. As well as references to a gun box and cheese, the smell start relatively tame when the narrator notices the most evil and search smell stealing about in the frozen air. The following description of the narrator's smell is a little more graphic, saying that the smell thickens and that it's got to be more and more gamy and hard to stand. Describing the smell as thick and gay, it creates an image in the mind of the reader something tangible, something that could be touched and felt, especially unpleasant thought. Also, although the smell is hard to stand, now two people are coping. As the smell increases, so makes the use of the narrator a more expressive language. After Thompson noted that the corpse was to be buried last summer, the narrator describes the increased potency of stench in semi-ironic terms: By this time the fragrance, if you can call it a fragrance, was almost suffocating. Calling the scent a scent, the narrator is now ironic because he says something that is the opposite of what he means. However, like the second reference to the gun box, where the narrator almost slips and speaks the coffin, he qualifies his ironic statement by saying: If you can call it fragrance. The effect of the smell can be seen in the complexion of the two men, Thompson's face turned gray, and the action, Thompson rested his forehead in his left hand. The next reference to the smell also uses ironic language. Once carbolic acid only serves to enhance the potency of the odor, the narrator notes that the two spirits began to mix, and that pretty soon we took a break for the door. Twain slowly but surely increases the potency of the smell both in the story and as an image in the mind of the reader. The reader can only imagine how bad something must smell to refer to it ironically as perfumes, and be strong enough for two men to run outside. The narrator's final reference to the stench pulls out all the stops, using ironic language that puts the stench on a new scale of potency. After the final bonfire of smelly objects lit in a desperate attempt to mask the smell of cheese with other smells, the narrator notes that all that was before was just poetry that smell. Poetry is one of the highest forms of artistic expression, so using it in an ironic sense to refer to smell, the stench goes beyond all previous boundaries, creating an almost incomprehensible image in the mind of the reader. The poetic language continues as the narrator notes that the original smell rose from it just as sublime as ever. The word sublime is used by poets to refer to something bigger than man, and which must be held in fear. It is usually reserved for mountains, forests and other large forms of nature that make a person feel small. When Twain applies the word sublime to the smell, he tries to express that the smell is greater than anything ever experienced before. Like nature, which often overpowers The stench overpowers the two men, who almost choke on it as they run out onto the train platform. While *The Story of the Disabled* has been poorly received by critics such as Everett Emerson, who calls the humor of the story unspeakable, and Gladys Carmen Bellamy, who notes that Twain's emphasis on the stench of corpses seems to emphasize the humiliation of human life, it doesn't seem like Twain wanted to offend his story. In fact, Twain structures the story so that the reader is free from any moral obligation to feel sorry for the corpse that actually has a box of weapons with a piece of cheese on top. This knowledge, which is repeated at various points throughout the tale, helps to increase the level of humor associated with the smell. Similarly, by using its increasingly powerful description of the corpse smell, Twain increases humor even more as readers get an increasingly palpable mental image. And while many critics don't like these images, the story has stood the test of time with a popular audience. Long notes that many modern readers find pleasure in these incorrect writings, and that we frankly delight in many ways that offended past feelings. Source: Ryan D. Poquette, a critical essay on the history of the disabled, in short stories for students, *Gail Group*, 2002.James D. WilsonIn the following essay, Wilson explores the origins of the History of the Disabled and his attitude to other works of Twain.Publishing The History of the Story of the Disabled, sometimes called *The History of Cheese Limburger*, was first published as a three-year-old word supplement to *Some Rambling Notes*. He remained part of the tour narrative in *The Merry Tales* (1892). In 1896, the collected edition of *The Works of Mark Twain*, however, Harper and the Brothers shared two, typing *The Story of the Disabled* and *Some Rambling Notes* of idle excursions in different volumes. Subsequent editions withstood this separation by reprinting the *Story of the Disabled* without specifying its original context. Edition of *Neider Full Short Stories* is based on thirty-seven volumes of Stormfield edition. The circumstances of the composition, the sources, and influences of *Some Rambling Notes* idle excursions, a fictional account of Mark Twain's trip to Bermuda with Joe Twichell in May 1877, was originally published as a four-part series in the *Atlantic Monthly*, beginning in October 1877, and in the form of a book, *Idle tour* and other documents by London publishers Chatto and Windus in 1878. The study of handwritten paper and ink suggests that the History of the Disabled was written in the late 1870s, probably in 1877; Emerson claims that Mark Twain heard a story from Twichell during their travels in Bermuda. The scientific assumption, supported by Mark Twain-Howells's correspondence, is that it was supposed to be part of the *Tour* without a case, but was cut because William Dean Howells thought piece to be indelicate. The manuscript of evidence further indicates that Mark Twain requested the story be inserted on page 90 punch, *Brothers, Punch!* (1878) and then intended to include it as a separate chapter in *The Tramp Abroad* (1880); in both cases, however, the story was deleted prior to publication, again probably as a result of Howells' objections. Obviously, Mark Twain loved the story and wanted it to be published; at the same time, it is equally obvious that he appreciated the critical judgments of his good friend Howells, whose achievements as editor and author made him for Mark Twain a representative of the noble literary tastes and standards that the Western author believed he should satisfy. DeVoto and Blair report that *The Story of the Disabled* may have been based on a pre-war sketch by Southwest humorist J. M. Field, *Resurrection* and his carriage. Field's sketch appeared in *St. Louis* (March 9, 1846), was republished in *The Spirit of Time* (March 21, 1846) and appeared in books from 1847 and 1858. A similar story is published in the issue of the *Carson, Nevada, Daily Appeal* of July 13, 1865. A more likely source is Artemus Ward, who included a version of the story as part of his lecture program sometime between 1862 and 1864. Austin hypothesizes that Mark Twain heard Ward say during the *Babes in the Woods* lecture Mark Twain attended in Virginia City, Nevada, in December 1863, and that Ward's oral rendition was evidently a germ Twain story written about fourteen years later. Austin compares Twain's of the Disabled to a printed reconstruction of Ward's oral anecdote published by James F. Ryder in 1902. This comparison shows not only the general differences between Yankees and Southwest humor, but also Mark Twain's method of developing history from scant source materials. Ward's anecdote, noble compared to Mark Twain's ominous story, is a brief simple narration without dialogue before climax; everything moves quickly to kick the line, which becomes an excuse for the whole fairy tale. Ward's outstanding joke hit line is simply an insignificant detail in *The Story of Mark Twain*, which is built on a jester of exaggeration. The story of the Disabled is much more much more elaborate fiction than Ward's source: additional plot details, extensive characteristic dialogue and sinister, explicit descriptions of smells push the story to more than twenty-six hundred words; In addition, the first-person perspective and substantial development as a rail passenger who acts as a storyteller, and Thompson baggage man provide an aesthetic interest and complexity of the story that makes the ruins of noble sentimentality about death. *Edgar Allan Poe's Gothic* fiction, in particular *The Descent to the Whirlpool*, is offered by Kemper as an influence on the *Story of the Disabled*. Develop a parody of fictional themes *Po* and characteristic methods, the story of *Mark Twain* takes Gothic prick from his predecessor in a parody of *Po*'s tone, character and situation. The opening paragraphs of the two stories follow parallel paths, when Mark Twain deceives the overheated imagination of neurotic narrator *Po*: each of them is rather vague about some traumatic, mysterious past event that history will explain; In addition, the first person engaged by the narrator, who aged prematurely as a direct result of what he is about to rehearse-assures the reader that a fantastic tale to follow is true and therefore certainly all the more terrifying. According to the hero characteristically narrates retrospectively, Kemper points out, informing us at the beginning of the story conclusion and thereby sacrificing suspense to amplify the psychological effect of usually terror. In *The Story of the Disabled*, Mark Twain uses the same technique, but he does it to create a comic effect; indeed, if the reader had believed that the unpleasant smells so vividly rendered were actually coming from a decomposing corpse rather than from a limburger cheese, he would have been less surprised than disgusted. The language and structure of Mark Twain's story, Kemper concludes, undermines and ridicules the Gothic plot he describes. Relationship with other Mark Twain works *The Story of the Disabled* is one of Mark Twain's scatological pieces, immensely true, *De Voto* writes, to one-type border humor and Mark Twain. Gibson ties it up with 1601, though he argues that the more notorious piece is shapeless and even soft when read matched with *The Story of the Disabled*. Additional parallels can be drawn with *Cannibalism in Cars* (1868) and the *Great Struggle for The Prize* (1863), sketches that depend on their influence on what Bellamy calls primitive cruelty humor. Horowitz sees in this story a preview of the cynicism typical of Mark Twain's later writings on institutionalized religion. The indelible-some will say the offensive-subject and tone of the story, written in 1877, should give pause to those who empathize Mark Twain's overzealous desire to soothe his wife's noble tastes or his surrender to her heavy editorial air in the decade after their marriage. The safest connection with mark Twain's other writings, in fact, is to attack the noble feelings of history, especially in that they govern our attitude to death. His grotesque humour is reminiscent of *Cannibalism in Cars*, Aurelia's Unhappy Young Man - a condensed 1864 novel that tells the story of a oscillating devotion to a young lady lover who seems to be disintegrating before a safe relationship with mark Twain's other works, in fact, is to attack history with noble feelings, especially as they manage our attitude to death. eyes and Soldier Lucretia Smith (1864), who exposes the sentimental excesses of a young woman who discovers that she cheated three mortal weeks here, sniffing and over the wrong soldier. In all four cases, reality invades noble illusions and expectations that are comically misplaced to the situation. The story also provides an interesting analogue to Emmeline Grangerford's section of *Huckleberry Finn* (1885); although the tone and language of the two issues differed, their satirical intentions were essentially the same; everyone uses irony to carry an extended joke at the expense of the usual attitude to death. Critical research by Baldranza argues that in the *Story of the Disabled* Mark Twain rises to the height of comic invention, scientists usually condemn this story. Bellamy backs away from the disgusting humour, claiming that by focusing too much attention on the stench of corpses, Mark Twain stresses the humiliation of human life. Emerson flatly calls it a disaster, his humor unspeakable. Most other scholars of Mark Twain simply ignore the story that Howells thought would challenge all the literature for him as. Yet Mark Twain carefully structured the story to minimize the crime by the feelings of his readers and maximize the comic effect. A dying narrator tells us from the beginning that his fate is the result of a huge mistake: planning to accompany the remains of his dear childhood friend and classmate, John B. Hackett on a train from Cleveland, Ohio, to his poor old father and mother in Wisconsin, the narrator actually sits in a heated luggage car with a box of rifles on which a stranger is set complete with a special way. that came from what he believed to be Mr. Hackett's apparently rotting corpse; however, since the story is told retrospectively, we know the true contents of the box and that the actual source of the vile stench is cheese. Part of the humor, then, arises from a dramatic irony: the steps taken to defuse the smell of corpse - pouring carbolic acid over it, making fire chicken feathers, and dried apples, and a sheet of tobacco, and rags, and old shoes, and sulfur, and asafetida - serve only to activate the peculiar aroma of cheese. The narrator is accompanied on his way by the trunk of Thompson, whose folk understatement in describing the immutable smell, Gibson argues, contributes greatly to the comic effect of the story. This is Thompson, who first broaches an indelicate corpse smell object: He's pretty ripe, isn't he! Trying to be as understanding as possible in the circumstances, Thompson tries to comfort the narrator with the loss of his friend, assuring that sometimes it is unknown whether they are actually gone or not; but soon he claims: But he's not in a trance! After spout a few homiletic feelings- We all have to go, they don't get around it. The man, who is born out of a woman, has a few days and far apart, as the Scriptwriter-Thompson succumbs to his irresistible discomfort, challenging the narrator's claim that his friend was dead for only two or three days his glances at considerable length on unwisdom postponing burials for too long. When the smell of joint cigar smoke fails to change its worth of a cent, serving only to ignite its ambitions, Thompson decides to take more drastic action. But his attempt to overcome the smell of carbolic acid is useless: It's useless. We can't set him up. He just uses everything we put up to change it, and gives him his own taste and plays it back on us. In utter desperation, Thompson lights a fire; its own scent turns out to be so powerful that the narrator wonders how even a corpse can withstand it, but the original smell rose from it just as sublime as ever. Thompson dejectedly gives up: We need to stay here... The governor wants to travel alone and he's fixed so he can vote for us. Ultimately death triumphed over the living, leaving two men in prison: Yes, sir, we are elected, just as sure as you were born. Horowitz provides the most extensive and ingenious analysis of the History of the Disabled, claiming that this is a special symbolic commentary to the Church, a broad farce ... about what usually happened as the body of Christ ... progresses over time. Herman to Horowitz's argument is the original context of the story; it was located at the end of a Bermuda travel narrative that collectively developed an Easter motif introduced as visitors arrive on Sunday, the third day of their journey, at the hour of Resurrection, when the piers gave up their dead. Horowitz identifies a corpse in history - on the way to being reunited with his parents in the fictional town of Bethlehem, Wisconsin, with Christ; As a result of a huge mistake, of course, the corpse goes instead to the very real town of Peoria, Illinois, its place of honor usurped by a box of rifles and a packet of limber cheese. Thompson, the trunk who buzzes *Sweet By and By*, aiming for the supposed coffin, is Saint Foma Aquinas - the emissary of the church who strives to base the Christian faith. In the carriage, the embodiment of Christ, which will be taken away by Tom's son, symbolizes the church, as the tale takes the form of an unorthodox trail. The Calvinist language of the conclusion of history - we are elected, the discovery of the truth that cheese is too late to save me is indicative of mark Twain's pernicious, deadly early learning time at the Presbyteryan Church. The discovery of the fraudulent foundation of the church faith came too late to save Mark Twain; therefore, Bermuda's secular experience, with all its celestial aspects, concludes Horowitz, has proved to be an insufficient balm. Source: James D. Wilson, *The Story of the Disabled*, in the reader's guide to the stories of Mark Twain, G.K. Hall and Co., 1987, page 147-52.Stephen E. Kemper In the next essay, Kemper explores how Twain parodies the themes and techniques of *Edgar Allan Poe* in *The Story of the Disabled*. Twain was superb and deadly various literary literary and genres which he found pretentious or absurd. Cooper takes serious drubbing more than once. Romantic poetry and fiction come in some licks, too, most notably in Huck Finn. Detective fiction was another favorite target. *Edgar Allan Poe* should also be added to the list of victims. Jack Schering suggests that *Po's Barrel Amontillado* may be the source for the man who corrupt Hadleyburg, and that *Puddin'head Wilson* resembles *William Wilson* in some ways. But this note concerns the development of a parody by, not emulating it. Comparing Twain's *The Story of the Disabled* with some of *Po's* fictional themes and methods, and especially his story *The Descent into the Whirlpool*, shows that Twain purposefully chose a Gothic jab from his predecessor. The story of the Disabled (1882), you remember, includes a guy who tells the story of his attempt to transport a dead friend to relatives in Wisconsin by train. At the beginning of the journey, the coffin switches from a box of weapons, and the shady character puts a bag of ripe Limburger cheese on the coffin. The narrator doesn't understand these facts later. Much of the story details the narrator and expressman's growing olfactory anxiety, and their frantic but unsuccessful attempts to change the corpse's seemingly conscious attack on the nose. At the end of the story, the narrator says that cheese turned out to be a fatal opponent because, forcing them to drive outside the car on a bitter night, he ruined their health. In the last line of the story, the narrator moans: This is my last trip; I'm on my way home to die. The story is ridiculous, outrageous and, of course, hilarious. For the most part, his humor, like Limburger cheese, is reliable and hard to miss. But Twain's parody of *Po* adds a subtle flavor to those who recognize him. Descent into the whirlpool, like the *Story of the Disabled*, is a fairy tale told by an old man to a younger listener. The man was caught in a deadly whirlpool while fishing, but managed to survive his horrors by applying common sense, scientific observations and imagination. Unfortunately, the price of survival is steep; man is destroyed physically and perhaps psychologically. The story begins, We have already reached the top of the high cliffs. For a few minutes the old man seemed too exhausted to speak. Not so long ago, he said, and I could take you along this route, as well as the youngest of my sons; but, about three years ago, an event happened to me like never before, to a mortal man- or at least such as no man has ever survived to tell about- and six hours of deadly terror that I experienced broke my body and soul. You assume I'm a very old man, but I'm not. It took less than a day to change those hair from the wharf black to the white to loosen my limbs, and stretch my nerves so that I tremble at least the tension, and I was frightened ... Twain's story begins, the story is ridiculous, outrageous, and of course hilarious. For the most part, his humor, like Limburger cheese, is reliable and hard to miss. But Twain's parody of *Po* adds a subtle flavor to those who recognize him. I seem to be sixty and married, but these consequences are due to my condition and suffering because I am single and only forty-one. You will find it hard to believe that I, who is now, but the shadow, was Hale, a hearty man two short years ago- an iron man, a very athlete! But that's the simple truth. But a stranger so far than this fact is how I lost my health. I lost it, helping to take care of a box of weapons on a two hundred mile rail journey one winter at night. This is the real truth, and I will tell you about it. Aside from the obvious parodies of *Po*'s tone, character and situation, Twain adopts one of *Po*'s favorite opening techniques to forge it: he gives a vague description of the mysterious event that the rest of the story will explain, and the main character insists that everything that will be connected, albeit beyond faith, is actually adorned with truth. Parrot another technique by *Po*, in the following paragraph Twain's narrator quickly clarifies the actual secret to the reader, flatly explaining it: The fact is that without my suspecting this huge mistake was made. I took away a box of guns that this young guy came to the station to send to a shooting company in Peoria, Illinois, and he got my body! ... As the train came off a stranger missed in the car and set up a packet of a particularly mature and capable Cheese Limburger at an end of my coffin-box-I mean my box of weapons. I mean, now I know it was Limburger cheese... *Po*'s narrators often speak retrospectively and tell the reader as soon as the story ends and what events constitute the actual mystery in the story. By practically eliminates the plot of suspense in order to make the psychological expectation primary. It reveals the climax of the story at the outset in order to force the reader to experience the psychological reactions of his characters more acutely. Twain uses the same technique for comic purposes: people in know-know find ignorance more amusing than other ignoramuses. If we suspected that the antear antagonist was a really rotting corpse rather than a Cheese Limburger, we would hardly laugh as much. The plot itself prompts *Po*: the narrator Twain and his companion Thompson are locked in a small box with a rotting corpse on a wild, stormy night. Thompson expresses familiarity with the event, common in *Po*'s stories; sometimes, he notes, the seeming corpses will rise and confront their watchmen. But Ligeia and Madeleine Usher have never been described this way: Sometimes it's unclear whether or not they're gone, it seems to have gone, you know, the warm body, the joints of the limb, and so while you think they're gone, you really don't know. I had things to do in the car. This is awful, because you don't know at what point they'll come up and look at you! ... But he's not in a trance! No, sir, I'm on bail for him! Language undermines and ridicules the Gothic object it describes. Two living characters are soon locked in a stunning battle with a corpse - with a death that seems to attack them and refuses to give them peace and comfort. Ligue and Dom Usher again come to mind, as does *The Mask of Red Death*, *Heart of The Story* and *Black Cat*. But for Twain to revive the corpse in the imagination and then fight it is ridiculous. *Po*'s supernatural premise, Twain suggests here, cannot be taken seriously (although Twain sometimes lends credence to popular superstitions, as in *Huckleberry Finn*). Like many of *Po*'s characters, Thompson and the narrator show more respect for the dead than healthy. Twain's treatment of Emmeline Grangerford and the boy in *The Good Little Boy* made clear his opinion about such an*

morbidity. Finally, Twain parodies the perverse over-exercise of imagination by a typical Po character. Dozens of Po's characters take as reality distortion, created by their over-imagination. Thus, Twain insists, absurdity defeats simple common sense. Thompson put his nose right into the cheese, but doesn't even understand it. The narrator knows that his friend recently died and can no longer decompose, but his imagination betrays his common sense. To paraphrase the saying, they can't smell Limburger for cheese. As in Po, the unregulated imagination makes them, but Twain emphasizes the absurdity and humor of such excess, not his pathos and restless genius. By burlesquing many of Poe's techniques, themes, and character styles, Twain pierces claims of gothicism, throwing his sharp darts at America's most capable and sophisticated practice in the genre. Twain is no more fair to Po than to Cooper. But while he says some stretchers in order to make his point more vivid and humorous, well, he also tells the truth, basically. Source: Stephen E. Kemper, Po, Twain, and Limburger Cheese, in Mark Twain Magazine, Volume XXI, No. 1, Winter 1981-1982, p. 13-14.SourcesBesbami, Gladys Carmen, Comedian as a technician, in Mark Twain as a literary artist, University of Oklahoma Press, 1950, p. 123.DeVoto, Bernard, Mark Twain, Riverside Press, 1951, page 253.Emerson, Everett, Backward, in The Literary Biography of Samuel L. , Press University of Pennsylvania, 1984, page 272.Horowitz, Floyd R., History of the Disabled: An Early Commentary by Mark Twain on Institutional Christianity, in the Journal of Midcontinent American Studies Journal, Volume 7, No. 1, 1966, p. 38-40.Kemper, Stephen E., Po, Twain, and Limburger Cheese, in Mark Twain Magazine, Volume XXI, No. 1, Winter 1981-1982, p. 13-14.Long, E. Hudson, Mind and Art, in Mark Twain's Handbook, Henricks 1957, page 341.Further ReadingAmbrose, Stephen E., Nothing like this In the world: The people who built the Transcontinental Railroad, 1863-1869, Simon Schuster, 2000.In his book, Ambrose, a renowned historian, examines the political and social efforts that helped build the Transcontinental Railroad, including Abraham Lincoln driving the desire to see it built, government members and brilliant entrepreneurs who invested in it, Irish and Chinese workers who did most of the construction work, and army soldiers who stood guard, protecting the railway crews from attacks. Bondeson, Ian, Buried Alive: The Horrible Story of Our Most Primary Fear, W.W. Norton and Co., 2001.This fascinating study gives a thorough examination of actual history, and urban legends about, premature burial, including an increase in related tales in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It also discusses the development of many safeguards, such as the waiting morgue, where the corpses were kept until they began to rot or returned to life. Twain visited one of them in the 1880s. Budd, Louis. N., Critical Essays about Mark Twain, 1867-1910, G. K. Hall and Co., 1982.This collection contains a number of key criticisms of Twain's works during his lifetime. Taylor, Mark A., Computerized Shipping Systems: Increasing Profit and Performance Through Technology, Angelico and Taylor, Inc., 1995.Although Taylor's book is primarily intended as a guide for businesses detailing what to look for when buying a new computerized delivery system, it also serves as a primer for those interested in exploring how modern shipping works. Written in a consumer-friendly style, the book notes many of the benefits of a computerized delivery system, including huge savings. Ward, Jeffrey C., Dayton Duncan, and Ken Burns, Mark Twain: An Illustrated Biography, Knopf, 2001.This biography is a companion to the PBS series, which aired in January 2002. Complete with Twain's humorous quotes, a selection of his correspondence that reveal his more realistic side, and literary choices from Twain fans and critics, the book also gives a cohesive overview of Twain's current scholarship. Burns' companion film is also available on PBS DVD. Siporin, Terra, a disease in the popular American press: A case of diphtheria, typhoid and syphilis, 1870-1920, Contribution to Medical Research, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1988.Ziporyn a carefully researched study analyzes how three diseases - typhoid fever, diphtheria, and syphilis - were treated in the United States media from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. The author believes that typhoid fever has been covered in the press more than the other two diseases, which she attributes to the social values associated with each disease. Disease. the invalid's story. the invalid's story summary. the invalid's story theme. the invalid's story quizlet. the invalid's story audio. the invalid's story irony. the invalid's story characters. the invalid's story questions and answers

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