To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Michael Thomas Tierce entitled "Mark Twain's Mysterious Strangers." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in English.

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MARK TWAIN'S MYSTERIOUS STRANGERS

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

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Michael Thomas Tierce

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to provide a lengthy critical study focusing solely on the recurrence of the "mysterious stranger" figure in the writings of Mark Twain. This figure appears in Twain's writings as early as "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," and it culminates in the title character of The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts. Examples of this figure are found in Twain's short stories, his novels, and his essays. A chapter is devoted to each of the most prominent strangers employed by Twain. Those discussed are the traveller, the joker, the non-human entity, the savior, and Satan.

The discussion of "the stranger as traveller" centers around Twain's five travel books. Because Twain spent a great deal of his life travelling all over the world, he many times found himself cast in the role of an outsider. As this outsider, he could objectively observe and comment on some of the illusions that people cling to. Through his recorded observations Twain himself became a "mysterious stranger" who dispelled the illusions he perceived in order "to stir up" those around him and "make them healthy."

The discussion of "the stranger as joker" centers around the "mysterious strangers'" involvement with practical jokes. It includes examples of the stranger as the butt of practical jokes and as the perpetrator of them. In The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts Twain asserts that nothing can withstand the assault of laughter, and he chides the human race for not fully utilizing this powerful weapon. Even though Twain many times denounces practical jokes, he must have recognized that their aim is to achieve laughter.

The discussion of "the stranger as a nonhuman entity" centers around various "nonhuman" spokesmen utilized by Twain. These spokesmen include the Superintendent of Dreams, an old man who claims to be a messenger from God, a man recently deceased, a dead baby, a group of animal scientists, and various groups of human beings--Negroes, Chinese, Indians--who are treated as if they were subhuman creatures. All of these nonhuman strangers are spokesmen for Twain's "condemnations of human nature" and of life in general.

The discussion of "the stranger as savior" centers around a group of strangers who offer some type of salvation to the areas which they visit. This assemblage includes a group of saviors who produce positive consequences, a group of saviors who produce negative consequences, Hank Morgan (A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court), David Wilson (Pudd'nhead Wilson), a large group of missionaries, and a large group of imperialists. In most cases, the results of these strangers' offers of salvation are more harmful than beneficial.

The discussion of "the stranger as Satan" centers around Twain's lifelong interest in Satan. It includes Twain's shorter pieces dealing with Satan, "Letters from the Earth," "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," and The Mysterious Stranger. In most of these works Twain uses Satan as a spokesman for his condemnations of "the damned human race." It should be noted that the Satan Twain applauds is not the traditional malcontent devoted to mankind's destruction but an idealized savior devoted to mankind's amelioration.

The recurrence of the "mysterious stranger" figure is one of the most dominant elements in Twain's writings. In most cases, these strangers are either objective outsiders who reveal illusions held dear by

mankind or they are outsiders who hold information necessary for mankind's salvation. Because Twain wished to formulate his own bible, and because these strangers work for the betterment of mankind, one can conclude that they are disseminators of "The Gospel According to St. Mark."

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Auto	The Autobiography of Mark Twain, ed. Charles Neider (New York, 1959)
Biography	Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain: A Biography (New York, 1912)
Blair	Selected Shorter Writings of Mark Twain, ed. Walter Blair (Boston, 1962)
Essays	The Complete Essays of Mark Twain, ed. Charles Neider (New York, 1963)
FOM	Fables of Man, ed. John S. Tuckey (Berkeley, 1972)
Gondour	Samuel Clemens, The Curious Republic of Gondour (New York, 1919)
HHT	Hannibal, Huck and Tom, ed. Walter Blair (Berkeley, 1969)
HST	The Complete Humorous Sketches and Tales of Mark Twain, ed. Charles Neider (New York, 1961)
Life	Life as I Find It, ed. Charles Neider (New York, 1977)
MS	The Mysterious Stranger, ed. William Gibson (Berkeley, 1969)
S & B	Mark Twain's Satires and Burlesques, ed. Franklin Rogers (Berkeley, 1967)
WM?	What is Man? ed. Paul Baender (Berkeley, 1973)
Writings	Samuel Clemens, The Writings of Mark Twain, Author's National Edition (New York, 1907-1918)
WWD	Mark Twain's Which Was the Dream? ed. John S. Tuckey (Berkeley, 1967)

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INTRODUCTION: THE STRANGER AS TWAIN

In a book-length study of Shakespeare, Leslie Fiedler argues that "there exists in all literature an archetypal figure who escapes both poles of classical definition--appearing sometimes as a hero, sometimes as a villain, sometimes as a clown."[1] Fiedler points out how this "'archetypal figure' has been named variously the 'shadow,' the 'other,' the 'alien,' the 'outsider,' the 'stranger.'"[2] The recurrence of this same "archetypal figure" is one of the dominant elements in Mark Twain's writings. The question of whether or not Twain was consciously aware that his use of the "mysterious stranger" figure had archetypal implications will probably remain unanswered. And even though James M. Cox has argued that "we cannot certainly know the stranger's full significance in Twain's work,"[3] the fact that Twain returned to the figure again and again throughout the course of his writings can easily be verified. This figure appears in Twain's writings as early as "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," and it culminates in the title character of The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts. Examples of this figure are found in Twain's short stories, his novels, and his essays.[4]

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[1]Leslie Fiedler, The Stranger in Shakespeare (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), p. 15.

[2]Fiedler, p. 15.

[3]James M. Cox, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: The Machinery of Self-Preservation," Yale Review, 50 (Autumn 1960), 102.

[4]It should be noted that throughout the study I maintain a liberal definition of "stranger." My definition includes any "alien being" (for

The recognition of Twain's use of the "mysterious stranger" figure is certainly nothing new. Many critics have noted and discussed this figure. However, a lengthy study focusing solely on this individual figure does not appear in the canon of Twainian criticism. Perhaps the most valuable discussion of this figure appears in the last two pages of James M. Cox's article "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: The Machinery of Self-Preservation":

> A look at the important fiction which Twain wrote after 1899 reveals that a particular figure tends to dominate them--a stranger, who ultimately becomes the mysterious stranger. Just as the burlesquer and the incipient business man had appeared early in Twain's work, so had this stranger. . . .[5]

Cox also discusses the role that this stranger assumes. He argues that the stranger's role is "one of disturbing the peace. Into quiet, complacent communities he comes disrupting the society by unmasking and turning it upon itself."[6] In effect, the stranger is an outsider who enters a given society and eventually dispels various illusions found in that society.

Other critics have also noted Twain's use of the stranger figure and the role that this stranger comes to assume. For example, Stanley Brodwin has recognized "a persistent Mark Twain character-type, the sometimes 'innocent,' sometimes devious stranger striving either to 'con' or

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example, a nonhuman entity), any person outside the established, controlling group (for example, Negroes and Chinese), and any person who is a stranger to or an outsider in a given community.

[5]Cox, p. 101.

[6]Cox, p. 101.

to 'reform' the people and the society around him."[7] Henry Nash Smith points out that some of Twain's writings "use the basic situation of an outsider of superior endowments who intervenes in the life of a small isolated town."[8] In the "preface" to Mark Twain and the Community, Thomas Blues asserts that the "fundamental argument" of Mark Twain's writings involves "a vision of an idealized relation between the individual and the community, in which an independent individual could freely challenge the community's values, disrupt its sense of order, and yet somehow retain his identity as a conventional member of it."[9] Even though the individual would not be a stranger to the community of which he is a part, the fact that Blues refers to him as an "independent individual" implies that he is to some degree an outsider.

Though many critics have dealt with the recurrence of the stranger figure in Twain's writings, apparently no critic has found this figure significant enough to merit a lengthy critical study. Following the format established by Leslie Fiedler in The Stranger in Shakespeare, I intend to devote a chapter to each of the most prominent strangers employed by Twain. Those to be discussed are the traveller, the joker, the non-human entity, the savior and Satan. However, before I begin an individualized study of each of these strangers, I wish to supply the reader with more background information dealing with the stranger figure in general.

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[7]Stanley Brodwin, "Mark Twain's Masks of Satan: The Final Phase," American Literature, 45 (May 1973), 206.

[8]Henry Nash Smith, "Mark Twain's Images of Hannibal: From St. Petersburgh to Eseldorf," TSLL, 37 (1958), 19.

[9]Thomas Blues, Pref., Mark Twain and the Community (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1970), p. IX.

In order to understand fully Twain's use of the stranger, it is necessary to mention two of the most common responses found in Twain's fiction to the appearance of a stranger. For example, from The Gilded Age and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn one gets the idea that the appearance of a stranger is a very special event. In The Gilded Age, the arrival of the Hawkinses in Hawkeye, Missouri, is met with the whole population of the little community putting away their employments and coming to view the newcomers. Speaking of Tom Sawyer's arrival at the Phelps plantation, Huck says that "everybody made a rush for the front door, because, of course, a stranger don't come every year, and so he lays over the yaller-fever, for interest, when he does come."[10] However, the pleasure and excitement over the stranger's arrival is usually short-lived. In Tom Sawyer's Conspiracy, Twain suggests another response to the arrival of a stranger: "In them days a stranger couldn't show himself and not start an uneasiness unless he told all about his business straight off and proved it hadn't any harm in it."[11] In other words, Twain was very much aware of a society that had a dual response to the appearance of strangers. On the one hand, the society was very curious to see the newcomers; but on the other hand, the society was afraid that the stranger might in some way interrupt the established order of the community.

One interesting biographical detail related to Twain's use of the stranger figure is the fact that Twain many times found himself in the

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[10] Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Writings of Mark Twain, Author's National Edition, 25 vols. (New York, 1907-1918), XIII, 315. Hereafter cited parenthetically within the text as Writings.

[11] Walter Blair, ed., Hannibal, Huck and Tom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 171-172. Hereafter cited parenthetically within the text as HHT.

role of a stranger. During his early life, Twain wandered over the Nevada frontier and all along the Mississippi River. He travelled to the Hawaiian Islands as a newspaper correspondent for the Sacramento Union. He travelled to Europe and the Holy Land and wrote travel letters back to the Alta California and other newspapers. John S. Tuckey describes Twain's adult life as also being filled with much travel:

> During much of his adult life he was an illustrious vagabond; once he left his home town, he never put down strong roots in any other locality. Even after his marriage to Olivia Langdon, he remained somewhat a drifter, and the periods of residence in the Hartford mansion might be considered extended sojourns of the Clemens family, who lived a semi-nomadic existence.[12]

The simple fact that Twain wrote five travel books[13] is enough to suggest that he truly was something of a wanderer.

The fact that Twain was a "wanderer" is not the only aspect of his life that places him in a position of an outsider; his fear of rejection and of isolation also seems to have alienated him from his surroundings. Hamlin Hill asserts that "fear had been the controlling emotion of his life: fear of poverty, fear of offending and alienating his family and friends, fear of being mistaken by his audience. He moved insecurely in all the worlds he inhabited, much like the mysterious stranger in a dream world who obsessed him in his fiction."[14] Many other critics have recognized and commented on Twain's fear of isolation. Van Wyck Brooks

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[12]John S. Tuckey, Mark Twain and Little Satan (West Lafayette: Purdue University Studies, 1963), p. 79.

[13]Twain's five travel books are The Innocents Abroad (1869), Roughing It (1872), A Tramp Abroad (1880), Life on the Mississippi (1883), Following the Equator (1897).

[14]Hamlin Hill, Mark Twain: God's Fool (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 269.

noted that Twain suffered from a "fear of solitude, that dread of being with himself which made him, for example, beg for just one more game of Billiards at 4 o'clock in the morning."[15] Kenneth Lynn argues that "with the possible exception of Poe's fantasies of being buried alive, there is no other corpus of American writing that reverts so often as does Twain's work to the nightmare of being utterly cut off."[16] Allison Ensor asserts that part of Twain's interest in the Prodigal, in Adam, and in Noah was tied to the fact that they all represented "the exile from Paradise--the man who once knew joy and happiness and lived in an ideal world but who now finds himself in an evil one, far removed from the old."[17] Ensor concludes his book by asserting that "it was Mark Twain's despair that he knew his condition to be the same"[18] as that of these three Biblical figures. Because of his many travels and his fear of isolation, it is easy to conclude that Twain many times found himself in the role of an outsider and many times felt himself to be alienated from his surroundings. Donald N. Koster sums up this point quite effectively: "[Twain] was never completely at home on this planet, never devoid of the child's feeling that he was a stranger, and a mysterious one under the stars."[19]

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[15]Van Wyck Brooks, The Ordeal of Mark Twain (1920; rpt. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1970), p. 24.

[16]Kenneth Lynn, "Huck and Jim," Yale Review, 49 (Spring, 1958), 423. A good discussion of Twain's fear of isolation and of the various images of confinement that appear in his writings.

[17]Allison Ensor, Mark Twain and the Bible (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), p. 31.

[18]Ensor, p. 103.

[19]Donald N. Koster, "Mark Twain, Mysterious Stranger," Adelphi Quarterly, 3 (Summer 1960), 16.

Twain's "Whittier Birthday Speech" is one of the most famous recorded examples of Twain himself in the role of the stranger. Twain was invited to speak at a dinner given in Boston on December 19, 1877, by the publisher of the Atlantic Monthly in honor of John Greenleaf Whittier's seventieth birthday. Twain's speech before "the literary aristocracy of New England"[20] has been the subject of much discussion and speculation. At the time of the speech, Twain was a fairly successful "westerner" who had migrated to Boston. Bernard DeVoto asserts that with the coming of Twain, Boston "confronted a civilization that had no value whatever in common with its own. . . . [Twain] was the frontier itself . . . he was, that is a savage."[21] The fact that Smith entitles his article "The Backwoods Bull in a Boston China Shop" suggests that Twain was an outsider. Van Wyck Brooks describes Twain as a "roughneck" from the West,[22] "his presence on the program was entirely appropriate--he had contributed at least a dozen articles and sketches to the Atlantic [Monthly] . . . and he had spoken with success at a dinner given by the magazine three years earlier."[23] Even though Twain's presence was appropriate, his use of Emerson, Longfellow and Holmes as the objects of his humor would certainly have been a new and strange phenomenon. After all, this venerable trio

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[20]Henry Nash Smith, "The Backwoods Bull in a Boston China Shop," American Heritage, 12 (August 1961), 33. A very detailed discussion of the "Whittier Birthday Speech" incident.

[21]Bernard DeVoto, Mark Twain's America (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin, 1932), pp. 192-193.

[22]Brooks, p. 134.

[23]Henry Nash Smith, American Heritage, p. 33.

"were men of extraordinary dignity, . . . so that no one could well approach them with a light and trifling matter."[24] However, Twain "was not only ignorant of the intangibles which this society valued. . . he was indifferent to them."[25]

The exact response to Twain's speech is extremely unclear. Howells calls the occasion "the amazing mistake, the bewildering blunder, the cruel catastrophe."[26] In his biography of Twain, Albert Bigelow Paine says of the occasion that "those Atlantic diners became petrified with amazement and horror."[27] In a letter to William Dean Howells concerning the event, Twain speaks of his "sense of disgrace" and says that he "must have been insane when [he] wrote that speech."[28] In spite of these bleak descriptions, Henry Nash Smith claims that the newspaper reports differ from Twain's, Howells' and Paine's negative versions of the acceptance of the speech. Smith quotes a passage from the Boston Daily Globe: "Mr. Emerson seemed a little puzzled about it, but Mr. Longfellow laughed and shook, and Mr. Whittier seemed to enjoy it keenly."[29] Even though it is

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[24]William Dean Howells, My Mark Twain (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1910), p. 59.

[25]DeVoto, p. 194.

[26]Howells, p. 60.

[27]Albert Bigelow Paine, Mark Twain: A Biography (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912), II, 605. Hereafter cited parenthetically within the text as Biography.

[28]Frederick Anderson, William M. Gibson, and Henry Nash Smith, eds. Selected Mark Twain--Howells Letters (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 102.

[29]Henry Nash Smith, "That Hideous Mistake of Poor Clemens's," Harvard Library Bulletin, 9 (Spring 1955), 147. Another very detailed discussion of the "Whittier Birthday Speech" incident.

unclear whether Paine's and Howells' accounts or the newspaper account is actually true, it is almost certain that Twain's speech "aroused misgivings at the moment when it was delivered."[30] Without a doubt, Twain himself was cast in the role of an order-disrupting "mysterious stranger" from the Western Frontier.

When Twain found himself among the literary elite of Boston he must have recognized the duality of his position. On the one hand, he was the "rough" outsider from the West; on the other hand, he was a "literary man" trying to secure a position among the refined and established literary figures of the East. This very same duality appears over and over in Twain's fiction and shows up again and again in his life. It is found so often in Twain's fiction that Kenneth Lynn asserts that the twinhood motif is "one of the most important themes in all of Twain's work."[31] Duality was apparently on Twain's mind right up to the end of his life. In his biography of Twain, Justin Kaplan claims that Twain's dying words concerned duality: "At Stormfield before he slipped into a coma his last continuous talking was about 'the Laws of Mentality,' about Jekyll and Hyde and dual personality."[32]

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[30]Henry Nash Smith, Harvard, p. 153.

[31]Kenneth S. Lynn, Mark Twain and Southwestern Humor (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1959), p. 259. A fairly good description of the twinhood motif and the switched identities motif is found on pages 259 and 260.

[32]Justin Kaplan, Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), p. 388. Note that even Kaplan's title reflects the duality theme.

The important question to consider concerns the relationship between the twinhood motif and the mysterious stranger figure. Many of Twain's stranger figures represent the dark or Mr. Hyde side of man's personality. One of the maxims from Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar says that "everyone is a moon, and has a dark side he never shows to anybody" (Writings, VI, 327). A very similar idea is attributed to the admiral in "The Refuge of Derelicts": "He says every man is a moon and has a side which he turns toward nobody."[33] In a short piece called "Talk about Twins," Twain gives the following character sketch of the fictional Siamese twins Luigi and Angelo:

> Angelo was of a religious turn of mind, and was monotonously honest and honorable and upright, and tediously proper; whereas Luigi had no principles, no morals, no religion--a perfect blather-skite, . . . infidel, atheist and agnostic all mixed together.[34]

Van Wyck Brooks argues that "this story of the two incompatible spirits bound together in one flesh [Luigi and Angelo] is, as we can see, the symbol of Mark Twain himself."[35]

The idea of viewing Twain as a split personality fits in very well with one of Forty-Four's messages to August Feldner in The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts: "you are not one person, but two. One is your Workaday-Self and 'tends to business, the other is your Dream-Self, and

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[33]John S. Tuckey, ed., Fables of Man (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 206. Hereafter cited parenthetically within the text as FOM.

[34]Charles Neider, ed., Life As I Find It (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 232. Hereafter cited parenthetically within the text as Life.

[35]Brooks, p. 221.

has no responsibilities, and cares only for romance and excursions and adventure."[36] Most of the mysterious strangers that Twain employs represent the Mr. Hyde, "Dream-Self," or shadow side of mankind-- the dark side of our souls or psyches which we try to suppress, but which we must inevitably face. In a passage from his book Memories, Dreams, Reflections, Carl Gustav Jung gives the following account of his youthful reaction to Goethe's Faust:

> Faust struck a chord in me and pierced me through . . . it awakened in me the problem of opposites, of good and evil, of mind and matter, of light and darkness. Faust, the inept, purblind philosopher, encounters the dark side of his being, his sinister shadow, Mephistopheles, who in spite of his negating disposition represents the true spirit of life as against the arid scholar who hovers on the brink of suicide.[37]

By placing a "sinister shadow" in the form of a mysterious stranger within the "arid" community of Hadleyburg, Twain forces the Hadleyburgians to face the "dark side" of their beings. Even though this stranger is seeking revenge on the community for a past offense ("in spite of his negating disposition"), he still "represents the true spirit of life" because he forces them to evaluate the very basis of their so-called morality. Because the Hadleyburgians were living a lie prior to the coming of the stranger, one can assert that their existence was lifeless and that they were "hovering on the brink of suicide." As I have tried to show, it would be possible to draw a parallel between Twain's mysterious strangers and Jung's shadow figure. However, because my purpose is to comment on

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[36] William M. Gibson, ed., The Mysterious Stranger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 315. Hereafter cited parenthetically within the text as MS.

[37] Carl Gustav Jung, Memories, Dreams Reflections (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 235.

as many aspects of these mysterious stranger figures as possible, I must limit my discussion of this subject to a single paragraph.

Before discussing the major mysterious stranger figures found in Twain's writings, it is necessary to mention a whole group who are not important enough to have their own chapter. These strangers are a group of outsiders who are in some way disconnected from the rest of mankind. Because they are disconnected, they are ideal "masks" for Twain to use as spokesmen for his more daring or indelicate views. In his introduction to The Mysterious Stranger, William M. Gibson quotes the following entry from one of Twain's notebooks:

> It is the strangest thing that the world is not full of books that scoff at the pitiful world, and the useless universe and the vile and contemptible race--books that laugh at the whole paltry scheme and deride it . . . . Why don't I write such a book? Because I have a family. There is no other reason.[38]

Twain's fear of public opinion forced him to express some of his satirical views on mankind through a mask. Because these strangers in question have already been condemned by public opinion, they can speak their minds freely without having to worry about losing their places in society. Perhaps the most famous of these masks is Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar. Since David Wilson is branded a pudd'nhead by the people of Dawson's Landing, he is an ideal spokesman for Twain's more daring views.

Twain uses this group of outsiders as spokesmen for his own views over and over. Rather than spending a whole chapter delineating each of these figures and their viewpoints, I am simply going to mention the most important ones. One interesting thing to note is that even the names attributed to these figures are somewhat derogatory, which suggests

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[38] William M. Gibson, ed., Introd., The Mysterious Stranger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 16.

that Twain carefully alienates his spokesmen from the community and from himself. Some of these spokesmen are: the Offensive Stranger in "The Dervish and the Offensive Stranger," the Frivolous Stranger in "The Stupendous Process," Hamfat in "Which Was It?" the Mad Prophet and the Mad Philosopher in "Papers of the Adam Family," the Admiral in "The Refuge of Derelicts," the narrator of "1601," the stranger in "The Scriptural Pnaoramist,"[39] the Negro slave in "Corn-Pone Opinions," Ah Song Hi in "Goldsmith's Friend Abroad Again," the old man in "The War Prayer," and the Old Man in "What is Man?". Twain even spoke through some of the figures he openly condemned. For example, the Czar of Russia in "The Czar's Soliloquy" and King Leopold in "King Leopold 's Soliloquy" are both masks through which Twain expresses some of his own more daring views. Other figures who fit this group and who will be discussed later are Huck Finn and Satan.

During the course of this introduction, I have suggested three reasons for Twain's recurrent use of "the mysterious stranger"; Twain himself was something of a stranger, he was aware of man's strange and mysterious dark side, and he used strangers as spokesmen for his more daring views. One other reason can be gleaned from Robert Penn Warren's essay "Blackberry Winter': A Recollection." In this essay, Warren makes the following observation about how he came to write the short story "Blackberry Winter":

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[39] See pp. 10-11 of Allison Ensor's book Mark Twain and the Bible for an excellent disscussion of the stranger who accompanies the panoramist. One of Ensor's comments about thisstory is that "The irreverance is attributed to someone other than Mark Twain [the stranger]; he was not yet ready to speak for himself in that manner" (p. 11).

> But something has to happen in a story if there is to be more than a dreary lyric poem posing as a story to promote the cause of universal boredom and deliquescent prose. Something had to happen, and the simplest thing to ever have happen is to say: Enter, mysterious stranger.[40]

Now that all the relevant background information has been supplied, the "simplest" thing for me to do is to follow Warren's advice and begin a discussion of each of the major types of mysterious strangers found in the writings of Mark Twain. Because Twain himself was a wanderer and a traveller, I am going to begin my study with a discussion of "The Stranger as a Traveller."

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[40]Robert Penn Warren, "'Blackberry Winter.': A Recollection," in Understanding Fiction, ed. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall 1979), p. 379.

CHAPTER 1

THE STRANGER AS TRAVELLER

According to the account of Twain's Hannibal days in Life on the Mississippi, he was captured at a very early age by the desire to travel. He mentions many ambitions that eventually faded away; however, he claims that "the ambition to be a steamboatman always remained" (Writings, IX, 32). Twain's yearning to travel went beyond the Mississippi River; this is clear from his reaction to his brother Orion's appointment as secretary of Nevada Territory: "I was young and ignorant and I envied my brother . . . He was going to travel! I had never been away from home, and that word 'travel' had a seductive charm for me" (Writings, VII, 1). In Tom Sawyer Abroad, the return home of Tom, Huck, and Jim from their adventures at the Phelps Plantation is greeted with "a torchlight procession and speeches" (Writings, XX, 7). All three are made heroes, and Tom is given the prestigious title of "Tom Sawyer the Traveler" (Writings, XX , 7). Because Twain himself travelled so much, perhaps he would have liked to have been dubbed "Mark Twain the Traveler." In any event, as I have already pointed out in the "Introduction," Twain spent a great deal of his life travelling all over the world. Not only did his travels cast him in the role of an outsider; but because he was a newspaper correspondent during many of his travels, he was expected to view objectively and discuss objectively those areas he visited. Because he was an objective observer, he was able to perceive and comment on some of the illusions that people cling to. As John Tuckey recognizes, Twain himself came to fill "the role of the detached ironic observer looking down upon the follies and depravities of

the human race and making his sardonic comments."[41] Twain himself became a mysterious stranger who attempted to disrupt the peace of a given society "by unmasking it and turning it upon itself."[42]

In the preface of his first travel book, The Innocents Abroad (1869), Twain attempts to establish the objective nature of his writings. He says that "I have seen with impartial eyes, and I am sure I have written at least honestly" (Writings, I, Preface). He tries to view his surroundings with the "sort of analytical attention" which he claims only an "experienced and philosophical traveller alone can give" (Writings, IX, 513). Not only did he consider it his duty to write impartially, but he also considered it his duty to dispel illusions: "For when an honest writer discovers an imposition it is his simple duty to strip it bare and hurl it down from its place of honor, no matter who suffers by it; any other course would render him unworthy of the public confidence" (Writings, III, 246-247). In The Innocents Abroad he admits that he "[claims] the right to correct misstatements" (Writings, III, 246-247). He says that the reason he abuses the pilgrims accompanying him on the Quaker City excursion is "to stir them up and make them healthy; that is all" (Writings, II, 229). In effect, Twain himself recognizes the immense value of an objective, illusion-dispelling stranger. As Leslie Fiedler has pointed out: "by virtue of his strangeness the stranger in our midst can sometimes see the

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[41] John S. Tuckey, Mark Twain and Little Satan (West Lafayette: Purdue University Studies, 1963), p. 36.

[42] James M. Cox, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: The Machinery of Self-Preservation." Yale Review, 50 (Autumn 1960), 101.

silliness of the games we play in deadly earnest."[43] By pointing out the silliness of those illusions Twain is trying to stir up his listeners and make them healthy.

Even though Twain argues that "travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrowmindedness" (Writings, II, 407), he also recognizes that it is at times hard and almost impossible not to be prejudiced. For example, he says he "felt a perfectly natural desire to have a good, long, unprejudiced look at the passengers" (Writings, I, 16) on board the Quaker City steamship. However, his desire for an "unprejudiced look" turned in to a course in name-calling. He asks a deck-sweep such questions as the following: "Who is that smooth-faced animated outrage yonder in fine clothes?" (Writings, I, 20). In other words, Twain himself burlesques the idea of viewing things with an unprejudiced eye. He also recognizes that "the fatigues and annoyances of travel fill one with bitter prejudices sometimes!" (Writings, I, 20). Even though he was aware it was impossible to get rid of all prejudices, in most instances he at least makes a conscious effort to be objective.

As I pointed out earlier, the bulk of Twain's travel books deals with the displacing of various accepted illusions. Perhaps his most vigorous attacks are found in The Innocents Abroad, his description of his travels through Europe and the Holy Land. Allison Ensor points out how Twain reaches the same conclusion about "almost everything that comes under his scrutiny in Europe and the Holy Land: It does not deserve its

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[43] Leslie Fiedler, The Stranger in Shakespeare (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), p. 57.

reputation."[44] Ensor goes on to point out how "the dominant impression one receives from reading The Innocents Abroad and the travel letters which preceded it is of a catalog of fakes and frauds which have received both too much veneration and too many tears."[45]

The illusions that Twain attempts to dispel in The Innocents Abroad range from Parisian barbers to the Holy places of Palestine. During his stay in Paris, he admits that "from earliest infancy it had been a cherished ambition of mine to be shaved some day in a palatial barber shop of Paris" (Writings, I, 106). However, when he finally does get into the chair of a Parisian barber shop, he has to admit that "my old, old dream of bliss vanished into thin air" (Writings, I, 108). He speaks of "the cruel infliction of a shave by a French barber" and the "exquisite agony" that he felt while being shaved (Writings, I, 108). He calls the barber a "genius of destruction" and an "incipient assassin" (Writings, I, 108). He also attacks the lack of romance in the name of his guide to Paris. Because he was expecting his guide to be named "Henri de Montmorency" or "Armand del la Chartreuse," he says that the name Billfinger places the guide in the same category of the Parisian barber shop (Writings, I, 113). He also says that the grisettes are "another romantic fraud" (Writings, I, 147).

He does not limit his romance-dispelling assaults to France. He calls the "frowsy, romantic, unwashed peasant girls" of Milan "a glaring fraud" (Writings, I, 195). Speaking of the famous gondola and gondolier

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[44]Allison Ensor, Mark Twain and the Bible (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), p. 25.

[45]Ensor, p. 25.

of Venice, he says that "one was an inky, rusty old canoe with a sable hearse-body clapped on to the middle of it, and the other a barefooted gutter-snipe" (Writings, I, 219). He calls the celebrated turkish baths of Constantinople "a malignant swindle" (Writings, II, 92). He makes the following comment about the Arabs who inhabit Palestine: "To glance at the genuine son of the desert is to take the romance out of him forever--to behold his steed is to long in charity to strip his harness off and let him fall to pieces" (Writings, II, 283). When he gazes at the holy sights in and around Palestine--the Sepulcher, the True Cross, where the Savior rose and appeared--he could not avoid the conviction that "there is nothing genuine about them, and that they are imaginary holy places created by the monks" (Writings, II, 312). Perhaps one can conclude that Twain's comment about the attractions of Palestine is true for almost all the attractions which he beheld while travelling in Europe and the Holy Land: "Thus, one by one, the splendid attractions of Palestine are passing away--gradually, but surely, the paint and the gilding are peeling from its cheap theatrical scenery and exposing the unsightly boards beneath."[46]

Twain also dispels various illusions in his other travel books. For example, in Roughing It he exposes the lack of romance in a trip across the desert:

> The alkali dust cut through our lips, it persecuted our eyes, it ate through the delicate membranes, and made our noses bleed and kept them bleeding--and truly and seriously the romance all faded far away and disappeared, and left the desert trip nothing but a harsh reality--a thirsty, sweltering, longing, hateful reality! (Writings, VII, 129)

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[46]Daniel Morley McKeithan, ed., Traveling with the Innocents Abroad: Mark Twain's Original Reports from Europe and the Holy Land (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 254.

He also assaults the Cooperian idea of the noble red man. He claims that "the mellow moonshine of romance" does not reveal the true Indian. After viewing the Indian first hand, he says "it was curious to see how quickly the paint and tinsel fell away from him and left him treacherous, filthy, and repulsive" (Writings, VII, 134). In A Tramp Abroad Twain attacks the romantic illusions surrounding French dueling. He claims that the great French duel is "in reality one of the most dangerous institutions of our day. Since it is fought in the open air the combatants are nearly sure to catch cold" (Writings, III, 62). In an outrageously humorous burlesque of such a duel, he describes how he became "the only man who had been hurt in a French duel in forty years" (Writings, III, 75). When the two combatants fired upon one another, the man for whom Twain was serving as a second unfortunately fell upon him. Because the two duelers were so far apart, the falling man was not hurt; however, Twain's "internal hurts" were so bad that "it was apparent that a broken rib had penetrated [his] left lung" (Writings, III, 75). His left arm also had to be set in two places, his right hip had to be put back into its socket, and his nose had to be reelevated (Writings, III, 75). Not only does Twain attack duels, but he also points out how one can tell the difference between Rhine wine and vinegar only "by the label" (Writings, III, 131). He also suggests that no other language "is so slipshod and systemless, and so slippery and elusive to the grasp" as "the awful German language" (Writings, IV, 267).

In Life on the Mississippi, Twain dispels the romantic, boyhood illusions he held about being a steamboatman. When he learns that being a pilot requires "getting up in the middle of the night to go to work," he complains that he "began to fear that piloting was not quite so

romantic as [he] had imagined it was; there was something very real and work-like about this new phase of it" (Writings, IX, 47). In Following the Equator he attacks the capitalistic nature of the city of Benares, India, which is regarded by the Hindu as "the sacredest of the sacred cities" (Writings, VI, 162). The fire used in religious ceremonies is sacred, and "ordinary fire is forbidden; there is no money in it" (Writings, VI, 179). He asserts that religion is "the business of Benares" (Writings, VI, 162) and that "to get to paradise from India is an expensive thing" (Writings, VI, 179). He also attacks how the describers of the Taj Mahal exaggerate it into "a gem-crusted Taj tall as the Matterhorn" (Writings, VI, 254). He complains that "with their gems--and gems--and more gems--and gems again--and still other gems--the describers of the Taj . . . succeeded to admiration in telling 'what ain't so'" (Writings, VI, 260).

The illusions that Twain the traveller most consistently deals with involve art and music, especially Wagnerian opera. The paintings of the "old masters" seem to cause a problem for Twain. He time and again complains that they do not live up to all the praise they continuously receive. Speaking of Da Vinci's "Last Supper" he says, "I am satisfied that [it] was a very miracle of art once. But it was three hundred years ago" (Writings, I, 192). In a short piece called "Down the Rhine," he makes a similar comment about the "Mona Lisa"; he says that "maybe others still saw in the picture the faded and vanished marvels which had been there once and were now forever vanished."[47] Even though he continously attacks the "old masters," the so-called illusion that he attacks most

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[47]Charles Neider, ed., The Complete Essays of Mark Twain (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1963), p. 602. Hereafter cited parenthetically as Essays.

consistently and most humorously is the excellence of Wagnerian opera. In A Tramp Abroad he launches many a protest against Wagner. For example, he makes the following comment about the singing in Lohengrin:

> No, it was every rioter for himself and no blending. Each sang his indictive narrative in turn, accompanied by the whole orchestra of sixty instruments, and when this had continued for some time, and one was hoping they might come to an understanding and modify the noise, a great chorus composed entirely of maniacs would suddenly break forth, and during two minutes, and sometimes three, I lived over again all that I had suffered the time the orphan asylum burned down. (Writings, III, 80)

In a short piece called "At the Shrine of St. Wagner," he again attacks the vocal parts of Wagnerian operas. "But straightway, thereafter, of course, came the singing and it does seem to me that nothing can make a Wagner opera absolutely perfect and satisfactory to the untutored but to leave out the vocal parts. I wish I could see a Wagner opera done in pantomime once" (Essays, p. 62).[48] Even though Twain does thoroughly satirize Wagner, he recognizes that his comments about Wagner are "offered to the public as a cat's view of a king" (Essays, p. 60). He also recognizes that his opinion of art in general is somewhat suspect. He says that "whenever I enjoy anything in art it means that it is mighty poor" (Essays, p. 70). Even though Twain himself does rationalize his opinions of art and music, his comments will surely "stir up" his readers and perhaps make them reevaluate their own opinions.

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[48]For more of Twain's comments on Wagnerian opera see also Charles Neider, ed., The Autobiography of Mark Twain (New York: Harper and Row 1959), p. 64; and Frederick Anderson, et al., Mark Twain's Notebooks and Journals (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), II, 93.

The idea of the need to travel and experience life firsthand in order to eliminate various illusions is not limited to the travel books. In The Prince and the Pauper the new king of England, young Edward Tudor, comes to the conclusion that "the world is made wrong, kings should go to school to their own laws, at times, and so learn mercy" (Writings, XV, 224). In other words, the young king was only able to perceive the horrors of the laws of England by experiencing them firsthand. In a similar fashion, one of the facts that Hank Morgan tries to "drill" into King Arthur is that "words realize nothing, vivify nothing to you, unless you have suffered in your own person the things which the words describe" (Writings, XVI, 278). In The American Claimant, a young English duke leaves aristocratic England and comes to America in order to live in a civilization where all men are free and equal and no aristocratic rank exists. However, through firsthand experience, this "poor vacillating young apostate" soon realizes that in America there is an "aristocracy of prosperity" and "all kinds of castes" (Writings, XXI, 112). He also recognizes that the caste he belongs to is "the outcasts" (Writings, XXI, 112). In the short story "Goldsmith's Friend Abroad Again," a young Chinaman named Ah Song Hi writes letters back home describing his views of America. In his first letter he calls America "that noble realm where all are free and equal, and none reviled or abused."[49] In his sixth letter, he complains that "Negroes were promptly punished, when there was the

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[49]Samuel L. Clemens, The Curious Republic of Gondour (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919), p. 75. Hereafter cited parenthetically as Gondour.

slightest perponderance of testimony against them; but Chinamen were punished always, apparently" (Gondour, p. 101).

Not only is travelling valuable as a means of dispelling illusions, but it also offers an escape from the commonplaces of life. Twain recognizes that maintaining objective distance from a given object is an effective way of suppressing monotony. For example, he asserts that "all scenery in California requires distance to give it its highest charm" (Writings, VIII, 124). Speaking of the California mountains, he says "one must have distance to soften their ruggedness and enrich their tintings" (Writings, VIII, 124). Because the trees of California are "chiefly of one monotonous family. . . at a near distance there is a wearisome sameness of attitude in their rigid arms" (Writings, VIII, 124). In Life on the Mississippi he also points out how "the surface of the water. . . is more expressive and intelligibly when inspected from a little distance than very close at hand" (Writings, IX, 98). Using the Civil War experience of the people of Vicksburg, he illustrates how over-familiarity with something even as drastic as being bombed can still turn the experience into a commonplace event. He argues that because of this commonplaceness, a nonparticipant "Might come nearer to reproducing [the experience of being bombed] to the imagination of another nonparticipant than could a Vicksburgian who did experience it" (Writings, IX, 298). Perhaps the most famous example of a need for distance is also found in Life on the Mississippi. Twain complains that when he "mastered the language" of the river, he lost something which "could never be restored" as long as he lived. He asserts that "all the grace, the beauty, the poetry, had gone out of the majestic river!" (Writings, IX, 78). In other words, his over-familiarity with the river resulted in a situation in which "the romance and the beauty were all gone from the river"

(Writings, IX, 80). In a similar sense, he asserts that the climates of California "seem beautiful at first, but sameness impairs the charm by and by" (Writings, VIII, 125). As Twain himself recognizes, change is the only way to conquer these feelings of sameness and over-familiarity, and one way to achieve such a change is to get a little distance from one's surroundings. The illusion-dispelling point of view of the travelling stranger fills this need for distance. After all, when Twain returns to the Mississippi after twenty-one years' absence, he is able again to perceive beauty in the river. He happily asserts that the reflection of "faint, spectral trees, dimly glimpsed through the shredding fog, were very pretty things to see" (Writings, IX, 406).

Even though Twain recognizes that it is occasionally necessary to view certain things from a distance, he also recognizes that it sometimes requires a certain amount of closeness or familiarity for a person to actually see what is there. For example, Twain attacks the observations of America made by Paul Bourget. Although Twain himself has suggested that his own negative observations might make his readers healthy (Writings, II, 229), he denies this same privilege to the Frenchman Bourget. Twain calls the Frenchman's idea to explain Americans to themselves a "doubtful scheme" (Writings, XXII, 151) and goes on to assert that "a foreigner can photograph the exteriors of a nation, but. . . no foreigner can report its interior . . . . One learns through the heart, not the eyes or the intellect" (Writings, XXII, 152). One reason why Twain claims that an outsider's observation is valueless involves the doubtful content "of the information which travelling foreigners are furnished with in America" (Writings, XXII, 252).

In A Tramp Abroad Twain speaks of the "indefinable charms" in the faces of certain women "which makes them beautiful to their intimates, but a cold stranger who tried to reason the matter out and find this beauty would fail" (Writings, IV, 223). Perhaps his most touching expression of the idea of intimate beauty unrecognizable by the stranger is found in his memorial poem to his daughter Suzy:

> Hard by, apart, a temple stood;
> And Strangers from the outer world
> Passing, noted it with tired eyes,
> And seeing not, saw it not;
> A glimpse of its fair form--an answering momentary thrill--
> And they passed on, careless and unaware.
>
> They could not know the cunning of its make;
> They could not know the secret shut up in its heart:
> Only the dwellers of the hamlet knew:
> (Writings, XXII, 384).

Another negative aspect of the appearance of the illusion-dispelling stranger is that "travel and experience mar the grandest pictures and rob us of the most cherished traditions of our boyhood" (Writings, II, 345). Even though Twain does acknowledge the existence of intimate beauty unperceivable by an outsider and does recognize that the illusion-dispeller robs us of our boyhood illusions, he still accepts and exhorts the value of "The Stranger as Traveller."

CHAPTER 2

THE STRANGER AS JOKER

One of the most important characteristics of the travelling stranger is that he is often the butt of practical jokes. For example, Twain is aware of the doubtful content of "some of the information which travelling foreigners are furnished with in America" (Writings, XXII, 252). He confirms that the information Paul Bourget (a travelling stranger) was able to gather about so-called American coquettes "was a jest--to be plain it was a series of frauds. . . . M. Bourget did not discover a type of coquette; he merely discovered a type of practical joker" (Writings, XXII, 157). Speaking of some of the other "significant" facts that Bourget makes use of, Twain argues that "it is plain that there was a sort of conspiracy against him . . . to freight him up with all the strange extravagances these people's decayed brains could invent" (Writings, XXII, 158). According to Twain, the Mississippi steamboatmen also could be counted on "to load up the confiding stranger with the most picturesque and admirable lies" (Writings, IX, 186). For example, when he is "travelling incognito" on the Mississippi after twenty-one years' absence, he tries to pass himself off as a stranger from New England. Even though the pilot claims to have immediately recognized Twain, he admits that he still allows Twain to "draw me out" (Writings, IX, 207). In other words, the pilot treats him as if he really were a New Englander and consequently loads him up with a wealth of lies about alligators. He tells him that the Mississippi River is filled with "alligator-beds" and that the alligators form "alligator-reefs" which are almost impossible to see (Writings, IX, 202-205).

Twain's writings are filled with example after example of the stranger falling victim to the practical jokers who inhabit the localities he visits. For example, in his Autobiography he tells how he and a friend played a practical joke on a visiting army officer. On the premises of one of Twain's summer homes was "what had once been a bowling alley."[50] After practicing on this so-called bowling alley day after day, Twain and his friend became so proficient at the game that it took them only thirty-five throws to knock down all ten pins. Because the venerable alley was so difficult, a newcomer did not stand a chance of knocking the pins over; therefore, when the army officer implied that he desired to play, Twain and his friend "judged that he was [their] meat" (Auto, p. 149). In other words, they knew he would fall victim to their little joke. And he did. Even after playing until "he was no longer able to stand without wobbling" (Auto, p. 150), the officer still had not managed to knock down a single pin.

Because Twain's stories dealing with his stay in and around Nevada are filled with examples of the hapless stranger falling victim to the locals' jokes, one might conclude that the Western Frontier was the refuge of many practical jokers. Speaking of the citizens of Nevada, Twain says:

> Now the older citizens of a new territory look down upon the rest of the world with a calm, benevolent compassion, as long as it keeps out of the way--when it gets in the way they snub it. Sometimes this later takes the shape of a practical joke. (Writings, VII, 234)

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[50]Charles Neider, ed., The Autobiography of Mark Twain (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), p. 148. Hereafter cited parenthetically as Auto.

The travelling stranger was so often the victim of the local inhabitants that the editor of a Nevada newspaper claimed that one community "had altered the Lord's Prayer to read: 'Give us this day our daily stranger!'" (Writings, VIII, 77).

Twain apparently many times found himself fillings the Western Frontier's need for "a daily stranger." Perhaps the most humorous example of Twain the stranger falling prey to a Nevada practical joker involves his purchase of a horse. When an auctioneer tries to sell Twain a Genuine Mexican Plug, he admits that he "did not know what a Genuine Mexican Plug was, but there was something about this man's way of saying it, that made [him] swear inwardly that [he] would own a Genuine Mexican Plug, or die" (Writings, VII, 169). His attempt to ride this horse brings to mind Faulkner's description of the attempts to ride one of Flem Snopes' "Spotted Horses." One of the more sympathetic locals tries to comfort Twain with the following comment:

> Stranger, you've been taken in. Everybody in this camp knows that horse. Any child, any injun, could have told you that he'd buck; he is the worst devil to buck on the continent of America. . . . Why, you turnip, if you had laid low and kept dark, there's a chance to buy an American horse for mighty little more than you paid for that bloody old foreign relic. (Writings, VII, 171).

By way of proving how quickly he learns from his mistakes, Twain proudly asserts that he "gave the Genuine Mexican Plug to a passing Arkansas emmigrant whom fortune delivered into [his] hands" (Writings, VII, 174).

Twain cites many other instances in which he becomes the "meat" of Nevada practical jokers. For example, some of the "older citizens" mention the "stirring story" of Jim Blaine's grandfather's old ram so often that Twain's "curiosity was on the rack to hear the story" (Writings, VIII, 98). However, when Twain finally finds Jim Blaine drunk enough to tell the story, he realizes that the others had been playing a joke on him. When Blaine started out to tell the story, he "always maundered off, interminably, from one thing to another, till his whiskey got the best of him, and he fell asleep" (Writings, VIII, 104). When Twain recognizes that no human being had ever heard more than the first line of the story of the old ram, he has to admit that he has been "sold." Another instance in which Twain the new "emmigrant" in Nevada is "sold" is found in the short story "The Californian's Tale." In this story, Twain becomes concerned because the wife of the man with whom he is staying is late in returning from a trip. However, the "veterans" of the area inform Twain that his wife died nineteen years ago and that he lost his mind as a result. Because Twain is a stranger, he is again "taken in" by a series of events which any of the locals would have known to avoid.

The Nevada Frontier is not the only place in which the stranger becomes the butt of the locals' practical jokes. In the short sketch "How the Author was Sold in Newark," Twain tells how he became the "meat" of one of the young gentlemen who had hired him to lecture in Newark. The gentleman tells Twain that he has an uncle "permanently bereft of all emotion" (Writings, XIX, 99). After the lecture, the president of the society for which Twain was lecturing overhears him complaining about his failure to make the uncle laugh. The president informs him that he is

wasting his time because the old gentleman "is deaf and dumb, and blind as a badger" (Writings, XIX, 101). Twain was so taken by this even that he retold the exact same tale three years later under the title "A Deception."[51] In A Tramp Abroad Twain tells how he was "taken in" by a young girl whom he mistakes to be a former acquaintance. Unfortunately for Twain, he cannot remember where he knows her from; therefore, when she realizes he is only pretending to know her, she decides to punish him by asking if he recognizes the names of some imaginary children. After he stumbles through her questioning, he admits that she has "conquered" him and thoroughly punished him. However, as is the case with the Mexican Plug, he takes his bitterness out on someone else. He asserts that "one should 'get even' in some way, else the sore place will go on hurting" (Writings, III, 262).

Not only does the travelling stranger take the risk of being "taken in" by the people he meets, but in some cases the way of life or the natural surroundings of an area pose a threat to him. For example, the stranger in the tale "The Man Who Put Up at Gadsby's" falls victim to the bureaucratic way of life of Washington, D.C. The stranger travels to Washington in order to apply for the postmastership of San Francisco. He innocently expects to receive the commission he is after and be on his way back home in a day or two; however, "he never got that post-office" (Writings, III, 276) because he could not cut through the bureaucratic red tape of Washington. Twain's description in Roughing It of his travels

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[51] Charles Neider, ed., The Complete Humorous Sketches and Tales of Mark Twain (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1961). "A Deception" is found on pp. 207 and 208 of this volume.

to Honolulu include a passage dealing with tamarinds. After eating one of these fruits, he complains that "they pursed up my lips," and "they sharpened my teeth till I could have shaved with them" (Writings, VIII, 180). He admits that he later found out "that only strangers eat tamarinds--but they only eat them once" (Writings, VIII, 180).

Another group of strangers or outsiders who are continuously the unfortunate victims of practical jokers are the Negroes and the Chinese.[52] In Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Jim is the victim of four practical jokes. When the reader is first introduced to Jim, Jim is sitting in the kitchen door of Miss Watson's house. He soon comes outside and falls asleep under a tree. Huck complains that "nothing would do Tom but he must play something on him" (Writings, XIII, 81). Tom steals Jim's hat and hangs it on a limb over his head. Huck also plays a couple of jokes on poor old Jim. In one instance, Huck kills a rattlesnake and hides it on Jim's blanket, "thinking there'd be some fun when Jim found him there" (Writings, XIII, 73). Unfortunately, the snake's mate curls up with the dead snake and bites Jim when Jim lies down. When Huck and Jim are reunited after being separated in a dense fog, Huck decides to tell Jim that their separation was all a dream. However, this practical joke makes Jim feel so embarrassed that Huck has to apologize to him. Huck says that he would not have carried out the joke "if I'd a' knowed it would make him feel that way" (Writings, XIII, 120). The most outlandish practical joke played on Jim is perpetrated by Tom Sawyer. All the mysterious and romantic details of Tom's plan to free Jim from

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[52] In the next chapter I will discuss why I consider the Negro and the Chinese to be outsiders in a white man's world.

and always the spirit of treachery" (Writings, XXII, 157). He even claims that the practical joker "enjoys the pain his witless performances inflict."[54] One reason why Twain despises practical jokers so much is that he has been one himself. In his Autobiography he admits that "the reflection that I have been a practical joker myself seems to increase my bitterness rather than to modify it" (Auto, p. 53). The fact that Twain himself was many times the victim of practical jokes might also have biased his opinion against them.[55]

If Twain was such a despiser of practical jokes, then why does he so often use them in his writings? One answer might be that these jokes teach various lessons. For example, Nicodemus Dodge teaches the local jokers not to take advantage of strangers. However, some of these jokes have very dangerous consequences; after all, practical jokes endanger Jim's life twice.[56] Perhaps one might theorize that Twain used practical jokes so much because they are designed to produce laughter. In The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts, Satan argues that the human race has only "one really effective weapon--laughter" (MS, p. 165). He claims that "against the assault of laughter nothing can stand," and he chides the

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[54]Franklin R. Rogers, ed., Mark Twain's Satires and Burlesques (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 156. Hereafter cited parenthetically within the text as S & B.

[55]In the last chapter of Roughing It, Twain tells how a group of his friends staged a "mock-robbery" of him. Twain was apparently very shaken by this "too practical joke." For a discussion of this episode see Chester L. Davis, "The 'mock robbery' of Mark Twain," The Twainian, 15 (Jan.-Feb. 1956), 2-4. See also Albert Bigelow Paine's biography of Twain, vol. 1, 302.

[56]Jim's life is endangered when Huck hides the snake in his bed and when Tom's complicated escape plans nearly result in Jim's being shot.

human race for leaving laughter "lying rusting" (MS, p. 166). As Hamlin Hill points out, Satan's revelation implies that "laughter [is] the salvation of the human race."[57] Hill also asserts that "whether the prescription of laughter was in fact useful to the human race as a whole, it was indisputably the salvation for Mark Twain."[58] Even though Twain despises practical jokes, he must have recognized that their aim is to achieve laughter. At least the practical joker attempts to remove the rust from laughter. For this reason, "The Stranger as Joker" is an important "mysterious stranger" figure.

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[57]Hamlin Hill, Mark Twain: God's Fool (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1973), p. 135.

[58]Hill, p. 135.

CHAPTER 3

THE STRANGER AS NONHUMAN ENTITY

In the introduction to this study, I briefly discussed how Twain delivered some of his attacks on mankind through the guise of a "mask." Twain not only used human outsiders as spokesmen for his opinions, but he "often used nonhuman or antihuman spokesmen to support condemnations of human nature."[59] These various nonhuman entities range from the Superintendent of Dreams to an old man who claims to be a messenger from God. This group includes a man recently deceased, a dead baby, and a group of animal scientists. It also includes various groups of human beings--Negroes, Chinese Indians--who are treated as if they were subhuman creatures.

One of the most famous of these nonhuman spokesmen is the old man in "The War Prayer." Twain uses this spokesman to condemn the notion that war can be a glorious event. In this anti-war story, a church service celebrating the "glad and gracious time" (Essays, p. 680) brought on by the "happy emotion" surrounding a war is interrupted by the presence of "an aged stranger" who claims to "come from the throne--bearing a message from Almighty God" (Essays, p. 681). This message is a reminder that when church-goers pray for God to assist them in their war, they are also praying for him "to tear their [enemies] to bloody shreds" and "to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead" (Essays, p. 687). Their prayers also ask God to help them "wring the hearts of

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[59] Paul Baender, ed., Introd., What is Man? (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 7. It should be noted that most of Twain's "condemnations of human nature" and of life in general appear in his later

their [enemies'] unoffending widows with unavailing grief" (Essays, p. 682). Even though the "aged stranger" claims to be a divine messenger from "Almighty God," the congregation judges him to be a "lunatic" and consequently ignores his message.

Just as the "aged stranger" in "The War Prayer" claims to have descended from heaven, another of Twain's nonhuman strangers--the recently deceased captain Eli Stormfield in "Extract from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven"--actually ascends to heaven. Through Captain Stormfield's presence in heaven, Twain is able to satirize many of mankind's ideas about heaven. For example, he ridicules the way mankind overemphasizes the importance of the planet earth. When heaven's gatekeeper asks Captain Stormfield what world he is from, he proudly replies "the one the Savior saved."[60] The gatekeeper informs him that "the worlds he has saved are like to the gates of heaven in number--none can count them" (SS, pp. 569-570). Even though most Christians believe that the inhabitants of earth are the Savior's chosen race, Stormfield learns that the earth is so unimportant that it is known in heaven as "the wart" (SS, p. 571).

Stormfield also learns that some of mankind's other conceptions of heaven are false. Following the "idea of bliss" instilled in him "when [he] used to go to church" (SS, p. 575), Stormfield's first request in heaven is for "'a harp and a hymn-book, pair of wings and a halo'" (SS, p. 573). However, Stormfield soons grows weary of his playing and singing.

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writings, after he had experienced bankruptcy and the death of his wife and two daughters.

[60]Charles Neider, ed., The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1957), p. 569. Hereafter cited parenthetically within the text as SS.

One of the veterans of heaven offers the following observation to Stormfield:

> They go and sing and play just about one day, and that's the last you'll ever see them in the choir . . . There ain't any harm in letting everybody get up there and cure himself as soon as he comes. . . . Singing hymns and waving "palm branches" through all eternity is pretty when heard about in the pulpit, but it's as poor a way to put in valuable time as a body could contrive. It would just make a heaven of warbling ignoramuses. (SS, p. 575)

Stormfield also learns that the churches' idea that only a certain type of Christian can get into heaven is false. Stormfield acknowledges that "'where I run across one white angel, I strike as many as a hundred million copper-colored ones--people that can't speak English'" (SS, p. 591). Stormfield claims to have seen Esquimaux, Tartars, Negroes, Chinese, Indians and even Mahomet and "the other heathens." Heaven is clearly not the monopoly of white Christians.

Another deceased human being who serves as a nonhuman mysterious stranger is found in "Frescoes from the Past." In this short sketch, Huck Finn overhears a story told about Dick Allbright and a mysterious "bar'l." According to the teller, a "bar'l" accompanied by a storm, mysteriously appears and floats behind a big raft four consecutive nights. After the storm causes four sprained ankles and two deaths, the "bar'l" is brought on board the raft and examined; it is found to contain the body of a dead baby. The baby is discovered to be the son of Dick Allbright:

> One night he choked his child, which was crying, not intending to kill it--which was probably a lie--and then he was scared and buried it in a bar'l, before his wife got home, and off he went, and struck the northern trail and went to rafting. (Writings, IX, 28)

When the other raftsmen decide to go ashore and lynch Dick Allbright, he grabs his dead baby and jumps overboard. Neither he nor the child are ever seen again. Even in this seemingly innocent ghost story, which Twain included in Life on the Mississippi for the purpose of "illustrating keelboat talk and manners" (Writings, IX, 19), one still gets a taste of mankind's moral corruption. A man murders his child for crying, hides his crime, and runs away. The only way the murderer manages to avoid getting lynched is by committing suicide.

Another of Twain's nonhuman mysterious strangers is the Superintendent of Dreams in the story "The Great Dark." In this story, Henry Edwards falls asleep after examining a drop of water under a microscopic lens. While apparently still asleep, he comissions the Superintendent of Dreams to supply him with a ship and a crew so that he can examine the ocean in a drop of water under the microscopic lens. During their exploration, Henry tells the Superintendent he desires to end the dream. However, the Superintendent asks him if he is "'quite sure it is a dream.'"[61] The Superintendent informs him that life on this ship "is real life" and that his other life "was the dream!" (WWD, p. 124). In this story, Twain delves into the question of appearance and reality. The Superintendent convinces Henry "that we seldom know the thing we think we know; that our best-built certainties are but sand-houses and subject to damage from any wind of doubt that blows" (WWD, p. 125). Through the Superintendent of

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[61] John S. Tuckey, ed., Mark Twain's Which Was the Dream? and Other Symbolic Writings of the Later Years (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 124. Hereafter cited parenthetically within the text as WWD.

Dreams, Twain follows Descartes' lead and questions the whole notion of mankind's ability to perceive verifiable truths.

A nonhuman mysterious stranger very similar to the Superintendent of Dreams is found in the short sketch "The Mad Passenger," which according to John S. Tuckey was intended to be part of "The Great Dark."[62] In this story, Henry Edwards, while still lost in a water-drop ocean, encounters a young stranger who had been labeled "the Mad Passenger" because he refers to the world outside the water drop as "Dreamland." This young stranger claims to live on a floating country found in the water-drop ocean. This "poor exile" became separated from his country during a storm, and he has been searching for it for twenty-two years. His description of his country is reminiscent of Gulliver's encounter with the Houyhnhnms. Just as the Houyhnhnms had "no word in their language to express lying or falsehood,"[63] the language of the young stranger's country did not have "exact equivalents for our words modesty, immodesty, decency, indecency, wrong, sin" (WWD, p. 566). The young stranger explains to Henry that "dreamlands [the worlds outside the water-drop ocean] were nothing but imitations of real countries" (WWD, p. 566), except for the outside world's religion, curious system of governments, and odd code of morals (WWD, p. 566). In other words, the young stranger's country is an exact duplicate of our world except that it is missing sin, morality, and religion. Just as Swift satirizes mankind's love of deception by setting

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[62]John S. Tuckey, ed., Introd., Mark Twain's Which Was the Dream? and Other Symbolic Writings of the Later Years, p. 18.

[63]Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), p. 203.

up an idealized world in which falsehoods are unknown, Twain satirizes the harms created by mankind's knowledge of sin and morality by setting up an idealized world in which these elements are missing. Twain again and again argues that before man was given the Moral Sense, he did not have any knowledge of good and evil and consequently could not do evil.[64]

Twain's use of the nonhuman mysterious stranger is not limited to supernatural beings and deceased human beings. In the short story "Some Learned Fables for Good Old Boys and Girls," he speaks through the guise of a group of animals who are scientists. In this story, a scientific expedition made up of "animals of the wood" journeys "beyond the forest and out into the unknown and unexplored world" (Writings, XIX, 137). Through the observations made by these animal scientists, Twain is able to ridicule many of mankind's follies. For example, he takes a shot at scientific language. The following comment is Professor Snail's observatain of a dam:

> The fact that it is diaphanous convinces me that it is dense vapor formed by calorification of ascending moisture dephlogisticated by refraction. A few endiometrical experiments would confirm this, but it is not necessary. The thing is obvious. (Writings, XIX, 140)

Twain also criticizes the whole idea of scientific discoveries. For example, Professor Mud Turtle calls a railroad track two "parallels of latitude" (Writings, XIX, 141); he calls a train "the Vernal Equinox" (Writings, XIX, 141); Lord Grandaddy-Longlegs calls a second train "the transit of Venus" (Writings, XIX, 144); and a body of liquor thrown from the train

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[64]A more detailed discussion of Twain's distrust of the Moral Sense will be given in Chapter 5 of this study.

is identified as "that fierce and most destructive liquid called lightning" (Writings, XIX, 148). Perhaps the harshest complaint against "the mystery-dispelling eye of godlike Science" is made by the "obscene Tumble-Bug"[65]; he says that "science only needed a spoonful of supposition to build a mountain of demonstrated fact" (Writings, XIX, 167).

Twain not only uses these animal scientists to ridicule science, but he also uses them to ridicule mankind in general. When these scientists discover a group of spiders who are "heathenish worshipers of unknown gods," they immediately detail "a great detachment of missionaries to teach them true religion" (Writings, XIX, 153). However, after these missionaries were among "those darkened creatures" for a week, three families at peace with each other and with "a settled belief in any system of religion" (Writings, XIX, 153) could not be found. The animal scientists refer to mankind as a "long extinct species of reptile," as a bird, and as "the companion of the other low orders of life." The scientists summarize mankind as an extinct cannibal who "imagined he had a soul, and pleased himself with the fancy that it was immortal" (Writings, XIX, 161). They are also amazed to discover that "there are lower animals than man!" (Writings, XIX, 167).

Twain not only deals with animals and supernatural beings as nonhuman strangers, but he is also aware of groups of human beings who are treated as nonhuman outsiders. Twain continuously demonstrates how his society treated Negroes as if they were subhuman. In Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Aunt Sally asks Huck if anyone was hurt during a

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[65]It is interesting to note that Tumble-bug is similar to the group of outsiders I briefly mentioned in the "Introduction." Because the other animals consider Tumble-Bug to be low and despicable, he is another excellent spokesman for Twain's more radical views.

steamboat explosion. Huck replies, "No'm. Killed a nigger" (Writings, XIII, 306). In other words, Huck's society has trained him to accept Negroes as something less than human. In his book Mark Twain: Social Critic, Philip Foner quotes an editorial by Twain which begins with the following ironic observation:

> Ah, well! Too bad, to be sure! A little blunder in the administration of justice by Southern mob-law; but nothing to speak of. Only a "nigger" killed by mistake--that is all.[66]

Percy Driscoll in Pudd'nhead Wilson is described as being "a fairly humane man toward slaves and other animals" (Writings, XIV, 14). Not only is a Negro treated as an animal, but according to Paine's biography, an abolitionist in Twain's day was thought of as "something less than human; something with claws, perhaps, and a tail" (Biography, I, 42).

One reason why the Negro is treated as subhuman is the belief that "the world was made for man--the white man" (Writings, V, 169). A person not only has to be white, but he has to be completely white. In Pudd'nhead Wilson, "only one-sixteenth of [Roxy] was black, and that sixteenth did not show" (Writings, XIV, 11); however, she was still considered a subhuman Negro. In "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," a "very sweet and pretty girl" with just "a spoonful of Negro blood in her veins" is condemned and labeled "the tainted girl" (Writings, XXXIII, 27).

The white world does not consider the black man to be a human being; it considers him to be a very valuable commodity--a slave. Speaking of the ending of Pudd'nhead Wilson, Barbara Chellis argues that the reason why Tom is finally sold down the river is that "he has been exonerated from all moral responsibility for the murder of the judge because he [Tom]

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[66]Philip Foner, Mark Twain: Social Critic (New York: International Publishers, 1966), p. 218.

is not a person, but a commodity."[67] Huck Finn is also continuously troubled because his helping Jim to escape from slavery is equivalent in his society's eyes to stealing another man's property. In Following the Equator, Twain recalls that when he was ten years old he saw a man kill a slave "for merely doing something awkwardly" (Writings, VI, 18). Even though "nobody in the village approved of that murder," nobody said anything because "the man had a right to kill his slave if he wanted to" (Writings, VI, 19). In other words, a man can dispose of his property as he sees fit. In his Autobiography, Twain tells how his village reacted to the murder of a slave:

> Everybody seemed indifferent about it--as regarded the slave--though considerable sympathy was felt for the slave's owner, who had been bereft of a valuable property by a worthless person who was not able to pay for it. (Auto, p. 33)

It is evident from this reaction that Negroes were thought of as property rather than as human beings.

Another concept which qualifies the Negro as a nonhuman outsider is the white man's notion that Negroes do not have feelings. James McIntyre argues that when Jim first appears he "is another Negro, just another shuffling, knee-slapping, watermelon-eating subhuman."[68] Chadwick Hanson asserts that because Jim is so ignorant, the first practical joke Tom plays on him causes Jim no mental pain or humiliation.[69] For this reason

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[67]Barbara A. Chellis, "Those Extraordinary Twins: Negroes and Whites," American Quarterly Review, 21 (Spring 1969), 110.

[68]James P. McIntyre, "Three Practical Jokes: A Key to Huck's Changing Attitude Toward Jim," Modern Fiction Studies, 14 (Spring 1968), 34.

[69]Chadwick Hansen, "The Character of Jim and the Ending of Huck Finn," Massachusetts Review, 5 (Autumn 1963), 46.

Hansen argues that "we are free to laugh at [Jim], that is, because his ignorance is so subhuman that he cannot feel pain."[70] When Huck overhears Jim mourning his separation from his wife and children he says, "I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks does for their'n. It don't seem natural, but I reckon it's so" (Writings, XXII, 215). Maxwell Geismar argues that Huck's preceding comment represents "the whole concept of the Negro as subhuman, as animal--a concept assiduously cultivated by the slave owning classes, and then the post Civil War south."[71] Twain again and again returns to the white man's notion that blacks do not have feelings. In "Which Was It?" he asserts that "the whites imagined that the Negroes did not mind being slaves " (WWD, p. 408). In "A True Story" he dispels the illusion that blacks are happy all the time and never have any trouble. In "King Leopold's Soliloquy," when King Leopold reads about the "butchery of women and children," he says that "it has a sort of pitful sound, although they are only blacks" (Life, p. 288). One of the most touching assertions that the black man does have feelings is found in The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts:

> Den you'd a laughed at me. Does a po' nigger want to get laughed at any mo' d'n white folks? No, Miss Hannah, dey don't. We's got our feeling's, same as you--all, all dough we's ign'ant en black. (MS, p. 196)

The fact that this humble black speaker has to assert that blacks have feelings implies that blacks were commonly thought of as emotionless, subhuman creatures.

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[70] Hansen, p. 46.

[71] Maxwell Geismar, Mark Twain: An American Prophet (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), pp. 99-100. This source is the abridged paperback version.

One important question to consider concerning the notion that Negroes are subhuman involves the reaction of the church to this concept. According to Allison Ensor, Twain "well remembered the sermons he had heard as a boy which proved by the Bible the inferior state of the Negro and justice of his being in servitude."[72] In his Autobiography, Twain makes the following comment about his mother's opinion of slavery:

> She had never heard it assailed in any pulpit, but had heard it defended and sanctified in a thousand; her ears were familiar with Bible texts that approved it, but if there were any that disapproved it they had not been quoted by the pastors; as far as her experience went, the wise and the good and the holy were unanimous in the conviction that slavery was right, righteous, sacred, the peculiar pet of the deity, and a condition that the slave ought to be daily and nightly thankful for.[73]

Even the church condoned the idea that the Negro was a nonhuman outsider.

Not only the Negro, but also the Chinaman and the Indian are treated as nonhuman outsiders. Twain complains that as he walked by "one of these monster American tea stores in New York, [he] found a Chinaman sitting before it acting in the capacity of a sign" (Writings, XIX, 277). He also asserts that a Chinaman fills the white man's need for a punishment taker:

> He is a great convenience to everybody--even to the worst class of white men, for he bears the most of their sins, suffering fines for their petty thefts, imprisonment for their robberies, and death for their murders. (Writings, VIII, 105)

Not only are Chinamen degraded to the level of signs and used as sacrificial "whipping boys," but they are also considered to be so subhuman

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[72] Allison Ensor, Mark Twain and the Bible (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), p. 79.

[73] Albert Bigelow Paine, ed., Mark Twain's Autobiography (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1924), II, 123.

that they can be stoned to death in broad daylight (Writings, VII, 106) and murdered in the street by a pack of dogs (Writings, XIX, 129) without any other human creature coming to their rescue.

Like the Negro and the Chinese, the Indian also appears to be a subhuman creature. However, in the case of the Indian, Twain is not against those who consider the Indian to be subhuman; in fact, he himself depicts them as subhuman creatures. When Brace Johnson--the Indian expert in Huck and Tom Among the Indians--talks about Indians, "he talked the same way as if he was talking about animals; he didn't seem to have much idea that they was men" (HHT, p. 138). In "The Noble Red Man," Twain himself makes the following comment about the Indian: "he is nothing but a poor, filthy, naked scurvy vagabond, whom to exterminate were a charity to the Creator's worthier insects and reptiles which he oppresses" (Life, p. 105). Twain himself classed the Indian in the same category as insects and reptiles. Even at the moments in which Twain sympathetically came to the Indians' defense, they still remained a "friendless and persecuted race" (Gondour, p. 139) whom the white man stole from and trampled upon as if they did not exist. Like the Negro and the Chinese, the Indian almost always finds himself in the role of a nonhuman outsider.

It is fairly clear that all of the nonhuman strangers discussed in this chapter are conveyors of Twain's "condemnations of human nature" and of life in general. The "aged stranger" in "The War Prayer," Captain Eli Stormfield in "Extract from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven," and the animal scientists in "Some Learned Fables for Good Old Boys and Girls" all supply condemnations of certain aspects of human existence. The Superintendent of Dreams in "The Great Dark" and the Mad Passenger in the story by the same name both maintain that life as we know it is nothing

more than a dream. The story of Dick Allbright supplies an example of the depths of human depravity. Twain's commentaries on the mistreatment of Negroes, Chinese, and Indians also supply the reader with examples of mankind's inhumane treatment of his fellow man. Speaking through the guise of these various nonhuman outsiders, Twain ridicules "the damned human race."

CHAPTER 4

THE STRANGER AS SAVIOR

Throughout Twain's work many types of strangers exist who offer some type of salvation to the areas which they visit. Paul Baender asserts that in many of Twain's writings, "a character from outside a normal society is introduced to impart wisdom the society badly needs but cannot discover."[74] These wisdom-imparters represent "the Stranger as Savior." This assemblage of strangers includes a group of saviors who produce positive consequences, a group of strangers who produce negative consequences, Hank Morgan (A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court), David Wilson (Pudd'nhead Wilson), a large group of missionaries, and a large group of imperialists.

One type of "stranger as a savior" is the outsider whose presence creates positive consequences. Two of these strangers are John H. Day in "Clairvoyant" and Harbison in "A Human Bloodhound." In his introductory comment to "A Human Bloodhound," Walter Blair asserts that each of these two characters "has an unusual skill that brings him knowledge unavailable to other villagers" (HHT, p. 68). The "unusual skill" of John H. Day is that he is apparently clairvoyant. He is a young English stranger who visits the village of Hannibal, Missouri. When a madman in the village attempts to murder his mother, even though Day is "two hundred yards away," he is able to divine the tragedy and send young Twain in time to stop it. Another example of his "fascinating and awful power"

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[74]Paul Baender, "Alias McFarlane: A Revision of Mark Twain Biography," American Literature, 38 (May 1966), 192-193.

(HHT, p. 65) is that he can perceive a person's true character. For example, he recognizes that G____ feels remorse over his killing of another man, whereas the rest of the town considers him to be cheerful about it. Day's clairvoyant abilities allow him to stop a murder and to accurately judge the characters of those around him. The "unusual skill" of Harbison is that he has a bloodhound's sense of smell. Because of his ability to follow a scent, he is able to track down a lost child. He also manages to free a man about to be hanged for murder. His sense of smell allows him to perceive that the accused man is not guilty and that the crime was perpetrated by a stranger. Even though Harbison is not really a stranger in his village, the fact that he is reserved with everyone in the community but two close friends makes him a type of outsider.

Another savior-stranger very similar to Harbison is Archy Stillman in "A Double-Barreled Detective Story." His "unusual skill" is an ability to track down people no matter where they go or hide. His ability is such a mystery to the other villagers that one of them asserts that "'the fourth dimension's foolishness to him'" (Writings, XXIII, 316). The source of Archy's ability is unknown to the others. It might be "sight," it might be "hearing," it might be "instinct," or it might be "magic" (Writings, XXIII, 317). Like Harbison, Archy's gift enables him to find a lost child. It also allows him to solve a murder that baffled even Sherlock Holmes.

A very humorous savior-stranger is the character Basil Stockmar, whom Twain inserts into Shakespeare's Hamlet. The foster-brother of Hamlet, Basil returns to the palace with the hopes of improving his success as a book agent. Basil soon recognizes that "the gang" at the palace is in trouble and that "as a friend of the family" it is his duty to "mix in"

(S & B, p. 61). According to Basil, it is his "private endeavors" which keep Hamlet from going to Wittenberg and arrange for Laertes to go to Paris. He also persuades Polonius and Laertes to disaprove of the match between Hamlet and Ophelia. Even though this burlesque of Hamlet only goes through the middle of the second scene of Act II before it breaks off, it is evident from the amount written that Twain intended Basil to be a type of savior who would attempt to solve Hamlet's problems.[75]

Another humorous story containing a "mysterious stranger" is "The Campaign That Failed." Jeff Rackham argues that the stranger's role in this story is similar to "Twain's other mysterious travellers: Like them, this one appears in a dream-like sequence, unrecognized, and bringing with him revelation and enlightenment."[76] The enlightenment the stranger brings is that war is not a romantic adventure but a harsh reality in which death plays the key role. For Twain, the romance is gradually taken out of war. When it is suggested that Twain and the other Marion Rangers attack a farmhouse guarded by five Union soldiers Twain asserts that "we realized, with a cold suddenness, that here was no jest--we were standing face to face with actual war" (Writings, XXI, 260). When word comes that union soldiers would hang any bands of rebels they captured, Twain says that "it took the romance all out of the campaign, and turned our glory into a repulsive nightmare" (Writings, XXI, 271). The final stage of Twain's recognition of the horrible nature of war comes with the killing of an innocent stranger:

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[75]Because Hamlet's not going to Wittenburg eventually leads to his death and because the breaking up of Hamlet and Ophelia eventually leads to her death, it could be argued that Twain intended to make Basil responsible for the tragedies that occur in Hamlet. However, Basil's role in the first two acts is not one of destroyer but one of problem-solver.

[76]Jeff Rackham, "The Mysterious Stranger in 'The Campaign That

> The man was not in uniform, and was not armed. He was a stranger in the country . . . . The thought of him got to preying on me every night . . . the taking of that unoffending life seemed such a wanton thing. And it seemed an epitome of war; that all war must be just that--the killing of strangers against whom you feel no personal animosity . . . . My campaign was spoiled. (Writings, XXI, 278-279)

The stranger is a type of savior whose death leads Twain to the realization that war is not a glorious enterprise. As Jeff Rackham points out, Twain "consciously, although subtly, uses [the murdered stranger] to direct the reader's sympathy toward a bloody truth, toward an indictment of war."[77] Through the coming and subsequent murder of the stranger Twain depicts "an educational process which turns innocent youths into rationalized murders [sic]."[78] In Twain's eyes, the "epitome of war" entails the murder of innocent strangers.

Another savior-stranger whose appearance produces very positive effects is Robert Wicklow in "A Curious Experience." Young Wicklow appears at a Northern fort at a time during the Civil War when there were fears "that rebel spies were flitting everywhere" (Writings, XXI, 290). Even though the commander of the fort and the other soldiers grow to like young Wicklow, evidence is soon uncovered that implicates him as a Southern spy. However, even though the evidence appears to be indisputable, the boy turns out to be innocent. He was a "ravenous devourer of dime novels" who "had read newspaper reports of the stealthy goings and comings of

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Failed,'" Southern Humanities Review, 5 (1971), 63-64. Because this stranger's appearance does produce "revelation and enlightenment," he fits the pattern of "the stranger as savior."

[77] Rackham, p. 66.

[78] Rackham, p. 66.

rebel spies . . . till his imagination was all aflame on that subject" (Writings, XXI, 326). In order to quench this flame, he had invented a whole network of imaginary spies and imaginary plots involving the names of the citizens of the town surrounding the fort. The humiliation experienced by the army commander when he imprisoned these innocent citizens certainly must have made him reevaluate his paranoid fears about rebel spies. Like the murdered stranger in "The Campaign That Failed," Young Wicklow unknowingly teaches the commander a valuable lesson.

The stranger mentioned in an anecdote about Caesar in "The Turning-Point of My Life" is another savior figure. Twain emphasizes that Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon was "a stupendously important moment" (Essays, p. 478). According to Twain, while Caesar was "hesitating" about crossing the Rubicon, a stranger with "noble mien and graceful aspect appeared playing upon a pipe" (Essays, p. 478). When a group of soldiers and trumpeters came to listen to him play, he grabbed a trumpet and crossed the river while "sounding the advance with a piercing blast." Upon hearing the trumpet sound, Caesar crossed the Rubicon "and changed the future of the whole human race for all time" (Essays, p. 478). This mysterious stranger's daring action supplied Caesar with the hitherto unavailable wisdom he needed to make the crossing.

The appearance of the stranger-savior does not always produce positive consequences; his coming often produces very negative effects. In the short story "The Great Revolution in Pitcairn," Butterworth Stavely is a stranger who comes to the island of Pitcairn and attempts to reform the ways of the islanders. His goal is to increase the islanders' religious activities, free them from "the English yoke," and create an empire complete with emperor. However, even though Stavely appears to be a type

of savior bent on the betterment of Pitcairn, Twain leaves little doubt about his evil nature and the harmful effects he brings to the island. In the first mention of Stavely, he is referred to as "a doubtful acquisition" (Writings, XX, 344). Stavely's evil nature can be inferred from the fact that he waits for "the time to be ripe" and then begins "secretly to sow the seeds of discontent among the people" (Writings, XX, 344). Stavely quickly gets himself elected chief magistrate and immediately becomes the islanders' idol. With Stavely as magistrate the island is soon "proclaimed a free and independent nation," and Stavely is proclaimed emperor Butterworth I. One of his reforms as emperor is to establish heavy taxation, the severity of which begins to "reduce the nation to beggary" (Writings, XX, 352). Because of this heavy taxation and other impractical reforms, the people of Pitcairn soon revolt against Stavely and return to their previous form of government and way of life. Even though Stavely claims that he freed Pitcairn from "a grinding tyranny," "lifted [its] degredation, and made [it] a nation among nations" (Writings, XX, 353), his role as Pitcairn's redeemer produces nothing but harmful consequences.

According to John S. Tuckey, "the narrator of 'Three Thousand Years Among the Microbes' is another of Twain's mysterious strangers . . . a being immensely superior in size and knowledge and power."[79] Like Butterworth Stavely, the narrator does not use his superiority to benefit those around him, but he uses it to exploit them for his private gain. A gold filling in one of Blitzowski's teeth appears to the Microbes to be a gold mine. When Huck, the narrator, discovers this gold mine, rather than using the wealth for the benefit of all, he decides to split it among a few of his

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[79] John S. Tuckey, Mark Twain and Little Satan (West LaFayette: Purdue University Studies, 1963), p. 67.

close friends. However, upon further reflection, he decides that rather than ruining his friends' lives with "the poisonous spirit of speculation," he will keep all the gold for himself. It is at this moment of decision that Twain discontinues the manuscript. Tuckey asserts that "the story breaks off after the narrator has let it be seen that he himself is corrupt and contemptible, an exploiter of those who are contemptible to him."[80] It appears that Twain himself becomes disenchanted with the failure of another of his savior-strangers to produce positive reforms.

Another stranger who has knowledge not found in the community but greatly needed is Robert Hardy in "A Scrap of Curious History." Hardy is a stranger from New England who comes to Marion City, Missouri. He soon reveals that he is an abolitionist and thinks that "Negro slavery [is] a crime, an infamy" (Essays, p. 518). When Hardy proclaims himself an abolitionist, he is "blaspheming against the holiest thing known to a Missourian" (Essays, p. 518). Anyone who speaks out against slavery "[can] not be in his right mind" (Essays, p. 518). For this reason, the name of "Robert Hardy, the stranger, the despised" is in everybody's mouths (Essays, p. 519). Even though Hardy recognizes the atrocities of slavery, his message is ignored, and he is hanged for killing a constable while trying to help a Negro escape to freedom.

Hank Morgan's role as the "mysterious stranger" in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court is similar to the role played by Butterworth Stavely. Morgan's attempts to create a new system of government also produce opposite effects from what he has intended. Hank tries to introduce many nineteenth-century improvements into the sixth-century way of

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[80] Tuckey, p. 67.

life. However, as Justin Kaplan points out, "the hallowed creeds of his century--progress, technology, democracy, free enterprise-- . . . were not altogether as he had believed them to be."[81] An early hint that Hank's introduction of nineteenth-century civilization will produce negative effects is found in its being described as a "serene volcano" which gives "no sign of the rising hell in its bowels" (Writings, XVI, 78-79). Mentioning Twain's use of the phrases "gun-purse" and "paying the shot," David Ketterer argues that "the new money and the new world of mind that it signifies entails [sic] destruction."[82] The end result of Hank's social improvements is the "Battle of the Sand-Belt," which results in the death of at least twenty-five thousand men. However, even though the nineteenth century seems to win out over the sixth, Hank's apparent victory also brings on his own defeat. Clarence, Morgan's faithful page, makes the following observation:

> We were in a trap you see--a trap of our own making. If we stayed where we were, our dead would kill us; if we moved out of our defenses, we should no longer be invincible. We had conquered; in turn we were conquered. The Boss recognized this; we all recognized it. (Writings, XVI, 446)

As Kaplan points out, "the apparatus of enlightenment introduced by the Yankee is indeed a 'weapon' which destroys its master as well as its enemies."[83] Dan Beard's drawing of the eclipse scene depicts the sun as the Divine Right of Kings in the sixth century and the moon as the freedom

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[81]Justin Kaplan, Introd., A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court (New York: Penguin, 1977), p. 11.

[82]David Ketterer, "Epoch-Eclipse and Apocalypse: Special 'Effects' in a Connecticut Yankee," PMLA, 88 (1973), 1106-1107.

[83]Kaplan, p. 21.

of individuals in the nineteenth century. The actual eclipse of the sun lasts only a short while, just as Hank's nineteenth-century eclipse of Arthur's sixth-century England is also short-lived. Twain says in his Autobiography that in A Connecticut Yankee he was "purposing to contrast . . . English life of the whole of the Middle Ages with the life of modern Christendom and modern civilization--to the advantage of the latter, of course" (Auto, p. 295). However, it is clear from the consequences of Morgan's importation of modern civilization into Arthur's England that Twain certainly lost sight of his purpose. The contrast between the two epochs depicts both as being equally corrupt.

Like many of Twain's msterious stranger figures, Morgan has knowledge which should result in positive reforms. For example, he dispells the sixth-century romantic illusion of the greatness of knight-errantry. Calling himself "the champion of hard unsentimental common sense and reason," Morgan "[enters] the list to either destroy knight-errantry or be its victim" (Writings, XVI, 386). Morgan recognizes that the march of civilization cannot begin until knight-errantry becomes a doomed institution.

Another illusion dispelled by Morgan is the idea that progress is the best thing that can happen to a civilization. Thomas Blues points out that Hank is faced with a perplexing dilemma: "that is, whether the individual who is liberated by technology . . . will choose to use his power humanely or will corrupt himself in pursuit of selfish aims."[84] Blues goes on to answer his own question. He says that "the 'magic of science' is supposed to liberate an oppressed people" but that Morgan "is not

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[84] Thomas Blues, Mark Twain and the Community (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1970), p. 39.

essentially interested in making men out of slaves, but in making them his slaves."[85] Morgan takes pride in being called "The Boss," and he considers all the people of Arthur's land to be simple children. The end result of the progress he makes in instituting nineteenth-century achievements into the sixth century is an ability to blow up all of civilization.

A third illusion dispelled by Morgan is the idea that a man can be changed and rehabilitated for the better. When the final war breaks out between Morgan and the knights, he simply cannot believe that the common people (whom he is supposedly trying to liberate) are siding with the knights. He has to accept the fact that he has failed to educate the superstition out of the people. Their training will not allow them to fight against the Interdict of the Church. Morgan has to accept one of his earlier statements as fact: "training--training is everything; training is all there is to a person" (Writings, XVI, 150).

David Wilson, the title character in Twain's Pudd'nhead Wilson, is another stranger who is capable of doing a great service to those around him. Wilson comes to Dawson's Landing from his home in New York in order to seek his fortune. However, because of a joking comment he makes about a dog, he is immediately judged to be a pudd'nhead. Because Dawson's Landing is "a slaveholding town, with a rich slave-worked grain" (Writings, XIV, 3), it badly needs reform. According to Edgar Schell, Wilson "offers the only hope" of achieving this reform.[86] Because the aphorisms he writes

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[85]Blues, p. 52.

[86]Edgar T. Schell, "'Pears' and 'Is' in Pudd'nhead Wilson," Mark Twain Journal, 12 (Winter 1964), 14.

indicate that he is an open-minded "free thinker" who recognizes and comments on life's absurdities, one gets the impression that he will in fact be the reformer of Dawson's Landing.

In one sense, Wilson does restore order to Dawson's Landing. He solves the murder of Judge Driscoll, and he reveals the switch Roxy makes between Tom Driscoll and Valet de Chambre. Thomas Blues asserts that "Wilson is the town's hero because he has put things back in their proper places."[87] Even Twain himself recognizes that Wilson is a piece of "machinery" whose job it is to restore order to Dawson's Landing (Writings, XIV, 295). However, his restoration of order does not produce any change in the town's viewpoint; in fact, he not only fails to reform the town, but as Blues points out, he begins to "see with its angle of vision."[88] For example, Wilson accepts the emphasis Dawson's Landing places on duelling. Wilson not only serves as Judge Driscoll's second in a duel, but he also chides Tom for not giving his uncle "a gentleman's chance" to defend the family honor in a duel (Writings, XIV, 110). Maxwell Geismar maintains that "it comes as a surprise and disappointment to us that he, too, subscribes without reflection to the Southern code of honor in the book."[89]

Wilson not only fails to change the town's viewpoint, but at the novel's end he is responsible for the continuation of one of the town's

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[87] Blues, p. 71.

[88] Blues, p. 20. A similar idea is found in David Vanderwerken, "The Triumph of Medievalism in Pudd'nhead Wilson," Mark Twain Journal, 18 (Summer 1977), 7; and Mark D. Coburn, "Communal Opinion and the Individual in Pudd'nhead Wilson," Modern Language Quarterly, 31 (1970), 219.

[89] Maxwell Geismar, Mark Twain: An American Prophet (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), p. 136. This source is the abridged paperback edition. A similar idea is expressed on p. 9 of Vanderwerken's article (see note 87).

most heinous customs; the guilty Negro is still sold down the river. Earlier in the novel Twain asserts that selling slaves down the river is "equivalent to condemning them to hell" (Writings, XIV, 16). James M. Cox makes the following comment about Wilson:

> His price of admission into the society has been to cooperate in pushing Tom Driscoll down the dark river of the social mind into the harsher areas of repression, and as the hero of Dawson's Landing he owns as much of Tom Driscoll as any Virginia gentleman.[90]

Despite Carolyn Mann's assertion that "in David Wilson, [Twain] sets forth his ideal of understanding that is not corrupted, and of knowledge that is used to benefit others,"[91] it is evident that Wilson uses his "knowledge" solely for the betterment of his own social position in Dawson's Landing. Because he does not attempt to keep Tom from being sold down the river, he does appear to be only a piece of "machinery"--an emotionless mechanism devoted to self-gratification.

In the essay "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" Twain discussed a whole group of strangers who supposedly have valuable wisdom to dispense. This group of strangers are the missionaries assigned to China, who are supposedly well-meaning spreaders of the Christian faith. In this essay, Twain sternly denounces the Christian Reverend Ament's "financial feat of squeezing a thirteenfold indemnity out of the [Chinese] pauper peasants . . . [as] a blasphemy so hideous and so colossal that, without doubt, its mate is not findable in the history of this or any age" (Essays, p. 285). Such

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[90] James M. Cox, "Pudd'nhead Wilson: The End of Mark Twain's American Dream," South Atlantic Quarterly, 58 (Summer 1959), 360-361.

[91] Carolyn Mann, "Innocence in Pudd'nhead Wilson," Mark Twain Journal, 14 (Summer 1968), 11.

action as Mr. Ament's forces Twain to assert that the accoutrements of the missionary in China are a "banner with the Prince of Peace in one hand and the loot basket and its butcher knife in the other" (Essays, p. 289). In another essay, "To My Missionary Critics," Twain admits that the above-mentioned thirteenfold indemnity should read one-third indemnity; however, he also points out that "by our Christian code of morals and law the whole $1.33 1/3,... is, 'theft and extortion'" (Essays, pp. 305-306). Whether the indemnity is thirteen times too much or one-third too much, it is still stealing. In this same essay, Twain quotes the following comment made by Sir Robert Hay, who is "the most prominent and important Englishman in China" and has an "irreproachable reputation for moderation, fairness, and truth-speaking" (Essays, p. 279):

> And even some missionaries took such a leading part in "spoiling the Egyptians" for the greater glory of God that a bystander was heard to say" "For a century to come Christian converts will consider looting and vengeance Christian virtues."[92] (Essays, p. 299)

Twain was not alone in denouncing the missionaries' action in China.[93]

According to Louis Budd, Twain was not only opposed to the missionaries in China, but "he had grown hostile to those of any church in any corner of the world."[94] Twain's attacks on missionaries go as far back as those operating in sixth-century England. Hank Morgan refers to the persuasions accomplished by a "battle-axe" as "useful missionary capacities" (Writings, XVI, 399). In Life on the Mississippi Twain attacks the

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[92] The italics are Twain's.

[93] Twain again and again returns to this notion of the misdeeds of the missionaries in China. For examples, see The Mysterious Stranger (MS, p. 136); "The Dervish and the Offensive Stranger" (Essays, p. 590); and "The Fable of the Yellow Terror" (FOM, pp. 426 & 427).

[94] Louis J. Budd, Mark Twain: Social Philosopher (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 178.

early French explorers of America who "traveled with an outfit of priests . . . always prepared to 'explain hell to the salvages [sic]'" (Writings, IX, 15). Twain also assails the missionaries in Hawaii. In Roughing It, he accuses the missionary of showing the native "how blissful a place heaven is" and how hard it is to get to it, and "how dreary a place perdition is" and how easy it is to get to it (Writings, VIII, 186). In a selection called "The Sandwich Islands," Twain claims that missionary work is useless to the first and second generation but valuable to the third. He ironically asserts that missionaries should not "refrain from the effort on that account, for after all, it pays" (Essays, p. 18). Twain also attacks the supposed missionary activities carried out by King Leopold in the Congo. In "King Leopold's Soliloquy," Leopold himself asserts that his "private trade-mark" is "a crucifix and a butcher knife crossed" (Life, p. 287). He complains that everyone attacks him for murdering and robbing the savages of the Congo, whereas no one praises him for sending missionaries among them "to teach them the error of their ways" (Life, p. 277). As I have already pointed out in Chapter 3 of this study (see page 45), Twain even attacks missionaries in his burlesque of science called "Some Learned Fables for Good Old Boys and Girls."

In "The Stupendous Procession," Twain depicts Christendom as follows:

> a majestic matron, in flowing robes drenched with blood. On her head, a golden crown of thorns; impaled on its spine, the bleeding heads of patriots who died for their countries--Boers, Boxers, Filipinos; in one hand a sling-shot, in the other a Bible. . . . Protruding from pocket, bottle labeled "we bring you the blessings of civilization." Necklace--handcuffs and a burglar's jimmy. (FOM, p. 405)

Albert Bigelow Paine's biography of Twain quotes the following comment written by Twain on New Year's Eve, 1900:

> I bring you the stately nation named Christendom, returning, bedraggled, besmirched, and dishonored, from pirate raids in Kiao-Chou, Manchuria, South Africa, and the Philippines, with her soul full of meaness, her pocket full of boodle, and her mouth full of pious hypocrisies. Give her soap and towel, but hide the looking-glass. (Biography, III, 1127)

As one can tell by these two quotes and the previous discussion, Twain certainly felt that the coming of the missionaries produced more harm than salvation.

Another group of strangers who appear to be harbingers of salvation and enlightenment are the American imperialists. Like the missionaries, these imperialists more often than not produce negative consequences. In "To the Person Sitting in Darkness," Twain attacks America's mistreatment of the Philippines. He recognizes that America became involved in the Philippines in order to free them from the Spanish rule. However, he also perceives that America's involvement is not completely altruistic. He complains that "there must be two Americas; one that sets the captive free, and one that takes a once-captive's new freedom away from him, and picks a quarrel with him with nothing to found it on; then kills him to get his land" (Essays, p. 291). Some of his other works also contain attacks on America's mistreatement of the Philippines. "The Stupendous Procession" includes the following item listed under the heading "America":

> Supporters. On the one hand greed; on the other treason. Followed by
> Mutilated Figure in Chains, labeled "Filipino Independence," and an allegorical figure of the administration caressing it with one hand, and stabbing it in the back with the other. (FOM, p. 408)

In the same piece, he supplies the following inscription for "The Star-Spangled Banner": "'Filipinos wounded O'" (FOM, p. 415). A similar

comment is found in a letter written home from the Philippines by an American soldier: "WE NEVER LEFT ONE ALIVE. IF ONE WAS WOUNDED, WE WOULD RUN OUR BAYONETS THROUGH HIM" (Essays, p. 294). Paul Baender asserts in the supplement to his edition of "What is Man?" that Twain "believed Emilio Aquinaldo, the Philippine guerrilla leader, was in a class with Joan of Arc."[95] Because Twain idealized Joan of Arc, it is obvious from this comparison that his sympathies certainly were allied with the Filipinos against American imperialism.

Twain not only emphasizes the negative consequences of America's involvement with the Philippines, but he also denounces imperialism in general. In The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts, Satan explains that Caesar invaded Britain not because "those barbarians had done him any harm, but because he wanted their land, and desired to confer the blessings of civilization upon their widows and orphans" (MS, p. 135). The essay "The Sandwich Islands" contains an ironic plea for the annexation of Hawaii. Twain maintains that "the poor islanders" need to be arrayed "in the moral splendor of our high and holy civilization" (Essays, p. 28). One of these "moral splendors" will be found in the provision of "some Jay Goulds[96] who will do away with [the islanders'] old-time notion that stealing is not respectable" (Essays, p. 28). In "The Dervish and the Offensive Stranger," Twain undercuts the idea that England "succeeded in

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[95] Paul Baender, What is Man? and Other Philosophical Writings (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 493. Hereafter cited parenthetically within the text as WM?

[96] Jay Gould (1836-1892) was an extremely rich financier whose business practices were something less than honest. For a good discussion of these practices see the Dictionary of American Biography. It is also interesting to note that Dan Beard pictures Gould as the slave driver in the first edition of A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.

her good purpose of lifting up the unwilling Boers and making them better and purer and happier" with the observation that "there are only eleven Boers left now" (Essays, p. 589). King Leopold is cited as being another example of the harms of imperialism. Even though "the vast and rich and populous Congo Free State" is placed in Leopold's hands so that he can "lift up those twenty-five millions of gentle and harmless blacks out of darkness into light" (Life, p. 275), he eventually rules not as a "trustee" nor as a "subordinate," but "as a sovereign" (Life, p. 276). His imperialistic policies involve murder and thievery rather than beneficial enlightenment.

The Philippines is not the only locality in which a forced skirmish leads to imperialistic oppression. Satan, in The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts, predicts that the heavy indemnities forced on the Chinese will cause them to "injudiciously rise in revolt against the insults and oppressions of the intruder" (MS, p. 136). According to Satan, this revolt will supply "Europe's chance to interfere and swallow China, and her royal Christian pirates will not waste it" (MS, p. 136). In Following the Equator, Twain asserts that England's representative in India, Cecil Rhodes, accomplished this robbery in two ways: first, he acquired parts of the savages' territories through "the hallowed old style of 'purchase' for a song"; second, he would "force a quarrel and take the rest by strong hand" (Writings, VI, 360).

Even though Twain again and again bitterly attacks the harmful effects associated with imperialism, he does acknowledge that "the most fortunate thing that has ever befallen the Indian empire was the establishment of British supremacy there" (Writings, VI, 301). Even with this concession, it is overwhelmingly clear that Twain was against forced

imperialism. Most of his references to imperialism are similar in tone to the definition of civilization he establishes in "The Secret History of Eddypus." He says that in America and Europe civilization meant "benevolence" and "justice," but as soon as it was spread through imperialism "it became a blight, a pestilence, an awful terror" (FOM, p. 327). He concludes that civilization "was a sham at home and only laid off its disguise when abroad" (FOM, p. 327). Imperialism is positive and well-meaning in theory, but it is negative and extremely harmful in reality. Twain's harshest condemnation of American imperialism is found in his rewriting of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic";

> Mine eyes have seen the orgy of the launching of the Sword;
> He is searching out the hoardings where the stranger's wealth is stored;
> He hath loosed his fateful lightenings, and with woe and death has scored;
> His lust is marching on.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> In a sordid slime harmonious, Greed was born in yonder ditch,
> With a longing in his bosom--and for others' goods and itch,
> As Christ died to make men holy, let men die to make us rich--
> Our god is marching on.[97]

It is clear that Twain's sympathies did not lie with American imperialism.

As is evident from this discussion, Twain recognizes that the effect produced by the well-meaning missionary and imperialist is to furnish the person sitting in darkness with too much light. These two groups of strangers bring the possibility of enlightenment and salvation

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[97]Mark Twain, "Battle Hymn of the Republic (brought down to date)," in On the Poetry of Mark Twain, Arthur L. Scott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), p. 128.

to the areas they enter; however, whether it is accidental or intentional, the results of these strangers' trying to further the cause of "the Blessings-of-Civilization-Trust" are more harmful than beneficial. In most cases, unfortunately, the redemption offered by "the stranger as savior" is either inaccessible or becomes corrupted.

CHAPTER 5

THE STRANGER AS SATAN

Perhaps Twain's best known work containing a "mysterious stranger" is found in the four manuscripts[98] collectively known as The Mysterious Stranger. The dominant personage in all four of these manuscripts is Satan.[99] The figure of Satan also plays a dominant role in "The Man That Corrupted Handleyburg," "Letters from the Earth," "Letters to Satan," "A Humane Word from Satan," "Sold to Satan" "That Day in Eden," and "Conversations with Satan."[100] Because Twain does use the figure of Satan so often, and because Satan always appears in the guise of an outsider, it is essential to devote a whole chapter to "the stranger as Satan."[101]

Before I begin discussion of individual works in which Satan figures prominently, it is necessary to supply a small amount of background

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[98] According to William Gibson, the four manuscripts are the "St. Petersburg Fragment," "The Chronicle of Young Satan," "Schoolhouse Hill," and "No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger." For a discussion of these manuscripts see William M. Gibson, ed., Introd. The Mysterious Stranger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 1-34.

[99] Even though the character in question is referred to as Satan's nephew, Philip Traum, and Forty-Four, most critics agree that he is similar enough to Satan to refer to him as such.

[100] The latter story, "Conversations with Satan," is an unpublished fragment. See p. 17 of Gibson's "Introduction" to The Mysterious Stranger.

[101] It should be noted that the Satan Twain applauds is not the traditional malcontent devoted to mankind's degredation but an idealized savior devoted to mankind's amelioration. It should also be noted that most of Twain's writings dealing with Satan occur after he had suffered such personal tragedies as bankruptcy and the deaths of his wife and two of his daughters. These tragedies increased Twain's distrust of human pretentions and increased his belief in the folly of the whole human race.

material. Edward Wagenknecht argues that "of all the figures in Christian Mythology, Satan was the one that interested [Twain] most."[102] In a similar fashion, Bernard DeVoto asserts that of all the angels, Twain "felt nearest to Satan."[103] As these two quotes suggest, Twain was affected strongly by the figure of Satan; in fact, Twain's impression of him is usually quite favorable. In his Autobiography, Twain makes the following comment: "I have always felt friendly toward Satan. Of course that is ancestral" (Auto, p. 18). According to Twain, his mother was a "friend of Satan" who "could be beguiled into saying a soft word for [him]" (Auto, p. 28). Twain's writings contain example after example of his coming to Satan's defense; in fact, Twain defends Satan so often that Coleman Parsons speaks of Twain's "championship of the insulted and injured Satan."[104] For example, an essay entitled "Concerning the Jews" contains the following comment about Satan: "I have no special regard for Satan; but . . . I have no prejudice against him. It may even be that I lean a little his way, on account of his not having a fair show" (Writings, XXII, 264). At the age of seven, Twain claims to have "had the highest respect for Satan," a respect which "equaled, and possibly even exceeded that [he had for] any member of any church" (Essays, p. 415). In a notebook entry Twain includes the following item: "my dream--talk with the devil.

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[102] Edward Wagenknecht, Mark Twain: The Man and his Work (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), p. 207.

[103] Bernard DeVoto, Mark Twain at Work (1942; rpt. Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin, 1967), p. 127.

[104] Coleman O. Parsons, "The Devil and Samuel Clemens," Virginia Quarterly Review, 23 (Autumn 1947), 127.

[#]."[105] Paine's biography of Twain includes the following assertion made by Twain: "what is the grandest thing in 'Paradise Lost'--the Arch-Fiend's terrible energy" (Biography, I, 146). Twain begins the short piece "Sold to Satan" with the following sentence: "It was at this time that I concluded to sell my soul to Satan" (Essays, p. 650). Twain allows his characters to make the following comments about Satan: "We have been misinformed about devils" (MS, p. 219); "Satan is a sacred character, being mentioned in the Bible" (MS, p. 277 & p. 41); and "I was not expecting to be moved by any gentle word said about Satan, but the Admiral surprised me into it" (FOM, p. 195). It is evident from these many quotes that Twain was definitely sympathetic toward Satan.

Some of Twain's works in which Satan figures prominently are all relatively short. For example, "A Humane Word from Satan" is a two-page letter written by Satan and addressed to the Editor of Harper's Weekly. In this letter Satan attacks those who annually evade their taxes. Speaking of New York, Satan argues that "there isn't a rich man in your vast city who doesn't perjure himself every year before the tax board" (Writings, XIV, 299-300). Satan claims that he gets these law breakers to hell "every time" and that he maintains "a whole hell-full of evaders" (Writings, XIV, 300). "Letters to Satan" contains two brief letters written to Satan by his agent or proxy on Earth. His agent says that he hopes his labors and reports will "induce [Satan] to come out of his age-long seclusion and make a pleasure tour through the world in person" (Essays, p. 631). Even though Satan is not a "mysterious stranger" in these letters, his agent tries to convince him to accept such a role and come to Earth.

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[105] Frederick Anderson, Lin Salamo and Bernard L. Stein, eds., Mark Twain's Notebooks and Journals (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), II, 301.

In the humorous sketch "Sold to Satan," Twain's decision to sell his soul to Satan immediately produces an interview between Satan and himself. One of the details about Satan which Twain recognizes is that "he was surprisingly different from the tradition" (Essays, p. 651). For example, he was made not of fire coal but of radium. Satan tells him of the vast prosperity which this radium could supply to Earth:

> With my nine hundred pounds you could light the world, and heat it, and run all its ships and machines and railways a hundred million years, and not use up five pounds of it the whole time! (Essays, p. 653)

Twain enters into a partnership with Satan concerning the finding and establishing of radium on Earth. He ends the sketch by saying that "Stock is for sale. Apply to Mark Twain" (Essays, p. 657). As this chapter on Twain and Satan will demonstrate, Twain does appear to be selling Satan's stock. Stanley Brodwin asserts that Twain assumed a "spiritual 'kinship' between Satan and himself" and that "'Sold to Satan' dramatizes this relationship perfectly."[106] This kinship is enhanced by Twain's calling himself Satan's stock agent on Earth.

"That Day in Eden" is subtitled "(Passage from Satan's Diary)." In these diary dictations Satan comes to the defense of Adam and Eve. He begins his comments by stressing Eve's beauty: "Your hair, your eyes, your face, your flesh tints, your form, the tapering grace of your white limbs--all are beautiful, adorable, perfect" (Essays, p. 669). Satan's sympathetic feelings for Eve are clearly evident from this comment. Satan recounts a conversation with Eve in which she asks him the meaning of

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[106] Stanley Brodwin, "Mark Twain's Masks of Satan: The Final Phase," American Literature, 41 (May 1973), 216.

the words God used in his single command. Unfortunately, he has to tell her that "things which are outside of . . . our own particular world . . . cannot be made comprehensible to us in words" (Essays, p. 669). In other words, Adam and Eve could not have possibly comprehended the meaning of God's command; therefore, they must be innocent. Satan also takes a shot at the Moral Sense. He calls it "a degredation, a disaster. . . . The creator of wrong" (Essays, p. 671). Satan's sympathetic feelings are again reflected in his response to Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden; he calls them "poor ignorant things" and says "[their expulsion] was pitiful" (Essays, p. 672). Stanley Brodwin asserts that in this story "Twain was able to 'humanize' Satan, contrasting his sympathy--even compassion--for man, with the Deity's distantness and absurd prohibition."[107] Not only is Satan sympathetic toward man, but Twain is also sympathetic toward Satan.

Another of Twain's works in which Satan figures prominently is "Letters from the Earth." Because he is "ordered into banishment [from heaven] for a day," Satan decides to "hunt up the Earth and see how the Human-Race experiment was coming along" (WM? p. 405). Like the previously discussed Satans, this Satan also dispels some of the illusions cherished by mankind. In the letters he writes back to St. Michael and St. Gabriel, Satan makes many negative comments about mankind and his religion.

Satan begins his attacks with some criticisms of mankind in general. He calls man a "sarcasm" for believing that human beings are the "'noblest work of God'" (WM? p. 405). He refers to man's idea that "the Creator

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[107] Brodwin, p. 214.

loves him" and "sits up nights worrying about him" as a "quaint idea" (WM?, p. 406). In an extremely humorous passage he attacks man's concept of heaven (WM?, pp. 407-412). He cannot understand why man would leave "the supremest of all his delights"--sexual intercourse--out of heaven. He also points out that even though man can only stand a couple of hours of singing on Earth, everybody in heaven continuously sings without interruption. Not only do they all sing, but everybody also plays a harp. It does not seem to matter whether or not they could play one on Earth. Even though all nations of the Earth "hate each other," in heaven all nations are combined "in one common jumble." He chides man for "exalting intellect above all things else in his world," and then contriving "a heaven that hasn't a rag of intellectuality in it anywhere" (WM?, p. 411). His harshest comment about mankind is that "the only really enlightened and superior idea" in the Bible is God's wise decision to "abolish" the human race (WM?, p. 419).

Satan also attacks, God, Christ, and the Bible. He chides God for creating microbes, flies and diseases. He asserts that flies are "the special pets of the Creator, his darlings" (WM?, p. 430). In a defense of Adam and Eve, he accuses God of banishing them from the Garden and assasinating them, "all for disobeying a command he had no right to utter" (WM?, p. 418). The fact that Christ was the being who "devised hell and proclaimed it" (WM?, p. 443) causes Satan to accuse him of being a "thousand billion times crueler" than the Old Testament God. He accuses the Bible of being a "blood-drenched history" containing "a wealth of obscenity; and upwards of a thousand lies" (WM?, p. 412). Two of the virtues he credits the Bible with teaching children are not to "piss against the wall" and how to masturbate (WM?, p. 449).

Some of the illusions dispelled by Satan in "Letters from the Earth" are similar to those attacked in The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts. For example, Satan maintains that man could not do evil before the Moral Sense was invented. He stresses the fact that God "did what he could in his clumsy way to keep his happy Children in the Garden from acquiring it" (WM?, p. 416). In Satan's eyes, the idea of placing the human being blessed with the Moral Sense above the animals lacking the Moral Sense is "like valuing a watch that must go wrong, above a watch that can't" (WM?, p. 416). The notion of man's freedom being limited by his circumstances also becomes material for Satan's commentary. He says that "God gives to each man his temperament" and expects him to conform to a certain set of rules even if his temperament goes against them (WM?, p. 436). For example, he points out that it is a woman's temperament to be competent at sexual intercourse "during 27 days in every month (in the absence of pregnancy) from a time a woman is seven years old till she dies of old age" (WM?, p. 438). Even though a man's "procreative competency is limited to an average of a hundred per year" and a woman "is good for 3,000 a year," she is still "restricted to one man" (WM?, p. 440). This limitation certainly goes against her temperament, but she is still forced to conform to this law of restriction.

Many critics have argued that the "mysterious big stranger" in "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" is Satan.[108] The conflict in this

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[108]For a discussion of the evidence supporting the identification of this stranger as Satan see the following articles: Henry B. Rule, "The Role of Satan in 'The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg,'" Studies in Short Fiction, 6 (1969), 619-629; George Pierce Clark, "The Devil that Corrupted Hadleyburg," Mark Twain Journal, 10 (Winter 1956), 1-4; and Helen E. Nebeker, "The Great Corrupter or Satan Rehabilitated," Studies in Short Fiction, 8 (Fall 1971), 635-636.

story involves a "bitter man"--Satan--and a town that "had the ill luck to offend [him]" (Writings, XXIII, 2). As a form of revenge on the town, Satan decides to adopt "a plan which would comprehend the entire town, and not let so much as one person escape unhurt" (Writings, XXIII, 2). However, because the town he is seeking revenge on, Hadleyburg, is "the most honest and upright town in all the region" (Writings, XXIII, 1), he cannot come up with a plan encompassing the whole town. Therefore, he finally decides on an elaborate plan which will have evil consequences for the top nineteen families of the town. He sends each of these families a letter containing a secret remark which will entitle them to see who the rightful owner of the bag of gold is. At this meeting, eighteen of these nineteen families experience shame and humiliation by claiming the gold for themselves. Soon after the meeting, "the last of the sacred nineteen" also falls victim to "the fiendish sack" of gold coins and "the town [is] stripped of its last rag of ancient glory" (Writings, XXIII, 68). Satan gets his revenge, and the "incorruptible" Hadleyburg becomes a corrupted town.

Satan teaches the local inhabitants of Hadleyburg an important lesson. Henry Rule argues that "although his initial motivation may have been revenge, the result of Satan's machinations is to lead Hadleyburg, perhaps without his volition, to some degree of moral reformation."[109] This reformation involves the illusion that "Hadleyburg [is] in reality an incorruptible town" (Writings, XXIII, 1-2). He proves to them that shielding children from all possible temptation produces an "artificial honesty" (Writings, XXIII, 15). In a letter to the citizens of

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[109]Rule, p. 621.

Hadleyburg, he points out that "the weakest of all weak things is a virtue which has not been tested in the fire" (Writings, XXIII, 52-53). The honesty fostered in Hadleyburg is so "artificial" that all nineteen of its most prominent families fall victim to Satan's initial temptation. Evidence of their reformation is found in their changing the town's motto from "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION" to "LEAD US TO TEMPTATION."

Rule argues that another way in which Satan benefits Hadleyburg is by supplying it with laughter. He asserts that when the townspeople have to face the pretentiousness of their morality, "they explode into roars of whole-hearted laughter that sweeps away hypocrisy."[110] Like Satan in The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts, the Satan of this story recognizes and utilizes the power of laughter.

As I have already noted, the character Satan in The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts is probably Twain's best known "mysterious stranger" figure. In these manuscripts, Satan claims to "have a purpose in coming to earth" (MS, "SH," p. 213);[111] he hopes to lift some of the burdens acquired by mankind as a result of Adam and Eve's fall (MS, "SH," p. 217). Satan knows that he has the power to free mankind from these burdens. Even though Satan recognizes that man's life is ordered by his circumstances and environment, he maintains that he "can free him" (MS, "CS," p. 116). August Feldner's Dream-Self addresses the following comment to Satan: "you can set me free, and no other can" (MS, "44," p. 380). One of the

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[110] Rule, p. 628.

[111] I am going to quote freely from these manuscripts as if they were one unified text. I will also speak of the different representatives of Satan as if they were one unified character. In my parenthetical citations, "CS" will stand for "The Chronicle of Young Satan" manuscript, "SH" for the "Schoolhouse Hill" manuscript and "44" for the "No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger" manuscript.

burdens from which Satan attempts to free man involves the many illusions which encircle man's perception. The narrator of "The Chronicle of Young Satan," Theodore Fischer, asserts that

> Satan was accustomed to say that our race lived a life of continuous self-deception. It duped itself from the cradle to the grave with shams and delusions which it took for realities, and this made its entire life a sham. (MS, "CS," p. 164)

Satan takes it upon himself to eliminate many of these "shams and delusions."

Like the travelling strangers discussed in Chapter 1, Satan casts himself in the role of an illusion-dispeller. One of the illusions that he attempts to dispel involves the way in which man exaggerates his overall importance. He claims that the members of the human race "'have a fine large opinion of themselves with nothing to found it on'" (MS, "CS," p. 94). He maintains that "human beings aren't of any particular consequence, there's plenty more, plenty" (MS, "44," p. 358). Theodore says that "the villagers, high and low, were all bugs to him" (MS, "CS," p. 100), and Satan himself insinuates that humans are "bugs" (MS, "44," p. 319). It is evident that in Satan's eyes, human beings are not nearly as important as they have always considered themselves to be.

Not only are human beings "bugs," but their freedom to act is restricted by many limitations. For example, Satan claims that the fear of public opinion makes the human race behave like "sheep." He points out that most people "suppress [their] feelings and [their] beliefs and follow the handful that make the most noise" (MS, "CS," p. 154). Even if a person escapes from the fetters of public opinion, his life will still be limited and ordered by his "circumstances and environment" (MS, "CS," p. 115). According to Satan, a "man's first act determines the

second and all that follow after" (MS, "CS," p. 115). In fact, even the first act is limited in the sense that it cannot be original. Satan argues that "a man originates nothing in his head . . . a man's mind cannot create" (MS, "44," pp. 332-334). Public opinion, circumstance, and "exterior things" all impinge on man's freedom to act. Only Satan's illusion-dispelling knowledge can free man from these restrictions.

Satan also destroys the illusion that the Moral Sense is man's most valuable possession. The following passage appears in Twain's "Working Notes" to The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts:

> he [Satan] hopes to find a way to rid them of the Moral Sense; they can [not] get to heaven without that, still it is worthwhile, because without it this life[would] be innocent and happy, and, brief as it is it would be better to be happy than unhappy. He must think out a way. (MS, "Appendix B," p. 437)

The obvious question to consider is why Twain finds it so imperative for Satan to remove the Moral Sense. Satan's answer is that the Moral Sense actually creates the possibility of committing a wrong act. Satan offers the following description of the Moral Sense:

> a Sense whose function it is to distinguish between right and wrong, with liberty to choose which of them he [man] will do. Now what advantage can he get out of that? He is always choosing, and in nine cases out of ten he prefers the wrong. There shouldn't be any wrong; and without the Moral Sense there couldn't be any. (MS, CY," pp. 72-73).

Like some of the other "mysterious strangers" previously discussed, Satan is firmly convinced that the Moral Sense is man's most harmful possession.

The grandest illusion which Satan dispels is the idea that reality exists. He tells August Feldner that "Life itself is only a vision, a dream" (MS, "44," p. 404) and that August himself is only "'a useless Thought, . . . wandering forlorn among the empty eternities!" (MS," 44," p. 405). Satan makes the following observation about the "universe and

its contents":

> These things are all impossible, except in a dream. You perceive that they are pure and puerile insanities, the silly creatures of imagination . . . in a word, that they are a dream, and you the maker of it. (MS, "44," p. 405)

Ronald Gervais asserts that the significance of Satan's negation of reality is that if "the world is known finally to be a dream, then man is saved from its grief and pain."[112] In the "Introduction" to The Mysterious Stranger, William Gibson quotes the following extract from one of Twain's unmailed letters addressed to Joseph Twichell: "taken as unrealities . . . these monstrous sillinesses become proper and acceptable, and lose their offensiveness" (MS, p. 30). The reduction of reality to a dream necessitates the reduction of mankind's sufferings; for this reason, Satan is confident that he has fulfilled his "purpose" for coming to Earth. He tells August that he has "set [him] free" to "dream other dreams, and better . . ." (MS, "44," p. 404). Because the manuscripts end with August saying "He vanished, and left me appalled" (MS, "44," p. 405), Coleman Parsons asserts that "Theodore Fischer is a sadder and wiser adolescent, but a far less happy one."[113] However, the word appalled does not necessarily imply dismay, but can also mean confusion. According to August himself, the idea that life is a dream "was electrical" (MS, "44," p. 404). Even though he might be confused by Satan's message, he is more excited than dismayed about it. Gervais argues that he "is not horror-stricken

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[112]Ronald J. Gervais, "'The Mysterous Stranger': The Fall as Salvation," Pacific Coast Philology, 5 (April 1970), 29.

[113]Parsons, p. 592. In the text of The Mysterious Stranger published in 1916 by Harper and Brothers, Satan makes his closing comments to Theodore Fischer rather than to August Feldner.

but full of blessed hope and thankfulness."[114] Once August gets over his initial confusion, he will almost certainly dream better dreams.

Satan's role is not limited to the dispelling of illusions; he also affirms some of the assets available to man. For example, he extols the virtues of insanity. He claims that "sanity and happiness are an impossible combination" because a sane man "sees what a fearful thing [life] is" (MS, "CS," pp. 163-164). In the working notes to the manuscripts, Twain writes that Satan "knows a happy insanity is best for all men" (MS, "Appendix B," p. 420). Satan also acknowledges the excellence of laughter. He calls laughter the "one really effective weapon" possessed by mankind (MS, "CS," p. 105) and maintains that "against the assault of laughter nothing can stand" (MS, "CS," p. 166). If accepting life as a dream will not free man from his burdens, then perhaps laughter and insanity will.

Satan's purpose for dispelling the illusions he attacks is to free mankind from the guilt resulting from Adam and Eve's transgression. After all, if man creates nothing and is a victim of circumstances and the Moral Sense, then he cannot be held responsible for his crime. If life is a dream, then man has not and cannot commit any crimes that need to be expiated by guilt. Twain argues that because life is so brief, "it would be better to be happy than unhappy" (MS, "Appendix B," p. 437). For this reason, he has Satan celebrate the virtues of laughter. Satan's message to Earth is for the human race to ignore the guilt and burdens which accompany life and concentrate on the positive and happy aspects of life.

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[114] Gervais, p. 31.

In a study entitled Archetypal Patterns in Poetry, Maud Bodkin gives the following definition of "The Devil Archetype":

> If we attempt to define the devil in psychological terms, regarding him as an archetype, . . . we may say that devil is our tendency to represent in personal form the forces within and without us that threaten our supreme values.[115]

Twain's use of "the stranger as Satan" seems to conform to this archetypal pattern; after all, his illusion-dispelling Satan figures clearly "threaten our supreme values." However, Bodkin judges this threat to be harmful, whereas Twain judges it to be beneficial. His defense of Satan and use of him as an illusion-dispelling beneficiary of manking certainly works contrary to the accepted archetype. Perhaps the most famous defense and glorification of Satan is found in the first three books of Milton's Paradise Lost. However, even though Milton initially appears to be defending Satan, he unquestionably concludes by denouncing Satan as the destroyer of mankind's bliss. Twain, of course, never takes this second step; for him, Satan makes possible mankind's bliss or happiness by teaching him his sufferings are illusions. From Twain's point of view, "our supreme values" must be revealed as the "shams and delusions" which Twain considers them to be. Because Milton does initially appear to glorify Satan, William Blake argued that "Milton was a true poet and of the devil's party without knowing it."[116] Perhaps one can slightly modify this statement and say that "Twain was a true poet and consciously of the devil's

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[115] Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 223.

[116] The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, in Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. David V. Erdman (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1965), p. 35. This quote is listed under "Plate 4."

party." He is well aware that he is the agent on Earth for "the stranger as Satan."

CHAPTER 6

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

In the "Working Notes" to The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts Twain writes that Satan "is starting an Anti-Moral Sense Church" (MS, p. 446), complete with a "catechism" (MS, p. 445), and a Bible printed by "slathers of little red. . . cooling devils" (MS, p. 449). In the "Introduction" to The Mysterious Stranger William Gibson quotes the following entry from Twain's notebooks: "If Satan is around, and so much more intelligent and powerful than God, why doesn't He write a Bible?" (MS, p. 9). In the essay "Concerning the Jews" Twain complains that "all religions issue Bibles against Satan, and say the most injurious things about him, but we never hear his side" (Writings, XXII, 264). Even if Satan will not write his own Bible, Twain proposes to "undertake his rehabilitation" himself (Writings, XXII, 205). The idea of acting as Satan's historian had been in Twain's mind for a very long time. In the essay "Is Shakespeare Dead?" Twain recounts how at the age of seven he proposed to write a biography of Satan (Essays, pp. 413-415). The fact that Twain entitles one of his Mysterious Stranger manuscripts "The Chronicle of Young Satan"[117] implies that the idea of his writing Satan's history was still in his mind when he was working on The Mysterious Stranger.

The concept of Twain as a writer of a bible or of a gospel is found many times throughout the course of his writings. "The Secret History of

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[117] According to William Gibson "The Chronicle of Young Satan" is Mark Twain's own title. See the "Introduction" to The Mysterious Stranger (MS, p. 5).

Eddypus, the World Empire" is set in the year 2901, and it tells the story of the rise of Christian Science to a world power. The writer of this history is Mark Twain, "a revered priest of the earlier faith, sometime Bishop of New Jersey" (FOM, pp. 318-319). In this story, Twain clearly associates himself with the writer of a religious history. In "The Mammoth Cod" Twain refuses an invitation to an expedition because he is "busy in [his] translation of the New Testament."[118] It has even been asserted that Twain was "on record as having said that he would like to write a life of Christ, but he may not have been serious."[119] Serious or not, Twain again and again intimates a desire to be involved with the writing of a bible.

James Wilson relates that "Mark Twain reveals in an October 1865 letter to Orion [Twain's brother] that he 'had but two powerful ambitions in [his] life': to be a riverboat pilot and a 'preacher of the gospel.'"[120] Some of the "mysterious strangers" discussed in this study serve as spokesmen for Twain's so-called "gospels." Hamfat Bailey in "Which Was It?" is credited with formulating "The Black Gospels" (WWD, p. 383) which include a "Gospel of Self" (WWD, p. 379). The following comment appears in "Working Notes" to The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts: "Satan shall

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[118]Mark Twain, The Mammoth Cod (Milwaukee: Maledicta Inc., 1976), p. 21.

[119]Paul Blouet, Jonathan and his Continent (New York, 1889), pp. 107-108 as quoted in Allison Ensor, Mark Twain and the Bible (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), p. 89.

[120]James D. Wilson, "In Quest of Redemptive Vision: Mark Twain's Joan of Arc," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 20 (Spring 1978), 184.

proclaim and fully set forth the doctrine of SELFISHNESS whether it is printable or not" (MS, p. 425). One of the books credited to the priest Mark Twain in "The Secret History of Eddypus" is a miniature volume called "The Gospel of Self" (FOM, p. 336). The old man in "What Is Man?" formulates a philosophy which includes "The Gospel of Self-Approval" (WM?, p. 148). Speaking of "What Is Man?", Van Wyck Brooks calls it Twain's "Bible,"[121] and Hamlin Hill calls it Twain's "Gospel."[122] It is clear from these many quotes that Twain was interested in formulating a new set of "gospels."[123]

The "mysterious stranger" plays a very important role in the formation of Twain's "gospels." For example, the new "God" deified by these "gospels" is the quintessential "mysterious stranger" figure--Satan. The similarities between Twain's Satan and the Biblical God are many. Both God and Satan have the power to create. Satan tells August Feldner that "a man's mind cannot create--a god's can, and my [Satan's] race can" (MS, p. 333). Like God, Satan is able to create living things. He creates "a crowd of little men and women the size of your finger" (MS, p. 47). Not only does Satan have the power to alter the lives of the miniature people he creates, but like God he can also alter the lives of human beings. For example, rather than allowing Nikolaus Bauman to spend forty-six years lying "in his bed a paralytic log, deaf, dumb, blind, and praying night

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[121] Van Wyck Brooks, The Ordeal of Mark Twain (1920; rpt. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1970), p. 303.

[122] Hamlin Hill, Mark Twain: God's Fool (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 131.

[123] Even though most of these quotes only refer to "the Gospel of Self," I will presently include a discussion of some of Twain's other "gospels."

and day for the blessed relief of death" (MS, p. 118), he decides to alter Nikolaus's life so that he will die in his youth.

Satan is also very similar to Christ. For example, both are "mysterious strangers"[124] who come to earth with specific purposes. Both have the power to "free" mankind from its sufferings,[125] and both offer the blessings of salvation. Stanley Brodwin makes the following assertion about Satan and salvation:

> Though tentatively and incompletely worked out in "The Mysterious Stranger" stories, Mark Twain had to come to the "position" that salvation lay outside of man, in the inevitable triumph of Satan.[126]

One form of salvation offered by Satan is to escape from the sufferings of life by viewing reality as a dream. Brodwin makes this observation about the idea that the universe is only "real" in appearance:

> Satan's mission is to teach man this "truth." The creative powers of Satan become a vital way by which this truth is to be conveyed. This is a fascinating inversion of the gospels in which Jesus uses his divine powers to heal, teach, and create faith. . . .[127]

Two other forms of salvation offered by Satan are to escape from the sufferings of reality through insanity (MS, pp. 163-164) or through laughter (MS, pp. 165-166). The fact that Satan's offer of salvation is

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[124] In The Innocents Abroad, Twain actually refers to Christ as "a mysterious stranger who was a God" (Writings, II, 231).

[125] For a discussion of Satan's "purpose" and his ability to "free" man see pp. 78-82 of the preceding chapter of this study.

[126] Stanley Brodwin, "Mark Twain's Masks of Satan: The Final Phase," American Literature, 45 (May 1973), 227.

[127] Brodwin, p. 220.

accepted by mankind is reflected when Twain observes in "Concerning the Jews" that Satan "has for untold centuries maintained the imposing position of spiritual head of four-fifths of the human race" (Writings, XXII, 165).

One specific similarity between Satan and Jesus is found in Twain's interest in certain texts from the Apochryphal New Testament.[128] He quotes the following extract dealing with the infancy of Christ: "'Jesus and other boys play together and make clay figures of animals. Jesus causes them to walk; also makes clay birds which he causes to fly, and eat and drink.'"[129] Compare Theodore Fischer's comment about Satan: "He made birds out of clay and set them free and they flew away singing" (MS, p. 47). In the "Introduction" to The Mysterious Stranger William Gibson asserts that "the resemblance of the boy Jesus to Philip Traum is unmistakable" (MS, p. 16).[130] Ronald Gervais maintains that "for more than thirty years Twain carried in his mind these pictures of the boy Jesus, . . . and when he finally made use of them, the portrait had become that of young Satan."[131] Because Twain's image of Satan is so closely akin to that of Jesus, it is easy to assert that Twain thought of Satan as a type of Jesus or Savior.

Because Satan is so closely associated with Christ, one would expect to find many biblical parallels in The Mysterious Stranger

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[128]For a discussion of Twain's interest in the New Testament Apochrypha see Mark Twain's Travels with Mr. Brown, Franklin Walker and G. Ezra Dane eds. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940), pp. 251-253. See also Writings, II, 272-274.

[129]Travels with Mr. Brown, p. 252.

[130]Gibson says that this resemblance was first noted by Gladys Bellamy in Mark Twain as a Literary Artist (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950), pp. 352-353. For further information relating to this source see MS, p. 16, n.31.

[131]Ronald J. Gervais, "'The Mysterious Stranger': The Fall as Salvation," Pacific Coast Philology, 5 (April 1970), 25.

manuscript.[132] In the "Introduction" to The Mysterious Stranger, William Gibson makes the following comment about Satan's creation of an assemblage of miniature human beings:

> Twain developed his own version of the Creation, the Fall, and the Day of Doom, in which the unfallen angel and nephew of Satan acts the part of God. The Fall, it must be noted, is due in Twain's "Bible" to a quarrel between two workmen, who grapple like Cain and Abel in "a life and death struggle" until Satan crushes them with his fingers. As for the Judgment Day, it arrives by Satan's whim. Annoyed by the lamentations of the fingerling mourners around the two bodies, Satan mashes them into the ground, and then wipes out the whole race by fire and earthquake for the boy's entertainment. (MS, p. 22)

Twain not only retells the Fall and the Day of Judgment, but a comment in "The Working Notes" to The Mysterious Stranger manuscripts suggests that he also planned to establish a new verson of the flood: "Make him build a city & drown it with a bucket of water" (MS, p. 424).

Twain not only parallels Old Testament events, but he also parallels those of the New Testament. For example, Satan gives Marget and Ursula a magic cat that miraculously supplies them with large quantities of food. While eating with Marget, Satan and Theodor share a small fish taken from a frying pan. Marget is about "to say she did not care for fish today" when "she noticed that another fish had appeared in the pan" (MS, p. 71). The feeding of many with apparently only one fish closely parallels Christ's "feeding of the five thousand" with five barley loaves and two small fishes.[133] At one point in the manuscripts, Forty-Four is burnt to ashes for being a magician. The description of his death is similar to the Crucifixion of Christ in that Forty-Four's death is also accompanied by a "blot of

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[132] Even though I am limiting my discussion to the parallels found in The Mysterious Stranger, the canon of Twainian criticism contains innumerable references to Biblical parallels found in Twain's writings.

[133] See John 6: 8-15.

black darkness" (MS, p. 309). As is the case with Christ, Forty-Four is resurrected from the grave, and he shows himself to one of his followers. August Feldner says that after Forty-Four's burning he returned to his own room "with a burdened and desolate weight at [his] heart" only to find that "there sat the corpse!" (MS, p. 312).

If Satan is the God of Twain's "Bible," then he must have some disciples who help him to spread his message. The most prominent of Satan's disciples is of course Twain himself. As I pointed out in my discussion of "Sold to Satan" in Chapter 5, Twain considered himself to be God's agent on Earth. Twain's writings are filled with many other examples of characters who act as Satan's disciples. In an essay dealing with the names in The Mysterious Stranger, James L. Livingston makes the following comment about the names of the three principal boys in "The Chronicle of Young Satan":

> Nikolaus Bauman ("workman"), Seppi Wohlmeyer ("good steward"), and Theodore [sic] Fischer ("fisherman") are the three types of the common people who Satan has selected for conversion; they are his disciples. Christ, of course, also directed his message to the common people . . . and he entrusted the dissemination of his teachings to fishermen who were to become "Fishers of Men."[134]

Satan tells the narrator of the "Schoolhouse Hill" manuscript that if he is interested in Satan's "purpose" for coming to the earth, then he "can be useful" to Satan (MS, p. 213). In effect, he will become Satan's disciple. Henry Rule asserts that the Satan in "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" also establishes some disciples. He maintains that "the pious folk of Hadleyburg have given themselves over to Satan and become his

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[134]James L. Livingston, "Names in Mark Twain's The Mysterious Stranger," American Notes and Queries, 7 (March 1974), 109.

'children.'"[135] In the early pages of "The Chronicle of Young Satan" manuscript Twain mentions "a Hussite woman" who persuades "the ignorant and foolish to come privately by night to her house and hear "God's real message'" (MS, p. 36). Perhaps this woman is a predecessor of Satan's disciples; after all, Twain clearly considers the teachings he attributes to Satan to contain "God's real message."

Evidence of Satan's disciples is found throughout the ranks of the "mysterious strangers" discussed in this study. For example, the many "mysterious strangers" classified as illusion-dispellers all help Satan to negate some of the shams that hamper mankind. The "mysterious strangers" who are critics of mankind supply Satan with vehicles through which he can force man to reevaluate his own importance. The "mysterious strangers" discussed in "The Stranger as Joker" help Satan by being spreaders of laughter. Even if Twain did not consciously fill his writings with "msysterious strangers" who function as the disciples of Satan's "gospels," it is clear that most of Twain's "mysterious strangers" all somehow work for the betterment of the human race. Even those who purposely try to injure mankind usually benefit it. The evil stranger in "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" teaches the Hadleyburgians a valuable lesson. Even the harmful effects produced by the missionaries in China and the imperialists in the Philippines teach man that he needs to reevaluate his firm faith in traditional religion and in the value of progress. John R. May argues that in The Mysterious Stranger Satan "becomes a kind of anti-Gospel because the news that he brings is not a

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[135] Henry B. Rule, "The Role of Satan in 'The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg,'" Studies in Short Fiction, 6 (1969), 622.

celebration of reality but its negation."[136] Because almost all the "mysterious strangers" Twain employs manage to somehow dispel some of the illusions considered by mankind to be realities, they serve as preachers for Satan's reality negating "Anti-Gospel."

In order for Satan's followers to be able to function as disciples he must formulate "gospels" for them to dispense. Perhaps the most prominent of these "gospels" is the assertion that the Moral Sense is much more harmful than beneficial. The consensus among Satan and his followers is that the Moral Sense actually supplies man with the ability to commit evil deeds. Without the Moral Sense no evil could exist.[137] Another of Satan's more prominent "gospels" is the idea that reality as we know it is only a "sham." According to Satan, life is only a dream.[138] Even though Satan himself does not argue against Providence, his followers certainly attempt to nullify its importance. Even though Twain speaks of "the hand of Providence" slapping Huck in the face, it is evident that Twain himself "does not believe in special Providences" (Biography, III, 1583). The reason why "Providence don't fire no blank ca'tridges"

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[136]John R. May, "The Gospel According to Philip Traum: Structural Unity in 'The Mysterious Stranger,'" in Mark Twain: A Collection of Criticism, ed. Dean Morgan Schmitter (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), p. 135.

[137]For further information dealing with the Moral Sense see MS, pp. 72, 73, 113, 216, 437, 443; Essays, pp. 622, 623, 671, 676; WM?, pp. 199, 416, 469; and WWD, p. 378. See also Letters from the Earth, ed. Bernard De Voto (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 181; and the "Preface" to "1601" and Sketches Old and New (New York: The Golden Hind Press, 1933), p. 10.

[138]For further information dealing with the idea that life is a dream see MS, pp. 30, 33, 332, 342, 404, 405; WWD, pp. 2, 23, 266; FOM, pp. 360, 442; and WM?, pp. 442, 443. See also the last paragraph of "My Platonic Sweetheart," Harper's Monthly, 126 (Dec. 1912), 20.

(Writings, VIII, 102) is that it don't fire at all.[139]

Many of the "gospels" set forth by Satan and his followers deal with the fact that mankind in limited by forces outside himself. For example, Satan asserts that mankind originates nothing; all he can do is to put several exterior things together and draw a conclusion from the combined product.[140] Man is also limited by the circumstances in which he finds himself. For example, a human being is born with certain traits which join together and form his temperament. According to Twain, man must always conform to the dictates of his temperament.[141] The training man receives while growing up also plays a big role in his decision on how to act.[142] Public opinion also forces man to conform to certain patterns of behavior.[143] The "Gospel of Selfishness" implies that man can only act if he is sure that the act will somehow benefit himself. Everything that man does is designed to improve his well being.[144] One might argue that the last two ideas are contradictory in that a man's self-interest

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[139]For further evidence of Twain's distrust of Providence see FOM, pp. 68, 77; S & B, pp. 376, 377; and Auto, pp. 45, 133, 134. See also FOM, p. 51.

[140]For further discussion see MS, pp. 332, 333; and WM?, p. 129.

[141]For further discussion see MS, pp. 115, 250, 436; Auto, pp. 336, 337, 386; Essays, pp. 481, 483, 484; and WWD, p. 485.

[142]For further discussion see Writings, XIII, 127; XIV, 27; XVI, 150. See also Essays, pp. 567, 568; and WM?, p. 561.

[143]For further discussion see Essays, pp. 475, 584, 675, 676; MS, pp. 154, 244; WWD, p. 62; Auto, p. 377; and WM?, p. 137.

[144]For further discussion see MS, pp. 425, 440; WM?, pp. 133-136; WWD, p. 306; and Writings, V, 131.

might at times conflict with public opinion; however, Twain would argue that because the penality resulting from a defiance of public opinion would not be beneficial, it would always be in a man's self-interest to conform to public opinion.

There are many other less prominent "gospels" which need to be mentioned. For example, Satan asserts that man is a suffering and a happiness machine. Every happiness man experiences is modified by a certain amount of suffering (MS, pp. 112-113). Both Satan in "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" and Hamfat Bailey in "Which Was IT?" assert that virtue not tested by temptation is useless.[145] Satan's disciples also rail at the evils of slavery, imperialism, war, and missionaries; and they applaud the virtues of laughter and insanity.

It is fairly clear that the overriding point of all of these "gospels" is that mankind is innocent. If all evil is the result of the Moral Sense, and if man is limited by so many outside forces, then he cannot be held responsible for his actions. In The Mysterious Stranger Satan asks August Feldner: "Why do you reproach yourself? You did not make yourself; how then are you to blame?" In the short sketch "Eve Speaks," Twain allows Eve to say: "I am as I am; I did not make myself" (Essays, p. 622). Both Satan's questions and Eve's assertion stress man's innocence. Satan tries to free man from his guilt by stressing the importance of laughter--mankind's "one really effective weapon" (MS, p. 165). With this weapon, man can hopefully cut through the "shams" used to build up false realities. In "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," bursts of laughter are responsible for the revelation that untested virtues are artificial shams. All the

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[145] See Writings, XXIII, 15; and WWD, pp, 234, 279, 282, 283, 302.

negative comments Twain and his spokesmen make about "the damned human race" will hopefully force man to reevaluate his motives and his ethics.

As I have tried to show in this study, the recurrence of the "mysterious stranger" figure is one of the most dominant elements in Twain's writings. In most cases, these strangers are either objective outsiders who reveal illusions held dear by mankind or they are outsiders who hold information necessary for mankind's salvation. In both instances, these strangers' overall functions involve mankind's amelioration. Because Twain wished to formulate his own bible, and because these strangers work for the betterment of mankind, one can conclude that they are the disseminators of "The Gospel According to St. Mark."

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