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MARK TWAIN RAISING THE DEVIL

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By

GLEN F. KEENLEYSIDE, B.A.

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AUTHOR: Glen F. Keenleyside, B.A. (Carleton University)

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Abstract

In the space of eleven years (1897-1908), Twain worked intermittently on three different portrayals of a devilish stranger in unfinished stories which are known collectively as the Mysterious Stranger manuscripts. In this thesis I will examine these different devilish strangers, taking as my starting point an examination of Hank Morgan in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1889), whom I feel is their precursor. I will conclude the thesis by illustrating Twain's continued interest in the devilish stranger figure after his abandonment of the Mysterious Stranger manuscripts, in "Letters from the Earth."

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ABBREVIATIONS

CS.----------"The Chronicle of Young Satan"

CY.----------*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

LE.----------"Letters from the Earth"

N. 44.-------"No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger"

SH.----------"Schoolhouse Hill"

Because I will be quoting from these works extensively, page references will be incorporated within the body of the text using the above abbreviations.

INTRODUCTION

The devilish stranger figure who visits the earth replete with supernatural powers and an awesome intellect held a special fascination for Mark Twain in his later writings. In the space of eleven years, from 1897-1908,[1] Twain worked intermittently on three different portrayals of a devilish stranger in unfinished stories which are known collectively as the Mysterious Stranger manuscripts. These manuscripts were not published until 1969,[2] following John S. Tuckey's revelation in 1963 that the Mysterious Stranger, which had been published posthumously in 1916 under Twain's name, was a text which Twain's literary executor Albert Paine, and Paine's associate, Frederick Duneka, had created by patching together portions of Twain's three manuscripts into one story.[3] I will not concern myself with examining the fraudulent edition, for I wish to trace Twain's interest in the devilish stranger figure rather than Paine and Duneka's interest in it. Tuckey, in Mark Twain and Little Satan and in "The Mysterious Stranger: Mark Twain's Texts and the Paine-Duneka Edition,"[4] has already dealt with the fraud in full, and suffice it to say that Tuckey's following remark reflects my own feelings regarding the fraudulent version: "it is perhaps only a mild exaggeration to say that the Paine-Duneka edition is about as far from Mark Twain's own latest intended form of The Mysterious Stranger as it would, on any ordinary

working day, be possible to get".[5]

Yet while Tuckey traces the various years of the manuscripts's composition and proves the Paine-Duneka text to be fraudulent, he pays very little attention to the differences which exist among Twain's devilish strangers in the manuscripts. He merely points out that each stranger is different from the other and leaves the matter at that:

> The three versions are not so much different drafts of one story as three different stories. Each has for the most part different characters, situations, and actions. Even the mysterious strangers are differently characterized in each manuscript.[6]

Neither does William Gibson's "Introduction" in his authoritative, uncorrupted edition of the manuscripts provide an actual analysis of the figures. He is more concerned with summarizing Tuckey's research on the dating of the manuscripts, and with providing biographical information on Twain.

In my examination of Twain's devilish figures, I will take as my starting point Hank Morgan in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1889), whom I consider to be their precursor. As Bernard DeVoto notes, Connecticut Yankee is the last work which Mark Twain wrote before a number of catastrophes occurred in his life. In 1894, his ten year old publishing firm went bankrupt, and one of his daughters, Jean, was discovered to be an epileptic. Twain himself began to suffer from bronchitis and rheumatism. In 1896, another of his daughters, Susy, died of meningitis, and his wife

became an invalid until her death in 1904.[7] All of these calamities led Twain to voice his pessimistic outlook on human life with stronger conviction in his Mysterious Stranger manuscripts than he did through Hank Morgan in Connecticut Yankee.

Twain wrote other works between The Connecticut Yankee and the Mysterious Stranger manuscripts -- namely, Pudd'nhead Wilson (1894) and Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc (1896) -- but because I wish to maintain a clear focus on Twain's shaping of the devilish stranger, I will examine only those characters who are visitors to the society in which we see them. In the words of William Gibson,

> Mark Twain began many other fables and fictions in the last decade of his writing life and completed a few. But the Satanic stranger who visits the earth . . . dominated his imagination and guided his pen in those years, trailing dozens of lesser characters in his angelic wake.[8]

Twain began "The Chronicle of Young Satan," the first of his Mysterious Stranger manuscripts, in 1897-1898, and he wrote only a part of it before he put it aside and began to write his second version of the story, "Schoolhouse Hill," in 1898.[9] Twain then abandoned the second manuscript in the year in which he began it, after becoming dissatisfied with it, and he returned to the "Chronicle" in the period from 1899-1900. It is Twain's return to the "Chronicle" that is responsible for much of the material in which he -- as we shall see in my second chapter -- is "speaking without reserve".[10] Because

Twain began the "Chronicle" before he began "Schoolhouse Hill," I will discuss it before I discuss "Schoolhouse Hill." As a result, my examination of the manuscripts follows the order of their presentation in Gibson's text.

One last point before turning to Hank Morgan in Connecticut Yankee. Mark Twain in his later writings 'raises the devil' in two senses: first, in the sense of satirizing the human race in a particularly violent way, and second, in the sense of struggling for years to make the devilish stranger a coherent literary character.

Notes

[1]John S. Tuckey, Mark Twain and Little Satan (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1972), p. 76.

[2]Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts, ed. William Gibson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

[3]Tuckey, Little Satan, passim.

[4]Tuckey, "The Mysterious Stranger: Mark Twain's Texts and the Paine-Duneka Edition," in Mark Twain's The Mysterious Stranger and the Critics, ed. J. Tuckey (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 85-90.

[5]Tuckey, "The Myst. Str.," p. 88.

[6]Tuckey, "The Myst. Str.," p. 86.

[7]Bernard DeVoto, Mark Twain At Work (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), pp. 106-108.

[8]William Gibson, "Introduction," in The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts, p. 19.

[9]Tuckey, Little Satan, p. 38.

[10]Tuckey, Little Satan, p. 44.

CHAPTER I

Hank Morgan as the Precursor of the Devilish Figure

Hank Morgan in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court is a factory superintendent in late nineteenth-century Connecticut who finds himself in sixth-century England after being hit on the head with a crowbar. Hank's story is presented in the first person, which allows us to gain insight into his character. Although Twain refers to Hank at first as "a curious stranger" (CY., p. 1), his curiousness decreases for the reader as his story unfolds. Hank's perception of things and his reactions to those perceptions gives the novel its direction. Everything is centered around him.

Being "a practical Connecticut man" (CY., p. 16), Hank immediately evaluates his situation after regaining consciousness from the crowbar blow and he determines to make the most of things. He views King Arthur and his superstitious subjects as being irrational creatures:

> I saw that I was just another Robinson Crusoe cast away on an uninhabited island, with no society but some more or less tame animals, and if I wanted to make life bearable I must do as he did -- invent, contrive, create, reorganize things; set brain and hand to work, and keep them busy. Well, that was in my line. (CY., p. 53)

Hank uses his nineteenth-century knowledge to convince the people that he has supernatural power, pretending to be able to blot the sun from the sky (CY., pp. 46-50) and blow up

Merlin's tower (CY., p. 58) through sheer willpower. He is surprised at the ease with which he can trick the gullible people, and he delights in surpassing Merlin's fame and popularity as a magician:

> I had to go out a dozen times a day and show myself to these reverent and awe-stricken multitudes. It came to be a great burden, as to time and trouble, but of course it was at the same time compensatingly agreeable to be so celebrated and such a center of homage. It turned Brer Merlin green with envy and spite, which was a great satisfaction to me. (CY., p. 54)

The above quotation typifies the tremendous pride and satisfaction which Hank -- or "The Boss," as he prefers to be called -- takes in himself throughout the novel. But time after time Hank shows his grand sense of superiority over the others to be groundless.

A criticism which Horace J. Bridges directs against Twain's bleak philosophy of life can be directed with much aptness against Hank Morgan:

> the tendency to dogmatize on insufficient evidence, to credit oneself with greater knowledge and competence than one really possesses . . . is a very serious obstacle to the working out of a satisfactory system of religion or philosophy. [1]

Because Hank credits himself with having greater ability than he actually has, he works out a muddled philosophy regarding the rest of mankind. On the one hand, Hank's philosophy concerning the nature of man is deterministic:

> Inherited ideas are a curious thing . . . . I had mine, the king and his people had theirs. In both cases they flowed in ruts

> worn deep by time and habit, and the man who should have proposed to divert them by reason and argument would have had a long contract on his hands. (CY., p.63)

> Training -- training is everything; training is all there is to a person. We speak of nature; it is folly; there is no such thing as nature; what we call by that misleading name is merely heredity and training. We have no thoughts of our own; they are transmitted to us, trained into us. All that is original in us . . . can be covered up and hidden by the point of a cambric needle, all the rest being atoms contributed by, and inherited from, a procession of ancestors that stretches back a billion years to the Adam-clam or grasshopper or monkey from whom our race has been so tediously and ostentatiously and unprofitably developed. (CY., p. 150)

Yet Hank does try to better the lot of King Arthur's people. He believes, deep down, that it is not too late to resurrect the pride and self-respect which he claims the church and monarchy have taken away from them. A firm believer in personal independence and liberty, he makes the following criticism of the Roman Catholic Church:

> In two or three little centuries it had converted a nation of men to a nation of worms. Before the day of the Church's supremacy in the world, men were men, and held their heads up, and had a man's pride and spirit and independence . . . . But then the Church came to the front . . . and she introduced heritable ranks and aristocracies, and taught all the Christian populations of the earth to bow down to them and worship them. (CY., pp. 64-65)

Being 'practical' in nature, Hank would not try to convince the people to abolish the monarchy and unified religion if he felt that he could not be successful in the attempt. We see

him claim in one instance, "I'm going to turn groping and grubbing automata into men" (CY., p. 147). And Hank's underlying optimism in mankind is further indicated after a peasant opposes a baron's cruelty and murders him in self-defense. Hank states, "There it was, you see. A man is a man, at bottom. Whole ages of abuse and oppression cannot crush the manhood clear out of him. Whoever thinks it a mistake is himself mistaken" (CY., p. 301). Hank, then, is a man of two contrary philosophies: he feels that man can never be freed of his training and habit, yet he also believes that he can coax King Arthur's subjects into seeking liberation from their oppression. Because Hank does not see himself as he actually is, he is unable to view the world and the other humans who inhabit it in an entirely logical manner. For all of his pretension to supernatural power, he has only human -- and therefore limited -- perception. He is unable to realize that in his scorn for the people of the sixth century there lies a scorn for the very nature of man, in whatever age he may live.

One of the sixth-century traditions which Hank scorns is the concept of knighthood. He derides the jousts in which Arthur's knights compete:

> what a pity it was that men with such superb strength . . . should not have been born at a time when they could put it to some useful purpose. Take a jackass, for instance: a jackass has that kind of strength, and puts it to a useful purpose, and is valuable to this world because he is a jackass; but a

> nobleman is not valuable because he is a jackass. It is a mixture that is always ineffectual, and should never have been attempted in the first place. (CY., p. 124)

Hank's comments in the above quotation, humourous in intent, foreshadow Twain's serious assertion in his later works that animals should be held in higher regard than humans. Hank makes the knights ride around wearing sandwich-board advertisements for soap and toothpaste, thereby making them look ridiculous. He says of one of his knights, who wears a stove-pipe hat with a full suit of armour, "It was another of my surreptitious schemes for extinguishing knighthood by making it grotesque and absurd" (CY., p. 190). Hank's remark indicates a belief that laughter is man's best weapon against the objects of his hatred. We will see Satan in "The Chronicle of Young Satan" expound upon a similar conviction in my next chapter.

An underlying motive for the 'practical' Hank's efforts to assist Arthur's people is his own personal gain. He wants to be the leader of the republic which he has hopes of establishing: "Well, I may as well confess, though I do feel ashamed when I think of it: I was beginning to have a base hankering to be its first president myself" (CY., p. 400). This confession undercuts the lofty claim which he makes earlier that his major concern is "to banish oppression from this land and restore to all its people their stolen rights and manhood without disobliging anybody" (CY., p. 112). Hank does not

mind using his superior education to disoblige Sir Sagramor and nine other knights during a jousting tournament by murdering them one after the other with a gun. He boasts afterwards, "The day was mine. Knight-errantry was a doomed institution. The march of civilation was begun" (CY., p. 396). Hank speaks of civilization as if its major purpose is to use guns and technology to commit murder. He has not really brought society to any higher a level than it was at before. In fact, he has broadened its ability to cause destruction, as we see from the massacre of the many thousands of knights outside of Merlin's cave through the use of dynamite, an electric fence, machine guns, and a man-made flood (CY., pp. 443-444) after he pits himself and a small army of men against the rest of England.

When Hank meets the cruel Morgan le Fay, who shares Hank's bent for feigning supernatural power, he is appalled. As Edmund Reiss points out:

> One of Twain's most ironic touches in the book is to link by name Hank Morgan, ostensibly the worthy proponent of science and the man of the new order, and Morgan le Fay, the cruel, evil sorceress and representative of the old order . . . . what appalls the Yankee in the character of Morgan le Fay are the same insensitivities Twain objects to in the Yankee's character.[2]

While Hank is able to see through the hypocrisy and evilness of the human race of the sixth century, then, he is unable to perceive his own shortcomings and those of his former Connecticut society. Being from that society himself, Hank cannot stand

back from it and see it as it is. His education may be superior to that of a sixth-century groundling's, but his intellect is not. It is Hank's training as a Yankee to take charge of a situation and dominate things, whereas it is the training of King Arthur's people to accept -- and expect -- domination from the church and monarchy. In Hank's encounter with the people of the sixth century we see the encounter of one trained creature with the creatures of a different training. Neither creature works by reason. They are machines.

It is at Merlin's cave, besieged by the whole nation, that Hank must finally admit his failure to free King Arthur's subjects from the shackles of their former training and habits. He is deserted by all of his men except for a small number of very young ones:

> the mass of the nation had swung their caps and shouted for the republic for about one day, and there an end! The Church, the nobles, and the gentry then turned one grand, all-disapproving frown upon them and shriveled them into sheep! From that moment the sheep had begun to gather to the fold -- that is to say, the camps -- and offer their valueless lives and their valuable wool to the "righteous cause." Why, even the very men who had lately been slaves were in the "righteous cause," and . . . slabbering over it, just like all the other commoners. Imagine such human muck as this; conceive of this folly! . . . All England was marching against us! Truly, this was more than I had bargained for. (CY., pp. 429-430)

The above quotation foreshadows a remark which Satan will make in "The Chronicle of Young Satan" concerning the ease with which the human race can be led into doing something

which it actually opposes by an appeal to its emotion. But whereas Satan -- who has observed man through the centuries and has a far lower estimation of him than Hank does -- is beyond the point of being surprised by man's lack of reason, Hank Morgan is only now beginning to realize that it is man's nature that is at fault rather than the backwardness of the sixth century.

Hank is a murderer. As Reiss states, he is not Twain's mouthpiece: "the insensitive, materialistic Boss is not to be taken as the voice, the mouthpiece, of the author".[3] Hank's comments on Christianity, as well as his statement that man is an irrational creature of training and habit, are often expounded in Twain's later work, but Hank's dishonourable behaviour in Connecticut Yankee separates him from a close association with the author's own views. Hank does not truly transcend the people whom he meets in the sixth century because he is, in the end result, one of them, only with different training. However, to suggest that Hank's attempt to instill nineteenth-century attitudes and opinions into the people is totally ineffectual would be incorrect. He is able to transmit his training to the younger subjects, who have not yet had the ways and attitudes of their own time drilled firmly into them, as in the case of the fifty youths who help him to defend Merlin's cave, and -- in particular -- in the case of Clarence, a young page whom Hank befriends and converts to the ways of a Connecticut Yankee.

Clarence is fifteen years old when Hank meets him (CY., p. 14), and he is in danger of becoming as well-trained as his elders in sixth-century attitudes until Hank intervenes and shapes his character into one after his own. Clarence is at first a naive, "cowering lad" (CY., p. 41) who is terrified by Hank's pretence of magical powers:

> It was pitiful to see a creature so terrified, so unnerved, so demoralized . . . . he made me promise over and over again that I would remain his friend, and never turn against him or cast any enchantments upon him. (CY., p. 38)

Hank begins his education of Clarence after establishing himself as King Arthur's top advisor. Clarence's actual name is Amyas le Poulet (CY., p. 109), but Hank gives the convert to nineteenth-century ways a nineteenth-century name, thereby making the conversion of his trainee all the more complete. By age twenty-two, Clarence is Hank's "head executive" (CY., p. 79):

> Of late I had been training him for journalism . . . . He took to it like a duck . . . . Already he had doubled himself in one way; he talked sixth century and wrote nineteenth. His journalistic style was climbing, steadily; it was already up to the back settlement Alabama mark. (CY., p. 80)

However, Clarence's conversion is not an immediate one. Shortly after Hank registers his approval of Clarence's journalistic style, we see Clarence become ecstatic over King Arthur's appointment of Hank to a quest in which the latter is supposed to battle three one-eyed giants. Hank relates Clarence's reaction to the news as following: "He could keep

neither his legs nor his body still, but pirouetted about the place in an airy ecstasy of happiness" (CY., p. 83). Clarence is yet susceptible to superstition and fantasy. But he moves further and further away from his society and its ways as the novel progresses and he adopts Hank's ways more fully.

Hank has a very close, almost father-son relationship with Clarence. Hank leaves him in charge of his affairs in Camelot while he attends to his quest, and when he next speaks with Clarence by telephone a few weeks later, he states that "It was good to hear my boy's voice again" (CY., p. 224). Hank's emotional attachment to his protegé is later reiterated when he reaches London and he sees a newsboy on a streetcorner. Hank remarks that "here was proof that Clarence was still alive and banging away. I meant to be with him before long; the thought was full of cheer" (CY., p, 363). The newsboy is also proof that Clarence has been so well trained by Hank that he is able to maintain and expand Hank's programs and operations in his absence. Clarence is as committed to change as Hank is, and he is becoming as much at home with nineteenth-century technology and attitudes as Hank is.

By the time Hank meets Clarence again, we see that the same Clarence who was once so easily duped by Hank's claim to supernatural powers is now capable of playing a joke on Hank. During a discussion concerning the monarchy

one day, Clarence suggests that the new republic which Hank hopes to form should have a unique kind of monarchy:

> He believed that no nation that had ever known the joy of worshipping a royal family could ever be robbed of it and not fade away and die of melancholy. I urged that kings were dangerous. He said, then have cats. He was sure that a royal family of cats would answer every purpose. (CY., p. 400)

Clarence proceeds to outline the benefits of having a cat monarchy until he can no longer suppress his laughter, and Hank finally realizes that Clarence is being facetious. The incident indicates that Clarence is becoming more artful and astute than Hank himself. He is turning the tables on Hank. And it is Clarence who masterminds the logistics of the battle at Merlin's cave in the final encounter with the knights of England. He has planned it all in Hank's absence.

Clarence's evolution from ignorant disciple to crafty confederate is perhaps best illustrated by the following conversation between Clarence and Hank, which Clarence leads off:

> "I've provisioned the cave for a siege -- "
>
> "A good idea, a first rate idea."
>
> "I think so . . . . I went out into the hills and uncovered and cut the secret wires which connected your bedroom with the wires that go to the dynamite deposits under all our vast factories . . . and connected that wire with the cave, and nobody but you and I suspect where the other end of it goes to . . . ."
>
> "It was the right move -- and the natural one." (CY., pp. 422-423)

Clarence no longer expresses himself in the vernacular of the

sixth century, as he had earlier. Hank's conversations with Clarence in the latter part of the novel are similar to those which might occur between two persons of the nineteenth century, and Clarence is now spoken to as an equal by Hank. In fact, in one of the last conversations which they have together -- when Hank suggests that he and Clarence ask the aristocracy to surrender at Merlin's cave, in order to help them avoid certain destruction -- Clarence speaks as if it is Hank who is the naive and unintelligent one. Clarence laughs "the sarcastic laugh he was born with" (CY., p. 437) and he says to Hank, "Somehow it seems impossible for you to ever fully realize what these nobilities are" (CY., p. 437). His insight into human nature surpasses Hank's.

Clarence has no conscience, while Hank does. Hank states that the ensuing slaughter at Merlin's cave "disturbed me so that I couldn't get any peace of mind for thinking of it and worrying over it" (CY., p. 436), but Clarence has no qualms over the slaughter. While Hank can only fool himself into believing that he is indifferent towards men, Clarence truly is uncaring towards them. In Clarence we see the evil influence which Hank has had on a youth whom he described at first sight as being "good-natured; by his gait, he was satisfied with himself" (CY., p. 14). By the end of Connecticut Yankee, the now sarcastic, disparaging Clarence is beginning to exhibit character traits which are similar to some of those exhibited by the ever-mocking Satan in "The

Chronicle of Young Satan," who shall be examined in the following chapter.

Notes

[1]Horace J. Bridges, "The Pessimism of Mark Twain," in As I Was Saying (Boston: Marshall Jones Co., 1923), p. 37.

[2]Edmund Reiss, "Afterward," in Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (Scarborough: Signet, 1963), p. 325.

[3]Reiss, "Afterward," p. 325.

CHAPTER II

Satan in "The Chronicle of Young Satan"

Satan, in "The Chronicle of Young Satan," makes his first appearance among three youths, one of whom is the narrator of the story, Theodor Fischer. The sudden appearance of the young stranger among the boys as they relax one day on a wooded hilltop, and his remarkable ability to light Theodor's pipe by blowing on it and to transform water into ice by using the same technique, astonishes and charms the boys. Because the scene of Satan's initial appearance is related by Theodor -- one of the visited -- rather than the visitor (Satan), we are able to gain insight into Theodor's thoughts, and his character takes on a human dimension, whereas Satan is presented as a mysterious being who is remote from the understanding of the boys and the reader. The narrative technique of the story differs from that of Connecticut Yankee, in which it is the visitor's thoughts which are revealed to us -- and whose character gains depth as a result -- and the visited whose thoughts are kept remote.

In the "Chronicle," Satan at first appears to have a dwarfed intellect, destroying a tiny race of humans which he creates after telling the boys that he can do no wrong (CS., p. 49). But as the story unfolds, we see that it is man, and not Satan, who has an inferior intellect. Satan is separated from the human society which he visits not only by

his superior knowledge, as Hank Morgan is in Connecticut Yankee, but by his superior intellect and his supernatural powers. As Theodor comments, "He had seen everything, he had been everywhere, he knew everything, and he forgot nothing" (CS., p. 50). Satan, then, has observed man through the ages. He has not merely been transported from one age to another.

In his destruction of the tiny race of humans, Satan displays a marked lack of concern for mankind, and although Theodor and his two friends, Seppi and Nikolaus, are shocked and upset by Satan's actions, they are unable to leave him because they are fascinated by him: "He made us forget everything; we could only listen to him, and love him and be his slaves, to do with as he would. He made us drunk with the joy of being with him" (CS., p. 50). As they spend more and more time with Satan, the boys perceive the unflattering view which he has of the human race:

> always when he was talking about men and women here in the earth and their doings -- even their grandest and sublimest -- we were secretly ashamed, for his manner showed that to him they and their doings were of paltry poor consequence; often you would think he was talking about flies . . . . Once he even said, in so many words, that our people down here were quite interesting to him, notwithstanding they were so dull and ignorant and trivial and conceited, and so diseased and rickety, and such a shabby poor worthless lot all around. He said it in a quite matter-of-course way and without any bitterness, just as a person might talk about bricks or manure or any other thing that was of no consequence and hadn't feelings. (CS., pp. 50-51)

Satan in the above quotation is reminiscent of the King of

Brobdingnag in Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels when he tells Gulliver, after the latter describes his society to him,

> I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of odious little vermin that Nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.[1]

In both works the scornful person is outside of the society which he comments on, and both speakers are contemptuous of mankind.

Yet Satan's contempt for man does not prevent him from viewing man with a sense of humour, sarcastic though this humour is. When the boys become startled after learning Satan's name, he laughs "a natural laugh, and pleasant and sociable, not boisterous, and [it] had a reassuring influence upon us" (CS., p. 48). But when Satan later ridicules the history of the human race and its aristocracies, he "laughed and laughed till it was enough to make a person sick to hear him" (CS., p. 74). Satan often disparages man's inability to perceive the comicalities which pervade man's existence. On one occasion, he makes the following statement about religion and the aristocracy:

> No religion exists which is not littered with engaging and delightful comicalities, but the race never perceives them. Nothing can be more deliciously comical than hereditary royalties and aristocracies, but none except royal families and aristocrats are aware of it. (CS., pp. 164-165)

He feels that the most effective way for man to destroy the

shams and delusions of society is not through force or weaponry, but through laughter:

> your race, in its poverty, has unquestionably one really effective weapon -- laughter. Power, Money, Persuasion, Supplication, Persecution -- these can lift at a colossal humbug, -- push it a little . . . century by century: but only Laughter can blow it to rags and atoms at a blast. Against the assault of Laughter nothing can stand . . . . As a race, do you ever use it at all? No -- you lack sense and the courage. (CS., pp. 165-166)

The principle behind Hank Morgan's attempt in Connecticut Yankee to abolish knighthood by making it look grotesque and absurd is given its full expression in Satan's above assertion.

Satan claims that "Men have nothing in common with me -- there is no point of contact. They have foolish little feelings, and foolish little vanities and impertinences and ambitions, their foolish little life is but a laugh, a sigh, and extinction; and they have no sense. Only the Moral Sense" (CS., p. 113). Frequently, Satan voices his conviction that the moral sense is a debasing thing. He is always accompanied by various kinds of animals when he appears before Theodor, because the animals share Satan's absence of the moral sense and therefore feel a kinship with him (CS., p. 140). He tells Theodor that man should not refer to human cruelty as 'brutality' or 'inhumanness' because deliberate cruelty is a distinctly human action:

> No brute ever does a cruel thing -- that is the monopoly of the snob with the Moral

> Sense . . . . a brute . . . . does not inflict pain for the pleasure of inflicting it -- only man does that. Inspired by that mongrel Moral Sense of his! A Sense whose function is to distinguish between right and wrong, with liberty to choose which of them he will do . . . . and in nine cases out of ten he prefers the wrong . . . . he is such an unreasoning creature that he is not able to perceive that the Moral Sense degrades him to the bottom layer of animated beings and is a shameful possession. (CS., pp. 72-73)

Throughout the "Chronicle" we see characters who choose to do evil rather than good. Father Adolf uses his evil influence to have the virtuous Father Peter suspended from the Church, and he later causes him to be wrongfully imprisoned by claiming that Father Peter stole over eleven hundred ducats from him. And Hans Oppert, the village loafer, derives unending satisfaction from beating and torturing his dog. The alteration which Twain made in his story in 1899-1900, mentioned earlier in my "Introduction," is largely responsible for the depiction of man choosing to do evil. The story's original plot sequence was primarily concerned with developing the character of Father Adolf, describing the boys's first encounter with Satan, and presenting Father Peter's trial.[2] Twain added to the story's plot sequence Satan's views on the moral sense, Theodor's recollection of the story of witch-hunters burning innocent girls as witches, the decision of the village not to charge Father Adolf with witchcraft for fear of suffering an Interdict, and the burning of Frau Brandt, a villager, as a witch after she derides God

while grieving for her drowned daughter.[3]

Satan shows Theodor that man has always been deliberately cruel when he portrays for him the history of civilization. Centuries of cruelty and oppression flash before Theodor's eyes, with kings starving their subjects to death in order to amass vast personal wealth, and successive generations of Christians inventing newer and more diabolical weapons with which to kill people than ever before. Satan laughs scornfully throughout the history review, his mocking comments being typified by the following one:

> the Christian Civilization has scored a triumph to be proud of. Two centuries from now it will be recognised that all the competent killers are Christian; then the pagan world will go to school to the Christian: not to acquire his religion, but his guns. The Turk and the Chinaman will buy those, to kill missionaries and converts with. (CS., p. 137)

He informs Theodor that because Christianity makes man so prone to do evil, "My uncle is thinking of introducing it into his dominions" (CS., p. 156).

Satan is a nephew of Lucifer's, and his name itself has evil connotations, yet his arrangement of the early deaths of a selection of people, although at first considered by Theodor and Seppi to be evil, is helpful, as when he prevents a disastrous outbreak of scarlet fever from occurring in the village by arranging Nikolaus's death. Satan is a positive figure despite his name and despite the boys's initial impression of his actions. He tries to better man's situation by giving him the least miserable -- and therefore the

shortest -- existence possible. As he tells Theodor, "we cannot love men, but we can be harmlessly indifferent to them; we can also like them, sometimes. I like you and the boys, I like Father Peter, and for your sakes I am doing all these things for the villagers" (CS., p. 115). Conversely, Father Adolf, although he is a priest, is a negative, evil figure who causes tremendous grief and disgrace to befall Father Peter for his own personal gain. We see that it is man who is evil, rather than Satan. Despite the pious façade of the Christian Church, man has no link with the spiritual world. The Church is portrayed as being a false agency which man uses to give glorious motives to his cruelty. When Frau Brandt is accused of being a witch for exclaiming, after her young daughter drowns, that God is without compassion, she is excommunicated, doomed to hell, and burnt at the stake, yet her spirit ascends to heaven (CS., p. 133).

Paul Baender makes the following comment concerning Twain's use of Satan as a positive figure:

> He [Satan] possessed the freedom, intelligence, and humour which men claimed for themselves yet denied in their actions and codes. And since he also represented the best in a deity -- compassion and disdain where merited -- Satan was a measure for the shortcomings of both God and man. By picking for this standard the evil firgure in Christian myth, Mark Twain might show how far Western man's habituation in biblical morality had corrupted his moral judgment.[4]

Satan for Twain is a seer of truth. Satan says of the human race at one point, "It duped itself from cradle to grave with

shams and delusions which it mistook for realities, and this made its entire life a sham" (CS., p. 164). He asserts that man is a conditioned machine:

> Every man is a suffering-machine and a happiness-machine combined . . . . In most cases the man's life is about equally divided between happiness and unhappiness. When this is not the case the unhappiness predominates -- always; never the other . . . . To that kind of a person life is . . . only a disaster. Sometimes, for an hour's happiness a man's machinery makes him pay years of misery. (CS., pp. 112-113)

Satan does not credit man with having free will. He claims that man's life is determined by his circumstances and environment, and that "each act unfailingly begets an act, that act begets another, and so on to the end" (CS., p. 115). Contrary to our first impression of the visitor and the visited, we now see that it is man who is a being of low intellectual capacities: "a man will never drop a link in his chain. He cannot. If he made up his mind to try, that project would itself be an unavoidable link -- a thought bound to occur to him at that precise moment, and made certain by the first act of his babyhood" (CS., p. 116). As in Connecticut Yankee, we have the assertion that man is an irrational creature of training and habit. He is unable to think for himself. But while Hank Morgan in Connecticut Yankee feels that he has the ability to rid man of his unreasoning nature, Satan in the "Chronicle" knows that no one has this ability. He causes Father Peter to go insane by telling him that he has been found guilty of Father Adolf's dishonest charges

against him -- when he has in fact been found innocent -- and Satan justifies his lie to Theodor by stating that "sanity and happiness are an impossible combination" (CS., pp. 163-164). Convinced of man's irredeemable lowliness, Satan's view of mankind is much bleaker than Hank Morgan's view.

Satan is known by the name of Philip Traum to all of the villagers aside from Theodor, Seppi, and Nikolaus. 'Traum' is German for 'Dream' (CS., p. 85). The alias is a fitting one, for whenever Satan is near people he enchants them: their spirits rise and they become joyful. Theodor tells us of his discovery of this fact when he has his second encounter with Satan:

> I was walking along the path, feeling very down-hearted, when a most cheery and tingling freshening-up sensation went rippling through me, and I was too glad for any words; for I knew by that sign that Satan was by. I had noticed it before. (CS., p. 64)

And when Satan later appears as Philip Traum before the villagers at Marget's party,

> Everybody noticed how cool and fresh it was, all of a sudden, and wondered at it, for they could see that the sun was beating down the same as before, outside, and the sky clear of clouds. (CS., p. 85)

Satan has an even greater effect on people when he melds into their bodies, which he does with Father Adolf and Wilhelm Meidling. He takes total control over them. While he is inside of Father Adolf's body, Satan performs astounding magical tricks (CS., pp. 85-88), and he enters Wilhelm's

body when the latter defends Father Peter in court, inspiring Wilhelm to prove that his client has not robbed Father Adolf (CS., pp. 160-161).

Paul Baender labels Satan as being "at times indeed a supernatural Hank Morgan indulging his "circus side" in prodigies of creation and destruction".[5] Yet while Hank is a precursor of Satan in the "Chronicle," one should not consider Satan to be merely a supernatural Hank Morgan. Hank is a character whom Twain has built upon, rather than copy, in the "Chronicle." Although Satan and Hank Morgan do share some basic similarities -- both are associated with magic, both are outside of the society which they visit, and both often speak scornfully of that society -- a number of Satan's dominant character traits distinguish him from Hank. He has no interest in establishing himself in the human race or in becoming its leader, as Hank Morgan does. Satan is content with making occasional visits to the earth, sometimes staying away for days on end. And while Hank occasionally derides the community which he finds himself in, he does place importance upon being admired by the people, which indicates that he is not so firmly set in his denunciation of them as he lets on to be. If he viewed the human race with as much contempt as Satan does, he would not be concerned with having the admiration of other humans. Moreover, Satan, viewing man's lowness with laughter rather than with Hank Morgan's dejection and his determination to improve man's nature,

mixes with the community with the aim of amusing himself rather than with the hope of educating people. While visiting with Marget one evening, Satan speaks approvingly of Ursula, Marget's maid, within Ursula's hearing, in order to watch her become vain and strut around the room. Satan tells Marget, who is unaware of his true identity, that he would like his uncle to meet her uncle some day, and she is delighted by the proposal. Satan plays chess with Wilhelm Meidling, predicting the eventual outcome of the game with accuracy after it has hardly started, and he sets one of Wilhelm's poems to wonderful music with no effort.

Satan does not have the muddled philosophy of Hank Morgan, who, as we saw in the previous chapter, feels that man can never by freed of his training, and yet at the same time believes that he can free him. And Satan does not make Hank's mistake of crediting himself with having more knowledge and ability than he actually has. Since he is endowed with genuine supernatural powers and a powerful intellect, Satan's claim of superiority to man is well-founded rather than groundless. In giving Satan a much more pessimistic attitude towards mankind than he gave to Hank, Twain presents a more direct indictment of the human race, and he brings his protagonist into a closer association with his own views. The satiric persona is becoming Twain's own voice.

One of the more noticeable differences between Hank and Satan is the relationship which they have with their

respective companions. Satan's relationship with Theodor is not of the father-son kind which exists between Hank and Clarence. Whenever Satan points out man's lowness to Theodor, he is not necessarily trying to make him a better person so much as he is trying to point out something which he finds to be amusing, in an attempt to share the joke. Yet it must be admitted that Satan does at times come very close to theorizing. As a result, while Satan does not have a muddled philosophy, Twain almost gives him a double, contradictory purpose. A character who is not supposed to be interested in instructing man should not be shown theorizing about man's nature with his human comrade very often. But because Twain makes it clear that Satan does not intend for Theodor to take his words as a sobering lecture, which Hank Morgan so often intends while talking to Clarence and King Arthur, he manages to steer clear of the aforementioned contradiction.

Although Satan often talks to Theodor as if the latter is capable of appreciating the humour of man's baseness, he is never long in realizing that Theodor is hurt by the humour rather than appreciative of it, as we see when he presents the review of Christian civilization for Theodor and Seppi: "he saw by our faces how much we were hurt, and he cut his sentence short and stopped chuckling and his manner changed" (CS., p. 138). It is because of Satan's lack of seriousness that Theodor does not accept his attitudes and opinions as readily as Clarence accepts Hank Morgan's. If

Satan really wanted to educate Theodor, he would be more inclined to spend every day with him, in a humourless, instructional capacity. However, to say that Theodor's hesitation to accept Satan's attitudes sets him apart from Clarence and his hasty conversion is not to say that Theodor never adopts any of Satan's views. Theodor reconciles himself to Satan's interest in meddling in people's lives, after having an initial feeling of dismay, when he learns that Satan changes them for the better. In fact, Theodor takes part in the tampering himself. After Frau Brandt is burnt at the stake and she ascends to heaven as a direct result of Seppi's and Theodor's wishes, Theodor states that "we knew she was in heaven notwithstanding the excommunication; and we were glad of her death and not sorry that we had brought it about" (CS., p. 133). Gradually convinced by Satan's assertions that man is a lowly creature, Theodor decides to use Satan's knowledge of the future to take advantage of his fellow man, justifying his action with the claim that such a lowly lot deserve to be outwitted. He and Seppi make a bet with other village boys that one of the villagers will break his leg at a specified time during the next day, and

> next day, sure enough, at 7 minutes after 12 we skinned them . . . and divided the take. We were not sorry, for it was wrong for them to bet on Sunday. It seemed to me that it was a plain judgment on them. (CS., pp. 149-150)

Much as he resents Satan's view of man, Theodor is not able

to reject it or avoid being influenced by it.

In narrating the events of the story, Theodor is reflecting back on his childhood as an old man -- he states at one point that he is a grandfather (CS., p. 148) -- and at times he digresses from his narration in order to comment as an adult upon Satan's attitudes and actions. When Frau Brandt speaks derisively of God for allowing Lisa Brandt to drown, not realizing that if Lisa had lived she would have led a miserable life of shame and depravity, the adult Theodor states that

> It is as Satan said, we do not know good fortune from bad, and are always mistaking the one for the other. Many a time, since then, I have heard people pray to God to spare the life of sick persons, but I have never done it. (CS., p. 129)

And after Satan causes Father Peter to go insane, claiming that only the insane can be happy, Theodor states that "privately I did not think much of his processes. At that time" (CS., p. 164). The shift in the point of view from the young Theodor to the old Theodor conveys the fact that although Theodor's conversion is not as immediate as Clarence's was with Hank, it is in the end result as complete. It is probable that Theodor as an adult would no longer be hurt to hear the history of Christian civilization mocked. Hence, despite the difference in the relationships which Satan and Hank have with their respective companions, the end result of the relationships is the same. Their companions are

converted to their attitudes towards mankind.

Notes

[1]Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels (Markham: Penguin, 1974), p. 173.

[2]Gibson, "Introduction," in The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts, p. 5.

[3]Gibson, "Introduction," pp. 6-7.

[4]Paul Baender, "Introduction," in Twain's What Is Man?, And Other Philosophical Writings, ed. P. Baender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 29.

[5]Baender, "Introduction," p. 29.

CHAPTER III

Forty-four in "Schoolhouse Hill"

Twain totally changes the story of the "Chronicle" in his presentation of a stranger in "Schoolhouse Hill," his second Mysterious Stranger manuscript. To begin with, the stranger who appears in "Schoolhouse Hill" is not named Satan, but Forty-four, and he is the Devil's son rather than his nephew. Forty-four refers to himself by a number because, he claims, his actual name is unpronouncable by man (SH., p. 218). But why he chooses the number Forty-four as a substitute name is uncertain. In the words of a bemused William Gibson, the number "ought to mean something".[1] We may never know for certain what Twain intended the number to mean, or if he intended it to mean anything at all, but Gibson offers a reasonable explanation for the number in his following remark: "I conclude that the number and name "44" indicate simply that "Satan's original host have large families," as the author says in his working notes for "Schoolhouse Hill"."[2]

Forty-four is as mysterious in his first appearance in "Schoolhouse Hill" as Satan is in the "Chronicle," but for a different reason. Forty-four's entry is not marked by destruction, as Satan's is when he destroys the race of tiny humans which he has created. Forty-four is passive, saying and doing nothing (SH., pp. 176-177). This passiveness is

representative of his behaviour throughout the story. He rarely engages in vigorous action or causes things to happen through his direct involvement in a situation. When Forty-four enters the village schoolhouse and displays his exceptional talents, it is Mr. Ferguson, the schoolteacher, who gives rise to each remarkable display by testing Forty-four's mental ability. While John Tuckey's comment that Forty-four in "Schoolhouse Hill" "comes off mainly as an unusually brilliant schoolboy"[3] does not do complete justice to Forty-four, it does have some merit. Forty-four's feats are more cerebral than physical. He astonishes Mr. Ferguson's class with his ability to repeat everything that has been said up to that point, and with his ability to memorize and learn all of the words in an English dictionary in minutes. The grandness of Forty-four's accomplishments is emphasized by the fact that they amaze not only a few children, but Mr. Ferguson as well, who has had thirty years of teaching experience (SH., p. 184). Forty-four's intellectual superiority to the others is established in the classroom episode.

A prime reason for Forty-four's passivity is his lack of familiarity with the human race. He needs to be warned by Tom Sawyer -- who appears with Huck Finn in the first two chapters and then disappears with Huck from the story -- that Henry Bascom, the school bully, wants to fight him, and Tom has to give Forty-four a quick lesson in boxing

in order to help him protect himself against Henry (SH., pp. 186-187). Although he is almost five million years old, counting as humans count -- which is fifteen years old in angel time (SH., p. 214) -- Forty-four does not know everything and he has not seen everything, as Satan has in the "Chronicle." Forty-four is disoriented, and in order to acquaint himself with humans as quickly as possible he establishes himself in the village of St. Petersburg rather than simply visit it occasionally.

However, despite the fact that Forty-four lodges in the village, he does not appear among the villagers very often. And he sometimes remains remote from the reader as well, in which case we simply hear about what he has done rather than see it for ourselves. Mr. Hotchkiss, with whom Forty-four lodges, and Aunt Rachel, Mr. Hotchkiss's slave, appear in the story as often as Forty-four does. When Aunt Rachel recounts the strange feats which she has seen Forty-four perform while she has spied on him, we learn second-hand of a conversation which Forty-four has had with the Hotchkiss's cat:

> Bofe of 'em talked cat-talk -- sof' en petting -- jist like a ole cat en a young cat -- cats dat's relations . . . . den he tuck truck outer his pocket en fed it to her chock up to de chin . . . . Tuck it all outer dat one pocket . . . . Well, a mouse come a-running, en run up his leg en into his bosom . . . . Den he loaded up de mouse -- outer dat same pocket; en put his head down en dey talked mouse-talk together. (SH., pp. 195-196)

As William Gibson states, the episode is "dramatic and finely humorous".[4] Aunt Rachel's excitable nature and her dialect makes the incident all the more irregular and remarkable, and it contributes to Forty-four's mysteriousness.

Twain does not mock human nature through the stranger of his story, as he did in the "Chronicle," but through his portrayal of the villagers themselves. Twain's use of omniscient narration makes any comment by Forty-four concerning man's unintelligence and irrationality unnecessary. The villagers are made to look unintelligent and irrational by their own actions, as when some prominent citizens accompany Mr. Hotchkiss to the bedroom of the absent Forty-four in order to examine his clothes, only to fall into confusion when the pocket of Forty-four's jacket pours piles of gold coins onto the floor:

> all those chief citizens got down on their hands and knees and scrambled all around and everywhere for the coins, raking under the bed and the sofa and the wardrobe for estrays, a most undignified spectacle. (SH., p. 198)

Twain the author, through his omniscient narration, performs in this scene a function which is similar to that of Satan in the "Chronicle." Twain reveals and mocks man's lack of intelligence without using a character from within the story to do so for him. But although Twain relies less on a persona in "Schoolhouse Hill" when he expresses his views, he does not express them as fully as in the "Chronicle," as the above

episode involving the chief citizens indicates. These backwoods people are too comical to be as harmfully corrupt as the characters in the "Chronicle." The world of Father Adolf and the witch hunters is far darker than that which is represented by Mr. Hotchkiss and the chief citizens. Moreover, Twain is restrained in his illustration of man's hypocritical nature, as when Hotchkiss, a prohibitionist, celebrates the safe return of Forty-four from a terrible snow storm which the village undergoes:

> by George, we'll celebrate! I'm a teetotaler -- been a teetotaler for years -- months, anyway -- a month -- but at a time like this . . . . And we'll have a smoke, too. I don't smoke -- haven't for years -- I think it's years -- because I'm president of the Anti-Smoking League -- but at a time like this . . . . (SH., pp. 208-209)

Hotchkiss's weakness is not brought to our attention in the scornful manner which typifies Satan in manuscript one. It is left to the reader to perceive the hypocrisy which is inherent in Hotchkiss's character.

Twain exercises a similar restraint in his depiction of man as an unthinking, conditioned creature. He depicts the conditioning, but refrains from commenting on it. We see that Mr. Hotchkiss is of a very changeable mind, and that he is changeable not by choice but out of impulse:

> he was periodically a Presbyterian, and . . . his period was almost astronomically regular . . . . His Mohammedan period, his Methodist period, his Buddhist period, his Baptist period, his Parsi period, his Roman Catholic period, his Atheistic period -- these were all similarly regular. (SH., pp. 190-191)

Mrs. Hotchkiss is a creature of a different impulse: "She was not a creature of change. When she gave shelter to an opinion she did not make a transient guest of it, but a permanency" (SH., p. 190). It will never be possible for the Hotchkisses to break free of their respective patterns of behaviour. The narrator says of Mrs. Hotchkiss, "As she had never been an abolitionist it was impossible that she could ever become one" (SH., p. 206). And we see other characters in the story who are creatures of conditioning. Crazy Meadows refuses to hold hands with Mr. Hotchkiss's slaves at a seance table because it has been his training to despise slaves, and the slaves are grateful for his refusal because of their training:

> they had sat down with these white men because they had been ordered to do it, and it was habit and heredity to obey, but their seats had not been more comfortable than a hot stove would have been. (SH., p. 205)

But Twain refrains from making any scornful comment regarding the training of Meadows and the slaves.

Twain's portrayal of the dim perceptions which humans have concerning the world around them also lacks the harshness of the "Chronicle." The paltriness of man's perceptions is presented in a humourous fashion. We see Mr. Hotchkiss reading a book on spiritualism -- presumably to widen the scope of his vision and awareness -- while he remains oblivious to a terrible snow storm which is raging outside, until his attention is drawn to it by Aunt Rachel (SH., p. 201). And we see that man has an even faultier insight into spiritual

matters when Hotchkiss holds a seance in order to communicate with Forty-four, whom he assumes to have perished in the storm, and then believes that he is successful when Forty-four, alive, joins him at the seance table. The following conversation occurs between the two characters, with Forty-four leading the way:

> "Do you take me for dead?"
> "Dead? Of course. Aren't you?"
> "Certainly not." (SH., p. 208)

The deluded Hotchkiss is simply not on the same level as Forty-four is.

It seems certain that the story's lightness of tone is what caused Twain to abandon it. He must have felt that he was not presenting his views as fully as he wanted to. William Gibson feels that Twain was attempting to make the story "both an essay in the correction of ideas and a comedy set in the world of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, whose boy-hero would like to reform and save it",[5] and he suggests that the strain of this double purpose was too much for Twain:

> Perhaps certain inherent contradictions within the character of 44 and in his projected actions proved too great for Twain to resolve. Apparently he wanted to make his stranger both a boy and an angel, both a companion to Tom and Huck and a Prometheus-figure who was to enlighten the citizens of St. Petersburg concerning the damnable Moral Sense.[6]

Apparently Twain found himself writing two stories in one and decided that the combination was unsatisfactory.

So many are the differences between "Schoolhouse

Hill" and the "Chronicle" that only rarely does Forty-four resemble Satan. One of these instances occurs when Forty-four asks Mr. Hotchkiss why humans feel that death is terrible:

> "Why is it awful?" asked the boy.
> "Why? It -- it -- why of course it's awful!"
> "Perhaps it is as you say; I do not know." (SH., p. 203)

But even in this instance Forty-four's puzzled, questioning manner distinguishes him from Satan's smug and self-assured bearing. While Forty-four questions man's fear of death, he does not flaunt the unimportance of human life, as Satan does in the "Chronicle," and -- in keeping with his passive nature -- Forty-four does not meddle in the process of the townspeople's lives. Rather than tell man that he is prone to be evil, he asks if man is, when he discusses a passage from the Bible with Hotchkiss:

> [FORTY-FOUR:] "Consider the passage which says man is prone to evil as the sparks to fly upward. Is that true? Is that really the nature of man?"
>
> [HOTCHKISS:] "Indeed it is -- nothing could be truer." (SH., p.216)

Forty-four does not mock man's lowliness, he pities it -- and he blames it on his father, Satan. Forty-four states that his father erred in thinking that the fruit of knowledge merely conferred a knowledge of good and evil (the moral sense), because "it conferred also the passionate and eager and hungry disposition to DO evil" (SH., p. 216). Forty-four is beginning to perceive in his visit to Earth that "man's disposition is wholly evil . . . and that he is as undisposed to do good

as water is undisposed to run up hill" (SH., p. 216). He concludes that Satan has conditioned man to be evil: "my father's error brought a colossal disaster upon the men of this planet. It . . . poisoned them in mind and body" (SH., p. 216). Hence, underlying the presentation of man as a ridiculous creature of training is the notion that it is not man's fault for being this way, that men are victims of Satan's bungling. Not only might Twain's displeasure with his combination of humour and gravity of purpose have led him to abandon his story. He might also have felt that he was portraying man in too sympathetic a light for his liking.

Forty-four is on a quest to ameliorate the consequences which his father's error has had for the human race:

> The fundamental change wrought in man's nature by my father's conduct must remain -- it is permanent; but a part of its burden of evil consequences can be lifted from your race, and I will undertake it. Will you help? (SH., p. 217)

The fact that Forty-four asks Hotchkiss to help him indicates that he feels that man is not useless, unlike Satan in the "Chronicle." Forty-four's request for help suggests that he has limitations of his own, and the fact that this super-natural being values the help of man raises man's stock in the reader's eyes. Apparently Forty-four feels that there is a possibility of a meaningful relationship with mankind despite man's inadequacies. Yet the story breaks off before he finds a human comrade with whom to develop a friendship.

Forty-four's mysterious ability to entrance anyone

whom he comes into contact with is the most noticeable similarity which he shares with Satan in the "Chronicle." After Forty-four's demonstration of his mental ability in the schoolhouse early in the story, Mr. Ferguson rouses himself "as if from a dream" (SH., p. 182), and when the schoolboys are dismissed for the day and they wait outside in order to watch Henry Bascom fight Forty-four, we learn that "They paid but little attention to the bitter weather, they were apparently under the spell of a more absorbing interest" (SH., p. 185). And when Forty-four makes his appearance at Mr. Hotchkiss's seance and the latter's slaves become upset, Forty-four puts the slaves and Crazy Meadows to sleep. He says to the slaves,

> "There -- go to sleep. Now go to bed. In the morning you will think it was a dream." They got up and wandered somnambulistically away. He turned and looked at Crazy Meadows, whose lids at once sank down and hid his wild eyes. "Go and sleep in my bed; in the morning it will be a dream to you, too." Meadows drifted away like one in a trance, and followed after the vanished negroes. (SH., pp. 207-208)

On one of the few occasions in which we see Forty-four actually involve himself with others and cause things to happen, then, he acts in a passive capacity, by putting people to sleep. Furthermore, Forty-four is able to enchant the chief citizens who sneak into his bedroom in his absence simply by 'being.' They have never met him, but have only heard of him, and what they have heard has been sufficient to engross them with him. And while it is never stated that

Forty-four has caused the tremendous snow storm which the village undergoes, the fact that its occurrence coincides with his visit seems to be more than mere coincidence. After its initial fierceness wanes, the snow storm causes the village to fall into a peaceful silence: "In the morning the world was still invisible, for the powdery snow was still sifting thickly down -- noiselessly, now, for the wind had ceased to blow" (SH., p. 219). This description is the last reference which the narrator makes to the village before the story breaks off. Forty-four's presence in the village seems to have turned the existence of the villagers into a dream. The town has come to a standstill.

As John Tuckey states, Twain's reason for abandoning the story soon after this point was probably his realization that "he had made another start upon the story of a young Satan but had not found it to be the right one".[7] After Twain's return to manuscript one in 1899-1900 and his eventual inability to produce enough material with which to sustain it, he leaves it behind and begins the third and last of the manuscripts in 1902, developing a story with which he shall occupy himself intermittently until 1908. This third manuscript shall be examined in the following chapter.

Notes

[1]Gibson, "Explanatory Notes," in The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts, p. 472.

[2]Gibson, "Explanatory Notes," p. 473.

[3]Tuckey, Mark Twain and Little Satan, p. 43.

[4]Gibson, "Introduction," p. 25.

[5]Gibson, "Introduction," p. 8.

[6]Gibson, "Introduction," p. 9.

[7]Tuckey, Little Satan, p. 43.

CHAPTER IV

Forty-four in "No. 44"

Twain gives the mysterious stranger of his third manuscript, "No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger," the same name (Forty-four) as he did the stranger of his second manuscript. However, the differences between the two strangers are legion. Forty-four in the third manuscript takes a far more active role in the action than does his namesake in "Schoolhouse Hill." And the stories are set in different places and eras. "No. 44" is set in Austria in 1490 -- about forty years after the invention of the printing press (N. 44., p. 229) -- rather than in St. Petersburg during the 1850's. Most of the action in "No. 44" takes place within the walls of a castle which has been converted to accommodate a printing press and its workers. The workers -- printers and their apprentices -- live in the castle on a permanent basis.

Forty-four makes his first appearance in the story among the printers and apprentices as they dine with their master and his wife (Mr. and Mrs. Stein) one day. Among those present is August Feldner, a sixteen year old printer's assistant, who narrates the story. Although Forty-four, dressed in ragged clothes, is "timid and humble" (N. 44., p. 235) in his demeanour, his presence in the room causes its occupants to bicker amongst themselves while deciding whether to honour his request for food and shelter in return for

doing odd jobs. The thoughts of neither August nor Forty-four are revealed during this scene. We simply see the action unfold as it occurs. The unsettling effect which Forty-four's arrival has on the entire group is conveyed as a result, and we are given our first hint of the turmoil which his presence in the castle will create throughout the story. Forty-four falls into the disfavour of the majority of the gathering by remaining silent when asked if he has ever been in jail. His silence is understood by the printers to be a confession of guilt (N. 44., p. 239). And when Forty-four spares one of the printer's assistants after overpowering him in a fight which he wants no part of, "The men considered him a milksop" (p. 243). Katrina, the Stein's cook and housekeeper, is the only person to show friendship to Forty-four during his initial appearance. She acts as a surrogate mother to him throughout the story, defending him from the endless abuse which the printers heap on him as he performs his daily tasks for Mr. Stein. And in his performance of his tasks Forty-four is astonishing: "if he was ever tired it was not perceptible. He always moved with energy, and seemed to find a high joy in putting forth his strange and enduring strength" (N.44., p. 245).

Forty-four's industriousness, as well as his remarkable ability to soothe Mr. Stein's vicious dog and make it perform tricks (N. 44., pp. 245-246), increases the

reputation of the magician who resides in the castle, for everyone feels that the magician is responsible for Forty-four's achievements (N. 44., p. 245). But as Forty-four and August gradually become acquainted with each other, we learn that it is Forty-four rather than the magician who has supernatural power. He is able to control the events around him. As he tells August at one point, "What I don't wish, doesn't happen" (N. 44., p. 250). He always orchestrates a situation so that it creates conflict between humans.

Forty-four does not visit the earth with the intention of helping mankind, which is the main purpose of his namesake in "Schoolhouse Hill" and one of the aims of Satan in the "Chronicle" after he becomes the friend of Theodor. Forty-four in "No. 44" visits the earth in order to entertain himself:

> That is one of the main reasons that I come here so much, I do love surprises! I'm only a youth, and it's natural. I love shows and spectacles, and stunning dramatics, and I love to astonish people, and show off. (N. 44., p. 386)

Forty-four's love of adventure gives his character a human element. He sounds like a mischievous adolescent when he he says to August at one point, "I say -- we'll be comrades, and have scandalous good times!" (N. 44., p. 319). After arguing earlier that one should not simply refer to Satan in the "Chronicle" as a supernatural Hank Morgan, it may seem

inconsistent to now label Forty-four in "No. 44" as a kind of devilish Tom Sawyer. But this label is a fitting one because although Tom Sawyer (in Twain's The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn) and Forty-four have important differences between them -- to begin with, Tom is not supernatural -- their dominant character traits are similar. Both love suspense and adventure. Forty-four simply has the ability to bring his schemes and grandiose plans to fruition, while Tom often does not.

Forty-four creates invisible beings to run the print shop after Mr. Stein's workers go on strike (N. 44., pp. 281-283), and he allows the magician to be held responsible for the astounding occurrences which he causes because he wants the magician's reputation as a sorcerer to grow until it ensures his death:

> I've taken a lot of pains with that reputation . . . and when I get it completed . . . and get him burnt, or pulverized, or something showy and picturesque, like that, I shan't mind the trouble I've had, in the least. (N. 44., pp. 396-397)

Forty-four's treatment of the magician is reminiscent of Tom Sawyer in Huckleberry Finn when his endeavours to enhance the drama of Jim's escape from captivity on the Phelps's farm make things harder on Jim.[1]

Forty-four is not called Satan or given any direct association with the Devil -- that is, he is not identified

as being the Devil's son or nephew. However, when he is promoted by Mr. Stein to the position of junior printer's apprentice, he does qualify for the printing trade's slang term for that position: printer's devil.[2] This hidden pun, which Twain would have been aware of -- he was a printer's apprentice as a youth -- gives Forty-four at least remotely devilish associations. And Forty-four is, in action if not in name, a mischievous young imp with supernatural powers. His devilishness is enough to lead John Tuckey to make a slip twice in one paragraph while discussing Forty-four and refer to him as Satan.[3] But Forty-four's association with Satan is never anything more than remote, because adventure and theatrical effect are his leading motives for action throughout the story, rather than the damnation of human souls.

Forty-four creates duplicates of the striking printers in order to enjoy the astonishment and turmoil which results when the two parties meet each other (N. 44., pp. 305-306), and to enjoy the conflict which arises when the duplicates court the same women as their originals do:

> constant quarrels and fights resulted. Soon the castle was no better than a lunatic asylum . . . . we witnessed these affrays, and 44 enjoyed them and was perfectly charmed with them. (N. 44., p. 317)

And Forty-four does not deny himself the pleasure of taking part in some of his own spectacles. When the magician, who

is blamed for the creation of the duplicates, blames Forty-four for their creation and tries to use his useless magic to engulf him in flames, Forty-four turns himself to ashes in front of everyone in the castle:

> for one moment a blot of black darkness fell upon the place and extinguished us all; the next moment in our midst stood that slender figure transformed to a core of dazzling white fire; in the succeeding moment it crumbled to ashes and we were blotted out in the black darkness again. (N. 44., p. 309)

When the spectacle causes the magician to be branded as a sorcerer and he goes into hiding in fear for his life, Forty-four furthers his enjoyment of the situation by appearing as the magician and walking into an ambush which awaits him. Katrina rushes at him with a knife, seeking revenge for what she believes has been the destruction of Forty-four, until Forty-four drops his disguise and stands revealed as himself:

> suddenly there was a great light . . . and Katrina dropped her knife and fell to her knees, with her hands clasped, everybody doing the same . . . and there where the magician had stood, stood 44 now, in his supernal beauty and his gracious youth; and it was from him that that flooding light came, for all his form was clothed in that immortal fire, and flashing like the sun. (N. 44., p. 390)

By vanishing and causing an eclipse of the bright light, he creates an effect which, as he later boasts, "beat Barnum and Bailey hands down" (N. 44., p. 391).

Perhaps Forty-four is nowhere more reminiscent of

Tom Sawyer than when he makes plans for his procession of ghosts, which are actually skeletons, late in the story. He arranges for all of the big names in human history to appear in a gala event which the ghosts hold every hundredth year:

> he was going to make this the swellest Hundredth Night that had been celebrated in this castle in twelve centuries, and said he was inviting Al ghosts from everywhere in the world and from all ages, past and future, and each could bring a friend . . . just so he is dead . . . he hoped to accumulate a thousand or two, and make this the Hundredth Night of Hundredth Nights, and discourage competition for a thousand years. (N. 44., p. 389)

Why the hundredth year event is called the Hundredth Night is not specified, but judging from Twain's information in the first two manuscripts that supernatural beings follow a different time scheme than humans do, it is probably safe to assume that one year of human time in "No. 44" equals one night in 'ghost' time.

Forty-four has no concern for the feelings and welfare of man, as the foregoing outline of his behaviour indicates. He has no qualms about causing the motherly Katrina to undergo the great mental torment of believing that he has been turned to ashes by the magician. When he learns that a knife-wielding Katrina is waiting in ambush for the magician to appear in the castle, he is delighted rather than saddened because of the opportunity which it provides for adventure (N. 44., p. 387). Forty-four's total disregard for

human feelings is also shown by his eagerness to have the magician persecuted for the many spectacles which Forty-four causes. His capricious attitude towards the human race is reflected by the fact that he visits August's fifteenth century only occasionally. During one visit with August, Forty-four states that "For the moment, I am not living in the present century, but in one which interests me more, for the time being" (N. 44., p. 299). He plays a jew's harp while spinning and leaping in the air, exclaiming that "the niggers use it" (N. 44., p. 299). Clearly, Forty-four has just returned from visiting the nineteenth-century United States. The fact that the mischievous Forty-four delights in this era puts it in an unflattering light. On another occasion, Forty-four appears before August as a black banjo player, whose mouth

> reached clear across his face and was unnaturally red, and had extraordinarily thick lips, and the teeth showed intensely white between them, and the face was as black as midnight. It was a terrible and ferocious spectre, and would bound as high as the ceiling, and crack its heels together, and yah-yah-yah! like a fiend. (N. 44., p. 354)

According to William Gibson, "44 is playing the character of both Mr. Bones and Banjo, the end men in the Negro minstrel show";[4] he has made yet another visit to nineteenth-century America, we see.

Forty-four tells August that he has visited the human

race a number of times on past occasions because "there is nothing just like it in any other world, it is a race by itself, and in many ways amusing" (N. 44., p. 320). And he is as much amused by man's gadgets and inventions as he is by man's nature. He often returns from his visits to the nineteenth century with examples of its technology. However, unlike Hank Morgan in Connecticut Yankee, Forty-four does not expose his human comrade to this technology with the aim of educating him. Rather, Forty-four considers the nineteenth-century dictaphone, camera, and electric light to be entertaining toys, and he shows them to August simply because he wants to share his toys with him (N. 44., pp. 364-365). Forty-four never tries to convert August into thinking like a human of a future century. Whereas Satan in the "Chronicle" often points out man's foolishness and lowliness to Theodor in lengthy discussions in order to share a joke with him, and Forty-four in "Schoolhouse Hill" is determined to make man aware of the change which Satan has wrought in man's character by instructing him, Forty-four in "No. 44" is too preoccupied with creating more mischief to stop and theorize about human nature with August with any enthusiasm or regularity. The few occasions in which he does point out man's lowliness are brief, and usually in response to an inquisitive August. Forty-four would rather indulge in adventure with August because he feels that any discussion of

man's nature is beyond man's comprehension. He tells August at one point that "there is nothing I cannot do . . . the difference between youand me is as the difference between a drop of water and the sea"(N. 44., p. 319). But the determination of the nettled August to score points in favour of the human race forces Forty-four at times into playing the part of a reluctant guru. Pressed by August to explain his views on the lowly lot of mankind, Forty-four brings him to the home of Johann Brinker, a bed-ridden old man who, as a rising young artist thirty years earlier, rescued a drowning Father Adolf from icy waters. Brinker has suffered permanent paralysis as a result of his heroism, and his sisters have become old maids while tending to him. Forty-four says to August, with much sarcasm, "Come, come, let us go, before these enticing rewards for well-doing unbalance my judgment and persuade me to become a human being myself!" (N. 44., p. 323). And when August intimates the grandness of man's mind to Forty-four, the latter replies:

> His mind is merely a machine, that is all -- an automatic one, and he has no control over it; it cannot conceive of a new thing, an original thing, it can only gather material from the outside and combine it into new forms and patterns . . . . a man's mind cannot create -- a god's can, and my race can. That is the difference. We need no contributed materials, we create them -- out of thought. All things that exist were made out of thought -- and out of nothing else. (N. 44., p. 333)

Forty-four's words foreshadow his revelation at the end of the story that nothing exists except thought.

By keeping Forty-four's theorizing on human nature to a minimum, Twain steers well clear of giving him the contradictory purpose which he almost gave to Satan in the "Chronicle." Forty-four's interest in amusing himself is never rivalled by a suggestion that he is also interested in engaging in deep discussion with August. Rather than rely on the theorizing of one character to convey his views, as he did in the "Chronicle," Twain in "No. 44" conveys his views through Doangivadam, Emil Schwarz, and a maid as well as through Forty-four. Doangivadam is a wandering compositor (a person who sets up type in a print shop) who visits Mr. Stein's print shop several times a year. His actual name has been forgotten in favour of his nickname, the meaning of which August explains: "make things as desperate for him as you pleased, he didn't give a damn, and said so" (N. 44., p. 268). Doangivadam always sides with the underdog in a dispute -- as when he sides with Forty-four against the strikers -- and he is well-liked and respected by all: "He was a good son of the Church, faithful to his religious duties, and the most pleasant and companionable friend and comrade a person could have" (N. 44., p. 268). According to Sholom Kahn, Doangivadam

> lent himself well to Mark Twain's purpose of playing satirically with problems of religion and history. His name suggests, without the theorizing of "Young Satan," a lighthearted release from the demands of conscience and the Moral Sense.5

Conversely, we see the moral sense at work in the printers when they stipulate that they will not end their strike until Forty-four is fired as an apprentice, an action which they realise Mr. Stein cannot take:

> It would . . . degrade him from his guild, for he could prove no offence against the apprentice. If he did not send 44 away work would stand still, he would fail to complete his costly printing contract and be ruined . . . . the master was their meat, as they expressed it, no matter which move he made. (N. 44., p. 266)

The printers know that they are being unfair, but they persist with their demands anyway, as a form of vengeance on Mr. Stein for hiring Forty-four. And the debasing effect of the moral sense is further illustrated when a chambermaid who works in the castle is transformed into a cat by Forty-four while the latter is disguised as the magician. The maid is happy with the transformation because it frees her of the moral sense, as we see from her words to the disguised Forty-four: "I am not angry any more; cats do not carry anger, I see. Don't change me back, leave me as I am" (N. 44., pp. 360-361). Her words echo Satan's claim in the "Chronicle" that animals, being devoid of the moral sense, exist on a

higher plane than man does.

Perhaps Twain's most stirring indictment of human life occurs when Emil Schwarz, August's duplicate -- whom Forty-four has created by giving physical manifestation to August's dream-self -- begs August to free him from the bonds of his flesh:

> Oh, this human life, this earthy life, this weary life! It is so groveling, and so mean; its ambitions are so paltry, its prides so trivial, its vanities so childish, and the glories that it values and applauds -- lord, how empty! Oh, here I am a servant! -- I who never served before; here I am a slave -- slave among little mean kings and emperors made of clothes, the kings and emperors slaves themselves, to mud-built carrion that are their slaves! (N. 44., p. 369)

William Gibson remarks that "Schwarz's lament voices a frequent mood of Mark Twain in the years of his composing of the Mysterious Stranger manuscripts".[6] This mood is voiced further in the concluding chapter of the story. Tuckey's research shows that although Twain spent until 1908 writing the story, its concluding chapter was probably written in 1904, "during the ordeal of those last weeks or days before the death of [his wife] Olivia".[7] In the last chapter, Forty-four bids a final farewell to August, revealing to him that everything in the world (including Forty-four) is only a figment of August's imagination: "Nothing exists save empty space -- and you!" (N. 44., p. 404). Only the individual exists, and because his body has so brief an existence, it

is only a dream. Man is nothing but thought:

> you are not you -- you have no body, no blood, no bones, you are but a thought . . . . you will remain a Thought, the only existent Thought, and by your nature inextinguishable, indestructible. (N. 44., p. 404)

The life and world which surrounds an individual amounts to nothing more than a short-lived dream. August was given a hint of this fact earlier in the story when Forty-four told him that all things which exist are made out of thought (N. 44., p. 333). Forty-four reveals that heaven, hell, and God do not exist either. He points out the flaws in man's concept of God:

> a God who could make good children as easily as bad, yet preferred to make bad ones; . . . who made them prize their bitter life, yet stingily cut it short; who gave his angels eternal happiness unearned, yet required his other children to earn it; who gave his angels painless lives, yet cursed his other children with biting miseries and maladies of mind and body; who mouths justice, and invented hell -- mouths mercy, and invented hell . . . who mouths morals to other people, and has none himself; who frowns upon crimes, yet commits them all; . . . and finally, with altogether divine obtuseness, invites this poor abused slave to worship him! (N. 44., pp. 404-405)

Forty-four asserts that man must "Dream other dreams, and better!" (N. 44., p. 404).

August's agreement with Forty-four's statements in the last chapter indicates the change which has been wrought

in his character by Forty-four's association with him. August states that Forty-four's revelation "left me appalled; for I knew, and realized, that all he had said was true" (N. 44., p. 405). Earlier in the story, August is shown reacting with appalled disbelief to Forty-four's attitudes and antics, as when he watches Forty-four play a jew's harp and spin and leap in the air, and when he learns that Forty-four is indifferent to religion: "I resolved to devote my life, with all the affections and forces and talents which God had given me to the rescuing of this endangered soul" (N. 44., p. 298). But when Forty-four gives August the ability to become invisible shortly after this episode, August suddenly becomes less concerned with religion:

> Being a boy, I did what another boy would have done: as long as I could keep awake I did nothing but appear and disappear, and enjoy myself. I was very proud, and considered myself the superior of any boy in the land. (N. 44., p. 302)

Forty-four shapes and influences August as he develops a friendship with him, and August is unable to resist this influence because he is awed by Forty-four:

> there could not be a more engaging mystery than he. He was always doing and saying strange and curious things, and then leaving them but half explained or not explained at all. Who was he? what was he? where was he from? I wished I knew. (N. 44., p. 320)

August is not the imposing figure which his name suggests.

He is too busy being awed by Forty-four to be able to inspire awe in anyone himself. The best that he can do when trying to account for Forty-four is to resolve that "There was no way of accounting for 44" (N. 44., p. 326).

August's mind is expanded by the unique experiences that are afforded by his ability to become invisible. He finds that when he is invisible he is rid of his physical being, and his existence is confined to that of his soul:

> When I was invisible the whole of my physical make-up was gone, nothing connected with it or depending upon it was left. My soul -- my immortal spirit -- alone remained. Freed from the encumbering flesh, it was able to exhibit forces, passions and emotions of a quite tremendously effective character. (N. 44., p. 343)

August's words in the above quotation are very similar to those of his duplicate, Emil Schwarz, when the latter pleads to be freed from the bonds of his flesh, and they indicate that August is developing new interests regarding his existence and leaving his previous interests behind. August's preoccupation with religion and his timidity before the printers were his basic character traits at the beginning of the story, but after he is given the power to become invisible emphasis is placed on the broadening of his horizons, and he is freed from his enslavement to religion and class privileges. August experiences a progression from ignorance to heightened awareness which Clarence in Connecticut Yankee and Theodor in

the "Chronicle" do not experience. This awareness reaches its apex during the story's grim conclusion, when August -- alone in an empty world -- learns that man is nothing but thought. We do not see any expansion of Clarence's consciousness -- he simply adopts Hank's nineteenth-century mentality and becomes locked into a different kind of training. And Theodor adopts Satan's cynical views concerning mankind without having achieved the state of awareness which August has achieved through his ability to shed his body and exist only as a soul.

By the time that Forty-four masquerades as the magician in the great hall of the castle and causes an eclipse to occur after transforming himself back to his actual appearance, August is no longer perturbed by Forty-four's antics. Rather, he has become an admirer of them. He reflects on the eclipse with thoughtful appreciation:

> It was good he thought of the eclipse, it helped out ever so much; the effects would have been fine and great in any case, but the eclipse made them grand and stunning -- just letter-perfect, as it seemed to me. (N. 44., p. 391)

August displays no concern over the consequences which Forty-four's antics might have for Katrina or anyone else. And when Forty-four tells him of his plan to make the sun rise in the south-west, August exclaims,

> Master, it will be wonderful! It will be the very greatest marvel the world has ever seen.

> It will be talked about and written about as long as the human race endures. (N. 44., p. 396)

All mention by August of his previous resolve to convert Forty-four is now absent. Instead, he relates that "We loafed along behind the sun around the globe, tarrying in all the great cities on the route, and observing and admiring the effects" (N. 44., p. 399). Forty-four is the one who has done the converting, and not August. Detached from human life, August sees the world as being a theatrical illusion.

Notes

[1]Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (New York: Rinehart, 1960), chs. 35-39.

[2]Gibson, "Explanatory Notes," in The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts, p. 476.

[3]Tuckey, Mark Twain and Little Satan, p. 79.

[4]Gibson, "Explanatory Notes," p. 481.

[5]Sholom Kahn, Mark Twain's Mysterious Stranger (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978), p. 118.

[6]Gibson, "Explanatory Notes," p. 482.

[7]Tuckey, Little Satan, p. 62.

CONCLUSION

Satan in "Letters from the Earth"

John Tuckey explains why Twain left "No. 44" as a rough draft in 1908 by referring to Twain's old age (he was seventy-three years old in 1908) and ill health:

> it appears that his creative powers had finally flagged. Although his imagination was still active, he lacked the energy for the hard work with the pen needed to embody his fancies in fiction. [1]

But in putting his last version of the Mysterious Stranger aside, Twain did not leave behind his interest in the Satan figure. During one brief return of strength in 1909 he wrote "Letters from the Earth" -- unpublished in his lifetime -- in which Satan writes letters to his angel friends in heaven during his first visit to the earth. Satan in "Letters" is more of a scornful observer than a devilish stranger, for no other characters appear in the story with whom he may interact. Consequently, there is no one for him to be a stranger to. Yet the opinions concerning man which he voices in his letters are similar to the opinions of the devilish strangers of the Mysterious Stranger manuscripts, and in fact are even more contemptuos of man.

Satan in "Letters" is Twain's mouthpiece. Paul Baender makes the following remarks concerning Twain's use

of Satan as a persona in the story:

> the speaker's style, indeed many of his interests and examples, were obviously typical of the author. He no longer cared to aggrandize his opinions through the eloquence and marvels of a Philip Traum. His own style was fit for the arguments, and the arguments only needed expression.[2]

The entire work focuses on Satan's derision of man's lowliness and lack of intelligence, and particularly on his belief in Christianity. He ridicules man's concept of heaven, in which man's greatest pleasure -- sexual intercourse -- is absent, and in which prayer, hymn-singing, and harp-playing at prolonged praise services for God are the norm:

> Consider the deafening hurricane of sound -- millions and millions of voices screaming at once, and millions and millions of harps gritting their teeth at the same time! I ask you -- is it hideous, is it odious, is it horrible? (LE., p. 409)

> the human being's heaven has been thought out and constructed upon an absolutely definite plan; and . . . this plan is, that it shall contain, in labored detail, each and every imaginable thing that is repulsive to a man, and not a single thing he likes! (LE., p. 412)

The mocking, belittling tone of Satan in the above quotations is typical of his tone throughout the story.

Satan says of the Bible:

> It is full of interest. It has noble poetry in it; and some clever fables; and some blood-drenched history; and some good morals; and a wealth of obscenity; and upwards of a thousand lies. (LE., p. 412)

He attacks man's lack of reason by discussing the latter's inability to perceive the contradictory nature of the God which he conceives of and worships:

> It is most difficult to understand the disposition of the Bible God, it is such a confusion of contradictions; of watery instabilities and iron firmnesses, of goody-goody abstract morals made out of words, and concreted hell-born ones made out of acts; of fleeting kindnesses repented of in permanent malignities. (LE., p. 425)

Satan's words are reminiscent of the episode at the end of "No. 44" when Forty-four reveals that man's concept of God is nothing more than a dream. And Satan echoes the claim of young Satan in the "Chronicle" when he states that man is a conditioned machine lacking free will:

> The human being is a machine. An automatic machine. It is composed of thousands of complex and delicate mechanisms . . . over which the man himself has no authority, no mastership, no control. (LE., p. 426)

The fact that man is a machine accounts for his inability to perceive the contradictory nature of his concept of God: a machine does not have the ability to reason. Man is irrational.

Satan shares the conviction of the stranger figures in the Mysterious Stranger manuscripts that man's possession of the moral sense puts him on a lower level than animals (LE., p. 416). For Twain, man is still a base creature who deludes and flatters himself with false concepts. Yet unlike Forty-

four in "No. 44," Satan does not give any indication that he feels that man can dream other, better dreams. Twain no longer seems to feel that man can alleviate the nightmare of his existence by dreaming better dreams. He feels that man lacks the mental capacity to do so. Satan writes in one of his letters, "What do you think of the human mind? I mean, in case you think there is a human mind" (LE., p. 428).

Mark Twain, then, was fascinated in his later writings with the devilish stranger figure who visits the earth, and this fascination continued after he did his last work on the Mysterious Stranger manuscripts. His years of struggle to give shape to his devilish stranger figure show his determination to bare his bitter and pessimistic views on human life for all to see. Mark Twain was unable to dream other, better dreams of life as his own life drew to a close.

Notes

[1]Tuckey, *Mark Twain and Little Satan*, p. 70.

[2]Paul Baender, "Introduction," in *What Is Man?*, p. 30.

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