DETERMINISM IN MARK TWAIN

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by

Pearl Forster

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DEDICATION

To Michael, for his time-proven love and loyalty, and for practising William Faulkner's philosophy that even if humans are prevented from prevailing we can at least endure.

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Abstract

Determinism in Mark Twain

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, and *The Mysterious Stranger*, Twain illustrates the determinism of forces that he sees as being perpetuated largely through the heredity and conditioning of cultural ethics. Twain makes the inference that the exercise of free will is impossible in any civilised state and that true freedom and democracy can never be anything more than philosophical ideals to struggle for in vain. At best, Twain sees any state of freedom as purely temporary, and in the works discussed asserts that the only real escapes lie in sleep, dreams, insanity, and death. The inability of Twain's heroes to escape or even outwit cultural and other environmental forces to find their own freedom thus emphasizes the power of determinist forces.

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INTRODUCTION

"Forces exist always already shaped by culture."

Lee Clark Mitchell

Columbia Literary History of the United States.

Mitchell's maxim re-states the founding philosophy behind Mark Twain's determinism which changing critical thinking is coming to realise was evident in his work throughout his career. It is still a misconception that Twain's fatalistic, pessimistic, and rigidly deterministic views of the universe feature only in his later writing, and that they reflect, as critics such as Bernard De Voto have claimed, the deepening personal tragedy the artist's life became.

My thesis aims to go beyond contemporary claims that Twain's "quarrel with 'sivilization' in general and America in particular" (R. Taylor 5) was evident in his earliest work; and that "his anger at the ways of the world merely grew fiercer as he grew older" (J. Smith 69). I demonstrate, through the forces-driven death wish in works spanning his best-loved to his last, that determinism was always central to Twain's art. And it developed out of a conflict between the mythos of the antebellum American Dream and the raw realities exposed by the Civil War and the subsequent industrialization and urbanization of American culture.

Twain's generation grew up to the escapist cry of "Go West, young man!" in a time when the vast open plains of the frontier still fired the "strike it rich" fever backdraughted by a belief in humanity's free will, self-determination, self-reliance,

and the progress of the race through the ideal of self-improvement. But Twain's earliest frontier tall-tales and humorous sketches reveal an already-formed understanding that beliefs in free will were chimeras, that training and environmental influences determine a person's life, character, and evil deeds.

In Twain's hardening determinism he was actually representative of the revolutionary changes in religious and philosophic thought resulting from advances in science and technology begun in the second half of the nineteenth century. And his acceptance of the popular evolutionary idea that "humanity was caught in a cul-de-sac of environmental forces from which there is no escape" (Stone 23) led to his conviction that the only real freedom lies in death.

Tracing themes which link *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and *The Mysterious Stranger* my thesis investigates the determinism of forces which Twain blames for fraudulently "freeing" humanity of its will. They are forces which the author sees as being perpetuated largely through the heredity and conditioning of cultural ethics. These determinants are in the powers that Twain believes history, politics, law, philosophy, religion, economics and nature have had, and always will have, over human destiny.

These determinist forces - at work in any age and in every culture - give rise to other forces which Twain's art translates into the intertwining themes of violence, enslavement, superstition and witchcraft, romanticism, science and technology, industrialism, imperialism, the monarchy and aristocracy, money and materialism,

colonisation and language. And an integral part of these forces is the guises people adopt either to employ or escape them.

Twain explores and exploits all these forces, their causes and effects, in an attempt to demythologise and disempower society's networks of institutionalized oppression and repression. But simultaneously, with his characteristic ambivalence, he makes us aware that no such achievement is possible; it is nothing more than hope over knowledge. Twain sees the forces of cultural determinism as too deeply entrenched, and humans as too bound up by custom and convention, fear and cowardice, self-interest and self-preservation to see these controls for what they are. Just as he shows these forces dividing people against each other in the age-old primogenitary assumption of power, privilege, and rule by the few over the deprived, depraved, and powerless masses, Twain makes it increasingly plain that, ultimately, individual quests for freedom and escape from social constraints can never succeed.

The three works covered here are linked in this verdict not just by themes demonstrating determinisms but by methods and motifs which gather force and momentum. Twain uses the technique of narrators ostensibly adolescent in age or attitude for both exposing these determinisms and for illustrating their inescapability. And he does this through the convention of travel in disguise through time and space. Over the three novels, these voyages of discovery accelerate toward the inference that the exercise of free will is impossible in any civilised state. True freedom and democracy, then, can never be anything more than philosophical ideals to struggle for in vain. At best, Twain sees any state of freedom as purely temporary and suggests that the only real escapes lie in sleep, dreams, insanity and death. This is heavily

underscored in all the novels by Twain's use of the conventional dream frame, the pervasion of death, and the unfolding revelation that "no sane man can be happy" in a world determined by "hysterically insane" forces.

But if freedom is illusory, so too are the forces which nevertheless prevent it. And this historically debilitating paradox of the human condition is what constantly whips Twain into a tumult of sympathy but at the same time contempt for humanity. On one hand he is the reforming zealot, brimful of righteous anger over the injustices and evils perpetrated against the innocent by inescapable forces. But on the other hand, he is the scornful, bitter misanthropist, condemning humanity for being too ignorant, cowardly and corrupted to oppose these forces of inhumanity.

Such duality is germane to all three novels. But added to the rationale for their selection, instead of others as equally demonstrative of Twain's determinist philosophy, is that these works record a progressive change in the ambivalence of Twain's thinking which affected that determinism. It registers a shift in emphasis from his uncertainty over whether human nature, or God as its creator, is responsible for the institutions which destroy its free will, to a conviction that humanity created God along with the other forces it is trapped in through heredity and history.

Twain's determinism exhibits a like strengthening as it progresses from the implicit in *Huckleberry Finn* - where the "sivilising" forces are always "after us" - to the explicit in *The Mysterious Stranger*, where every action is pre-determined by and inextricably linked to a chain of causes and effects set in motion by past influences and containing future forces.

Twain recognises that the best way to illustrate the on-going, inescapable impact of determinist forces is to set a story back in time. By implication, the past is then compared to the present; the inference is powerfully drawn that the same forces against freedom (some in different guises) are still controlling the laws and customs which dictate beliefs and actions; and the logical conclusion is not only to predict a future of history continuing to repeat itself, but also to predict that technology will increasingly help unleash even more and deadlier forces against freedom.

Twain exploits this time-frame device in all three novels to show how cultural ethics in general, and American culture in particular, condition morality and imprison people within their society. By setting *Huckleberry Finn* in the ante-bellum South, Twain gives us the brutal reality of the legal, religious, economic, and customary forces which combined "forty or fifty years ago" to justify the existence and perpetuation of human enslavement. But the message of his narrative is pointed more toward his own era. And it is the same one that comes through in the other two works as well: the American Dream has soured because it was based on the myth of freedom and equality for all. The end of the Civil War may have broken the Blacks' bonds, and opening up the West may have promised freedom and prosperity, but Jim and Huck in all their adventures symbolise the empty reality behind these hopes. At the end of the novel Jim stands legally free and with forty dollars in his pocket. But how free is he really? He is stranded hundreds of miles away from a now non-existent home with his wife and children still enslaved.

And Twain wants us to realise how little freedom still existed, especially for the Negro, amidst the political, economic, and social forces at work in post-Civil War

America. Robert Hunter's study of poverty of that era shows that over twenty million people were "underfed, underclothed, and poorly housed," and the four million Negroes "freed" by that war were among the poorest (Allen 235). As for Huck, he knows intuitively that "lighting out for the Territory" holds only a brief escape. He may get there "ahead of the rest," but those very words underline the hot pursuit of "civilising" forces. And true to Huck's predictions, the territory was declared officially closed only a few years after the book's publication.

In each of the novels, determinist forces have the effect of exposing the American Dream as the paradigm for the universal hope (and inevitable disillusionment) in the attainment of a "golden age" of peace, progress, prosperity, and individual liberty. Hank Morgan in *A Connecticut Yankee*, is the very embodiment of the nineteenth-century's almost child-like faith in the engineered modern state, which through the driving forces of industrialism, capitalism, and materialism is somehow supposed to create utopia for everyone. But the existence of a white slave trade in Arthur's realm is notable for more than the irony of Hank's disgust that its evil forces would survive another thirteen centuries and be transplanted into the land which at the same time would revolt against its own enslavement to Britain. "The Boss" himself becomes a force for enslavement.

The factories Hank establishes to modernise, commercialise, democratise, republicanise, and enlighten Dark Ages England, paint an allegory of the dark side of America's technological boom: one which implies that the same forces which legalised the physical enslavement and abuse of Blacks in America's South, have - in the name of progress and prosperity - turned America's poor into wage-slaves. Many of them

were forced daily to risk loss of life and limb in inhuman factory conditions. In Dan Beard's illustrations for the first publication of *A Connecticut Yankee* the slave-driver bears a striking resemblance to America's railroad king, Jay Gould, and while Hank's workers are forging metal to produce everything from bicycles and sewing machines, to modern machine-guns, there is an implied comparison of Hank's imposed dynamism to the impact of nineteenth-century industrialists. One such example is Twain's acquaintance, the steel giant, Andrew Carnegie. In his lifetime, Carnegie made annual profits exceeding forty million dollars, and he has left America a legacy of libraries and other institutes. But his employees were kept on starvation wages, and hundreds - including ten year old children - were killed and maimed every year in his Homestead Steel Works (Painter 94, 111). Multi-millionaires like Gould and Carnegie paid no income tax, while for a sixty hour week, millions of wage slaves earned as little as six dollars (Allen 235).

So the parallels in sixth-century England and nineteenth-century America, as well as the juxtaposed differences, demonstrate the continuing enslavement of people everywhere by the forces determining their environment.

The Mysterious Stranger makes this even more explicit by "flitting" Theodor and his friends from the sixteenth-century "Age of Belief" Austria all around the globe, back and forward in time. Clothed in the ultimate disguise of invisibility the boys spend "weeks and months" observing the "insanities" of wars, murders and tortures resulting from cultural forces. And by setting such horrors in apposition to the belief-determined inhumanities which characterise the boys' own village Satan impresses upon them the power and unavoidability of time and place-formed perceptions.

Theodor realises humans are thus "prisoners for life" and Satan's claim that this truth has freed the boy from the determinist illusions of his society's beliefs is rendered a lie when the reader discovers that Theodor is an embittered old man telling his story of a remembered past.

In all three novels, organised religion is seen to be the most powerful force for cultural determinism, since it sanctions and perpetuates beliefs in each society's legal, political, monetary and customary controls. So deeply inculcated are these beliefs that they form the basis for society's moral values. And in each case people do wrong in the trained belief that they are doing what is right and what is demanded of them by both church and state. Huck judges himself from the moral perspective of a slave owning culture. He believes that in aiding Jim's escape, he is depriving Miss Watson of her rightful property, and he knows he is risking at best imprisonment, and at worst, eternal damnation.

In *A Connecticut Yankee* the church has, through fear, conditioned the masses to believe so completely in the God-given rights of the propertied classes, that the terrified peasants rush to hunt down and hang their neighbours on behalf of the landowner. Hank the conquering colonist - a product of his own cultural forces - believes that nineteenth-century enlightenment and technology can strip away the church's power-hold. But even electric fences, bombs, and machine guns prove to be no match for the twin forces of superstition, the church and Merlin.

The church is at its most powerful in *The Mysterious Stranger* where it demands such unquestioning, blind adherence to its tenets that it incites the villagers - in the name of what is good and Godly - to stone and burn anyone suspected of witchcraft.

Thus in all three novels violence, and particularly mob violence, is seen to be yet one more manifestation of the network of forces which makes up cultural determinism. Each of Twain's heroes tries in his own way to escape or even outwit these forces to find his own freedom. But none succeeds. In effect they become anti-heroes. For while they serve the function of demythologising civilisation - of exposing all social systems as just illusory forces against freedom - their ultimate inability to exercise any real free will symbolises the whole of humanity's entrapment in a totally determined universe.

CHAPTER ONE

LANGUAGE, LIES, AND GUISES.

Huckleberry Finn has long been recognised as a novel which draws attention to itself as a work of fiction, a narrative lie written by Samuel Clemens as Mark Twain and told in the language and guise of a twelve year old boy purporting to be giving us his autobiography. Huck opens his story by alluding to the "stretchers" Mr. Mark Twain told in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* which Huck dismisses as "nothing" since, "I never seen anybody but lied, one time or another..." (49).

In focusing on lies and their universality, Twain is announcing that this novel is about the lies and deceptions on which this and all human societies are based. The story begins and ends with events which Huck judges to be "just Tom Sawyer's lies" but they satirize the shams and frauds being perpetrated by everyone, from the Christian gentility down to the bogus duke and king. And they demonstrate how role-playing, guises and language are both manifestations and reinforcements of the lies which create and perpetuate a society's determinist forces. As the narrative advances, Twain illustrates how these false forces powerfully manipulate the lies that define a society's reality and reflect its controls.

So Twain's epistemological purpose in setting up *Huckleberry Finn* as a lie is to expose a truth, to draw a comparison between the way he is manipulating his characters and plot and the way external forces shape and influence everyone's lives. And since the novel is a fiction which satirizes the enslaving nature of all human

ıstitutions, it seems Twain is implying that free will, free choice and true freedom are ictions in that most gigantic, hypocritical farce of all, the lie of civilisation. Within ıis lie *Huckleberry Finn* reveals the lie of democracy and the biggest lie inside that ıstitution is the lie of slavery. Twain cited this as a prime example of:

> The lie of silent assertion...the universal stillness that reigned, from pulpit and press all the way down to the bottom of society...the silent assertion that there wasn't anything going on in which humane and intelligent people were interested. (My First Lie and How I Got Out Of It 64)

The lie of slavery which determines Jim's existence is the force which gives rise to the vhole litany of lies Huck is forced to tell to protect Jim. More than this, though, Huck instinctively knows that lies are crucial to his own survival against the :onspiracy of lies on which this civilisation's determinist forces are based. He herefore sees the truth as threatening: "a body that ups and tells the truth...is taking :onsiderable many resks" (252). Throughout the novel, Huck takes on so many aliases ınd guises and tells so many lies that he nearly always forgets his assumed identity. The only time Huck is spared the anxiety of conjuring up a persona is when Aunt Sally mistakes him for Tom. He is "so glad to find out who I was: it was like being ɔorn again" (293). Thomas Pribek says Huck's ability to submerge himself into Tom's :haracter is evidence of his recognition that survival in society must come through playing an established, acceptable social role (68). But Huck's ultimate goal is escape from social forces, not immersion in their fraudulent, illusion-worshipping games, and all of his lies and masquerades are to this end. Huck knows that to be true to himself he has to deny his own identity and pretend to be what society expects him to be, only long enough to effect an escape. In any case, as Alan Trachtenberg points out, Huck

has to stay legally dead as long as Pap is alive and he is associated with Jim's escape (960).

In a society where lies and the language of lies, deceits and treacheries act as controls which then reinforce the lies vital to society's continuance, Huck does more than lie from necessity; his "sound heart" wins out over his "deformed conscience" (as Twain calls it) and he lies for the honest end of helping a man enslaved by "a fiction of law and custom" (*Pudd'nhead Wilson* 16). The crafty Huck tells one such lie when the slave hunters threaten to invade the raft. He effects their hasty retreat by spinning a yarn about his sick family from which they infer that the raft is infected with smallpox.

This lie is just one in a lengthy series of fictions Huck invents involving dead and dying, destitute and desperate family members. Together with his recurring death-wish this reveals a deep, brooding pessimism in Huck's nature resulting from the forces still at work on him, which have shaped his life circumstances and character. It is thus both significant and ironic that Huck so frequently casts himself in the role of a boy alone in the world. As Peter Beidler points out:

> "Huck *is* an orphan who has known loneliness and brutality, otherwise it is doubtful he would come up with such mournful, imaginative accounts of his past." (15-16)

Huck's lies are therefore another argument for the power and inescapability of determinist forces, especially that of history. In continually taking on new identities and attempting to re-create his past, Huck succeeds only in reaffirming it. Inventing

his own murder is more than just a desperate desire to "get shut" of Pap for good; Huck sees it as a way of freeing himself from all the old forces. The death of his own identity seems to offer an escape. But this turns out to be a false hope, as illusory and predictive of failure as the outcome of his and Jim's journey to freedom.

Lies expose such truths throughout the novel, and it is through a lie Huck tells Jim to make fun of his simple superstitions and assumed intellectual inferiority, that Twain reveals how culturally determinist forces corrupt as they condition beliefs. Huck and Jim are separated in a fog and Huck convinces Jim he dreamed the whole incident. Jim feels cruelly betrayed when he realises Huck has "made a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie", and he declares: "trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de head er de fren's and makes 'em ashamed" (143). Huck is mortified and stunned too because he is a product of a slave society which justifies the reduction of fellow creatures to livestock, by inculcating the lie that Negroes are ignorant and insensate. Huck's difficult decision to "humble myself to a nigger" and apologise, both illustrates his conditioned acceptance of cultural lies and voices his surprised discovery of Jim's dignity and sensitivity.

Language is both a manifestation and enforcer of such lies which determine everyone's fate by race and class in *Huckleberry Finn*. And just as the denigrating "nigger" is used to reinforce the slave's non-person status - the legal abuse, hatred and degradation of a whole race - Neil Schmitz says that in labelling friends who lie as "trash", Jim "is placing Huck in a genus, white trash, the class that Pap in all his viciousness typifies" (132). So Huck has an added compulsion to regret such a lie.

Along with its deconstruction of racist language, this incident is important as an example of the way forces built on lies divide people against each other and serve the end of perpetuating the crushing evils of racism and enslavement in the cultural ethics of a white supremacist "Christian" civilisation. There is an added irony too; in presenting an entire society's involvement in the debasing, imprisoning lie of slavery, Twain exposes humanity as ineffably and pitifully insensate. Such a picture reduces humanity to its essence and it cannot be viewed as anything but trash. Seen in this light, Huck's misspelling of the word "civilisation" appears, as Eric Mottram claims, to be a contemptuous underlining of a key word of American pride (169). We see Twain's ironic, satiric comment on the ridiculously arrogant and ignorant, culturally conditioned lie of white supremacy when Huck bestows on Jim the highest praise of being "white inside".

The determinist lie of Jim's own inferiority is accepted by him too; even when he sees no sense in Tom's insane escape games, he relents because "he allowed we was white folks and knowed better than him..."(321). Huck furnishes another example of the way language is used to define and determine what this society has been trained to perceive as "natural", when he has the epiphanic realisation that Jim cares "just as much for his people as white folks does for their'n. It don't seem natural, but I reckon it's so" (218).

It is because Jim cares so much about his family that he rebels against his white owner's lie never to sell him down to New Orleans. And it is Miss Watson's "polite lies of civilisation that suffocate Huck's spirit" (Marx 1962 331). She emblemises and satirises the religious, legal, economic and social lies her society is based on and the

language of her lies - written and spoken - loom large in the novel as illustrations of these determinist forces at work. Miss Watson's pious Christian rhetoric is evidenced in Huck's crises of conscience over helping Jim, and it is through her will, in which she frees Jim, that we see Huck's decisions and actions (and by implication our own) negated in the face of forces we are nearly always unaware of and impotent against. Her will makes a lie of free will by stressing the total power of her society's determinist forces to give or take life and freedom, even in death. It is predictive too of Tom's unwitting lie that Jim is "as free as any cretur that walks this earth!" (365). As Schmitz says:

> "Jim is headed for a catastrophe because there is not yet a politically organised world where all are free, least of all in pre-Civil War Illinois" (134).

Huck's adventures satirise the lie of freedom for everyone, whether they are attempting to fit themselves under the thin veneer of an artificially created civilisation or escaping its forces. To do either demands a ceaseless switching of roles and identities which involve the constant manipulation of lies and disguises. Huck's experiences show how imperative these are to freedom, yet at the same time stress that their necessity makes a lie of free will and implies that the quest for freedom is delusive. Huck's role-playing is emblematic too of everyone's vulnerability to shaping by exterior influences. He reveals his recognition of this in his explanation for lying to help the drowning murderers: "there ain't no telling but I might come to be a murderer myself, yet, and then how would *I* like it?" (127).

The masks and the lies that society's forces compel everyone to hide behind mean that theatricality becomes an important force; part-playing and appearance determine reality and therefore truth. This is illustrated in all three novels: from Huck's staged murder,

the duke and dauphin's swindles and Tom's "evasion" in *Huckleberry Finn*; to Hank's and Merlin's "getting up effects" in *A Connecticut Yankee*; and Satan's "tricks" in *The Mysterious Stranger*. Through the proliferation of lies, guises and dramatic spectacles in each novel - along with the language used to effect them - Twain compares the unreality of these deceits with the illusions of cultural conventions and socially determined roles. In so doing, he makes the point that these lies determine people's lives in a powerfully real way because they are trained and conditioned to accept them as reality.

Huck understands how intrinsic lies are to disguises when he sees the way clothes transform the king and mask his criminal designs. Upon first meeting the ragged, dirty, and smelly king and duke, Huck quickly realises that "these liars warn't no kings nor dukes at all, but just low-down humbugs and frauds" (185-6). However, when the king dresses up to "work" Arkansaw, Huck says:

> "I never knowed how clothes could change a body before...he looked that grand and good and pious that you'd say he had walked right out of the ark..." (221)

This biblical allusion prepares the way for the king's biggest lie ever: the conning of the Wilks girls' fortune, in the guise of their preacher uncle. Huck is so sickened by the "soul-butter and hogwash" the pair inject into this iniquitous fraud that he declares: "It was enough to make a body ashamed of the human race" (226). Through the discrepancy between appearance and truth, Twain thus demonstrates how powerful a manifestation guises are of determinist forces. He stresses this in all three novels and in many of his other works too, especially *The Prince and the Pauper*, *Pudd'nhead*

Wilson, and *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg*. People are conditioned to judge things and each other by their outward appearance, and clothes create an impression which can be used to manipulate and dominate others. Colonel Sherburn is one such example: Huck describes him as "proud-looking...and a heap the best dressed man in that town". Sherburn's clothing stamps him with the authority of wealth and the cowering townspeople "drop back on each side to let him come on" (204).

When Huck is making plans for the Territory, he remarks that he will need "money for to buy the outfit" and Pribek says this reveals that "Huck has perceived something of the nature of morality in a society antithetical to humane values: appearance is everything" (77). More than this though, clothing is a visual language which symbolises the constricting, determining lies of civilising forces "subservience to which Twain sees as the universal human slavery" (Hilfer 74). It is therefore significant that throughout the novel, Huck sheds his "smothery" clothes at every opportunity. And on the raft, he and Jim are "always naked, day and night" (179).

But the forces of lies and the lies of forces are ultimately inescapable and this is evidenced in the false identity and "evasion" charades at the end in which Huck becomes Tom and Tom assumes Sid's identity. These intertwined lies present a microcosmic parody of the language, lies and guises inherent in the power play that creates the determinist structure of the universe. Huck's reluctant submission to Tom's domination and to his "authorities" is symptom and symbol of this adult world; both the powerful and the powerless have been conditioned to accept as real the illusory forces which determine their circumstances. With all the weight of his membership in these forces behind him, Tom demands of Huck, "Don't you reckon I know what I'm

about?" and Huck with his "mudcat" status feels argument is hopeless: "if he was bound to have it so, I couldn't help it" (305).

Ironically, Tom does know what he is about; his "evasion" is about his society evading truths, the chief of which is the lie of enslavement. And in the same way Huck and Jim's quest for freedom from the determining lies of civilisation is an evasion of the truth that there is no real escape. As in *A Connecticut Yankee* and *The Mysterious Stranger*, *Huckleberry Finn* employs language, lies and guises to reveal the universal truths that our lives are determined by the lies of cultural ethics. And the biggest lie in this culture is that the disguise of colour determines that Blacks shall be slaves even if they are "white inside". To borrow a tribute from a contemporary of Twain's, Andrew Lang, *Huckleberry Finn* reads so much like the truth of America's antebellum South, it looks "like an historical document" (282). And in its ability to tell the truth lies its true greatness (Trilling 311).

CHAPTER TWO

ENSLAVEMENT, VIOLENCE, AND RACISM.

A century before *Huckleberry Finn* was published, Benjamin Franklin said of America: "Our country offers...free governments, wise laws, liberty, a good people to live among..."(Allen 237). To borrow Huck's vernacular, this utopian "stretcher" omits to mention that in America's Deep South, not everyone was free. Their "good people" had - for their own economic gain - forged biblical texts into manacles and used them to legalise the bondage and brutality of Negroes kidnapped from their homes in Africa and shipped to America in chains.

The slavocracy had no trouble reconciling slavery to the credo of America's Declaration of Independence; liberty and equality did not extend to Negroes because they were less than human beings; they were God-ordained beasts of burden. The Church said so, and to ensure that the white slaveholder's "property" remained sacrosanct, the Fugitive Slave Act made it illegal to help or harbour runaways (Mottram 180).

This is the historical setting for *Huckleberry Finn* and Twain uses this society's slave ethos as a metaphor for the enslavement of all humans by circumstances largely beyond their control. As in all three works, the novel's heterocosm demonstrates the ways in which beliefs and actions are determined by heredity and environment, by the training and conditioning of the cultural ethics of a people's time and place in history. It is the rigidly restrictive, tight-knit controls of this slave culture's "sivilising" forces

which Huck is forever trying to "get shut of." And it is the impact of its Calvinist dogmas and economic ethics on Jim which impels him to run when he learns Miss Watson plans to break her promise never to sell him down the river away from his wife and children.

This same cultural determinism which has shaped the ostensibly Christian, compassionate Aunt Sally, for instance, is manifested in her anxious enquiries into Huck's reported steamboat explosion:

> "Good gracious! Anybody hurt?"
>
> "No'm, killed a nigger."
>
> "Well, it's lucky; because sometimes people do get hurt..." (291)

The dehumanising process of human bondage on both the enslaved and the enslaver is revealed in this exchange. But perhaps the strongest argument for the power of determinist forces here lies with Huck volunteering that nobody was hurt since only a "nigger" was killed. He has come to know, love and admire Jim during their down-river quest for freedom. And in a society which looks upon "low-down abolitionists" and "nigger stealers" as worse criminals than cattle thieves, Huck has risked his life and his reputation to help free Jim. He even believes he will be damned to hell for it. And his sole purpose in coming to the Phelps farm now is to rescue Jim who has been sold back into slavery "for forty dirty dollars" (281) by the rapacious dauphin. But so successfully has Huck been programmed to believe in the non-person status of "niggers", that after all he has seen of Jim's humanity, he can still come out with the socially demanded view of Negroes.

Huck's decision to help Jim is purely personal; the whole network of cultural, legal, religious, and economic influences impinging on him ensures that even at the conclusion, he never questions the moral right of enslavement. Quite the contrary. Huck firmly believes that in his bid to free Jim he has reverted to the "wickedness" he was "brung up to". As Nicolaus Mills says, it would be almost impossible for Huck to think any differently. He has been exposed to an evangelical Calvinism which combined Christian beliefs with the ethics of enlightened selfishness "built on to the Eighteenth Century traditional beliefs in a conservative providence which intended the social and economic [and racial] divisions of society" (July 1970 69). Twain thus exploits Black/White relations in general and the friendship in particular between a legally enslaved Negro and the psychologically enslaved White boy to make the point that no one is free from external influences.

Jim and Huck are both on the run for freedom: Jim toward the social acceptance and re-union of his family which he believes would follow his escape to a free state, and Huck away from the "cramped up and smothery" constraints of "sivilisation" and his murderous, drunken, no-good Pap. James Johnson says it is ironic that Huck feels free with Jim because Jim is a slave yet Huck is enslaved by his benevolence and compassion for Jim (97). And later, his desire for peace and harmony enslaves him to the duke and dauphin, who, as a consequence, betray Jim back into slavery.

In this locale, the pair represent the helpless, hopeless victims of their oppressive, ante-bellum American culture. In a universal landscape, their escape quest emblemises the deep human yearning we all have for freedom from determinist forces. And their

ıilure to achieve it symbolises the impossibility of Everyperson's escape from the ɔrces of time and place. The discovery at the end of the novel that Huck has been ırning his heart and soul inside out over the morality of his efforts to free Jim when e has been free all along epitomises both the irony of the word "free" and how little al free will anyone has in the face of determinist forces. Just as Twain knew by the me he wrote *Huckleberry Finn* that the Civil War had freed Blacks in name only, he ants us to know that Huck and Jim's river journey cannot take them to freedom. ven before it gets underway, he plants the suggestion that their quest will parallel the ıraelites' search for the Promised Land. Led by Moses, the formerly enslaved tribes andered the wilderness for forty years. When they finally did find Canaan, it was othing like their dreamed of Eden.

y this association, Twain is telling us that legal freedom and the Territory will be ead promises for Huck, and Jim too. Time would expose them as cruel shams in the ıme way that Huck felt the story of "Moses and the bullrushers" was a cheat since Moses had been dead a considerable time...and was...no use to anybody" (50). By nplication then, the dream of emancipation from determinist forces is a desert ıirage; ultimately the only real escape lies in death. Death pervades the novel, not ıst by its perpetual presence but by Huck's repeated longing for it. He frequently eels dismal, depressed, and lonesome and voices the wish, that Hank Morgan and heodor Fischer echo also with increasing pessimism: to be dead and "done with it ll".

his creates an aura around the novel of life's futility and the hopelessness of the elplessness against life's compelling forces. It negates the dream of freedom and

forecasts its disillusionment, not just for Huck and Jim but for all humanity regardless of time and place. In this historical context, it symbolises the despair over the dissolution of the American Dream, which Huck puts into words when he finds Jim has been kidnapped and sold, cheated once again of the chance to be free:

> "after all this long journey...here was it all come to nothing, everything busted up and ruined..." (281)

By setting *Huckleberry Finn* back to a time "forty or fifty years ago" Twain demonstrates that, like history, the dream of freedom is cyclical: hope precedes disenchantment. Past forces are influencing contemporary events which in turn will determine future forces. This is borne out by the way the ethos of slavery affected attitudes toward the Negro after the war. For many Blacks - just like the freed Israelites - the emancipation in 1865, was only the start of their troubles. In the years that followed, White supremacists agitated for the repeal of the few civil rights Negroes had; anti-Black violence erupted into statewide civil wars in Mississippi and Arkansas (the setting for *Huckleberry Finn*), and the Ku Klux Klan's activities were inciting calls for anti-terrorist legislation (Painter 2).

In *Huckleberry Finn*, this acceleration of racial hatred and violence toward freed slaves is predicted in Pap's anti-government, anti-education, White supremacist tirade, and portrayed as a manifestation of the determinist forces of this civilisation which is held together by enslavement, racism and violence. It is a vivid illustration of Twain's claim that "slavery had a hardly less baleful influence upon the poor white" than it did on the Negro (Budd 95). Before the war, slaves posed a threat of rebellion - which is reflected in the farmers' fear and hysteria over Jim's escape - and afterward they were

competing with poor Whites for jobs in the broken, impoverished South. Thus, the Negroes were a target and a scapegoat - just as the Jews have historically been - on which to blame society's ills. So ironically, being "free" meant being worse off in some ways for many Negroes.

For all that Pap is a vicious, mercenary, drunken layabout who has never lifted a finger in his life except to "borrow" from others or "hick'ry" Huck until he "was all over welts", Pap believes in his inherited right of supremacy, even over a Negro who is a college "p'fessor", can speak four languages and "knowed everything". Through Pap, Twain exemplifies how racism is based on ignorance, self-interest and fear, and is, in truth, just an excuse for violence which, according to William Gibson (14), is what Pap's prime trait really is. And violence, besides being a fear-inducing control, is also an outlet for all the pent-up frustration, boredom and anger of people who feel constricted by the human-contrived forces determining their lives.

Such violence briefly empowers the otherwise powerless. Twain underlines this in Huck's depiction of the mindless, mean-spirited violence of the Bricksville people whose degeneracy is symbolised by their "old shakly dried-up" houses and mud streets. The determinist forces of this society's slave system, with its rigid class structure of inherited rights and privileges, has rendered them shiftless and lifeless, and their only power and pleasure comes from "sicking" dogs onto sows or watching dogs fight. They epitomise Twain's contention that the disempowered masses "are both piteous and despicable" (Morse 2). Huck observes:

> There couldn't anything wake them up all over, and make them happy all over, like a dog-fight - unless it might be putting turpentine on a stray dog

> and setting fire to him, or tying a tin pan to his tail and see him run himself to death. (202-3)

They are so drama-starved that when Sherburn, the most powerful man in the town, threatens to shoot the drunken Boggs, they make sure the tragedy happens by frog-marching him toward it.

Their excitement over Sherburn gunning down Boggs is so great that they shove each other aside to watch him die under the weight of a huge bible placed on his chest. To their added delight, a lanky man re-enacts the horror, for which they all treat him from their bottles. And then they set off to lynch Sherburn. But he and they both know they are cowards conditioned to bow to authority and they exit quietly on his command. "They are out to kill time, not the Colonel" (Carrington 10), otherwise, as Sherburn says, they would have come masked and in the night. The irony of Sherburn's labelling the mob cowards when he has just murdered an unarmed man typifies the arrogance and assumed God-given rights of the powerful and wealthy to determine society's moral conventions.

Lynch mobs are common to all three novels as a manifestation of the universal cruelties and moral cowardice engendered by the repressive forces of cultural conformity. And in *Huckleberry Finn* Twain's allusion to "nightriding" highlights the anti-Black violence flaring as he was writing the book. From the year *Huckleberry Finn* was published until the end of the century, Nell Painter says, "2,500 lynchings occurred in the United States" (164).

Thus, the novel demonstrates how violence becomes an integral and self-perpetuating force in a culture conditioned to perceive punitive measures as the morally just, necessary, even God-ordained way of maintaining its laws and customs. And the novel is studded with violence, from Aunt Sally's "lickings" which Huck admits "don't amount to shucks" to the horrible deaths of the rapscallion duke and dauphin, whom the enraged mob tar and feather, then ride on a rail. In between, there is Pap's *delirium tremens* attempt to kill Huck, and Huck's subsequent slaughter of the hog to fake his own murder; the "gang of murderers" on the derelict steamboat; the Grangerford/Shepherdson feud in which the families successively wipe each other out over a matter of honour no-one can even remember; the brutality and near-hanging of Jim by the farmers; and finally, Pap's murder.

All told, Huck sees thirteen corpses and witnesses many violent incidents, the memories of which he says he "ain't ever going to get shut". When the Shepherdson men pursue the last two wounded Grangerford boys to their deaths in the river, Huck says their shouts of "kill them, kill them!" made him so sick "I ain't a going to tell *all* that happened - it would make me sick again" (175). Through Huck's relation of this scene of carnage where he tearfully drags ashore the bodies and covers Buck's face, Twain dramatises how powerful violence is as an enforcer of other interwoven determinants.

In a society which lives by violence, the contrast of Jim's humanity and Huck's compassion and abhorrence of brutality - even against the reprehensible duke and dauphin and the murderers on board the sinking "Walter Scott" - make a telling commentary on both the effects of violence and the cowardly, dehumanised people

who often take a sadistic pleasure in its application. Despite the evils Huck has seen the duke and dauphin perpetrate, their awful fate prompts him to declare:

> "I was sorry for them poor pitiful rascals...I couldn't ever feel any hardness against them any more in the world. It was a dreadful thing to see. Human beings *can* be awful cruel to one another." (301-302)

It is ironic that, as George Carrington notes, these wretches die "by the self-righteous upholders of the same puritan culture that sanctions slavery." (6)

Humanitarian feelings are tantamount to insurrection in such a violent, slave society; this is stressed when Jim is recaptured. Despite everyone's praise for the way Jim risked his own freedom to save Tom's life, he is kept chained up on a bread and water diet. Huck is pained that "they didn't think" to take off any of the "rotten heavy" chains or let him have meat or greens. But Jim is a runaway slave living in a time and place where, by the inculcated beliefs and attitudes of every law and custom, he is deemed a threat to the property and profiteering rights of a whole protected way of life. A slave willing to die for his freedom is an affront to the Southerners' aggressive, arrogant, culturally conditioned assumption of their absolute right to enslave the people of an "inferior" race. As Huck says: "everybody naturally despises an ungrateful nigger" (281).

So deeply entrenched are these beliefs as a denial of any inhumanity or injustice in depriving others of liberty, that Tom has no compunction about concealing the fact that Miss Watson had freed Jim in her will. Tom regards his cruel, drawn out game of "freeing Jim" as "the best fun he ever had in his life", and he only wished they could

"keep it up all the rest of our lives and leave Jim to our children to get out" (321-322).

As William Manierre notes, this dragged out conclusion is far more than just a burlesque of romantic silliness; it emblemises society's refusal to free the Negro (66). Even further, though, it represents a refusal by this society's values - which are its determinist forces - to allow free will to anyone, since the enslavers of Blacks (who are also the purveyors of poverty to the poor Whites because of slavery) are imprisoning the whole of society in this dehumanising system. This is exemplified, too, as Mills says, by the need to keep a runaway fed, watched and under control to protect everyone's property rights: "in creating a slave system the white South not only controlled its slaves through fear but unavoidably itself" (Autumn 1970 329). Even the doctor's seriously ill patients must be neglected in favour of ensuring Jim does not escape.

Tom's insensitivity and assumption of authority are imitative of this society's "sivilising" forces and are also predictive of the "well-intentioned" destruction Hank and Satan wreak in their attempts to "free" people from enslaving forces. Twain uses Huck ironically, to emphasise the part training and conditioning play in permeating the social mores which determine the moral rightness of slavery. Huck is incredulous over Tom's insistence on helping to "steal" Jim out of slavery:

> Here was a boy that was respectable, and well brung up; and had a character to lose...and knowing and not ignorant; and not mean, but kind; and yet here he was, without any more pride, or rightness, or feeling, than to stoop to this business and make himself a shame...It was outrageous (304-5).

Huck was right; Tom's whole "evasion" was a lie. And just as Huck's and Jim's freedom will historically be proved a lie too, Twain makes a Black man and a White boy emblematic of the impossibility of anyone finding true freedom from society's enslaving forces. At the end, Jim stands legally free but has no rights, and Huck is headed for the Territory which is soon to be enclosed in barbed wire: an apt metaphor for the ongoing imprisoning nature of "sivilisation".

CHAPTER THREE

MONEY, THE ARISTOCRACY, AND ROMANTICISM.

In a novel which exposes the lies of a society that conventionalises, romanticises, sanctifies and glorifies its commercial morality, Twain makes *Huckleberry Finn* a stage for the satiric inter-play of determinist forces stemming from the South's power structure of inherited wealth and position, and materialism. Through Tom's romanticised killings and robberies, inspired by the insidious influence of romantic literature, Twain shows, by implication, how Southerners have mythologized their tradition of gentility, and how such romanticising of an economy built on slavery has institutionalised cultural determinism. Tom's highway robber gang and his "stealing" of Jim thus emblemise a society in which people are conditioned to accept what is in reality the theft of human liberty for power and profit.

This society's code is one of "pecuniary honour" (McMahan 8): money buys and guarantees respectability and desirability; it is Huck's six thousand dollars which makes him acceptable to St. Petersburg. Trachtenberg says, "One of the most basic deceptions in the book is that money can be traded for human value" (967). Huck and Jim are both viewed in terms of money and property. Huck's money is what "allowed" the Widow she would "sivilise" him, and it is to get at Huck's fortune that Pap wants "property" rights to his son. Pap's avarice is symptomatic of a covetous society which by law and custom earns its bread off the stolen sweat of others. Jim's worth as a piece of property is emphasised first by the slave trader's offer, then by the high rewards offered for his capture. And the doctor puts a monetary value of a thousand dollars on Jim's denial of his freedom in favour of "nussing" Tom. There is

also the succession of allusions to Jim's ownership. On Jackson's Island, he proudly reclaims ownership of himself: "I owns mysef, en I's wuth eight hund'd dollars. I wisht I had de money..." (100)

Jim does not see the paradox of his bravura; a monetary value cannot be attached to a free human being; the eight hundred dollars is his price tag as a slave. And to collect on his worth, he would have to sell himself back into bondage, which is an impossibility for a runaway slave. This linking of money with slavery highlights the determinist forces at work in a society where every law and custom of the church and state is designed to protect the property rights of the powerful, the privileged and the pretenders to gentility. It stresses, too, the delusion of anyone owning themselves against these forces. We see this again in Huck's crisis of contaminated conscience over "running Jim off from his rightful owner", and over Jim "saying he would steal his children - children that belonged to a man I didn't even know..." (145-6).

Ironically, this question of ownership and worth saves Jim from being strung up when he is captured: "he ain't our nigger, and his owner would turn up and make us pay for him" (360). The legality, the justice and the morality of lynching Jim are not even in the equation; property and money are the deciders. Twain hereby points out how unconscious we are of the extent to which indoctrination by customs and conventions determines our moral sense, our reasoning processes, and even our instincts.

Money is the powerful force behind all the sham values of a civilisation Huck wants to escape from, and it is significant that he tries to rid himself of its burdensome connections by "selling" his money to Judge Thatcher. As Elizabeth McMahan says,

money is also the prime motivator of action in *Huckleberry Finn* (8). It is money lust that drives the genteel, aristocratic Miss Watson to betray Jim, and it is a measure of this society's cultural conditioning that Jim understands why "ole Missus" capitulates: "she could git eight hund'd dollars for me, 'en it 'uz sich a big stack o' money she couldn' resis'" (96). Huck has the same recognition of the townspeople's eagerness to hunt down Jim: "three hundred dollars is a power of money" (113). His diction is significant; it links power and money to the corrupted and corrupting values and forces of a society which takes its power and wealth from slave labour. Huck underlines this too when he plays the victim to discover Jim's whereabouts: "they've took my nigger...and now I ...ain't got no property...and no way to make my living" (285).

The money/slavery nexus determines that Blacks are viewed as stocks and shares to be traded for cash and worked to add interest to the owner's investment. Slaves' lives are determined absolutely by the economic ethos of the would-be aristocratic Southern landowners whose power through money is legally and morally sanctioned and supported by the pulpit. This is powerfully and satirically illustrated by the unquenchable greed of the biggest sham aristocrat of them all, the imposter king. Posing as a preacher, he dismembers the Wilks' slave family by selling the mother down the river and the sons to Memphis. The determinist rights of a fraudulent, meretricious aristocracy to claim humans as their private property is again reinforced by the king when he sells Jim, who has saved his life and done his "royal" bidding. Motivated solely by the desire to acquire money and status without effort (McMahan 8), the king and duke personify the sham forces of an hierarchical social system headed by greedy pretenders to gentility.

Huck is intuitively aware of this power of greed to motivate people where a sympathy bid will fail. To enlist the ferryman's aid in searching for the drowning murderers, he pretends that one of the party in trouble is related to the district's richest man, who will pay handsomely for "the remainders". Anything can be bought or sold in this society. Money can buy a clear conscience, as it does for the slave catchers, who float forty dollars to Huck on a board rather than risk helping him. It can pay a person for making an absurd game of their false imprisonment, suffering and threatened murder, as Tom believes when he gives Jim forty dollars "for being prisoner for us so patient, and doing it up so good" (368). And forty dollars to buy whisky is enough incentive for the king to sell Jim into illegal slavery.

Twain uses this triptych of forty dollar payments structurally and thematically (Doyno 4), to highlight money as a determinist force in the betrayal of the freedom quest. And Victor Doyno says each of these exchanges signals the failure of an attempt to free Jim (5). Just as Twain employs the story of Moses to predict the ultimate failure of freedom, these payments are reminiscent of the forty pieces of silver that emblemise Judas Iscariot's betrayal of Jesus as a consequence of a misguided attempt to free him of false charges. And just as the aristocratic Sanhedron's money symbolises a force that Jesus could not escape, Huck's money marks his imprisonment within the forces of a romanticised, money-motivated civilisation. At the end, he learns that he is not free of his six thousand dollars; it is still there, plus interest. Money symbolises the forces that will draw Huck back to St. Petersburg when he fails to find freedom in the Territory.

Through Twain's portrayal of a South infatuated with and deceived by the wealth and power of its aristocracy, he satirises the corruption of a cultural determinism which was, at the time he was writing, defining the social realities of an "equal" America. While millions were living in squalor far worse than Huck's depiction of Bricksville, multi-millionaires were buying nobility by "selling" their daughters to European titleholders. One such trade was Consuelo Vanderbilt's marriage to the Duke of Marlborough for the price of two and a half million dollars (Allen 237). Twain saw this all-powerful combination of vast wealth and position as poverty-inducing piracy of the poor from whom it is wrested, and his attacks on the freedom-stealing forces of the monarchy and nobility become even more vitriolic in *A Connecticut Yankee*.

Such culturally conditioned moral degeneracy is the hallmark of all the robber nobility according to Huck. Through historical examples, particularly of "Henry the Eight", he assures Jim that there is no difference between their phoney king and duke and the real kind: "all kings is mostly rapscallions...It's the way they're raised" (216-18). Huck's comparisons of European royal swindlers with the American pseudo-aristocracy suggest a further comparison with the massive cultural con being perpetrated against Blacks by Southern Whites. And together, they emphasise the ongoing institutionalised nature and strength of money and rank as romanticised determinist forces.

By this stage, Huck has seen through the falsity of "a handsome lot of quality", including Colonel Sherburn and the feuding Grangerfords and Shepherdsons. All of these aristocratic imitators have perverted codes of chivalric honour which valorise senseless murder and are the force behind a "right smart chance of funerals". The lordly Mr. Grangerford commands his young son Buck toward "heroic" death when he

castigates him for shooting from behind a bush instead of making himself an honourable target: "Why didn't you step into the road, my boy?" (166-8). Like the Shepherdsons, the Grangerfords are affluent landed slaveholders whom Huck describes as "high-toned, and well born, and rich and grand" (166). But through his ironic observations of their home, their reading material and their dead daughter's highly sentimentalised drawings and "good poetry", Twain reveals their pious pretensions to gentility. These same Christians who subscribe to the *Presbyterian Observer* and showcase books like *Friendship's Offering* take their guns to church while all the time talking about brotherly love, faith and good works.

Emmeline Grangerford's obsession with death, expressed through her verse and pictures bearing such titles as "I shall never see the more, alas", parallels the bloody feud and its dead cause. And it parodies the South's loyalty to the illusory yet dangerous reality-avoidance forces of romanticism for which Twain in part blamed Sir Walter Scott's historical novels. In *Life On The Mississippi*, Twain claims:

> The South has not recovered from the debilitating influence of his books. Admiration of his fantastic heroes and their grotesque chivalry doings and romantic juvenilities still survive here...and traces of its inflated language and other humbuggeries survive along with it. (Birchfield 16)

Through Tom who has "read all the books" and bases his robberies on their "authority", Twain exposes the determinist realities of a robber aristocracy which glamorises its exploitation of Blacks and poor Whites as Southern chivalry. Richard Adams says the presence of three murderous thieves on board the wrecked *Walter Scott* is neatly satirical and echoes the seizing by Tom's gang, of doughnuts and jam

from a Sunday School picnic (348). Tom's theft of Jim's freedom with his dangerous games repeats this stealing from primers. And by implication, both incidents parallel the theft through cultural conditioning, of everyone's physical and psychological freedom. Through Tom's perverted escape, Herbert Carson says:

> Twain displays this ideal Southern youth and his society as a complicated structure that entraps humans and keeps them in bondage to stupidity and ignorance, and arranges complicated schemes which justify their cruel imprisonment. (14)

The depths of influence such imprisoning delusions have is satirised in Tom's emotional response to the fake pathos of his self-invented insanities; he "most broke down" over his wall inscription, "Here a captive heart busted..." (332)

Tom sums up the empty yet powerful conformist forces of his society's romanticised aristocracy when he insists on doing things the "moral" way, the way "the nobility does": "it don't make no difference how foolish it is, it's the right way" (316). His declaration is Twain's indictment of this society's pecuniary code of existence from which it seizes the power to determine morality and even quotes God's word to prove its right to do so.

CHAPTER FOUR

CUSTOMS, CONVENTIONS AND RELIGION

In a civilisation where God's word is supposedly axiomatic to every social and legal custom and convention, *Huckleberry Finn* unmasks religion to reveal just a convention. But in this novel, people make a religion out of their conventions, and like all mind-enslaving customs and conventions, social coercion makes of religion a powerful determinist force.

In all three of these works, custom-conditioned morality blinds people to the real and larger moral issues surrounding them, like the church-condoned intellectual and material impoverishment, oppression and enslavement of the poor by the rich and powerful. Twain saw the intractability of this same force still at work when Maxim Gorki visited the United States in 1905 to raise funds for Russian revolutionists. Many Americans, including Twain, wanted to kill Czarist despotism, but the cause was smashed and Gorki banished when the media revealed that the woman travelling with him was not his wife. Twain saw that the resulting hypocritical moral outrage was the product of the same inculcated customs and conventions that had determined beliefs and actions as powerfully as in the days of *Huckleberry Finn.*

It was to make this point about the unchanging nature and strength of culturally conditioned forces that Twain set all three of these novels back in time. His reinforced belief prompted this observation:

> "Custom is custom; it is built of brass, boiler iron, granite; facts, reasonings, arguments have no more effect upon it than the idle winds have upon Gibraltar" (*Letters From The Earth* 156).

We see this philosophy permeate the whole social fabric of *Huckleberry Finn*. Conventional ideas and customary practices determine morality, even when they appear to be in direct conflict with the Calvinist doctrines of this puritanical culture. Thus the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons can share the same steamboat landing, the same church and the same Christian ideals, while each dedicating their lives to exterminating the other. As Anthony Hilfer says, religion is one convention to these people, and feuding another. And ideas and ideals can exist without reference to each other or to reality: "On the universal level...the feud is a criticism of mental inertia and slavery to convention" (75).

On the particular level of Huck's journeying through the South, the feud and the feuders are emblematic of the moral bankruptcy of the convention-bound enslavers he meets in every social strata. Huck's Pap is an alcoholic outcast and appears to rebel against every social and religious value St. Petersburg holds. The new judge fails to reform this self-claimed misunderstood man and concludes that "a body could reform the ole man with a shot-gun, maybe, but he didn't know no other way" (73). And yet, in Pap's determination to live a loafer's life - just taking whatever he needs - he is only a bottom of the pile version of the propertied class which fattens itself on the produce of its slave labour. As well, his insistence on the inferiority and rightful enslavement of Negroes - along with his right to be "boss of his son" - marks him as a conditioned conformist to this society's customary beliefs and prejudices.

Pap's fury over Huck's ability to read and write betrays an instinctive knowledge and fear of the conformist powers of these civilising influences. He calls education "hifalut'n foolishness" and promises to "lick" Huck if he catches him near the school. Pap again confirms everyone's psychological plasticity to customary conditioning when he contemptuously predicts that Huck will "get religion too", and he tears up an illustrated text Huck was given for "learning my lessons good". But to deny the existence of conventions or rebel against them is to recognise their powerful hold, and Pap makes as big a convention of religious beliefs and superstitions as everyone else. Huck first knows of his father's reappearance when he spies in the snow the sign of a cross in a left boot print. Pap made this cross "with big nails, to keep off the devil" (66). And in his *delirium tremens* we see the same co-existence of conflicting conventions as those which drive the feuding families and signify the depth and permanency of the enculteration process. The religious conformist in Pap believes that the Angel of Death is coming for him, but his response to society's code of self-righteous violence is to roar and cuss and threaten to kill Death with a clasp-knife. This is the incident in which Pap almost kills Huck and in the name of this society's customary practice of preserving its property rights, he steals from Huck, and he beats and imprisons him. The patriarchal Mr. Grangerford is only slightly less tyrannical in his domination of his family, and he does succeed, in his customary quest, to cause the deaths of all his sons.

Mills says social crime is thus linked with the abuse of children in *Huckleberry Finn* and Twain saw that they had a reciprocal influence. He knew that "the relationships between childhood anxiety and adult destructiveness exist because they serve a wider system of social custom and exploitation" (July 1970 63). This accounts for Huck's

melancholic sense of impotence in a world of manipulative and life-threatening adults and explains why he is constantly "lighting out" in vain attempts to escape their conformist controls. It is a mark of the conditioning powers of these controls that Huck comes to believe he likes the new ways "a little bit" but can then quit them and go off to the woods with Pap. He has been trained to like "the old ways best" and only abandons Pap when he is forced to flee for his life.

Through almost every authority figure in the novel, from the lowly Pap to the lofty Mr. Grangerford, Twain demonstrates that the degraded, dehumanised behaviour that results from conformist conditioning is not restricted to one class or type. All humans are subject to shaping by inescapable external influences, and we see these at work on everyone from the top to the bottom of the social scale. Nevertheless, Twain makes it apparent that being victims of cultural determinism does not grant exoneration from the collective baseness of human behaviour. Individuals may have codes of honour they claim to live by, but the imperatives of social conformity nearly always supersede individual instincts. In any case, their belief systems have already been formed and deformed by these human-created social, economic and religious pressures. We see this exemplified by Miss Watson and the Phelps'. They are vastly different in their natures, but conformity to religion-backed social and economic customs and conventions renders them all perpetrators of "the constraints of a culture which enslaved its whites in tradition and its blacks in chains" (J. Johnson 117). Miss Watson is so mean-spirited, preachy, and pecky that Huck feels sure there would be "no help" for anyone her Providence got hold of. Her conformity to the Calvinist ideal of worth through wealth is what turns Jim into a runaway. The Phelpses are goodhearted in

their piety, yet loyalty to their society's custom-forged morality dictates that they keep Jim chained up like a dog, in a darkened and tiny hut, on a starvation diet.

Despite the inescapability of cultural coercion, Huck's anxieties over the miseries these people create underlines Twain's belief that humans are still culpable for their evil actions; it is their arrogance, greed, self-preserving cowardice, weakness and hypocrisy in accepting and perpetuating these customs and conventions which enslaves them all. It is a measure too of the Southerners shaping by determinist forces as well as their culpability for empowering them, that these people act according to customary codes. By contrast, the less intensely trained Huck has to soul-search for his morality; he "goes to studying things out" whenever he is "in a tight place" (346).

Near the end of his travels, Huck concludes that in this world a person who does "a low-down thing...don't want to take no consequences of it. Thinks as long as he can hide it, it ain't no disgrace" (281). And some, like Sherburn, the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons, are so secure in the power and pride of their customs and conventions that they see no disgrace, only honourable vindication, in their cowardly deeds; they commit them in daylight, in full view of everyone, and do not expect any legal consequences. There is, of course, a black comic irony in Huck's vilification of this society's reversed morality; he believes himself to be its most evil example. The conventional beliefs and customary practices he has been indoctrinated with have burdened him with a conscience, and this conscience repeatedly "ups and says" to Huck that, in breaking every social and religious taboo in his low-down act of helping Jim to freedom, he is consigning himself to hell. But when Huck's conscience goes to "grinding" him for the third time, what it reveals is not a God-ordained judgement

against "nigger stealers" but the fear-induced, institutionalised moral cant of a society seeking to protect its slavery-based economy:

> "It hit me...here was the plain hand of Providence slapping me in the face and letting me know my wickedness was being watched...I most dropped in my tracks I was so scared." (281-2)

Huck fears the social and moral consequences of actions that he has been trained by legalised conventional ideas and customary practises to "know" a wrong even without going to Sunday School. His conscience vacillates between reducing his blame - because he was "brung up wicked" - then boosting it by reminding Huck he could have gone to Sunday School where "they'd a learnt" him "that people that acts as I'd been acting about that nigger, goes to everlasting fire". Huck's recognition here of environmental determinism followed by his confirmation of the part training has to play in it, stress both the lack of free will and Twain's belief that, contrary to conditioned thought, the religious customs and conventions manifested in the Christian conscience, are not coming from the voice of God. They are nothing more than culturally contrived and cultivated controls to justify and sanctify the theft of human liberty.

The determinist fear that religious training instils is evident in the malevolence and violence Huck attributes to Providence which hits, slaps, and watches him with the aim of disallowing his "miserable doings" to go any further. And the powerful part religious rhetoric plays in perpetuating the determinism of slavery is reinforced during this final debate with Huck's conscience. As Henry Nash Smith notes, Twain intersperses formal and clichéd theological language with Huck's own vernacular:

"Thus, although Huck is obviously recalling the bits of theological jargon from sermons justifying slavery, they have become a part of his vocabulary" (1978 121). Repudiating this custom-contaminated conscience makes Huck the only White person in the novel to have a real conscience; and he exercises it purely on the basis of his personal experiences of Jim's innate goodness toward him:

> I'd see him standing my watch...so I could go on sleeping...and how glad he was when I come back out of the fog;...and would always do everything he could think of for me, and how good he always was...and so grateful..." (283)

But as Robert Taylor says, "Huck is only able to reason against the customs and traditions of his time because his 'training' has not had time to petrify" (7).

Twain develops this idea progressively in *A Connecticut Yankee* and *The Mysterious Stranger*, where both Hank and Satan reiterate Twain's oft repeated conviction that arguments have no chance against petrified training. And training people to believe in the doctrines of sin and damnation is probably Twain's hardest strike against the determinist force of religion in all three novels. In *Huckleberry Finn* he shows how these conventional ideas are used interdependently by social, religious, legal and economic forces to equate slavery with moral rectitude, and opposition to it with evil punishable by "everlasting fire".

By choosing hell over the treachery of betraying a good human being, whose only crime was to be born Black, Huck unwittingly shows up the fraud of religion. In flouting its fiercest intimidation device - the terror-striking promise of hell-fire and eternal damnation - he exposes it as nothing more than a human-invented, conventional belief designed to control people through fear. And Huck's decision now, that he

might as well "take up wickedness again" and "go the whole hog", reinforces his earlier realisation that since "the wages is just the same" he may as well "do whichever come handiest at the time" (149). He knows from bitter experience that the civilised universe is determined by forces which make him pay whether he does the culturally determined moral thing or not. Ironically, this also reflects the Calvinist, conventional idea of the elect; actions are of no account since a person's destination is pre-determined.

As the novel progresses, Huck comes to a like awareness that Christian customs and conventions are of no account to him. Certainly he finds nothing to be gained from prayers; they fail to provide him with the fish hooks he asks for and he concludes that "there ain't nothing in it". And later he learns "you can't pray a lie" anyway. As for the precept of self-sacrifice, Huck "couldn't see no advantage about it - except for the other people - so...I...just let it go" (60). Huck can't "see no advantage" in the conventional idea of heaven either when Miss Watson assures him that all a body has to do is play a harp and sing all day long: "I made up my mind I wouldn't try for it" (51).

Huck's rejections all build up to a picture of this society's religion-based customs and conventions as determining a whole way of life that is as false and fraudulent as the king's "missionarying" at the Pokeville camp meeting. Just as Jim understands "de real pint" of Solomon's story is the dismemberment of slave families (Schmitz 132), so Huck's observations reveal the evils of customs and conventions which work together to preach the sanctity of slavery. And when Huck says Tom's "A-rabs" and elephants "had all the marks of a Sunday School", we infer that Tom's lies have all the marks of

what a Sunday School is in this society: an inculcator of religious beliefs which are nothing more than conventional ideas and customary practices designed to keep people in slavery. But Twain knows that Huck's and Jim's rejection of social morality cannot turn the tide of determinist forces. The great current of cultural conventions rolls on and over humanity as surely and ceaselessly as the mighty Mississippi surges South.

CHAPTER FIVE

NATURE AND SUPERNATURE

Escaping civilising forces can only ever be short-lived in the determinist landscape of *Huckleberry Finn*. Huck's alarm call to Jim, "they're after us", comes to symbolise the intrusive, predatory character of environmental and human nature as well as the enslaving force of supernatural fears. And Huck's experiences reveal that, ultimately, it is a losing game even to stay "ahead of the rest".

Nature and the supernatural may seem to offer freedom from the constraints of customary codes of behaviour and religious beliefs, but they prove to be equally as imprisoning and determinist. Their function is to complete the pessimistic sense of inescapability from a universe of immutable forces in which the human yearning for unattainable free will can only find solace in sleep, dreams and death.

Death is, paradoxically, the most determinist of all natural forces; it is the one real, permanent and unavoidable escape. Its power and presence dominates the novel, not just by the numerous killings that occur, but by Huck's reinforcing and repetitious use of death imagery as well. His fear of death and his alternate obsessive longing to dissolve into it identify the source of his depressive anxieties as an intuitive knowledge of the self-preservatory yet hopeless compulsion to out-run the forces determined to conquer him. Each time Huck confronts the "busted up" dream of his illusory flight to freedom, he "most wishes" he was dead. Sleep, though, offers a refuge for Huck; he declares "there ain't no better way to put in time when you are lonesome..." (91-2).

And since it is both human nature and essential to survival to hope and dream against knowledge, Huck and Jim hope that nature and a superstitious respect for its laws will fulfill their dreams of freedom.

Nature in the form of the river is invested with the promise of carrying the two fugitives from cultural forces into the free states. But the river, like death and all other natural forces, is paradoxical in nature. It can be a benign life-giver or a malevolent life-taker. The one thing the South-bound Mississippi cannot do is forge a road to freedom: as Huck says, "would a runaway nigger run south?" (187). So the river and the raft come to symbolise the shattered illusion of hope over knowledge.

Gladys Bellamy has noted the insubstantial, dream-like quality of the raft's image and points to similar feelings Twain evokes in *A Tramp Abroad* where he describes the illusory ability of the raft's soothing motions to dispel anxieties - "existence becomes a dream...a deep and tranquil ecstasy" (221). This is the ecstatic dream Jim and Huck have of freedom, but the sleep, dream, death motifs so important to all three novels stress Twain's implication that there is no substance to life, and especially no substance to the dream of freedom. Thus Huck and Jim's dream can only end with the nightmare realisation that freedom is an unattainable ideal in a determined world. The only freedom and the only escape lie in the obliteration of life. This implicit message becomes more pronounced in *A Connecticut Yankee* and concludes with the explicit statement in *The Mysterious Stranger* that *all* is pure illusion. And Huck and Jim's freedom is as illusory and elusive as the brief snatches they get at it on the raft which floats them, always, away from freedom and deeper back into enslaving forces.

It is thus significant that the pair's rafting days make up only four short chapters interspersed among a very long series of struggles to disentangle themselves from these forces and run back to the water. Water induces an illusion of timelessness, weightlessness and boundlessness which Susan Harris says poets throughout the ages have noted. And she claims that Twain initially used the river "as a metaphor to express his desire to escape the sufferings that he felt history imposed on humans" (202). But Twain knew long before he wrote *Huckleberry Finn* that the illusions of freedom induced by water are just that: illusions of temporal freedom. In *Old Times On The Mississippi*, Twain asserts that the knowledge he gained as a river pilot destroyed these illusions, that once you learn to read the signs of hidden dangers "the romance and beauty...[are] all gone from the river" (Marx 1963 50).

Huck's re-creation of sunrise on the Mississippi has long been hailed as a lyrical paean to the beauties of nature and a joyous expression of the comfort, freedom and peace of life on the raft. But there is ambiguity in these descriptions and a juxtaposition of Huck's observations that warns of the menacing forces lurking beneath the water's surface and threatening invasion from the shore. And at first glance, the novelty of Huck's vernacular obscures the fact that Twain is injecting his prose with sentimental, clichéd images to alert us to the illusions being undercut. Each positive image of the river as a lovely sanctuary is countered with a negative reality reminder. Huck talks of the "perfect still" and quiet being punctured by the "jumbled up voices" and the "sweep screaking"; of streaks on the water's surface which indicate snags and a swift current; of picturesque log cabins on the woods' edge, then wood yards "piled by them cheats"; and of how the sweet, fresh fragrance of flowers wafting across from the woods is sometimes spoiled by the rank reek of rotting fish (177-8).

This contrast of dream and reality reinforces the temporality of any idyllic moments in a determined environment, a point stressed by Huck's report that "nothing ever happened to us at all" for three nights in a row (119). The inescapability of natural and human forces is signified by the never-ending stream of disasters and desperate doings that happen *to* the pair. And Twain emphasises this by Huck's pathetic expressions of relief and gratitude for the raft's illusory security. Each one precedes or follows their enforced separation from the raft, or surrender of it, or threatened incursion by freedom-destroying agents. By the time Huck utters his ironic assertion, "You do feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft" (176), he and Jim have had to ward off bounty hunters; they have been lashed and flooded by storms; and they have almost come to grief in a fog which caused them to float past Cairo and miss the jumping-off junction to freedom. Then they have to dive for their lives when a monstrous steamboat smashes straight through the raft. Nature here joins forces with technology - the destructive steamboat that looks and sounds like a hound from hell - to thwart once more, their illusory escape to freedom.

Mother Nature, human nature and the nature of machines are all paralleled as careless, reckless, malevolent and menacing determinist forces when Huck cynically but matter-of-factly states, "Of course there was a booming current; and of course that boat started her engines again ten seconds after she stopped them, for they never cared much for raftsmen" (152). Because of the steamboat, Huck is pitched into the middle of the frightful feud and it is survival of this that prompts his thanks to be back, safe and sound, on the raft. Not for long though; after only three days, their rafting is ruined for good by the duke and dauphin's takeover. And this determines a whole new

series of perilous dramas for Huck and Jim which conclude with the reality that even for the legally free, there is only the hollow pretence of the ideal.

Jim and Huck both know that there is another powerful and supernatural determinist force preventing them from reaching freedom too: "it was some more work of the rattle-snake skin". Jim believes it is bad luck to handle a snake skin, and on Jackson's Island Huck had killed a rattle-snake and put it on Jim's blanket for fun. He had forgotten that a snake will always go in search of its mate. Jim was bitten and almost died but he was fairly certain they "hadn't got to the end" of the bad luck yet. His superstitious belief is confirmed when the fog obscures Cairo and Huck prefigures their doomed mission:

> "anybody that don't believe yet, that it's foolishness to handle a snake-skin, after all that snake-skin done for us, will believe it now, if they read on and see what more it done for us." (151)

Jim claims to know "most everything" about signs and he concedes that most are about bad luck. There are "mighty few" good-luck omens "an' *dey* ain' no use to a body" (99). Superstitions have an equally religious power-hold on Huck. He accidentally flicks a spider into a candle flame and is so "scared" of the consequences he "most shook the clothes off of me". He performs a series of rituals for warding off bad luck, including tying up his hair with thread, but he "hadn't no confidence" they would work "when you'd killed a spider" (52).

Supernatural beliefs can sometimes prove to have a more useful and commonsense wisdom behind them than Christian ones, though, as Huck discovers on Jackson's

Island. Daniel Hoffman points out that it is thanks to Jim's superstition about birds that they and their possessions are safe in the cave when the island is flooded in a violent storm. Likewise, the wigwam Jim constructs on the raft protects them from the weather and the slave hunters (40). George Carrington says the religion of witchcraft that governs the novel is more powerful than Christianity because "Christianity cannot explain the snakeskin for Huck, or the spirit voices and the hounds for Nat" (92).

Jim takes a pride in his beliefs which parallels and mirrors the slaveocracy's pride and assumed superiority stemming from their belief in a social order which they themselves head. But rather than causing Jim to appear foolish, his superstitions engender compassion for a human being caught up, as we all are, in the determinist forces of our place and time. And the comparison of beliefs unmasks all cultural forces as just human-invented illusions.

Hoffman has researched the beliefs in witchcraft and omens that Twain uses in *Huckleberry Finn* and claims that everyone of them is proved to be of European rather than African origin, and to have been widely held among Whites as well as the Negroes of the region. A trick Tom plays on Jim convinces him he has been ridden all over the county by witches and Hoffman says, "the witch who is warded off by tying hair with threads and rides her victims by night is an old familiar European folk figure" (407).

As Hoffman says, this refutes the belief that only children, Negroes and White "trash" like Pap are superstitious. And it affirms Twain's proposition that people make religions out of conventional beliefs - including Christian precepts - which are nothing

more than ingrained and empty superstitions. Through Huck's and Jim's enslavement to their superstitious fears, and the romantic Tom's mindless exploitation of the slave Nat's belief in witchcraft, Twain shows how everyone in this society is influenced by forces that determine their beliefs and actions. Carrington intimates that Twain has a powerful purpose behind his opening focus on witchcraft:

> "he reduces all human behaviour to the usual level of witchcraft, the level of trivia, and then seriously shows how people take their trivia seriously." (126)

Louis Budd concurs that Twain did not use folklore in *Huckleberry Finn* for realistic detail, much less humour: "his notebook for 1882 complained that 'human nature makes superstitions and priests necessary'" (100).

In all three novels, the world of the supernatural operates alongside traditional religious beliefs to expose both as forms of mind control which breed self-perpetuating guilt and fear. And in all three, this melding of superstitions produces the sleep, dream, death nexus which underlies the frenetic dissipation of human energies in the futile fight to break free of the determinist forces dictating existence. The forces of nature and supernature are thus tied in with the pessimistic realisation that a lack of activity underlines the basic meaninglessness of life; and worse, the inescapability of its freedom-opposing forces. This explains why the "still and Sunday-like" atmosphere of Huck's approach to the Phelps' farm oppresses him, and why he feels that the monotonous noise of the meaningless "dronings of bugs and flies...makes a body wish he was dead" (288).

Motion eases this sense of meaninglessness and hopelessness; it creates the illusion that travel, movement, and change of scene equates to freedom from determinist forces.

Huck senses this strongly; it is behind his urgency to be always "lighting out", and he expresses it at the beginning of the novel: "All I wanted was to go somewheres; all I wanted was a change, I warn't particular" (50). But the river journey dispels this illusion of freedom. Leo Marx says the raft was not capable of carrying the burden of hope Twain placed upon it (1962 340). But, from the beginning, the novel seems to deny that Twain ever harboured any such hope. There are enough prefigurings of both the river and the raft as freedom frustraters to demonstrate that Twain intended them as symbols of the inescapability of all forces: natural, supernatural and human-contrived.

Just as the Mississippi gnaws away at the banks of Bricksville, the determinist forces operating in every epoch and locale, undercut the pursuit of freedom. Huck and Jim's dream is betrayed by the river's geography, and the raft's helplessness against its powers which render the duo vulnerable to human forces. Nature, supernature and human nature combine forces to ensure that historically the dream of freedom is a "busted up" promise. As Huck finishes his story, he again picks up the hope over knowledge that he will find freedom "ahead of the rest" in the Territory. But the hope has already vanished into a past now "Forty or fifty years ago".

CHAPTER SIX

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, INDUSTRIALISM AND COMMERCIALISM

In *Huckleberry Finn* the raft ripping leviathan steamboat heralds what Twain ambiguously described as "the living, tearing, booming", combusting force of the machine age. In his next novel, *A Connecticut Yankee*, Twain leaps forward to the 1880's where technology has advanced steamboats into warships, and where the killing power of electricity has been ingeniously channelled into a chair for the societally condoned murder of condemned criminals. And to demonstrate the determinist nature of these machine age forces, Twain takes another giant leap back to the year 528 and unleashes them on a nation still steeped in the corrupt forces of Church and Monarchy.

Hank Morgan is the book's anti-hero. He is the spirit, the emblem, the caricature, and the personification of the nineteenth century's revolutionary determinist forces of science, technology, industrialism and commercialism, forces which are still impacting on and determining every factor of human existence from patterns of housing and employment to problems of health and social crime. Hank represents an era where the religious faith which determines the earthly rules for heavenly rewards is being superseded by a faith in progress and prosperity - through science and technology - to create a heaven on earth. He boasts of the ability to invent "anything a body wanted" and his job is making "guns, revolvers, cannon...all sorts of labour-saving machinery" (36). From the novel's outset, Twain is setting up Hank as a paradoxical creator/destroyer, a God/Satan who, in bringing humanity the power to free itself from

all the old religion-centred forces, determines its enslavement to new and even deadlier ones.

To illustrate Twain's ambivalence toward these ambiguous forces; to express his doubts about their ability to ameliorate the miseries of the masses; to voice his suspicion that the new forces are just the old ones wearing new masks; and to predict their potential for mayhem and progress-destruction, into which humanity has historically perverted knowledge and technology, Twain projects the protagonist of these forces back into another epoch and another land.

By transposing Hank into the mythological King Arthur's realm in sixth-century England, Twain uses the comedy of satire and farce to juxtapose the determinist forces at work in both the ancient and modern worlds and by so doing expose them. Hank thus re-enacts and reinforces the tragic truth of Huck and Jim's travels through their determined landscape. The forces operating in any and every time and place are inescapable, unchanging and destructive to individual liberties. In this novel, though, one force gathers momentum in our own time which Twain foresaw and forewarned could do more than just determine the pattern of human existence; it could blow the life-force itself into extinction. In the cataclysmic obliteration of both the old and new orders in *A Connecticut Yankee*, Twain presages a time when science and technology, industrialism and commercialism will become a joint force threatening humanity's mass destruction. He may not have foreseen that our Armageddon would arise from a programme of planet poisoning pollutants through a pillaging of the earth's resources begun in his own childhood, but Twain was right in his suspicion that the determinist

forces impelling our eruption would spring from the money-motivated misuse of science and technology.

When the novel was published, it was generally received as a tribute to the triumphs of American democracy and its fostering of a science and technology based industrial capitalism. But Twain's pessimistic determinism, already strong in *Huckleberry Finn*, turns comic incongruity away from eulogy and into cynical satire. His increasingly ominous prefigurings of the holocaust Hank's civilisation is heading for make a strong argument for Twain's denial from the outset that the product of profitable progress will be freedom from oppressive forces. This conclusion is underlined by Hank's repeated allusions to the French Revolution and America's Civil War. Both these events and their outcomes parallel the civil war in *A Connecticut Yankee*.

Further proof that Twain viewed technology as a mixed blessing at best were his many satirical censurings of the social reality of life for the minioned millions and his vigorous support for the rising Knights of Labour movement (Foner 214-228). Through Hank's debate with Dowley over the evils of the wealthy determining wages for the poor, Twain argues the need for strong trade unions. The growing numbers of unemployed workers in the 1870's and 80's had, as Boris Ford points out, already exploded the myth of a capitalist democracy (70); and the worst was yet to come. In the depression of the 90's an estimated 4 million were jobless. Ford says, the "rags to riches", "log cabin to White House" epithets had been totally undermined: "The hero of self-improvement...was shown to be a mere victim of circumstances and/or his own illusions" (70).

Hank turns out to be both. And through his revealed thoughts, his language, and his actions, Twain illustrates that Hank's beliefs and attitudes have been as deeply determined by the forces of his historical setting as the enslaved Arthurians he alternately pities and despises. From the beginning, Twain had no illusions that Hank would prove to be anything but the anti-hero of the anti-heroic freedom-destroying industrial revolution he both represents and forces onto the "white Indians" of England. Like the power-hungry, money-hungry forces impelling the machine age, Hank's passionately professed intentions are to create a better, fairer world for all. But he neither understands nor really cares about the possible consequences of what amounts to his colonisation and exploitation of a people he regards as "pygmies". His "impatience" to cash in on the terror-striking eclipse is characteristic: "in a business way it would be the making of me" (71). This was Twain's description of Hank to his illustrator, Dan Beard:

> "He is boss of a machine-shop; he can build a locomotive or a Colt's revolver, he can put up and run a telegraph line, but he's an ignoramus, nevertheless." (Spoffard 15)

Twain thus reminds us that wealth and power historically rest with those who arrogantly assume them, whether they be the Church, the nobility, the industrial capitalists or a megalomaniac, ignoramus like Hank. And by such powers are the forces of our lives determined. Hank's craving for money and power is behind his use of technology to "get up effects", especially terrifying effects. He is overjoyed with the fear-producing force of his fireworks "miracle" at the Holy Fountain:

> "It was immense - that effect! Lots of people shrieked, women curled up and quit in every direction..." (211)

Hank's careless use and misuse of power is literally and figuratively linked to electricity; the greatest and most ambivalent force for revolutionising nineteenth-century technological progress. "Not for nothing does he begin and end his account of his attempts to 'modernise' sixth-century England with the twin images of his hand on the switch" (Gardiner 450). In the first, Hank likens himself to the God of Genesis: "I stood with my hand on the cock...ready to...flood the midnight world with light..." (103). And in the second, he is the God of Judgement Day: "I touched a button...all our noble civilisation factories went up in the air and disappeared from the earth" (396).

Through Hank, Twain thus uses the power of electricity to symbolise the potential for good and evil in human nature, and to show that the environmental forces we are subject to invariably determine that the creative potential of scientific and technological discoveries will be subverted to destructive ends. This is exemplified by Hank's self-righteous satisfaction and comic commentary on the lightning crackle of arcing armour as the flower of Britain's chivalry conducts its own annihilation on his electric fences: "*There* was a groan you could *hear*! It voiced the death-pang of 11,000 men" (404). But Hank's faith in the force of technology to "kill them all", blinds him to the resulting pyrrhic victory. He and his soldiers are trapped in the cave by the 25,000 putrefying corpses. Hank's lack of foresight stresses the lack of free will any of us has over the forces controlling us. The full effects of the cause are always hidden.

Hank's "end justifies the means" philosophy typified for Twain the cavalier attitudes of the nineteenth-century captains of industry. News reports of frequent industrial

accidents and railway disasters in which large numbers of people were being killed and mutilated drew a steady stream of vitriol from Twain's pen against the careless, money-pinching policies of the tycoons whose "criminal indifference" caused these tragedies (Paine 890). Painter records that well into the 20th century there was still no effective statutory protection to limit working hours for adults or children, set minimum wages, provide accident or unemployment compensation, old-age pensions, or occupational safety. "The incidence of industrial accidents in the United States was the highest in the world. About half a million workers were injured and 30,000 killed at work every year" (206). The streets were no safer. In the year *A Connecticut Yankee* was published, more than ninety people were killed in electrical accidents around New York City alone, most involving falling wires. This prompted the comment from Twain that "The Electric Light Companies [are] permitted to murder men and horses unrebuked" (Gardiner 455).

These frightening side effects of the industrial revolution, and Hank's eventual malignant use of its powerful new ambivalent forces, thus cast an ironic shadow over his naïve equation of knowledge and technology with progress and civilisation. He proudly refers to his hidden network of factories, mills and workshops as "Beginnings of Civilisation", but we see the implications for the insidious determinist forces at work in any and every industrial civilisation when we witness what these ones ultimately breed. And just as Hank's civilisation creates itself in the manifestations of technological progress and enlightenment, so it is ironically destroyed by its own inventiveness. Alfred Nobel believed his invention, dynamite, could serve a humanitarian purpose, even as a weapon. And it is just such naïve pride in science

which Justin Kaplan says turns all Hank's innovations into dynamite: "The entire apparatus of material progress is also a weapon, a force for destruction" (1989 102).

The message of Hank's enforced dynamiting of his "civilisation factories", his electrocuting, machine-gunning and bombing of the knights, is thereby reinforced. And the forces already determining human events - in this case the unified powers behind the Church, the nobility and Hank himself - will ensure that the forces of science and technology must inevitably negate progress.

Hank unwittingly and ironically predicts this double defeat in his metaphor of his science and technology based civilisation as a "serene volcano, standing innocent with its smokeless summit in the blue sky and giving no sign of the rising hell in its bowels" (103). The paradoxical creative/destructive force of the volcano is manifested in Hank's use of dynamite and electricity. Together, they symbolise both Hank's and the nineteenth century's dream of progress, freedom, and utopia through a prosperity born of science and technology. The novel's dream frame is thus more than just a stock device of medieval literature. Twain uses it to emphasise that Hank's contradictory dream of possessing unlimited power for the purpose of forcing freedom on the populace is an escapist fantasy, just like the fable of progress.

Twain's idea in *Huckleberry Finn* that sleep and dreams offer the only temporary escape and freedom from forces - until the ultimate one of death - is expanded in *A Connecticut Yankee* (and still further in *The Mysterious Stranger*), to embrace insanity. Exemplifying this is Hank's decision that if he really has been transplanted into the sixth century instead of what appears to be a lunatic asylum, then: "I would boss the

whole country inside of 3 months..." (50). The magic of technology and of putting the whole country on a business footing makes Hank the most powerful force in the land, apart from the Church. By his own admission, this "colossal power" offers him freedom from the mediocrity of amounting to nothing more than a factory foreman in his own time. But Hank's exercise of power leads to the insanity of genocide. And the brevity of his science and technology based civilisation demonstrates that freedom is a dream and dreams are the stuff from which fantasies like the legend of King Arthur and his knights are spun.

Trying to realise his dream of becoming self-appointed President of an enforced republic brought about by an industrial revolution, unleashes the determinist monsters of a real-life nightmare. And in the clash of forces, Merlin and modern technology send Hank into a kind of insanity, a thirteen centuries sleep. His awakening in nineteenth-century England echoes the dream-confusion of his projection into the past. But this time, he knows that he is lost to both familiar worlds. His only escape lies in death.

Hank's disjunctions in time thereby symbolise the force of the industrial revolution and its potential for misdirecting new powers for personal gains instead of human progress. They underline, too, the folly of attempting to depose centuries-old forces since this only results in the imposition of further forces. So, the failure of Hank's dream symbolises the inescapability of historical and environmental forces. In this fantastical setting of the seemingly romantic, medieval Camelot, Hank is seduced into believing he can conquer sixth-century ignorance, superstition, poverty and fear with nineteenth-century enlightenment and all its tools of science and technology. He seems to have

struck the capitalist, industrialist's dream of a gullible mass market, but the conflicting forces within him and against him turn the marketeer into a mass murderer.

In true captain of industry spirit, the profit motivated Hank is immediately aware of the enormous possibilities the sixth century presents for him to colonise, modernise, and materialise:

> "Look at the opportunities here for a man of knowledge, brains, pluck, and enterprise to sail in and grow up with the country. The grandest field that ever was; and all my own; not a competitor..." (86)

He echoes and goes beyond the philosophy of plutocrat, Andrew Carnegie, who declared that concentrating industrial and commercial business in the hands of a few was "not only beneficial, but essential to the future of the race". And competition, he claimed, "ensures the survival of the fittest in every department" (H.N. Smith 1964: 10).

Hank sees himself as more than just "the fittest". He is "the one and only actually great man in that whole British world" (90). He likens himself to Robinson Crusoe, cast away with only "tame animals" for society, and is determined to "invent, contrive, create; reorganise things" (81). In so doing he fires a force of economic determinism which sparks the civil war and leads to anarchy. This monetary force links the novel to the antebellum America of *Huckleberry Finn*, where the war was an economic issue not just for the Southerners, but for many Northern manufacturers as well. Through Hank, Twain thus illustrates how the powers of mechanised industry and commercialism - vested in the hands of a few - influence almost every sphere of human existence, and threaten individual liberty.

The stock exchange becomes the focus for this new economic force. And it is significant for more than the manipulation of railway shares which is the catalyst for war. The industrial society's might of money ethos replaces the "might is right" psychology of the chivalric order, and again demonstrates the continuity of old oppressive forces in new masks. The Round Table emblemises the determinist feudal forces of Church, crown and nobility. Its transformation into a business Round Table is emblematic of the corruption, impoverishment and enslavement that industry and its corollary of speculation brought to the nineteenth century. It also forecasts the inescapability of similar forces on all industrial revolutions.

Launcelot's speculation of railway stock which bankrupts fellow knights therefore has determinist implications. Firstly, the shrieking, tearing steam train is another of Hank's innovations which, like electricity and dynamite, represents the destructive force of the machine age. Secondly, it associates Hank's business practises with the sorts of legalised money manipulation that were turning America's capitalist kings like Jay Gould into murderers and maimers via their machines.

Hank is a shady shyster. He puts power and profits before people, and his reference to himself as a despot undercuts his comic tone when we witness him in action. He sends the knights out canvassing "clothed in steel and equipped with sword and lance and battle-axe, and if they couldn't persuade a person to try a sewing machine" or some other item, they "removed him" (365). And reflecting the powerful influence that Protestant commercialism (McElrath 42-3) has been on Hank is his reduction of St. Simon Stylite to a "going concern". He hooks up the hermit's prayer power to sewing machines and makes shirts which "sell like smoke to pilgrims". Inflated prices help, of

course, boosted by false advertising. But when the hermit's "motive power" palls, Hank hoodwinks some gullible knights into buying his good little earner. The hermit "got him to his rest" within the year.

Hank's commercial language constantly exposes his actions as power and money motivated and it illustrates the forces of economic determinism at work in an industrialised society. Anything without the lure of profits is not worth "putting in" for, so Hank is contemptuous of the knights grailing expeditions: "There was worlds of reputation in it, but no money" (97). Hank's plan to ridicule the knights and reduce them to a spent force by turning them into sandwich boards and signwriters ("Use Peterson's Prophylactic Tooth-brush - all the go") is thus doubly satirical. It pokes fun at the power of advertising, the greed driving it, and the faith people have in the benefits and products of science and technology. It stresses too that the determinist forces of both industrial and chivalric societies are like the power of false advertising. People invest them with power by their credulity and institutionalised belief in them.

What Hank's commercial, industrial revolution comes to emblemise is a continuity of old determinist forces in disguise. And what Twain is comparing and contrasting is a pair of feudal systems. One is the old, agrarian-based serfdom, where the peasant is enslaved to the landowner. The other is the new industrial order, where the underpaid wage slave works inhuman hours in unsafe, unsanitary conditions to make massive profits for the modern robber barons. The capitalist is just the monarchist in a new mask. And as in old feudal times, the capitalist works hand in glove with the religious and political forces of the day. It can surely be no mistake that Twain chose to

juxtapose the sixth and nineteenth centuries. For as Kaplan says, "industrialism represented a time of retrogression, a new dark ages" (1971 22).

The forces that determine humanity's enslavement are thus shown to be alive in every age and their universal dehumanising impact is illustrated in Hank's labels of "civilisation factories" and "Man factories". His statement that in his "colony", his "Factory", he is "going to turn groping and grubbing automata into *men*" is deeply ironical. In effect he will turn humans into machines. Hank's factories emphasise that civilisation and humans are "manufactured" by historical, environmental, and human forces. Hank becomes one such human determinist force for the absolute faith in the combined power of science and technology, industrialism and commercialism, to bring light to the dark ages. Its failure to do so is "Twain's dark indictment of chivalry, technology, and all humanity" (Kaplan 1989 104). Twain's bankruptcy by the Paige typesetter as he was writing *A Connecticut Yankee* personalised the determinist forces of the machine. With its potential for ruin, he came to view it as a "cunning devil". And he came to see the whole network of exploitative forces of this "gilded age" as "shabby, mean, cruel and hypocritical". Privately, he declared, "I wish I could see it in hell, for it belongs there" (Brooks 352). Twain's Connecticut Yankee takes it there.

CHAPTER SEVEN

REFORM AND REVOLUTION, IMPERIALISM AND COLONISATION

In 1872, Nietzshe wrote in a postscript to *The Birth of Tragedy*, "I appended hopes where there was no ground for hope" (Mottram 169). Twain echoes this pessimistic determinism in the hell on earth Hank creates out of his hopes for colonising medieval England. Hank's final bitter acknowledgement that reform and revolution will never succeed in ousting oppressive forces is Twain's own belief. He makes Hank the mouthpiece for his certainty that heredity, history, human nature and training will always ensure that the masses remain subservient to the forces determining their lives. When the Church imposes the Interdict, Hank knows that the people could overpower it and form a republic. He believed he had "educated the superstition out of those people" to enable them to do it. But he had forgotten his own conviction that "Training is all there is *to* a man", and that under threat the petrified beliefs of the people's first and longest training determine loyalties and actions.

The trained and ingrained fear of the combined forces controlling their lives weighs so heavily on these "big children" that they are too terrified even to contemplate any opposition:

> "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 on them and shrivelled them into sheep...it was now "Death to the Republic!". All England was marching against us!" (392)

Hank preaches what Twain knew from history and was soon to satirise in contemporary events Hank alludes to in Russia, Europe and the United States; revolutions need to be bloody to force change, but all that ever changes is the names of the forces. Joseph Conrad restated this assertion when speaking of revolutionists in the author's note to his novel on the Russian revolution, *Under Western Eyes*:

> "The most terrifying reflection...is that all these people are not the product of the exceptional but of the general - of the normality of their place, and time, and race...the tiger cannot change his stripes nor the leopard his spots." (51)

Hank's bid to "free" the populace, then, is as inevitably facile in the face of unchanging determinist forces as Huck's efforts to help free Jim. And just as the river in *Huckleberry Finn* is Twain's symbol of a determinist universe, so Albert Stone says the holocaust which ends Hank's revolution is Twain's dramatic symbol of determinism in *A Connecticut Yankee* (173).

At the outset, Hank is adamant he wants a peaceful revolution, but his cross-country wanderings with Sandy and later Arthur convince him otherwise. Via the cruelties and horrors of Morgan le Fay's torture chamber and dungeons, Hank witnesses the evils that English laws and customs visit on the helpless peasants, and he is amazed at their passive acceptance of, for instance, laws which entitle the nobles to rack people to death for killing an animal destroying their crops. And if the peasant confesses to the crime, his property is confiscated and his family beggared. Such laws too grant Morgan le Fay the right to imprison someone for life for the insulting mistake of misnaming her hair colour. But the oppressed "had been heritors and subjects of cruelty and outrage so long that nothing could have startled them but a kindness".

Hank reminds himself that "no people in the world ever did achieve their freedom by goody-goody talk and moral suasion...all revolutions that will succeed must *begin* in blood...If history teaches anything, it teaches that". He concludes that what these people needed was "a Reign of Terror and a guillotine, and I was the wrong man for them" (176-7).

How unwittingly and ironically right Hank was. Yet how strange that he should think so, considering that he has just joked about giving Morgan le Fay "permission to hang her whole band" of musicians, as a concession to her pride. As Kaplan says:

> "Hank's changes from moderate, middle-class republican to rebellious proletarian, to ideologue of revolutionary terror, recapitulates the successively more murderous and repressive stages of the French Revolution." (1989 104)

In Hank, Twain revives memories of earlier revolutionists and reformers who turned out to be the "wrong man" too, reformers who, like Hank, were just ambitious imperialists and colonisers in disguise. Augustus brought peace and prosperity to Rome, but he steeped the empire in blood first. And the one closest to Hank's time, whom he and his republicanism come to resemble, was Napoleon the Third. Claiming to be for the republic, this chameleon ended the revolution with his famous "whiff of grape-shot", established a virtual military dictatorship and then declared himself Emperor.

Through Hank and his historical parallels, Twain thus leaps backward and forward in time, to underline his belief that it is only ever the faces of the forces motivating humans that change; the forces themselves never do. Hank is the precursor of all the

"benevolent" dictators this century has seen too, full of the most powerful rhetoric about the good of the people and righting the wrongs that enslave and mis-shape them. And he represents the race going on in Twain's own time which the author railed against and was so appalled to see America joining, the imperialist race to plunder, rape and steal the land and resources of countries like the Philippines, the Congo and China. In works such as *To the Person Sitting in Darkness* and *Comments on the Killing of the 600 Moros*, Twain records how - in the name of liberation, civilisation and Christianity - the great powers, including America, massacred many who resisted their colonisers' gifts of enforced enlightenment.

Hank's plans for the enlightenment, the physical and psychological freedom of the people through reform and revolution are thus the timeless tocsin sounding, a revelatory reminder of the inescapability of past, present and future determinist forces which change in name only. And in his eventual liquidation of King Arthur's "cowboys", Twain foresaw the twentieth-century culminations of the nineteenth century's imperialist, colonialist forces. Despite Hank's professed republicanism and utopianism, he emblemises these forces. We see this when he boasts: "My works showed what a despot could do with the resources of a kingdom at his command" (102). Hank betrays himself from the start with the White supremacist prejudices and language they typify. He scorns and derides the Britons' snobbish, class contempt for their inferiors, yet he sees all of them as "white indians" and himself as the undisputed "giant among pygmies".

Hank's derogatory reference to Indians is more than just a racist inversion of the "white inside" attribution Huck accords Jim. It is both a reminder of what the forces

of racism, imperialism and colonialism had already inflicted on Negroes and American Indians, and a prefiguring of the attempted conquest these forces were to generate. There are distinct similarities between Hank's colonising factories (which he orders people into) and the reservations the Indians were forced onto. Until they could be "civilised", both British and American "Indians" were seen to be in the way of progress. To curb the Native Indians' customary nomadic existence, and their access to valuable resources - as well as to steal their land legally - the Dawes Severalty Act was imposed in 1887. The result was that by 1900 the Indian population and lands had both dropped to about one third of what they were (Painter 163).

Hank's inference that despite their Whiteness these sixth-century Britons are just ignorant, unregenerate primitives illustrates the power of prejudice propelling the nineteenth century's determinist forces of imperialism and colonialism. Because the people do not bathe, he goes so far as to state that, "measured by modern standards, they were merely modified savages" (125). The irony is, he admits himself that the stench from his soap factory "was getting so pronounced" the King was fainting and Sir Launcelot could not stop swearing. Soap is one of the manifestations of Hank's imperialist, colonialist forces for reform. He links soap and "order" with civilisation and spreads this "reform" through the knights who - after themselves recovering from their first bath - are sworn to "get a bulletin board and disseminate soap and civilisation" (146). Reform and civilisation become suggestive of enforced order and consequent rebellion, though, when Hank implies that the deadly weapons the knight-salesmen carry make them "the most effective spreaders of civilisation we had" (365).

Hank's sadistic sense of humour and his assumed superiority of civilisation give the lie to his professed egalitarian principles and dispel his illusion of having been "born in a wholesome free atmosphere" (87). In the next breath he is affirming that he is just as much a product of the ingrained customary ideas of his birthplace as the Arthurians are of theirs: "In both cases they [inherited ideas] flowed in ruts worn deep by time and habit" (88). Twain makes us see that Hank's characteristic contradictory nature is inherently human and is a result of the universal dream of freedom - which for Hank means the freedom to head his own republic - clashing with the reality of a determined world.

Thus Hank can vacillate between the dream of a republic -

> A man *is* a man, at bottom. Whole ages of abuse and oppression cannot crush the manhood clear out of him...there is plenty good enough material for a republic in the most degraded people...even the Russians...even in the Germans...(279-80)

- and the certainty that the dream had been folly from the first since the people *were* just "human muck" after all.

This same contradiction makes a mockery of Hank's tirade against the evils of training perpetrated and perpetuated by the forces determining the Arthurian's superstition-instilled lives. It is just these same trainable human qualities of vulnerability, susceptibility and gullibility that he capitalises on to educate his "materials up to revolution-grade". And what is education if not a programme of perceptional persuasion, a training of the intellect and emotions to accept as truths the principles, precepts and prejudices preached by systematised forces?

Training, "the stubborn unreasoning" - as Hank ironically calls it - of Morgan le Fay's time is what leads her to believe that she must save the soul of a suspected criminal by extracting a confession under torture. Through training, she assumes the absolute power of life and death over her underlings. This terror-inducing beauty rears up wrathfully when Hank suggests she has committed a crime in dirking her page to death merely for accidentally bumping her: "Crime, forsooth! Man, I am going to *pay* for him" (161). Hank is outraged by such senseless and legal violence but concludes that it is useless to try to reason against training.

Training, though, is what Hank's reforms are reliant on, reforms which lead to the violence of the civil war, the Interdict, and the programming of his fifty-two "Soldiers, Champions of Human Liberty and Equality", to follow their General's orders and exterminate the Knighthood. Hank believes the country must be purged of this order of nobles and gentry if the populace is to be freed from its scourge. And in his unreasoning battle cry, "We will kill them all", Hank forecasts the programme of propaganda his modern counterpart, Hitler, used to scapegoat the European Jews and legitimise genocide. So, only the names of the reformers and revolutionists change; the forces of imperialism and colonization driving them never do. And today, as in Hank's and Hitler's revolutions, the cry is still the same, and still as urgent; liberation must come through blood and death. But as Twain illustrates through Hank and his historical examples, any freedom gained turns out to be a short-lived sham, as empty for the masses as America's Declaration of Independence was for Blacks, women, poor Whites and immigrants.

It is thus significant that Twain's "ignoramus" seems oblivious to the failures of the historical reforms and revolutions he champions, and that he is so blind to the inequities and iniquities being perpetrated by the industrial revolution of his own time, that he is hell-bent on re-creating them in sixth-century England. As Robert Penn Warren says: "The establishment of a rational order demands centralised authority, and ironically the effort to free humanity ends in a new form of tyranny" (15). Hank sees and despises the determinism of England's enslaving, institutionalised forces, and he believes an American style democratic republic can wipe them out:

> "institutions are extraneous...I was from Connecticut, whose Constitution declares that "all political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority and instituted for their benefit". (128-9)

But this contradicts violently the true social and political realities of Hank's America where nearly all women and most Negroes (in practise) were denied the right to vote, and the masses were only as free as their poverty could make them. Hank shows himself to be a well-trained product of the determinist forces behind this constitutional farce when he mirrors it in his modified plan to institute universal suffrage and place the nation's government equally in the hands of men *and* women. He waters this down to "all men, wise or unwise, and all mothers who at middle age should be found to know nearly as much as their sons at twenty-one" (366). This determinist force of sexism smacks too of racist disfranchisement moves under way as Twain was writing *A Connecticut Yankee*. The poll taxes and the White primary and grandfather clauses many Southern states were introducing were - in law and practise - disfranchising Blacks and immigrants (Painter 227-9).

Hank's dream of democratic freedom through universal suffrage is rendered a lie too by the determinist force of his personal mania to be "Boss": to be the only powerful force in the land, to exploit the ignorance of these "animals" to do so, and to "remove" any opposition to his goals. Far from freeing them, he works overtime to structure, regiment and institutionalise these "rabbits" into a parody of his nineteenth-century industrial society. True to his contradictory nature and despotic ambitions, when Hank acknowledges bitterly that the English are so steeped in conditioned class distinction they "were of course poor material for a republic", he says: "there are times when one would like to hang the whole human race and finish the farce" (283).

The hypocrisy of Hank's democracy thereby matches the false ideal of freedom from determinist forces. And it debunks the myth that time, reforms, and revolutions bring escape from these historically powerful controls. Twain emphasises this through both Hank's thirteen centuries jump back from the "Age of Progress" and the seven year secrecy he maintains before revealing his nineteenth-century civilisation to the astonished inspection of the sixth century.

Time and again Hank demonstrates that the never-changing forces of imperialism and colonization are the secret agenda for his reforms and revolution. He wants to free the masses from the manacles of the Church, the Monarchy, the nobility, and Merlin's magic. This would free him to enslave them again, this time in the magic of science and technology to produce the profit-making goods of nineteenth-century civilisation in his factories. To do this, Hank needs to "impose on everyone an individual sense of conscience compatible with the Protestant work ethic". And this, according to Sam

Girgus, is why one of his first acts as Boss is to institute a Department of Public Morals and Agriculture (555).

Imposition of the colonizer's own cultural forces is thus proof of both his shaping by them and his imperialist motives. It explains why Hank's reforms include the introduction of a new currency, newspapers, a patent office and patent laws (a patently absurd anachronism!), and baseball. And, conquest through language being a force recognised by the earliest Roman colonizers, it explains too why Hank takes such delight in "socking it to them" with his nineteenth-century slang. Through his irritation and impatience with the formularized formalisms and archaisms of Sandy's long, drawn-out monologues, Hank reveals the arrogant colonist's typical intolerance of the local language. Like all conquerors he assumes that language skills equate with intelligence, so he gains a sense of superiority by bewildering this "nation of worms" with American colloquialisms and machine shop language.

True to the spirit of his colonist/imperialist antecedents, Hank links the success of his colony with the people's acceptance of the colonists' first takeover tools, money and language: "We were progressing, that was sure" (285). Hank's characteristic handling of his violent deeds, shady deals, lies of omission, and lies of silent assertion with jocose language exemplifies how he is both the victim and the vehicle of his society's imperialist, colonist drives to determine the lives of "these islanders" through the forces of reform and revolution. The hilarity behind Hank's inhumanities cannot, as Everett Carter postulates, be written off as frontier humour, where "death and destruction are overstated as a standard mode of evoking laughter" (422). Twain is

exploiting all the devices of satire and black comedy in *A Connecticut Yankee* to dramatise the pernicious and perennial nature of determinist forces.

Hank, as both a manifestation and motivator of these influences, reveals and reflects their callous, cavalier disregard for the lives, the wants and the needs of a people whose life-long existence is shaped by the strictures and structures of their heredity, history, human nature and training. And through Hank's comic treatment of his failed dream to free himself and the people from these forces by reform and revolution, Twain exposes the tragic truth that the determinist nature of these forces dictates their inescapability. They can and must be killed but the insuperable fact is they will re-form and rise again. Chadwick Hansen says Twain stresses this by the thirteen centuries sleep Hank is sent into. It echoes Malory's epitaph for Arthur:

> "here lies Arthur, the once and future King". Twain, though, has put the forerunner to twentieth-century totalitarianism in Arthur's place "because he knew Arthur would not come again but Hank would." (72)

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CHURCH, THE MONARCHY, AND MAGIC

Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor says that the forces of "miracle, mystery, and authority" always prevail because humans "are slaves...though rebellious by nature" (Kaplan 1989: 104). Merlin, The Church, and the Monarchy represent this trio of superstition-bound, oppressive forces in *A Connecticut Yankee*. Propped up by a nobility and knighthood privileged by laws and customs which enslave the serfs, these forces rule by a fear-induced loyalty to their institutions. By adding Hank to this equation - with his superstitious beliefs in the supremacy of civilisation through the "magic" of science and in the Protestant work ethic to produce it - Twain illustrates how unchanging the determinist forces of "miracle, mystery, and authority" are. As Hank says: "Even down to my birth-century that poison was still in the blood of Christendom" (89).

So all-encompassing and mighty are these forces, that Kaplan says the novel intimates there can be no revolt against them without a Terror and there cannot be a successful one even with a Terror (104). This is borne out by Hank's failure to usurp the determiners of Medieval existence, even though his "miracle" of the eclipse makes him "the second personage in the kingdom, as far as political power and authority were concerned" (79). He never sees the irony of this lust for power despite his constant justifiable tirades against the biggest wielder of it:

> "Concentration of power in a political machine is bad; and an Established Church is only a political machine; it was invented for that...preserved for that; it is an enemy to human liberty." (160)

Hank's delusions of power turn out to be as empty and yet as paradoxically determinist and destructive as the people's trained and entrenched superstitious beliefs in the mysterious ways of their Church, their Monarch, and their magicians.

Hank underestimates their chief magician's powers of persuasion when he omits Merlin from his "vastest" projects of overthrowing the Church and monarchy, and replacing them with "go as you please" Protestant churches and a republic. This mistake ultimately costs Hank his life. When he writes off Merlin as just "a parlour magician", a "cheap old humbug", and a purveyor of "chuckleheaded, chicken-livered superstitions", Hank dismisses the Church's most powerful force for unifying its support systems of the nobility and the knighthood. This determinist combine of worship "founded on unreason" is what stirs the superstition and fear-ridden serfs into deserting Hank's cause and going over "to the enemy".

The centuries-old Merlin is thus the symbol and the manifestation of these historical "enemies of liberty", the Church and the Monarchy. Apart from his one allegorical act of putting Hank to sleep for thirteen hundred years, Merlin is a force for falsity. But false forces, like the culturally conditioned, debilitating fears and superstitions he emblemises, are what determine human existence. And their universal ineluctability is what Twain allegorizes in Hank's hibernation. It is therefore significant that Hank's technology-based power is gained from his fraudulent claim to be *the* master magician.

He mockingly refers to Merlin as his "rival", but jubilates over "the magic of fol-de-rol" getting left every time by "the magic of science".

Since Hank's "miraculous" powers are in reality owed to what Twain ironically called "the more splendid necromancy of the nineteenth century - the marvels of modern science" (Gardiner 451), there is a strong implication that science is just modernised magic, another false force. Seen from a later wiser and sadder perspective, our initial faith in many scientific "miracles" - pesticides, for example - is made to seem like ignorant superstition when these poisons are proved to be dangerous and destructive. And since Hank - while decrying and deploring the Church and the Monarchy as sellers of superstition - exploits this very superstitious dread and awe of magic for his own political and commercial ends, there is an even stronger implication that Hank and his magic have as great a potential for enslavement and destruction as the determinist forces Merlin represents.

Juliette Trainor says Twain prefigures Hank's intention to destroy these forces of Catholicism and the Crown in his opening tale from Malory entitled: "How Sir Launcelot Slew Two Giants and Made a Castle Free". In this story, the giants are "well-armed, all save their heads, and with two horrible clubs in their hands" (34). Trainor points out that on three occasions, Hank refers to the Church as "the hand of the giant", and that he says of Arthur:

> "he wasn't a very heavy weight, intellectually". She says, "Hank considers neither the Church nor the Monarchy well armed in their heads because both are so easily duped by Merlin." (382-3)

But Hank ends up being duped by Merlin too. And his faith in the magic of science and technology to free the masses from superstition is as culturally conditioned as their beliefs. As for the legend of Launcelot slaying the giants and freeing the castle, this turns out to be as falsely predictive of Hank's motives and success as the universal dream of defeating determinist forces.

Hank feels morally outraged by the gigantic frauds the feudal forces of Church and Monarchy perpetuate. But as an envoy from "The Age of Reason", he feels vindicated by his republican aims to pass himself off as a god and employs his powers to impress, to terrify, and to eliminate the undesirable. But for all his boasts about being "The Boss", Hank acknowledges that "there was another power a trifle stronger" than both himself and the king put together. "That was the Church" (87). He admits to being "afraid of the Church", for a unified church "makes a mighty power, the mightiest conceivable...it means death to human liberty, and paralysis to human thought" (102). It is for this reason that Hank decides against "making everyone a Presbyterian". By insisting on a variety of sects and prohibiting religious teaching anywhere but in churches and Sunday-schools, he believes he will eventually smash the power-hold of the Catholic Church.

Through Hank's decision to spread Protestantism and separate the church and state, Twain is more than just making the point that Catholicism was once the only religion, the complete determiner of people's lives through its sole interpretation of "God's" laws which infiltrated and shaped the nature of every other determinist force. He is demonstrating, as he did in *Huckleberry Finn*, that all religion dictates belief and that this sort of mind control is the most determinist and evil of all cultural ethics. For

example, at the time Twain was writing *A Connecticut Yankee*, Britain still had religious limits on those who could hold public office or enter universities (Budd 129).

Throughout the novel, Twain links the nobility's evils with religion and exposes the hypocrisies and crimes committed, concealed, and condoned by its laws. Hank says of the nobility that, "tyrannical, murderous, rapacious, and morally rotten as they were, they were deeply and enthusiastically religious". He notes that they "stopped to pray" before cutting an enemy's throat, and that after ambushing and dispatching an enemy, they would speed to a wayside shrine and give thanks "without even waiting to rob the body" (151).

Hank finds himself hindered by the very real force of the Church at every turn. Determined to retain its powers by keeping the people ignorant, its priests interfere and raise trouble every time he tries to map and survey the kingdom. And Hank is forced to replicate the modern, progressive nineteenth-century American "free" society "fenced away from the public view" for seven years because "I should have had the Established Roman Catholic Church on my back in a minute" (103).

This necessary secrecy signifies more just than the Church's powers, though. It elucidates the way all such societal controls, including Hank's civilisation factories, have always established and guarded their powers. Pondering on the Church's inception and its promulgation of the worth-through-birth determinant, Hank says:

> "In two or three little centuries it had converted a nation of men to a nation of worms...she invented "divine right of kings"...she preached (to the commoners) humility, obedience to superiors, the beauty of self-sacrifice...

> meekness under insults, patience, meanness of spirit, non-resistance under oppression; and she introduced heritable ranks and aristocracies, and taught all the Christian populations of the earth to bow down...and worship them." (89)

The Church, the King and the nobility - or their modern equivalents - are thus impenetrable, unassailable, unquestionable, supreme authorities. And in portraying their process of perpetration and perpetuation, Hank is exposing his own game-plan for overthrowing them and making himself "the first statesman..the uncrowned head" of England.

Nevertheless, Hank becomes, inescapably, just as much a victim of these sixth-century forces as he is of the magical nineteenth-century forces of science and technology. His inability to defy the Church openly, his powerlessness in the face of the atrocities he sees committed by the laws of the Church and Monarchy, and his eventual defeat by the unified forces of the Church and Merlin, all point to the strength and historical determinism of the forces for superstition.

Hank comes up against these forces in the Church's opposition to any interference with God-inflicted disasters. Thomas Schwartz has researched Freethinker Robert Ingersoll's influence on Twain's dramatisation of medieval superstitions in *A Connecticut Yankee*, and says he borrowed the idea for Hank's insurance schemes from Ingersoll's history of religion, *Ghosts and Other Lectures*. In this work, Ingersoll records that the Catholic Church preached that it was "blasphemy to even try by any natural means to stay the ravages of pestilence" (186). Hank tells us the priests opposed both his fire and life insurance "on the ground that it was an insolent attempt

to hinder the decrees of God". When he points out that insurance does not hinder the decrees but only modifies the hard consequences of them, "They retorted that that was gambling against the decrees of God and was just as bad" (273).

Such "superstition-mongering" manages to "damage those industries" for Hank. Force of practicality wins out against superstition, though, on his "accident business". The usually gullible but accident-prone knights come to see the sense of it, so Hank "got even" with this one.

Hank's hatred of the fear-producing forces of superstition is hugely hypocritical. All of his "miraculous" feats - like using the telephone to "forecast" Arthur's movements, and the revolver to kill the knights - reveal the effects on the masses of their enforced ignorance and abject subservience to the Church, the Crown, and the nobility, and Hank is utterly contemptuous of their "humble and hearty outpourings of loyalty" to such self-appointed shams and farces. But he exploits the very objects of his rancour to enhance his own power which, as Hansen says, he uses "to dominate them by fraud, or fear, or force" (63). And ironically, his playing upon their superstitions only serves to reinforce them as it does at the Holy Fountain.

Hank has an ideal opportunity here to expose as empty superstition, the belief that God has stoppered this miraculous fount in the Valley of Holiness because someone has been washing against the Church's orders. As Hank says, "The 'Fountain' was an ordinary well...There was no miracle about it". The well had sprung a leak which Hank says the superstition-handicapped Merlin would have seen if he had used his

eyes instead of trying to cure it by incantations. But Hank keeps quiet and "turns it into a miracle in the customary way"; he cures the well "by natural means" (200-1).

As usual Hank's "natural means" combine "a grand exhibition of posturing and gesturing" with the magic of technology to produce a spectacle "the awfulness of which caused hundreds to tremble, and many women to faint". When he turns the flow back on he is highly gratified to see "acres of people throw themselves down in that water and kiss it...it made me think more of them than I had before" (211-13). Yet when Sandy kisses hogs she believes to be enchanted princesses, Hank is "ashamed of her...ashamed of the human race" (179). Determinist forces are acceptable to Hank as long as he is their determiner. As Hansen says: "Hank is disgusted at the sight of people deluded by medieval beliefs but delighted at the sight of people deluded by himself" (65).

Despite Hank's rise to power through the forces of delusion, he deludes himself into believing his power is a force for good. It has been won from the people's respect for his "honest and honourable endeavour". His title of "The Boss" has been voted to him by the nation, not inherited like the unearned title of some "sheep-witted earl who could claim long descent from a king's leman" (90). As for Arthur's "unearned supremacy" gained "through the force of inherited ideas", Hank is Twain's mouthpiece for his belief that the monarchy, "originally procured by the highwayman's methods...remains a perpetuated crime" (Brooks 345). France and Switzerland were the only European countries not to be perpetuating the "crime" of monarchy when this novel was published.

Hank points to Arthur's crime of conditioned "conscience" over wanting to "lay hands" on the escaped peasants from Abblasoure. The three had been unjustly imprisoned by their lord and their kindred starved under "the curse of Rome". Arthur holds the trained and engrained belief that the peasants are their lord's property. Their escape is therefore an "insolent and high-handed outrage from persons of their base degree". This is Arthur's sense of moral justice after he and Hank have just watched the last of the young escapees' family die of small-pox, thanks to "the heavy hand of the Church and the King".

The lord and the Church had fined the families for their captive sons' inability to help harvest the lord's crops free of charge. They were fined again when their enforced labour led to their own crop's damage through neglect. Finally the Church and the lord took the crop to meet the fines, and forced the family to harvest it without food or pay. When small-pox fell on the starving family, the mother blasphemed "against the Church and the Church's ways". For that "lack of humility under the chastening hand of God", the family was cursed, forbidden help, and left to die. While these incidents evoke sympathy from Arthur, he is intransigent on the rights of the nobility and Church to own and determine the peasants' lives. This draws from Hank the comment that Arthur's veins "were full of ancestral blood that was rotten with this sort of unconscious brutality, brought down by inheritance..." (272).

If Arthur's brutality is "unconscious" - the result of education from birth - what excuse can Hank offer for his conscious acts of violence like eliminating Sir Dinadan for repeating endlessly a bad and boring joke? And worse, how can he mitigate the maniacal humour which accompanies such violence? Twain's answer is that Hank's

actions are a parable of the monetarist drives determining life in nineteenth-century America. The brutal forces of Arthurian monarchism and Catholicism were replaced in Hank's birth century by the brutal forces of capitalism and Protestantism. These forces created the "brutal laws" which Hank claims could never happen in a democracy "where every man has the vote", laws which protected the industrial robber-barons' rights to starve, kill, and maim their workers, just as the Church and the Crown's laws enslaved the serfs in Arthur's England.

Arthur's enslavement to the "transparent swindle" of inherited supremacy is replaced by Hank's enslavement to the delusion of supremacy through a profit system powered by science and technology. And his macabre humour reflects his warped, contradictory beliefs in his society's conflicting ideals of a Church-condoned industrial wage slavery and "egalitarianism".

There is nothing egalitarian about Hank's supremacist laughter at the unsmiling serfs' serious beliefs in their inferiority to the Church, the Monarchy, and the magician. But both belief systems amount to superstition, a misdirected reverence toward the forces that mould and determine their existence, which, in the process, destroy their potential for self-fulfilment and freedom.

Hank waxes eloquent on the freedom-destructive evils of the Church and Monarchy and rightly calls these institutions "an insult". Yet he cannot see the equally inherent evil of his swapping one set of enforced beliefs in "miracle, mystery, and authority" for another. For all that he rails against the Church and the Monarchy for maintaining

their power and position by deliberately hindering progress and enlightenment, Hank's imposed system of new superstitions represents not a force for the destruction of the liberty-destroyers but just a continuation of them. As he so ironically acknowledges: "We *must* have a religion - it goes without saying" (160). Hank is thus the parodic forerunner of the nineteenth-century missionary, the "civilising" power who, as Twain says in *To The Person Sitting in Darkness*, carries "its banner of the Prince of Peace in one hand and its loot basket and its butcher knife in the other" (J. Smith 14).

The Church and the Monarchy have always determined life for the masses with their laws of the loot basket and butcher knife according to Twain. He pumps *A Connecticut Yankee* full of examples he has drawn from the European and American histories his biographers list as his favourite reading. Hank witnesses the Church's iniquitous law of tithes which threatens poverty to a swineherd's family. When the priest takes the fattest of their ten pigs, the anguished wife thrusts a child at him, saying: "Thou beast without bowels of mercy, why leave me my child, yet rob me of the wherewithal to feed it?" (179).

A priest is involved too in the "Heartrending Incident" of the young mother who is hanged to protect property owners under "the bitter laws of royalty". The woman's husband had been press-ganged and sent to sea, leaving her with no means to survive. To feed her baby, the starving woman was eventually reduced to stealing a piece of cloth to exchange for food. The priest pleading her case says that while the law demanding the death penalty is right, "another law had placed her where she must commit her crime or starve, with her child - and before God that law is responsible for both her crime and her ignominious death!" (329-30).

The priest's heartfelt cry seems to be deeply ironical. Throughout the novel, Twain trumpets, from the lips of those subject to its cruel laws, that the Church *is* the law, *is* the "Established crime", and that its priests are mainly "frauds and self-seekers". In light of these repeated charges, and Twain's well-documented opposition to the influence of all religion as an "Established Anachronism" (Budd 136), Miller's claim that this episode proves Twain was not anti-clerical (131) seems to be a gross misreading. Twain's intention is clearly to expose the Church as the head of that unholy trinity of determinist forces: "miracle, mystery, and authority".

The priest is a servant and promulgator of the laws of this trinity, which preaches the serfs' compulsory worship of its institutions along with its ownership of their bodies, souls, and property. It seems unlikely, then, that the priest would dare to speak out against property laws held in place by the Church to protect the powers and privileges of the "gilded minority" (especially itself), through keeping the masses servile and subjugated. The inference seems to be that Twain and the priest are speaking with forked tongues. Twain is satirising the sham and hypocrisy of the institution which purports to comfort and support its press-ganged members. Thus the hanged woman's baby, adopted by the priest, symbolises the masses trained by the Church from infancy to entrust themselves to an all-powerful Church which nurtures them on the iniquitous lie that by God's command they are the chattels of and economic providers for the Church, the monarchial hierarchy, and the mendacious magicians.

The interdependency of these Church-led forces breeds and feeds on its superstitious sway over the lives of its powerless subjects. When the Church puts out its Interdict, Hank knows that superstition, "the Church's terrors", has won out over reason: "the

Church was going to *keep* the upper hand" (376). It is the Church's army, the knights of the monarch, which hoists Hank with the petard of his own magic. And it is the Church and Monarch's magician, Merlin, who sends Hank to his demise back down the centuries. Whatever the age and place, and whatever their names and faces, these determinist forces of "miracle, mystery, and authority" always prevail. They must, because humans are trained and enchained by their superstitions.

CHAPTER NINE

SERFDOM, THE NOBILITY, AND THE KNIGHTHOOD

In *Huckleberry Finn* the Negroes are slaves "by a fiction of law and custom". In *A Connecticut Yankee* the serfs are free "by a sarcasm of law and phrase". Hank links these two settings and centuries into a universal human landscape of physical and psychological enslavement by the laws of on-going determinist forces when he says of British serfdom:

> "It reminded me of a time thirteen centuries away, when the "poor whites" of our South who were always despised, and frequently insulted, by the slave-lords around them, and who owed their base condition simply to the presence of slavery in their midst, were yet pusillanimously ready to side with slave-lords in all political moves for the upholding and perpetuating of slavery, and did also finally shoulder their muskets and pour out their lives in an effort to prevent the destruction of that very institution which degraded them." (277)

Twain illustrates by this analogy, as he will again in *The Mysterious Stranger*, that slavery has more than one form and is the symbol of humanity's control by external forces. The "poor whites" in all three works show that true free will can never be possible because humans are so strangled by custom, tradition, heredity, and training that they will act against their own best interests and deny even their most basic freedoms just to protect their own survival. The peasants at Abblasoure are the masses in microcosm. They far outnumber their authority figures but they have been so thoroughly trained to fear the consequences, legal and social, of breaking

commandments, legal or customary, that they would sooner hang their relatives than risk uniting and deposing their oppressors. Twain thus demonstrates that the worst characteristics of human nature, cowardly weakness and impressionability, allow its trained acceptance of forces which ensure the perpetuation of its own "human muck" status, and "sarcasm" of freedom.

Seven-tenths of Arthur's nation are such "free and independent paupers". They are free to pay taxes to the Church, taxes to the King, and taxes to their landlord while the "wasteful nobility" and the "all-devouring Church" pay none. They are free to leave their lord's estate only if they have his permission, free to buy their bread only from his bakery, and free to harvest their crops only if they have finished gathering in his for him gratis (125-6).

The sarcasm of these serfs' freedom is "ordained of God", just as the Negroes' slavery was: "The priests had told their fathers and themselves...and these innumerable clams had permitted it so long that they had come at last to accept it as a truth...to believe it right and as it should be" (125). If however, the "skinned free man" finds such a life of deprivation and degradation unendurable and seeks relief in death, then the Established Church and the institutionalized nobility offer the same fearful rewards they would still be offering freedom-seekers down through the ages in *The Mysterious Stranger* and *Huckleberry Finn*: the gentle Church condemned him to eternal fire, the gentle law buried him at midnight at the crossroads with a stake through his back, and his master the baron or the bishop confiscated all his property and turned his widow and his orphans out of doors (127).

Hank reviles this "sarcasm" of the serf's freedom but in his references to the continuation of such feudal forces in America's antebellum South, he fails as always to see the import of historical determinism. He observes the same driving forces in the fervour with which the Abblasoure serfs "turned their cruel hands against their own class in the interest of the common oppressor" (277), as were behind the "poor whites" determination to die for the slave holders. But although Hank finds this realisation "depressing - to a man with the dream of a republic in his head", he still hopes to "force" the people into overthrowing the throne and the nobility and trampling them in the mud (279-80). He sees "no occasion to give up my dream yet awhile" (280). His own qualifier "yet awhile" draws attention to the delusion of this dream.

Hank has been nurtured on the ideals of the American Dream and hopes against knowledge that republicanism holds the answer for England's "free" people. Yet he is oblivious to postbellum conditions in America's republic: the impoverished tenant farmers and newly freed Blacks, the racial hatred and violence, the massive unemployment, and the evil effects of industrial capitalism on the wage-slaves who are often locked inside factories to prevent their escape. Hank is outraged at the serfs' enforced and inhumanly long hours of unpaid work for their lords, and at the iniquitous imposition of fines for petty offences. And he lectures Marco's friends on the inherent evils of the employer's unassailable right to fix wages without negotiation. But he is blind to the laws of these same determinist forces continuing to commit the same crimes against workers in nineteenth-century America. Painter records that in many industries, notably Jay Gould's railroads, not only were workers paid bare subsistence rates, they were charged for breakages to machinery, and imperfect

products, even when these were caused by faulty materials or mechanical malfunctions. And when they were sent away from home they received no pay for time lost in travelling (42).

Hank is equally blind to the continuation of such determinist forces in France, as well as America, long after the Paris Commune he so frequently glorifies and seeks to emulate. He watches the "free" English serfs grafting for gratis three days a week on their lord the Bishop's roads, but instead of noticing the parallels with nineteenth-century industrial serfdom, he says: "it was like reading about France... before the ever memorable and blessed Revolution, which swept a thousand years of such villainy away in one swift tidal-wave of blood..." And Hank stresses that this was a minor momentary Terror, "a swift death by the axe" which killed only ten thousand people, whereas the other Terror, serfdom, which had killed a hundred million, was a "lifelong death from hunger, cold, insult, cruelty and heartbreak" (127).

Hank forgets that this "minor Terror" was defeated after only seventy-three days and that it left twenty-five thousand Parisians dead (Painter 19). Is it mere coincidence that Hank's massacre of the knights produces the same body count and a similar defeat by similar forces? He makes no mention of these same forces causing the same "heartbreak" that led to a like Armageddon in America just before his transposition to sixth-century serfdom. First there was the anthracite strike in Pennsylvania in 1877. Twenty Irish miners (known as the Molly Maguires) were hanged at the end of this bloody battle. Coming immediately after was the nationwide railway strike during which ninety-five people were killed, mostly by federal troops; many more were

injured and several hundred arrested (Painter 15-18). Hank wants to make of England an America which is non-existent, except in his dream.

Hank's vision of leading Arthur's serfs to freedom through a bloody revolution is thus a repetition of the universal dream doomed to repeat the historical nightmare reality. The determinist forces of wealth, power, and privilege will always marshall their troops to mow down any incendiarism, claiming, as always, that such revolt against the natural, God-ordained order of things is a treasonable threat to the safety of the realm.

Fear of such reprisal is a manifestation of these forces which determine both the continued cowardice and the nascent rebellion of those it disempowers. The nobility uses the force of this fear to turn the Manor House peasants into a self-destructive mob when the baron is found stabbed to death and his house fired. The lynchers are set to do their lord's "fearful work" of hunting, hanging, and butchering eighteen of their number on the mere suspicion of their involvement in the crime. One of the peasants reinforces the determinist propellants of the mob mentality when he confesses to Hank:

> "I helped to hang my neighbours for that it were peril to my own life to show lack of zeal in the master's cause; the others helped for none other reason. All rejoice today that he is dead, but all do go about seemingly sorrowing, and shedding the hypocrite's tear for in that lies safety." (279)

It is this fear for their own safety that enslaves the serfs to their masters. And it is to sustain their fear-created monopoly of power and privilege that these forces

determining the serfs' lives enact the brutal laws which, ironically, sow the seeds of future violent retaliations against their freedom-destroying cruelties and injustices.

This violence, though, begets more violence, just as it did in France and in Hank's America. And just as the forces determining the brutal laws in these countries rolled out their armies to gun down the law-breakers, so will the Church and the nobility quell Hank's revolution. The reality of his egalitarian dream was being played out in the agitation for labour reforms in America which would soon be propagandized by big business as communist-inspired threats to the safety and security of the nation. The ensuing undemocratic "red bashing" and deliberate fear-mongering against workers' unions or any movement with socialist philosophies led to the witch-hunts of the Haymarket bombing in 1886 and the McCarthy trials more than sixty years later. The historical determinism of such events is conspicuous by its absence in Hank's dream frame of reference.

By using the nineteenth century as a frame for *A Connecticut Yankee* Twain evinces that the cyclical nature of history is due to the enduring nature of the human forces which shape these events. It is these forces which dictate that the laws enslaving sixth-century serfs will be the same ones enslaving the nineteenth century's industrial serfs. Hank should have seen by historical precedent that the strength and perpetuation of the forces determining serfdom would invalidate his dream of a democratic, industrial republic. Why should it succeed here in these dark days of feudal Britain when it is failing thirteen centuries later in the Age of Enlightenment, and in the very birthplace of the great American Dream? In any case, the dream of a republic built by a dictator

who has had to train, condition, and force the fear-enslaved serfs to accept the concept of freedom is as facile and futile as the dream of achieving freedom.

By interlocking the two epochs and their impossible dreams of finding freedom from enslaving forces, Twain thus demonstrates the inescapability of historical determinism. Whether the institutionalized forces opposing freedom are the worth-through-birth nobility of England's sixth century or the worth-through-wealth business magnates of America's nineteenth century, they are always able - either through their self-protective prejudice or the serfs' ingrained fear - to coerce the disempowered into protracting their own enslavement. The slavery parables in all three novels delineate the truth of determinism; they expose the "fictions of laws and customs" created by the institutionalized forces which enslave humans in every era through the pre-conditioned beliefs and prejudices of cultural ethics.

These beliefs and prejudices programme people to feel disempowered, and we see this at work on the anti-heroes in each of the novels. When witnessing or participating in events they feel impotent against, they all repeat variations of Huck's fatalist assertion: "I never said nothing...it wouldn't of done no good". This is effectively Hank's stance on the abolition of physical slavery in Arthur's Britain. Besides the "sarcasm of law and phrase" which enslaves the "free" serfs, human bondage is a thriving business, protected and encouraged by a law which states that any stranger without proof of free status is fair game for bounty-hunters. Hank is determined to outlaw slavery. But despite his detestation of this institutionalized evil and for all that he professes to be the second most powerful force in the land, Hank stands helplessly by with a group of pilgrims and does nothing to stop the near flaying alive of a young mother in a slave-

gang. Neither does he prevent the dismemberment of the woman's family when she and her husband "had to be torn apart by force" while she "shrieked like one gone mad".

Hank again echoes Huck's passive powerlessness when he declares that he will never get the picture of this woman and her husband's anguish out of his mind. But as for interfering and setting the slaves free, "that would not do. I must not...get myself a name for riding over the country's laws and the citizen's rights roughshod". Hank comforts himself with the resolve that "If I lived and prospered I would be the death of slavery" (189-191). He sees the determinist impact of this dehumanising force on the pilgrims who are "too much hardened by life-long familiarity with slavery to notice" anything except the expert way the slave trader handles his whip. But he is blind to the irony of his own inability to act when he says: "This was what slavery could do, in the way of ossifying what one may call the superior lobe of human feeling...they would not have allowed that man to treat a horse like that" (190). Hank reveals an unconscious understanding, though, of the ineluctability of enslaving forces when he notes that the babies being carried by the slave chain are "near to death and freedom".

By linking freedom with death, Hank unwittingly acknowledges the impossibility of his dream of founding a free republic. His powerlessness against enslaving forces (and by inference our own) is stressed once more when he and Arthur dress as "petty freemen" and set out to see what life is really like for the serfs suffering "poverty, misery, oppression, insult, and the other...inhumanities" that Hank says make them a satisfaction to their masters (260). Supposedly the greatest powers in the kingdom,

Hank and Arthur cannot prove their identities and are "sold at auction, like swine". As Twain illustrates in *Huckleberry Finn*, clothing enforces caste and Arthur discovers first hand how poor peasant attire determines non-person status. His "style" - the "noble gait and bearing" of his "sacred caste" - counts for nothing when he is sold as a serf; it even devalues him. The king fetches two dollars less that Hank, which gratifies Hank since it proves that"there is nothing diviner about a king than there is about a tramp, after all. He is just a cheap and hollow artificiality when you don't know he is a king" (321).

As for Arthur, experience of his own brutal laws changes him from being the most disinterested in the slavery question to "the bitterest hater of the institution" (327). Meanwhile, Hank's echoing of Tom's evasion with his plan to invent a drawn-out but "picturesque...dramatic" escape is merely a comic cover-up for his helplessness. And the universal lack of free will is symbolised by the inability of the king and his "perpetual minister" to save their own necks from the hangman's noose. Their last-minute reprieve comes courtesy of the upholders of Britain's determinist laws, the nobility's representative order of the knighthood, plumes streaming, racing to the rescue on bicycles.

Rescuers the knighthood may be, but Hank has chivalry marked down for death. He sees its romanticised ideals as responsible for welding the feudal forces of monarchy, religion, nobility, and superstition which determine the serfs' vassalage. These same forces stipulate that only the nobility qualifies for army officership, regardless of merit. These forces dictate, as Arthur asserts, that: "All places of honour and profit do

belong, by natural right, to them that be of noble blood" (235). And only those of noble blood make up the chivalric order of the knighthood.

The chivalric code is fostered by and in turn preserves the ideological "might is right" rule of bloody barbarism against the impoverished, enslaved lower classes. Through Hank's gruesome quip about the surgeons ruining his best saw amputating limbs after the tournament, Twain exposes the insane reality of the brute violence behind this knightly, courtly code. Jousts are fought purely for entertainment, and duels to the death for no other reason than to prove one's strength superior to a stranger's.

Hank sees the evidence of this unreasoning brutality when he first arrives at court. Prisoners who have been forced to yield to their conquerors are "maimed, hacked, carved...their hair, their faces, their clothing...caked with black and stiffened drenchings of blood" (53). Despite their pain and being left unwashed and untreated, the "poor devils" utter no complaint and Hank realises that their "animal training" has conditioned them to accept the knighthood's chivalric code of "kill or be killed" as the true, the honourable, the just, and the righteous rule of life.

The knighthood's true nature as a false force for the injustice, cruelty, and oppression dealt by the "might is right" rule is revealed during Hank's enforced duel with Sir Sagramour. Merlin steals Hank's novel and highly successful weapon, a lasso. Sir Sagramour insists on the no borrowing rule, cornering Hank into shooting his opponent and nine others who call his bluff when he challenges the whole of knighthood.

Hank's conquest convinces him that "knight-errantry was a doomed institution. The march of civilisation was begun" (363). But as Twain evinces through Hank, civilisation is just the culturally inculcated acceptance of enslaving customs and conventions under another name. And just as Hank calls the nobility from which the knighthood is drawn "a band of slave holders under another name", so too do his civilisation, his representative behaviour, and his reactionary violence to feudal forces make him a determinist force for enslavement under another name.

When Hank is enslaved and a stoned woman is being chased by a mob bent on burning her as a witch, Hank rails against the slave driver for taking advantage of this human bonfire to save his investments from freezing to death. Hank declares that the man (drawn by Twain's illustrator to resemble America's "quintessential capitalist", Jay Gould) has a heart "solely for business". But as Robert Miller says, Hank is unaware that the slave driver is only "a cruder version of himself. Both see humans in terms of their commercial value" (122). What is Hank but a nineteenth-century, profit-motivated industrial enslaver when he works St. Simon Stylite seven days a week and into an early grave simply because it is senseless to waste his prayer power. And just as the serfs are commanded into their lord's service, so Hank commands them into his factories. Wage-slaves have no freedom of choice which makes the point that money or its obverse, poverty, determines circumstances. And for those enslaved by penury, the only true freedom lies - as the woman dying of small-pox says - in "the release of death".

Twain thus demonstrates that whether the enslaving forces of a civilisation stem from the power and wealth sustaining autocracy of the romanticised sixth century, or the

industrial plutocracy of the idealised nineteenth century, their determinist impact is the same. Whether the serfs are being starved, enslaved, killed and maimed on their lord's manor or in the financiers' mines, factories, and railways, they are free only "by a sarcasm of law and phrase". And just as Twain fictionalizes what he knew to be the non-existence of physical slavery in sixth-century England to allegorize actual slavery in nineteenth-century America, so too, he parabolizes the sarcasm of the serfs' freedom to highlight wage-slavery in the industrialized world. Through these comparisons he reinforces the on-going ineluctability of freedom-enslaving forces.

CHAPTER TEN

HISTORY

The worlds of *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Mysterious Stranger*, and *A Connecticut Yankee* are all historical heterocosms which, in Twain's preface to *A Connecticut Yankee*, the author tells us he is presenting as history and authenticating with embellished narratives of historical happenings. These happenings highlight the historical determinism of the culturally prescribed beliefs based on customs and laws which humans in every era and locale take on trust to be the truths governing their existence. These "truths" are merely freedom-denying fictions, the reality of which Twain exposes by wiping away the bloom of romance veiling each epoch.

By this fictionalising of history, the reader is encouraged to compare the customs and laws not just of the past with the present, but of one country or civilisation with another, and to reach the revelatory conclusion that behind the fragile façade of progress and enlightenment through science and technology, nothing much has changed. As Roger Salomon says, "The historical focus of *A Connecticut Yankee* lies in those other ramifications of growth and knowledge...in customs and laws which tend to debase or elevate our moral nature" (36). Via Hank, though, and his catastrophic misuse of modern "marvels", Twain realises his deepening conviction that any hopes for elevation are delusory. New developments which hold out the hope for humanity's moral and material advancement will always be hijacked by the same forces which have historically institutionalized the laws and customs determining its debasement.

Twain's brief, then, in *A Connecticut Yankee* (and in all three works) is to exhibit the institutions which instigate these laws and customs as the rigid determiners of a people's cultural ethics and moral conscience. And the protagonist in each of these novels comes to see that this culturally conditioned conscience "doesn't pay", for it is this moral sense that enslaves humans to the laws and customs of their time and place. Twain satirizes the ludicrous yet powerful force of customs when the lodgers of Sandy's enchanted pork refuse Hank's request to "dust around a little where the nobilities had...promenaded". They consider this would be "a grave departure from custom, and therefore likely to make talk". But just as the determinist reality of all laws and customs is hidden behind their appearance of social and religious sanctification, these people agree to cover "the evidence" by scattering fresh rushes (185).

It is through such comic episodes that Twain exposes the true determinist nature of the enduring and enslaving customs and laws which give rise to injustices and cruelties in every age and which ensure the cyclical nature of history. Hank confirms this when he comments on the longevity of the Church's customary and legal right to beggar the peasants with its iniquitous tithes: "The same thing had happened in the Wales of my day, under this same old Established Church, which was supposed by many to have changed its name when it changed its disguise" (179).

The novel is full of such parallels of the sixth century's "ungentle laws and customs" with those being practised in industrial America. The game law that makes the gentry's ownership of animals more important than human life has its counterpart in the factory owner's legal right to protect his profits by refusing to provide safety

guards on dangerous machinery. The peasants' enforced purchase of bread from their lord's bakery finds its match in the industrial workers' payment in scrip, forcing them to buy their groceries at the company store's inflated prices. And the imposition of crippling taxes on the poor while the gentry pay none is the same inequity which boosted the already fabulous wealth of multi-millionaires like Andrew Carnegie, J.P. Morgan, the Rothschilds, the Rockefellers, the Vanderbilts, and Jay Gould whose estate was worth 77 million dollars. Henry Clay Frick, who ran Carnegie's Homestead steelworks, amassed a fortune of 150 million dollars in his lifetime. Meanwhile, he and his fellow "robber barons" were so determined to protect the prosperity gained through their workers' poverty that they violently opposed any moves to reduce the sixty hour week and improve work conditions. Frick's union-smashing attempt cost sixteen lives and thousands of jobs in the 1892 lockout (Painter, xxviii, 111-114).

The J.P. Morgans of the nineteenth century are thus seen to be at one with the Morgan le Fays of the sixth century. They, like Hank, are "barren of sentiment". So, Hank Morgan's business ploys, power games, and sadistic acts of violence link him (by name and nature) with the propounders of the wealth-promoting, humanity-debasing laws and customs of both eras.

It is the continuity of these "ungentle laws and customs" which Twain personifies in Hank to present his belief that the past necessarily contains and portends the future since the forces driving human nature are unalterable and ineluctable. As William Faulkner's character, Gavin Stevens, muses throughout *Intruder in the Dust*, the past is not dead. The past is not even past.

For Twain, the proof of humanity's lack of real progress lies in its record of past inhumanities. It is these which have made present ones possible and which in turn prophesy the potential for even greater brutalities through the acceleration of scientific and technological know-how. For example, as Kaplan points out, Arthur's subjects die by sword and lance...by torture, hanging, drowning, clubbing, burning at the stake, starvation and disease (1989: 99). But Hank's technology has invented much more civilised, efficient, "labour-saving" methods for murder on a much more massive scale. At the "Battle of the Sand Belt", his machine-guns, dynamite, electric fences, mines, torpedoes, and fabricated floods kill so many knights, so fast, he says the destruction is "amazing...we could not *count* the dead because they did not exist as individuals, but merely as homogeneous protoplasm, with alloys of iron and buttons" (396).

As for the destruction of civilians and their civil liberties in Hank's birth century, these are still being achieved by hanging, clubbing, starving, and disease. But as Hank's inventive genius previews, these "ungentle laws and customs" have been modernised to include legal murder by electrocution. Industrially, there is legally acceptable death by great cutting knives, by red-hot, jack-knifing steel beams, and by long hours of mind and body torturing toil in America's "dark satanic mills".

Such killing factory conditions as these are exposed by Upton Sinclair in his novel *The Jungle*, for instance. This Industrial Age exposé highlights conditions which technology has not used to ameliorate the lives of the labourers who are, if anything, worse off than England's sixth-century peasants. In one of his notebooks on *A Connecticut Yankee*, Twain makes a sarcastic quip about the historical determinism of

the forces enslaving the serfs of both centuries: "We Americans worship the almighty dollar. Well, it is a worthier God than Hereditary Privilege" (Salomon, 130).

Twain's historical comparison of these false gods reveals their identical characters. Through the brutal enforcement of their laws and customs both man and mammon institutionalize their worship by the masses. This highlights, too, the paradoxically delusory yet destructively real nature of all human determinist forces that may change by name and face but never by nature. The illusions of optimistic faith in progress slip away in this historical juxtaposing of ages to expose the pessimistic, realistic truth that progress is as false a fable as the illusion that progress promises freedom. Hank's story exemplifies this truth.

Hank's meteoric rise and fall parallels and mirrors another truth too: that the age-old forces impelling humanity make the pattern of every civilisation's ascent and decline inevitable. Ironically, though, this same continuity of human nature assures the resurrection of forces which will repeat the progression and regression cycle of history. The Yankee's contrived and imposed civilisation satirises the nature of these forces and shows that all civilisations succeed only by the imposition of laws and customs on the powerless by the powerful. So, far from functioning as a euphoric eulogium on progress, the novel is a bitter and regretful recognition of the historical truth that atavism is a natural consequence of advancement. Hank's triumph and tragedy emblemise this truth. From them we infer that progress through civilisation is a vain illusion, an illusion which nevertheless determines the freedom-denegation of those subject to a civilisation's laws and customs.

A Connecticut Yankee is not, then, simply an attack on the evils inherent in these laws and customs - past and present - it is a medium for Twain to dramatise the continuity of the historically determinist forces that shape them and stem from them. And through their destruction of Hank's utopic dream, Twain is also debunking the escape through redemption idea of the Edenic myth: the notion that Adam and Eve's fall from grace was a "fortunate fall" because it gave humanity the incentive to "progress" back to the garden. Twain's fatalistic, pessimistic judgement - based on historical evidence - is that the determinist forces which drive humanity around in a never-ending cycle of horrific inhumanity are what make its redemption impossible. Hank's awakening to find himself "a stranger and forlorn", condemned to the dream-like reality of separation by "an abyss of thirteen centuries yawning" between himself and "all that could make life worth the living" (409), intimates there is no return to that garden. His lament for a past forever lost symbolises the universal longing to escape the bonds of time and place as well as the recognition that there can never be the freedom to do so. And his defeat by historical forces is the universal conquest of humanity by the determinist continuity of its own nature.

This inescapability of historical determinism and human nature is reinforced by the book's dream frame encompassing both the sixth and nineteenth centuries, and by Hank's alternate entrapment in each. By stressing the romantic, sleepy, dream qualities of the Middle Ages, then undercutting these with realities reminiscent of scenes in *Huckleberry Finn*, and by focusing simultaneously on Hank's perverted dream of freedom through progress and civilisation, Twain elaborates the point that progress no more frees humans from the past than it does from the present.

Hank elucidates this when he reveals in the duality of his language and sentiments the ugly continuum of life behind the falsely glamorized ideals of the chivalric age. As he approaches Camelot he describes it as a "soft, reposeful, summer landscape, as lovely as a dream and as lonesome as Sunday" (41). Then, again using Huck-like imagery, Hank draws attention to the brutal, brutalized nature of the people who "look like animals", and live like hogs and dogs in rudimentary shacks in mud alleys. Time and history seem to have swung back from pre-Civil War Bricksville as the hogs roam and root about and "wallow in the middle of the main thoroughfare" (42). And as James Williams notes, the knights are the sixth-century counterparts of the village loafers Huck details. They are "credulous liars, insensitive to suffering, brainless, verbose, and dirty...they delight in dog fights" (291). Human nature and the forces driving it have not changed through the ages, and this is symbolized most powerfully by the presence and acceptance of slavery in both historical settings.

This sameness of human depravity in the two eras highlighted by the dream frame implies the unreality, the nightmarish insanity of a reality historically controlled by cultural forces. And it is the beliefs trained and ingrained by these forces which enslave humans to determinist illusions, the unreality of which renders life without free will meaningless. Indoctrinated instincts, morals, manners, and prejudices are therefore all a matter of perspective. For those trained to accept different beliefs, this apparent discrepancy between appearance and reality amounts to insanity. Ironically, humans can only see the insanity of others' false beliefs. Hank's certainty that he has landed in an insane asylum when he views life in Camelot prepares us for the realization that reality has historically been, and is, and always will be, whatever we are trained to believe it is.

Sandy and Hank both ponder this question of reality versus insanity when Hank sees the enchanted castle as "nothing but a pig-sty". Sandy has been trained to believe in the regular occurrence of enchantments. She sees the hogs as noble women, and the swineherds as the ogres imprisoning them. She is "surprised and distressed" at this "strange...awful marvel" of differing perceptions. Hank, meanwhile, marvels at "the power of training! of influence! of education! It can bring a body up to believe anything". Hank realises they each have to put the other in their own place "to demonstrate how easy it is to seem a lunatic to a person who has not been taught as you have". For his part, he acknowledges that Sandy would believe him insane if he were to tell her that humans "unequipped with magic powers" could "soar among the clouds" in a basket, could "spin along fifty miles an hour" in a wagon, and could converse with someone several hundred miles away on a telephone (177-181).

These differing viewpoints which Hank can see are, in both cases, "absolute proof of...an unsettled reason", are Twain's way of linking together the historical and "unreasoning" forces which control their helpless victims. By so doing, he creates an historical collage of an entire humanity vitiated by a system of illusory, human-created and perpetrated forces which nevertheless enslave all through their powerful laws and customs. Seen in this light, Hank's supremacist belief in the power of progress to pronounce freedom is as naïve, as blind, and as hopelessly illusory as any Middle Ages belief. Jay Martin asserts that "equally as foolish, finally, as their chivalry, his modernism is merely more deadly...Hank becomes a victim of his own technological jokes...he is besieged by history" (180-1).

History, then, and the continuity of human nature which recycles it is created by the beliefs of one's time and place which, although dramatically different, have the same ineluctable, determinist impact on the whole of humanity. It thus seems highly significant that Hank's attempt to conquer history - to overwrite it - is recorded on a palimpsest. And as the narrator tells us,

> "Under the old dim writing of the Yankee historian appeared...Latin words and sentences: fragments from old monkish legends..." (38)

Hank's nineteenth-century imperialist beliefs in his ability to re-write the history of the sixth century with the tools of science and technology had to fail, not just because the past has already happened and cannot be written over but because history is inescapably determinist. The human and historical forces of the past have sown the seeds of future forces which means that events to come are already determined. Hank believed his "jump of thirteen centuries" worth of knowledge and his technology-based power would free him not only from pre-determined obscurity in his own time, but from the determinist constraints of England's feudal structure of primogenitary privilege. His destruction course too, though, is as inexorable and inescapable as the forces of stupidity, ignorance, cowardice, superstition, selfishness, greed, and evil inherent in humans.

These forces make the cataclysmic conclusion inevitable. And they underline the temporality and illusion of progress and civilisation. As soon as Hank is manipulated into leaving for France, his civilisation crumbles, civil war erupts, and the Church negates his republic. The new forces fold under the continuity and power of historically entrenched ones. As in all three novels, travel through time is a metaphor for this inescapability of historical forces and its concomitant lack of free will. Hank

never does have control over his circumstances. Any belief that he does is purely illusory. By his own repeated acknowledgements he is a product of the prescribed conditions of his own time and place. He has no control over his time-warp awakening in sixth-century England; ultimately he has no control over the Church and Merlin's power-hold over the knights and the commoners; and in the end he has no control over his own human weakness and inability to withstand the emotional and physical trauma of finding himself in nineteenth-century England separated by centuries from his family and the England his technology created and destroyed.

Hank's failure to free himself from the historical forces of both centuries emblemises humanity's universal lack of free will and enslavement within the laws and customs of illusory yet determinist forces. And just as the bullet hole through Sir Sagramour's armour illustrates the continuity of history, human nature and their forces, so does it reveal the illusions that create these forces. The art of metallurgy was not known in England until the eighth century, so Twain is using the anachronism of armour to symbolise the historically determinist lies created and perpetuated by laws and customs. In so doing he is evincing too that history is shot through with lies. History is always told from the conquering colonist's perspective and, as exemplified by Hank's story written on a palimpsest, is superimposed with the lies inherent in the customs and laws of the dominant culture. To quote Twain: "The very ink with which all history is written is merely fluid prejudice" (Twain and Ayres 123).

The biggest lie that Hank's history illustrates is the force which ensures the continuity of all other forces, and therefore of historical determinism: the lie that "might is right". And whether this might is generated by the worth-through-birth belief of

Arthur's England, or the weal-through-wealth ideal of Hank's American dream, history shows that it is always plundered and perpetuated by the legalised barbarity of laws and customs. This too is signified in the nineteenth-century bullet hole through sixth-century armour. Through Hank's journeyings to and from the past, with his violent entry and exit, Twain shows that, historically, violence and the fear of it is what manufactures the cowardice, weakness, ignorance, self-righteous arrogance, selfishness, and greed which enslaves humans to the laws and customs of their time and place. And it is these laws and customs which have always determined human existence by the inhumanities they visit on those whose freedom they purloin. By going backward, Twain thus enables us to look forward, to recognise that time is all that separates the lies of the past from the lies of the future.

A Connecticut Yankee, then, in revealing the lies of historical forces, points to the truth about the determinist forces of the present and pessimistically predicts the death of any optimistic belief in the power of progress and technology to free humanity from these forces in the future. The novel's dystopic ending negates all such hope. It points to the historical truth that humanity never learns from history and so is doomed to repeat its own determinist degeneracies. As Hank observes, "I reckon we are all fools. Born so, no doubt" (321). The determinist laws and customs which make us the fools of history can only be escaped temporarily in sleep and dreams. Twain evinces this truth through Hank's dream/nightmare drifts into and out of worlds where reality and dream are interchangeable and indistinguishable. They culminate in Hank's slide into insanity and suicide. His demise prepares us for the Mysterious Stranger's revelation that only in death can we escape the past and the present.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SLEEP, DREAMS, INSANITY, AND DEATH

Huck Finn is prepared to go to hell to follow his dream of finding freedom from civilisation. Hank Morgan's dream of heading a free republic takes two civilisations to hell. But through the Mysterious Stranger, Theodor Fischer learns that humanity has no need of hell. It has created a more than adequate one here on earth. Satan's pseudonym is Philip Traum (Traum means dream) and his lesson is that since humanity's hellish determinist forces are created and held in place by thought, they could be changed by thought, if only humans could see them for what they are and have the courage to "dream better dreams". But Satan's visions of humanity's past and future persuade Theodor that human nature renders this melioristic dream impossible. In such a scenario death is preferable to life. Having conveyed this message, the Mysterious Stranger, who is "but a dream" created out of the "nothingness" from which all human forces are made, dissolves away.

Twain's *Mysterious Stranger* manuscripts, [1] worked on between 1897 and 1908, are his last attempts to fictionalise these determinist beliefs which he set out in Socratic dialogue in his moral treatise *What is Man*. The thrust of this essay is that despite its vanities and conceits humanity has no freedom of will. The human will "is worked solely from the outside. Temperament, training, and the daily influences which mould and make a person what they are - compels the action they will take" (6, 91). And as Satan demonstrates in the cosmic allegory of *The Mysterious Stranger*, humanity's actions have historically produced a pageant of ever increasing insanities.

Satan initiates Theodor and his friends into the realization that hemmed in as humanity has always been by the follies, vices, and self-deceptions inherent in its flawed and malleable nature, its notions of self-importance are "dream stuff"; and its manufactured morality, based on a false belief in its freedom of will, makes of human existence a meaningless mockery, an insane, recurrent and cruel nightmare in which the only true freedom is the blessed release into the oblivion of death.

The human insanities Twain saw as being responsible for determining the race's own hellish existence prompted him to plan this final work as his most explicit and utterly contemptuous indictment of human nature. In language echoed by Satan, he told his friend William Dean Howells:

> I believe I can make it tell what I think of Man...what a shabby, poor ridiculous thing he is, and how mistaken he is in his estimation of hi character and powers and qualities, and his place among the animals...I hope...it will turn out to be the right vessel to contain all the abuse I am planning to dump into it. (Fussell 76)

Perhaps Twain believed he had succeeded too well in his aims to win the public's acceptance of *The Mysterious Stranger* stories for he never published them. Certainly the editors of the much bowdlerized *Chronicle of Young Satan* - which for nearly sixty years was passed off as "the authorized version" - feared the work was too anti-clerical. This was their main reason for expurgating it. In any event, the novel has long been regarded as Twain's darkest satire and despite Satan's assertion that with laughter, humanity's "colossal" determinist "humbugs" can be blown "to rags and

atoms at a blast", humour is conspicuous by its absence in this work. The only laughter comes from Satan's "evil chuckle" and his scornful, sarcastic mirth over the self-delusions of this "mud made" race. This seems to bear out his claim that humanity only possesses a "mongrel perception of humour" which it never uses as a weapon because it is always too busy "fussing and fighting with other weapons" (674).

In a satire so devoid of humour, the inference is that along with the doctrine of progress, Twain has tossed aside the empty dream that humanity can be morally uplifted or influenced by satire. If humans only have a bastard sense of humour for "low-grade, trivial comicalities", it follows that satire can make no lasting impact. After all, the age-old determinist forces - some of which Satan identifies as "power, money, persuasion, supplication, persecution" - are as alive all round the globe today as they ever were. And in a life where not even laughter can change the determinist dictates of human nature, The Mysterious Stranger states that death is the only dignified refuge for the human "suffering machine". As the bringer to Eseldorf of "merciful" death and the "happiness" of insanity, Satan elucidates the Twainian maxim prefacing chapter ten in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*: "All say, 'How hard it is to die' - a strange complaint to come from the mouths of people who have had to live".

When Theodor reaches the revelatory conclusion that humanity's determinist universe means that everyone is "a prisoner for life" and apart from escapes into insanity or death "cannot get free" (647), he is articulating an unstated understanding of this truth manifested in both Huck's and Hank's wish to be "dead and done with it all". In the two earlier novels the largest measure of Twain's satiric vitriol is poured onto the institutions which have historically enslaved humanity in ignorance and superstition.

But the history of humanity's unchanging nature, revealed with increasing despair in *Huckleberry Finn* and *A Connecticut Yankee*, prepares us for Twain's shift of focus in *The Mysterious Stranger* to human nature as its own worst determinist force.

Through Satan, Twain evinces his belief that it is corrupted human nature which institutionalises the forces that manipulate the majority of "sheep" into labouring, bleeding, and dying for the minority (CYS 36). And since these human-created, corrupted and corrupting institutions have historically stunted humanity's evolution by imprisoning it within liberty-denying, life-destructive laws, customs and conventions, Twain, through Satan and Theodor's revelations, denies humanity's ability ever to disentangle itself from these illusory forces and exercise free will by dreaming "better dreams".

According to Budd, this moral inertness of human nature is suggested by *The Mysterious Stranger* as countering the dream of material progress (191). Thus, when Satan asserts that humanity is a "dull and ignorant...worthless lot all around", Smith says he is voicing the author's disillusionment with the glittering promise for humanity's continuous moral improvement held out by the doctrine of progress (1962 186). Satan's further intimation that the only progress the Christian world has made is in the competency of its killing machines has already been prepared for in Huck's recognition that the coerced conscience contrives to make humans "awful mean" in the destruction of each other's liberty. Twain pitches this paradox of human nature negating progress even more powerfully in *A Connecticut Yankee*. The same conditioned conscience here codifies the Arthurians into the "human muck" that

pronounces "death!" to Hank's republic and leads to the destruction of two civilisations.

When this freedom-denying conscience re-emerges as the moral sense in *The Mysterious Stranger*, it is stated to be the patron and perpetrator of all the evil, cruelty, misery, and suffering humanity inflicts on its own. And all for "no gain" as Satan declares, since the illusory, human-created forces which determine human events foster nothing but the insane, death and destruction-wreaking divisions of humans against each other in a never-ending procession of blood-letting. Satan's revelation of the "pure and puerile" insanities inherent in human nature and the determinist prison it constructs for itself ends in his entreaty to Theodor to use this knowledge to free himself. But the narrator is relating these events as an old man reminiscing on his adolescence, and once again Twain is retreating into the past to reinforce the message that the dream of freedom has failed and never can succeed in a universe determined by the depravity of human nature, a universe in which the only escape for Father Peter is into the insane delusion that he is the emperor.

Satan brings about this "favour" of insanity via the device of discovered gold. Through the angel's use of self-created money, Twain once again exhibits the "talking" power of this greatest of all human-manufactured, misery-making determinist forces. Father Peter is falsely accused of stealing the money and imprisoned. However, at the trial, Satan makes the money's mint date "speak" for the priest's innocence and he is exonerated. But Satan carries to the man the message that he has been found guilty and the shock drives him into a delighted delusion of self-deification.

Theodor upbraids Satan for not finding a way to free the man "without depriving him of his reason". Satan's riposte is to declare Theodor "an ass". He says "sanity and happiness are an impossible combination. No sane man can be happy, for to him life is real, and he sees what a fearful thing it is. Only the mad can be happy, and not many of those" (673-4). It is symbolic that Satan can "free" Father Peter no other way. As Kenneth Lynn notes, he can talk to cats, travel effortlessly through space and time, and create living people from mud. He knows everything about everyone past, present and future, but he cannot liberate the priest "for the simple reason that the entire world is a prison-house" (284).

The novel's concluding focus on existence without free will as imprisonment within a meaningless "hysterically insane" dream thus gives it the same cyclical structure as *Huckleberry Finn* and *A Connecticut Yankee*. It also parallels Satan's assertion that for a million years humanity has propagated itself without advancement:

> you always come out where you went in...the race has gone on monotonously...reperforming this dull nonsense - to what end? No wisdom can guess! Who gets a profit out of it? Nobody but a parcel of usurping little monarchs and nobilities who despise you...whom you slave for, fight for, die for...and you are afraid to resent it...while in your heart...you despise yourselves for it. (663)

Satan's graphic "theatres" of fear-produced acts of moral cowardice and hypocrisy, like the ever increasingly devastating slaughters of wars - and the chasing, stoning, hanging, and burning of so-called witches - elaborate Twain's theme of enslavement by forces humans have historically felt powerless to resist.

This centuries-old, fear-induced torpor is reflected in the ironic introduction to Theodor's sixteenth-century Austrian village of Eseldorf (which translated means Assville). He tells us:

> It was in 1590 - winter. Austria was...asleep; it was still the Middle Ages in Austria, and promised to remain so forever. Some even set it away back centuries upon centuries and said that by the mental and spiritual clock it was still the Age of Belief in Austria...Yes, Austria was...asleep, and our village was in the middle of that sleep...it drowsed in peace...news from the world hardly ever came to disturb its dreams, and was infinitely content. (602)

This conventional romance setting, reminiscent of Camelot, is in stark contrast to the real, determined structure of both this fictional world and our own. Underneath the tranquil, dreamy, "painted" surface of this conventionally delineated "contentment", the dark, deadly forces of other conventions are at work.

The seasonal allusion is a powerful metaphor for these forces. Together with the vast "frowning" castle atop the gorges where "the sun never penetrated", it emblemises the icy darkness of this microcosmic world and its deeds. It is a darkness both of the intellectual state in which the people are imprisoned, and of the church's frightful methods for perpetuating their imprisonment. This Austrian "Age of Belief" is symbolic for every other age and place in which beliefs are enforced by long training and ingraining. It stresses too, through Satan's postulations on thought and the power of dreams, Twain's recognition that truth equals belief; and belief is simply a coerced consensus brought about by cultural customs, conventions and laws. As Twain told his biographer, Albert Paine, it is to protect this power base of its belief system that:

> The church has opposed every innovation and discovery from the day of Galileo down to our own time, when the use of anaesthetics in childbirth was regarded as a sin because it avoided the biblical curse pronounced against Eve. (Paine Volume 3 1535)

And today when millions of people all around the globe are infected with the deadly AIDS disease the church is still promoting the belief that corpses are preferable to condoms.

Such opposition to independent thought produces the Church-trained "sleepy" state which characterises the Eseldorfer's enforced ignorance. Theodor says: "Mainly we were trained to be good Catholics; to revere the Virgin, the Church and the saints above everything; to hold the Monarch in awful reverence..." he says that they are "not allowed" to know much. The priests said that knowledge was not good for the common people, and could make them discontented...and God would not endure discontentment with His plans. This was true, for the priests got it of the Bishop. (CYS 36)

Such is the Eseldorf that the young, naive Theodor describes as "a paradise". In truth it is a living hell where non-conformists and heretics are spied on, informed on, tormented, tortured, and purged before being condemned to biblical hell. Fear of similar treatment trains the majority to cling to whatever "truths" they are taught to believe and keep vigilant watch on their neighbours to ensure they are not tainted by wrongful associations. As Satan says:

> Monarchies, aristocracies, and religions are all based upon...the individual's distrust of his neighbour...These institutions will always remain and always

> flourish, and always oppress you, affront you, and degrade you, because you will always be slaves of minorities. (667)

Satan recognises though, as Twain did, that despite humanity's hypocritical and cowardly "worship" of its own enslaving forces, and its culpability for the "repulsive" acts it commits, it is helpless against the dictates of its own weak nature. For this reason, Twain's misanthropy for humanity as a whole was always countered by a deep sympathy for the individual victims of its determinist forces. This expresses itself in *The Mysterious Stranger* as it did in all his satires and polemical pieces exposing the never-ending parade of injustices and evils for which his Calvinist training insisted that human nature must still be held accountable. This ambivalence of contempt and pity is highlighted by Satan's attempts "to help" some of the villagers by sending them into insanity or early death. At the same time these acts of "kindness" reveal the ways in which circumstances shape and determine individual lives; and like "a row of bricks" stood on end and pushed over, they go on to determine other's lives in ways which Satan shows are unforseen and unavoidable because humanity has no free will.

When Satan changes the pre-determined life courses of Nikolaus and Lisa by ensuring their deaths from drowning, he not only demonstrates to Theodor that humanity's lack of foresight and free will means that it "never knows good fortune from ill", but also that an early death is the best of all good fortunes. Had they survived the calamity, Satan says Nikolaus would have been left for forty-six years "a paralytic log, deaf, dumb, blind, and praying night and day for the blessed relief of death". And because Nikolaus is prevented from saving Lisa, she is spared "From ten years of pain and

slow recovery...and then nineteen years pollution, shame, depravity, crime, ending with death at the hands of the executioner" (648).

This "good fortune" of untimely death sets in motion further good fortune for Lisa's mother. Frau Brandt goes "wild with grief and shame" when the carpenter seizes her daughter's corpse for debt. She blasphemes "the laws of the emperor and the church" for which she is betrayed and sent to the stake; "excommunicated and cut off from the joys of heaven and doomed to the fires of hell". But Satan assures the boys "The woman is advantaged. Die when she might, she would go to heaven. By this prompt death she gets twenty-nine years more of heaven than she is entitled to, and escapes twenty-nine years of misery here" (658-660).

Theodor's alternating joy and horror over the consequences of Satan's interference in these people's lives further elucidates humanity's lack of free will resulting from a lack of foresight. He is anguished to learn that in "advantaging" Frau Brandt they have unwittingly secured her betrayer's consignment to hell. Theodor's helplessness echoes Huck's lack of awareness that determinist forces have already rendered his decision to "go to hell" null and void. But as Twain evinces through Hank's attempt to overwrite the past and change the course of history, foreknowledge is useless without free will. Theodor's well-intentioned desire for Satan to "improve" the careers of people he cares about, will turn out to be as pathetically pointless as both Huck's and Hank's grand gestures.

Besides illustrating the cause and effect determinism of circumstances and environment, these incidents reinforce the fiction of beliefs held to be truths and the

strength of training which goes into their centuries of enforcement. One such belief is that heaven-bound souls must first go through purgatory but that money can buy an early release. In *The Mysterious Stranger* Twain uses this belief to exemplify the ways in which the Church trains the people to fear its powers over life and death on earth as well as in the hereafter. But Satan exposes these as human-created lies; firstly when he denies that Frau Brandt will go to hell, then when he asserts that there is no purgatory, and finally when he reveals that there is "no God...no heaven, no hell. It is all...a grotesque and foolish dream". As for humanity, its universe and its contents, Satan affirms that these too are:

> only dreams, visions, fiction!...so frankly and hysterically insane - like all dreams...the silly creations of an imagination that is not conscious of its freaks...they are a dream, and you the maker of it...And you are but a thought. (679)

This focus on the unreality of human life stresses the like unreality of the human-contrived forces which humanity allows to determine its existence. And Satan's declaration that Theodor and the whole of his race are mere "thoughts", reinforces Twain's thesis that our thoughts are the result of our inherited and trained beliefs. And these are subject to our circumstances and environment as well as the time and place we are born into. This is highlighted by Theodor's terrified belief that for the want of an hour, Hans Oppert will go to hell simply because the priest arrives too late to give him the last rites. Through such incidents Twain makes the point that time renders the reality of our lives and our beliefs as substanceless as dreams. And thus, we have no more control over these than our gender, our sexual orientation, our intelligence quotient, our physical make-up or our temperament.

Twain evinces this truth too, through the ironies surrounding Satan's assumed superiority to humans. He ridicules their vanities, and the pomposity of their pretensions, yet cannot see the limitations of the foreknowledge he so proudly demonstrates. Theodor notes that although Satan can use this heavenly power to "better" someone's life, he seems unable to do so "except by killing him or making a lunatic out of him" (674). Satan is an immortal yet this inability points to a lack of free will in spite of foreknowledge. And as the named-for nephew of the arch rebel against the laws of God the arch dictator, Satan's actions intimate that if, like his uncle, he cannot exercise free will without losing it, then he never had it to begin with. Free will is thus an impossible dream for anyone. If it is denied even to the angels, how much less can humans expect to possess it? This is further reinforced by the revelation that angelic existence has no reality. It is nothing more than "dream stuff" created from the same thoughts as humanity's other determinist beliefs.

By exposing all such beliefs as fictions, Twain is testifying to the tragedy of people living out lives based on delusions, accepting appallingly cruel, torturous, oppressive conditions in the insane belief that they are martyring themselves for the dream of a happiness-filled hereafter. At the same time though, he recognises that we are all prisoners of these insane, dream-stuff, determinist forces. And since our only escapes lie in sleep, dreams, insanity and death, an early escape is a release from sorrow. As the older, sadder Theodor reflects, "Many a time...I have heard people pray to God to spare the life of sick persons, but I have never done it" (657). And when Satan denies the existence of heaven or hell, Theodor has the "blessed and hopeful feeling" that there is after all a freedom to look forward to from the fearful miseries and horrors of

both human-created hells. It is the refuge of death which near to his own end Twain described as "the only earthly dignity that is not artificial" (Paine Volume 3 1578).

Herein lies the message of *The Mysterious Stranger*: the greatest tragedy of human existence is that the only true freedom is in death-induced oblivion.

CHAPTER TWELVE

GOD, CHRISTIANITY AND THE MORAL SENSE

At the point of the Mysterious Stranger's final disappearance, he utters a vituperative attack ostensibly on God as the malignant, self-righteous, judgemental inventor of all the evils and insanities afflicting humanity for which the creator then blames and pleasurably punishes his children. But Satan has already denounced God and all other determinist forces as substanceless dreams. And he is here emphatically stating the conclusion to which Twain's implications in all three works have been leading, that the concepts of God, Christianity, and humanity's "mongrel Moral Sense" are all the insane inventions of human thought designed to disguise the real determiners of mortal misery.

The Mysterious Stranger illustrates this thesis with a long list of malevolent acts attributed to God which only emphasise the impossible irrationality of belief in a wicked, irascible deity who could have made his children as good, happy, immortal, and disease-free as his angels, yet chose to curse them "with biting miseries and maladies of mind and body"; who:

> mouths justice...Golden Rules, and forgiveness...and invented hell; who mouths morals to other people and has none himself; who frowns upon crimes, yet commits them all; who created man without invitation, then tries to shuffle the responsibility for man's acts upon man...and finally, with altogether divine obtuseness, invites this poor, abused slave to worship him! (679)

From Satan's repeated assertions of the insanity of such beliefs comes the epiphanic realization that much of humanity's suffering is needless. The novella's action demonstrates that suffering is inflicted by the heartless on the mindless through fictional forces which have historically maintained power over the masses by fermenting their fear and ignorance through superstitious religious beliefs. Satan's censorious scorn and derision for humanity's worship of its dreamed-up deities is a venomous venting of Twain's impotent rage against the determinist continuity of humanity's self-perpetuated perversity.

The determinist import of the sleep, dream, insanity, and death motifs Twain has been incrementally developing over the three novels is thus misunderstood by those who see Satan's denial of the reality of dream-created forces as solipsistic. Far from dismissing the problems of living in a determined world by an absolute refutation of God, the universe, and humanity's existence, Twain is arguing vigorously that our universe is an all too real, human-invented hell. Satan affirms this by his repeated references to hell as an invented state. And through the angel's declaration that human nature is "inextinguishable, indestructible", Twain is positing the continuity of a world determined by the insanity of all the immorality humanity carries out in the guise of its Moral Sense.

In *The Mysterious Stranger* this moral sense is shown to be an invention of the all-powerful and imposed Catholic Christian belief network nurtured by the promise of heaven and the threat of hell. Enforced beliefs create the villagers' sense of right and wrong which necessitates, as it did in *Huckleberry Finn* and *A Connecticut Yankee*, that people do wrong in order to do right by the codes of their culture. In all three

works human-created forces hide behind the cloak and dagger of God's laws, God's plans, and God's infinite, unquestionable wisdom.

The moral sense and Christianity are thus inextricably linked in *The Mysterious Stranger* with witch-hunting and war-mongering. And as Satan demonstrates so too are the moral cowardice and mob spirit that make these phenomena possible. Twain's work evinces a life-long fascinated horror and loathing for the lynch-mob mentality and the religious, social and psychological determinants driving it which he expresses with progressive force through Huck's, Hank's and lastly Theodor's experiences. Twain's focus on the religious persecution of witches - to him the ultimate proof of humanity's invention of its own freedom-denying determinist forces - was sparked by the hanging in 1692 of nineteen people condemned as witches in the Puritan American settlement of Salem Village. But his wider interest encompassed the two hundred year European blood-bath of Christianity-inspired witch-killing begun in the late fifteenth-century (Kahn 62). Satan refers to both the European and American slayings, "first agitated by a handful of pious lunatics", in his prediction that "witch-hunting will come to a sudden end" (667).

The exact number of these executions may never be known but Sheldon Watts' study estimates that in Western Europe alone, at least one hundred thousand villagers, mostly women, were sentenced by law courts to die for witchcraft. Confessions were extracted under torture and the few acquitted were often stoned or burnt to death anyway by their neighbours (201-4). Jerry Allen's figures for the whole of Europe, which do not include men, claim a death toll of well over three hundred thousand (241). What more effective way for a male controlled hierarchy to ensure the

continued subjugation of women! And providing proof for Twain's claim that human nature is unregenerate was a call just this year, by the Anglican vicar of Lutton in Lincolnshire, England, to have women priests burned at the stake as witches for "assuming powers they have no right to" (AAP 6).

Roy Male says it is difficult now for us to understand how the great witch hunts in Europe could have taken place as late as the seventeenth-century when methods of scientific discovery were well advanced. But he says the answer lies in the inherent Christian belief that life's mysteries are attributable either to God or the Devil. People thought to be witches were thus evidence of the "perpetual menace of infernal seduction" (44).

Twain uses Satan's provision of money for the needy Father Peter, and revelations of the inhumane uses to which humanity puts its Christian Moral Sense, to prepare us for this dogma-determined destruction of free will in the novel's focus on witchcraft, torture, and murder. Only the boys know that "there was no mystery" about the priest's discovery of the 1107 ducats. Father Peter, who is already charged with having made the "horrible" assertion that "God was all goodness and would find a way to save all his poor human children" (603), concludes that "it was the plain hand of Providence". But the devil-wary villagers suspect "the hand of Satan", and Theodor's ironic comment that this "seemed a surprisingly good guess for ignorant people like that" (618), exposes God, Satan, and the church's propulsive beliefs in supernatural forces as human-contrived controls.

This is further exemplified by Twain's characterizations of both the town's priests crimped or cut from the original manuscript. Father Adolf is there portrayed as a megalomaniac, spying, lying "loud and zealous...dissolute and profane and malicious" cleric who is held in "solemn and awful respect" because he "had absolutely no fear of the Devil...he would even speak of him scornfully and scoffingly". He "had actually met Satan face to face...and defied him" (CYS 37-41). Father Adolf represents the unmasked determinist lies of both the church and the devil. But the paradoxical goodness of the "good and gentle and truthful" Father Peter, who teaches "just what the Church required, and nothing else" (CYS 42), and who believes in the goodness and rightness of God and the Moral Sense, emblemises the masses who are too "good" to see that these human-invented forces stand behind the greatest evils determining their existence. The Christian Moral Sense, Satan shows, is what teaches the "very rich, and very holy proprietors" of a nineteenth-century French factory full of "poor dying slaves" that they are "better than dogs" (629).

Time and again in *The Mysterious Stranger* Satan demonstrates Twain's contention that humanity's evils, committed in the name of morality, place it below the beasts in the field. Satan takes Theodor into a torture chamber where splinters are being driven under the nails of a suspected heretic who is refusing to confess. Sickened by the sight, the boy tells the angel "it was a brutal thing". "No", Satan retorts,

> "it was a human thing. You should not insult the brutes...No brute ever does a cruel thing - that is the monopoly of those with the Moral Sense...a brute does not inflict pain for the pleasure of it - only man does that. Inspired by that mongrel Moral Sense...that degrades him to the bottom layer of animated beings and is a shameful possession." (628-9)

The heinous cruelty of a Christian-moulded Moral Sense which can determine whether a sinner is sent to "eternal joy" or "eternal pain", depending on whether or not absolution has been granted, is presented as an insanely evil and immoral lie when Hans Oppert's brutalised dog forgives him but the church's laws will not. These scenes prepare us for the fearful force of Eseldorf's Christianity-cultivated "witch-terror" which echoes Twain's description of the church's "900 years' holy work" in his article *Bible Teaching and Religious Practise*:

> During many ages there were witches. The Bible said so. The Bible commanded that they should not be allowed to live...the Church...gathered up its halters, thumbscrews and firebrands...and tortured, hanged and burned whole hordes and armies of witches, and washed the Christian world clean with their foul blood. Then it was discovered that there was no such thing as witches, and never had been. (J. Smith 44-5)

From Twain's emphasis on the non-existence of witches we infer also that a Christianity which could invent witch-mania as a method of mass control has likewise invented itself as a determinist force. Together with Twain's observation in *The United States of Lyncherdom* that lynchings are born of moral cowardice and "will infallibly" lead to an "epidemic of bloody insanities" (J. Smith 100-104), this point is underscored by Theodor's statement that the church found witches wherever it looked for them: "we had tried to extirpate the witches, but the more of them we burned the more of the breed rose up in their place" (633). And to make its determinist "divide and conquer" power-policy even more effective, the church propounds the belief that "When that kind of malady is in the blood it does not always come out with just one burning" (632).

Such a belief dictates that Gottfried Narr, although "a good creature", is "under a cloud, and properly so...since a social blight had mildewed the family - his grandmother had been burned as a witch" (632). The old lady had pleaded guilty to the crime of curing headaches "by the Devil's help" because she knew the villagers would be forced to disassociate with her if she were acquitted. This would mean she could no longer work and would starve to death. "The fire is best; it is soon over" (634). Death is an escape from the fear of consequences.

To highlight the determinism of this human-invented force of fear Twain uses fire in *The Mysterious Stranger* as "a symbol of humanity's utmost inhumanity to itself" (Parsons 119). This is strongly conveyed in the "pitiful" spectacle of the eleven schoolgirls burned as self-confessed witches for bearing fleabites judged by the witch-commission to be "the Devil's marks". The girls' admission to having "ridden through the air on broomsticks to the witches' Sabbath" comes after they have been shut up in the dark separately and starved for ten days. The commission, armed with questions "written down...two centuries before", then prompts the girls' confession to having "danced and drunk and caroused with several hundred other witches and the Evil One". Even though Theodor finds the burnings "too dreadful" to witness, his Christian-trained Moral Sense persuades him that they are "just and right" (633).

Ironically the "rightness" of Christian-determined death by fire becomes for Theodor "wanton murder" when Satan, who "does not know right from wrong", and who has no knowledge of pain, commits the same atrocity. Theodor fails to realise that the only difference between his society's evil acts and Satan's is the socio-religious determinant of fear. So powerfully inculcated are "the awful fears which were freezing

the blood in the hearts of the community" against witches that the people "take to witch-hunting on their own score". The witch-commission had feared to proceed against "any but the poor and friendless". Now, though, the "fright frenzied" villagers catch and kill "a born lady" while her distraught daughter can only look on and weep, "afraid to say or do anything" (642-665).

Through the Eseldorfers mob murder of this hapless woman, Twain evinces that fear inbreeds an unconscious psychological need to find a scapegoat for the individual's secret abhorrence of its social and religious systems and of itself for tolerating its own soul's enslavement by them. But as Satan also reveals in this incident, and in every other fear-forged act of cowardice in *The Mysterious Stranger*, self-interest is the strongest part of this fear which always determines that the "sheep" will follow "the aggressive and pitiless minority".

In bleak contrast here to Huck's albeit hopeless heroics on behalf of Jim is Theodor's fearful inability to risk the community's censure. Earlier he had confessed to being too faint-hearted to warn Marget that the witch-commission had set the village to spy on her, and now, he joins "the howling and cursing mob" in hurling stones at its helpless victim. In a society where an insurmountable fear-forced Moral Sense means death to all opposers, "this act, like all others, is absolutely predetermined and inevitable" (Stone 244).

Humanity's Christian-created Moral Sense, then, is presented not as an instinctive compulsion to do right but as a consequence-dreading desire "to avoid it - when unpopular" (Twain The US of L 100). Satan shows Theodor that the instigator of all

wars is this same Moral Sense-inspired insanity which determines the belief in non-existent powers like witchcraft and leads to the denial of freedom, and the barbaric deaths of innocent people for "things invented... which had never happened". In an anti-war tirade, which echoes the prophet in Twain's *War Prayer*, the angel describes the propaganda process by which "the loud little handful" always convinces the majority that any war is just and honourable and necessary. And in his depiction of "the conscience-soothing falsities" which mask "this process of grotesque self-deception", Satan reveals both the part the Christian pulpit always plays in the war-cry and the way free speech and then free will are strangled by it (668).

This linking of freedom-stifling Christianity with the imperialist, determinist deception of war is expanded in Twain's damning indictment of humanity's "history of progress" which Satan presents to the boys in a vision. Beginning with the clubbing to death of Abel by Cain, and ending with the angel's "dishearteningly accurate" prophesy of the Christian nations becoming gun-runners to the pagan world (Miller 184-5), Satan demonstrates the real determiner of every aggressor's religious zeal "to confer the blessings of civilisation on their [conquered] widows and orphans"; it is the lust for other peoples' land and resources (662). And through all the "hideous drenchings of the earth with blood", he reveals "Christianity and Civilisation" marching "hand in hand through those ages, leaving famine and death and desolation in their wake".

The angel goes on to presage that Christians would perfect the technology for mass slaughter, would become recognized as the most "competent killers", and would be sought not for their religion but their guns. Twain's purpose for this prediction is two-fold. First, he is making a virulent attack on imperialist moves in his own time by

England, Europe and America on other countries. Satan refers to some of these - including the parable of the British in India - and others, like the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State, have been deleted from the original manuscript. Twain's other purpose is to predict the retaliatory consequences these "Christianising" efforts would determine.

Satan's reference to "the Chinaman" buying guns "to kill missionaries and converts with" (663) is an allusion to the Boxer Rebellion in 1900 following what Theodor sees in his travels around China as events "too horrible to think" (643). And Twain's satire on Christian missionaries there in *To the Person Sitting in Darkness* is echoed in a reference deleted from the original *Chronicle* manuscript. In this, Satan predicts the imperialist death-and-destruction determinism of the twin forces of Christianity and civilisation:

> The Christian missionary will exasperate the Chinese; they will kill him in a riot. They will have to pay for him, in territory, cash, and churches, sixty-two million times his value. This will exasperate the Chinese still more, and they will injudiciously rise in revolt against the insults and oppressions of the intruder. This will be Europe's chance to interfere and swallow China, and her band of royal Christian pirates will not waste it. (CYS 136)

And so Satan's expositions of humanity's never-ending "raging, struggling, wallowing through seas of blood" (663), in wars, witch-hunts, and torturings, all in the guise of Christianity and its Moral Sense, and all for the greater glory of God, demonstrate only the insanity of belief in these human-invented forces. The race, as the angel says,

lives a life "of continuous and uninterrupted self-deception" (674). And by the insanities born of deception is its life and death determined.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SATAN AND FREE WILL

As an unfallen angel, who "cannot do wrong", Satan functions in *The Mysterious Stranger* as the paradoxical illuminator and embodiment of the imagination-wrought wrongs and insanities which kill humanity's free will. His names, and his contradictory passion and indifference toward his own as well as humanity's powers of creation and destruction, symbolise the determinist lies of humanity's belief in its freedom of choice and in itself as the prize over which God and the Devil constantly battle. Reflecting the Victorian world, where belief still lagged behind scientific evidence suggesting the mythology of God and the creation, Twain brings to life a parabolic figure who parodies the Creator, the Destroyer, and human nature to reveal the latter as the paradoxical Creator of its own freedom destroying deceits.

Twain alerts us to this truth by a lie. Satan, who bears the questionable name of God's adversary, "The Father of Lies", assures the boys that angels are incapable of sin because they are ignorant of it; "we are without blemish, and shall abide in that estate always" (609). This ironic assertion comes right in the middle of a discussion about his uncle who sinned and authored humanity's Fall. And whilst Satan is denying the angels' knowledge of wrong he is wiping from his fingers the blood of his own mud-made miniature people whom he has just crushed to death.

More than an imperialist crushing by a superior power, Satan's act is a symbolic killing of the Eseldorfers' free will by the lies of social and religious forces which

command the worship of beings whose lives are rendered as worthless as minuscule dust particles. Theodor expresses this trained compulsion to obey coercive powers in the boys' adoration of Satan: "We could not take our eyes from him...and their dumb speech was worship" (613).

Like the mythological, adoration-demanding God of Genesis, Satan created his microscopic people for his own pleasure. And, like this wrathful, avenging Old Testament tyrant, when the "sobbing and lamenting" of their bereaved annoys him, he "mashed all those people into the earth just as if they had been flies" (610). Theodor's analogy states the "blandness", the malevolence of humanity's determinist "deities" as well as the race's consequent reduction, through a deprivation of free will, to a disgusting, over-plenteous pest feeding and breeding on diseases in the dust. In a sequence of life-giving and taking, which ends with a parody of Doomsday, Satan reinforces these notions. And implicit in the deaths of these people, who have died without having lived, is that in contrast with the horrors of life for the villagers, death is a "blessed" release.

In this apocalyptic scene, the angel has no sooner modelled his castle replete with five-hundred little people than he whips up a combination storm and earthquake to obliterate them. When his lightning fires the castle and the inhabitants "come flying out, shrieking" Satan brushes them back. He then rents the ground open, tumbles the castle ruins into the chasm, and closes the earth over it, allowing not one poor creature to escape. The boys are heartbroken because the people "are gone to hell", but, "full of bubbling spirits", Satan assures them "they were of no value...it is no matter; we can make plenty more" (612). In this allegory a likewise earth-formed, earth-bound,

enclosed humanity is intended to perceive its own creation and place in the universe as of microscopic importance as these expendable little people. And just as the demise of their whole race is determined by only two of their number "locked in a life and death struggle" for dominance, so are human events dictated for the many cowardly "vermin" by the few king rats.

Theodor is initiated into this realisation by Satan's "matter-of-course" reference to the "dirt" race as "'trivial and conceited, and so diseased and rickety'...just as a person might talk about bricks or manure or any other thing that was of no consequence and hadn't feelings". And, using imagery which builds on the angel's dismissal of humans as perishable pests, Theodor observes that Satan's detached presentation of "the damned writhing in the red waves of hell" is nothing to him "beyond mere entertainment...he was as bland about it as if it had been so many imitation rats in an artificial fire" (611).

Satan's callous insouciance to his own cruelty while he condemns humans for theirs is more than just a parallel with the murderous forces at work on the free will of earthlings; it is a prefiguring of his concluding statement that these determinants are only thought-created. From this, we infer the illogic of belief in an egocentric being who craves the humble homage of creatures whom he ridicules for acting according to their created nature and then kills for his own entertainment. Satan's alleged innocence of evil is in reality, as Ellwood Johnson says, "the absence of a sense of guilt" (10). It is this freedom from the curse of conscience afflicting Huck, Hank and Theodor which enslaves the boys to this being whom Theodor confesses "made us drunk with the joy of being with him" (611). And, through this supernatural being's ironic inversions of

accepted notions of good and evil, Twain is also drawing attention to the determinist nature of what we perceive to be reality and truth. Satan's contradictory declaration that "truth is good manners; manners are fiction", reinforces the truth that for the Eseldorfers it is social and religious "realities" which decree these self-deceptions.

Theodor makes much of Satan's characteristic deceitfulness and from this representative God/Rebel's first to his last appearance in Eseldorf he proves to be such a successful liar that we are as "appalled" as Theodor is by the Parthian shot truth that his existence has been created from a lie. We see Satan "telling lies" to gain the boys' adulation and subjugation and, in their recognition of his spell-binding powers to make them dance on the grave of his "fiendish massacre", we see an analogy with the power and authority of their community leaders. And we infer that the truth of our arranged reality is that it is deceiving us into surrendering our free will on the pretext that it is operating in the best interests of the majority. Despite the boys' professed belief "in Satan's desire to do us kindness", Theodore later admits "we were losing confidence in his judgement" (660).

The boys' nascent loss of faith parallels the beginnings of the nineteenth-century's crisis questioning into the truth of human existence triggered by science advancing the theory of evolution. The boys' doubts about Satan stem from their introduction to the truth that human lives are determined and, for all that Satan can "improve" an individual's lot, the end result will be no different than the sparrow which "falls just the same" even though God watches over it. Using the example of Nikolaus, Satan says: "He had a billion possible careers, but not one of them was worth living; they were charged with misery and disasters" (648). This negation of belief in our freedom

to better our life-chances is also a reiteration of Twain's by now strong distrust in the "truth" of humanity's ability to "lift itself above the beasts". His narrator's conviction in *What is Man* that humanity's shaping by external forces renders it incapable of knowing anything that can so advance itself is echoed by Mrs Bauman: "if we could only know! Then we shouldn't ever go wrong; but we are only poor, dumb beasts groping around and making mistakes" (654).

Satan's knowledge-imparting sermons, complete with exempla, are opening the lads' eyes to the lies of their reality but, through the ever-constant and pressing presence of death and the fear of it, the boys learn the ironic truth that knowing your prison is thought-created does not "set you free". There is no freedom from the determinist engineers of this fear except in death.

Satan reinforces this lesson by the most powerful and appalling method possible: he turns two of the boys into the determiners not only of their friend's death but of the fates of countless other villagers as well. And just as the victims are given no choice in their changed life-schemes, Satan, with characteristic cunning, keeps the boys ignorant of the full consequences of their decisions made "In charity and pity". This teaches them the unavoidability of cause and effect determinism for creatures who cannot possibly exercise free choice if they have no knowledge of the outcome of their actions. When Mrs Bauman blames herself for her son's death, which in truth was organised by Satan, Seppi and Theodor, the Satan-schooled Theodor says: "It shows how foolish people are when they blame themselves for anything they have done" (656).

Once again the inconsistent creator/destroyer has changed his tune from one of blaming humans for their cowardice and cruelty, their risible, petty vanities, their lying, deceitful, evil natures, and the insanity of their thought-devised, determinist forces. But lies and deceit, intrigue, insanity and death are a hallmark of all Eseldorf's determinist forces and the Mysterious Stranger is as much a manifestation of these qualities as the duality of his nature is replicated in the race he so despises. This is symbolised by his melting into Wilhelm's body to speak in Father Peter's defence. The immortal likewise possesses Father Adolf's body in the original manuscript to shift suspicion of witchcraft from Marget's household to the priest. This take-over of other people's speech underlines not only the lies of appearance which we are deceived into perceiving as truth but also the hijacking of our free will by such lies.

And just as Satan upbraids humanity's social and religious forces for stifling free will and free speech, he puts a silencer on the boys' tongues to prevent them from exposing the truth of his identity. And the truth is that humanity really is to the angel "as the red spider is to the elephant" (644) because as he reveals: "I myself have no existence; I am...[a] creature of your imagination" (678). Humanity, as he has demonstrated and as he has stated, creates its own gods, its own devils, and its own sins and guilt. It is "the maker" of its own "death to freedom" determinist insanities. But Satan has illustrated that individuals are born into a collective society in which beliefs are pre-existent and therefore pre-determined. Even if a person could think independent thoughts, social and religious mores prohibit their free expression unless the whole of society sees as the individual does. And since society is trained to fear the freeing powers of its own creative imagination it is doomed to remain "a prisoner

for life". Theodor's qualifying use of the word "life" suggests escape and freedom lie in its extinction, and Satan verifies this by his own dissolution.

CONCLUSION

At the close of *The Mysterious Stranger* Satan repeatedly stresses Theodor's alienation from society by telling him he is "alone in shoreless space...in limitless solitudes without friend or comrade forever...a useless...homeless thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities!" (678-9). Like Hank and Huck before him Theodor symbolises the individual pitted against the artificial yet powerful cultural controls that isolate people and render them "homeless". Their "useless" thoughts signify their powerlessness to resist the dehumanising process consequent to being locked into "limitless solitudes" by prejudice, superstition and conformity to society's demanded behaviour patterns.

Huck's, Hank's and Theodor's "wanderings" in search of illusory freedom conclude that there is no exit from this "shoreless space" apart from the soul's temporary escapes into "the empty eternities" of sleep, dreams and insanity. And the only real freedom from alienating social systems is the dissolution into the ultimate determiner, death. As Huck said of the dead Emmeline Grangerford, "I reckoned...she was having a better time in the graveyard" (160).

NOTE

(1) A Note on *The Mysterious Stranger* Text.

The Mysterious Stranger was first published in 1916, but, until independent studies of the manuscripts were carried out in the late 1960's, it was not widely known that the novel's title was taken from the only work Twain ever intended it for: *Number 44: The Mysterious Stranger*. Twain wrote two other versions of the story and his title for the one published as *The Mysterious Stranger*, and discussed in this thesis, was *The Chronicle of Young Satan*. However, the work is still largely referred to as *The Mysterious Stranger* so that title has been retained to avoid confusion.

The title was not all that the editors Albert Paine and Frederick Duneka borrowed from *Number 44*. They also took its conclusion and, without revealing this to anyone, cobbled it onto *The Chronicle* manuscript from which they cut over a quarter of the text. As well, Paine and Duneka added the character of the astrologer and, to avoid offending Catholic readers, re-assigned to him the worst personality traits of Father Adolf. Most critics seem to agree that despite the liberties the editors took with Twain's text, they gave it a unity and coherence which work admirably toward the borrowed ending. Even so, there are passages deleted from the original which are relevant to this thesis; references to these are indicated in brackets with the initials of the original title *The Chronicle of Young Satan*.

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