

Introduction

MARK TWAIN'S *The Mysterious Stranger, A Romance*, as published in 1916 and reprinted since that date, is an editorial fraud perpetrated by Twain's official biographer and literary executor, Albert Bigelow Paine, and Frederick A. Duneka of Harper & Brothers publishing company. When I first read the three manuscript versions of the narrative in the Mark Twain Papers, like other scholars who had seen them, I found this dismaying conclusion to be inescapable. John S. Tuckey first demonstrated the fact in 1963 in an admirable monograph in which he dated the composition of the manuscripts;¹ this publication of the texts themselves offers additional proof. Thus, half a century after a spurious version was delivered to an unsuspecting public in the form of a children's Christmas gift book, the manuscripts are presented here for the first time as they came from their author's hand.

Paine was able to publish the "final complete work"—he said in 1923—because he turned up its essential last chapter in a great batch of unfinished stories and fragments several years after Clemens died in 1910.² On the basis of incomplete evidence and wrong

¹ *MTSatan*.

² "Introduction," *DE*, XXVII, ix-x.

dating of manuscripts, Paine's successor as literary editor, Bernard DeVoto, argued that in completing *The Mysterious Stranger*, Mark Twain "came back from the edge of insanity, and found as much peace as any man may find in his last years, and brought his talent into fruition and made it whole again."³ Two generations of readers have found the published tale as moving as DeVoto did. Although a very few readers and critics, notably Frederick A. G. Cowper and Edwin S. Fussell,⁴ have been troubled by inconsistencies, especially in the final chapter, most have agreed that the melancholy fable, Twain's last important fiction, formed a kind of *Nunc Dimittis*.

The truth is that Mark Twain attempted at least four versions of the story, which survive in three manuscripts. *The Mysterious Stranger* represents, partially, the first manuscript in order of composition rather than the last, as DeVoto thought. None of the three is a finished work, although Twain did draft a "Conclusion of the book" for the third manuscript with the intent—never fulfilled—of completing this last version. Further, it is now clear that Paine, aided by Duneka, cut and bowdlerized the first manuscript heavily. He borrowed the character of the astrologer from the third manuscript and attributed to the new figure the grosser acts and speeches of a priest. Then he grafted the final chapter of the third manuscript to the broken-off first manuscript version by cutting half a

³ MTW, p. 130.

⁴ After suggesting that the generalized source for *The Mysterious Stranger* was chapter 20, "L'Hermite," of Voltaire's *Zadig*, and that Goethe's *Faust* might have contributed picturesque events, Cowper wrote in a footnote: "When he was over seventy, Mark Twain was going over with Paine a number of incomplete manuscripts. They found three forms of *The Mysterious Stranger* and agreed that one could easily be made ready for publication. Seemingly nothing was done to complete it. Twain died in 1910 and the story was not published until 1916. It is evidently not a finished work." His analysis appears in "The Hermit Story, as Used by Voltaire and Mark Twain," *In Honor of the Ninetieth Birthday of Charles Frederick Johnson*, ed. Odell Shepard and Arthur Adams (Hartford, 1928), p. 333. Fussell perceived a constant conflict in the published story between the author's "emotional reactions" and "his theoretical formulations,"—a conflict partially inherent in the manuscript on which the posthumous edition is based, it may be noted, and partially caused by Paine's editorial tampering ("The Structural Problem of *The Mysterious Stranger*," *Studies in Philology*, XLIX [January 1952], 103).

chapter, composing a paragraph of bridgework, and altering characters' names. Speaking of his great discovery among the confusion of papers, Paine said, "Happily, it was the ending of the story in its first form."⁵ Although Paine's loyalty to Mark Twain was great and his rich accumulation of data about Mark Twain's life in *Mark Twain: A Biography* will always be valuable, two facts must be recorded here. He altered the manuscript of the book in a fashion that almost certainly would have enraged Clemens, and he concealed his tampering and his grafting-on of the last chapter, presumably to create the illusion that Twain had completed the story, but never published it. One bit of evidence proves this conclusively: in the all-important final chapter, on the manuscript the names "August" and "44," which Twain had given characters in the last version, are canceled, and "Theodor" and "Satan," characters in the first version, are substituted in Paine's hand.

A case can be made for Paine. When he and Duneka lifted the magician from the third manuscript, developed this figure into the astrologer, and used him as a kind of scapegoat, they thought they were acting to sustain and add to Mark Twain's reputation. They cut passages that they believed would offend Catholics, Presbyterians, and others for the same reason, and in cutting they did eliminate burlesque passages that clog the story. Moreover, as the experience of thousands of readers attests, the last chapter, although it was written for another version, does fit this version remarkably well. Certain "dream-marks" *do* suggest a dream-conclusion. But the major and inescapable charge in the indictment of Paine as editor of *The Mysterious Stranger* stands—he secretly tried to fill Mark Twain's shoes, and he tampered with the faith of Mark Twain's readers.

It follows that the serial text in *Harper's Monthly Magazine* (May through November 1916) and the text of the book (published in late October) possess no authority in the preparation of this edition. The text of the first edition remains chiefly an exhibition of the self-confident taste of the editor and his associate,

⁵ "Introduction," DE, XXVII, x.

Duneka—and, it seems likely, of their desire to get out another book by “Mark Twain.” One depressing aspect of their misrepresentational editorial work is that they commissioned N. C. Wyeth, a well-known illustrator of children’s books, to illustrate their altered text, and they let the designer place a fine color engraving of that nonentity, the “borrowed” astrologer, on the front cover.

The Order of the Manuscripts

Three of Twain’s holograph manuscripts in the Mark Twain Papers at the University of California in Berkeley provide the copy-text of this edition. Typescripts of the first and third manuscripts, with a few authorial corrections, possess subsidiary authority. Mark Twain’s titles for each, in the order of composition, were “The Chronicle of Young Satan,” “Schoolhouse Hill,” and “No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger.” His manuscript working-notes for the three versions, a long notebook entry about “little Satan, jr.,” and a single discarded page of manuscript surviving from revision are included entire in appendixes. Explanatory notes follow.* The Textual Apparatus describes the texts, sets forth the editorial principles observed, lists the recovered cancellations, and gives all editorial choices or emendations. Here, as elsewhere in the University of California Press edition of *The Mark Twain Papers*, the intention is to set forth all the evidence for the making of the text.

The present dating of these works follows closely the conclusions of Tuckey, who in *Mark Twain and Little Satan* made a thorough examination not only of the manuscripts but of the whole body of documents in the Mark Twain Papers from 1897 through 1908, comparing papers, inks, and handwriting for dating clues and making skilled use of internal evidence as well.⁶ Other literary evidence to be cited supports Tuckey’s dating at every point.

Four versions of the narrative are to be distinguished in the three manuscripts:

Version A. The first may be called the “St. Petersburg Fragment” (Tuckey’s “Pre-Eseldorf” pages). It consists of nineteen

⁶ *MTSatan*, pp. 14–15.

* The reference here is to the original, clothbound edition (University of California Press, 1969).

manuscript pages preserved from a version of the story which was set in St. Petersburg. They were written after Mark Twain's arrival in Vienna in late September 1897 and were revised and worked into the early part of Version B. A number of canceled references to St. Petersburg identify the original setting. For black walnuts (which are Missouri trees) Twain later substituted chestnuts, for dollars he later substituted ducats, and for the village bank he wrote in the name of Solomon Isaacs, the moneylender. He substituted Nikolaus for Huck, Theodor for George (Tom in the notes), Father Peter for Mr. Black, Seppi for Pole, and Wilhelm Meidling for Tom Andrews "of good Kentucky stock." References that placed the story in the 1840's of the author's boyhood were deleted. The action includes Satan's lecture on the Moral Sense, Mr. Black's finding of the dollars, and the stir this discovery makes in the village.

Version B. "The Chronicle of Young Satan" ("Eseldorf," as DeVoto referred to it) is Mark Twain's own title for a story of some 423 manuscript pages which breaks off in mid-chapter in the court of an Indian rajah, where Satan is competing with the court magician. The main setting is Eseldorf, an Austrian village, in 1702; the action begins in May. The chief characters are the narrator Theodor Fischer and his youthful companions Seppi Wohlmeyer and Nikolaus Baumann; Father Peter and Father Adolf, the good and evil priests; Marget, the niece of Father Peter, and Ursula, their servant; Wilhelm Meidling, Marget's suitor; Lisa Brandt and her mother. Finally there is the stranger, known to the villagers as Philip Traum, although at home he is called Satan, after his uncle.

Mark Twain wrote "Chronicle" in three periods between November 1897 and September 1900, not long before he returned to the United States from Europe, free from his "long nightmare" of debt. In the first period from November 1897 through January 1898 in Vienna, Twain reworked the "St. Petersburg Fragment" into a plot sequence which develops the character of Father Adolf and then tells of the boys' first encounter with Satan, Father Peter's trial on the charge of stealing Father Adolf's gold, and Father

Peter's vindication.⁷ Twain concluded in the following months, however, that he had resolved the conflict between the priests too rapidly, and apparently he decided that for Satan to drive Father Peter into a state of "happy insanity" at the very moment when the old man was proved innocent would provide the true ending he was seeking. So, returning to his manuscript between May and October 1899, Twain put aside the trial scene and developed further episodes, mixing into them Socratic dialogues on the workings of the Moral Sense.⁸ Theodor recalls the story of the girls burned as witches because of fleabite "signs" and tells how Gottfried Narr's grandmother had suffered the same fate in their village.⁹ The village is forced to choose between charging Father Adolf with witchcraft and suffering an Interdict. Fuchs and Meidling suffer pangs of jealousy because Lilly Fischer and Marget become infatuated with Satan and his knowledge and creative skills. This spurt of sustained composition ended approximately with Twain's summary passage early in chapter 6:

What a lot of dismal haps had befallen the village, and certainly Satan seemed to be the father of the whole of them: Father Peter in prison . . . Marget's household shunned . . . Father Adolf acquiring a frightful and odious reputation . . . my parents worried . . . Joseph crushed . . . Wilhelm's heart broken . . . Marget gone silly, and our Lilly following after; the whole village prodded and pestered into a pathetic delirium about non-existent witches . . . the whole wide wreck and desolation . . . the work of Satan's enthusiastic diligence and morbid passion for business.

Twain wrote the remaining half of "Chronicle" from June through August 1900, in London and at nearby Dollis Hill. His hatred of cruelty (which would lead him to begin a book about

⁷ In the present text, the sequence runs through chapters 1 and 2, the opening of chapter 3, and part of chapter 10. See *MTSatan*, pp. 38-39.

⁸ These episodes, written in London and in Sanna, Sweden, constitute chapters 3 through 5 of the present text.

⁹ The reference to Narr's grandmother, who "cured bad headaches by kneading the person's head and neck with her fingers," places the writing of this passage some time after July 1899. See Explanatory Notes.

lynchings in the United States) continued to manifest itself in passages that showed the burning of Frau Brandt at the stake for blasphemy, the punishment of the gamekeepers, Theodor's presence at the pressing to death of a gentlewoman in Scotland, and the Eseldorf mob's stoning and hanging of the "born lady."

Satan's freedom in time and space and his godlike powers also make possible two new strands of action: he changes the lives of Nick and Lisa to bring on their drowning, and he refers to future—that is, contemporary—events. In the spring and summer of 1900, Clemens was increasingly angered by the role of the European powers in the Boxer Rebellion; and, despite his admiration for the British and their institutions, he became increasingly committed to the cause of the Boer Republics. Satan refers sardonically to both situations in chapters 6 and 8.

Nearly all the episodes thus far lead to the deferred episode wherein Father Peter is exonerated and goes mad, the conclusion toward which Twain presumably had been working. But the pressure of world events and Twain's sense that he probably would not publish this book in his lifetime carried him on. King Humbert the Good of Italy was assassinated by an anarchist at Monza on 29 July 1900 and died excommunicated. Pope Leo XIII subsequently forbade priests to recite a "tender prayer" composed by Queen Margherita that already had been widely repeated in Italy and the Catholic world. Twain must almost at once have seized upon this as "proof" of the doctrine of papal infallibility.¹⁰ His version of the event probably inspired the famous generalization on the power of laughter—and the failure of the human race to make use of its one great weapon. Then Twain added a parable on the price the British might have to pay for their tenure in India; and the Indian setting inspired him to begin another "adventure" of Satan and Theodor in the court of a rajah. At this point the manuscript ends.

Version C. "Schoolhouse Hill," or the Hannibal version, a fragment of 16,000 words, is first adumbrated in Mark Twain's notebook in November 1898. His entry begins:

¹⁰ *MTSatan*, pp. 49–50.

Story of little Satan, jr, who came to (Petersburg (Hannibal)) went to school, was popular and greatly liked by (Huck and Tom) who knew his secret. The others were jealous, and the girls didn't like him because he smelt of brimstone. *This* is the Admirable Crichton He was always doing miracles—his pals knew they were miracles, the(y) others thought them mysteries. He is a good little devil; but swears, and breaks the Sabbath. By and by he is converted, and becomes a Methodist. and quits miracling. . . . As he does no more miracles, even his pals(s) fall away and disbelieve in him. When his fortunes and his miseries are at the worst, his papa arrives in state in a glory of hellfire and attended by a multitude of old-fashioned and showy fiends—and *then* everybody is at the boy-devil's feet at once and want to curry favor.

Little Satan, Jr., is also to perform tricks at jugglery shows, to try to win Mississippi raftsmen to Christ, and to take Tom and Huck to stay with him over Sunday in hell.¹¹ The complete entry, with Mark Twain's working notes, shows that for the moment he had put the trial sequence of "Chronicle" aside and was making a fresh start in a mood of comedy. Whereas "Chronicle" is the first-person narrative of young Fischer, the six chapters of November and December 1898 are told by an omniscient narrator. Apparently, it was to be both an essay in the correction of ideas and a comedy set in the world of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, whose boy-hero would like to reform and save it.

The miraculous boy, now renamed 44, appears one winter morning in the St. Petersburg school and performs marvels by reading books at a glance and learning languages in minutes. With Tom and Huck on his side, he fights and puts down the school bully. The Hotchkiss family take him into their home, where he feeds and talks to the savage family cat. And, after saving Crazy Meadows and others from a blinding blizzard, he appears miraculously at a séance. Here the manuscript ends.

In the rest of the story, Twain's notes suggest that he intended to

¹¹ Notebook 32, TS p. 50. MT's holograph manuscript of this and all other notebooks cited are in MTP. The entry is printed with Mark Twain's working-notes in Appendix B of this volume. Passages enclosed in angle brackets are canceled in the original.

picture once more some of the life of his own Hannibal boyhood as a background for 44's tricks and miracles and reforms. But he also planned to introduce two serious actions. Forty-four was to fall in love with "Hellfire Hotchkiss" and to discover how tame, how "purely intellectual," was the happiness of hell compared to this mortal love. He was also to form an Anti-Moral-Sense Sunday-school and to print his own catechism with the aid of "slathers of little red . . . devils" specially brought up from hell. ("If Satan is around, and so much more intelligent and powerful than God, why doesn't He write a Bible?" Twain wrote in his notebook in June 1898).¹²

Why Mark Twain let this story lapse after a moderately promising beginning when he had dozens of ideas for continuing it is problematical. Perhaps certain inherent contradictions within the character of 44 and in his projected actions proved too great for Twain to resolve. Apparently he wanted to make his stranger both a boy and an angel, both a companion to Tom and Huck and a Prometheus-figure who was to enlighten the citizens of St. Petersburg concerning the damnable Moral Sense. The strain of this double purpose, only a little evident in "Chronicle," appears more clearly here.

Version D. "No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger," or "Print Shop" version, is a story of 530 manuscript pages, set like "Chronicle" in Austria, but in 1490, not long after the invention of printing. Late in 1902 Mark Twain altered the first chapter of his "Chronicle" manuscript to fit this new setting; but, intending to revise further, he left the linkages to his new version loose and imperfect. Father Adolf and Father Peter, for example, who are important in "Chronicle," play only minor roles in the new plot, and Marget and Wilhelm Meidling never reappear. Between November 1902 and October 1903, while in Florence for his wife's health, Twain wrote chapters 2 through 7 or 8, which represent the trials of No. 44 as a printer's devil in a "mouldering" castle. Most of the printers abuse him, but Katrina, the cook, and Heinrich Stein, the master, openly

¹² Notebook 32, TS p. 25.

support him, and August Feldner, the young narrator, secretly sympathizes with him. These chapters reach their climax when 44 masters the printing trade in a few hours, and, just as a major printing job is nearing completion, the compositors call a strike against the master.

Twain completed the next sequence, from chapters 8 or 9 through 25, in the first six months of 1904. In this stretch of narrative, 44 saves Stein from ruin with the help of the wandering jour printer Doangivadam and Katrina and August. He completes the Bible-printing contract by creating invisible Duplicates of the printing force (shades of Colonel Sellers as a scientist!), creates havoc in the castle by incarnating the Duplicates, and immolates himself before the entire group. In this fashion, the print-shop action comes to an end. Except for the parable of human suffering embodied in the plight of Johann Brinker and his family, Twain's new plot complications tend to be either fantastic or feeble. Forty-Four plays tricks on Balthasar Hoffman, the magician, and on Father Adolf, and he explains the difference in the human psyche between the Workaday-Self and the Dream-Self. By the time August Feldner/Martin von Giesbach falls in love with Marget Regen/Elisabeth von Arnim and grows jealous of Emil Schwarz, his Dream-Self's embodiment, Mark Twain has turned the idea of double personality into the triad of Waking-Self, Dream-Self, and Immortal Spirit and has even endowed Schwarz with some of the powers of 44. All these developments take place in something like a dramatic vacuum.

When Twain returned to the story in June and July 1905 in Dublin, New Hampshire, he evidently saw that his grip on the plot had weakened, for he destroyed some of the most recent pages and "Burned the rest (30,000 words) of the book this morning. Too diffusive"—that is, a block of the story following chapter 19. He managed to make his new matter (chapters 26 through 32) considerably livelier than his love story, although it is still "diffusive" and disjointed. Forty-Four transforms Marget's maid into a cat, plays Mister Bones in a Christy minstrel show, simultaneously attacks Mary Baker Eddy and Imperial Russia, undergoes a second apotheosis, and releases Emil Schwarz from the bonds of flesh. He

satirizes a sentimental poem and turns time backward. Somehow, in the midst of this farrago of burlesque and satire, Twain created a minstrel-show vignette memorable for its humor and sentiment, and composed Schwarz's eloquent, serious, and startling plea for release from the bonds of "this odious flesh."

The plea of Schwarz to his alter ego for freedom also prefigures the "empty and soundless world" in which August is left after 44's historical pageant of skeletons has passed by. This episode, placed here as chapter 33, was written last, in 1908, and Twain may have intended it as an alternate ending to the whole. The "Conclusion of the book," however, is his own notation at the head of the dream-ending—the six manuscript pages written in the spring of 1904 and placed in this text as chapter 34. It seems more likely therefore that he wrote the pageant chapter as part of an effort—never fulfilled—to link the body of his story to the "Conclusion of the book."

Characters

Twice Mark Twain tried to place his fable of man's meanness and misery in "St. Petersburg" and the years of his boyhood, and twice he found it necessary to move it to Austria and a remoter era. Though he tended to regard time and place as unimportant and easily changeable, his effort to reuse the "Matter of Hannibal," as Henry Nash Smith has called it,¹³ suggests that he may have been drawing characters from memory. The likelihood grows as one reads "Villagers of 1840-3," a manuscript of late 1897 which was written shortly before Twain composed the "St. Petersburg Fragment," the first sequence of "Chronicle," and "Schoolhouse Hill." For "Villagers" is an impressive set of thumbnail biographies of persons in Hannibal that suggests total recall, modified by black humor. Most of the names, as Dixon Wecter and Walter Blair have shown, were names of real persons, though a few, including the Clemenses', were disguised.¹⁴

In the "St. Petersburg Fragment," for example, Tom Sawyer and

¹³ "Mark Twain's Images of Hannibal: From St. Petersburg to Eseldorf," *Texas Studies in English*, XXXVII (1958), 3-23.

¹⁴ "Villagers of 1840-3" is included in *HH&T*. See also *SCH*, p. 128.

Huck Finn were the chums of "Pole" before the author made the names appropriately Austrian—Theodor, Nikolaus, and Seppi. Very likely the name "Pole" was derived from Napoleon Pavey, the son of a Hannibal hotel-keeper. In "Villagers" he "went to St. Louis. Gone six months—came back a striker, with wages, the envy of everybody." He "became second engineer. . . . Got drowned." Sam Clemens had lodged with a Pavey family as a young jour printer in St. Louis from 1852 to 1853.¹⁵ Similarly, "Mr. Black" (Father Peter in "Chronicle" and "No. 44") is inspired by Orion Clemens, the good-hearted, dreamy, older brother who vacillated for a lifetime in his religions, jobs, and moods and who had no unkindness in him. Clemens for many years helped support Orion and his wife Molly; they aroused in him both sympathy and acute exasperation. In "Schoolhouse Hill" Oliver Hotchkiss, a more complex figure based on Orion, is still sympathetic but often comic. Twain identified him in a marginal note thus: "O had mental perception but no mental proportion."¹⁶

Contemporary events in Vienna as well as family and Hannibal history provided Mark Twain with ideas for characters in "Chronicle." Deputies Wohlmeyer and Fuchs in the Austrian parliament during the autumn of 1897 furnished only their names. Father Adolf, however, originally Father Lueger in the manuscript, derived distinct and unpleasant traits from Twain's repeated impressions of Dr. Karl Lueger, Burgomeister of Vienna and leader of the anti-Semitic Christian Socialists.¹⁷ The priest's bull voice and gross physique come to mind in descriptions of Deputy Schönerer—"vast and muscular, and endowed with the most powerful voice in the Reichsrath."¹⁸

"Schoolhouse Hill" is closely related to "Villagers" and to Hannibal people other than Orion and Pamela Clemens. Tom and Sid Sawyer, Huck Finn, and Becky Thatcher reappear at a second remove from the humorist's boyhood friends. But the Scottish

¹⁵ SLC to Frank E. Burrough, 15 December 1900 (TS in MTP).

¹⁶ Orion Clemens had died on 11 December 1897.

¹⁷ *MTSatan*, pp. 17-23.

¹⁸ "Stirring Times in Austria," *Hadleyburg*, p. 323.

schoolmaster, Archibald Ferguson, is a semifictional representation of Sam Clemens's teacher, William O. Cross,¹⁹ and the school bully, Henry Bascom, owes a substantial debt to the son of a Hannibal slave-trader, Henry Beebe, who "kept that envied slaughter-house" and to whom "Joe Craig sold . . . cats to kill in it."²⁰ Perhaps the most vital of all the characters is the elderly slave-woman Aunt Rachel, who reports so tellingly the offstage feats of 44. Though Twain may have been drawing on his memories of Aunt Hanner and Uncle Dan'l, his uncle John Quarles's slaves, who had served him more than once as models, he probably was thinking of Aunty Cord, a Negro servant in the Crane household at Elmira, whom he described to Howells in 1877 as "cook, aged 62, turbaned, very tall, very broad, very fine every way."²¹ It was Aunty Cord, in the character of Aunt Rachel, whose "A True Story, Repeated Word for Word as I Heard It" Twain sent to the *Atlantic* in 1874. Of the "Villagers" characters in "Schoolhouse Hill," one more remains whose past life was to affect the plot. Crazy Meadows, whom 44 rescues from the blizzard, is identified in Twain's working notes as "Crazy Fields [who] lost wife, then child; because wife nursed sm. [small] pox patient who had no friend." Further notes linking "C. F." to Dr. James Radcliff of Hannibal, whose three sons went mad, indicate that Twain intended to present Fields's life history as a paradigm and a commentary on the Moral Sense.²²

Mark Twain carried Father Peter and Father Adolf over from "Chronicle" to "No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger," but assigned them minor roles. Father Peter's niece, renamed Gretchen, quickly disappears. The magician, in contrast to his predecessor Merlin in *A Connecticut Yankee*, serves merely as a cog in the plot. And most of the compositors in Stein's print shop are present simply to

¹⁹ Appendix B, *SCH*, pp. 131–133; *HH&T*, Appendix A.

²⁰ *Mark Twain's Letters to Will Bowen*, ed. Theodore Hornberger (Austin, 1941), p. 18. Even Dr. Wheelwright, "the stately old First-Family Virginian and imposing Thinker of the village," is probably a sketch from life of the "aged Virginian physician Dr. [Humphrey] Peake" as Wecter notes in *SCH*, p. 67; see also *HH&T*, Appendix A.

²¹ *MTHL*, p. 195.

²² Notebook 35, TS p. 12 (10 May 1902); MT's working-notes, in Appendix B; "Villagers," *HH&T*.

torment 44 and August Feldner. Four important characters, however, are new: Katrina, Doangivadam, the narrator August Feldner, and Johann Brinker. Each possesses some vitality. All four are related to Clemens's youth or to his early experience as a printer's devil. Twain may have drawn Katrina (who is "swarthy") from his memory of the Negro cook who fed him and two other apprentices in the printing-shop kitchen of Joseph Ament, editor of the *Hannibal Missouri Courier*.²³ Unquestionably he modeled Doangivadam upon Wales McCormick, a fellow apprentice in Ament's shop. As Clemens remembered McCormick, he was a giant of seventeen or eighteen, a "reckless, hilarious, admirable creature," high-spirited and irreverent without limit—and therefore well suited to the fictional role of defending his abused juniors.²⁴ For the most part, August Feldner, the young narrator, is as fearful as his champion is bold, and he comes to life most poignantly when he confesses that the tough compositors fastened upon him a nickname so humiliating he could only hint at its meaning by an abbreviation: "B.-A." he says in the text; "bottle-a'd" Twain writes in a marginal note; "bottle-assed" is the word in printer's jargon. It is a fair guess that August speaks for the youthful Clemens when he says that this "small thing" shamed him "as few things have done since." Brinker's years as a blind and paralyzed deaf-mute—with the suffering they bring for his mother and sisters—follow his performance of a generous deed. His is the fate which Nikolaus Baumann in "Chronicle" escaped by his early death, and it is similar to that of Tom Nash of Hannibal.

Satan, alias "No. 44," is the primary character in all three manuscripts and the most complex in his acts, his satirical bent, the "fatal music of his voice," his Socratic way of speaking, and his origins.

²³ Probably in the summer of 1848 according to Wecter, *SCH*, p. 202. The fictional Moses Haas, "never good for 600 on a fat take," sounds like the compositor-editor of Clemens's boyhood, "full of blessed egotism and placid self-importance," who would "smouch all the poetry" on the day before publication and "leave the rest to 'jeff' for the solid takes," described in "The Compositor," *Hartford Courant*, 20 January 1886.

²⁴ Autobiographical Dictation, 29 March 1906, TS in MTP; MTA, II, 276-282; *SCH*, pp. 204-205, where Dixon Wecter notes the similarity.

To adapt Whitman's figure, he forms one side of a Square Deific.²⁵ In Mark Twain's theology, he is the truth-speaker momentarily banished from heaven, the preacher Koheleth, the new Prometheus who is "courteous to whores and niggers."²⁶ He thus usurps certain functions of Christ the consoler who, says the head clerk in "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven," has saved as many worlds as there are gates into heaven—"none can count them." The Father of the Old Testament and Missouri Presbyterianism forms the second side of the square—severe, jealous, and vengeful. He is distinct from but sometimes shades into the eternal Creator, the third side, of whom Clemens thought in astronomical terms—a supernal Power not so much indifferent to men as wholly unaware of them. Forty-Four is speaking for this last, greatest deity when he tells Theodor that "Man is to me as the red spider is to the elephant."

Of the Quaternity, it is Satan the rebel, nonetheless, who figures most often in Twain's writings and who exhibits the richest development.²⁷ Young Clemens's first impression of the devil, recorded sixty years later, was so strong that, he says, he tried at age seven to write Satan's biography—only to be frustrated by the paucity of facts and his Sunday-school teacher's shocked resistance.²⁸ If this yarn seems something less than petrified fact, one must credit Clemens's claim that he had read the entire Bible by the time he entered his teens, and take seriously his remembered fear during a thunderstorm that the devil was coming to claim the soul of the original Injun Joe. Even more significant is his recollection of how he and others conspired to abuse the character of Satan in his mother's presence to see how she would react. As they had ex-

²⁵ I am expanding the trinity defined by Coleman O. Parsons in his "The Devil and Samuel Clemens," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, XXIII (Autumn 1947), 595-600. Much the fullest summary and discussion of influences in literature and life before Tuckey is Parsons's "The Background of *The Mysterious Stranger*," *American Literature*, XXXII (March 1960), 55-74. Behind Philip Traum, Parsons shows the figures of Pausanias in Adolf Wilbrandt's *The Master of Palmyra*, Goethe's Mephistopheles, the angel Jesrad in Voltaire's *Zadig*, and of course the boy Savior of the Apocryphal New Testament.

²⁶ See Appendix B.

²⁷ Satan's genealogy in Mark Twain's thought has been brilliantly outlined by Coleman Parsons; see note 25 above.

²⁸ "Is Shakespeare Dead?," *What Is Man?*, pp. 307-310.

pected, Jane Clemens was "beguiled into saying a soft word for the devil himself." She could not remain silent or passive when "hurt or shame [was] inflicted upon some defenseless person or creature"—not even the arch-sinner.²⁹ Years later, when as a cub pilot on the Mississippi he was reading Shakespeare and Milton, Clemens wrote in a letter to Orion, "What is the grandest thing in 'Paradise Lost'—the Arch-Fiend's terrible energy!"³⁰

Then in 1867, shortly before he sailed for the Holy Land, the journalist Clemens encountered in a New York library another memorable figure in the apocryphal books of the New Testament. For his *Alta California* readers he quoted: "Jesus and other boys play together and make clay figures of animals. Jesus causes them to walk; also clay birds which he causes to fly, and eat and drink. The children's parents are alarmed and take Jesus for a sorcerer. . . ." The resemblance of the boy Jesus to Philip Traum is unmistakable.³¹

Satan in the Bible and *Paradise Lost* and the youthful Jesus of the Apocrypha are thus essential components of the matrix in which Mark Twain shaped his mysterious stranger. Thirty years later, the figure began to take form. The process began, it seems, with Clemens's bankruptcy, the death of Susy, and Jean's first epileptic seizures, and it continued during Olivia Clemens's decline into invalidism. In 1895 Twain recorded a dominant mood and a ruling idea in this notebook entry: "It is the strangest thing, that the world is not full of books that scoff at the pitiful world, and the useless universe and the vile and contemptible human race—books that laugh at the whole paltry scheme and deride it. . . . Why don't I write such a book? Because I have a family. There is no other reason."³² That this question relates to the Mysterious

²⁹ HH&T, pp. 44–45.

³⁰ MTB, p. 146; Parsons, "The Devil and Samuel Clemens," p. 593.

³¹ MTTB, pp. 252–253. This key source was first noted by Gladys Bellamy in *Mark Twain as a Literary Artist* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1950), pp. 352–353. See I. *Infancy*, Chapter XV, 1–7 and Chapter XIX, 3 and II. *Infancy*, Chapter I in *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 2d ed. (London: William Hone, 1820).

³² Notebook 28, TS pp. 34–35 (10 November 1895). Clemens had long since learned the art of scoffing satire under the pseudonym Mark Twain, and also under the convention of a foreigner's writing letters home on his first visit to a

Stranger tales as well as to Twain's "gospel," *What Is Man?* (which he would begin in 1898), is hinted at in a cryptic entry made a month later, "What uncle Satan said."³³ By the summer of 1897 Twain was writing "Letters to Satan" inviting His Grace to "make a pleasure tour through the world," assuring Him, "You have many friends in the world; more than you think," particularly Cecil Rhodes and the European Concert.³⁴ Then comes the notation late in June, "Satan's boyhood—going around with other boys and surprising them with devilish miracles," and in these words the "St. Petersburg Fragment" and "The Chronicle of Young Satan" were born.³⁵

During the next seven years while Mark Twain worked intermittently on the three related manuscripts,³⁶ he also composed a stream of notes and shorter pieces, finished and incomplete, published and unpublished, all concerning some diabolic or angelic stranger. Some time before the Clemens family left the Hotel Metropole in Vienna in the spring of 1898, Twain wrote "Conversations with Satan," a fragment in which the devil appears, dressed like an Anglican bishop, with the features of "Don Quixotte," Richelieu, or Sir Henry Irving playing Mephistopheles, to discuss cigars with Twain.³⁷ Later in 1898 Twain commented on or created three cognate characters. The first is the silent, august, black-clad figure of Death in Adolf Wilbrandt's "remarkable play," *The Master of Palmyra*, which Mark Twain saw at the Burg Theatre and praised warmly to American readers in the essay "About Play-Acting."³⁸

new country—for example, Ah Song Hi's letters to Ching-Foo in Twain's early sketch, "Goldsmith's Friend Abroad Again" (*The Curious Republic of Gondour* [New York, 1919], pp. 75–109). Satan's "Letters from the Earth" is only one of several series that show Mark Twain an expert in the convention.

³³ Notebook 28, TS p. 51 (8 December 1895). One of the things that Satan said, "with discontent," was, "The trouble with you Chicago people is that you think you are the best people in hell—whereas you are merely the most numerous" (MTN, p. 324). The entry was made about 1 January 1897.

³⁴ *Europe*, pp. 211–220.

³⁵ Notebook 32a, TS p. 37; *MTSatan*, p. 31.

³⁶ Tuckey lists the dates of composition for all the manuscripts in a very useful table; *MTSatan*, p. 76.

³⁷ The manuscript, Paine 255 in MTP, has Mark Twain's room at the Metropole for its setting.

³⁸ *Hadleyburg*, pp. 235–251.

The second is the big, mysterious "passing stranger" of "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg," whom Richards in his delirium links to Satan and the "hell-brand."³⁹ The third is Twain's notebook hero-in-embryo, a descendant of Lilith, whose family escutcheon is a plain, clean slate, since he has no knowledge of good and evil, whereas the descendants of the Eve-branch bear the design of an apple core with the motto, "Alas!"⁴⁰

Twain's opening allegation in "Concerning the Jews," published in September 1899, is that he has no prejudices of race, color, caste, or creed—not even a prejudice against Satan, "on account of his not having a fair show." A crucial passage follows in which he strongly defends Captain Dreyfus, announces that he will undertake Satan's rehabilitation himself—if he can get at the facts and find an unpolitic publisher—and concludes that "A person who has for untold centuries maintained the imposing position of spiritual head of four-fifths of the human race, and political head of the whole of it, must be granted the possession of executive abilities of the loftiest order."⁴¹ This brilliant ironic passage, which may refer to "Chronicle" in the phrase about Satan's rehabilitation, ends most of Twain's peripheral attempts to sketch Satan or to use him for secondary argumentative ends. From the autumn of 1899 on, Twain concentrated his attention upon full, imaginative portraits of Satan and of 44 in the Mysterious Stranger stories.⁴²

³⁹ *Hadleyburg*, pp. 2, 3, 67, 81. Twain offered the manuscript to a publisher on 2 November 1898 (Notebook 32, TS p. 48).

⁴⁰ Notebook 32, TS pp. 39–40 (September 1898). This descendant of Lilith may be the germ for Orrin Lloyd Godkin, one more disparager of the human race, in "Indiantown" (WWD, pp. 163–166).

⁴¹ *Literary Essays*, "Definitive Edition" (New York, 1923), XXII, 264, 265.

⁴² "The Stupendous Procession," a "fearful document" indeed as Paine called it, presents a pageant of warring nations, slaughter, and corpses presided over by a "Frivolous Stranger." The piece was intended for New Year's Day, 1902; MTB, pp. 1149–1150 prints a few paragraphs; MS is in MTP (DV345). "Sold to Satan" conjures up the devil, glowing with radium and clothed in a skin of polonium (*Europe*, pp. 326–338, written 1903–1904). "That Day in Eden (Passage from Satan's Diary)" sadly explicates man's acquisition of the Moral Sense as the saddest result of the Fall (*Europe*, pp. 339–346). The offensive stranger in "The Dervish and the Offensive Stranger" uneasily explains the downfall of the American Indians, the Filipinos, the Boers, and the Chinese (*Europe*, pp. 310–314). By 1905, the "aged stranger" of "The War Prayer" takes the place of a minister in a cathedral to pray for the total annihilation of the enemy

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

Acts and Concepts

Just as one may glimpse in Clemens's own experience the origins of many characters in "Chronicle," "Schoolhouse Hill," and "No. 44," one may also find in the records of his life adumbrations of acts and concepts in the three stories. Four of these may be termed, by a kind of bastard shorthand, protracted death by water, mob cowardice and cruelty, the Creation minimized, and quarrels and warfare. By developing such motifs, with varying degrees of success, Mark Twain was suggesting that men and women have no need of any hell "except the one we live in from the cradle to the grave."⁴⁸ The cause, he argued, was that the race was damned irrevocably, either by an indifferent-because-unconscious God or by the race's own defective nature—he never could decide which. Three other of Twain's concepts may be identified as the powers of laughter, music, and thought; the hierarchy of selves within the self; and the consoling view that life is a dream. These three qualify or explain the first four.

As I have suggested, Nikolaus Baumann's futile attempt in "Chronicle" to save Lisa Brandt from drowning anticipates Johann Brinker's rescue of Father Adolf from the icy river in "No. 44." Both events bring disease, paralysis, or crushing disaster to the rescuers and their families. Both stem from memories of the writer's boyhood. In 1906 Clemens recalled how he and Tom Nash had been skating on the Mississippi one frigid winter night when the

in the name of the "spirit of love" (*Europe*, pp. 394–398). As late as 1909 Mark Twain assumed the mask of Satan once again in the eleven "Letters from the Earth"—published in *Letters from the Earth*, ed. Bernard DeVoto (New York, 1962), pp. 3–55.

⁴⁸ Notebook 30, TS p. 53 (post 19 June 1896).

ice broke up; how he reached the shore safely, whereas the perspiring Nash boy had fallen into the icy water near shore; and how Tom had contracted scarlet fever as a result of the drenching, which left him stone-deaf and with impaired speech. He also remembered in 1898:

I knew a man who when in his second year in college jumped into an ice-cold stream when he was overheated and rescued a priest of God from drowning; suffered partial paralysis, lay in his bed 38 years, unable to speak, unable to feed himself, unable to write; not even the small charity of quenching his mind was doled out to him—he lay and thought and brooded and mourned and begged for death 38 years.⁴⁴

Similarly, in 1902, Twain made a note about Crazy Fields, whom he had presented briefly in "Schoolhouse Hill" as Crazy Meadows. Crazy Fields was associated by Clemens with old Dr. Radcliff in "Villagers" who declared on his deathbed: "Don't cry; rejoice—shout. This is the only valuable day I have known in my 65 years." Two sons of Dr. Radcliff of Hannibal had been born mad, and the third had gone mad after a career as a fine physician.⁴⁵ Late notes for "No. 44" add five more examples of blasted lives to these parables of good men's suffering.⁴⁶ Clemens's reaction to all these events, real and imaginary, was angry and rebellious. But the countermood of bitter resignation in Mark Twain is never very far away: as Theodor Fischer muses after the death of Lisa and Nikolaus, "Many a time, since then, I have heard people pray to God to spare the life of sick persons, but I have never done it."

Mob cowardice and mob cruelty, often abetted by the orthodox, figure again and again in the *Mysterious Stranger* manuscripts. Eleven girls of Eseldorf are burned together as witches because of "witch signs," or fleabites, on their bodies. The grandmother of Gottfried Narr is burned as a witch because she relieves pain by massage. Lisa Brandt's mother burns at the stake for blasphemy

⁴⁴ MTN, p. 363.

⁴⁵ "Villagers" in *HH&T*.

⁴⁶ See Appendix B.

after her daughter drowns. A Scottish mob will stone and crush a gentlewoman to death, Satan informs Theodor out of his foreknowledge, because she is suspected of having Catholic sympathies.⁴⁷ Johann Brinker's mother, also suspected of witchcraft, is condemned to the stake by Father Adolf, whose life Brinker had saved at the cost of his own paralysis. Frau Brinker's decision to die in the fire rather than endure ostracism and starvation is moving and fitting in its context, no less so for the author's having found the germ of the episode in Cotton Mather's *The Wonders of the Invisible World*.⁴⁸ Other particular sources for some of these witchcraft episodes may yet be found in the histories Clemens read and reread; but no reader of "Goldsmith's Friend Abroad Again," which reports boys and policemen stoning and beating the Chinese in San Francisco, or of *The Prince and the Pauper* or *Huckleberry Finn* or *A Connecticut Yankee* or "The United States of Lyncherdom" would be surprised to find scenes of mob violence in these manuscripts.

Seeking to account for the special impact of these scenes, one remembers two scarifying events in Sam Clemens's early life. He once gave matches to a drunken tramp in the Hannibal jail so that he might smoke. During the night, before the jailer could unlock the door, he had to watch the man at the bars burning to death. He

⁴⁷ Several parallels exist in W. E. H. Lecky's account of how a Scottish mob stoned to death a certain Jane Corphar in 1704–1705. Accused of witchcraft, she had been released by the magistrates; but the minister of the town incited the mob to beat her in the presence of her two daughters. Eventually the mob had forced "a man with a sledge and horse to drive several times over her head" (*A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* [New York, 1892], II, 331–333). Mark Twain owned Lecky's *History*.

⁴⁸ Mather included in his book the report of a woman's confession at the stake, in Scotland in 1649:

As I must make answer to the God of Heaven, I declare I am as free from Witchcraft as any Child, but being accused by a Malicious Woman, and Imprisoned under the Name of a Witch, my Husband and Friends disowned me, and seeing no hope of ever being in Credit again, through the Temptation of the Devil, I made that Confession to destroy my own Life, being weary of it, and chusing rather to Die than to Live (Mr. Sinclair's *Invisible World*, cited in *The Wonders of the Invisible World* [London, 1862], p. 278; original edition, Boston, 1693).

Coleman Parsons in "The Background of *The Mysterious Stranger*" cites Sir Walter Scott's *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830), letter IX.

also sat helplessly by in St. Louis while his beloved younger brother, Henry, slowly died of burns from a steamboat explosion.⁴⁹

The most striking action in all three tales is Philip Traum's creating and destroying a race of Lilliputians, apparently for the sole purpose of amusing the three boys of the "Chronicle" story—the "Creation minimized," as I have called it. If, as John Hay once wrote Clemens, memory and imagination are the great gifts in a writer, they are nowhere more evident than in this demonstration by Satan. Here, in 1897 Mark Twain developed a *donnée* that he had noted only briefly thirty years earlier, when for his California newspaper readers he quoted from the Apocrypha: the youthful Savior in those books, like Philip Traum, often crippled or killed those who opposed his will.⁵⁰ So, from the apocryphal anecdote and his memory of *Gulliver's Travels* Twain developed his own version of the Creation, the Fall, and the Day of Doom, in which the unfallen angel and nephew of Satan acts the part of God. The Fall, it must be noted, is due in Twain's "Bible" to a quarrel between two workmen, who grapple like Cain and Abel in "a life and death struggle" until Satan crushes them with his fingers. As for the Judgment Day, it arrives by Satan's whim. Annoyed by the lamentation of the fingerling mourners around the two bodies, Satan mashes them into the ground, and then wipes out the whole race by fire and earthquake for the boys' entertainment. "As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;/They kill us for their sport," cries Gloucester in *King Lear*. The analogy is close.

As for the motif-in-action of quarreling and warfare, in all three versions of the story a sequence of personal fights and national battles substantiates Twain's contention that if the human race is not already damned, it ought to be. In 1897 Pudd'nhead Wilson observed that "The universal brotherhood of man is our most precious possession, what there is of it."⁵¹ In 1899 Clemens said that he had proposed to the Emperor Franz Joseph "a plan to

⁴⁹ See also Parsons's citations in his "The Background of *The Mysterious Stranger*," pp. 65–68, particularly to chapter eight of Louisa May Alcott's *Little Men*.

⁵⁰ MTTB, pp. 252–253.

⁵¹ *Following the Equator* (Hartford, 1897), p. 256, chapter 27.

exterminate the human race by withdrawing the oxygen from the air for a period of two minutes.”⁵² Behind these bits of mockery, one so sad and one so savage, is an old animus reawakened by contemporary wars. This same animus underlies many sardonic references in “Chronicle” and “No. 44” to Christian nations warring against other Christian nations and overwhelming pagan countries by conquest.

To illustrate: in “Chronicle,” Theodor promises to tell, by and by, why Satan “chose China for this excursion.” In 1897 Twain was defending the Emperor of China, and in 1899 he clearly sided with the “cautious Chinaman” as against “the Western missionary.”⁵³ By 1900 he was writing his friend the Reverend Joseph H. Twichell, “It is all China, now, and my sympathies are with the Chinese. They have,” he said, “been villainously dealt with by the sceptred thieves of Europe, and I hope they will drive all the foreigners out and keep them out for good.”⁵⁴ Quite apparently Twain intended to make some exemplary use of the Chinese Boxers’ struggle against the Powers, East and West. Satan develops the war-motif fully by showing the boys a theatrical or visionary “history of the progress of the human race” from Cain and Abel down through the sixty wars fought during the reign of Queen Victoria. Twain’s last cinematic frames show England fighting what he called elsewhere a “sordid & criminal war”⁵⁵ against the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State in South Africa, and Europe “swallowing China”—proof, he explained, that “all the competent killers are Christian.” Even Satan and Theodor’s adventure with the “foreigner in white linen and sun-helmet,” who cuffs the native juggler and thereby destroys the many-fruited tree and brings a fearful penalty upon himself, is a parable and prediction about British imperialism in India.⁵⁶ Finally, toward the end of the

⁵² *MTB*, pp. 1079, 1235.

⁵³ *MTL*, p. 683.

⁵⁴ *MTL*, p. 699.

⁵⁵ *MTHL*, p. 715.

⁵⁶ Compare the tree-growing juggler in Ceylon and Dan Beard’s picture, “The White Man’s World,” which shows the white man in the sun-helmet and illustrates Twain’s assertion in the text, “The world was made for man—the white man” (*Following the Equator*, p. 339 and pp. 186–187).

"No. 44" manuscript, Mark Twain attempts simultaneously to satirize Mary Baker Eddy and Czarist Russia. Mrs. Eddy had published a telegram instructing her followers in the "Christian Silence dialect" to "cease from praying for peace and take hold of something nearer our size," as Twain put it. He was bitterly disappointed when the peace treaty between Russia and Japan was concluded at Portsmouth in August 1905: as his recent article "The Czar's Soliloquy" showed, he had hoped that Japan would win and the Czar be overthrown.

The author's frame of mind, so often reflected in these war scenes and "stupendous processions," may be summed up in a statement that he made in the summer of 1900: "The time is grave. The future is blacker than has been any future which any person now living has tried to peer into."⁵⁷ Small wonder, then, that Philip Traum should recount an up-to-date history of private and public murder in "Chronicle" or that 44 should drag in by the heels Mary Baker Eddy's proclamation about the Russo-Japanese War.⁵⁸

Bitter and sad as the three "Mysterious Stranger" manuscripts may be, they are not without affirmations: humor of all shades, the love of music, and the power of imagination. Perhaps it was the

⁵⁷ "The Missionary in World-Politics," with letter to C. Moberly Bell, editor of the *London Times*; unpublished MS in MTP.

⁵⁸ Why did Clemens fail to refer to the Spanish-American war in the *Mysterious Stranger* stories? Presumably the answer lies in the fact that the "Chronicle" and "Schoolhouse Hill" were dropped before he returned to the United States in October 1900, and that "No. 44" scarcely touches on war as a theme. In the fall of 1900 Twain became convinced that the liberation of Cuba, which he applauded, was degenerating into imperialist war in the Philippines, and that even British civilization could not justify the "single little shameful war" in South Africa against the Boer Republics. He wrote four widely read and reprinted attacks upon American missionaries and the European powers in China, upon Chamberlain, McKinley and his administration, and upon the Czar of Russia. They are "A Salutation-Speech from the Nineteenth Century to the Twentieth" in the *New York Herald* of 30 December 1900; "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" in the *North American Review* of February 1901; "To My Missionary Critics" in the same magazine for April 1901; and "The Czar's Soliloquy" in the *Review* for March 1905. He joined the New England Anti-Imperialist League in 1900, and wrote much more, published and unpublished, on disarmament and the possibility that new weapons might make war obsolete. For a discussion of his anti-war writing from 1898 to 1902, see William M. Gibson, "Mark Twain and Howells, Anti-Imperialists," *New England Quarterly*, XX (December 1947), 435-470.

contrast of bitter and affirmative strains that wrung from Livy Clemens, after she had heard her husband read the opening chapters of "Chronicle," the tribute, "It is perfectly horrible—and perfectly beautiful!"⁸⁹ The kind and quality of the humor vary greatly, as one might expect in Twain's unfinished work. When Philip Traum composes a narrative poem and a musical setting for it at the piano, he seems amateurish and boastful, whereas the antic dancing and singing presented by 44's Mister Bones mix humor and pathos effectively, perhaps because of Twain's lifelong delight in the Negro minstrel show. In the same way, 44's long talks with Mary Florence Fortescue Baker G. Nightingale (the chambermaid whom he has turned into a cat) represent burlesque spun out thin. But Aunt Rachel's amazed report of how 44 pacified and fed and talked to the fierce Hotchkiss cat, Sanctified Sal, is dramatic and finely humorous in the style of Uncle Remus or of Twain's own jumping-frog and blue-jay yarns. For all the slapstick Twain's avatars indulge in, they are the agents of a master humorist who is especially skilled in "black humor." I have already cited an instance in which Traum ridicules the doctrine of papal infallibility—a section Paine deleted from the published book. In a well known passage, Traum cries:

Power, Money, Persuasion, Supplication, Persecution—these can lift at a colossal humbug,—push it a little—crowd it a little—weaken it a little, century by century: but only Laughter can blow it to rags and atoms at a blast. Against the assault of Laughter nothing can stand.

But Twain's illustrations never reached print. His account of how Robert Burns broke the back of the Presbyterian church and set Scotland free was to prove laughter's power. The general failure of readers to detect "the funniness of Papal Infallibility" would demonstrate how rarely mankind used that power.

Humor and music as catharsis and satire as correction are omnipresent in Mark Twain's theory and writings. The citizens of Hadleyburg, for example, restore their town's reputation for hon-

⁸⁹ *MTHL*, p. 699.

esty by laughing down their "incorruptible" leading citizens, whom another mysterious stranger has exposed. But in these stories and other late writings Twain could never quite decide whether laughter was divine or only human. Pudd'nhead Wilson in 1897 insisted: "Everything human is pathetic. The secret source of Humor itself is not joy but sorrow. There is no humor in heaven."⁶⁰ Five years later Clemens observed, "We grant God the possession of all the qualities of mind except the one that keeps the others healthy; that watches over their dignity; that focuses their vision true—humor."⁶¹ Of all the paradoxes in the three Mysterious Stranger stories, none is more paradoxical, or more sanative, than Twain's demonstrations of the power of laughter—was it *merely* human?—in the empty spaces of the universe.

Mark Twain put the concepts and actions thus far distinguished to real dramatic use in the plots of the Mysterious Stranger manuscripts. Only in "No. 44," the last, longest, and most diffuse version, did he develop a concept that resisted incorporation into the plot: that is, his speculative distinctions between Waking-Self, Dream-Self, and Immortal Soul and the resulting rather farcical incarnation of Emil Schwarz (Feldner's doppelgänger) and the printer's crew of Duplicates or Dream-Selves. How Twain arrived at this psychology is therefore as much a biographical question as it is a matter of literary genetics. Although Clemens in maturity was a champion of eighteenth-century rationalism, he grew up at a time when spiritualism and faith-cures roused widespread and lively interest, and he had long collected instances of "mental telegraphy," a power with which he endowed 44. In 1886 he and Howells collaborated in writing an absurd play, *Colonel Sellers as a Scientist*, in which one of Sellers's great schemes is to materialize the dead in order to build up a great supply of free labor (free, since the "materializees" neither slept nor ate).⁶²

By the early 1890's Clemens was taking an increasing interest in

⁶⁰ *Following the Equator*, p. 119, chapter 10.

⁶¹ Notebook 35 (1902), TS pp. 39–40.

⁶² Walter J. Meserve, ed., *The Complete Plays of W. D. Howells* (New York, 1960).

mind-cures, which he associated with hypnotism, the work of J. H. Charcot's pupils, and the reports of the Society for Psychical Research.⁶³ Characteristically, his interest took two forms in alternation: a rational and satiric view and a speculative and psychological view. The first is exemplified earlier in the King's remark in *Huckleberry Finn*, "Layin' on o' hands is my best holt—for cancer and paralysis, and sich things"; Twain develops it amusingly at length in "Schoolhouse Hill" when Oliver Hotchkiss holds a séance. The second appears in Twain's sketch of 1876, "The Facts Concerning the Recent Carnival of Crime in Connecticut," a brilliant narration of the conflict between "Twain" and his conscience or superego, which ends by his murdering his conscience and enjoying the same exhilarating, amoral freedom that Schwarz enjoys in "No. 44."

The germ for Mark Twain's analysis of multiple selves in "No. 44," as Tuckey has observed, is a long notebook entry made in January 1897. In it Twain states that he has found "a new 'solution' of a haunting mystery." He had made a promising beginning himself in the "Carnival of Crime"; then Robert Louis Stevenson had come closer with Jekyll and Hyde; but, Twain continued, upon learning of a distinction which the French had been drawing between the waking person and the person under hypnosis, he had arrived at a new concept of duality. "My dream-self, is merely my ordinary body and mind freed from clogging flesh and become a spiritualized body and mind and with the ordinary powers of both enlarged in all particulars a little, and in some particulars prodigiously." The Dream-Self, he believes, is free in time and space, and "When my physical body dies my dream body will doubtless continue its excursion and activities without change, forever."⁶⁴

No more than the image of the Dream-Self "as insubstantial as a dim blue smoke" finds its way into "Chronicle," in Philip Traum's lovely trick of thinning out like a soap bubble and vanishing. Many of the other distinctions and powers reappear directly and with embellishments, however, in the various incarnated Dream-Selves of "No. 44." Two of these distinctions are neither fantastic nor

⁶³ *MTSatan*, pp. 26–28; *MTHL*, p. 659.

⁶⁴ *MTN*, pp. 348–351.

farical. Schwarz pleads eloquently with August and then with Number 44: "Oh, free me from . . . these bonds of flesh . . . this loathsome sack of corruption in which my spirit is imprisoned, her white wings bruised and soiled—oh, be merciful and set her free!" For the moment, Twain is able to take his idea of duality seriously and to lend Schwarz fictional life. The second distinction—that the dream body will continue on its excursion forever—foreshadows the "Conclusion of the book" and the prospect of August, as a "homeless Thought, wandering forlorn among the empty eternities!"

The "Conclusion of the book," which has so moved and challenged readers of *The Mysterious Stranger* since 1916, argues the extreme Platonic view that the final and only reality resides in the individual soul, all else being illusion—or that "life is a dream." (It is a view Emerson entertained only to reject it in *Nature*.) Although it is a key that fits nothing in the plot of the "Schoolhouse Hill" fragment, it does fit much of the action and imagery in "Chronicle" and nearly everything in the second half of "No. 44," the manuscript which it was written to conclude. The sources and analogues for it in Clemens's earlier writings, his reading, and his experience, enmeshed with his creation of Satan figures and his speculations about dreams, are extraordinarily various and complex. Here it may suffice to suggest only the chief sources of Twain's solipsistic idea.

Mark Twain began the "St. Petersburg Fragment" and "Chronicle" about a year after the death of his beloved daughter Susy, and he finished his "Conclusion of the book," "No. 44," in the summer of his wife Olivia Clemens's death. On the first anniversary of Susy's death he wrote one friend, "I suppose it is still with you as with us—the calamity not a reality, but a dream, which will pass, —*must* pass."⁶⁵ To another, he said six years later about Olivia's illness, "For a year and a half life, for this family, has been merely a bad dream."⁶⁶ Still later, after Olivia had died, he told Susan Crane of a lovely and blessed dream of Livy who leaned her head against

⁶⁵ SLC to Wayne MacVeagh, 22 August 1897, in MTP.

⁶⁶ SLC to T. B. Aldrich, 14 February 1904 (Harvard).

his while he repeated to her, "I was perfectly sure it was a dream, I never would have believed it wasn't." ⁶⁷ This persistent sense of reality-in-dreams permeates Twain's long analysis of Waking- and Dream-Selves in a notebook entry of January 1897, and gave rise in the same month to an idea for a "farce or sketch" of people who seem to have "slept *backward* 60 years." ⁶⁸ The dream motif began to carry over into his fiction, notably "My Platonic Sweetheart." This sketch of the summer of 1898 tells of a recurrent dream of idyllic meetings between the narrator and his charming girl, both timelessly young, in settings ranging from Missouri to India and ancient Athens—each dream like "Mohammed's seventy-year dream, which began when he knocked his glass over, and ended in time for him to catch it before the water was spilled." ⁶⁹ In many respects this sketch anticipates the love passages and the ending of "No. 44." Twain kept on trying variations based upon his dream donnée. He began three stories of family disaster, the first of them called "Which Was the Dream?," also in the summer of 1898. ⁷⁰ He conceived of "a drama in the form of a dream" ⁷¹ which he mentioned in a speech in 1900, and a year or two later he jotted down the idea, "divorce of the McWilliamses on account of his dream-wife and family." ⁷²

This welter of ideas in notes and fragments, this effort made over and over again to give form to the dream motif, began to come clear in the spring of 1904, not long before Twain either wrote or had firmly in mind his last chapter; it was in these months that he

⁶⁷ MTL, p. 777, 24 September 1905; MTN, p. 395, 24 September 1905.

⁶⁸ Notebook 31, TS pp. 41–43 (6 January 1897).

⁶⁹ DE, XXVII, 299.

⁷⁰ MTHL, pp. 675–678; MTW, pp. 118–120; and "Which Was the Dream?" in WWD.

⁷¹ New York Times, "The Drama," 7 July 1900.

⁷² Notebook 34 (1901), TS p. 21b. These notes and fragments are closely linked to Clemens's metaphor that the death of Susy had left the family helpless "derelicts" in an immense empty ocean. The metaphor recurs in letters to Francis H. Skrine, Twichell, and Howells. It becomes the setting of two manuscript fragments of the period, "The Enchanted Sea-Wilderness" (WWD, pp. 76–86) and "The Great Dark" (WWD, pp. 102–150). See SLC to Skrine, 19 January 1897, Roger Barrett Collection; to Twichell, 19 January 1897, MTL, p. 640; to Howells, 22 January 1898. MTHL, pp. 670–671.

probably wrote a note and he certainly wrote a letter couched in the language and imagery of the "Conclusion of the book." The note concerns "The intellectual & placid & sane-looking man whose foible is that life & God & the universe is a dream & he the only person in it—not a *person*, but a homeless & silly *thought* wandering forever in space."⁷³ The letter, dated 28 July, is in response to Twichell's question as to how life and the world had been looking to Clemens:

(A *part* of each day—or night) as they have been looking to me the past 7 years: as being NON-EXISTENT. That is, that there is *nothing*. That there is no God and no universe; that there is only empty space, and in it a lost and homeless and wandering and companionless and indestructible *Thought*. And that I am that thought. And God, and the Universe, and Time, and Life, and Death, and Joy and Sorrow and Pain only a grotesque and brutal *dream*, evolved from the frantic imagination of that insane Thought.

By this light, the absurdities that govern life and the universe lose their absurdity and become natural, and a thing to be expected. It reconciles everything, makes everything lucid and understandable: a God who has no morals, yet blandly sets Himself up as Head Sunday-school Superintendent of the Universe; Who has no idea of mercy, justice, or honesty, yet obtusely imagines Himself the inventor of those things; a human race that takes Him at His own valuation, without examining the statistics; thinks itself intelligent, yet hasn't any more evidence of it than had Jonathan Edwards in his wildest moments: a race which did not make itself nor its vicious nature, yet quaintly holds itself responsible for its acts.

But—taken as unrealities; taken as the drunken dream of an idiot Thought, drifting solitary and forlorn through the horizonless eternities of empty Space, these monstrous sillinesses become proper and acceptable, and lose their offensiveness.

To this point in his letter, Clemens seems almost to merge himself into the character of the "sane-looking man" with the foible, or of 44 revealing the truth to August. But, Clemens explains to his old friend, the idea has become a part of him for seven years, for in that

⁷³ See MT's working notes, Appendix B.

time he has been working on an unfinished story. He continues: "And so, a part of each day Livy is a dream, and has never existed. The rest of it she is real, and is gone. Then comes the ache and continues." He concludes: "How well she loved you and Harmony, as did I, and do I, also." ⁷⁴ Unquestionably Clemens endowed 44 with his own questionings and grievances and griefs.

It would be a mistake, however, to consider this letter unmixed autobiography. It is a moving document, written by Samuel Clemens, who suffers; it is equally a letter by Mark Twain, the long-committed artist who creates. Only a year before his death Clemens expressed elation at his discovery of a new literary form: writing untrammelled letters to his intimate friends like Howells or H. H. Rogers or Twichell and then not sending them. He told Howells, "When you are on fire with theology . . . you'll write it to Twichell, because"—in imagination—"it would make him writhe & squirm & break the furniture." ⁷⁵ So, it appears, a literary impulse as well as private sorrow underlies the crucial letter to Twichell. It would also be a mistake to think that Twain had newly discovered the sense of cosmic loneliness which the "Conclusion" brilliantly imparts. More than thirty years earlier he had written, "I felt like the Last Man, neglected of the judgment, and left pinnacled in mid-heaven, a forgotten relic of a vanished world"; ⁷⁶ this was his sensation as he stood above a sea of clouds on the crater edge at Haleakala, on Maui.

While Mark Twain wrestled with his final chapter—the only final chapter in the three manuscripts—he was attempting to cope with dream experiences and a haunting sense of isolation that had for long lain deep in his inner life. As Coleman Parsons first suggested, in completing the chapter Mark Twain evidently found powerful catalytic aid in *The Tempest*.⁷⁷ Schwarz's plea to the

⁷⁴ Dated Lee, Massachusetts, 28 July 1904 (MS at Yale University, TS in MTP).

⁷⁵ MTHL, p. 845.

⁷⁶ *Roughing It* (Hartford, 1872), p. 550, chapter 76.

⁷⁷ "The Background of *The Mysterious Stranger*," pp. 71–72. Clemens knew Shakespeare's plays well. On the Mississippi he heard George Ealer declaim Shakespeare, and read the plays in his spare time, and after he was a writer, he

"magician" for freedom from the bonds of "this odious flesh" recalls Ariel's eloquent pleas to Prospero for his release. Moreover, Traum and 44 share with Ariel the ability to enchant with music, the globe-girdling swiftness, the antic and mercurial moods (untroubled by any Moral Sense), and the power of melting "into air, into thin air," as none of their progenitors do—not Satan nor the child Jesus nor Pan nor the Admirable Crichton nor Twain's own Superintendent of Dreams. Prospero says:

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

Prospero's tone of great authority and reassurance as he speaks to the troubled young Ferdinand has its counterpart in the "gush of

burlesqued Shakespeare often. He cites Shakespeare as an example of supreme genius in "Chronicle," chapter 2. As early as 1873 Mark Twain quoted part of the dream-passage from *The Tempest* in "A Memorable Midnight Experience"; Howells located the passage for him in 1876; Mark Twain alluded to it again in 1889 in *A Connecticut Yankee*; and he quoted it at length in 1909 in the essay "Is Shakespeare Dead?" (*Europe*, p. 5; see *Yankee* [New York, 1889], p. 205, chapter XVII; *MTHL*, p. 127; *What Is Man?*, p. 362). Tuckey corroborates Twain's knowing *The Tempest*. After completing all but chapter 33 of "No. 44" (which was an afterthought), Clemens told his daughter Clara that he had broken his bow and burned his arrows—very probably his own version of Prospero's speech, "I'll break my staff, . . . / And deeper than did ever plummet sound / I'll drown my book" (*MTSatan*, p. 69). Finally, some part of the tone and imagery of 44's last speech to August may also derive from Belial's speech in Book II of *Paradise Lost*:

To be no more; sad cure; for who would loose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through Eternity. (146-148)

I am indebted to my former student Mrs. Barbara Fass for this brief but striking parallel.

thankfulness" which 44 releases in August and the "blessed and hopeful feeling" that his words will prove true. Satan's voice, like Prospero's, has "that fatal music" in it. Above all, what 44 reveals to August about the character of human life in the cosmos echoes and reechoes from Prospero's conclusion: life is as insubstantial as a dream.

If the similarities are strong, differences and difficulties (apart from *The Tempest's* superiority) remain in Mark Twain's "Conclusion of the book." The almost unrelievedly dark tenor of his letter to Twichell is only half lightened in the "Conclusion" by blessed and hopeful feelings. Although 44's parting speech is credible insofar as one accepts his authority as a character and his premises in the argument, what is one to make of his urging August to "Dream other dreams, and better!"? Does the command to dream signify a command to create that "so potent art" of which Prospero and Shakespeare were masters? It is desirable here to repeat that Clemens valued the creative life above all other lives; it is a vulgar error to suppose he did not. The difficulty is that 44's injunction, whether in this or another meaning, cannot easily be assigned to a God hostile to men in an unmanageable or nonexistent universe. Of course, Clemens might have revised his manuscripts and this draft of a chapter, but as the chapter stands, the paradox remains: mold your life nearer to the heart's desire; life is at best a dream and at worst a nightmare from which you cannot escape.

The "Mysterious Strangers"

Almost universally, readers have accepted *The Mysterious Stranger, A Romance* as a finished, posthumously published work, and students of Twain have likewise credited Paine's story that his discovery of the last chapter enabled him to publish the complete tale. Only when John Tuckey published *Mark Twain and Little Satan* in 1963 were these readers and students disillusioned—although recently at least one critic, James M. Cox, has insisted that this posthumous edition of Mark Twain's last work "is not going to be superseded by any future text" and that it "is the closest thing to

Mark Twain's intention that we shall ever have." ⁷⁸ But what Mark Twain actually wrote inevitably supersedes the Paine-Duneka patchwork text, and Mark Twain's "intention"—if by that we mean his effort to achieve a total effect in a completed work—was never fulfilled.

This is not to deny that the cut, cobbled-together, partially falsified text has the power to move and to satisfy esthetically despite its flaws. Perhaps it will last among some readers in preference to the unfinished fragmentary tales here published. But I think it possible that a writer or editor who is more sympathetic to Twain's divided mind and creative dilemma in his late life may, in the future, produce a better version than that pieced together by Paine and Duneka. Perhaps such a writer will imagine a new, wholly satisfying ending to "The Chronicle of Young Satan," or perhaps he will be able to condense, rework, and strengthen "No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger" and end it with Twain's last chapter in its proper place. To carry on, flesh out, and conclude "Schoolhouse Hill" would probably be even more difficult, and yet scarcely less rewarding. In any event, such a writer will begin with the texts that Mark Twain wrote in the form in which he left them, acknowledging openly when he selects or modifies or creates or concludes. Finally it must be said that these incomplete texts are Mark Twain's own fragments, large and small, with their own value and interest; and if he produced no finished narrative frieze, he did succeed in creating a multitude of various, memorable figures in the half-sculptured stones.

⁷⁸ *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 270, 272.