

A “BANISHED ADAM”:
MARK TWAIN AND THE FATHER OF THE HUMAN RACE

A thesis
presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

by
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May 2008

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Tom Quirk, who has served as my thesis advisor and has provided valuable support and feedback throughout this project, as well as throughout my graduate career. Additionally, I want to thank Professor Pat Okker and Professor Steve Watts, who served on my thesis committee and offered useful and encouraging comments.

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Abbreviations

Because I will be referring to several works and anthologies of Twain's works frequently, I have chosen to abbreviate their titles within my in-text citations. Full publication information can be found on the works cited page. The abbreviations are as follows:

BMT.....*The Bible According to Mark Twain*, Baetzhold and McCullough, eds.

MTDHR.....*Mark Twain on the Damned Human Race*, Smith, ed.

MTFM....."Mark Twain and the Fall of Man," Brodwin

MTL.....*Mark Twain's Library: A Reconstruction*, Gribben

WIM.....*What Is Man?*, Baender, ed

INTRODUCTION

While Mark Twain has long been viewed as irreligious, scholarship in recent years has underscored the fact that Christianity, the God of the Bible, and the Presbyterianism of his youth play an integral part in his work. In fact, the Bible is Twain's "most important literary source," as William Phipps says (5). Appearing with particular frequency in his work is the story of Adam and his Fall; Twain uses this story so often that Harold Bush claims Twain had a "near obsession with the biblical Adam" (206). Although Twain did not believe in the literal existence of Adam, the story of the Fall resonated deeply with him and appears again and again in his works. Part of this "obsession" may be due to his self-described "fascination about meddling with forbidden things" (qtd. in Ensor 41), but, at any rate, "it seems clear that he was fascinated by the beginnings of things," as Alison Ensor notes (30). At times, Twain uses Adam for merely comic effects, but in his in-depth treatments of the Fall, Twain uses Adam as a symbol for the entire human race, through which he can celebrate, lament, and rage about the human condition, which he saw as subject to a controlling determinism.

Twain's Adamic works have long been overlooked and underappreciated; these minor works of a major writer's last years have seemed a symptom of his failing artistic genius. However, these works deserve a second look; while, undoubtedly, they do not reach the artistic heights of Twain's greatest writing, in some ways they may be viewed as the culmination of his career. Twain struggled with religious and philosophical issues

both on the page and off throughout his life, attempting to make some sense of the world and man's place in it. Toward the end of his life especially, these themes merged with Twain's treatment of Adam, as Twain examined the nature of man and the place of man in the universe through an imaginative case study of the father of the race. As some of the last works of a great author and as works that encapsulate many of the intellectual and emotional themes Twain dealt with throughout his life, Twain's Adamic works demand closer attention.

In this study, I will examine Twain's Adam obsession through the lens of his religious and philosophical background. Because Adam can stand as a symbol of the type of faith which was threatened by the intellectual currents of the nineteenth century, Twain's rocky relationship with Christianity and its God provides an essential backdrop for this study. Furthermore, Adam, as the first man and, for centuries of Christian thinkers, the archetype of all to follow, provides a unique way to address the question "What is Man?"—a question Twain long struggled to answer. Because Adam was free from many of the societal influences that Twain saw as shaping human beings, he provided Twain with a simplified version of mankind, allowing him to work out his philosophical ideas in a simplified fictional form. To fully comprehend the implications of Twain's treatment of Adam, it is vital to examine the ways in which he attempted to answer the question "What is Man?" over the course of his life. Moreover, in order to adequately understand Twain's perspective on the figure of Adam and to grasp the significance of this figure for Twain, it is essential to thoroughly examine his religious background and his philosophical development. After setting the stage with a detailed examination of these subjects, I will progress to Twain's Adamic works and discuss the

ways in which Twain's religious and philosophical ideas play out in these stories, which tenderly, humorously, and even bitterly pay homage to our biblical first parents.

“I Have Never Seen an Atom of Proof...and yet—”:

Mark Twain’s Religious Development

Although, long before the end of his life, Twain was by no means an orthodox Christian, his Presbyterian upbringing seems to have had a long-lasting effect on his view of human nature and, thus, on his treatment of Adam’s Fall. Twain was never—or at least not for very long—a devout Christian, but religious questions haunted him throughout his life. While his later writings have led to a popular conception of Twain as a religious cynic, his relationship to Christianity was in reality much more complex than simple rejection.

This complex religious history began in his childhood. While still an infant, Twain was baptized, which he later claimed to “look upon...as conferring the rank of Brevet Presbyterian” (qtd. in Quirk 3). Twain first attended Sunday school “in a shabby little brick Methodist church...called the Old Ship of Zion,” but most of his family, excluding his father, soon became “abandoned Presbyterians,” in Twain’s words (Wecter 86).

Even as a child, however, Twain was not exactly orthodox. As Twain himself explained, “when only a ‘Sunday school scholar’...’I was greatly interested in the incident of Eve and the serpent, and thought Eve’s calmness was perfectly noble. I asked Mr. Barclay [his schoolteacher] if he had ever heard of another woman who, being

approached by a serpent, would not excuse herself and break for the nearest timber” (Brodwin MTFM 36). Not only did the boy Sam Clemens show inappropriate appreciation for Eve’s disobedience, but he also was already beginning to question the efficacy of faith. When still a schoolchild, Twain tested the effectiveness of prayer by praying as hard as he could that one of his schoolmates would share her gingerbread with him. Although he was initially impressed by the results—she did share her gingerbread with him that day—he soon found that the experiment was not repeatable, because, although he prayed and prayed for more gingerbread, in the future his classmate kept her gingerbread to herself. This led to a disconsolate Sam telling his mother, “I don’t believe in saying prayers any more, and I’m never going to do it again” (qtd. in Paine I: 40). While such an incident seems insufficient to destroy a child’s faith in and of itself, it was significant enough to him that he recounted it to his biographer years later; at any rate, it sets the stage for his later struggles to believe.

Sam Clemens’s childhood faith seems to have been more terrifying than comforting. The Presbyterianism of Hannibal seems to have placed great emphasis on the judgment of God, leaving “his sensitive conscience . . . impressed by the lurid imagery of hell-fire that reaches a mythological incandescence in *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*” (Andrews 67). This atmosphere of fear can only have been reinforced by the violence Clemens witnessed as a child. In one incident, Clemens and a friend witnessed a man’s death just as a storm was brewing. When the man was shot, Paine recounts, “the thunder-storm that had been gathering broke loose. The boys fled wildly, believing that Satan himself had arrived to claim the lost soul” (I: 47). This cannot have been comforting to a child with an imagination as large as Twain’s would prove to be.

This emphasis on God's judgment led the boy Twain to fear for his own soul.

Paine recounts,

In the fearsome darkness he would say his prayers, especially when a thunder-storm was coming, and vow to begin a better life in the morning. He detested Sunday-school...and once Orion... had threatened to drag him there by the collar; but as the thunder got louder Sam decided that he loved Sunday-school and would go the next Sunday without being invited (I: 49).

While this retelling is humorous, the humor conceals the terror Twain must have felt.

Surely this preoccupation with the fate of his soul influenced his later inability to free himself from religious doubt, despite his rejection of the faith of his childhood.

In this, Twain somewhat resembled his father, John Marshall Clemens, a freethinker who, Twain later reported, "'went to church—once; never again'" (qtd. in Wecter 86). Twain had a similarly unorthodox religious influence in the person of his uncle, John Quarles, who became a Unitarian. Whatever influence Twain's father and uncle may have had during his father's lifetime, his father's biggest influence on him may have come from the circumstances surrounding his death. John Clemens was in the process of running for the position of clerk of the Circuit Court when, after riding home from Palmyra, Missouri in inclement weather, he contracted pneumonia, from which he later died. Although John Clemens, as a rule, "did not attend church, or speak of religious matters, or participate in family religious exercises" (Andrews 67), he apparently was not certain of the safety of his irreligious views, considering that he underwent a deathbed conversion. Twain would later report, "The Presbyterian preacher had said, 'Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and that through his blood only you can be saved?' 'I do.' Then the preacher prayed over him and recommended him" (qtd. in Phipps 9). While Twain would later take up his father's freethinking mindset, he

would also inherit the kind of doubt that must have led to this uncharacteristic religious experience.

The circumstances of John Clemens's death may have also had a detrimental effect on Twain's view of his father. Although Kenneth Andrews claims that Twain's father "scrupulously observed a personal integrity that Mark took over intact," the elder Clemens's character may have been called into question by the circumstances of his death (Andrews 67). Harold Bush notes, "the deathbed conversion of an aging skeptic...compounds the perception that he turned out to be either a pathetic hypocrite, a man of no real conviction, or at best a man of great religious confusion" (31). John Clemens's motivation for confessing Christian faith on his deathbed can never be known, and neither can we know what effect this might have had on his son's view of him. However, in any circumstance, this is certainly open for the negative interpretations Bush provides. And this may not be the worst of it. Later in his life, Twain claimed to have watched an uncle's autopsy "'through the keyhole'" in 1846, but this is impossible, considering that "no uncle of his died that year" (Bush 30). However, his father did die in 1847, and we know from his brother Orion's autobiography that an autopsy was performed on their father. Orion's report was apparently not flattering toward his father, and William Dean Howells urged Twain to keep Orion from publishing this portion of his work. Although the circumstances surrounding this autopsy are mysterious,

Phillip Fanning has recently presented a reasonable hypothesis that may ultimately explain the chain of events. In short, his version of the events considers the possibility that Jane Clemens ordered an autopsy because she believed that her husband had contracted syphilis, most likely from a prostitute....The gist of Fanning's hypothesis is that the autopsy uncovered the fact that the father had indeed contracted syphilis, considered at the time a deadly plague that was in effect 'just punishment for having sinned' (Bush 30).

There is, of course, no way to verify the results of this autopsy or even to know for sure whether or not this is the autopsy Twain watched “through the keyhole”; however, the potential significance of this event demands our attention. Bush believes that this event “made Sam feel even more guilt over past sins and his need to reform” (32-33).

Whatever the reason, Paine does assure us that Twain did make his mother a promise to reform, “to be a faithful and industrious man, and upright, like his father” (I: 75).

Whether or not Twain at this point believed his father to be “upright” is a question we may never be able to answer, but we do know that his father’s death made quite an impact on an impressionable boy.

Twain’s mother was the religious backbone of the family. Pamela Boker links Jane Clemens’s religiosity with the premature death of her son Ben and claims, “Her actions undoubtedly were prompted by her fear that the Almighty had taken Ben as punishment for her sins, and that unless she reformed, her other children might be taken from her as well” (Boker 119). Be that as it may, Jane Clemens was known for her kind heart, and Bush believes that Twain’s description of his mother “is calling upon major features of the religious sensibilities and moral ethos of his time” (Bush 23). Paine reports that Jane Clemens’s “sense of pity was abnormal” and that although “she joined the Presbyterian Church, and her religion was of that clean-cut, strenuous kind which regards as necessary institutions hell and Satan... she had been known to express pity for the latter for being obliged to surround himself with such poor society” (I: 36). In this, too, we can see a reflection of Twain’s religious and moral sensibilities. His childhood fear of hell and God’s judgment appears to mirror that of his mother, and his sympathy with the oppressed seems also to be an inheritance from her. Even Jane Clemens’s “pity”

for Satan finds a place in Twain's later work, especially in texts like the *Mysterious Stranger* manuscripts and *Letters from Earth*.

Twain's Presbyterian upbringing seems to have instilled him with the sense of guilt that would haunt him throughout his life. As a "bad boy," Twain must have felt confused as to why he was spared while his brother Ben, a "good boy," died and may well have felt guilty that his brother received the punishment he felt he deserved (Boker 108). Boker explains, "Years after the untimely deaths of his sister and brothers, Twain expressed a tremendous complicitous guilt in his letters, journals, and fiction....Undoubtedly, what the young Sam was feeling was unatoned-for remorse for what he perceived as his own cruel acts toward his siblings while they were alive" (108). The cause of Twain's sense of guilt has long fascinated Twain scholars; Twain himself attributed it to his "trained Presbyterian conscience," at least in the case of the tramp who accidentally burned down the jail with himself inside, using matches Twain had given him (qtd. in Brodwin MTFM 9).

Van Wyck Brooks tried to explain Twain's sense of guilt by postulating, "It is an established fact, if I am not mistaken, that these morbid feelings of sin, which have no evident cause, are the result of having transgressed some inalienable life-demand peculiar to one's nature. It is as old as Milton that there are talents which are 'death to hide,' and I suggest that Mark Twain's 'talent' was just so hidden" (26). This highly speculative reasoning hardly seems like the most likely explanation, however. Speculating about whether or not Twain's true talent ever really reached the surface seems like a futile exercise, and the fact that Twain's excessive sense of guilt began in childhood would seem to indicate that its cause could not be his failure to make full use of his talents,

considering that a child has hardly had a chance to begin to use such talents. It seems much more likely that his sense of guilt is a result of his inability to grieve properly, as Boker postulates, or that it is the result of the type of religious training he received, as Twain himself thought.

When Twain left Hannibal as a young man, he was exposed to a variety of new ideas, which seemed to promise freedom from his childhood sense of guilt. Stanley Brodwin, for one, sees Twain as eagerly trying to free himself from the burden that his youthful religion seems to have imposed on him; Twain “consistently embraced any new thought that would help free himself from his youthful fundamentalist background,” Brodwin says (MTFM 18). One potentially freeing influence may have come in the person of a Scotsman named Mcfarlane that Twain befriended in Cincinnati during the winter of 1856-57, at least according to A.B. Paine (Paine I: 114), although Paul Baender has since called the existence of this man into question. Baender believes that Twain may have simply used this man as a mouthpiece for his own ideas in later life (“Alias Macfarlane” 192). This man supposedly believed in what Andrews calls “a pre-Darwinian mechanistic evolutionary theory” (67). What is more, Paine attributes to Macfarlane the ideas that “Life... had been developed in the course of ages...and that from this beginning development on an ascending scale had finally produced man” but that “the scheme had...failed....that man’s heart was the only bad one in the animal kingdom” (Paine I: 115). While Macfarlane’s influence is hard to prove, considering that his existence is in doubt, some have seen Macfarlane as paving the way for Twain’s later pessimistic philosophy.

Whether or not Twain actually knew someone named Macfarlane or was influenced by him, his move away from Hannibal's Calvinism was encouraged by his exposure to Tom Paine's *The Age of Reason*. Brodwin believes that reading Paine influenced Twain's move toward Deism: "Paine's central idea, that Bibles are man-made fables which actually denigrate God, reflects Mark Twain's own ideas. What is central to both of them is their rejection of anthropomorphism and orthodox Christian theology in favor of a more rational, scientifically oriented view" (MTFM 18-19). Indeed, Tom Paine's assessment of the Bible aligns closely with the one later espoused by Mark Twain. With regards to the story of Adam and Eve's Fall and Christ's redemption, Paine writes, "Putting aside everything that might excite laughter by its absurdity, or detestation by its profaneness, and confining ourselves merely to an examination of the parts, it is impossible to conceive a story more derogatory to the Almighty, more inconsistent with his wisdom, more contradictory to his power, than this story is" (13). Twain's idea that the "real" God could be nothing like the God of the Bible was doubtless either begun or reinforced by Paine's view that "Whenever we read the obscene stories...the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon than the word of God" (16). Indeed, Twain even imitates Paine's wording in his "God of the Bible vs. God of the Present Day" when he asserts that the God of the Bible is "irascible, vindictive, fierce" (*BMT* 317). In this Paine's influence is clear.

Furthermore, Tom Paine, like Twain, deals specifically with the story of Adam and Eve, which he calls "the whimsical account of the creation—the strange story of Eve—the snake and the apple," a story which he claims is "irreconcilable, not only to the

divine gift of reason...but to the knowledge that man gains of the power and wisdom of God by the aid of the sciences” (37). Furthermore, Paine claims, “Adam, if ever there were such a man, was created a Deist” (59). In this Paine’s speculation resembles Twain’s: neither will steadfastly assert the historicity of Adam, yet both repeatedly discuss the story of his Fall and even, as in this case, speculate on the nature of this first man. Bush asserts that Paine’s *Age of Reason* “Arguably...was of all books the one most definitive in forming the philosophy of the mature Mark Twain, although perhaps in an unconscious way that remains hard to document” (32); as these instances show, Paine seems to have had a direct influence on Twain’s later thought. While it may not be possible to document the progression of Twain’s thought with certainty or to trace Paine’s exact influence, it seems clear that Paine’s arguments made a strong impression on Twain and resurfaced in his later writings. While Cummings believes that “Mark Twain moved beyond Deism” as he embraced Darwinism, his later writings continue to reflect a Deistic belief in a God who created the world and then left it, demonstrating Paine’s continuing influence (63).

Yet, despite the influence of Macfarlane and Paine, Twain’s sense of guilt did not abandon him as he matured. When his brother Henry died as the result of a steamship explosion, Twain blamed himself, not only because he helped Henry land a job on the steamer but also because he pressured an inexperienced medical student to administer morphine, which Twain seemed to believe led to Henry’s death (A. B. Paine I: 142-43). Boker reports that “Sam...was apparently so distraught after the accident that his mother and sister feared he was losing his mind” (114). It is no wonder that Twain was, at least at some points, eager to leave behind the religion that he saw as enforcing on him his

overdeveloped sense of guilt; the wonder is, perhaps, that this religion maintained such a strong hold on his imagination and conscience despite his sometime efforts to leave it behind.

However, Twain did not always embrace his seeming inability to believe in the faith of his childhood. In 1867, after the *Quaker City* tour that resulted in *Innocents Abroad*, Twain longed for “the ignorance & confidingness that could enable a man to kneel at the Sepulchre & look at the rift in the rock, & the socket of the cross & the tomb of Adam & feel & know & never question that they were genuine,” as he wrote in his notebook (qtd in Brodwin, “Mark Twain’s Theology” 228). Thus, Twain’s religious views at this point are marked by a profound ambivalence, rather than a definite belief or unbelief. Twain seems to be drawn in two separate directions at once; he wants to be able to believe while at the same time he is repelled by some elements of Christianity and the God the Bible presents.

Twain’s relationship with Christianity is further complicated by his courtship of his future wife, Olivia Langdon. Having met her brother, who purportedly showed him a picture of Livy, on the *Quaker City* tour, Twain was supposedly infatuated with Livy before even having met her. After meeting her in person, Twain began the arduous task of convincing her religious family that he was worthy of her. It is impossible to know to what extent Twain’s flirtation with Christianity in this period was a genuine effort to believe and to what extent it was deceptive—deceiving, perhaps, not only Livy’s family, but also himself. At any rate, Twain’s letters in this period reveal a seeming reconciliation with Christianity, although, as Tom Quirk notes, “It was not the Christianity of his youth, but the muscular, liberal kind expressed by Horace Bushnell,

Henry Ward Beecher, and others” (17). In one 1868 letter, Twain writes, “I shall do no act which...Livy might be pained to hear of—I shall seek the society of the good—I shall be a *Christian*” (qtd. in Bush 60). The following year, Twain told Mrs. Langdon, “But now I never swear; I never taste wine or spirits upon any occasion whatsoever; I am orderly, and my conduct is above reproach in a worldly sense; and finally, I now claim that I am a Christian” (qtd. in Bush 61). These two letters reveal a type of spiritual progression; the first indicates a desire to become a Christian, the second contains a declaration of faith. To what extent this is a genuine progression we will never know, yet, considering the yearning for faith revealed by Twain’s notebook declaration (the longing to “feel & know & never question”) and his lifelong fascination with biblical themes, it seems likely that this struggle for faith was at least partially genuine.

Nevertheless, this flirtation with orthodoxy was short-lived. Even Bush, who champions what he sees as Twain’s religious nature, admits, “shortly after the marriage, some of the piety did disappear, and Twain did begin to slip away from whatever doctrinal orthodoxy he may have attained” (Bush 62). A.B. Paine explains Twain’s not-so-gradual shift from this seeming acceptance of Christianity. While Livy originally “establish[ed] family prayers in their home, grace before meals, and the morning reading of a Bible chapter,” this did not last long. Twain participated at first but soon told her, “you may keep this up if you want to, but I must ask you to excuse me from it. It is making me a hypocrite. I don’t believe in this Bible. It contradicts my reason. I can’t sit here and listen to you, letting you believe that I regard it, as you do, in the light of gospel, the word of God” (Paine I: 411). Sometime around this period, Twain wrote his “God of the Bible vs. God of the Present Day,” which, Edward Wagenknecht points out, “Mrs.

Clemens would not let him print” (189). While Twain here thoroughly rejects the God of the Bible, he, at this point, thinks that the God of the Present Day is a better option. The Deistic conception of God presented here is optimistic; although Twain does not see God as ordering our lives, he does see him as worthy of trust. He writes,

to trust the true God is to trust a Being who has uttered no promises, but whose beneficent, exact, and changeless ordering of the machinery of his colossal universe is proof that he is at least steadfast to his purposes; whose unwritten laws...being equal and impartial show that he is just and fair; these things, taken together, suggest that if he shall ordain us to live hereafter, he will still be steadfast, just and fair toward us. We shall not need to require anything more (*BMT* 317).

This is clearly a step away from Twain’s claim to be a Christian, and his move away from faith seems to have affected his wife, as well, since Livy seems to have eventually “accepted its [the “God of the Bible vs. God of the Present Day’s”] thesis” (Andrews 67). Thus, while Livy seems to have initially drawn Twain closer to Christianity, albeit a different kind of Christianity than he had grown up with, the final result was that his lack of faith rubbed off on her.

Livy was not the only Christian influence on Twain’s life, however. In fact, Twain actively cultivated friendships with ministers. As he wrote his mother from San Francisco, “I am as thick as thieves with the Reverend Stebbins. I am laying for the Reverend Scudder and the Reverend Doctor Stone. I am running on preachers now altogether, and I find them gay” (qtd. in A.B. Paine I: 372). Twain’s most widely publicized friendship with a minister was with the reverend Joseph Twichell, pastor of the Asylum Hill Congregational Church, which Twain referred to as the “Church of the Holy Speculators” (A. B. Paine I: 370). Twichell counseled Twain as he pursued Livy Langdon and remained his lifelong friend, even when it became clear that Twain had

rejected the faith Twichell preached. In fact, when Twain moved to Hartford “he adopted...the role of Twichell’s chief parishioner” (Andrews 70). Andrews explains this seemingly incongruous behavior in this way: “Mark ruled out all theology, and the supernatural that it attempted to interpret, but he was not at all at odds with his community’s regard for personal and public morality” (70). Twain was indeed actively involved in fundraising for the church and for charities supported by Twichell, despite their theological disagreements.

By 1878, Twain, along with his friend William Dean Howells, rejected the “divinity of Jesus” (Brodwin MTFM 23), yet his friendship with Twichell continued. In Paine’s biography of Twain, he quotes Twain as telling Twichell of his rejection of Christianity during their European wanderings that would result in *A Tramp Abroad*:

Joe...I’m going to make a confession. I don’t believe in your religion at all. I’ve been living a lie right straight along whenever I pretended to. For a moment, sometimes, I have been almost a believer, but it immediately drifts away from me again....The problem of life and death and eternity and the true conception of God is a bigger thing than is contained in that book [the Bible] (A.B. Paine I: 631).

According to Paine, this marked a change in the way Twain and Twichell discussed religion; he claims, “the personal side of religious discussion closed between them, and was never afterward reopened” (Paine I: 632). However, this seems a not entirely accurate representation of the true course of events. Bush claims, “It is significant that Paine’s rendition of the manifestation of such animosity...is completely reliant on Twain’s memory of the events almost thirty years later” (9). Bush goes on to note the awestruck, meditative tone of passages in *A Tramp Abroad*; as he explains, “in *A Tramp Abroad*, the experience of the sublime in nature is often linked specifically to God....This

poetical approach to God was championed most frequently by Horace Bushnell, Joe Twichell's spiritual mentor and friend of Mark Twain, and to some extent it signals the effects of the higher criticism" (10-11). Later letters between Twain and Twichell reveal that the subject of religion was most certainly not "closed between them," as Paine asserted, yet Bush's insistence that Paine's account posits the existence of "animosity" between the two men does not seem entirely accurate, either. It is possible for the meditative passages cited by Bush to have been written by a man who rejected the faith Twichell believed; even in the discussion quoted by Paine, Twain refers to what he calls "the true conception of God," which indicates that the idea of God was very much on his mind, although not in the form of the God of the Bible. And this revelation would not need to have resulted in "animosity." Twichell, by all accounts, extended his friendship to Twain in periods of belief and unbelief; Twain's confession of his unbelief would not necessarily have resulted in friction between them.

Twichell, in some ways, remained Twain's spiritual mentor, even though Twain rejected Twichell's faith. As Andrews recounts, "After Livy's death, when Mark's rage against Twichell's God reached a frenetic climax in long unpublished letters, Twichell asserted the therapeutic value of such release, invited Mark to expend his wrath freely, and at the same time cautioned him to be content with communicating the blasphemies only to his closest friend" (233-34). It was not only Twain's grief over Livy's death and anger at the Christian God that found its way into his letters to Twichell; his pessimistic view of humanity was freely expressed there, as well. To one letter, Twichell replied, "Mark, the way you throw your rotten eggs at the human race doth greatly arride me. We

preachers are extensively accused of vilifying human nature, as you are aware; but I own that for enthusiasm of misanthropy you beat us out of sight” (qtd. in Andrews 234).

In fact, Twichell once accused Twain of being “too orthodox on the Doctrine of Total Human Depravity” (qtd. in Brodwin, “Mark Twain’s Theology” 235). As these letters show, “the personal side of religious discussion” was not dropped from Twain and Twichell’s conversation. The tone might have changed after Twain’s confession of unbelief, yet Twichell retained his pastoral role. When Twain wrote, concerning Christianity, “It is an odious religion....Still I do not think its priests ought to be burned, but only the missionaries” (qtd. in Blair 136), it is doubtless Twichell’s influence that caused Twain to make an exception.

Throughout this period, Twain continued to be plagued with an excessive sense of guilt. “Remorse was always Samuel Clemens’s surest punishment,” Paine remarks, and it appears that this “punishment” came to Twain regardless of whether he was guilty or innocent. The deaths of his son Langdon and his daughter Susy were events that particularly plagued Twain’s conscience. Langdon, a sickly child, died as a result of diphtheria that he contracted after Twain took the child out for a drive on a chilly day. “I should not have been permitted to do it,” Twain said later. “I was not qualified for any such responsibility as that....Necessarily I would lose myself dreaming. After a while the coachman looked around and noticed that the carriage-ropes had dropped away from the little fellow, and that he was exposed to the chilly air. He called my attention to it, but it was too late” (qtd. in A.B. Paine I: 456). Of course, whether or not Twain’s supposed negligence really played a role in the child’s death is a matter of conjecture, but Twain never stopped blaming himself for not being more careful.

Twain's supposed role in the death of his daughter Susy is even more tenuous. At the end of his round-the-world lecture tour that he had embarked on to free himself from his load of debt, just as his separation from Susy was about to end, she contracted meningitis and died while he was a continent away, in England. While Susy's meningitis was most definitely not caused by Twain's absence, by his debt, or by anything else he could have controlled, Twain still held himself responsible. "The death of Susy he related directly to his mania for speculating that brought about the wasting of his and his wife's fortunes," Guy Cardwell explains. "'My crimes made her a pauper and an exile,' he told Livy, meaning only that Susy was not the daughter of rich parents when she died, and that Susy had preferred to remain in the United States when Clemens, Livy, and Clara departed on a world lecture tour" (203). Of course, Twain could not have been responsible for Susy's death, but this did not stop him from blaming himself.

Twain's personal tragedies not only fed his guilty conscience but also caused him to rage against what he saw as the injustice and cruelty of God. As early as 1860, he wrote to Orion, "What a man wants with religion in these breadless times surpasses my comprehension" (qtd. in Andrews 67). In Twain's essay from the 1870s "God of the Bible vs. God of the Present Day," Twain accused the Biblical God of being "an unfair God...a God of unsound judgment...a God of failures and miscalculations" (*BMT* 315). Considering Twain's concern for the problem of pain and injustice here before his personal tragedies hit, it is not surprising that his anger grew to such astounding proportions later. As Andrews writes, "he was always to exaggerate almost incredibly the weight of his own misfortunes, and it is little wonder that when they did become from any point of view very heavy, he should have succumbed to desolation" (74). After the

death of Susy, Twain asked Howells, “Why am I robbed, and who is benefited?” (qtd. in Wagenknecht 199). Despite his Deistic view expounded in “God of the Bible vs. God of the Present Day,” Twain, in his anguish, acts as if Susy’s death is a personal affront.

Twain’s anger sometimes was expressed explicitly against religious orthodoxy and the Deity. Twain blamed parents for bringing children into the world ruled by such an unjust God, since, “before the ministers abolished hell a man knew, when he was begetting a child, that he was begetting a soul that had only one chance in a hundred of escaping the eternal fires of damnation. He knew that in all probability that child would be brought to damnation—one of the ninety-nine black sheep” (qtd. in Wagenknecht 201). In his 1906 “Reflections on Religion,” Twain wrote of God that “In His destitution of one and all of the qualities which could grace a God...the real God...is just like all the other gods in the list. He proves every day that he takes no interest in man...further than to torture them...” (qtd. in Emerson 289). While Twain had earlier contrasted the cruel God of the Bible with a hands-off, but fair, God of the Present Day, by this point he seems to have decided that the real God was just as bad as the fake one.

Bush explains Twain’s conflicted relationship with Christianity by positing that Mark Twain, like Herman Melville, participates in “protest theism,” to use Stan Goldman’s term. As Bush explains, “protest theism involves calling into question God’s commitment to bringing about a world of shalom” (72-73). Twain does indeed seem to participate in protest theism, yet, although Bush sees Twain’s “logic” as having “deep affinities with the Christian approach to society and culture, and...with faith itself,” Twain did not accept the tenets of Christianity or of any other quantifiable faith. He did,

indeed, remain fascinated, or even obsessed, with religious concerns, but this should not be confused with religious faith.

Ironically, the “God” Twain was so angry with bears much resemblance to the God of the Bible, the Christian God that he, at least intellectually, claimed not to believe in. Joe Twichell’s daughter later explained the paradox in this way:

I don’t feel he was an atheist—how could he have got so enraged at the Deity if he thought there was nothing there!....I feel that Mark Twain was a very sensitive, tenderhearted man who could not solve the problem of Pain in the world—none of us can—and who couldn’t reconcile it with the idea of a loving Father in Heaven, and couldn’t or wouldn’t brace his faith for it. As I remember, this is the burden of his later letters to my father (qtd. in Bush 210).

It seems that Twain was never emotionally able to let go of the Christian God, blame him as he would for the pain he felt.

Despite this, some critics have noted that Twain maintained a commitment to Christian principles, particularly to the ideal of social justice. Wagenknecht claims, “Mark Twain preserved something of the Christian ethic” (214), and Bush writes, “Twain’s literary achievement is often directly indebted to the Social Gospel’s vision of cosmic hope” (18). In Twain’s commitment to anti-imperialism, racial equity, and charitable concerns, he does indeed, like his friend Twichell, demonstrate a commitment to Judeo-Christian morals, yet Twain was painfully aware of the negative effects Christians had on the world, as well. As Brodwin writes, “To a perceptive man living in the nineteenth century...there could be no escape from the problem that the Bible had seemingly created more suffering than good” (MTFM 29). In his anti-imperialist rants, Twain made clear that he was aware of the role that Christians had in spreading empire. This is demonstrated in “King Leopold’s Soliloquy,” in which Twain damns the Belgian

King Leopold for his actions in the Congo, even while Leopold “effusively kisses” a “crucifix” (*MTDHR* 184). Twain makes the connection of religion with imperialism equally clear in his “To the Person Sitting in Darkness” in which he condemns missionaries to China for extorting “blood money” from the people (*MTDHR* 8). While Bush sees Twain’s moral commitments as examples of a type of religion, it seems that Twain himself did not see his moral outrage as symptomatic of faith. Twain would, more likely, have thought that morality existed in spite of religion than because of it. In fact, Twain wrote in an 1865 letter to his brother Orion that he believed that “there is a God for the rich man but none for the poor.” In this, he demonstrates his belief that God himself is not concerned about the issues of social justice about which he was so passionate.

However, despite Twain’s rejection of Christianity and condemnation of its morality, the Calvinistic doctrines of his childhood seem to have maintained a controlling grip on his psyche. Many have noted this long-lasting effect of Presbyterianism, which had “a powerful hold...on his imagination” (Ensor 95). Not least among these observers was William Dean Howells, who told Twain that he was “a ‘creature of the Presbyterian God who did make [him]’” (qtd. in Brodwin, “Mark Twain’s Theology” 242). Concurring in this opinion was Twichell, who “considered [Twain’s] blasts against humanity to be nothing less than Twain’s return to his roots in Calvinism, especially his emphasis on the total depravity of man” (Bush 214). This is clear in Twain’s statement to A.B. Paine that “when I read the papers all about the rascalities and outrages going on I realize what a creature the human animal is” (1336). Twain’s view of humanity was overwhelmingly negative, cohering very closely to the view of man advocated by Calvin.

In his essay “My First Lie, and How I Got Out of It,” Twain claims, “I do not remember my first lie... but I remember my second one very well. I was nine days old at the time...” (MTDHR 28). Although this is a humorous essay, Twain’s claim that he broke the ninth commandment twice while less than two weeks old seems to hearken back to the Calvinistic idea of original sin. This story does also reinforce Twain’s insistence on the importance of training, since he claims that he learned to cry in order to get what he wanted as a result of seeing that he received abnormal amounts of attention when he cried after being stuck with a pin. However, these two ideas are not contradictory here; Twain claims that he was trained by his circumstances that doing wrong would have positive results, but he still seems to present himself as having an inborn sinful nature that caused him to do wrong. Twain himself presents this in religious terms and even draws a parallel with the story of Adam when he writes, “It was human nature...and I fell” (28). Although Twain uses this for comic effect, the orthodoxy of this view is significant. No wonder Wagenknecht wrote, “He thinks—he even jokes—in terms of Calvinism” (198). Despite Twain’s attempt to separate himself from his childhood religion, its doctrines had penetrated too deeply to be left behind. “‘The religious folly you are born in you will *die* in,’ he wrote, ‘no matter what apparently reasonabler religious folly may seem to have taken its place meanwhile, and abolished and obliterated it’” (qtd. in Wagenknecht 200). Surely Twain must have realized that much of the way he perceived the world and man’s place in it was a result of the religion of his childhood; try as he might, he could not shake those deeply ingrained thought patterns.

Twain's marginalia in his copy of Lecky's *History of European Morals* give further insight into Twain's relationship with Calvin's view of man's sinful nature. Twain reacted strongly to this statement by Lecky: "That man is not only an imperfect but a fallen being, and that death is the penal consequence of his sins, were doctrines profoundly new to mankind, and they have exercised an influence of the most serious character upon the moral history of the world." In response, Twain "crossed out the word 'serious' and...substituted the word 'rotten'" ("Mark Twain's Personal Marked Copy..." [July-Aug. 1955] 3). Thus, although Twain seems to have accepted a view of man as fallen, he still reacts angrily to Calvinism's declaration of that fact. An explanation for Twain's seemingly contradictory behavior might be, as Brodwin says, that "Mark Twain accepted the image of a Fall in the human condition, though he could not accept any of the traditional salvationist schemes" (MTFM abstract 1). Since Twain was not able to accept all of Calvinism, but only the negative part—the fall, but not redemption—it is no wonder that he thought that the whole scheme was "rotten."

In this respect, Twain's fascination with the story of Adam is telling. From a Calvinistic point of view, Adam is the starting point of the human race and the first man to fall. His fall is the first in a vicious cycle of sin and death, and thus his fall provides the model for all of the ones to follow. In a way, Twain seems to have accepted this portion of the Bible—he accepted the idea that man is fallen. It is the idea of a benevolent plan that he could not believe in. Surely Twain's telling and retelling of the story of the Fall indicates an emotional tie to the faith of his childhood.

Because Twain accepted the idea of a fallen humanity but could not accept the remainder of the Christian message, he had to find some way of fitting his view of

mankind into a coherent worldview, which he attempted to do when he wrote *What Is Man?* After reading Jonathan Edwards's Calvinistic treatise *Freedom of the Will*, Twain wrote Twichell,

Jonathan seems to hold (as against the Arminian position) that the man...never creates an impulse itself....Up to that point he could have written Chapters III & IV of my suppressed Gospel [*What Is Man?*]. But there we seem to separate....he suddenly flies the logical track &...makes the man & not those exterior forces responsible to God for the man's thoughts, words, & acts. It is frank insanity (qtd. in Bush 258-59).

Twain here self-consciously engages in a debate that has raged in Christendom for centuries, aligning himself with the determinism of Calvinists like Edwards, although he cannot accept Edwards's conclusion. He summarizes Edwards's argument as follows: "Man is commanded to do so & so. It has been ordained from the beginning of time that some men sha'n't & others can't. These are to blame: let them be damned" (qtd. in Bush 258-9). Twain follows Edwards's reasoning up to a point, but he refuses to concede man's responsibility for actions that he was not able to avoid. Twain "had to find his own theological structure," Brodwin writes. "[H]e did in terms of his determinism which freed man from moral blame" (MTFM 65). Thus, while Edwards and Calvinists like him saw man's actions as predetermined but still held men morally responsible, Twain accepted the idea that man's actions were predetermined but saw that, at least theoretically, as freeing men from responsibility.

Although Twain fit the religious idea of predestination into a secular structure, he remained obsessed with religious concerns to the end of his life. Chief among these were the nature of God and the possibility of life after death. As we have already seen, Twain early in his marriage propounded a Deistic view of God but claimed that this distant God

is still worthy of trust. As we have also seen, in his 1906 “Reflections on Religion,” Twain concludes that the “real God” is no better than the God of the Bible. In one respect, however, these early and late views are consistent—Twain saw God as much bigger than the Bible made him out to be. After Twain’s death, A.B. Paine found among his writings the following passage:

The suns & planets that form the constellations of a billion billion solar systems & go pouring...through the viewless arteries of space are the blood-corpuscles in the veins of God....Who is so poor in his ambitions as to consent to be God on those terms? Blasphemy? No, it is not blasphemy. If God is as vast as that, He is above blasphemy; if He is as little as that, He is beneath it (qtd. in Paine IV: 1354).

Twain’s final word on God seems to be that he is too big to care about us, but, if we enter into his perception at all, he is cruel or at least criminally negligent. Twain was similarly ambivalent about the possibility of life after death. As he told Paine, “I have never seen what to me seemed an atom of proof that there is a future life....And yet—I am strongly inclined to expect one” (Paine IV: 1431). This seems to be the enduring problem of Mark Twain’s relationship to religion; intellectually, he did not believe, but, emotionally, he could not help believing.

Man as Machine:Twain's Philosophy of Human Nature

While Mark Twain abandoned the Calvinism of his youth in certain respects, one element of his childhood faith that appeared in an altered form in his later philosophy was the idea that man's will is not free, that his actions are predetermined. This element of Twain's philosophy has grave implications for the rest of his view of mankind and for his treatment of Adam. The ability or inability of mankind in general, and of Adam, the archetypal man, in particular, to freely choose relates directly to questions of human autonomy and of the goodness of God. Because of the magnitude of this issue and the huge role it played in Twain's fictional and non-fictional work, the roots of this determinism merit further examination.

Many have speculated on the cause of Twain's insistence on determinism, but it is clear that, as Wagenknecht says, "his acceptance of it seems...closely connected with his own personal and emotional needs" (226). That much is clear. What, exactly, it was about Twain's personal and emotional needs that caused him to embrace determinism is more questionable. Pamela Boker relates Twain's determinism to his traumatic, grief-filled childhood when she argues, "behind Twain's philosophical convictions about determinism lay a deeper suspicion that his own life had, at some time before he could remember, got out of his control, and that his own character and life's work had

somehow been influenced by forces which he felt he could never quite identify” (73). Others have argued that Twain’s determinism is a direct result of his obsessive feelings of guilt, that in reality what Twain meant by saying “man is a machine” (*WIM* 205) was “It was not my fault” (De Voto 125). Van Wyck Brooks sounds a variation on this theme when he says that Twain’s philosophy is evidence of his misused talent and that “it brought him comfort to feel that if he was, as he said, a ‘sewing-machine,’ it was the doing of destiny, and that nothing he could have done himself would have enabled him to ‘turn out Gobelins’” (40). Others, however, have raised doubts that Twain’s determinism can be explained away by his guilty conscience; as Tom Quirk asserts, “I am not inclined to believe that Twain’s embrace of a determinism was in any way a compensatory gesture, an attempt to absolve himself of guilt” (10). In actuality, there seem to be many causes for Twain’s determinism. Twain’s Calvinism and plaguing sense of guilt seem unlikely to be the sole causes of his determinism, but they could not have hurt his desire for determinism to be true. To the extent that credulity is a choice, Twain’s belief in determinism was probably strengthened, not weakened, by the guilt that plagued him. However, dismissing Twain’s determinism as a neurosis fails to do justice to the complexity of his involvement with this issue.

While Twain’s initial exposure to determinism came from his childhood Calvinism, and, as Brodwin writes, “His pessimistic determinism drew artistic strength and meaning from the basic moral and ontological assumptions implicit in the Fall” (*MTFM* 2), Twain soon became fascinated with more secular explanations of human nature. One of these earlier influences was phrenology and its “notion of ‘temperaments,’” a term that would later become prominent in Twain’s own view of the

nature of man (Gribben, “Mark Twain, Phrenology, and the ‘Temperaments’” 45). Alan Gribben has shown that Twain was exposed to phrenological ideas in his early adulthood, and phrenology apparently made some impression on Twain, considering that he diagnosed himself as having the sanguine temperament (“Mark Twain, Phrenology, and the ‘Temperaments’” 50). According to phrenology, humans have “four basic types of ‘temperaments’” (Gribben, “Mark Twain, Phrenology, and the ‘Temperaments’” 46), which is a far-less-complex formula than Twain would later arrive at, but this early exposure to phrenology probably helped Twain begin to formulate his philosophy. According to phrenologists, people could direct the course of their lives and correct overly-prominent parts of their temperament to some extent, but the idea that the way humans act is due to something inherent in them directing their actions and reactions seems an important foundation for Twain’s thought. Phrenology was not the sole source Twain drew upon for his idea of “temperament,” but it provided an early, pseudo-scientific explanation for the nature of man which seems to have made a lasting impression on Twain.

Twain soon moved on to more reputable sources for his ideas, however. During his courtship of Livy and during the early years of their marriage, Twain was reading a number of books and articles that would influence his view of man for the rest of his life. In fact, Cummings argues that “The main ideas for it [*What Is Man?*] came from three books he had read between 1869 and 1874—Holmes’s *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, Darwin’s *Descent of Man*, and Lecky’s *History of European Morals*—when determinism was foreign to his thinking” (45). Due to Twain’s childhood Calvinism, it seems unlikely that determinism was really foreign to his thinking; while the idea of predestination

differs significantly from the secular determinism of Twain's later thought, they do share considerable common ground. However, Cummings is right in noting the importance of these authors to Twain's philosophy, even though this list is somewhat incomplete.

Twain not only read Oliver Wendell Holmes's *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* but also made marginal comments in it for Livy in 1869 (Gribben *MTL* I: 317). Holmes's treatment of man as a machine undoubtedly influenced Twain's later insistence on that tenet. According to Holmes, "Personality...was formed by 'organization [heredity], education, condition'" (Cummings 111). Furthermore, Holmes asserts, "Given certain factors, and a sound brain should always evolve the same fixed product with the certainty of Babbage's calculating machine" (10). These ideas rob man of the freedom of choice; if man is solely a result of heredity, education, and condition, and if a brain is nothing more than a calculator, turning out fixed results, man seems to have no choice in what he does. However, Cummings believes that Holmes's ideas did not convince Twain right away; as he says, "Mark Twain...seems not to have been immediately persuaded by Holmes's anatomizing. But Holmes's mechanistic philosophy was lodged in the recesses of Twain's mind" (57). Much like Twain's childhood Calvinism, Holmes's thought would resurface later in Twain's philosophy. At this point in Twain's life, however, he was courting Livy and trying either to become or to pass himself off as a Christian, and Holmes's Deism did not square exactly with that goal.

However, Twain continued to be fascinated by scientific views of the universe during this period, and this led to his questioning of the Biblical chronology of creation and of the importance of mankind and the earth itself. In 1870, he wrote to Livy, "according to Genesis, the *stars* were made when the world was, yet this writer mentions

the significant fact that there are stars within reach of your telescopes whose light requires 50,000 years to traverse the wastes of space & come to our earth” (qtd. in Quirk 61). Twain based this letter on two articles found in *Eclectic* magazine in January of 1870, one of which, titled “The Early History of Man,” claims, “the antiquity of man is very great—the popular chronology entirely wrong” (“The Early History of Man” 1). The other article, titled “Solar Wonders,” points out, “the earth on which we move, the scene of all those interests which we deem so important, bears so minute a proportion to the sun, that if he were represented by a two-foot globe the earth would on the same scale appear no larger than a cherrystone” (“Solar Wonders” 3). This type of easily-accessible scientific thought seems to have had considerable influence on Twain’s work and have further undermined any respect he may have had for the accuracy of the Biblical story of creation and its resulting representation of man’s place in the universe. Furthermore, Twain’s susceptibility to the influence of articles such as this indicates the type of reception he would soon give to thinkers such as Darwin and Spencer. In fact, this reading can be seen as preparation for Twain’s acceptance of Darwin’s claim that “The high antiquity of man...is the indispensable basis for understanding his origin” and thus for his acceptance of the rest of Darwin’s explanation of human descent (2).

Twain seems to have first been exposed to Darwin’s *Descent of Man* in 1871 (Quirk 63), and, after this time, “the influence of *The Descent of Man* ‘was always present’ in Mark Twain’s thought” (Cummings 58). Darwin examines the question of the nature of man through the lens of studies of other species, and relates human diversity to “various mental characters of...monkeys of the same species.” He claims that “this diversity...is partly innate, and partly the result of the manner in which they have been

treated or educated” (27), much like Twain would later claim that the forces shaping mankind were twofold, temperament and training. Cummings notes an even more significant congruence between Twain’s and Darwin’s views when he points out,

Darwin accepted heredity as a fact, but he also understood that ‘[t]he laws governing inheritance are for the most part unknown’; and he was therefore chary in his speculations on the subject. Similarly with Mark Twain...he appears to have made a special effort to prevent his readers from assuming that any specific trait of his characters was genetically inherited (171).

This is especially true in case of Adam and Eve, who are parentless and who thus cannot have received any traits through genetic inheritance. This is one of the reasons that Adam and Eve provide such an excellent case study for Twain’s view of man.

Twain’s insistence on the essential selfishness of all human behavior also bears a startling resemblance to some of Darwin’s thought. As Camfield notes, Darwin actually explains impulses toward moral behavior as the product of material evolution by the survival of the fittest. Insofar as this is true, his distinctions between altruism and selfishness are semantic...But Clemens noted that if sympathy is an instinct, it is not therefore any less selfish...In the margin on page 78 he wrote, ‘selfishness again / -- not charity / not gene / rosity / (save to- / ward our- / selves) (138).

This, of course, seems to mirror the Calvinistic emphasis on total human depravity that Twain grew up with, but it also foreshadows his mechanistic view of human nature later delineated in *What Is Man?* To a certain extent, Twain believes that moral behavior has evolved, yet Twain here maintains an ideal of morality separate from the norms of behavior that have developed over time. There is a hint of indignation in Twain’s insistence that human morality is based on selfishness, indicating that Twain, on some level, believed in an independent moral law.

Twain was also impressed by Darwin’s discussion of animal intelligence and habit. In fact, Twain’s marginalia in *Descent of Man* includes his own observations

backing up Darwin's conclusions: "War horses learn the bugle notes. Fire horses rush at the fire alarm. That is educated excitement and interest, and imagination, and memory" (qtd. in Cummings 33). This idea shows up immediately in Twain's discussion of animal habit in *Roughing It* (Quirk 69), and it foreshadows his emphasis on training in his later writings. His marginal notations also point out, "Sheep eat with their heads all turned the same way on the hillside—cows, mostly, too" (qtd. in Cummings 33), which, as Cummings points out, is an illustration he uses in *What Is Man?* when he argues that "'instinct' is...merely *petrified thought*; thought solidified and made inanimate by habit," although "Man," unlike animals, "would go further, reason wider," and thus have better "instincts" (*WIM* 190). Furthermore, in Darwin's later work *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Twain made "numerous pencil marks" on the page discussing "the powerful force of habit," a force so powerful that "caterpillars will die rather than eat the leaves of an unfamiliar tree" (Gribben *MTL* I: 175). Twain's idea that man is trapped by his training found a great deal of substantiation in his reading of Darwin.

Twain's ideas also have some affinity with those of Herbert Spencer, although this connection is harder to trace and is more problematic. Camfield notes, "Spencer's ideas had a profound impact on Clemens's moral philosophy. Yet through the accidents of time, we do not have any of his marked copies of Spencer's works, nor do we have his copies of the influential articles in *Popular Science* (to which Clemens subscribed) that Sumner and Fiske wrote to promote Spencerian philosophy" (137). Cummings, too, sees resemblances between the ideas of Spencer and Twain when he says, "Clemens' ...view of nature led him to make classic statements of social Darwinism—the notion that men

are basically animalic and competitive...and that nations in waging war and conquest obey the law of survival of the fittest” (30). To substantiate this, Cummings points out Twain’s comments to Paine that “It is not immoral for one nation to seize another nation by force of arms, or for one man to seize another man’s property or life if he is strong enough and wants to take it...nature intended exactly these things” (Paine IV: 1335). However, this statement blatantly contradicts Twain’s staunch anti-imperialism of his last decade. Again, this demonstrates Twain’s profound ambivalence about the nature of man; although he vehemently espoused an evolutionary, deterministic viewpoint, he did not practice the actions that the words he preached would seem to demand.

Camfield similarly notes Twain’s conflicted relationship to Spencer’s view of the importance of training. “By the 1880s,” he writes, “under the influence of his reading in Spencer, Clemens came to believe that human beings are nothing but the product of learning. Nevertheless, even though...*Connecticut Yankee* says that training is everything, it almost immediately contradicts this monistic conclusion. Something remains ‘original in us’” (156). “This,” he believes, “is the remnant of the idea of soul that Clemens, for all of his monistic attack on sentimental dualism, cannot bear to eliminate from his moral vision” (157). Thus, although Twain accepted Spencer’s view of the importance of training, he still clings to the idea of originality.

Twain’s troubled relationship to Spencer’s work is demonstrated by his listing of Spencer alongside thinkers such as Socrates, Cicero, and Darwin in his “Proposal for Renewal of the Adam Monument Petition.” He describes these men as “intellectual giants,” to whom, he says, “We pay a due and willing homage” (452). Tellingly, Twain here juxtaposes Darwin and Spencer with the biblical Adam, a figure who their work

threatens, and insists, “in mental stature the best of them was but a dwarf by contrast with Adam” (452). Twain’s facetious insistence on Adam’s superiority to those who had undermined the idea of his existence indicates the deep ambivalence he felt about the question of origins.

One author whose effect on Twain is considerably clearer, although still complicated, is W.E.H. Lecky, whose *History of European Morals* Twain read, commented extensively upon, and used in building his fiction and philosophy. One of the ways in which Lecky affected Twain’s thought was in his discussion of “temperament.” As Gribben points out, Twain’s idea of temperament may have come originally from phrenology, but Lecky likely “[brought] the phrenological term ‘temperament’ to Clemens’ recollection” (*MTL* I: 402). It would seem, however, that Lecky provides Twain with more than just the term “temperament”; in many ways, his idea of temperament is similar to Twain’s later use of the term. Lecky initially claims, “The happiness of the great majority of men is far more affected by health and by temperament, resulting from physical conditions...than by any mental or moral causes” (88) and further clarifies this statement when he says, “there are temperaments due to physical causes from which most sufferings glance almost unfelt” (89). This bears a great deal of resemblance to Twain’s description of his own temperament in later life. After his final tragedy, the death of his epileptic daughter Jean, Twain wrote, “Shall I ever be cheerful again, happy again? Yes. And soon. For I know my temperament....My temperament has never allowed my spirits to remain depressed long at a time” (*A.B. Paine* IV: 1552). Twain was confident that, because of his temperament,

his “happiness” would not be greatly “affected...by any mental or moral causes,” even causes such as his grief over Jean’s death.

Lecky’s influence on Twain’s view of human nature is further demonstrated by the congruence between their descriptions of the makeup of humans’ characters. Lecky argues, “The distinctive beauty of a moral type depends not so much on the elements of which it is composed, as on the proportions in which those elements are combined” (154). This statement strongly resembles Twain’s claim in “Letters from the Earth” that “each individual” possesses “in differing shades and degrees, all the various Moral Qualities,” including items such as “courage, cowardice, ferocity, gentleness, fairness,” and many more (*BMT* 220).

Twain’s idea of the combination of temperament and training also strongly resembles Lecky’s insistence that “The type of character of every individual depends partly upon innate temperament and partly upon external circumstances” (156). To both Lecky and Twain, the innate temperament is not the only element directing human life; training also plays an essential role. Joe Fulton points out that Twain “marked” the following statement by Lecky: “The character of large bodies of men depends in the main upon the circumstances in which they have been placed....When these are changed the character will alter too, and the alteration, though it is very slow, may in the end be very deep” (qtd. in Fulton 65-66). This statement demonstrates Lecky’s and Twain’s belief that changing the circumstances of men can change their characters, an idea that Twain tried to work out in his fiction, most notably in *Connecticut Yankee*, which Harold Aspiz calls “a ‘laboratory’ novel,” in which Twain attempted to represent the effects of training on human beliefs and behavior (17). This idea again resurfaces in *What Is Man?*

One of the most notable ways in which Lecky appears to have influenced Twain goes contrary to the goal Lecky was trying to achieve. Although Lecky outlines the views of utilitarian philosophers in an attempt to discredit them, he apparently did such a good job representing their views that Twain was more impressed with their arguments than with Lecky's. Lecky summarizes utilitarian views as follows: "According to these writers we are governed exclusively by our own interest" (7), a statement that accords with the view Twain presented in *What Is Man?* and with his commentary on Darwin's discussion of morality. Lecky goes on to explain that, to utilitarians, "all domestic or social affections were dictated solely by a need of the person" (21), a sentiment extremely close to that Twain expressed in *What Is Man?* when he claimed that love "will squander life and everything else on its object. Not *primarily* for the object's sake, but for *its own*" (139). Twain's marginalia in this text, too, can provide insight on his reception of it; Twain marked the following sentences with his own underlining and brackets:

A desire to obtain happiness and to avoid pain is the only possible motive to action. The reason, and the only reason, why we [should] perform virtuous actions, or in other words, seek the good of others, is that on the whole such a course will bring us the greatest amount of happiness ("Mark Twain's Religious Beliefs..." 2).

Paine reports that Twain marked the utilitarian claim that "the reason, and the only reason, why we should perform virtuous actions [is] 'that on the whole such a course will bring us the greatest amount of happiness,'" with the marginal comment "Sound and true" (511). Furthermore, Twain wrote in response to Lecky, "All our acts, reasoned and unreasoned, are selfish" (qtd. in A. B. Paine I: 512). This coincides closely with the views he would espouse in *What Is Man?*, where he claims, "There is *no* act, large or

small, fine or mean, which springs from any motive but the...necessity of appeasing and contenting one's own spirit" (140). However, despite this apparent endorsement of selfish motivations, Twain frequently responds angrily to human selfishness.

Despite Twain's sometime agreement with the utilitarians Lecky tried to discredit, he had second thoughts on this subject. As Camfield writes, "Clemens did not completely relinquish the sentimental conception of morality as articulated by Lecky....The positive vision of progress that the book [*Connecticut Yankee*] often endorses depends on his faltering belief in this principle of sentimental morality" (161). It seems that Twain agrees with the utilitarians that humans do act in a selfish manner, but his view on whether or not this is the way things should be changes, aligning him, at times, with Lecky and the intuitionists. Twain was moving more and more toward a mechanistic, utilitarian view of humanity, but he still could not accept it completely; this continued philosophical quandary finds its way even into work of Twain's last years, where his presentation of Adam and Eve at times seems sentimental and at others indicates a more utilitarian viewpoint.

A final similarity between Lecky's views and Twain's can be found in their interpretations of traditional Christian doctrines. According to Lecky, the doctrines of "damnation of unbaptised infants and the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation....surpass in atrocity any tenets" in "any pagan creed" (96), sentiments similar to those Twain would express. Furthermore, Lecky directly addresses the question of the Fall in a way of which Twain must have approved:

That a little child...is...responsible for its ancestors having 6,000 years before eaten some forbidden fruit...that an all-righteous and all-merciful Creator in the full exercise of these attributes deliberately calls into existence sentient beings whom He

has...destined to...torture, are propositions...so extravagantly absurd and so ineffably atrocious that their adoption might well lead men to doubt the universality of moral perceptions (96-97).

Lecky, like Twain, found this morally reprehensible, and Twain likely found in Lecky support for his growing doubts about Christianity, in addition to finding his discussions of moral philosophy useful.

Twain found a further influence in Taine's literary naturalism, which aimed to discern the truth of humanity through observation. We know that Twain was familiar with several of Taine's works, and he even has one of his fictional characters in *The Gilded Age* refer to Taine's *Notes on England* (MTL II: 684). Taine seems to have reinforced Twain's idea of the importance of training; Jason Gary Horn observes, "Taine...provided him and other American literary realists with a method for analyzing and depicting characters as products of external forces. Such deterministic notions surface as a philosophical issue in nearly all of Twain's major works" (18). In fact, Twain's marginal notation on William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* indicates his approval of Taine's idea, which James included, "that the origins of all human experience, 'whether the facts be moral or physical' ought to be studied" (Horn 120). Twain's presentation of the Fall of Adam and Eve can be viewed in this light, as an attempt to study "the origins of all human experience" in an environment that could never be replicated.

Taine did not originate these ideas; as Cummings reports, "A major idea in Taine's introduction, that a people's development is controlled by 'race, surroundings, and epoch,' had, according to Henry James, 'already been reiterated to satiety' by 1872" (70). This, perhaps, indicates why Twain's *What Is Man?*, which he saw as

groundbreaking and revolutionary, seemed so old-hat to many of his readers when it was published in 1906. However stale Taine's views were by 1872, they seem to have reinforced ideas that Twain was already beginning to form and to have helped him to systematize his views of human nature. Cummings claims that Taine provided Twain with "laws, systems, and mechanisms," developing his view of the influence of training on character (75). Cummings demonstrates that Taine's ideas about training are visible in *The Prince and the Pauper*, and they remained with Twain through the end of his life.

All of these works helped Twain formulate his philosophy, and in 1883, Twain made his "first formal statement of determinism in a talk he gave to the Hartford Monday Evening Club" (Cummings 136). Quirk dates Twain's hard-boiled determinism a little later: "There is little doubt that, by 1890, Twain became a card-carrying determinist" (193); however, Quirk points out, "though he stood squarely upon his belief that training is everything, Twain continually tested that conviction in his last years" (199). One of the earlier places in which we can see Twain testing out his philosophy is in his 1885 essay "The Character of Man."

The title "The Character of Man" indicates that Twain was undertaking a huge project, but he quickly qualifies this. "Concerning Man—" he writes, "he is too large a subject to be treated as a whole; so I will merely discuss a detail or two of him at this time" (60). (Twain was to attempt to complete this project of describing human nature in *What Is Man?*) Twain based this essay upon the "premises: that he [man] was not made for any useful purpose....that he was most likely not even made *intentionally*; and that his working himself up out of the oyster bed to his present position was probably a matter of surprise and regret to the Creator" (60). Here evidence of Twain's scientific reading is

evident in his insistence on humanity's evolutionary origins, yet he adds his own negative, perhaps Calvinistic, assessment of human nature at the same time. That humans are the result of a long evolutionary process Twain got from Darwin; that humans should be the cause of "surprise and regret" seems closer to a borrowing from Calvin's idea of total human depravity. Twain's determinism comes out clearly in this essay when he writes that it is a

lie... that I am I, and you are you; that we are units, individuals, and have natures of our own, instead of being the tail-end of a tape-worm eternity of ancestors...with this so-called individuality of ours a decay and rancid mush of inherited instincts and teachings...and not so much new and original matter in it as you could balance on a needle point (61-62).

(The observation that all of humanity's originality could fit on a "needle point" would resurface a few years later in *A Connecticut Yankee*.) This passage also demonstrates the influence of Twain's scientific reading, and, more specifically, of his own interpretation of that reading. Camfield believes, "by Spencer's Lamarckian understanding of evolution, and by Clemens's Spencerian reading of Darwin, learned traits are inheritable. Therefore, all traits one has that evolved through the time before birth as well as those accumulated after birth Clemens attributes to 'training'" (157). Whether or not Spencer really did have a "Lamarckian understanding of evolution," Twain does seem to buy into the idea that "learned traits are inheritable." This idea is evident in Twain's statement that our "individuality" comes from "inherited instincts and teachings." Furthermore, Twain denounces the "lie...that there is such a thing in the world as independence"; however, he follows this by clarifying, "the quality of independence was *almost* wholly left out of the human race" (emphasis added) (62). Thus Twain seems to allow a little room for originality and independence; he allows a needle-point's worth of "new and

original matter,” and he admits the existence of “scattering exceptions to the rule” that there is no such thing as independence (62).

Two exceptions that Twain might have seen to this rule were Joan of Arc and Emilio Aguinaldo. While, in most cases, he sees human behavior as entirely explained by “inherited instincts and teachings,” he is seemingly awestruck at the accomplishments of this pair, simply because they made their achievements without the benefit of the preparation he would have thought necessary. Of Joan of Arc he writes, “Joan of Arc stands alone...by reason of the unfellowed fact that in the things wherein she was great she was so without shade or suggestion of help from preparatory teaching, practice, environment, or experience” (“Saint Joan of Arc” 593). His praise of Aguinaldo is not quite as effusive, but he draws a parallel between the two: “Joan of Arc and Aguinaldo were peasant-born and poor; uneducated and obscure; without friends, and without influence, in the beginning” (“Aguinaldo” 100). He offers no explanation of how these two were able to make such extraordinary accomplishments. Their heredity is not ruled out, but he does not directly call upon it as an explanation. Twain’s view of humanity seems conflicted here; while he attributes 99.9% of human nature to training and heredity, it appears that he is not willing or able to completely remove the possibility of freedom.

Twain further draws on his earlier interpretations of Darwin and Lecky when he claims, “The mainspring of man’s nature is...selfishness” (64). In this, Twain’s views seem to have remained consistent between his earlier readings of these thinkers and his later presentation of this idea in *What Is Man?* In this, of course, Twain seems to be making an implicit moral judgment that seems to hearken back to Calvinism; despite his

apparent approval of utilitarian morality visible in his marginalia in Lecky's work, Twain writes with apparent disapproval of humanity's selfish nature.

Twain's most complete explication of his philosophy came in *What Is Man?*, which he began in 1898 and continued to work on over a period of years until publishing it, anonymously and privately, in 1906. Baetzhold sees *What Is Man?* as the result of Twain finally achieving, between 1895 and 1906, "a complete acceptance—at least intellectually—of the deterministic philosophy that had fascinated him for so long" (Baetzhold 210). Once Twain had written *What Is Man?*, he was not quite sure what to do with it, however; convinced that his work contained scandalous new ideas, he wrote Twichell, "For seven years I have suppressed a book which my conscience tells me I ought to publish. I hold it a duty to publish it. There are other difficult duties which I am equal to, but I am not equal to that one" (qtd. in Brooks 303). He did, of course, publish it, but under great secrecy.

The majority of reviewers seem to think that Twain's reticence to publish and his sense of the importance of the work were unjustified. Although Twain's secretary, Isabel Lyon, responded to Twain's reading of part of *What Is Man?* with the exclamation, "He is so wonderful—so ennobling" (qtd. in Hill 100), few share her opinion. Lyon was not entirely alone in her assessment; "the *Chicago Tribune* reviewed the Gospel as a volume that belonged on a shelf with Socrates" (Hill 135). Since that time, some have also joined in lauding Twain's attempt at philosophy; Don M. Wolfe exults, "*What Is Man?* may be considered part of the gospel of democracy, possessing a place with the essays of Jefferson, the speeches of Lincoln, the educational treatises of Horace Mann" (215-16). But the majority of critics come closer to agreeing with Van Wyck Brooks, who declared,

“the book is...quite worthless except for the light it throws on Mark Twain” (310).

Whatever the merits of *What Is Man?*, its primary usefulness in this study will be for “the light it throws on Mark Twain” and on his other works, particularly the retellings of the story of Adam and Eve.

Twain’s method in *What Is Man?* is to utilize Socratic dialogue between two characters, an Old Man and a Young Man, to explain his views. Twain’s use of this form has received just criticism; it is “hardly a real dialogue,” as Tuckey points out (541). Instead, it is “a rigged argument. The Young Man is not merely an idealist; he is also naïve, easily persuadable, and almost a straight man for his opponent in debate” (Hill 133). Twain’s use of Socratic dialogue is far less effective here than in *Huck Finn*; it is a form that he uses well for comic effect but that, in this attempt at serious philosophy, seems dry and stilted.

In this work, Twain aligns himself with the Old Man, a freethinker—or, at least, as much of a freethinker as one can be, considering the Old Man and Twain’s view that no one “originates a thought in his own head” but rather is only able to pass on views shaped by external influences and heredity (148). Because of this, the Old Man/Twain claims, “A man is never anything but what his outside influences have made him” (163). Lecky’s unwitting influence can be clearly seen here, since Twain uses the ideas Lecky tried to refute; as Baetzhold points out, “the Old Man’s explanation of the ‘training’ process closely parallels Lecky’s summary of the ‘associationist’ position. As the historian puts it, the ‘associationists’ deny the existence of such qualities as innate ‘benevolent’ feelings” (219). In this formal statement of his philosophy, Twain continues to draw on ideas that entered his consciousness thirty years previously.

Using the Old Man as a mouthpiece, Twain vehemently declares that “Man is not to blame for what he is,” since “He didn’t make himself. All the control is vested in his temperament...and the circumstances....He is...purely a piece of automatic mechanism” (330). However, despite this view of man as a “mechanism” and his claim that “there is no such thing” as “Free Will,” Twain does acknowledge that there is something that he calls “Free Choice” (199). Although he does not see man as able to actually freely determine which actions he will take, he admits that people do make choices, showing the same reticence he had earlier shown in “The Character of Man,” shying away from completely denying human freedom. However, this so-called “free” choice is “nothing beyond a mere *mental* process: the critical ability to determine which of two things is nearest right and just” (200). According to Twain, man’s mind is able to make moral judgments about his actions, but the man’s response to this judgment is effectually determined by other factors, keeping man from having freedom of the will.

Twain sees man as being made up of two essential parts: the mind and the machine. The mind, as we have already seen, is responsible for man’s moral judgments, but the way the man responds to these judgments is a result of his machine. The machine is composed of man’s “born disposition and the character which has been built around it by training and environment” (200). Twain again makes his dualistic view of human nature clear when he states, “The mind is quite independent....You have nothing to do with it” (178). Again, Twain emphasizes this dualism by claiming, “Man is a machine, made up of many mechanisms; the moral and mental ones acting automatically in accordance with the impulses of an interior Master who is built out of born-temperament and an accumulation of multitudinous outside influences and trainings....a machine

whose Will is absolute and must be obeyed” (205). Although at some points in “What Is Man?” he makes a distinction between the mind and the machine, here Twain changes his terms and refers to the mind and the interior Master. Twain also makes distinctions between two elements within each of these two entities. The mind is built of “moral and mental” “mechanisms” which make judgments about which actions are right and wrong. The “interior Master,” on the other hand, which determines whether to take the “right” action or the “wrong” one, is composed of temperament and outside influences.

Man’s temperament is born in him (200), but it is only partly responsible for his actions, the other determining factor being the environment that surrounds him. In this, Twain’s views seem largely unchanged from those he espoused in *Connecticut Yankee* in 1889. In *Connecticut Yankee*, he claimed,

Training—training is everything; training is all there is *to* a person. We speak of nature; it is folly; there is no such thing as nature; what we call by that misleading name is merely heredity and training....All that is original in us...can be covered up and hidden by the point of a cambric needle....And as for me, all that I think about in this plodding sad pilgrimage...is to look out and humbly live a pure and high and blameless life, and save that one microscopic atom in me that is truly *me* (208).

In this passage, although he begins by claiming that “training is all there is *to* a person,” Twain soon makes clear that he thinks that there is something “original in us,” although that part is extremely small. These claims are similar to those in *What Is Man?*—man’s temperament is born in him and influences him to some extent, but the rest of man’s behavior is determined by his outside influences. This view seems slightly changed from Twain’s admission in “The Character of Man” that there might be a miniscule amount of “new and original matter” in human “individuality” (61); while the “me” still seems to exist in *What Is Man?*, it seems to be completely reduced to in-born temperament.

This situation is complicated by the fact that Twain wrote his essays in praise of Joan of Arc and Aguinardo during this same period and that these essays give no explanation for this pair's extraordinary accomplishments. However, in these essays Twain does not discuss what actually caused this pair to be able to achieve greatness. He makes clear his view that their training did not suit them for the work they did, but he does not address the question of whether there is something "original" in them separate from in-born temperament.

As we saw earlier, Twain makes clear in "What Is Man?" his view that humans do not have free will. However, Twain does not deny the existence of the will altogether. As the Old Man tells the Young Man, "There is *Will*. But it has nothing to do with *intellectual perceptions of right and wrong*, and is not under their command. [The biblical character] David's temperament and training had Will, and it was a compulsory force; David had to obey its decrees, he had no choice" (201). Thus, the will is not under man's control; it is under the control of his "temperament and training," over which he has no control. Twain's use of "will" here seems to be synonymous with "force"—it is something that man cannot control or deny.

This emphasis on man's inability to control his actions would seem to have definite implications for his moral character. After all, if man is not able to control his actions, he cannot be held responsible for them. However, Twain does not—at least consistently—let man off the hook for his actions. Twain makes his views explicit when the Old Man tells the Young Man, "The fact that man knows right from wrong proves his *intellectual* superiority to the other creatures; but the fact that he can *do* wrong proves his *moral* inferiority" (198-99). Even though man is unable to control his actions, he is seen

as morally inferior to the animals, simply because he knows that his actions are wrong. This hardly seems fair to the human race. In fact, this seems to align him with the Calvinistic view he so condemned in his writing about Jonathan Edwards: “Man is commanded to do so & so. It has been ordained from the beginning of time that some men sha’n’t & others can’t. These are to blame: let them be damned” (qtd. in Bush 258-59). Twain himself realized that he was inconsistent in this regard, as evidenced by his 1904 statement, “I wish I could learn to remember that it is unjust + dishonorable to put blame upon the human race for any of its acts. For it did not make itself, it did not make its nature, it is merely a machine” (qtd. in Bush 261). De Voto sees Twain’s insistence on this point that man is blameless as evidence that “clearly *What Is Man?* is also a plea for pardon. In describing man’s helplessness, it pleads that man cannot be blamed....No one, I think, can read this wearisomely repeated argument without feeling the terrible force of an inner cry: Do not blame me, for it was not my fault” (116). However, if the goal of this philosophy was to absolve humans—and, thus, Twain himself—of guilt, it was ultimately ineffective. Although Twain tried to remember that, according to his own “gospel,” man is not responsible for his actions, his strong sense of moral indignation was ingrained in him too deeply—perhaps as an essential part of his “temperament”—to act as if man really bore no moral responsibility. Edward Wagenknecht points out, “his deterministic philosophy being what it finally was, he knew he had no right either to praise man or to blame him, yet he went right on doing it just the same” (120). Despite his disagreement with Edwards, Twain emotionally came to the same conclusion; mankind is responsible for its actions, even though it cannot avoid them.

However, since, in Twain's view, man's actions are determined not only by temperament but also by training, some room remains for moral improvement. This moral improvement can be effected by changes in man's training. In his 1902 essay "A Defense of General Funston," Twain draws a comparison between George Washington, renowned for his moral character, and General Funston, a "hero" of the war in the Philippines, whose treatment of enemy combatants Twain saw as reprehensible. He claims at the beginning of the essay that "In each case, the basis or moral skeleton of the man was inborn disposition" and follows up with the question, "Is there a value, then, in having a Washington, since we may not concede to him *personal merit* for what he was and did?" (84). Twain's answer to this question is a resounding "yes." To Twain, Washington's "immeasurable value...lies in his permanent and sky-reaching conspicuousness as an *influence*" (85). Because much of man's behavior is subject to his training, not only to his disposition, people such as Washington are invaluable because they are able to effect a change in the training people receive. If Washington, rather than Funston, is praised as a role model, people are more likely to imitate him and, thus, to engage in morally upright behavior. Twain reinforces this in "What Is Man?" when he asserts, "To train men to lead virtuous lives is an inestimably important thing" (165). In these works, Twain sees the human condition as somewhat malleable. This is no doubt the "Pelagian view" that Bush sees Twain as occasionally espousing (214).

However, Twain's overall view of humanity was far from optimistic. He lamented in a 1907 letter to Howells, "I suspect that to you there is still dignity in human life, & that Man is not a joke – a poor joke – the poorest that was ever contrived – an April-fool joke, played by a malicious Creator....Man is not to me the respect-worthy

person he was before” (qtd. in Brodwin, “Mark Twain’s Theology” 231-2). While Twain at times espoused an optimistic view that man could have some effect on his own actions, his overall outlook was overwhelmingly deterministic, leaving little room for man to improve his own moral standing. Andrew Hoffman explains Twain’s reforming work as an effort to develop his image rather than as a genuine effort to improve man’s lot:

He engaged himself in crusade after crusade in part to solidify the image of Mark Twain as a cultural and moral force, but that effort contradicted his belief in the utter absence of free will.... Why should someone try to change the world, at a high personal cost, when the progress of human events was subject to the more or less mechanical movements of history, and not the efforts of individuals? (437).

While Twain himself would be bound by his philosophy to admit that public approval—and self-approval—was dictating his actions in this matter, Hoffman’s belief that Twain’s attempts at reform could only be efforts to improve his public image indicates a misreading of *What Is Man?* Despite the “utter absence of free will” postulated in *What Is Man?*, Twain believed that changes in training could change outcomes. Thus, the training provided by his indignant essays might be enough to change people’s views and actions. However, even though Twain believed that changing training could change outcomes, the fact remains that Twain’s determinism made the possibility for reform shaky at best, which Twain himself realized in his darker moments.

Many have questioned the extent to which Twain actually believed what he wrote in *What Is Man?* As the culmination of Twain’s philosophical reading and thought spanning decades, *What Is Man?* should not be dismissed lightly. Twain himself at least seems to have believed that he believed it. However, the critics who have raised this

question are not without basis. Wagenknecht believes that, since Twain did not act in accordance with what he thought he believed, he, “Like many a man...was bigger than his philosophy”(121). Wolfe thinks that “Mark Twain’s mechanistic outlook, filled as it was with hope for the human race, did not dissipate his pessimism,” since “the one was intellectual, the other emotional” (200). This question is not as simple as whether or not Twain really believed what he said he believed. It seems, instead, that Twain believed more than one thing at the same time.

Twain’s beliefs seem to be contradictory in more than one instance. In the case of whether or not humans should be blamed for their actions, Twain seems to both believe that they are innocent and that they are guilty. Furthermore, in his insistence on the concepts of “right” and “wrong,” Twain undercuts his own philosophy. Baetzhold declares, even while defending *What Is Man?*, “There is no denying...that [Twain’s] arguments at a number of points are confused or superficial, or both. One of the chief flaws in terms of his own theories is that there *is* an ‘upward’ toward which the individual may be trained. One might also ask who decides what that ‘up’ actually is” (225). This relates back to his argument with Lecky, in which Twain agreed with the utilitarians that selfishness is, and ought to be, the motive for human action but was still unable to completely banish the idea of morality outside of human interest. However, the fact that Twain’s beliefs were self-contradictory does not destroy their validity for understanding his outlook on life.

Many have furthered their argument that Twain did not believe what he wrote in *What Is Man?* by pointing to his fascination with dreams exhibited in “Which Was the Dream?” and the *Mysterious Stranger* manuscripts. They see No. 44’s claim that “*Life*

itself is only a vision, a dream” as Twain’s attempt to relieve mankind from the relentless determinism of so much of his other work (404). De Voto, working from the distorted text prepared by A.B. Paine, sees the *Mysterious Stranger* as doing away with the philosophical and religious problems that had plagued Twain: “He could end his contention with the vengeful God and put away remorse forever by reducing all contention, vengeance, pain, degradation, guilt, sin, and panic to a lonely dream.” Because of this, De Voto thinks, 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” (130). De Voto is not alone in this view. Cummings claims that Twain “was... turning away from his determinism. A part of Mark Twain loathed his own ‘Gospel’” (Cummings 213). Tuckey expands on this by specifying that Twain “had not one but two philosophies; or one might say more particularly, two psychologies—the somewhat older positivistic one...which viewed human beings as mechanisms...and the newer one, emphasizing the forces of the unconscious and the significance of dreams” (532-33). Of course, as we have already seen, Twain’s ideas were not always logically consistent, and he did believe mutually contradictory ideas. But neither “Which Was the Dream?” nor the *Mysterious Stranger* manuscripts must be read as undercutting Twain’s determinism, which he continued to espouse to the end of his life.

An initial reason that these works should not overly influence our view of Twain’s determinism is that the dates of composition of these works indicate that they were not Twain’s final word on the issue. “Which Was the Dream?” dates to 1897 (Tuckey 31), a year before Twain began work on *What Is Man?*. Furthermore, the

famous dream ending of *No. 44*, one of the *Mysterious Stranger* manuscripts, most likely dates to “the intense period of worry and depression preceding [Twain’s] wife’s death on June 5, 1904,” leading Baetzholt to believe, “It is unlikely...that Clemens accepted the solipsism of his conclusion as a serious philosophical position” (236-37). Whether or not Twain intended this “as a serious philosophical position” at the time, this date of composition comes two years before his publication of *What Is Man?*, indicating that the determinism of the latter work still maintained its hold.

The second reason why these works should not undermine Twain’s determinism is that it seems likely that, even when these were initially written, Twain did not see them as contradicting his deterministic philosophy. Quirk points out, “Twain may not have intended the figure of *No. 44* to be understood as anything other than an invented person called into service on behalf of the dreamer...this narrative may be just what *44* implies it is—a dream fable” (271). This seems like the best way of squaring the seeming solipsism of *No. 44* with the determinism of *What Is Man?*, especially considering that Twain continued to espouse his deterministic philosophy even within the *Mysterious Stranger* manuscripts. In *The Chronicle of Young Satan*, the title character, the unfallen nephew of the original Satan, enters into a dialogue with the narrator, who asks, regarding the paths of humans’ lives, “Does God order the career?” Young Satan replies, “Foreordain it? No. The man’s circumstances and environment order it. His first act determines the second and all that follow after” (115). In *No. 44*, the angelic/satanic title character continues to explain this deterministic view of life: “A man *originates* nothing in his head, he merely observes exterior things, and *combines* them in his head...His mind is merely a machine, that is all” (333). The presence of these clear

statements of determinism within the manuscripts thought to throw doubt on Twain's commitment to his philosophy indicates that Twain himself did not see his determinism as destroyed by the supposedly solipsistic ending.

Through his last years, Twain continued to insist on his determinism. In "The Turning Point of My Life," which was published in February 1910, two months before his death, Twain claimed, "I was one of the unavoidable results of the crossing of the Rubicon," explaining that each event that occurs is one "link" in an unbreakable chain of events (457). He goes on to trace the origins of his literary career to the case of measles he contracted as a child, explaining that this event was an early one in an inevitable chain that led him to his literary success. He argues that the two causal factors driving this chain are "Circumstance" and "temperament" and hearkens back to *What Is Man?* when he declares,

Circumstance furnished the capital, and my temperament told me what to do with it. Sometimes a temperament is an ass. When that is the case the owner of it is an ass, too, and is going to remain one. Training, experience, association, can temporarily so elevate him that people will think he is a mule, but they will be mistaken (460).

Twain's continued insistence on this point in his last published work is surely significant. Despite his logical inconsistencies, Twain at least believed that he believed in this deterministic mechanism, and, because of this, his determinism provides a useful lens for reading his work.

Although Twain's determinism was long in the making, in some ways "The Turning Point of My Life" brings his work full circle. As Twain concludes this final work published during his lifetime, he reflects on the story of human origins that he learned in his childhood. "Necessarily the scene of the real turning point of my life (and

of yours),” he writes, “was the Garden of Eden” (463). Twain here applies his philosophy to the story of the Fall, joking—but perhaps half serious—

I cannot help feeling disappointed in Adam and Eve. That is, in their temperaments. Not in *them*....afflicted with temperaments made out of butter....What I cannot help wishing is, that Adam and Eve had been postponed, and Martin Luther and Joan of Arc put in their place—that splendid pair equipped with temperaments made not out of butter, but of asbestos. By neither sugary persuasions nor by hellfire could Satan have beguiled *them* to eat the apple (464).

This is Twain’s final word, both on determinism and on religion, and he uses the story of Adam and Eve to make it. It is for this reason that Twain’s presentation of Adam and Eve is so important—because their story, for Twain, is the crux of the issues that he dealt with throughout his life.

“My Sympathies Are With Adam”:

Mark Twain and the Fall

Twain’s lifelong fascination with religious and philosophical concerns feeds into his obsession with the biblical story of Adam and Eve. His Edenic writings of his later years have received little critical attention, but this neglect is unwarranted. While the artistic quality of these texts may fail to reach the heights Twain reached in works such as *Huck Finn*, these stories in many ways are the culmination of the religious and philosophical doubts Twain struggled with throughout his life and present his attempt to deal emotionally in fiction with the concerns he tried to approach rationally and didactically in *What Is Man?* Whereas Twain’s earlier passing references to Adam were often humorous and his earlier representations of the Fall were metaphoric, in some of his later works Twain deals overtly with the themes that had covertly appeared in his work throughout his career. For Twain, his examinations of the Fall served as a way to imaginatively work through questions of life and death.

It is no secret that Twain returned again and again to the figure of Adam and the story of the Fall throughout his life. The sheer number of times Twain mentions Adam in his works is astonishing, and, in many of these cases, Twain uses Adam chiefly for comic effects. In his 1869 work *The Innocents Abroad*, Twain positions his narrator at the supposed tomb of Adam, humorously lamenting the loss of this distant relative. In his

1905 story “Adam’s Soliloquy,” Twain positions Adam in the modern-day Museum of Natural History, inspecting the dinosaur skeletons, and in a park, reflecting on all of his descendants passing by him. In “Adam’s Expulsion,” Twain tells of Adam’s immediate descendants trying to convince him to write down the events of the expulsion from Eden. Since Adam puts off telling his story and ultimately is too old to remember what happened, Twain here seems to use Adam simply as an excuse to write farcical paraphrases of scriptural verses—paraphrases such as the following: “...an exceeding great fear came upon all that saw it...and they fled away to the mountains, crying, ‘Hold the fort for I am coming’” (115). This is merely a smattering of examples of the way Twain uses the figure of Adam throughout his works in ways that, as these examples show, are often primarily comic.

Twain’s comedy often took the form of relating the story of Adam and his fall to events of his own life and the lives of other people, as demonstrated in works ranging from an early newspaper piece which he signed “A Son of Adam” (qtd. in Cummings 36) to his last published work “The Turning Point of My Life.” In a letter written during Twain’s piloting days, he tells an acquaintance, “What a fool old Adam was. Had everything his own way...but yet, unsatisfied...he had to eat a miserable little apple.” He then goes on to relate this story to his reader: “Ah, John, if you had been in his place you would not have eaten a mouthful...--that is, if it had required any exertion” (A. B. Paine I: 156). Twain again demonstrates his propensity to use the story of the Fall to explain the behaviors of other people in the “Sandwich Islands Lecture,” in which he claims that women on the islands are not allowed “to eat of the choice fruits of the islands,” since “They seemed to have had a sort of dim knowledge of what came of women eating fruit

in the Garden of Eden and they didn't feel justified in taking any more chances" (7). Twain again uses Adam to explain human behavior in *Innocents Abroad*, when he writes, "The nomadic instinct is a human instinct; it was born with Adam and transmitted through the patriarchs, and after thirty centuries of steady effort, civilization has not educated it entirely out of us yet" (587). Twain directly links himself with Adam when, in 1876, he was asked to name his "Favorite tree." Twain responded, "Any that bear forbidden fruit" (qtd. in Bush 89). Twain again relates Adam's experience to his own when his struggles with copyright find expression in the following notebook entry: "Adam was the author of sin, and I wish he had taken out an international copyright on it. For international copyright could have won, then. But when there came to be two men, it was too late..." (qtd. in Werge 6). In all of these instances and many more, Twain relates the story of Adam, Eve, and their Fall to the lives of himself and his contemporaries, and, in many of these cases, he uses the idea of the Fall to explain human experience in his own time.

Twain's references to Eden and the Fall are not always so explicit. Many of his works can be read as dealing with the idea of a Fall, even when Adam, Eve, and Eden are not directly mentioned. In fact, Stanley Brodwin classifies Twain's works into three phases, "prelapsarian," including works like *The Innocents Abroad*, "balance[d]," including works like *Huck Finn*, and "postlapsarian," including later works like *Connecticut Yankee* (Abstract 1-2). Brodwin sees this pattern as reflecting a "lifelong nostalgia for innocence and childhood" and as presenting America as having fallen from glorious beginnings to the Gilded Age of Twain's time (Preface vi, viii). Pamela Boker similarly sees Twain as "mourning for a former state of the self, namely childhood"

(130). Support for this comes from one of Twain's letters, in which he writes that, "in thinking of [his childhood in Hannibal]," he has "seemed like some banished Adam who is revisiting his half-forgotten Paradise" (qtd. in Brodwin MTFM 1). It seems likely that this reading is correct, to a certain extent. However, Twain's repeated use of Adam and the Fall should not be dismissed as merely relating to mourning over a lost childhood or a corrupted nation.

In some ways, Twain's insistence on including Adam in his works, or of even basing those works on the story of Adam and the Fall, can be seen as a participation in religious and scientific debates about the origins of the human family tree. Sherwood Cummings sums up this aspect of the issue well when he writes,

Samuel Clemens appears to have embraced the implications of the new science with a vengeance; but...the more he gave in to those implications, the more he returned in his musings and story-telling to the subject of Eden and Adam and Eve....evidence can be assembled to indicate that at *one* level of his thinking, at any rate, he was classically troubled...over the choice between Genesis and Darwin (Cummings 32-33).

Cummings sees Twain's Adamic humor as a way to "fend off claims against Adam's existence" (36). Of course, Twain does not seriously attempt to contend with Darwin; as we have already seen, Twain admired Darwin's work and even used it to build his own philosophy. However, Twain's Adamic humor seems to be bittersweet, nostalgic for the idea that Adam really was the father of mankind yet still poking fun at this idea.

Twain continually juxtaposes Darwin's account of human origins with that of the Bible, for example, in the "Autobiography of Eve" when Twain gives Adam, Eve, and Cain the credit for making all of the fossils that would later so perplex geologists (62). In this instance, Twain humorously explains away much of the evidence for evolution. In

No. 44, Twain playfully eliminates the conflict between the ideas when discussing an assemblage of ghosts: “The skeletons of Adam’s predecessors outnumbered the later representatives of our race by myriads....Among them was the Missing Link...” (403). In this case, Twain rewrites history to allow both narratives to be true: the narrative linking human origins back to Adam and the narrative tracing origins past human ancestors to animals.

Twain’s involvement in this issue can perhaps be most clearly seen in his proposal for a monument to Adam. In 1879, Twain humorously proposed the idea of building a monument to Adam in Elmira, asserting that this site would soon be the destination of pilgrims and tourists. “The matter started as a joke,” Twain later explained, “but it came somewhat near to materializing” (“A Monument to Adam” 234). The reason Adam needed a monument, according to Twain, was that he was being outmoded and was in danger of being forgotten, due to the increasing influence and popularity of Darwin, who “had left Adam out altogether” (“A Monument...” 234). This proposal, begun in jest by Twain, acquired some serious backing and was almost presented to Congress, since Twain’s jesting petition was signed by nearly a hundred backers (excluding Twain himself).

Twain’s motivation for starting the Adam monument petition seems to have been simply that he thought it would be funny. Yet, one might wonder why such a project would even occur to him in the first place; the answer seems to be that Twain was deeply concerned with the question of origins. After the failure of this petition, in his 1883 speech at the Royal Literary and Scientific Society dinner, Twain presents a pseudo-explanation for his petition when he laments the possibility that Adam will be “forgotten”

("On Adam" 180). Twain later reversed his position when he commented on "The insane oddity of a monument set up...to preserve a name that would outlast the hills and rocks without any such help" ("A Monument..." 235). While Twain did not seriously think that Adam was in danger of being forgotten, on some level this Adam monument proposition seems to have reflected anxieties that were very real for Twain. The fact that Twain was so fascinated with this petition seems to indicate a deeper level of concern, despite his humorous handling of the subject.

Although the 1879 monument project never reached fruition, Twain resurrected the idea in fiction in his later piece "The Refuge of the Derelicts," in which a starry-eyed poet tries to draw financial supporters to create an Adam monument of his own. The poet's chief supporter, known as "the Admiral," frequently soliloquizes on the person of Adam. On one occasion, he explains the significance of Adam:

Suppose you ordered a Man at the start, and had a chance to look over the plans and specifications—which would you take, Adam or the germ? Naturally you would say Adam is business, the germ ain't; one is immediate and sure, the other is speculative and uncertain. Well, I have thought these things all over, and my sympathies are with Adam. Adam was like *us*, and so he seems near to us, and dear. He is kin, blood kin, and my heart goes out to him in affection. But I don't feel that way about that germ. The germ is too far away—and...such a wilderness of reptiles between ("Refuge of the Derelicts" 341).

In this passage, we can perhaps see part of the reason for Twain's repeated use of Adam and his repetition of his Adam monument idea. The story of Adam provides a human connection to human origins; Darwin's explanation, in a way, is dehumanizing. William R. Macnaughton explains, "Through these intellectual discussions [in "Refuge of the Derelicts"], material that could have caused pain is rendered comic for the reader" (215). And not only for the reader, but for Twain himself. While Cummings writes that Twain

shows “a playful attempt to reconcile the apprehensions of science and myth” (36), Twain’s continued insistence on this theme raises the question of to what extent Twain’s playfulness hides serious anxieties.

For Twain, the figure of Adam provided a way to examine not only questions of human origins but also questions deeply significant for his own life and for those of his fellow human beings. For Twain, Adam serves almost as an Everyman; Twain once wrote, “Every man is...the human race,” and this is particularly true of Adam, as the father of humanity (qtd. in Brodwin *MTFM* 3). Throughout his work, Twain had “a tendency... to speak more broadly about his created characters and to contrive situations that dramatize certain aspects of human nature,” as Tom Quirk notes (151), and this tendency is amplified in his dealings with Adam, who serves as a case study of human nature. As Brodwin explains, “it is clear that Mark Twain was searching for causes. This may well be why he used Adam as his exemplum” (*MTFM* 67). Because Adam is in a unique position as the first man and as the one whose Fall has traditionally been thought to have caused the presence of sin and death in the world, Twain was able to use his story to examine the causes of the problems for which he sought to find solutions in his struggles with theology and philosophy. Twain used Adam and Eve to imaginatively work out the religious and philosophical questions that plagued him throughout his life—questions of freedom and conscience, life and death.

Twain uses Adam (and Eve) for humorous effects in many works discussing the Fall directly. However, in these stories, Twain does not content himself with humor but also uses the story of the Fall to examine a variety of questions about the nature of humanity and of God. Although he addresses both of these issues, his focus is primarily

on the nature of mankind and the Fall's effect on it, rather than on the character of God. In fact, as Ensor notes, in "Extracts from Adam's Diary" "The name of God does not even occur, nor is there any but the most oblique reference to him" (46). It seems counterintuitive to write a story of the Fall without discussing the God who forms man in the biblical account; Twain's decision to minimize the appearance of this character tells us much about his primary project in these stories—to examine the question "What is man?" through the story of Adam and Eve. Although God does play a larger role in some of these stories, the main focus is on humanity.

One of the primary questions to consider in any discussion of the Fall—and one Twain addresses—is the question of whether or not the Fall was "fortunate" for mankind. The idea of a *felix culpa*, or happy fault, has been addressed by centuries of theologians. Milton, who Twain self-consciously echoes and quarrels with in some of his discussions of the Fall, himself raises this question when Adam reflects,

...full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By mee done and occasion'd, or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
To God more glory, more good will to Men (465; XII.473-
77).

Scholars have long quarreled about Milton's view of this issue, and Twain's is no more clear-cut. In fact, Twain takes opposing positions on the issue in his various writings. Of course, this question had a much more literal meaning for Milton, who believed in an actual Fall from Paradise, but the amount of anger seemingly contained in some of Twain's writing on this issue indicates that this is a question of great importance to him, as well.

Twain had a long-lasting interest in the question of the positive or negative results of the Fall. Guy Cardwell notes, “he was at least passingly fascinated by ‘the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall.’ A fortunate fall could be, it seems, a supplementary way for Clemens to excuse himself for his ‘crimes’” (214). This is one possible explanation for Twain’s repeated dealings with this topic, although this does not square with all of Twain’s discussion of this question. In some cases, Twain does indeed minimize the negative results of the Fall, which could be seen as him justifying sin by its good results, but, in many cases, Twain rejects the idea that the Fall was fortunate.

In several of his writings, Twain takes the position that the Fall brought benefits to mankind—a position that at times seems serious, at others facetious. One of the earlier works in which Twain addresses this issue is *Pudd’nhead Wilson*. In an excerpt from *Pudd’nhead Wilson’s Calendar* included as a chapter heading, Twain/Wilson writes, “Whoever has lived long enough to find out what life is, knows how deep a dept of gratitude we owe to Adam, the first great benefactor of our race. He brought death into the world” (69). In this passage, Twain/Wilson treats the Fall as positive, bringing death as a relief from life (a sentiment to be echoed more darkly in the “Autobiography of Eve”). It is perhaps significant that this work was published prior to the deaths of his daughter Susy and wife Olivia; Twain here treats the topic of death relatively lightheartedly. However, even though this quip presents death as positive, it presents life as negative—dark humor, at best.

“Extracts from Adam’s Diary” is another work that Twain was working on simultaneously with *Pudd’nhead Wilson* and that he continued to revise until 1905. In this work, Twain takes a straightforwardly positive view of the Fall. In an early version

of the story, Eve convinces Adam that the Fall is actually a result of his telling “an aged and mouldy joke,” also known as a “chestnut” (282). In this story, Adam and Eve do not get along until after the Fall. Shortly before this (un)fortunate event, Adam complains, “I advised [Eve] to keep away from the tree. She said she wouldn’t. I foresee trouble. Will emigrate” (281). But after the Fall, Adam and Eve come to enjoy each others’ companionship, and, by the time that the story ends, Adam affirms the positive effect of the Fall: “I see that I was mistaken about Eve in the beginning; it is better to live outside the Garden with her than inside it without her...Blessed be the chestnut that brought us near together and taught me to know the goodness of her heart and the sweetness of her spirit!” (286). In this line, Twain seems to consciously or unconsciously echo the words of Adam to Eve in *Paradise Lost* when he contemplates leaving paradise: “...with thee to go/ Is to stay here; without thee here to stay/ Is to go hence unwilling” (468; XII.615-17). In his revised version of the story, Twain keeps the element of tension between Adam and Eve before the Fall and harmony after. Again, Twain presents the Fall as positive. His only revision of the last line of the story is to substitute the word “sorrow” for “chestnut”—“Blessed be the sorrow that brought us together...” (16). In this lighthearted, upbeat work, Twain presents the blessing of human companionship as a direct result of the Fall—a result that outweighs any negative effects.

Twain takes a similar view in “Eve’s Diary,” which he wrote in 1905, after his wife Olivia’s death. This is a sentimentalized version of the Fall, in which Eve’s “(unwitting and un[con]scious)text” is “Extracts from Adam’s Diary” (Twain, qtd. in Emerson 281). Twain’s treatment of the Fall is here less serious than in some of his other works, which Macnaughton explains in this way: “Undoubtedly because he was writing

for immediate publication, Mark Twain neither asks for any conjectures from the reader concerning the reasons for the Fall, nor bewails the consequences of it, preferring instead a sentimental ending” (218). Yet, although Twain deals lightheartedly with the Fall in this story, his dealings with the question of the Fortunate Fall in this work are still worth comparing to those of his other writings. Because Eve is responding indirectly to the same events as Adam was in his diary, their treatments of the question of the Fortunate Fall are much alike.

In this “diary” of the mother of the race, life in Eden does not live up to the hype. In this version of the Fall, too, Adam does not come to appreciate Eve until after the Fall. In fact, Eve writes prior to the Fall, “Yesterday [Adam] avoided me....But when night came I could not bear the lonesomeness, and went to the new shelter which he has built...but he put me out in the rain, and it was my first sorrow” (24). Later she tells of the companionship she finds by looking at her own reflection in the water and explains, “she [the reflection] is my comfort and my refuge when my life is hard—and it is mainly that” (25). Not only does Eve experience loneliness before the Fall, but also she experiences grief and fear (27). This prelapsarian existence seems somewhat less than ideal. However, this situation is rectified by the Fall. Eve writes, “The Garden is lost, but I have found *him*, and am content” (31) (emphasis in original). Eve is never content before the Fall; it is only the gain of Adam’s love, apparently a result of the Fall, that can bring her happiness. Twain chooses to end “Eve’s Diary” not with her words but rather with Adam’s words after Eve’s death: “Wheresoever she was, *there* was Eden” (33). Again, Twain echoes the sentiment that human love is worth more than living in paradise. The year prior to writing “Eve’s Diary,” following Olivia’s death, Twain told his brother-

in-law, “I am a man without a country. Wherever Livy was, that was my country” (qtd. in *BMT* 19)—a sentiment similar to that expressed by Adam in “Eve’s Diary” or in *Paradise Lost*, as Adam tells Eve, “thou to mee/ Art all things under Heav’n, all places thou” (468; XII.617-18). Twain’s repetition of this ancient theme marked the last time Twain could “with such feeling and without bitterness... write of the first couple the world had ever known,” as Ensor notes. In Twain’s other works dealing with this question—works written both prior to and after those already cited—the Fall is presented in a wholly negative light.

Although Twain presents a somewhat positive view of the Fall in the excerpt from *Pudd’nhead Wilson* in which he credits Adam with bringing death to humanity, another saying from *Pudd’nhead Wilson’s Calendar* presents the Fall in a negative—although humorous—light. “Adam was but human,” Twain explains. “He did not want the apple for the apple’s sake; he wanted it only because it was forbidden. The mistake was in not forbidding the serpent; then he would have eaten the serpent” (61). While Twain does not here outline what, exactly, the negative effects of the Fall were, his referring to God’s injunction not to eat the apple as a “mistake” indicates that man’s disobedience had negative results. This quip also lays the blame for this unfortunate fall firmly on God’s shoulders. As Ensor notes, “beneath the humor lies first the suggestion that Adam could not have chosen abstinence...and second a hint that God was rather foolish to expect the outcome to be otherwise” (52). Not only is the Fall unfortunate for mankind, but also the blame for it lies not with humanity but with God.

This idea is repeated in “Diaries Antedating the Flood,” which includes a “Passage from Satan’s Diary” and a “Passage from Eve’s Diary,” where Twain presents a

negative account of the Fall. In this work, Brodwin points out, Twain “confronts the more tragic and theologically serious issues of the Fall,” and Twain comes to the conclusion that the Fall was most definitely not fortunate (MTFM 56). In “Satan’s Diary,” the title character is not nearly so bad as most tellings of the story have made him out to be. In fact, Satan tries to warn Adam and Eve not to eat the apple. He cautions them that the Moral Sense, which they will gain by eating the apple, “is a degradation, a disaster....it has but one office...to teach how to do wrong” (66)¹. When Eve fails to heed his warning, Satan relates, she realizes her nakedness and laments, “I am degraded—I have fallen, oh so low, and I shall never rise again” (67). However, this is not the only result of the Fall. In this telling of the story, Adam and Eve have remained in Eden for a hundred years without sin and have retained their youth, but, as soon as Eve eats the apple, “her hundred years rose upon her” (67). Thus, in this telling, the Fall is definitely a negative experience. There is no evidence here that Adam and Eve gain anything from the Fall except for the ability to do wrong, which Satan makes clear is not a positive result.

Similarly, the “Passage from Eve’s Diary” presents the Fall as a wholly negative experience. Now, Eve says, they have gained “the conscience that persecutes guilt and innocence alike”—a telling statement, considering Twain’s inability to banish his own feelings of guilt (68). Eve now wishes that they “could sell [the Moral Sense] for one hour of Eden and white purity,” or, if they cannot do that, that they could at least “degrade the animals with it!” (68). As Brodwin points out, in Twain’s view “man had

¹ This is somewhat less vehement than the 1898 “Schoolhouse Hill” fragment from the “Mysterious Stranger” manuscripts, in which the son of Satan claims that “The fruit’s office was not confined to conferring the mere knowledge of good and evil, it conferred also the passionate and eager and hungry *disposition to DO evil*” (216, emphasis in original).

Fallen to a position below the animals” (“Mark Twain’s Theology” 227). And this is not the worst of it. At this point of the “Diary” Eve does not know what death is, but that is soon changed when she and Adam discover Abel “with his head crushed and his face and body drenched in blood” (69). This, they learn, is death.

The depiction of the Fall as positive in some works but negative in others makes the question of the cause of the Fall and the possibility of avoiding it particularly important. If the Fall has no negative consequences, there is no need to blame anyone for it, but, if the Fall is indeed unfortunate, the question of whom to blame becomes essential. In the works in which Twain presents the Fall as positive or neutral, the cause of the Fall is treated in a similarly lighthearted fashion, but in the cases where the Fall is presented in a negative light, Twain’s determinism places the blame firmly on God.

In dealing with this issue, Twain is entering directly into religious debates. As Bush notes, “Adam provided Twain with a powerful trope through which he could reinterpret his attitude.... his use of Adam constituted an engagement in the religious controversy between classic Calvinism and an emergent Arminianism/Pelagianism, a controversy that spanned the entire century and beyond” (209). Interestingly enough, Twain here follows in the footsteps of Milton, his predecessor in this sense, who also engaged in the determinism/free will debate through the story of the Fall of man in *Paradise Lost*. While Milton claims that God created man “Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall,” Twain’s main charge against God is that man did not have the capability to stand and was thus not “free” to do anything (260; III.99).

Twain’s treatment of this issue is not confined solely to the religious sphere, however. While Twain explicitly lays out his deterministic views of humanity in *What Is*

Man? and other works, they also play a large role in his discussions of Adam's Fall. Brodwin explains, "Mark Twain's mechanistic philosophy found its roots, ironically, but logically, in the Garden of Eden" (MTFM 68). Twain's sympathetic retellings of Adam's Fall are in accord with the following passage that he marked in Lecky's *History of European Morals*: "it is through ignorance and involuntarily that they [men] sin" (qtd. in "Mark Twain's Personal Marked Copy..." [July-Aug. 1955] 4). It is indeed significant that Lecky, whose work provided such an inspiration for Twain in developing his own philosophy, provides Twain with backing on this essential point. In this way, Twain's struggles with religion and philosophy converge in his dealings with Adam.

In "Extracts from Adam's Diary," in which Twain presents the Fall as resulting in human companionship, Twain treats the circumstances of the Fall lightheartedly. As Adam tersely narrates events before the Fall, we learn that Eve, who is always demonstrating concern for the animals, "has taken up with a snake now" (11). Eve realizes that some of the animals in Eden are not designed for vegetarian diets, because, in the case of the lions and tigers, "the sort of teeth they wear would indicate that they were intended to eat each other" (10). When the serpent tries to convince her to eat from the tree of knowledge, Adam warns her against it because "it would bring death into the world," but, he realizes, "it had been better to keep the remark to myself; it only gave her an idea—she could save the sick buzzard, and furnish meat to the despondent lions and tigers" (11). Adam, tired of interacting with Eve, decides to "Emigrate" but stops when, all of a sudden, the animals start eating each other, indicating that Eve has eaten the apple and brought death into the world—another of Twain's borrowings from Milton, who similarly has the animals start attacking one another after the Fall (Ensor 47). After

Adam sees the results of the Fall, Eve brings him some of the fruit of the tree, and, he says, “I was obliged to eat them, I was so hungry. It was against my principles, but I find that principles have no real force except when one is well fed” (12). In this case, Adam and Eve do know the possible results of the Fall, but they both choose to eat the apple anyway, and, despite the animals’ sudden conversion to meat eating, the Fall has positive results, indicating that the question of causation and blame is not all that important in this case.

In “Eve’s Diary,” which also treats the Fall as a positive experience, the cause of the Fall is not explicitly deterministic, either. Here Eve is presented as trying to please Adam, which seems to indirectly cause the Fall, even though this version does not actually include the moment of the Fall. Eve writes, “I tried to get [Adam] some of those apples, but I cannot learn to throw straight. I failed, but I think the good intention pleased him. They are forbidden, and he says I shall come to harm; but so I come to harm through pleasing him, why shall I care for that harm?” (24). In this case, prelapsarian existence seems much like postlapsarian existence, minus the human companionship. Prior to the Fall, Eve remarks that she “made...wreaths and garlands and clothed myself...whilst I ate my luncheon—apples of course” while she “wished and waited for Adam” (25). In this case, it is not entirely clear what is the exact cause of the Fall, considering that Eve eats apples prior to the Fall. However, Eve’s determination to bring Adam apples indicates that her love for him is likely the determining factor, and, since the Fall results in human companionship, it seems worthwhile.

The “Autobiography of Eve” also initially treats the Fall lightheartedly, but Twain does here become more serious. While the “Autobiography” shares some of the

characteristics of “Eve’s Diary,” in this story Twain fleshes out his deterministic view of humanity and its implications for the Fall. In this earliest attempt at depicting the Fall from Eve’s point of view (Twain wrote it in 1901 or 1902 [*BMT* 35]), Eve is created outside of the Garden and must find her way into it in order to discover Adam. In this way, Twain works “to make a thematic point: that post-Edenic conditions were inherent in Eden itself,” indicating that Paradise is not all it was cracked up to be (Macnaughton 220). In Eve’s autobiography, she seems to be an innocent victim in a cruel world—even before the Fall. In her life outside of Eden, she experiences “bitter...biting cold” and wind that “cut[s] [her] cruelly,” in addition the loneliness we also see in other versions of her story. Furthermore, Eve is deeply hurt by the rejection she initially experiences from Adam, when he physically repulses her when she kisses him. She questions:

How could he use me so? What had I done? I had not meant any harm....I am young and have no one to teach me, and if I made a mistake was it so great a one that I deserved such humiliation? I could hardly believe it had happened. I had never been treated so before; the animals always gave me love for love, and never thought to hurt my body or shame my pride (50).

In this case, however, human companionship is achieved in the Garden, when Adam “repent[s]” (51). In fact, Adam and Eve have children in Eden—and not only Cain and Abel, but also “Edwina,” “Gladys,” and a few others (62). Despite these differences from later versions of the story, Twain here originates some of the ideas he would later include in “Extracts from Adam’s Diary” and other retellings.

As in “Eve’s Diary,” the moment of the Fall is not included in the “Autobiography of Eve,” but as in “Extracts from Adam’s Diary,” Eve realizes that some of the animals—particularly a lion she names William McKinley—need meat (56). Despite this, and despite Ensor’s claim that this same realization in “Extracts from

Adam's Diary" indicates that "Adam and Eve know what 'death' means" (47), Adam and Eve here clearly have no conception of the meaning of death. In fact, the two of them explicitly discuss this question as they sit in the shade of the tree of knowledge. "Adam," Eve asks, after discussing with him the unknown meanings of the words "good" and "evil," "There are those other new words—die, and death. What do *they* mean?" "I have no idea," Adam replies (58). Eve quickly comes up with a solution to this problem—"Let us eat of it," she suggests; "we shall die, and then we shall know what it is, and not have any more bother about it" (58)². Adam consents to her plan, and the two are about to follow through with it when they are distracted by the passing of a Pterodactyl, whom they subsequently name "Terry" (59). The Fall is thus left for another day, but Adam and Eve's inability to make an informed decision about eating the apple marks the beginnings of Twain's deterministic explanations for it. Because Adam and Eve do not know what "good," "evil," or "death" are, they are unable to freely and meaningfully choose. Adam and Eve's unique position means that they are free of much of the training that would shape their descendants, but this means that they are not trained to avoid things that will bring them harm. Although the Fall and its consequences are temporarily averted, the Fall is sure to come, and Adam and Eve are clearly victims of their circumstances and of the God that created them. Furthermore, this story continues long after the Fall, and, by the end of the "Autobiography," Eve sees death in a positive light and welcomes wars

² This suggestion is similar to a thought Twain attributes to his boyhood self in the "Turning Point of My Life." In this passage, Twain discusses his anxiety over the measles outbreak in Hannibal and his decision to try to contract the disease. Upon successfully doing so, he relates that he exulted, "There, I've got it! and I shall die" (458). This similarity indicates the way in which Twain identified with this first couple, whom he saw as victims of the same cruel God who, he believed, was responsible for his own pain.

and pestilence, as bringing an end to the misery of existence on an overpopulated earth³. This attributing a positive value to death is clearly ironic; death is only positive because existence after the Fall has become negative.

In “Diaries Antedating the Flood,” Twain retains many of these ideas, and this version of the story, too, takes a serious turn. In “Passage from Satan’s Diary,” one of the diaries included, Satan has nothing against Adam and Eve; rather, he tries to explain to Eve the meanings of the words “pain,” “fear,” “death,” “good,” and “evil” (64-65). However, Eve is unable to understand and comes away with the impression that “nothing could be better than Death” (65). Eve’s enforced naiveté results in the Fall since she cannot understand the meaning or possible results of the prohibition and since she is desirous to know what the Moral Sense is that Satan warns her the apple will impart. As Adam tells her, “I have not understood any of this talk, but if you like we will eat [the apple], for I cannot see that there is any objection to it” (66). Eve eats first, of course, and Adam is able to see the negative results it has on her, yet he “loyally and bravely” joins her, much as Milton’s Adam realizes the negative results of the Fall but chooses to die with Eve rather than live without her (67). In this way, Adam, quite literally, “falls” for Eve. Unlike in the “autobiography,” Adam willingly and nobly chooses to join Eve in her fate. Eve’s fate is determined by her lack of knowledge, Adam’s by his love.

In this case, as in Eve’s “autobiography,” Eve has no way of knowing what the Fall means or what its results will be and thus cannot be blamed for it. Brodwin sees this as indicating that Adam and Eve are “childish” and unable to make proper decisions; like Adam and Eve, he believes, we are victims who have “impossible moral decisions thrust

³ In fact, the story of the Fall plays only a minor part in “The Autobiography of Eve.” The main focus is on overpopulation and other concerns of life after the Fall. Because my focus here is on Twain’s concern with the events of the Fall, I have chosen to focus primarily on this minor part of the text.

on us illogically when we are in a state of innocence—childhood,” which “has the effect of poisoning our adult life with guilt” (MTFM 68-69). In this way, Twain relates the story of the first couple to his own experiences and his own struggle with guilt over events which his own philosophy told him were unavoidable. Eve herself underscores this point in a “Passage from Eve’s Diary” included in “Diaries Antedating the Flood,” when she laments,

...what had we done? We meant no harm. We were ignorant, and did as any other children might do. We could not know it was wrong to disobey the command, for the words were strange to us and we did not understand them....If we had been given the Moral Sense first—ah, that would have been fairer, that would have been kinder: then we should be to blame if we disobeyed....We were ignorant then, we are rich in learning now....We know...remorse, the guilt that persecutes guilt and innocence alike (67-68).

Here, God is clearly to blame. As Ensor comments, “this time, [Twain’s] purpose was not comedy but a serious attack on God or the Bible or both” (56). Adam and Eve do not understand the meaning of the command, yet they are punished as if they did; they are not to blame, yet they are blamed.

Twain’s treatment of the Fall in the “Schoolhouse Hill” fragment offers a varying explanation for the cause of the Fall, but it still leaves God as the mastermind behind the tragedy. In “Schoolhouse Hill,” Satan’s son reveals that Adam and Eve fell due to his “father’s conduct” (214). However, Satan did not mean to cause Adam and Eve’s ruin, rather,

when he made the venture it was because his idea of the nature of the fruit was a most erroneous one....He...supposed that the nature of the fruit was to reveal to human beings the knowledge of good and evil—that and nothing more; but not to Satan the great angel; he had that knowledge before...The fruit’s office was not confined to conferring the mere knowledge of good and evil, it conferred

also the passionate and eager and hungry *disposition to DO evil* (215-16, emphasis in original).

Brodwin explains this passage as presenting “a new perspective. . . .not only is Adam an innocent victim, but the whole ‘temptation’ situation is a lamentable mistake. Adam *and* Satan have been fooled by God, and are therefore natural objects of sympathy for Mark Twain” (“Mark Twain’s Masks of Satan” 222, emphasis in original). Although the Fall is blamed on Satan here—unlike in these other retellings—he is not really the guilty party, since in this case, he, like Adam and Eve, is ignorant. Although this telling explains the circumstances of the Fall differently, it comes to the same conclusion—that God is the guilty party.

Twain again blames God for the Fall in “Letters from Earth.” In this work Twain more explicitly echoes his deterministic views of humanity demonstrated in *What Is Man?* When Satan asks God the purpose of creating animals, God answers, “They are an experiment in Morals and Conduct” (220). God explains to him that “No creature can be honorably required to go counter to the law of his nature—the law of God” (220). Man is a bit more complex than the animals but seems to be governed by the same laws. God tells Satan his plan to “Put into each individual. . .all the various Moral Qualities” including, for example, “courage, cowardice, ferocity, gentleness, fairness, justice, cunning, treachery, magnanimity, cruelty, malice, malignity, lust, mercy” (220). “Each human being,” God continues, “shall have *all* of these in him, and they will constitute his nature. In some there will be high and fine characteristics which will submerge the evil ones, and those will be called good men; in others the evil characteristics shall have dominion, and these will be called bad men” (221). This explanation of man’s nature seems much like Twain’s description of temperament in *What Is Man?*

Later, the actual Fall is given direct treatment when Satan explains, “man is so made that he eagerly *wants to know*,” and, as God told him earlier, creatures must obey the laws of their natures (229, emphasis in original). Brodwin explains, “God creates Adam and Eve insufficient to stand” (“Mark Twain’s Masks of Satan” 212), but, in reality, the scenario Twain presents is that God actually forces them to fall. After the Fall, Satan vehemently denounces God’s response to Adam and Eve’s actions. “Naturally,” he writes, “you will think the threat to punish Adam and Eve for disobeying was of course not carried out, since they did not create themselves, nor their natures nor their impulses nor their weaknesses.” Instead, he says, “the only person responsible for the couple’s offence escaped; and not only escaped but became the executioner of the innocent” (231). God here is condemned by Satan—and Twain—for causing humans to sin and then punishing them for it. In this passage Twain combines Calvinism and his determinism, blaming God for predestining mankind—a predestination not effected by arbitrary choice of one person over another but rather by God’s instilling each person with a particular temperament which must be obeyed. As Ensor writes, in Twain’s view “the Bible time and again shows God punishing men merely for obeying the laws of their natures; Adam was the first” (82). To Twain, no human, including Adam, could escape from the fate to which he was predestined by his temperament and surroundings.

This is not the only place that Twain deals with the question of Adam’s temperament. Twain saw human behavior as a result of temperament and training, and the cases of Adam and Eve provide a unique test case for his theories. In the margins of his copy of Lecky’s *History of European Morals*, Twain wrote, “All moral perceptions are acquired by the influences around us; these influences begin in infancy; we never get

a chance to find out whether we have any that are innate or not” (“Mark Twain’s Personal Marked Copy” [Sept.-Oct. 1955] 4); Adam and Eve provide Twain with a way to explore humanity before it was subject to these “influences.” Furthermore, as Quirk notes, “we know from his reading that Twain was interested in the ‘uncivilized races’ and ‘primitive man’” (109); Adam provided him with a way to imaginatively work out the character and training of the *most* primitive man. Quirk continues, “In prelapsarian Eden, human nature is not yet damned by a Moral Sense and not yet enlightened by human history. Nor is it the product of prior training and acquired habit. Adam and Eve have to invent their own humanity” (265). However, even though Adam and Eve are not the products of human society, their characters are still determined by their temperaments and even, to a certain extent, by training, as Twain’s Edenic works show.

Considering Adam and Eve’s lack of societal influences, training seems unlikely to play a huge role in developing their characters. In this situation, Adam and Eve’s temperaments are the biggest determinants of their personalities. Twain explicitly addresses the question of their temperaments on multiple occasions. In “The Turning Point of My Life,” for example, he writes, “Adam’s *temperament* was the first command the Deity ever issued to a human being on this planet. And it was the only command Adam would *never* be able to disobey. It said, ‘Be weak, be water, be characterless, be cheaply persuadable’” (464). Similarly, in *The Chronicle of Young Satan*, Twain writes, “The first man was a hypocrite and a coward, qualities which have not yet failed in his line: it is the foundation upon which all civilizations have been built” (138). These two examples demonstrate a considerably more negative view than Twain takes in most of the

retellings of the Eden story, but, in these stories, too, Twain demonstrates concern with explicating Adam's temperament.

In these cases, Twain seems more interested in character development than in making a statement about the injustice of God, yet his insistence on including descriptions of temperament demonstrate his commitment to providing a fictional representative of his philosophy. For example, in the "Autobiography of Eve," Eve writes of Adam, "he was a scientist first and a man afterward—it was his nature" (60). Furthermore, Adam seems to have an innate tendency to "light out for the territory," like Huck Finn. For example, in "Extracts from Adam's Diary," Adam writes that he "Escaped" from Eve at one point, only to be thwarted by her eating of the apple and the consequent upheaval of the natural world (11). It is significant that this first man shares this character trait with Huck Finn; both of these male characters resist "sivilizing," or submission to society—even when that society only includes one other person. This reflects the "nomadic instinct" Twain attributed to Adam, and all other men, in *Innocents Abroad* (587). Despite this resistance to settling down, Adam appreciates Eve's company, since he naturally likes to show off; Eve relates, "Although he talks so little he has quite a considerable vocabulary. This morning he used a surprisingly good word. He evidently recognized, himself, that it was a good one, for he worked it in twice afterward, casually" (24). In this way, Twain demonstrates the desire for approval—primarily from self but also from others—that he attributes to all humans in *What Is Man?*

Twain also explicates Eve's temperament. This case is a bit more complicated, because, as Wagenknecht notes, "when Mark Twain denounces the human race, it is generally to be understood that he is denouncing only the male half of it" (126). Even

though Twain's view of Eve seems to be primarily positive, indicating a possible exception to his damnation of humanity, he does here delineate attributes that he seems to see as essential to females, demonstrating his continued insistence on innate temperament. Emerson explains, "As a tribute of sorts to Olivia Clemens, the [Eve's] diary emphasizes what the author believed to be distinctively female characteristics: love of beauty and nature, affection, reliance on intuition, curiosity" (281-2). Twain's Eve does indeed demonstrate these stereotypically female characteristics throughout Twain's dealings with her, but these are not the only elements of Eve's temperament. She is "born scientific" ("Eve's Diary" 29), and she is a bit narcissistic, always trying to outdo Adam and "be the principal Experiment," since she has come to the conclusion that she and Adam are experiments ("Eve's Diary" 30).

Probably the most important aspect of Eve's temperament is her social nature. Camfield believes that Twain "rejected Spencer's social contract theory of human society in favor of the sentimental idea that social impulses are natural human attributes" (138), and this does seem to be true to a certain extent. While Adam is always trying to escape Eve's society, a desire for social contact is essential to Eve. For example, she realizes something is missing from her life before she even knows that Adam exists. Yet Twain still affirms that Eve's desire for Adam is self-serving, agreeing with the utilitarians Lecky describes as believing that "all domestic or social affections were dictated solely by a need of the person" (21). In fact, Eve herself decides that the reason she loves Adam is "merely because he is *mine* and is *masculine*" (32). Eve's social tendencies are innate, subscribing to the sentimental ideals Camfield describes, yet her seeking Adam out is due to her own felt needs, aligning Twain once again with the utilitarians.

Although Adam and Eve obviously do not have much society to provide them with outside influences, that does not stop Twain from dealing with the question of how outside influences affect them. He deals humorously with the idea of the social training of Adam and Eve in a section he later excised from “Extracts from Adam’s Diary.” In this excerpt, Adam expresses his perplexity about Eve—or “the creature,” as he calls her—and her complete lack of propriety. Adam expresses his vexation that Eve

Seems bent upon living with me—*is* bent upon living with me, in fact....I said it would cause remark. She said there was nobody but the animals to take notice of it. I reminded her that there was herself, and also me....I reminded her...that I had no formal introduction to her, knew nothing about her character and antecedents....Then she said that if all respectability was lodged in me, some share could hardly be denied her, since out of a rib of my body she had been made (qtd. in Emerson 283).

This passage, humorous though it is, shows Twain’s awareness that he was creating characters in a unique social setting. A large part of the humor of this passage is based on the idea that Adam is using anachronistic social standards—standards that Adam and Eve would not know intuitively and that they could not have been trained to accept. Here Twain is asking his readers to note the artificiality of social standards and thus realize that this type of social consciousness is solely the result of training.

Twain deals explicitly with this subject in *What Is Man?* The Old Man has been explaining to the Young Man that humans cannot originate thoughts themselves, and, in response, the Young Man claims, “The *first* man had original thoughts, anyway; there was nobody to draw from.” This dialogue follows:

O.M. It is a mistake. Adam’s thoughts came to him from the outside....Adam had no fear of death—none in the world.

Y.M. Yes he had.

O.M. When he was created?

Y.M. No.

O.M. When, then?

Y.M. When he was threatened with it.

O.M. Then it came from the *outside*. Adam is quite big enough; let us not try to make a god of him. *None but gods have ever had a thought which did not come from the outside....* Neither he nor Eve was able to originate the idea that it was immodest to go naked: the knowledge came in with the apple *from the outside* (129-30, emphasis in original).

In this excerpt and its emphasis on Adam and Eve's learned concern for modesty, Twain lays out the same argument explicitly that he makes implicitly in the excised fragment from "Adam's Diary": social standards—and all other ideas—are the result of training.

This is not the only place that Twain addresses the issue of training in these works, however. In the "Autobiography of Eve," Eve realizes her need for Adam from watching the interactions of the animals. Although she is lonely nearly from the beginning of the story, she only realizes the reason for this after she sees that all of the other animals come in pairs. She writes, "There is surely something wrong...all the other creatures have mates, I have none. I am the only one that is alone" (42-43). She even begins to show off to the animals, trying to fit in: "it was foolish to talk *at* the creatures, while talking to myself," she relates. "[S]aying, 'Dear me, I did not know it was so late; here I am, idling about, and my mate likely to arrive at any moment from his long journey and be *so* disappointed if I am not there to welcome him.' It was foolish, but I could not help it, I so longed to have them think I had a mate and was like other animals, and not a freak" (43). Even though Eve has at this point never met another human being, she is not free from outside influences; her interactions with the animals provide the beginnings of her social training.

In his fictional representations of these subjects, Twain is dealing with issues that concerned him throughout his life. Perhaps the most important problem Twain addresses is the question of the nature of death. Because Adam and Eve brought death into the world, this story is a particularly good place for Twain to examine this issue in fiction. This question would have had particular significance for Twain at the time he wrote most of his Adamic works, since he was dealing with the aftermath of his daughter Susy's death and, later, with his wife Livy's death. Furthermore, Twain was himself in the final years of his life, making this question still more poignant for him. However, this issue also had lifelong significance for Twain, due to the deaths of his siblings, his father, and his son Langdon. In fact, Pamela Boker argues, "Twain's career as a fiction writer and storyteller exemplifies how an early experience of death and loss can become integrated into one's self-identity and view of the external world" (123). Considering this, the way Twain portrays death in these works is especially significant.

Twain's presentation of death is somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, he presents death as a blessing, as a way to heal the hurts of life. Yet, on the other hand, he also presents the pain of death. It seems that Twain here was working out his contradictory feelings about the nature of death, dealing in his fiction with questions that he was not able to dispel from his consciousness.

In the "Passage from Satan's Diary," this paradox is presented fully. Satan attempts to explain the meaning of the word "Death" to Eve by telling her, "In a way, it is a sleep....But it is a sleep only in a way.... It is more than a sleep." Eve does not understand the significance of his words, and exclaims, "Sleep is pleasant, sleep is lovely," coming to the conclusion that "nothing could be better than Death" (64-65).

Twain's irony is thick here, yet he has Satan agree with her, thinking, "Poor child, some day you may know what a pathetic truth you have spoken; some day you may say, out of a broken heart, 'Come to me, oh, Death, the compassionate! steep me in thy merciful oblivion, oh refuge of the sorrowful, friend of the forsaken and the desolate!'" (65). In this, Twain demonstrates his agreement with a story he found in Lecky's *History of European Morals*, which tells of the sons of a pagan priestess who were to be "reward[ed]...with whatever boon was the best for man." This boon, it turns out, was death, for "they sank asleep and died." Lecky also relates the story of "the architects of the great temple of Apollo at Delphi" who "prayed the god to select that reward which was best.... They too died in sleep" ("Mark Twain's Personal Marked Copy...: [July-Aug. 1955] 2). In this telling of humanity's Fall, Twain agrees with the moral of these stories, yet he still presents the bitterness of death.

Perhaps the most significant place Twain deals with this question is in a couple of "Passages from Eve's Diary" in "Diaries Antedating the Flood." In one of the "Passages from Eve's Diary" included in this work, Eve relates how she and Adam found Abel's body. She writes, "We cannot wake him! With my arms clinging about him I have looked into his eyes, through the veil of my tears....Oh, is it that long sleep—is it Death? And will he wake no more?" (69). But the following "Passage from Eve's Diary" explains that the world is now facing overpopulation, and, in this context, Eve has come to rejoice in death, much as Satan predicted she would in his diary. She writes, "the physician failed us, war has saved us....War is a rude friend, but a kind one" (71-72). Brodwin puts it well when he writes, "Mark Twain's irony was never more bitter...than in making Eve—the mother of all Living—the fervent supporter of War and Death"

(MTFM 73-74). Twain here, with Eve, seemingly rejoices in death, but this seeming rejoicing is in actuality deeply ironic. Twain here apparently is in agreement with the following passage he marked in Lecky's *History*: "Life lost much of its bitterness when men found a refuge from the storms of fate, a speedy deliverance from dotage and pain. Death ceased to be terrible when it was regarded rather as a remedy than as a sentence" ("Mark Twain's Personal Marked Copy..." [July-Aug. 1955] 3). Yet, for Twain, death does not seem to have "ceased to be terrible." While he presents it as positive, overall, death is only a blessing for Twain—and, thus, for Eve—because life has become a curse.

While Twain discussed many of these issues in his other works, his retellings of the story of Adam and Eve are a particularly good place to examine his views, since, in these stories, his religious and philosophical concerns coincide, presenting us with a fictional and emotional representation of his contradictory feelings about these questions. To some extent, the stories of Adam and Eve reveal the *pathos* that the *logos* of *What Is Man?* obscures—the tragedy of the human condition, or, particularly of Mark Twain's view of the human condition. While this is, at times, a bit overdone, Twain here seems to be using his fiction to "display to the audience the full intensity of the emotions which that person would have felt, but which he would have been unable adequately to reveal," as Lecky writes to describe the work of actors. Twain commented on this passage, "It is a satisfying explanation and justification of what has always before been an offence to me—the actor's gross exaggerations" ("Mark Twain's Personal Marked Copy..." [July-Aug. 1955] 4). Surely Twain's "gross exaggerations" in these works are an expression of "the full intensity of [his] emotions." Macnaughton explains, "What seems to have been the most important motive in much of this writing... was a strong, persistent drive to

answer large questions and to confront mammoth problems before his death” (203), and this, indeed, seems to be a large part of Twain’s motive in returning again and again to the story of Adam and Eve. By telling and retelling the story of the beginning of human life, Twain hoped to make some sense of the end of his.

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