

THE DREAM-VISION IN THE LATER WORKS
OF MARK TWAIN

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PREFACE

That Mark Twain would be interested in dreams and the workings of the unconscious mind coupled with the possibility of a sleeping and a waking self places him as a member of the avant garde treading in unexplored waters. Twain investigates the psychology of the dream before his contemporaries attempt to study the subtle workings of the unconscious. For this reason, Twain's interest in the dream evident in his early works and its emergence into a dream-vision in his later works deserves notation. For this reason I have undertaken the study of the dream-vision in four of Twain's later works.

Even as early as 1876 in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain reveals an interest in dreams, the workings of the unconscious mind, and the fusion of dreams and reality. Throughout his early writings, he scatters dreams as evidence of this interest and toys with the possibilities of their occurrences. The young Twain views life as a game and the dream merely amplifies the fantasy; the elderly Twain sees life as a nightmare through which the only possible escape is the dream. But this is an important point; there is a possible escape. Too often critics labeling Twain a pessimist and quoting his later works as proof fail to recognize this possibility.

By tracing Twain's use of the dream-vision from A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, through "Which Was the Dream," and "The Great Dark," and ending with The Mysterious Stranger, it is hoped that some illumination will be given to Twain's later years and particularly to the idea that Twain did not completely lose faith in mankind, but instead that he believed there was hope as long as man could dream. Through the use of the imagination manifested in the dream, man could escape even the horrors of reality.

Emphasis will also be given to the development of the dream-vision: Twain's reasons for using it and modifying it. Particular attention will be paid to the development of Twain's conventional stranger and the emergence of the schizophrenic narrator/protagonist.

Although no one has made a comprehensive survey of the dream-vision through all of Twain's works, of particular help to me in this study were the following articles: L. R. Dennis, "Mark Twain and the Dark Angel," Midwest Quarterly, VIII (January, 1967), 181-197; Ellwood Johnson, "Mark Twain's Dream Self in the Nightmare of History," Mark Twain Journal, XI (Winter, 1970), 6-12; Charles S. Holmes, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: Mark Twain's Fable of Uncertainty," South Atlantic Quarterly, LXI (Autumn, 1962), 462-472; and John S. Tuckey (ed.) Mark Twain's The Mysterious Stranger and the Critics, Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1968.

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CHAPTER I

THE DREAM-VISION: ITS DEVELOPMENT AND PURPOSE

The original dream-vision begun in the Middle Ages uses a conventional narrative form in which the dreamer, usually led by a guide, experiences allegorical dreams. Notable examples written during the Middle Ages are The Pearl, Piers Plowman, and Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess and The House of Fame. The Medieval authors place their emphasis upon the allegorical nature of the dream. This is not the main concern of Mark Twain as he comes to rely upon this motif in his later works. Although he uses the sleeping dreamer, his emphasis is placed upon the schizophrenic narrator/protagonist and his difficulty in distinguishing between illusion and reality.

The thin line separating dream from reality had always interested Mark Twain, and even in his early works he uses the dream to mask reality, and to foreshadow his eventual reliance upon the dream-vision. This foreshadowing is visible in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, "A Curious Dream," "A Curious Experience," and The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

Tom Sawyer uses the dream to mask the reality of his sneak-visit home when he is presumed dead, and to cover-up his neglect in not letting Aunt Polly know that he is

alive. Realizing that Aunt Polly could hardly excuse Tom for deliberately overhearing the conversation about the "dead" boys, for witnessing her grief and yet remaining silent, Tom finds himself in the precarious position of knowing too much while he is suspected of knowing nothing. His only possible escape is to explain his knowledge as a dream and to alibi his neglect as an excuse.

In this episode Twain hints at the easy fusion of dream and reality. Even though each event that Tom narrates happens exactly as in the original, Aunt Polly is willing to accept it as a dream. When Sid admonishes that Tom's scratching, "We aint dead--we are only off being pirates," on the sycamore bark is kind even though it was only a dream, Aunt Polly lashes out with, "Shut up Sid! A body does just the same in a dream as he'd do if he was awake."¹ And even though Sid questions the dream as "Pretty thin--as long a dream as that, without any mistakes in it,"² Aunt Polly does not. Tom is a hero once more because in his "dream" he attempts to let Aunt Polly know that he is alive. Although in reality he would have been a scoundrel for witnessing the conversation and doing nothing about it, by placing the event within the realm of illusion, Tom is saved. The dream is his salvation.

¹Mark Twain, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, p. 149.

²Ibid., p. 150.

Another example of Twain's early interest in dreams is evident in the short story, "A Curious Dream." In it Twain reiterates a dream-conversation which he had with a skeleton who is dissatisfied with the conditions in the cemetery. Throughout the rambling narrative, the skeletal narrator belittles his descendants living in luxury while his coffin leaks, and he has to spend rainy evenings sitting in a tree to avoid the unbearable freezing water trickling down his neck. Toward the end of the tale Twain remarks that it all seemed so real that he is not sure if it was a dream.³ This later becomes the emphasis in his dream-vision works.

The same emphasis is apparent in the short story, "A Curious Experience." This longer tale revolves around a Yankee spy, Robert Wicklow, who causes irreparable damage to a Northern Army Camp because of a latent dream-state. The young lad wins over the Colonel of the camp by fabricating a story concerning the burning of his plantation home, and the eventual killing of his Union father and aunt by the soldiers. Having no one, the boy wishes to be a soldier, or if that is not possible, a drummer boy.

Given the position of drummer boy the lad is eventually suspected to be a spy because of his curious activities

³Mark Twain, "A Curious Dream," The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain, p. 39.

including the writing of mysterious letters. Having uncovered the plot, the authorities have the young Wicklow followed and his every move documented. When the attack he is directing becomes known, he is captured and questioned. His interrogation ends with the guards hanging young Wicklow by his thumbs because he will not reveal a secret code but insists that he will die first.

His facade is so believable that the military arrest those he has indicted, notify the War Department about the spy, and are humiliated as a result of their efforts. Upon following up on the young boy's stories, the authorities find that they are all untrue. The boy is not a spy. All of his confessions are fraudulent. He is living in a dream-state believing that he is a spy.

The Colonel explains that Wicklow had devoured dime-novels, enhaled newspaper accounts of the war spies, and befriended a verbose Yankee youth full of war accounts. Having been sufficiently stirred, Wicklow's imagination is capable of inventing the spy tale and all of its ramifications. Even the tortures that the boy endures are the result of his imagination. The boy had endured the tortures because he could not explain the codes. "He had fired them out of his imagination without forethought or afterthought; and so, upon sudden call, he was not able to invent an explanation of them."⁴

⁴Mark Twain, "A Curious Experience," The Complete Short Stories of Mark Twain, p. 185.

Although Twain does not mention the word, "dream," the colonel remarks that the boy lived in a "gorgeous, mysterious, romantic world during those few stirring days, and [he] thinks it was real to him, and that he enjoyed it clear down to the bottom of his heart."⁵ It is clear, then, that the boy is living in a dream world believing that he is a spy. However, the dream is only temporary despite its consequences, and Wicklow is able to return to his home and elderly parents. This return to reality characterizes Twain's earlier works, but becomes impossible in his later more elaborate dream-visions.

A final example of Twain's early intrigue with the dream and its relation to reality occurs in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. After Huck has disappeared in the fog and Jim had searched frantically for him, Jim falls asleep. He awakens to find Huck ready to play a trick on him. When Jim is ecstatic over Huck's sudden return, Huck convinces him that none of it happened: that there was no fog, no islands, no troubles, no nothing. That Jim has, in fact, dreamed the entire incident. Jim does not accept this theory unequivocally, though, and he questions Huck:

"Dad Fetch it, how I gwyne to dream all dat in ten minutes?"

"Well, hang it all, you did dream it, because

⁵Ibid., p. 186.

there didn't any of it happen."

"But, Huck, it's all jis as plain to me--"⁶

After thinking it over for about five minutes Jim finally gives in and says:

Well, den, I reck'n I did dream it, Huck; but dog my cats ef it ain't de powerfulest dream I ever see. En I hain't ever had no dreams b'fo' dat's tired me like dis one.

Huck replies, "Oh, well, that's all right, because a dream does tire a body like everything sometimes. But this one was a staving dream; tell me all about it, Jim."⁷

Huck then allows Jim the painful pleasure of not only recalling all of the events of his "dream," but also of interpreting it. It is not until Jim notices the raft with the debris covering it that he realizes that Huck has been fooling him. By then, he has practically convinced himself that it is a dream and Huck explains that:

He had got the dream fixed so strong in his head that he couldn't seem to shake it loose and get the facts back into its place again right away. But when he did get the thing straightened around he looked at me steady without ever smiling and says:

. . .When I got all wore out wid work, en wid de callin' for you en went to sleep my heart wuz mos' broke bekase you wuz los' en I didn' k'yer no mo' what become er me en de raf'. En when I wake up fine you back again, all safe en soun', de tears come, en I could 'a' got down on my knees en kiss yo' foot, I's so thankful. En all you wuz thinkin' 'bout wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie. Dat truck dah is trash; en trash is what people is dat puts dirt on de

⁶Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Portable Mark Twain edited by Bernard DeVoto, p. 289.

⁷Loc. cit.

head er dey fren's en makes 'em ashamed.⁸

The dream-trick, then backfires into the glaring realization of the effects of deception for Huck. What is intended as a game turns into a nightmare. But, once again, the dream fantasy ends and Jim recognizes reality even though the effects of the trick will linger interminably.

In Twain's later works, however, a more elaborate disguise is used as the dream enlarges to encompass the entire narrative. It would seem that "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" is a transitional work chronicling the change between a society (or individual) capable of distinguishing between illusion and reality and the individual (or society) living either in a dream considered reality or reality considered a dream.

The citizens of Hadleyburg are actually living in a dream state believing that they have established a perfect community and refusing to let any temptation question it. When the reality of their fall pops their perfect bubble, they are left with the bitter realization of what their lives are going to be, but, more shockingly, what they have been. In their dream state, the people of Hadleyburg have confused reality with the illusion they have so carefully painted and preserved.

⁸Ibid., p. 290.

"The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" comes closer to paralleling the dream-vision which Twain chooses for his later works than any of the other earlier works although many of them mention dreams and hint at the confusion of dreams and reality. Although "Hadleyburg" is written after A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, its importance lies in its complete masking of reality, thus, serving as the transition between the individual able to distinguish between reality and illusion and the one who is not. For, after "Hadleyburg" there is no distinction between illusion and reality. The two fuse as Twain develops his dream-vision motif.

It is, then, the purpose of this thesis to survey chronologically four of Mark Twain's later works in which he employs a modified dream-vision beginning with A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, through "Which Was the Dream?," and "The Great Dark," and culminating with The Mysterious Stranger. Through the study of these four works it is hoped that some rationale for Twain's use of the dream-vision can be established by tracing its development. Although mention of earlier works in which Twain concerned himself with the use of dreams have been made, it is not the intent of this thesis to analyze these works. Instead, they are mentioned only as possible early indication of Twain's interest in dreams which may have led to his reliance upon the dream-vision in his final works.

Twain may have chosen the dream-vision as his motif for various reasons. First, he had always been interested in dreams. He made graphic notations of his own dreams in his notebook, autobiography, and letters.⁹ An entire section of his notebook is devoted to his interest in the dream and his concern with a "seeming duality--the presence of another person with a character distinctly its own within himself."¹⁰ Twain explains that the "other person is not one's conscience,"¹¹ but that it is, in fact, a "spiritualized self which can detach itself and go wandering off upon affairs of its own."¹² With Twain's other self, his dream self, he shares a common memory. When he awakens in the morning he knows what his dream self has been doing, and where he has wandered "in the course of unreality . . . called Dreams."¹³

Twain's interest in dreams led him to explore this medium, but perhaps another reason for Twain's choice of the dream-vision is that it allows flexibility, contradiction,

⁹Charles S. Holmes, "A Connecticut Yankee In King Arthur's Court: Mark Twain's Fable of Uncertainty," South Atlantic Quarterly, LXI (Autumn, 1962), 470-471.

¹⁰Albert Bigelow Paine (ed.), Mark Twain's Notebook, p. 348.

¹¹Ibid., p. 349.

¹²Loc. cit.

¹³Ibid., p. 350.

and ambivalence which Twain had perfected.¹⁴ Within the dream framework he could present his opposing paradoxical philosophies without question. The dream-setting, both chronologically and realistically removed from the nineteenth-century provides the freedom of time and space and allows for ambivalence. For, if anything is possible in the dream, then surely vacillation would not be questioned within its framework.¹⁵ Dreamers do not stop to analyze their dreams during the vision; it is not until the dream is over that there is time to dissect the dream and piece together the possibilities.

Or, perhaps the dream-vision provides an escape from the "nightmare of reality."¹⁶ Since Twain seems to equate beauty with escape and ugliness with reality¹⁷ if the real world is too much to endure, the dream provides at least a temporary escape¹⁸ from the "damned human race." For Twain, the escape is necessary. Unable to find the glory in life, he has to create it outside of life--in dream.¹⁹

¹⁴Holmes, op. cit., pp. 470-471.

¹⁵Gladys Carmen Bellamy, Mark Twain As Literary Artist, p. 361.

¹⁶Coleman O. Parsons, "Background of The Mysterious Stranger," AL, XXXII (March, 1960), 71.

¹⁷Bellamy, op. cit., p. 360.

¹⁸Thomas Blues, Mark Twain and the Community, p. 54.

¹⁹Bellamy, op. cit., p. 362.

Finally, since anything is possible in the dream, and can be tolerated there,²⁰ Twain chose the dream-vision as the most likely framework on which to weave his philosophies. There, they could easily be dismissed as "just a dream." There, what had been intolerable in "What is Man?" could be endured for, after all, it was not real.

Twain also had noted that everything is much more vivid in a dream than it is in real life. In his Notebook, he writes:

Walking I cannot form in my mind the minutely detailed and living features of a face and a form and a costume which I have never seen, but my dream self can do all this with the accuracy and vividness of a camera. Walking, I cannot create in my mind a picture of a room and furniture which I have not recently seen, or have never seen, but my dream self can do this to the minutest detail.²¹

Twain's structure for the conventional dream-vision is modified somewhat with each subsequent experiment with it. There are, however, certain similarities which are consistent in each of the later works considered in this thesis: 1) the fusion of dream and reality; 2) the appearance of a stranger; and 3) the use of a schizophrenic narrator/protagonist.

Each of the dream-vision works evolves around the fusion of dream and reality. The change comes gradually, but the distinction between the two which eventually becomes

²⁰Ibid., p. 361.

²¹Paine (ed.), op. cit., p. 350.

apparent despite initial confusion in the childhood fantasy world of Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, or even Robert Wicklow is impossible in the adult world. Unable to dream without losing their grasp of reality, the adult world of the old Yankee or General X is caught in the dream and condemned to life imprisonment. From its bounds, they cannot escape.

Another similarity in the dream-vision works is the use of a stranger. Although Twain had used the stranger in earlier works, he assumes a more significant role in the later dream-vision works. His function is enlarged to encompass the alter ego of the schizophrenic narrator.

The final consistency emerging throughout Twain's later dream-vision works is the schizophrenic narrator/protagonist. He embodies two distinct personalities representing, in most cases, a sleeping and a waking self. The stranger becomes the alter ego of the waking narrator complementing his personality.

Certain differences in the dream vision pattern also emerge as Twain develops it. In A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court as well as in "Which Was the Dream?" and "The Great Dark," Twain uses the standard dreamer who falls asleep and dreams. In each case, the dreamer wakes to find his two worlds fused and himself unable to analyze and question his dream. For the dream has turned into the nightmare of reality with its ubiquitous complexities and

contradictions. In The Mysterious Stranger, however, the pattern alters somewhat in that there is no conventional dreamer; there is no sleeping and waking to discover the fusion of dream and reality for the two have been interwoven so convincingly that even the reader is not totally aware of the distinction. In the first three examples, it is only the narrator who is unaware of the dream; in The Mysterious Stranger the dream-reality mystery envelopes both the reader and the narrator until the final episode.

Another difference that develops is the gradual lessening in importance of the double narrative frame, which focuses on one narrator for the prologue and epilogue and another one for the main story. As early as "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." Twain uses both the stranger and the double narrative frame. He continues to use them within the dream framework in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, as well as "Which Was the Dream?" and "The Great Dark." As Twain writes his final dream-vision, however, he has moved away from the additional narrative frame. By the time that Twain writes The Mysterious Stranger, he needs neither the artificial crowbar nor the intrusion of a narrator to explain and amplify the story.

Twain's first major attempt with the dream-vision is A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. The conventional structure is complete with the blackout-inducing crowbar

responsible for the dream state. Hank Morgan awakens in sixth-century Camelot. When the dream ends, Hank is brought back to the reality of the nineteenth century, however, the dream has become so much a part of his world that he can no longer distinguish it from reality. To him, it is reality.

Twain varies the dream-vision structure somewhat with "Which Was the Dream?" which eventually evolves into "The Great Dark." Tuckey labels it the "homecoming fantasy" whose conception probably took place in one of Twain's dreams.²² Tuckey compares the sequence to a dream which Twain described to Livy in a letter while he was in Paris:

It seemed as if I had burst awake out of a hellish dream and had never been away and that you would come drifting down out of those dainty upper regions with your children tagging after you.

Tuckey believes that this dream set the stage for the "homecoming fantasy" which revolves around the prosperous man who dreams for a few seconds which seem like years, and upon awakening still finds himself at home with his family. In "The Great Dark," however, the fantasy has been too real and the dreamer does not recognize his family but instead lapses back into a dream.

²²Bellamy, op. cit., p. 360.

²³Dixon Wector (ed.), The Love Letters of Mark Twain, p. 312.

During the same period in which Twain was experimenting with the "homecoming fantasy," he was also struggling to write The Mysterious Stranger. With its meticulous fusion of dream and reality, perhaps Twain's culminating dream-vision is meant to confuse the reader in an attempt to show that life is a nightmare. Or, perhaps, it is a tribute to man's creative imagination and offers a more positive statement than any of Twain's other dream-visions: that death and delusion are not the only means of escape in a materialistic world, that through the imagination man can realize his full potential and escape the nightmare of reality.²⁴

²⁴Bellamy, op. cit., p. 360.

CHAPTER II

THE INTRODUCTION: A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT

Dream of being knight-errant in armor in the Middle Ages. Have the notions and habits of thought of the present day No pockets in the armor. Can't scratch. Cold in the head--can't blow--can't get a handkerchief, can't use iron sleeve. Iron gets redhot in the sun--leaks in the rain . . . makes disagreeable clatter when I enter church. Can't dress or undress myself. Always getting struck by lightening. Fall down and can't get up.²⁵

Mark Twain's notes for A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court reveal two important factors. First, that his primary intention is comic effect, and second that he plans to achieve it through the dream-vision. With his comic purpose in mind, Twain realized that the romantic traditions of the Medieval period with its chivalric traditions and inhibiting garb would provide the best setting for the novel. The quickest way to reach it would be through the dream because the comedy could be enhanced by the addition of an anachronistic visitor.

The novel itself, Mark Twain's first attempt at using the dream-vision encompassing an entire novel, is buttressed

²⁵Paine (ed.), op. cit., p. 11.

by satire as well as humor. Although the humor hinted at in Twain's notes is prevalent in the novel, the biting satire almost overshadows it in several sequences. It is typical in that the vernacular man triumphs over the genteel society, at least within the dream framework.

The form of the story is typical of Twain in that the original narrator is removed from the story and the employment of an additional narrator takes place. In essence, the original narrator provides a prologue and an epilogue to the Yankee's story. Even so, the double-frame story which has the prologue and epilogue divorced from the actual story is contradictory. While the Yankee's narrative lauds the triumph of nineteenth-century reality, the dream framework not only questions it, but also "reverses the dominant values of the story."²⁶ After his trip, the Yankee rejects the theory of progress and nineteenth-century advances for the dream world of the sixth century.²⁷ This commitment to the world of fantasy negates the belief that the nineteenth-century with its scientific achievement and advancement provides the proper background for survival. Just as the Yankee rejects reality for the dream, Twain hints that all that has been accepted as reality may only be "dream stuff."²⁸

²⁶Holmes, op. cit., p. 472.

²⁷Loc. cit.

²⁸Loc. cit.

The prologue to the story begins with a tour of Warwick Castle, and Twain, traveling with a tour group narrates the events. Momentarily, the guide stops to point out a small hole in the chainmail of a suit of armor. A stranger in the group mutters that he did it and exits mysteriously. Later that evening the stranger enters and tells his story. He had been the Superintendent of an arms factory and knows a great deal about guns, cannons, and ammunition. One day at the factory, a crowbar fight develops, and the stranger is knocked unconscious. Upon awakening, he finds himself in sixth-century Camelot.

The Yankee's story is written on palimpsest, a special parchment upon which writing dims allowing for further inscriptions even though traces of earlier manuscripts remain. The Camelot adventure superinscribed upon fragments of earlier writings may symbolize the illusionary journey imposed upon the Yankee's conscious mind. So skillfully is the Medieval adventure written that the realistic life is completely covered up.

At first, the Yankee seems helpless with "little chance to survive, much less to succeed in the England of King Arthur."²⁹ But, eventually, by using his nineteenth-century familiarity with history and by incorporating his knowledge

²⁹Robert Regan, Unpromising Heroes: Mark Twain and His Characters, pp. 52-53.

of progressive methods and ideas, he succeeds in gaining the attention of the round-table generation. Outwitting Merlin, the magician, and even King Arthur, the Yankee finds himself "The Boss" of Medieval England--at least temporarily. Because of his selfishness and egocentricity, however, the "Boss" cannot rise above the machine. Instead of really being interested in liberating the people, he is concerned with dominating them, putting himself a little bit above everyone else. As a result, civilization declines rather than advances during his stay. Although the machine could have made their dreams come true, the Yankee's egocentric dreams make it impossible,³⁰ and he destroys everything that he has created. In so doing, the Yankee finds himself an alien. He belongs neither to the nineteenth century which he has abandoned nor to the medieval community which he has destroyed. Alone, confused, he resorts to a dream sanctuary, his "futile refuge."³¹

Twain also finds refuge in the dream-vision; to him it is a paradoxical paradise. There he can explode in paradoxical positions as he does in Connecticut Yankee. Within the dream framework he can believe in democracy and laud the liberty and freedom of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

³⁰Blues, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

³¹Ibid., p. 54.

on the one hand; and yet, see man as a devious, deceitful individual³² exhibiting all the traits he abhorred on the other. Twain finds himself in the precarious paradoxical position of hating society while loving certain individuals within its bonds. The dream-vision clouds over his paradoxical philosophies for in the fantasy world of the dream anything, even unquestioned paradoxes, is possible.

Twain probably chose the dream-vision for Connecticut Yankee realizing that its loose structure would provide him the freedom³³ of both time and space. As he continues to work with the structure, he modifies his reasons for choosing it, but this original motive is prevalent through all of his dream-vision experiments. The dream allows Twain to investigate the full range of man's depravity without sacrificing the willing suspension of disbelief.

Having always been interested in dreams, Twain is especially concerned with the possibility of a sleeping a waking self. This interest is manifested in the schizophrenic narrator/protagonist, Hank Morgan.³⁴ Two distinct

³²Holmes, op. cit., p. 469.

³³Ibid., pp. 470-471.

³⁴J. R. Kreuzer in "Dreamers in the Book of the Duchess," PMLA, LXVI (June, 1951), 543-547, notes that Chaucer was responsible for this development in the dream-vision. According to Kreuzer, Chaucer was the first to use a real character, the Black Knight as John of Gaunt rather than an allegorical

personalities are apparent in the duo. The stranger quietly and mysteriously disappears from the castle while Hank Morgan, showman, finds it virtually impossible to do anything quietly. He delights in exciting attention, and his specialty is "technicolor explosives and other noisy demonstrations which electrify his audience."³⁵

Besides this split-personality convention, Twain also includes the appearance of a stranger in his dream-visions. Representing the world of the dream³⁶ Hank Morgan is described as a "curious stranger" who seems to drift away imperceptibly out of (the) world and time and into some remote era and old forgotten country."³⁷

Another of Twain's dream-vision conventions is the confusion of dream and reality. Finding himself slingshot back into nineteenth-century America, the Yankee finds reality too painful. Confusing the nightmare of reality with the dream of fantasy, the old Yankee is willing to relinquish

abstraction. Although Twain was probably unaware of Chaucer's part in this development, it is interesting to note that it was used even in the Middle Ages.

³⁵James M. Cox, "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: The Machinery of Self-Preservation," Mark Twain: A Collection of Critical Essays edited by Henry Nash Smith, p. 119.

³⁶Holmes, op. cit., p. 471.

³⁷Mark Twain, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, p. 1.

his hold on nineteenth-century knowledge and progress for the fantasy world of the Middle Ages; yet, he does not belong there either. Unable to distinguish between the dream and reality in his delirious state, the Yankee mistakes the visitor for his wife, Sandy, and he tells the visitor of having dreamt a strange dream in which he:

. . . seemed to be a creature out of a remote unborn age, centuries hence and he seemed to have flown back out of that age into this of ours, and thence forward to it again, and was set down, a stranger and forlorn in that strange England, with an abyss³⁸ of thirteen centuries yawning between me and you.

For the elderly Yankee, looking backward³⁹ to the dream is his salvation. The dream having dissolved into the nightmare of reality is too painful to endure, and he must revert back to the original fantasy.⁴⁰

³⁸Ibid., p. 306.

³⁹James Cox in "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court: The Machinery of Self-Preservation," labels Yankee an "inverted Utopian fantasy" comparable to Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward which was published in 1887. Bellamy's book is a "dream fantasy in which the hero is thrust into the future, 2000 A. D." Cox says that Twain's novel became a "going backward in order to look forward."

⁴⁰Blues, op. cit., p. 53, finds it difficult to believe that the dying Hank Morgan "so closely identifies himself with a wife who has functioned chiefly as comic vehicle and with the knights who have been his enemies." Perhaps what Blues fails to realize is human nature. It is only natural to want what is most difficult to obtain, and surveying the possibilities, it is only natural for Hank Morgan to choose the more pleasant of the two alternatives.

But, the fact remains that no matter which world the Yankee chooses he has failed. His inevitable failure parallels Twain's personal failures; his business ventures, publishing business, and the Paige typesetter were all losing ground. All of these factors combined to cause Twain to doubt his own creative genius.⁴¹ His refuge, too, became the dream, and Twain undoubtedly realized that failure is much easier to accept in a dream. Secretly, he always hoped that he would wake up and find that his failures were only bad dreams. Yet, he could not let his dreamer wake. Instead, the Yankee finds refuge in the past, in the fantasy of the dream, and even as the dream dissolved into the nightmare of reality, the confused Yankee cannot distinguish between the two.

This careful fusion of dream into reality once merely an interest of Twain's became a haunting preoccupation throughout the rest of his career. This semi-obsession coupled with his growing pessimism hastened the emergence of the Yankee as the confused dreamer who becomes the prototype for Twain's later dreamers.⁴² Regan labels the Yankee prophetic, leading the way to Twain's later works and pre-empting Mark Twain's whole imagination in future works.⁴³

⁴¹Holmes, op. cit., p. 466-467.

⁴²Regan, op. cit., p. 176.

⁴³Ibid., p. 184.

A Connecticut Yankee has been labeled the turning point⁴⁴ in Twain's career. Holmes contends that it should not be classified with Twain's early works, but instead with his later works such as The Mysterious Stranger⁴⁵ since the novel ends in failure rather than triumph. Whereas Twain's early works deal with innocent youths, lively and imaginative, Twain's later protagonists are old men bent upon destroying the illusions of childhood.⁴⁶ In this respect, Yankee does belong to Twain's later works. It also marks the beginning of his use of the dream-vision with its inherent flexibility. If illusion destruction is Twain's emphasis during his later years, then the dream provides the proper framework. For there, none of the flats are indeliably painted, none of the buildings are carefully constructed, none of the dreams can last.

⁴⁴Henry Nash Smith, "Puddn'head Wilson and After," Massachusetts Review, III (Winter, 1962), 234.

⁴⁵Holmes, op. cit. p. 462.

⁴⁶Blues, op. cit., p. 56.

CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT: THE UNFINISHED MANUSCRIPTS "WHICH WAS THE DREAM?" AND "THE GREAT DARK"

The unfinished manuscript, "Which Was the Dream?" was planned at the beginning of 1895, but was not actually written until 1897.⁴⁷ The story follows the same pattern as most of Twain's writings between 1896 and 1905. A lucky man has finally reached the pinnacle of success. Everything is going well for him. He could not be happier. Then, suddenly, he has a turn of fate, and the nightmare becomes the new reality. Clutching to the hope that he will soon awaken from the nightmare, the dreamer realizes that one disaster may actually be life.⁴⁸ Eventually, he is unable to distinguish between the two.

The differentiation between the conscious and unconscious levels of mentality interest Twain. Tuckey quotes one of Twain's letters to John Adams in which Twain asks, "Meantime which is I and which is my mind? Are we two or are we one?"⁴⁹

⁴⁷Mark Twain, "Which Was the Dream?" And Other Symbolic Writings of the Later Years, edited by John S. Tuckey, p. 31.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 1.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 2.

This interest, apparent in Connecticut Yankee, is developed in "Which Was the Dream?" which later gave way to the longer manuscript, "The Great Dark."

"Which Was the Dream?" begins with Mrs. Alison X's prologue. She explains that this is to be a busy day. Tonight will be the dress rehearsal for a play written by their daughter, Bessie. In honor of Bessie's upcoming birthday, Mrs. X's husband, Tom, has promised to write a biography. Though he has promised to write it for years, he has always procrastinated in starting.

That evening she goes to the study and sees Tom at work on the manuscript. She notes that he is drowsy, and while she watches he falls asleep for a second, but the cigar smoke awakens him. "With a violent start and a sneeze," he begins to work again.⁵⁰

Mrs. X's story reveals that her husband has not slept long, that his dream, in fact, lasted only a few seconds. To him, however, it seemed to last for years.

The narrative shifts as General X's story follows. Longer and more detailed, his story begins with a nostalgic remembrance of his childhood. He and his wife, Alice, have been engaged since they were five years of age. Finally, in 1845 they marry. Their first child, Bessie, is born in 1846.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 34.

Coal is discovered on their property, and they become wealthy.

General X says:

More than ever we seemed to be living in a world of enchantment. It all seemed so strange, indeed so splendidly impossible, that these bounties, usually reserved for age, should be actually ours, and we so young Every morning one or the other of us laughed and said, 'Another day gone, and it isn't a dream yet!' For we had the same thought, and it was a natural one that the night might rob us, some time or other, and we should wake bereaved.⁵¹

Consequently, the irony begins. For since General X sees the seeming illusion in reality, he would certainly be subject for difficulty in distinguishing between the two.

Dreams play an important role in the life of his daughter Bessie. She has one recurrent dream in which she is being eaten by a bear. She explains to her mother that the problem is that "she is never the bear, but always the person being eaten."⁵² General X goes on to explain that not everyone would realize that there is an advantage to being the bear rather than the victim, but, he continues "there is an advantage, for while you are in a dream, it isn't a dream--it is reality, and the bear bite hurts, hurts in a perfectly real way."⁵³

⁵¹Ibid., p. 40.

⁵²Ibid., p. 47.

⁵³Loc. cit.

For her birthday her father plans a surprise. He wants his daughter to know that "her persecuting dream can be turned into something quite romantically and picturesquely delightful when a person of her papa's high capacities in the way of invention puts his mind to work upon it."⁵⁴ Perhaps this is Twain's way of praising the imagination which seems to be his salvation. In each of his dream-vision stories, there seems to be a growing emphasis on the powers of the imagination culminating in his treatise on the powers of the imagination in The Mysterious Stranger.

General X begins a sentence about his younger daughter, Jessie, but the sentence is left incomplete, and a new unnumbered chapter begins with a shriek that the house is on fire.⁵⁵ The transition is abrupt. From a tranquil family discussion, General X is thrust into the nightmare of a burning home.

The house is not completely destroyed, and with some help from Grant, they are able to live in part of their home. Later, they notice that Jeff Sedgewich (the stranger in this manuscript) is missing. Their first thought is that perhaps he has been killed in the fire, but this is doubted. Jeff had become the General's pseudonym; he signed all the checks, wrote

⁵⁴Loc. cit.

⁵⁵This is obviously stimulated by the cigar smoke noted by Mrs. X in her introduction to the story.

and signed the General's letters, and even had obtained his power of attorney. Much of this was done without the knowledge of Alice because she had always felt that Jeff should not be trusted.

The General had always trusted him, and he had even permitted him to sell Alice's estate and invest the money in a California gold mine, the "Golden Fleece."

Now, however, the General becomes uneasy when Jeff still does not appear; he even avoids the crowds that usually cheer him as he has been mentioned as a presidential candidate.

Later that same evening he tells his children a bedtime story "in the golden land of Romance, where all things are beautiful and existence is a splendid dream, and care cannot come."⁵⁶ Then as the vision vanishes, they become "prisoners in this dull planet again."⁵⁷

The intruding band which had shattered the vision, now clamored for a speech from General X. The speech came automatically "as if it was someone else talking" then came the cheers "as in a dream" and the General bowed, and went (his) way.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 57.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 58.

⁵⁸Loc. cit.

Then, as his dream world begins to shatter, the bank president informs him that he is overdrawn--everywhere. The General's last hope remains with the "Golden Fleece" investment and his household insurance. Then, he discovers that there is no "Golden Fleece" mine and he has no insurance. Jeff has not made the payments; that he has, in fact, been a fraud. But the General is the only one who knows it. Most humiliating to him is that they do not believe him, label him a "liar," and accuse him of conspiracy. As he is accused of forgery, "he sprang--and remembers no more." Just as quickly as the dream began it ends with a swift return to reality.

When the General comes to, he "had the feeling of one who had slept heavily. is lazily comfortable. but not greatly refreshed, and is still drowsy."⁵⁹ His "eyelids began to droop" and he is transported into another life. This time he is living in a log cabin, and he does not know where he is. His children fill in the missing details. His name is now Edward Jacobs; they are now living in a town in California called Hell's Delight.

When he awakens again, he relates that they "had been separated just an hour--by the clock--but in the true sense a whole year and a half."⁶⁰ This statement of Mr. X-Jacob Edwards

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 67.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 71.

seems to indicate that the real world for him had become a dream. The clock symbolizing the time that governs reality had no meaning for him and he quickly relapses into another dream.

DeVoto believes that because Twain was working simultaneously on "Which Was the Dream?" and his autobiography, he inadvertently slipped his deterministic philosophy into this fictional account, "Which Was the Dream?"⁶¹ Since everything that happens to cause General X's downfall is beyond his control Twain seems to say it was not his fault; it was not my fault, it was the way of the world.⁶²

Twain's title choice for the manuscript is an important point of information for it demonstrates his growing belief that the nightmare of life can not possibly be reality. It must be a dream. His fusion of the two worlds in "Which Was the Dream?" and his question title cause speculation as to which life really is the dream.

Since the manuscript is unfinished, it is not possible to conjecture as to Twain's intended ending. Whether he would continue with the failure ending or bring General X back into his affluence of success or whether General X once lost in the

⁶¹Bernard DeVoto, "The Symbols of Despair," Mark Twain: A Collection of Critical Essays edited by Henry Nash Smith, p. 149.

⁶²Loc. cit.

dream would never be able to regain a stronghold on his sanity are all questions that remain unanswered, but the biggest question that remains unanswered is, which was the dream?

Tuckey, however, considers "The Great Dark" to be an extension of "Which Was the Dream?", and so in examining it, perhaps some conclusions may be drawn. The idea for "The Great Dark" may have originated in one of Twain's dreams. In his Notebook, August 10, 1898, he mentions a possible stimulus for "The Great Dark."

Last night dreamed of a whaling cruise in a drop of water. Not by microscope, but actually. This would mean the reduction of the participants to a minuteness which would make them nearly invisible to God, and He wouldn't be interested in them any longer.⁶³

Since the dream in "The Great Dark" takes place in a drop of water it is more than likely that this particular dream provides the idea for it. The dream-vision in the story follows the two-part pattern that Twain has begun to develop. First, the dream and its consequences, though short-lived, seem interminable; and second, the dream and reality become fused, frequently inseparable.⁶⁴

Structurally, "The Great Dark" is quite similar to "Which Was the Dream?" The Prologue is given by the wife, Mrs. Edwards, just as it had been given by Mrs. X in "Which

⁶³Paine (ed.), op. cit., p. 365.

⁶⁴DeVoto, "Symbols of Despair," op. cit., pp. 154-155.

Was the Dream?" Perhaps Twain is more sure of his direction with his slight alterations for in "The Great Dark" his formerly ambiguous Mr. and Mrs. X become Mr. and Mrs. Edwards although the names of the children, Bessie and Jessie, remain the same.

In the Introduction, Mrs. Edwards explains that they are preparing for their daughter Jessie's birthday when Mr. Edwards unveils one of the presents, a microscope. Through it they examine a drop of water which is strengthened by scotch whiskey "to stir up the animals."⁶⁵ Then he falls asleep. Mrs. Edwards reaches for the whiskey container which falls awakening Henry. He proceeds to his table to write. Probably, the intent of this introduction by Mrs. Edwards is to establish this short duration of Henry's dream.

Mr. Edward's story proceeds and he tells of finally finding the "animals" in the drop of water which he describes as "monsters entering the horizon of the great white sea."⁶⁶ Impressed with what he has seen, Mr. Edwards throws himself on the couch and is soon approached by the Superintendent of Dreams who invites him to journey into that unexplored drop of water. The Superintendent will gladly furnish the ship

⁶⁵Mark Twain, "The Great Dark," Letters from the Earth edited by Bernard DeVoto, p. 186.

⁶⁶Loc. cit.

and crew. Once again, the stranger has entered the dream; this time in the form of the Superintendent of Dreams.

Mr. Edwards agrees to go. Upon voyaging into the unknown depths, Edwards does not realize that they are traveling without charts--and without a destination. They encounter horrendous ice and snow storms, and unhappily, they learn that even the captain does not know where they are. Matters become more complicated when the "creatures" begin to invade the great dark. Upon questioning the mate about the invaders, Edwards is shocked by the reply "I didn't enter it in the log. For a man in his right mind don't put nightmares in the log."⁶⁷

As they continue their journey, they suddenly realize that there is no difference between night and day. That it is, in fact, always night. Yet, even Turner's revelation that "it ain't tonight at all; it's just noon now" does not astonish Edwards. Knowing that the Superintendent of Dreams is in charge reassures him. Besides, he cannot experience the "real terror in the nightmare around him because he does not think it is real."⁶⁸

Confident that he can end the dream whenever he desires, Henry approaches the Superintendent of Dreams. He is

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 192.

⁶⁸L. R. Dennis, "Mark Twain and the Dark Angel," Midwest Quarterly, VIII (January, 1967), 195.

it positive that he is enjoying the journey after watching the Superintendent of Dreams trick Turner, so he tells the Superintendent that he can end the dream right away. To this, the Superintendent "looked him steadily in the eye for a moment, then said, with deliberation, 'The Dream? Are you quite sure it is a dream?'"⁶⁹ To his questioning, the Superintendent replies "You have spent your whole life in this ship. And this is real life. Your other life was the dream."⁷⁰

This sudden knowledge causes Edwards to ponder the situation which "so little time before (he) knew was a dream and nothing more."⁷¹ However, when he considers the past ten days, he recalls that they have been:

. . . intense realities!--so intense that by comparison the life (he) had lived before them seemed distant, indistinct, slipping away, and fading out in a far perspective--exactly as a dream does when you sit at breakfast trying to call back its details.⁷²

From this point on, the Superintendent becomes the puppet-master pulling the control strings. Not only does he direct the physical actions of the puppets, but he also

⁶⁹Mark Twain, "The Great Dark," op. cit., p. 204.

⁷⁰Loc. cit.

⁷¹Loc. cit.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 204-205.

begins to control their mental processes⁷³ and directing the confusion between the dream and reality.

In attempting to straighten out the confusion in his own mind, Henry questions his wife, Alice concerning the weather during this trip in comparison with the weather during their European voyage. To his chagrin, she denies ever going on such a voyage, and Henry wonders if, perhaps, it was a dream too. Continuing to probe her about details of the trip-- details which she considers details of a dream--Henry confides that he is "not at all sure that it was a dream," but that five minutes earlier, he "was sure that it wasn't."⁷⁴

Further complicating matters is the fact that his wife remembers nothing of their home, except as a dream home, and nothing of the microscope. The Superintendent's careful manipulation from behind the scene is completely unknown to the puppets who are gradually losing control of their lives.

Alice then accuses her husband of having mental problems as he is so preoccupied with his dreams of Europe that he is oblivious to the real events that are happening on board the ship. Upon further examination and questioning, Henry discovers that his wife considers all of his tales of land-life, "dreams," dreams which she happened to be included

⁷³ DeVoto, "Symbols of Despair," op. cit., p. 152.

⁷⁴ Mark Twain, "The Great Dark," op. cit., p. 207.

in, but does not necessarily need to know about. She tells him that people are not expected to remember the dreams of others.

As lapses of memory are conveniently filled in for both Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, the Superintendent gains a stronger grip on their lives, and as Henry muses upon both lives, the real life begins to fade. Details of the real life become sketchy and minute while the dream life becomes more vivid.

With the beginning of Book II which Henry admits he has procrastinated in starting, interim details are mentioned: The Edwards have had a son, Harry, and several mutinies have taken place on board the ship. The dream slowly turns into a nightmare as squid begin to attack the vessel causing much destruction. The children are lost; Mrs. Edwards becomes ill, almost mad, and another mutiny develops. Here the manuscript ends.

In the eight pages of notes following the manuscript, Twain has planned to have the ship meet another treasure ship, the "Two Darlings." A snowstorm strikes and the "Two Darlings" disappears with the children on board. For ten futile years they pursue the ship in search of the children. Eventually they come into the dreaded "Great White Glare" which causes terrible suffering.

The waters change colors maddening the animals who launch a viscious attack against the ship. Not that this is not trouble enough, but now "The Great White Glare" dries up

the water; the "Two Darlings" is found, but the children are dead.

Here, the story becomes a vivid nightmare. The captain goes mad; the only surviving child is hit by a stray bullet; everyone but Henry and one other man dies. The final notes for the story bring Henry back to reality, but not for long. He says that "it is midnight. Alice and the children come to say goodnight. I think them dreams. Think I am back home in a dream."⁷⁵ DeVoto points out that "the final note brings the story back out of dream and makes the intended point: dream has triumphed over reality in Henry's mind."⁷⁶

Freudian psychology concerning dream-journeys asserts that they are symbolic of death,⁷⁷ and Dennis contends that the journey within the dream framework in "The Great Dark" is, in the final analysis, death.⁷⁸ On the other hand, Tuckey views the ending as a positive affirmation because of the captain's final speech⁷⁹ in which he attempts to negate what is actually happening through positive thinking.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 227.

⁷⁶Mark Twain, "The Great Dark," op. cit., p. 227.

⁷⁷Dennis, op. cit., p. 194.

⁷⁸Loc. cit.

⁷⁹John S. Tuckey (ed.), "Which Was the Dream?" and Other Symbolic Writings of the Later Years, introduction, p. 19.

Realizing that DeVoto labels Twain's stormy darkness as his "symbol of despair"⁸⁰ and that the once-calm river image has become a "black and unfathomable expanse where all the laws of nature have been suspended,"⁸¹ it seems strange that Tuckey could view the ending of the manuscript as a positive one. The ubiquitous darkness coupled with the death journey certainly would seem to overpower the one positive speech given by the captain. Knowing, also, that throughout most of the journey, the captain has been complacent, unaware, and unconcerned, should cause Tuckey to question the captain's sanity with his sudden reversal. It is only when he is threatened that he reacts, and his final attempt at positive thinking takes place in total darkness, the most powerful symbol of despair.

It seems almost impossible that Twain would alter his philosophy enough to include the intrusion of a positive ending. Although the theme of "The Great Dark" has altered slightly from "Which Was the Dream?," it has not changed enough to permit hope. The deterministic theme of "Which Was the Dream?" has shifted to the idea that "men are as guilty as circumstances compel them to be."⁸²

⁸⁰DeVoto, "Symbols of Despair," op. cit., p. 154.

⁸¹Dennis, op. cit., p. 195.

⁸²DeVoto, "Symbols of Despair," op. cit., p. 151.

It is interesting to note the shift that has occurred in Twain's work since the writing, pigeonholing and writing of Huckleberry Finn. Though Edwards and young Huck begin with the same characteristics of the young, naive protagonist preparing for a journey, and both begin new lives as the result of the journey,⁸³ the similarities end there. Whereas Huck could lay on his raft and count innumerable stars, Edwards sees only darkness; whereas Huck could see land and was free to explore its shores, Edwards sees no shores--for there are none.⁸⁴ And how differently the journey ends for each of the two protagonists; for Huck, hope remains as long as he can "light out for the territory ahead of the rest"; for Edwards, the territory left to explore is the nightmare world of reality-fantasy from which he cannot escape.

Without water, which has been Huck's life-force, there is no chance for survival, and as the pitch-like waters dry up "life is symbolically and literally denied."⁸⁵ For in the great dark "life is seen as horror and death is seen as horror."⁸⁶ There is no escape.

⁸³Dennis, op. cit., p. 194.

⁸⁴Loc. cit.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 196.

⁸⁶Loc. cit.

Twain's two unfinished manuscripts come closer to paralleling Twain's life than either of the other two dream-vision examples. The general framework of the prominent man who suddenly is ruined by a twist of fate may have been Twain's own way of viewing the events which had shaped his life, and perhaps he left the manuscripts unfinished purposefully. Perhaps he was waiting, or hoping, for some strange awakening in his life which would prove it to be a bad dream and provide an ending to the manuscripts.

With the writing of the two manuscripts, however, Twain moves a step closer to The Mysterious Stranger.⁸⁷ In the Superintendent of Dreams Twain has embodied many of the characteristics of Satan in the Mysterious Stranger. The Superintendent's antics and moods coupled with his mysterious nature preempt Philip Traum.⁸⁸ Tuckey labels the Superintendent as both the "architect and the stage manager" of the dream.⁸⁹ He not only plans and designs it, he is also responsible for its production and direction just as Philip Traum is in The Mysterious Stranger. Tuckey believes that the Superintendent is "clearly an unconscious anticipation of Satan."⁹⁰

⁸⁷ John S. Tuckey (ed.), "Which Was the Dream?" And Other Symbolic Writings of the Later Years, op. cit., p. 236.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 237.

⁸⁹ Loc. cit.

⁹⁰ Loc. cit.

Having moved the dream-vision from sixth-century Camelot to a voyage in a microscopic drop of water, Twain is now prepared to rely solely on one narrator and to journey back to sixteenth-century Austria where the dream will fuse so neatly with reality that it will become inseparable from it.

CHAPTER IV

THE CULMINATION: THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER

Part of the irony of The Mysterious Stranger is that although Twain leaves dream markers throughout the story, the reader is still somewhat stunned by Satan's modified-solipsistic speech in the final chapter of the novella.⁹¹ Too often the reader fails to comprehend the frequent clues

⁹¹According to John S. Tuckey in Mark Twain and Little Satan, the final chapter was written for the "Print Shop" version and not the "Eseldorf" version of The Mysterious Stranger. He further contends that The Mysterious Stranger, as published, "clearly does not represent Mark Twain's intention." (p. 77) If Tuckey is correct--and his evidence is well documented and researched--then, Twain's real intentions would not have changed the dream-vision motif he had established in previous works. For The Mysterious Stranger differs from the other dream-visions in that even the reader is unaware of the dream until the final chapter. In Twain's other dream-visions, it had been only the narrator who was unaware, the reader had been informed of the dream. According to Tuckey, Philip Traum or "44" as Twain had labeled him in "The Print Shop" version represented the dream-self of August Feldner. Satan's final revelation would have surprised only Feldner in "The Print Shop" version. In this respect, the story would follow the conventional pattern.

Tuckey, however, launches too harsh an attack against Paine for his editing of The Mysterious Stranger. As James Cox points out so well in The Fate of Humor, Twain knew from the beginning where he wanted to end. The concluding chapter was written, but even with this goal in mind, Twain could not reach it. Scholars agree that the "Eseldorf" version is the most concise of the three existing manuscripts. Realizing this, Paine was able to do what Twain could not, "Integrate and coordinate the dissipating impulse of his final effort as a writer." (p. 272)

or to question the apparent reality of successive scenes. Even the opening paragraphs describe the dream-setting as "Austria . . . still in the Middle Ages" and promising to remain so forever.

Austria . . . far from the world, and asleep, and (the) village in the middle of that sleep It drowns in peace in the deep privacy of a hilly and woodsy solitude where news from the world hardly ever came to disturb its dreams"92

Yet, the delicate balance is so carefully set that the dream world of Theodor Fischer seems almost real, and even as Satan "Chats while he makes a crowd of little men and women the size of (a) finger, then reaches out his hand and crushes the life out of them with his fingers, throws them away, wipes the red from his fingers on his handkerchief, and goes on talking," the reluctant believer accepts this as reality although he knows it is not. Satan's Lillipution-creation and destruction is Twain's first direct attempt at questioning the nature of reality⁹³ in The Mysterious Stranger. By microscoping the murder scene, seemingly real as it is, Twain minimizes its disasterous effect. This tragedy of life viewed as a miniature spectacle reduces the suffering to a minimum because the creatures are unreal doll-like puppets.⁹⁴ From

⁹²Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, p. 631.

⁹³Edwin S. Fussell, "The Structural Problem of The Mysterious Stranger," Mark Twain's The Mysterious Stranger and the Critics, edited by John S. Tuckey, p. 79.

⁹⁴Bellamy, op. cit., p. 361.

this opening spectacle, the reader is swept into the dream although the dream itself is not always apparent.

Even the boys question the reality of Philip Traum and the aura surrounding him. Theodor says that "it seemed almost too good to be true, that we were actually seeing these romantic and wonderful things, and that it was not a dream."⁹⁵ Frequently the boys mention that the marvelous words of Satan can not be true. They are either too wonderful or too painful to be real.⁹⁶ When Satan vanishes for the first time Seppi sighs and says, "I suppose none of it happened."⁹⁷

Satan continues to appear to the boys, and eventually as Philip Traum, he even becomes visible to the community of Eseldorf. As Satan, he takes the boys to remote times and places. As they travel, they learn. Fussell labels the journey through Theodor's mind as "progressive illumination."⁹⁸ With Satan's guidance Theodor gradually discovers the "truth." Theodor gradually discovers the truth from Satan, whose illuminating powers take the form of various creations and telescopic journeys through time and space.

⁹⁵Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, op. cit., p. 648.

⁹⁶Fussell, op. cit., p. 77.

⁹⁷Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, op. cit., p. 651.

⁹⁸Fussell, op. cit., p. 80.

Stone agrees that the reader perceives the development of Eseldorf through the eyes of Theodor. Although Traum is the main character, it becomes clear that "all of Traum's actions are not only perceived through Theodor's mind but are directed toward illuminating that Ishmael-like mind with a sense of the true nature of things."⁹⁹ Stone labels the production a "cosmic initiation with Theodor as the initiate and Philip Traum as the master of ceremonies."¹⁰⁰ To Fussell, Satan represents intuition from his first appearance, but he gradually comes to represent truth.¹⁰¹

To portray truth Twain has had to again enlarge upon his escape motif. From his earliest travel books Twain advocated beauty as an escape, a dream; reality as ugliness. However, in The Mysterious Stranger as well as his other dream-vision, his escape motif has been enlarged to include both dichotomies, beauty and ugliness¹⁰² to present the truth. In The Mysterious Stranger, the ugliness dominates the escape route.

⁹⁹Albert E. Stone, Jr., "Nightmares and Dreams," Mark Twain's The Mysterious Stranger and the Critics, p. 186.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 187.

¹⁰¹Fussell, op. cit., p. 81.

¹⁰²Bellamy, op. cit., p. 360.

Because the truth is painful perhaps too painful to be tolerated in essays such as "What is Man?," Twain chose an enlarged dream motif for The Mysterious Stranger to reveal essentially the same philosophy. By removing the reader from reality through the enchanting world of the dream, what has previously been intolerable becomes tolerable.¹⁰³ Although the events within the dream are not pleasant, they are at least endurable there.

The dream itself is possible because the boys want it and because they are prepared to accept it. Felix Brandt, the "oldest servingman in the castle," sets the stage for their belief in spirits. The boys "went [to the castle] nights, to hear him talk about old times and strange thing" They heard "about ghosts and horrors of every kind . . ." that encouraged them "not to fear supernatural things, such as ghosts."¹⁰⁴ Perhaps the most important tidbit of information that Brandt gives to the boys, however, concerns angels, for he had seen them. Brandt tells the boys that angels "had no wings and wore clothes, and talked and looked and acted just as any natural person" and that they would never be known as angels "except for the wonderful things they do which mortals

¹⁰³ DeVoto, "Symbols of Despair," op. cit., p. 157.

¹⁰⁴ Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, op. cit., p. 636.

could not do, and the way they suddenly disappeared" while talking.¹⁰⁵

Their willingness to accept the possibility of angel companions coupled with their lack of fear of the unknown makes the dream existence of Philip Traum a reality.¹⁰⁶

"Felix Brandt makes their belief possible, and their belief makes Traum possible, and Traum's beliefs free (them) from history."¹⁰⁷

In other words, the illumination begins within the imagination of the boys. Brandt's careful preparation makes it possible because even the imaginative mind of a child must be primed to accept new information. Only by previous experience, either physical or kinesthetic, can the mind reach out to grasp a new concept.¹⁰⁸ The boys are prepared to "experience" an angel because they know from Brandt's descriptions and stories what an angel should be. When Traum appears, he is the perfect manifestation of Brandt's description, he looks like any other human, but unlike other boys his voice is "easy and graceful and unembarrassed," and the boys soon discover that he has many other suprahuman powers

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 637.

¹⁰⁶Ellwood Johnson, "Mark Twain's Dream Self in the Nightmare of History," MTJ, SV (Winter, 1970), 7.

¹⁰⁷Loc. cit.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 8.

as he breathes fire and creates delicacies for their amusement, enjoyment, and edification.¹⁰⁹ As Satan whisks the boys from one adventure to the next, the illumination becomes stronger. Each successive journey reinforces the "reality" of its previous experience.

The "progressive illumination," then, takes place through a series of light-shedding adventures, each accepted provisionally as the only reality.¹¹⁰ By gaining the confidence of the boys gradually, Satan is soon able to expound his beliefs and philosophies which are accepted immediately as truth. The truth that Satan reveals is that man is physically a slave of circumstance (mechanism) and morally, a victim of moral sense.¹¹¹

The primary education begins after Satan has crushed the life out of the miniature villager, and he tells the boys that [he] "cannot do wrong for [he] has no disposition to do it for [he] does not know what it is."¹¹² Although the boys cannot accept this without reservation, they continue to listen to his exciting adventures until the crowd of little people notice the dead body and begin weeping and praying. This annoys Satan and "he reached out and took the heavy

¹⁰⁹Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, op. cit., p. 637.

¹¹⁰Fussell, op. cit., p. 81.

¹¹¹James Cox, The Fate of Humor, p. 276.

¹¹²Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, op. cit., p. 642.

board seat [from the swing] and brought it down and mashed all [those] people into the earth just as if they had been flies, and went on talking just the same."¹¹³ And although the boys are appalled by this wanton murder of innocents, Satan soon makes them forget everything, being "drunk with the joy of being with him."¹¹⁴

Satan has already begun his illumination concerning moral sense. With his thoughts in mind, they question Father Peter concerning the value of moral sense. From him, they learn that "it is the one thing that lifts man above the beasts that perish and makes him heir to immortality."¹¹⁵ Satan, however, gives the boys a different perspective. When Theodor wonders what it would be like in a jail cell, he is quickly transported to one where a young heretic is bound, awaiting prosecution. When the young man refuses to confess, the executioners drive "splinters after splinter under his nails,"¹¹⁶ Theodor could not endure it and was "whisked" out of the cell. When he remarks of the brutality of the execution, Satan retorts:

No, it was a human thing. No brute ever does a cruel thing--that is the monopoly of those with Moral

¹¹³Ibid., p. 643.

¹¹⁴Loc. cit.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 669.

¹¹⁶Loc. cit.

Sense. When a brute inflicts pain he does it innocently; it is not wrong; for there is no such thing as wrong. And he does not inflict pain for the pleasure of inflicting it--only man does that by that mongrel Moral Sense of his! A sense whose function is so distinguish between right and wrong, with liberty to choose which of them he will do.¹¹⁷

The "illuminating journey" continues as Satan reiterates that with man's capacity to choose between right and wrong, "in nine cases out of ten he prefers the wrong."¹¹⁸ Then he whisks them to a French village to continue their education. There, the slaves of the wealthy, including small children, work fourteen hours a day every day. Getting only four hours of sleep every night and inhabiting a pig sty four miles from their place of employment, these poor people "die off like flies" when disease invades their filthy quarters. Satan then convinces the boys that the heretic had an easy punishment compared to this life because he was killed soon after they left. He was taken out of his misery; these people will suffer interminably. Satan finishes with "it is the Moral Sense which teaches the factory proprietors the difference between right and wrong."¹¹⁹ The results are plain; the easy way out is death.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 670.

¹¹⁸Loc. cit.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 671.

Another way to escape the real world of crime and inhumanity is through the fantasy world of the insane. Only there is happiness possible for Father Peter; consequently, he is "rewarded" by being blessed with the world of the insane. There he finds the happiness which does not exist in the real world.¹²⁰ Satan asks Theodor if he is "so unobservant as not to have found out that sanity and unhappiness are an impossible combination? No sane man can be happy, for to him life is real and he sees what a fearful thing it is."¹²¹ Up to this point the only possible escape routes mentioned by Satan have been death or delusion. In the final analysis he adds another possibility, the dream.¹²² He tells Theodor that "it was a vision. It had no existence. Life itself is only a vision, a dream."¹²³

¹²⁰Johnson, op. cit., p. 8.

¹²¹Loc. cit.

¹²²Bellamy, op. cit., p. 360.

¹²³Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, op. cit., p. 742. Coleman O. Persons in "Background of The Mysterious Stranger," AL, XXXII(March, 1960), 55-74 lists the following books as possible sources for Twain's philosophy in The Mysterious Stranger: Pascal's Thoughts which stated that "It may well be that life itself is but a dream;" Schopenhauer's The World as Will and Idea which said, "We have dreams, may not our whole life be a dream?;" Pater's Studies in the History of the Renaissance which stated that "each mind (keeps) as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world." Persons further contends that although Twain may not have read Calderon's La Vida es Sueno (Life is a Dream) in Edward Fitzgerald's translation,

Satan has reached this summit by leading the boys (and the reader) to accept each "reality" provisionally. This is not a difficult task to ask of the young boys for Traum is, after all, "an extension of their thoughts and wishes."¹²⁴ He is, therefore, capable of reading their minds as well as appearing in the somnolent lives. But, Satan is not a hallucination of Theodor or Seppi or Nikolaus. As Philip Traum, he can be seen by the community, and as Satan, he is visible to the three boys. "He (Traum) is, and is clearly meant to be, not a private projection of the narrator but an embodiment of the creative imagination,"¹²⁵ immortal and angelic "transcending time and space."¹²⁶ It affords the children excitement and adventure even as it frees them to see the truth.¹²⁷

Such Stuff As Dreams are Made of (1865), he was certainly familiar with The Tempest (Act IV, Scene I):

The cloud-cap'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve.
 And like an insubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a rack being. We are such stuff
 As dreams are made on, and our little life
 Is surrounded with a sleep.

Perhaps one or a combination of these sources contributed to the ideas presented by Twain in The Mysterious Stranger.

¹²⁴Cox, The Fate of Humor, op. cit., p. 276.

¹²⁵Loc. cit.

¹²⁶E. H. Eby, "Mark Twain's Testament," MLQ, XXIII (September, 1962), 262.

¹²⁷Cox, "The Mysterious Stranger", op. cit., p. 215.

Philip Traum, then, can be seen as a "testament to the greatness of man's imagination."¹²⁸ Through it man achieves "a kind of divinity and immortality."¹²⁹ The explicit information testifying to this tribute is Traum's sudden appearance stimulated by Brandt's stories; the implicit evidence is found in "the three stimuli for Mark Twain's own creative power--the past, boyhood, and dreams."¹³⁰ The entire Philip Traum sequence, then, testifies to the fact that man, capricious, petty, cruel as he is, still has the capacity to "transcend his defeciciencies" through the creative imagination, his only salvation.¹³¹ Having experienced the omnipotent powers of the imagination, Theodor is told still to "dream other dreams, and better!"¹³²

¹²⁸Eby, "Mark Twain's Testament," op. cit., p. 255.

¹²⁹Loc. cit.

¹³⁰Ibid., p. 260. Eby explains that during most of his life, Mark Twain relied upon the past--images of Hannibal and his boyhood days--for his inspiration. The past had always supplied the creative force necessary to stimulate the imagination. So naturally his tribute to the imagination would have for its setting, the past. Similarly with memories of boyhood Hannibal days in mind, it is natural that Twain's youthful protagonist's story would take place during his formative years. Finally, Twain's interest in dreams is evident in his notebook entries, his use of the dream structure in previous works, and particularly in "My Platonic Sweetheart" which reinforces his dream philosophy.

It is interesting to note that even his use of the dream-vision is reaching back to the past for his inspiration.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 262.

¹³²Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, op. cit., p. 742.

Misinterpretations of The Mysterious Stranger stem from various arbitrary definitions of "dream" according to Johnson. He believes that Twain is writing about "visions, creative imagination, a dream world, but that the implication of the word dream is always belief."¹³³ To support this contention, Johnson turns to the text. After showing Theodor a "tranquil and Dreamy picture of a vast landscape with cities and villages slumbering," Satan tells Theodor of the:

. . . immortal mind that creates anything it desires--and in a moment. Creates without material. Creates . . . anything, everything--out of the airy nothing which is called Thought.¹³⁴

At this point Johnson believes that "dream, idea, and thought are interchangeable."¹³⁵ The real world consciously-willed and created by thought is limited only by the scope of one's imagination.¹³⁶ It is the inner man, the creative force that determines the outer world.¹³⁷

Even the ending:

Nothing exists; all is a dream, God--man--the world--the sun, the moon, the wilderness of stars-- a dream, all a dream; they have no existence.

¹³³Johnson, op. cit., p. 7. In The Mysterious Stranger knowing is like dreaming or thinking. What we know, what we dream, we are.

¹³⁴Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, op. cit., pp. 693-694.

¹³⁵Johnson, op. cit., p. 9.

¹³⁶Loc. cit.

¹³⁷Ibid., p. 7.

Nothing exists save empty space and you! And you are not you--you have no body, no blood, no bones, you are but a thought. I myself have no existence; I am but a dream--your dream, creature of your imagination. In a moment you will have realized this, then you will banish me from your visions and I shall dissolve into the nothingness out of which you made me . . . you will remain a thought, the only existent thought, and by your nature inextinguishable, indestructible. But I, your poor servant, have revealed you to yourself and set you free. Dream other dreams, and better!¹³⁸

which some critics have been overly eager to label as Twain's ultimate despair, is not completely hopeless. Satan says "dream other dreams--and better" and he also reveals that he has set Theodor free by revealing him to himself. Johnson believes that it would be completely hopeless without this revelation.¹³⁹ By being set free from the mechanistic world, man has a chance to "dream other dreams" for according to Twain's testament the mechanistic world is constructed by man's "limited logic which patches together trivalities unimaginatively and hopelessly."¹⁴⁰ The blame then focuses upon the individual rather than society. By removing the shackles of economic, religious, and moral standards which have confined man, and by using the imagination to capacity, man can be set free.¹⁴¹ This had been Twain's goal through

¹³⁸Mark Twain, The Mysterious Stranger, op. cit., p. 742.

¹³⁹Johnson, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁴¹Loc. cit.

his later years: to reveal to man his potential. He is finally able to achieve it in the ending as his goal. He knew what he wanted to say: he had said it before.

Twain had always been concerned with the individual in society, particularly those who were exploited by others. In her book, Enchantment: A Little Girl's Friendship with Mark Twain, Dorothy Quick relates a true story which exemplifies Twain's concern. Dorothy attended a circus excursion with Twain in 1908, just two years before his death, and in the midst of his "pessimistic" years. Twain seemed sad after watching the elephant perform. He remarked that he "always felt sad to see anything brought down from its high estate . . . or something meant to be great that doesn't know its own power." He explained that the elephant could have stampeded and trampled everyone present--if he only knew his capabilities. Unaware, the elephant was satisfied by obsequiousness. Twain wondered how many men were the same way. It bothered him that they sweat at menial tasks when their capabilities could reach a powerful level. He told Dorothy, however, that he knew his power.¹⁴² Tuckey contends that Twain was "proposing to play in actual life, the role of the mysterious stranger, revealing to a

¹⁴²Dorothy Quick, Enchantment: A Little Girl's Friendship With Mark Twain, quoted in Tuckey, Mark Twain and Little Satan, op. cit., p. 81.

young person the limitless power of a creative mind."¹⁴³

If, then, Twain was ready to play the mysterious stranger in real life, why did he mask his fictitious production in the dream? Despite all that has been written since DeVoto's Mark Twain At Work, it would seem that DeVoto has the answer. Twain's final message is delivered from an extremely pessimistic podium. Throughout the novella, Twain has lashed out at man, inhumane, cruel, and petty as he is. Twain's philosophy though it is identical to his philosophy in "What is Man?" is more easily tolerated under the guise of a dream which begins as a game for the amusement of the boys. The miracles soon involve the villagers and eventually become a "bloodshed panorama"¹⁴⁴ of history in miniature. Yet, the miniature production "diminishes the suffering to the vanishing point since (the actors) are just puppets, unreal creatures in a shadow play."¹⁴⁵

By providing half-truths of man's cruelty, inhumanity, and cowardice in single vision¹⁴⁶ even though "very little that Satan reveals is ultimately true,"¹⁴⁷ eventually the

¹⁴³Tuckey, Mark Twain and Little Satan, op. cit., p. 81.

¹⁴⁴Henry Nash Smith, "A Supernatural Spectator," Mark Twain's The Mysterious Stranger and the Critics, p. 192.

¹⁴⁵Bernard DeVoto, Mark Twain at Work, p. 117.

¹⁴⁶Smith, op. cit., p. 192.

¹⁴⁷Fussell, op. cit., p. 81.

half-truths lead to the ultimate revelation which is accepted as true. Then, the "blood-stained panorama" is declared to be a dream. "Placed at such a psychological distance, the spectacle that had previously been too painful to be mastered by the artist's imagination became tolerable."¹⁴⁸

Twain removes the spectacle from reality in every possible way: psychologically, morally and physically. In this way, he can expound his philosophies, opposing though they are,¹⁴⁹ more palatably than he had been able to in "What is Man?" In The Mysterious Stranger, then, the illuminating journey leads from the mistaken belief that reality lies in the material world to the realization that the only reality lies in the dream.¹⁵⁰ Whereas before Satan has found an escape only in delusion or death, he now adds the final possibility: the belief that life is just a dream¹⁵¹ and the hope that man can escape the illogic of reality through the creative imagination.

¹⁴⁸Smith, op. cit., p. 192.

¹⁴⁹Throughout his later years Twain vacillates between his beliefs in mechanism and free choice. This is apparent in The Mysterious Stranger.

¹⁵⁰Stone, op. cit., p. 188.

¹⁵¹Bellamy, op. cit., p. 360.

CHAPTER V

THE DREAM-VISION: ITS RATIONALE AND TRIUMPH

From his half-masked dream-vision in The Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Twain progresses to the full-costume disguise of the dream-vision in The Mysterious Stranger. From his double-narrative frame in his first three dream-visions, Twain moves to rely upon only one in The Mysterious Stranger. This change comes gradually, but through the transitional works, "Which Was the Dream?" and "The Great Dark," Twain has masked the developing dream so that by the time that he writes The Mysterious Stranger, he is prepared to use the full disguise and to mask the dream even from the reader until the final chapter. Consequently, he needs only one narrator; two might unveil the secret.

Another step in the development of Twain's dream-vision concerns the function of the stranger. The introduction of a stranger, characteristic even of his earliest works, assumes a more significant implication in the later dream-vision works. The function of the stranger, then, is enlarged to encompass the alter-ego of the schizophrenic narrator. The stranger, Jeff Sedgewick, becomes the alter-ego of General X in "Which Was the Dream," just as Philip Traum and the Superintendent of Dreams become the alter-egos of Theodor

Fischer and Henry Edwards respectively. The only exception is the dreaming stranger who, becoming the Yankee, serves as the alter-ego of his waking self.

His dream-vision stimulus also changes as it develops. From the blackout-inducing crowbar, he moves to the suggestion-stimulating microscope, and finally to no dream stimulus at all in The Mysterious Stranger.

Twain's purpose, too, shifts as he develops his dream-vision. With the writing of The Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Twain reveals that his main purpose is to entertain. Even though the story ends in failure, it is still clear that Twain's original intent is comedy. But this does not hold true for the other three dream-vision works. Although there are hints at comedy in "The Great Dark," and even in The Mysterious Stranger, these examples seem grossly out of place. It is almost as if Twain is trying to add a comic note, but is no longer able to.

All of the dream-visions, however, deal with the fusion of dream and reality, but it too has become more complex since his early writings. The once-carefree game of make-believe in which Tom Sawyer or Robert Wicklow were anything they wanted to be without ever losing their grasp of reality, however, has become a fantasy of self-deception in the adult

world of Twain's later works.¹⁵² For the adult world does not know when the game has ended. Unable to anticipate or to recognize the conclusion of the game, they are incarcerated within the bounds of the dream. Their fantasy evolves into the nightmare of reality from which they can not escape.

Other similarities emerge in surveying the dream-vision works. Ferguson points out that both A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court and The Mysterious Stranger are "surveys of human cruelty and stupidity."¹⁵³ "The Great Dark" and "Which Was the Dream" also comply with this definition. Similarly, Holmes remarks that in The Mysterious Stranger and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court:

. . . the baffled idealist, unable to reconcile himself to the gap between what he hopes of human nature and what he sees, simply unmakes the world which has such painful contradiction in it.¹⁵⁴

The dream-visions all end with the steady waning of reality and the progressive realization that "life is simply an illusion in The Mysterious Stranger; the retreat to the cave and the final dissolve into dream in A Connecticut Yankee;"¹⁵⁵

¹⁵²Bradford Smith, "Mark Twain and the Mystery of Identity," CE, XXIV (March, 1963), 427.

¹⁵³John DeLancey Ferguson, Mark Twain: Man and Legend, p. 280.

¹⁵⁴Holmes, op. cit., p. 470.

¹⁵⁵Loc. cit.

and the fusion and confusion of dream and reality in "The Great Dark," and "Which Was the Dream?"

Another of Twain's conventions which was not hampered by the dream-vision was Twain's concern with and reliance upon the past. Twain himself had remarked that:

. . . . sleeping or waking; dreaming or talking, the thoughts which swarm through our heads are almost constantly, almost continuously, accompanied by a like swarm of reminders of incidents and episodes of our past.¹⁵⁶

These remarks emphasize the importance that Twain placed upon the past and show how it colors his every minute. It was the source of most of his fiction. It has always been his inspiration, and even in his later works he draws from the past in his selection of the dream-vision for his motif, an extension of the past having its roots in Medieval England.

During his later years perhaps Twain's biggest problem was finding new material,¹⁵⁷ new sources to draw from. Physically, Twain had left Hannibal in 1853, a half-century before attempting The Mysterious Stranger;¹⁵⁸ consequently his choice of Hannibal for its setting failed. Tuckey says that Twain's impressions must have "thinned away

¹⁵⁶Mark Twain's Autobiography, XXXVI, p. 288, quoted in George Feinstein, "Mark Twain's Idea of Story Structure," AL, XVIII (October), 162.

¹⁵⁷Tuckey, Mark Twain and Little Satan, op. cit., p. 78.

¹⁵⁸Loc. cit.

and thinned away like the disappearing Philip Traum, until many of them had become ghostlike in their vagueness, their insubstantiality."¹⁵⁹ Tuckey feels that it is remarkable that Twain's vessel of memories lasted so long, and that he relied upon the past for his inspiration throughout all of his life even when his memories had vanished suggests that perhaps he never found another stimulus for his work.¹⁶⁰

Usually a voyage reinforcing the escape from reality accompanies Twain's use of the past. This trip enables the protagonist to "expand his identity"¹⁶¹ usually by taking on a new personality, or a new name. By testing out his new identity upon strangers, he may emerge in a new role, reborn¹⁶² as a new character. This symbolic rebirth usually yields a better personality in Twain's early works; in his later works, however, the rebirth becomes symbolic of a confused, unhappy dreamer living in the nightmare of reality. He has escaped temporarily, but he finds that his new life is worse.

Twain himself, always trying to withdraw from reality, must have chosen the past and the dream as an escape from the manifold problems which enveloped him during his later years.

¹⁵⁹Loc. cit.

¹⁶⁰Loc. cit.

¹⁶¹Bradford Smith, op. cit., p. 430.

¹⁶²Loc. cit.

In an article in 1873 looking back at the 1866 Sandwich Island days, Twain said he would go back there if he had his way for in that:

. . . blessed retreat, you are safe from the turmoil of life, you drowse your days away in a long deep dream of place, the past is a forgotten thing, the present is heaven, the future you leave to take care of itself.¹⁶³

Bellamy labels this passage as the "propaganda of escape"¹⁶⁴ which Twain advocates throughout his life, particularly through the dream in his later works. Beginning with A Connecticut Yankee when Twain put his Yankee into an illusory world rather than the real one, he acknowledges that illusion is necessary as an escape because the real world is too much to endure.¹⁶⁵

Twain's view of a better world is possible through his bifocal vision¹⁶⁶ which could measure the present and contrast it with the past. Since the reality of adulthood did not measure up to the dreams of childhood, Twain finds it necessary to freeze his fiction in the dream-mold of fantasy which provides an escape from the real world of "sick children,

¹⁶³quoted in Bellamy, op. cit., p. 220.

¹⁶⁴Loc. cit.

¹⁶⁵Blues, op. cit., p. 54.

¹⁶⁶Stone, op. cit., p. 196.

an invalid wife, ruined business schemes and from the terrible burdens of responsible adulthood."¹⁶⁷

Kaplan believes that Twain himself lived in a "sort of deliberate, self-induced dream state in which the reality was what he dreamed and the fantasy was what he lived by day"¹⁶⁸ for about two years after Suzy's death. During this time he wrote the "homecoming fantasies" dealing with the prominent man who suddenly, unexpectedly loses everything in a turn of fate, and as a result is unable to distinguish between reality and illusion. Kaplan points out that by "releasing himself from daytime rationality and consciously wooing the creatures of the night, Twain found new ways to look at himself."¹⁶⁹ There he also discovered new material for fiction by exposing himself to madness, and he came to realize that the dream was "psychosis with all the absurdities, delusions and illusions of a psychosis."¹⁷⁰ Kaplan contends that it was, at this point, only his work that saved him from madness.¹⁷¹ His work was to him what the dream was to his literature--an escape. This is one of the reasons that Twain chose the

¹⁶⁷Eugene McNamara, "A Note on 'My Platonic Sweetheart,'" Mark Twain Journal, XII (Spring, 1963), 18.

¹⁶⁸Kaplan, op. cit., p. 405.

¹⁶⁹Loc. cit.

¹⁷⁰Loc. cit.

¹⁷¹Loc. cit.

dream-vision for his later works. It provides an escape from the present and welcomes a journey through the past.

The "literature of disillusionment"¹⁷² has always had to be explained in terms other than reality.¹⁷³ It has to be considered a dream or fantasy. So perhaps another reason that Twain chose the dream is that, removed from reality, it provides flexibility and believability. During a dream, the dreamer never doubts or questions the appearance of others even though their dream appearance may be quite different from their waking appearance. Even if one dream character embodies all of the characteristics of another rational character, if he says he is Philip Traum, it is accepted within the dream framework. Upon awakening, the dreamer may question Traum's appearance, and wonder how he ever mistook the stranger for Traum, but during the dream there are no questions.¹⁷⁴ If then, in a dream, the negation of rational knowledge is possible, then, surely anything can be accepted within its framework.

Dreams, largely concerned with mood and emotion, rather than logic, are shadows of reality, experiences

¹⁷²DeVoto, Mark Twain's America, p. 229.

¹⁷³Loc. cit.

¹⁷⁴A. R. Lacey, "Is Life A Dream?," Review of Metaphysics, XIV (March, 1961), 434.

reproduced and recombined from real life.¹⁷⁵ The dream allows an infinite number of possibilities and piecing together of experiences. It is flexible enough to include the entire gamut of experiences from the serious to the lightly comical; from the satirical to the reminiscent, and "it serves a whole range of interests from the humorously capricious to the philosophically contemplative."¹⁷⁶

This flexibility appeals to Twain because it enables him to launch two philosophies within one dream. Even if the philosophies are in opposition, they will not be questioned within the dream framework because it is a fantasy. Similarly, in the dream Twain can expose all of the grotesque horrors which he considers to be mankind; he can present life as a "bloodstained panorama"¹⁷⁷ and get away with it because the events in the fantasy are not real.¹⁷⁸

Many scholars believe that Twain chose the dream-vision to free himself from the terrible guilt of conscience which plagued him during his later years. It was his way of saying, "I'm sorry; it was not my fault." DeVoto believes

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p. 433.

¹⁷⁶F. Burwick, "Dream-Visions of Jean Paul and Thomas De Quincey," Comparative Literature, XX (Winter, 1968), 3.

¹⁷⁷Henry Nash Smith, "A Supernatural Spectator," op. cit., p. 192.

¹⁷⁸Bellamy, op. cit., p. 372.

that the dream was "the answer and the proof."¹⁷⁹ In the unfinished manuscript, "Which Was the Dream?" in which the successful man was betrayed by one he considers a close friend, Twain tries to say that it was not his fault,¹⁸⁰ but dissatisfied with that theory Twain wrote "The Great Dark" which permeates with the deterministic philosophy that it was not his fault; his fate had been predetermined and could not be avoided.¹⁸¹ But Twain's guilt was still not assuaged, and finally, in The Mysterious Stranger he tries to convince himself that life is a dream.¹⁸² This idea almost satisfies him. Realizing, however, that waking would not bring Suzy back to life or undo life's other disappointments, Twain found his answer in the solipsistic belief that nothing exists but self. Then, by reducing self to "thought wandering forlorn among the empty eternities,"¹⁸³ he contented himself. For then his failures and misfortunes were also just a dream. By reducing everything, "vengeance, pain, degradation, guilt, sin, and panic to a lovely dream,"¹⁸⁴ Twain found peace.

¹⁷⁹ DeVoto, "The Symbols of Despair," op. cit., pp. 157-158.

¹⁸⁰ Loc. cit.

¹⁸¹ Loc. cit.

¹⁸² Loc. cit.

¹⁸³ Loc. cit.

¹⁸⁴ Loc. cit.

Knowing also that "whenever fictions are bred, and wherever belief is suspended, someone is likely to accept them for fact, even if momentarily,"¹⁸⁵ Twain probably realized that his fiction could "ferment into histories, social codes and religions."¹⁸⁶ Naturally the imagination would take the lead in securing the growth and development of the new institutions emerging from superstition, the tall tale, satire, or dreams.¹⁸⁷ Realizing this Twain launches many controversial ideas which could develop into, influence new institutions or shatter the old. This may have been his way of praising the imagination through the fantasy of the dream while providing it with the raw materials of change.

In summary, Twain's dream-vision, then served Twain in several important ways: it enabled him to purge himself of the sins that plagued him throughout the later part of his life; it freed him to condemn and criticize the "damned human race" while allowing the reader the privilege of dismissing the invective as "just a dream;" it enabled him to use the past which all of his life had served as his inspiration, and finally, it allowed him the opportunity to reveal that through the use of the imagination, anything is

¹⁸⁵Robert E. Bell, "How Mark Twain Comments on Society Through the Use of Folklore," Mark Twain Journal, X (Summer, 1955), 24.

¹⁸⁶Loc. cit.

¹⁸⁷Loc. cit.

possible. Even for man, despicable as he is, an escape still exists through the omnipotent imagination.

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