EVE, JOAN AND ROXANA:

REFLECTIONS OF MARK TWAIN'S LIFE AND THOUGHT

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by

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INTRODUCTION

It is surprising that amid the mass of critical and biographical material on Mark Twain's work and life, relatively little attention is paid to his three major women characters, Joan, Eve, and Roxana. While it is true that they are not of the stature of a Tom Sawyer or a Huck Finn and the works in which they appear are decidedly inferior to Life on the Mississippi, Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, and several of the short stories, they, nevertheless, are of particular interest because they represent Twain's only major attempts at the delineation of a woman's character and because all three reveal much about Mark Twain the man and Mark Twain the social philosopher.

Pudd'nhead Wilson, Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, and Eve's Diary were all written within a period of about a dozen years when the glory that had been Sam Clemens' life faded away and he was confronted by enormous financial and personal losses. His publishing firm and the Paige typesetter failed almost simultaneously, leaving him virtually a bankrupt. Just as he had redeemed himslf financially, his beloved daughter, Susy, died unexpectedly. Finally, after a long illness, Olivia Clemens died in 1904. Pudd'nhead Wilson was written in haste to help repay the debts incurred through the business failures, yet we find Twain following this frankly commercial venture with The Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc which was published anonymously and without

hope of profit. Although little is said about Eve's Diary, it is safe to infer that the profit motive was inoperative in the creation as it is so clearly a memorial to the recently deceased Livy Clemens. Thus although the three were written for different reasons, they were all written in a period of personal sorrow and anxiety. It, therefore, is hardly surprising that they do not equal his best works; it is surprising that they are as good as they are.

Although the once highly respected biographical approach to literary criticism has fallen into disfavor, most critics have found it nearly impossible to separate Sam Clemens, the boy from Hannibal, from Mark Twain, the giant of American letters. The battle that raged after the publication of Van Wyck Brooks' volume on Twain[1] is centered in the biographical—psychological approach, and succeeding writers have found it difficult to proceed in a new direction. In studying these works, I, too, cannot avoid relating the three women to Mark Twain's own emotional life and his treatment of them to his own statements about himself and about mankind in general. If read without reference to Clemens' life or the circumstances of creation, Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc and Eve's Diary in particular become flat and sentimentalized; remembering Susy and Olivia, they begin to take on life and dimension. Without knowledge of the growing pessimism of the last twenty years of Twain's life--regardless of the true explanation for it--all three works lack real meaning and depth.

CHAPTER ONE

It is ironic that Mark Twain's most ambitious effort should be one of the poorer representations of his talent. Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc[2] is a book upon which Twain expended years of research and which was longer in the writing than most of his more successful works. It stands in contrast to most of his other works in that it alone was a studied attempt to create a work of art. So deeply did Twain feel about his subject that he had the book published under a pseudonym, fearing that the public would not accept as serious the work of a 'funny man.' Twain was immensely proud of Joan and often spoke of it as the best thing he ever wrote. "I judged that the end of the book would be hard work, and it turned out so. I have never done any work before that cost so much thinking and weighing and measuring and planning and cramming, or so much cautious and painstaking execution ...Possibly the book may not sell, but that is nothing--it was written for love".[3]

A major criticism of the work seems to be that Mark Twain's Joan is a child. Historically, Joan of Arc was a child who led the army of France to victory over the English, reestablished the monarchy, and was tried and executed before she was out of her teens. Mark Twain was constantly aware of the fact of Joan's youth and, using the persona of Louis de Conte, repeatedly reminds the reader of the disparity between Joan's wisdom and her calendar years. He stands in awe of the courage, nobility, and perception which she displays under the worst of circumstances and he seems to be continually asking how such a wonder came to be.

One of Twain's chief problems was to humanize the legendary Joan while still emphasizing the magnitude of her achievements and her superhuman bearing throughout her trial and martyrdom. He tried to solve the problem by alternating between Joan the soldier and Joan the peasant. A chapter in which Joan is scolded as by an exasperated parent is brought to an abrupt end by a messenger come to see the Commander-in-Chief.[4] Her cool, decisive behavior in battle is balanced by her concern for the victims of war. She holds a dying soldier "just as his sister might have done; and the womanly tears running down her face all the time."[5] The grandeur of the coronation scene contrasts to the simplicity of Joan's request on behalf of her people while the pomp of the following banquet is offset by the singing of the folk song. "Yes, you see, all the pomps and grandeurs dissolved away and she was a little child again herding her sheep with the tranquil pastures stretched about her, and war and wounds and blood and death and the mad frenzy and turmoil of battle a dream."[6]

The coronation of the king was historically the focal point of Joan's career and is given a key position in the story. Twain describes the preparations of the citizens of Rheims, the procession into the city, the throng's adoration of Joan, the solemnity of the service, and the surrounding music and color. In particular, he emphasizes the fact that at this time Joan was at the height of her power--the mightiest name in France and, with the king, was the central figure of this drama. Into this scene of splendor he introduces Joan's father and the garrulous old Uncle Laxart. Seeing her with her kinsmen, we are reminded that Joan is still the peasant girl longing for home and mother. The interlude with

the old men is given equal weight to the scenes of public festivity, thus emphasizing the more human qualities of this saintly figure. It is in this moment that Twain comes closest to bringing Joan to life: she speaks longingly of returning to home and mother, she adorns herself with a blue ribbon, and she smothers her laughter at her foolish old uncle's tale. Here she is allowed to betray a trace of pride in her fencing ability as she beats La Hire. In this scene of simple family life we are given a brief glimpse of what the real Joan of Arc may have been.

After the scenes of public grandeur and private happiness, time begins to run out for Joan; the impotence, indifference, cowardice, and treachery of the men about her conspire to bring about her capture and eventual martyrdom. In the section describing Joan's last year there is no opportunity for the fictitious de Conte to observe such intimate scenes as the one with her family. However, Twain brings Joan's former secretary to the trial as a scribe and from this vantage point is able to at least show Joan as she appeared in public. Limited as Twain was by the circumstances of the trial and by the official transcript, he is forced to rely on comments pertaining to her physical appearance. De Conte repeatedly speaks of Joan's pallor, her youth, her weakness as if to remind himself as well as the reader that this magnificent fight is being waged by an untutored and ailing girl. Although the use of interpolated comment is awkward, Twain found it necessary in order to maintain the contrasts set up in the earlier parts of the work.

An important compensation for the difficulties presented by the static quality of the trial scenes was the opportunity afforded by the cruelty of Joan's judges. Until this time there is relatively little

contrast of character. To be sure we have the lumpish peasants, some treacherous nobles, and a weak and shallow king, but none are fully developed. In the trial scenes, however, Twain gives us the classic contrast of good and evil, and Cauchon, the Bishop of Beauvais, is made to order for the latter role. His evil is complete; wrapped in the robes of the Church Militant, he sells himself to both the English and the Devil in order to advance himself in this world. He lies, cheats, and perverts the laws of both man and God. He is a complete portrait of human evil and as such, dramatizes the simple goodness and piety of Joan of Arc.

It is curious that Mark Twain who was so often critical of the established church and, indeed, of God Himself, should have written of Joan as a near divinity. Although, as I have indicated, he carefully keeps us in mind that she was a "claymade"[7] girl, he seems to think of her as a kind of Messiah come to save an unworthy world. It is significant that Louis de Conte says, "I knew that she had seen the vision of the Tree."[8] Traditionally, the Tree is used as an allusion not only to the Tree of Knowledge in the Garden of Eden which contained within its fruit the poison of Death, but it is also a common symbol for the Cross on Calvary. Both references apply in this context: Joan has shown knowledge which could only come from a divine source and she has also looked forward to her own death as a martyr. Throughout the book, Twain speaks of Joan's miraculous deeds while emphasizing her humble beginnings which were much the same as Jesus' beginnings. It is also significant that in the final scenes of her martyrdom some of her words are reminiscent of Christ's crucifixion. Her words to Master Peter, "Yes--and by His Grace I shall be in Paradise"[9] echo Christ's words to

the repentant thief.[10] Her prayers for the ingrate king[11] are akin to "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."[12] Joan's cries for Holy Water[13] remind us of Jesus' "I thirst."[14] While Twain does not explicitly state that Joan is a Christ, it is clear that, despite his insistence on her humanity, he thinks of her in terms of a pure and uncorrupted spirit. To him, she was the Genius of Fidelity,[15] of Patriotism,[16] and one who, like Christ, could not be tempted by the powers of Hell itself.[17]

> That wonderful child, that sublime personality, that spirit which in one regard has had no peer and will have none--this: its purity from all alloy of self seeking, self interest, personal ambition. In it no trace of these motives can be found, search as you may, and this cannot be said of any other person whose name appears in profane history.[18]

The form of Eve's Diary does not admit the use of the dramatic contrasts found in Joan. Except for the beasts, Adam and Eve are the sole occupants of the Garden and most of the piece is in the form of Eve's monologue save for a rather inept extract from Adam's diary dealing principally with Eve's attempts to domesticate the brontosaurus. Introduced at the end of her first twenty-four hours of life, Eve realizes that she is an experiment living in a hastily made world, which she is determined to understand and set to rights. The realization that "the core and center of my nature is the love of the beautiful"[19] comes to her early in life and is the basis for much of the conflict with Adam.

Eve's compassion for all living things and her sensitivity of spirit are contrasted throughout the piece with Adam's low tastes. Eve befriends the animals, glories in the beauty of the universe--her quick intelligence always seeking to probe the unknown--and instinctively reaches out for companionship and affection. When Adam rejects her she turns sorrowfully

to her own reflection in the water. "It is where I go when I hunger for companionship, someone to look at, someone to talk to."[20] Her first sorrow is due to Adam's callous indifference to her need to communicate with someone; after a day of being treated coldly, Eve, overcome by loneliness tries to enter Adam's new shelter," ...but he put me out in the rain, and it was my first sorrow."[21] Like Joan, Eve is misunderstood by man; like Joan, she is rejected by man and suffers through this rejection.

From the day of her creation, Eve is in harmony with the universe and all living in that universe, save man. She has an awareness of the existence of a Creator, an awareness not shared by Adam. She, not Adam, is the Prometheus who brings fire to mankind although she does not know its significance. Having decided that fire has no practical application, Adam loses interest in it and turns away. Eve, however, loves it for its beauty alone while realizing that one day it will prove to be useful. Her joy in the exploration of the world, and in the observation of its beauties and curiosities is an indication of her acceptance of the world. In contrast, when not indifferent to nature, Adam is wary of the world, seeking to build shelters against it and its inhabitants. Adam is lumpish and fearful in a kindly environment while Eve finds excitement and joy in learning its secrets.

A natural being in tune with a natural universe, Eve does not experience the Fall except through Adam. Twain tells us that her ordinary luncheon fare had always been "apples, of course",[22] thus indicating her lack of corruptions. Through Adam's rejection of her she came to know sorrow before the Fall and it was Adam's recklessness before the Fall that taught her fear. Adam's indifference taught her the meaning of loneliness

so that she is able to say while still in the Garden that "it is a mournful place."[23] One senses that Twain is implying that man was a creature warped by nature even before the Fall, while woman was and is in harmony with God and the Universe and cannot be changed except through man. She herself is exempt from God's curse except insofar as that curse may affect the man she loves. Adam, not Eve, brought sin and death into the world and it is through him that Eve suffers. However, this suffering is lessened for her as the fallen Adam no longer puts her out in the rain.

Both Eve and Joan may be characterized as solitaries at home with the natural world but alien to man. Joan is set against the full range of masculine frailty: misunderstanding, stupidity, cowardice, avarice, and brutality. She stands alone in a man-made society and because of man's evil is made to die. Like Eve, she finds her only real companionship with the animals and with a distant woman. Within the smaller framework of Eve's Diary, Eve is equally alone. Adam is not as dramatically evil as the men who persecute Joan, but he shows himself the spiritual father of mankind in his callous behavior toward Eve and in his treacherous betrayal of her in the matter of the apples. ("Of course I would not have told on him, I would have perished first.")[24] Despite their loneliness, both Joan and Eve remain loyal to man; because of man's disloyalty, the Joans ahd Eves of the world are doomed to solitary suffering and eventual death.

If it is true that Mark Twain envisioned Joan as a new Messiah, then he must have seen Eve as a kind of Ruth, willing to give up even her native land to follow the person she loves. Rather than characterizing Eve as the first mother, Twain pictures her as the first wife, the

embodiment of nature, unquestioning love for unworthy man. The children of Adam and Eve are never mentioned in Eve's Diary; we see Eve only in relation to Adam. Like Ruth following Naomi into the unknown, Eve is content to follow Adam, knowing that she loves him in spite of his faults. "If he were plain, I should love him; if he were a wreck, I should love him; and I would work for him, and pray for him, and watch by his bedside until I died."[25]

Gladys Carmine Bellamy says of Mark Twain that "most of his women characters float...on pink tinted clouds of sentimentality. ...they are of a charming purity, but they have no life. The single exception is the courageous portrayal of Roxy-concubine and slave."[26] While feeling that this is dealing a bit harshly with Eve and Joan, I must agree that in Roxy we have the finest characterization of a woman in all of Mark Twain's works. In a book written expressly for the commercial market, at a time when his financial world was collapsing around him, and when he was distracted with worry, Twain has given us a portrait which is unique in its vitality and depth of feeling.

If Joan is another Messiah, and Eve another Ruth, then Roxy is a second Hagar, who with her child is forced by respectable society to become an outcast. Roxy is one-sixteenth Negro; her son, the offspring of one of Dawson's Landing's leading citizens, is one thirty-second Negro and the double of Roxy's master's child. There is no physical evidence to separate Roxy from the white ladies of Dawson's Landing; she is fair of complexion, majestic in bearing, handsome and even beautiful. However, the invisible flaw of color sets her apart as one destined to be enslaved. Too proud to mingle with the Negroes, she finds herself alone in a world

which uncaringly exploits her and which she in turn attempts to exploit.

Miscegenation is an ugly word even today; in the late nineteenth century it was salt in the still unhealed wounds of the Civil War. Time had begun to glamorize the memories of the Old South; the essential immorality of slavery and the consequent abuses of the system were often hidden in a cloud of nostalgic stories about the old plantation and the darkies singing happily in the cotton field. The fiction prevailed that the Negro was possessed of a childlike mentality and had to be handled with the strictest discipline. They were presumed to be sunny of disposition, light of conscience, and sexually indefatigable. Twain's Roxy, however, is broodingly introspective and tragically alone.

Although there is no evidence that in this period of personal misfortune, Mark Twain set about to write a social tract, he did perhaps unconsciously create one of the most telling indictments of the South ever written. Dawson's Landing is a community abounding in flowers, sunlight, and sleeping cats. But the cat becomes a symbol of the horrors and animality that lie beneath the placid surface and that have lain there for generations. For Roxy is not the product of just one master exercising the droit de seigneur; she is one-sixteenth Negro; generations of brutish couplings have produced her. Like Dawson's Landing, her beauty is flawed by an ineradicable stain; like Dawson's Landing, she is condemned to a life of fear and enslavement. Roxy's tragedy is society's tragedy in which all become victims of a system.

In Joan of Arc, Mark Twain gave us an unsullied child; in Eve, man's faithful partner; although Roxy may have once been young in years, she was never a child; although she was briefly mated, she never knew mature love.

Barred by her own sense of superiority from association with the other slaves, she is also barred by the one-sixteenth from a legitimate union with the race of white masters. Born of a loveless mating, she is fated to a similar relationship. As a consequence, all of her suppressed affection is directed to her son, the flaxen haired Valet de Chambre. We see Roxy, therefore, as the archetypal Mother living only in and through her child and willing to sell herself to preserve his place in society.

Given the circumstances of her own life and the bitter foreknowledge of Valet's future as a slave, it comes as no surprise that Roxy should suffer no feelings of guilt in the matter of the exchange of the babies. Religion had little effect on morality in a situation where even the preacher was not above borrowing a ham now and then. For Roxy, religion could only be a recognition of a hope for some form of salvation; it could not alter the brutal facts of the world in which she lived. Roxy is not completely conscienceless and she is comforted by the thought that she has only done to one child what generations of whites have done to a whole race. The condemnation of Thomas á Becket Driscoll to a life of slavery is merely a reversal of an age-old custom. "Tain't no sin--white folks have done it! It ain't no sin, glory to goodness it ain't no sin! Day's done it - yes, en dey was de biggest quality in the whole white bilin', too - kings!"[27]

After the exchange, Roxy's life becomes one of increasing bitterness. Forced to deny her son during his childhood she is finally separated from him for a period of years. When she returns she finds that the child for whom she has made such enormous sacrifices has become an unprincipled

profligate, totally without kindness or generosity. Twain is at his best when he shows Roxy's love for Tom strained to the breaking point only to return in full force in response to a kind word. As Tom becomes more and more enmeshed in lies and gambling debts, Roxy sacrifices more and more of herself in order to save him. When there is no other alternative, she offers to allow Tom to sell her back into slavery in order to wipe out his indebtedness--her only stipulation being that he not sell her down the river. The implications of this final sacrifice are staggering: having achieved freedom for herself, and knowing her son for the rotter he is, Roxy's love is so great that it overcomes both fear and reason. Tom's subsequent betrayal of his mother and her anguished recognition of that betrayal reveal the depths of human evil and human sorrow. "I would have perished first."[28] is echoed in Roxy's "Sell a pusson down de river--down de river!--for de bes'! I wouldn't treat a dog so!"[29]

Running throughout the book is Roxy's sense of social superiority. She is openly contemptuous of Jasper. "I got somep'n' better to do den 'sociat'n' wid niggers as black as you is."[30] She boasts to Tom "Day ain't another nigger in dis town dat's as high-bawn as you is."[31] and she refers to her ancestors as the "Smith-Pocahontases."[32] It is ironic that the standards which Roxy sets for her son should be those of the white aristocracy which enslaved and abused her black forefathers. The community of Dawson's Landing is dominated by a handful of F.F.V.'s who hold personal honor above common humanity and the chivalric code above life itself. While indifferent to the fact of human servitude, the Driscolls and the Howards are sensitive to the fact that personal insult--real or fancied--must be wiped out by blood. When Tom refuses

to challenge the twins to a duel, Roxy is outraged. Like Joan or Eve, she has a dream of what this world can be although, unlike them, she is guided by false standards.

Despite the limitations of her background, Roxy shares many of the qualities of Joan and Eve. She is intelligent and resourceful, quick witted and courageous. Like Joan and Eve, she is also a solitary. Although we are told of the friendships she has with some of the slaves and of the acquaintances she has on the riverboat, her opening conversation with Jasper indicates that she sets herself apart from the Negroes. Although she communicates with others verbally, she is isolated from them. Even Tom is separated from her by his own lack of humanity. Roxy's relationship to her son depends solely on the accident of birth rather than on any kinship of feeling. Like Joan and Eve, Roxy gives love only to be betrayed; Joan by her king and his people, Eve by her husband, and Roxy by the human race.

CHAPTER TWO

Two threads run throughout all of Mark Twain's adult life; the dependence on and the reverence for women as the arbiters of taste and beauty, and the feeling of guilty responsibility for a succession of family disasters. Both themes recur particularly in the work of this latter period and are especially discernable in the characterizations of Joan, Roxy, and Eve.

Sam Clemens' mother, Jane was a strong willed woman who had entered into a loveless marriage in a fit of pique. Despite the emotional poverty of her marriage and the literal poverty in which she lived, she managed to create a home for her family which approximated some of the warmth and grace inherited from her Kentucky and Virginia forefathers. Although she was constantly beset with financial worries because of her husband's inept management, she was optimistic about her sons' prospects in the new West and devoted herself to furthering their prospects. Sam, however, was a source of concern to her. So anxious was she about his unruly temperament that, at his father's death bed, she made him swear to always be a good boy. Van Wyck Brooks quotes Paine's version of the scene: "Only promise me to be a better boy. Promise not to break my heart."[33] According to Brooks, this was the crucial moment in Mark Twain's life when his fate was decided. The promise became a lifelong incubus returning to torture him each time he attempted to break

out of the conventional mold. While Brooks' theory may be a bit harsh on Jane Clemens and may overemphasize her influence on her son, it is clear that the promise did have a profound effect on Sam--both the boy and the man. We know that the experience was followed by a period of nervous disorder which abated only to return again at the time of Henry Clemens' death. Sam experienced strong feelings of guilt in having helped Henry obtain a berth on the Pennsylvania, feelings which were to remain with him all of his life. These were to burst forth again at the time of Langdon Clemens' death, and reached full force in the prolonged period of financial and personal loss. It was during this final period that his three great female characters were created.

When we come to think of the life of Samuel Clemens and then come to judge Joan, Eve, and Roxy, we do not find it surprising that each is contrasted to a man who not only cannot understand her and who is indifferent to her, but who sometimes becomes her active opponent in life's battle. Mark Twain's Joan who, as DeLancey Ferguson puts it,"is Susy Clemens",[34] does not represent a turning point in mankind's religious and political thought; she is, as was Susy, the spirit of youth who is fighting a lonely battle for an ideal and who is crushed by the unyielding forces of life--in this case the callous indifference of man. As I have indicated, Joan is contrasted to the wickedness of a Cauchon, a Loyseleur, and a king. However, the real traitor to Joan of Arc was Louis de Conte, the man who loved and served her, and yet was afraid to either deal with her with complete honesty or to openly stand by her when his support was needed. Louis recognized in Joan some of the same qualities that Mark Twain saw in his daughter: "In this family, she

held the place of intellectual chief, as by natural right; none of us thought of disputing it with her. In depth of mind, in swiftness of comprehension, clearness of intellectual vision, ...we knew her as our intellectual superior. And we did not resent it but were only proud of it."[35] Just as Mark was unable to help his daughter in her struggle toward her goal, so Louis found himself a grieving bystander in the drama that was the life of Joan of Arc.

Although he is in a sense a traitor, Louis is also the one truly tragic figure in the book. His guilt lies in his inability to express himself either by word or deed, and his tragedy lies in his helplessness. "I am not demonstrative; I am always hiding my feelings; but my heart was wrung yesterday. I could not tell you how deeply I loved you nor how grieved I was for you, nor how I pitied you in this awful trouble."[36] These are the words of Mark Twain written to his wife at the time of Susy's death but they are equally applicable to Louis. Knowing the prophecy of Joan's cruel death and the predictable outcome of the trial, he can only bring himself to watch and record Joan's agony. Although he shows an almost feminine sensitivity to Joan's feelings, he is paralyzed into inactivity. He is even afraid that Joan may betray him through some sign of recognition. "Her eyes sought ours fifty times that day, but they passed on and there was never any ray of recognition in them. Another would have started upon seeing me, and then--why then there could have been trouble for us, of course. We walked slowly home together, each busy with his own grief and not saying a word."[37]

Proof of the existance of a sense of guilt in Mark Twain's Joan is the implication that Louis, who may be equated with Mark Twain, is trying

to absolve himself of the blame for Joan's tragedy. His unspoken "I couldn't help it" is perhaps the dominant theme of the book and his pleasure in Joan's rehabilitation is that of a child who is told that the broken cup can be mended. Louis attacks the villains in the affair in an attempt to obscure his own sins of omission: "Here you have the black heart of Cauchon at the blackest; here you have proof that in his nature there was no such thing as pity. One wonders if he ever knew his mother or had a sister"[38] Passages such as this coupled with Louis' heartrending descriptions of Joan and of his own sorrow arouse the reader's sympathy for the former secretary but fail to alter the fact that Louis made not one move to help Joan. Louis attempts to place the blame for Joan's martyrdom on a handful of officials while ignoring his own silent complicity. In Louis, Twain seems to express his own guilt, and in retelling the story of Joan seems to be trying to expiate that guilt.

Eve's Diary is another act of penance. A companion piece to the earlier Adam's Diary, it was written as a memorial to Olivia Clemens. Here we have man and woman involved in the closest human relationship possible, yet, even in this relationship, man is guilty of sin and betrayal. Unlike Louis, Adam's sins are those of comission and it is through those sins that Eve is made to suffer. It is Adam who brings sorrow to Eve through his indifference to her; it is Adam's transgression that deprives Eve of her heritage--the garden; it is Adam's sin which brings death to the world, and it is Adam who betrays Eve to the Creator. Mark Twain's letters, notebook, and particularly his writings of this final period are filled with expressions of responsibility for the sufferings of Livy

and the girls. Nowhere is this sense of guilt stronger than in Eve's Diary.

Just as we saw the note of apology in Joan of Arc, so we see it now in Eve's Diary. However, now the apology has taken a different turn: Eve tells us that Adam cannot be blamed for his deficiencies because "He is as God made him."[39] His mind and heart simply do not have Eve's capacity for thought and feeling. Where we found Louis de Conte hunting for villains to blame, we now find Eve attributing Adam's sins to the God who created him. Through Eve, Mark Twain tries to excuse Adam's and ultimately his own shortcomings and betrayals. In a remarkable passage, Eve lists Adam's faults and then explains that he cannot be blamed for these faults. He is not bright, talented, educated, or considerate; neither his love nor his loyalty can be compared to hers.[40] Clearly Mark Twain seeks here to divide humanity into two classes; the female who exhibits self awareness and sensitivity toward the male, and the male who is limited by nature and cannot be blamed for his shortcomings.

Having established to his own satisfaction that man cannot hope to achieve woman's sensitivity of mind and spirit, Twain is able to evade the responsibility for man's sins. It is significant, however, that having vindicated himself, he still feels the need to prove his worth. Just as he tried to justify himself by emphasizing the fact of Joan's rehabilitation, he now attempts to say that, after all, Adam wasn't such a brute--he did appreciate Eve. The line at Eve's grave, "Wheresoever she was, there was Eden",[41] is of course, one of the most beautiful that Mark Twain ever wrote. However, like the official recognition of Joan's truth, the sentiment is belatedly expressed. Here again we see the familiar attempt

to make things right--the same childish endeavor to mend the broken cup. Lacking a human scapegoat, God is responsible for man's errors; lacking the more perfect qualities of woman, man is still able to express--albeit tardily--his sense of love's reality.

Van Wyck Brooks states that Pudd'nhead Wilson is not so much a book as it is a nightmare.[42] Mark Twain himself wrote in his final remarks on the book that "when Roxy wandered into the book she had to be furnished with something to do."[43] Roxy began to do so much that what had been begun as a farce ended as the deepest kind of tragedy. The inclusion of Roxy opened a Pandora's box of sin piled upon sin, guilt piled upon guilt. This time all of mankind is involved; woman as well as man is tainted and all must suffer. Unlike Joan or Eve, Roxy is consciously capable of evil and the most puzzling problem of the book is trying to untangle the knotted threads of corporate and individual guilt.

When Twain was forced by his financial reverses to return to writing as a quick source of cash, he instinctively turned to the world of his childhood which he had so successfully mined in the past. In his depressed abstraction, however, the world which had been a haven of carefree irresponsibility whose seamier side was rarely disclosed, now became a cesspool. No longer is the river a pathway to freedom; it has become a road leading deeper into Hell. The sunrise of idealism has been replaced by the glare of afternoon and the black of night. The abuses only hinted at in the characterization of Jim are clearly defined in Roxy. The sentiments only half felt and half articulated by Huck reappear fully developed in Tom's words "Why were niggers and whites made? What crime did the first uncreated nigger commit that the curse of birth was decreed

for him? And why is this awful difference made between black and white?"[44] The search for the source of guilt becomes the implied theme of the book; it is a search for which Mark Twain could provide no ending.

While clearly Roxy is a tragic victim of the inhuman traffic in slavery--the present product of the crime committed against her great, great grandmother--she is also a prime mover in the sequence of events which lead to the tragic conclusion of Pudd'nhead Wilson. Twain seeks to excuse her petty thievery as a result of the treatment given her people: "Was she bad? Was she worse than the general run of her race? No. They had an unfair show in the battle of life; and they held it no sin to take advantage of the enemy--in a small way."[45] Twain even finds an excuse for the larger crime of sending the legitimate Tom into slavery: "Day done it--yes, day done it; en not jis' common white folks nuther, but the biggest quality dey is in de whole bilin'."[46] Roxy could be judged guiltless in the tragedy except for the fact that she, who dared everything for her son, adopted as her own the same warped code served by her masters. As I have shown, Roxy is inordinately proud of her own Smith-Pocahontas blood and even prouder of the infusion of Old Dominion quality through the father of her child. "Dey ain't another niggah in dis town dats' as high bawn as you is... ."[47] When Roxy learns that her son has failed to live up to the code of the white masters, she is scandalized and infuriated: "It's de nigger in you, dat's what it is. Thirty-one parts of you is white, en on'y one part nigger, en dat po' little one part is yo' soul. ...You has disgraced yo' birth. What would yo' pa think o' you? It's enough to make him turn in his grave."[48] These apalling words indicate the depth of guilt in Roxy who embraces the false

values of the oppressor and in doing so turns her own son into a monster. It was Roxy who taught herself to treat the real Tom as a slave and the false Tom as a master thereby setting the stage for the tragedy to follow. Her crime lay not just in the fact of the exchange but in the fact that through her betrayal of self and her adherance to false values, she by her own efforts turned her son into her accepted and recognized master. "He was her darling, her master, and her deity all in one, and in her worship of him she forgot who she was and what he had been."[49] Roxy is equally guilty in the tragedy of the real Tom who after the dramatic courtroom exposure found himself in a position for which he was never prepared. "Money and fine clothes could not mend these defects or cover them up; they only made them the more glaring and the more pathetic."[50] Surely in Twain's thinking, Roxy was the guilty one in the drama.

While it may be comfortable to blame Roxy, the case is not that simple. Perhaps the blame should lie with Percy Driscoll who congratulated himself on his magnaminity when he refrained from selling his slaves down the river. Driscoll slept well that night little realizing that his threats had sent Roxy into such paroxysms of fear that she dared to exchange her child for his. Or perhaps the blame for the tragedy should be laid at the door of the deceased Cecil Burliegh Essex whose easy immorality resulted in the birth of Valet de Chambre. Perhaps the murdered man, York Driscoll, should be given the responsibility as his threats in the matter of the will drove Tom to a life of subterfuge and crime. It might even be fair to blame David Wilson who was so intent on self vindication that he didn't hesitate to destroy the lives of three people. Finally, we must allot a large measure of the blame to the false

Tom because of his life of profligacy, his contempt for and betrayal of his mother, and his cowardly murder of his adoptive father.[51]

The fact is that everyone involved in the tragedy of the book, with the possible exception of the Italian twins, is guilty. All have drunk from the same poisoned well of false values and human corruption and all are tainted by it. The characters all share in a corporate sin. Characteristically, however, Twain tries to find a scapegoat. Despite the abuses which Roxy has suffered, Twain makes a feeble attempt to show that she is warped by nature and currupted by habit. The one fairly dispassionate character in the book, David Wilson, is made to say of her, "The drop of black blood in her is superstitious."[52] Twain emphasizes her gaudy taste in clothing and her personal vanity particulary in her scene of preparation for suicide. He repeatedly mentions her love of whiskey which in the eighteen nineties was a sure indication of a woman's low character. Running in counter measure to the theme of Roxy's love and concern for her son is the idea of her hypocrisy and deceit, her desire for a dole, and her ruthless ambition. The repeated revelations of the dark side of her nature often lead the reader to think that the source of infection did indeed reside within the slave, Roxana.

It is small wonder that Mark Twain should try to shift at least a part of the blame onto Roxy; all that she stands for represents a curse on the beloved land of his childhood and in her he must have seen accusations too awful to face. "The Civil War is the watershed in Twain's life between innocence and experience, childhood and manhood, joy and pain, but it is politically, of course, the dividing line between slavery and freedom. And Twain, who cannot deny either aspect, endures the

contradiction of searching for a lost happiness he knows was sustained by an institution he is forced to recognize as his country's greatest shame. It was the best he could dream; to be free as a boy in a world of slavery."[53]

Mark Twain, however, was too honest a man to ignore cold facts, as horrible as they may be. The fact is that Roxy shared with all mothers worthy of the name a capacity for unselfish love which, as Mark Twain saw it, was beyond the ken of man. "In de inside, mothers is all de same. De Good Lord he made 'em so."[54] Roxy's salvation is her sacrificial love in voluntarily returning to slavery--an act which could only be prompted by nobility of soul. In the light of this act all the sins of mankind are revealed and Roxy stands vindicated.

It is clear that in all three works it is the woman who is the dominant figure. Minnie Brashear says that Twain thought of women as "queens of earth rather than of heaven"[55] and all critics point out that all his life Twain invited women to discipline him. "The assumption that women ought to exert a gentle tyranny over their menfolk appealed to one who subscribed cheerfully that his own sex was coarser clay."[56] It is not surprising therefore that all three women are shown as having extraordinary qualities of leadership and being able to dominate the physically superior but morally weaker male. It is Joan to whom the soldiers look for guidance; it is she who is able to instill pride into a supine nation, and it is she who for a time is even able to lead a weak and conscienceless king to assert himself as a king should. Although she prefers the retired life of a peasant, she realizes that only a woman's moral strength can save her people and so great is her love that she is

willing to sacrifice herself to save mankind from itself. It is this kind of love that can save the human race; her influence is the one good in an infirm and corrupt world. In his portrait of Joan, Twain has given us his ideal woman--capable of loving the world while remaining unblemished by it.

Roxy is, of course, at the opposite end of the spectrum. Her world has become so evil that she herself is touched by its guilt, yet she is also engaged in an act of salvation. Desperate to save her son from a hellish system she tries with terrible energy to find a place in society where he can live free from fear. The measure of her involvement in the sins of man is the coldness with which she can destroy any enemy; the measure of Joan's lack of sin is her ability to weep over those she has injured. Unlike Joan, who can still pray for the king while at the stake, Roxy is tragically aware of the native viciousness of the man she tried to save. Despite the differences between them, however, Joan and Roxy resemble each other in their recognition that man cannot save himself; woman must push him toward his own salvation.

Van Wyck Brooks saves some of his choicest invective for Olivia Clemens because, as he sees it, it was her lifelong censorship of Twain's work that emasculated his talent. Olivia's nickname for him was 'Youth' and, for Brooks, this pet name takes on sinister connotations: "Was it not from an instinctive sense that her power lay in keeping him a child, in asserting the maternal attitude which he could never resist?"[57] Brooks asserts that in Eve's Diary, "which is said to figure their relationship."[58] Adam "is the hewer of wood, the drawer of water, and Eve the arbiter in all matters of civilization."[58] While I think it impossible to make a final judgement on the psychological effects of Livy's constant supervision of

Mark Twain's work, it is a fact that she did wage a lifelong battle against some of his more unconventional habits and did try to lead him to observe the conventional proprieties of language and decorum in his writings. Although it is clear that such supervision was not entirely unwelcome, it would seem that over a period of thirty-five years some of the earthy spontaneity would fade from his work.

There are some indications, however, of a measure of resentment of this censorship even in Eve's Diary. In the light of Brooks' words, Eve's observation that "some instinct tells me that eternal vigilance is the price of supremacy"[59] takes on a chilling tone. When Eve becomes annoyed over her inability to understand the animals "for I want to be the principle Experiment--and I intend to be, too",[60] another ominous note is sounded. We might at this point wonder if Twain's resentful feelings of inferiority were finding expression in these words and in Eve's repeated remarks concerning Adam's 'low tastes.' It is especially significant that Twain characterizes Eve as thinking that she is particularly proficient in her own sphere of interest--languages. "During the last day or two I have taken all the work of naming things off his hands, and this has been a great relief to him, for he has not a gift in that line..."[61] When we remember that both Joan and Roxy excelled in men's traditional occupations--Joan in war and Roxy in crime--the thought occurs to us that perhaps Twain did feel some measure of resentment against the interfering woman. Generally speaking, the Eve we see before the Fall is officious, priggish, vain, and domineering. Her youthful naivete does lend a veneer of charm, but the iron will to rule is frighteningly evident. Looking at the youthful Eve we are inclined to

agree with Brooks that if this is really a portrait of Livy Clemens, she was indeed a destroyer.

We cannot, however, base our estimate of Olivia-Eve solely on her character before the Fall. Although her love of goodness and truth--the old fashioned virtues--remain unchanged, and although she continues her improvement project to the very end, she no longer tries to usurp Adam's place. While still recognizing his limitations she also has begun to recognize her need for him. Before the Fall she longed for someone to talk to--a companion only a bit more responsive than her reflection in the water; after the Fall she becomes aware of her need for him as a mate: "life without him would not be life; how could I endure it?"[62] We are reminded of Livy's remark to her husband, "Well, if you are to be lost, I want to be lost with you."[63] When Eve loses Eden she finds her soul and while there is a note of wistful regret for that which has been lost, there is greater joy in that which has been found. Adam too has found a happiness which was absent in the Garden and can even sing--although his singing sours the milk. The sense of tension that was so clear in the earlier part of the work has disappeared in their acceptance of one another; Adam now shelters Eve from the rain and Eve grants Adam the position of First Experiment. While Brooks' contention that Eve-Olivia was a destroyer or genius may have some merit in it, it is plain that Sam Clemens gloried, as did Adam, in his wife's 'tyranny', and could honestly say with Adam, "Wheresoever she was, there was Eden."[64]

CHAPTER THREE

In his last years, Mark Twain became more and more pessimistic about the nature of mankind and about man-made institutions. He began first to attack man's social and religious institutions and then to attack man himself. Of course, his most explicit statements concerning his increasing misanthropy are to be found in "What is Man?" and in "Letters from the Earth", but we can find the ideas reflected there reflected in Joan of Arc, Eve's Diary, and in Pudd'nhead Wilson. The difficulty in discussing his growing pessimism and his thoughts on the nature of man lies in the fact that these three works are about women and, for Twain, most women were exempt from blame for the human condition. As I have indicated, he thought of women in the light of Southern tradition and Victorian custom: respectable women were a breed apart--delicate in thought, noble in devotion, and heroic indeed. Only a Roxy, tainted as she is by man's vileness, can participate in the crimes of the human race.

Mark Twain was at his most vitriolic when he came to attack human institutions--social, political, or religious. In these he saw corruption and deceit which used and magnified the woes of man. Although our three books are not specifically treatises on man's institutions, in them we can determine many of the black thoughts so characteristic of the last two decades of Twain's life. Although Eve's Diary describes a time before institutions have evolved, it contains implied criticism of the ancient

traditions concerning the nature of the Fall, and also attacks the Victorian prudery which blushed at any hint of the physical side of love. When Eve says that her love for Adam "is a matter of sex, I think",[65] she is not only recognizing the complimentary nature of the male and female personality, but she is also recognizing the human need for sexual fulfillment. While her thought is expressed with becoming modesty, it is as startling as some of Twain's more forthright words on the subject:" ...the human being like the immortals naturally places sexual intercourse far and away above all other joys--yet he has left it out of his heaven."[66] Twain's celebration of sex in the last section of Eve's Diary contrasts sharply with the rigid sexual taboos insisted upon by both Christian morality and social custom. "So the first pair went forth from the Garden under a curse--a permanent one. They had lost every pleasure they had possessed before 'The Fall'; and yet they were rich, for they had gained one worth all the rest: ~~they~~ they knew the Supreme Art."[67] For a generation which equated the Fall with sinful sex and carnality, Eve's passionate nature and sexual contentment must have come as quite a shock.

Organized religion, Roman Catholicism in particular, was a favorite bête noire of Mark Twain. He found himself in a peculiar position, however, when he came to the writing of Joan of Arc: to the end, Joan remained a devout Roman Catholic--a fact which barred her biographer from an open attack on the Church. Twain was, therefore, forced to make a differentiation between the Church and the clergy--a differentiation which he did not ordinarily make. A further difficulty was presented

by his own belief that patriotism and Christianity are mutually exclusive. "A man can be a Christian or a patriot, but he can't legally be a Christian and a patriot--except in the usual way: one of the two with the mouth, the other with the heart."[68] Twain sought, somewhat unsuccessfully, to reconcile this contradiction by treating of individuals rather than of institutions. His Joan is not pictured as a symbol of revolt against the Church nor does she stand for a growing nationalism with all its divisive implications. In defense of the Church, Twain states that the Pope would have saved Joan had he been appealed to--hardly a valid supposition considering Joan's denial of the intermediary power ot the Church and her insistance that the directives of her Voices take precedence over the orders of the Church. I am forced to the conclusion, contradictory as it may be, that, in this book, Twain tried to present the Church as a positive good. It is unfortunately infested by Cauchons and Loyseleurs who pervert and misuse its authority. It would seem to follow that if the Church were rid of such evil it could be a purifying and ennobling influence. I say that there is a contradiction here as Twain felt that God is an uncaring God and as such, cannot be represented by an institution claiming to bring God's salvation to us. "God cares not a rap for us ..."or" ...for men's flatteries, compliments, praises, prayers; it is impossible that he should value them, impossible that he should listen to them, these mouthings of microbes."[69] If the Christian idea of God in a hoax, then God's Church with its teachings and rituals is a fraud and Joan is sacrificed by a lie. Her belief that God cares for his people and her trust in the Pope as well as the validity of her sanctification are all revealed as false. In order to save Joan, Twain must abandon his own beliefs and treat Joan's Visions as well as her

Church as truths only temporarily obscured by the evil in man.

" 'Poor child, but for the priests it would not have happened; but whenever they meddle harm must come to somebody.' " " 'Particularly when they and politics join teams and meddle together!' "[70] Not only are we to separate the priests from that which they theoretically serve, but we are also to divide the politicians from the country they attempt to govern. Twain can only make a case for Joan's patriotism if he makes it clear that her vision of a unified France is a valid and noble one. Her France must be a kind of lost Eden to be rescued from fallen man rather than a political entity struggling for its share of the world's spoils. Weak kings and treacherous councilors are only temporary obstructions, not an inherent fault of the nationalistic ideal or of the concept of institutionalized government. The critic of Patriotism had to find some basis upon which he could say with honest admiration that Joan "was the Genius of Patriotism--she was Patriotism embodied, concreted, made flesh, and palpable to the touch and visible to the eye."[71] This echo of St. John suggests the messianic nature of Joan's mission; she is to redeem a fallen people in order that it may grow in moral greatness. To her, Charles was not simply a man given to cowardice and duplicity: he was France, living symbol of her land. Again, Twain was forced to criticize the man rather than the institution he represented, and in his tacit acceptance of the institution vindicated Joan's efforts and achievements. Twain's use of the persona, Louis de Conte, enabled him to reach a balance in which he could comfortably and with conscience, accept the concepts of institutionalized religion and nationalism while rejecting those who sought to subvert those concepts to their own selfish ends.

Because Twain was not hampered by a heroine of Joan's sanctity, it would be reasonable to suppose that in Pudd'nhead Wilson, his criticism of human institutions would be without equivocation. He does indeed attack the Church but only indirectly and only by implication. No mention is made of the white man's faith save as we can observe its distorted reflection in Roxy's world. Presumably the white man has no God to worship; he can only dedicate himself to his murderous code of honor. It is part of the tragedy of Tom that suspended as he is between two worlds, he can neither live up to the white man's code, nor can he avail himself of the cold comforts of religion as it is found in the world of the slave.

Roxy's religion is a poor thing which cannot hope to better her life on earth but can only offer a meager chance for an after life for her soul. To her, religion is an ephemeral thing which lasts only a day or a week after which it relaxes its grip enabling her to follow her natural inclinations with complete freedom of conscience. "She made this sacrifice as a matter of religious etiquette; as a thing necessary just now, but by no means to be wrested into a precedent; no, a week or two would limber her piety, then she would be rational again, and the next two dollars that got left out in the cold would find a comforter--and she could name the comforter."[72] Religion's only practical value in this life is to provide some dramatic interest thus lifting, if only for the moment, the unceasing burden of hopelessness. Roxy's acquisition of religion is responsible for a momentary flush of satisfaction; there is no real change in her condition or her morals. In a society where even the deacon appropriates ham to which he has been providentially led, and conduets

grateful chickens from the cold coop to the warm platter, it is unlikely that religion could have a significant effect on the day-to-day morality of that society's members. The only justification is that it entertains and somehow lightens the tedium of despair. Here then we see the identification of the institution with those who serve it. Immoral man, who cannot free himself and can only retaliate through petty thievery, is a fit representative of an impotent institution.

If we can say that Roxy's religion performs any good at all, we must admit that that good is far outweighed by the harm it does. For Roxy's God is man's arbitrary judge: Lord of Heaven and Hell, he disposes of his victims with fine impartiality. Roxy's belief in the doctrine of the elect may give her some freedom from responsibility, but it also adds to her sense of hopelessness--it is hardly likely that she with her drop of black blood, is one of God's chosen. Nothing she does, be it for good or evil, can affect the final disposition of her soul. "He said day ain't nobody kin save his own self--can't do it by faith, can't do it by works, can't do it no way at all. Free grace is de o'ny way, en dat don't come fum nobody but jis' de Lord; en he kin give it to anybody he please, saint or sinner--he don't kyer. He do jis' as he's a min'ter. He s'lect out anybody dat suit him, en put another one in his place, en make de fust one happy forever en leave t'other one to burn with Satan."[73] Clearly the tradition which rules out the efficacy of good works is unlikely to foster an active sense of morality--particularly in the untutored. Yet it is a paradox that when we last see Roxy, she has turned to her church in earnest as the only source of comfort and happiness in her bleak life. Without hope in this world, she finds some solace in a religion that

preaches the existance of another life--regardless of her chances of attaining that salvation. Like Joan, her church has failed her, like Joan, she remains faithful to her church; like Joan, her sorrows and disappointment can only be eased by the church's promise of salvation; unlike Joan, her confidence in that salvation is a matter of forlorn hope rather than of living faith.

It is significant that Eve, the only one of the three who has no contact with organized religion is the only one who finds a measure of happiness in this life. Adam and Eve transgress the law of the ancient Hebrew God and in so doing find contentment. The God which Eve recognizes is Twain's God of Nature--the Creator, the artisan who originates. This God cares nothing for the human microbe and can neither be bought nor flattered. "The Bible of Nature tells us no word about any future life, but only about this present one. It does not premise a future life; it does not even vaguely indicate one."[74] Because Eve recognizes the impersonality of the God of Nature and makes no attempt to placate him, she, alone of the three women, is able to accommodate herself to life. Having no lure of salvation to distract her, she is able to find comfort in her life's one reality--the love which she shares with Adam. I think that the implication is clear: the God of the carrot and the stick is a sham; life is only bearable when man can accept its joys and sorrows on its own terms without regard to false promises of life's continuation on another and perhaps better level.

As I have indicated, Mark Twain could not quite come to grips with the institution of slavery in Pudd'nhead Wilson. "When he invoked

Hannibal he found there not only the idyll of boyhood but anxiety, violence, supernatural horror, and an uncrystallized but enveloping dread."[75] The unspeakable accusations represented in Roxy's story are too much to be faced with complete candor and honesty. Despite the fact that ultimately Twain must condemn slavery as one of mankind's greatest shames--a martyrdom of an entire people, there seems to be some sort of a subliminal implication of evil inherent in the black race. I am convinced that the curious contrasts of light and dark which recur throughout Pudd'nhead Wilson represent an effort to identify black deeds with black skin. Even in Tom's anguished outcry there is mention of some original sin which is responsible for the condition of the Negro and which might be interpreted as a justification for slavery. "What crime did the uncreated first nigger commit that the curse of birth was decreed for him?"[76] Even Roxy seems to equate blackness with lowliness: at the outset we hear her refusal to associate with Jasper framed in terms of color: "I got somep'n' better to do den 'sociatn' wid niggers as black as you is."[77] Later she attributes Tom's failure to live up to the code of chivalry to "de nigger in you, dat's what it is. Thirty-one parts o' you is white en on'y one part nigger, en that po' little part is yo' soul. Tain't wuth savin', tain't wuth totin' out on a shovel en throwin' in de gutter."[78] Finally, as Roxy becomes more deeply involved in Tom's affairs, she blackens her face: in order to reach her son, she must become as black as his soul. The black face is but a reflection of the black spirit. Although Twain must in honesty condemn the system of slavery and its abuses, he is still too emotionally involved to make that condemnation clear cut. There is always the nagging feeling that perhaps the black race does indeed have a

curse on it. He is able to speak of slavery in the abstract as an absolute evil; when he must apply that condemnation to the place which symbolizes the joy of his boyhood, he is forced to temporize. The remarkable thing is that this son of the South was able to face the problem as squarely as he did in Pudd'nhead Wilson.

In "What is Man?", Mark Twain set forth a theory of human behavior which in his eyes at least went far toward explaining man's viciousness and cruelty and, in so doing, excused man from responsibility for his sins. Man he said is capable of no free or independent thought or action. He is merely a combination of his own inborn temperament and those environmental influences which were operative during his development. He is further limited by the existence of an inner master which controls all of his actions whether for good or for evil. In short, man is a machine; just as he cannot be commended for the little good that he does, so he cannot be held responsible for the sins he commits. He is an automaton in a world of automatons; an unthinking and blameless machine. Clearly to a guilt-ridden man this is a comforting philosophy and it is of some value in analyzing Joan, Eve and Roxy.

In particular, Adam is excused from his misdeeds by the philosophy of "What is Man?". Ironically it is Eve herself--Adam's chief victim--who provides the excuse: "He loves me as well as he can...He is as God made him...it is a peculiarity of sex, I think."[79] In Eve's mind, Adam is limited by nature: whatever flaws he may have are attributable to the Creator--not to Adam. He cannot be blamed for callousness and treachery: God made him that way. Eve, too, is what she is because of her tempermental

makeup, though it is plain that she is of finer stuff than Adam. Both of their natures are predetermined and once determined, are not subject to radical change. While it is true that after the Fall both Adam and Eve are seen to improve somewhat, we may argue that whatever change there is is due to the change in environmental influences. Forced by the Fall to learn to live together, they were in some measure able to accommodate themselves to each others' strengths and weaknesses. However, it is implied that sexual attraction became the real bond between them, and in the light of Twain's deterministic doctrine, it is fair to assume that Adam and Eve changed in order to satisfy their own inner master. After the Fall, Adam allowed Eve to share his life and Eve granted Adam preeminence. Why? To satisfy that which had become of great importance to them--sexual fulfillment. We may say then that Adam and Eve are the purest examples of this determinism: they are as they were created; the Fall sets up new outside influences and inner motivations to which they respond. They are at all times at the mercy of the three forces of temperament, environment, and inner drive.

In Joan of Arc, we find Twain's doctrine of determinism operative in a slightly different way. Joan, the child of light and sun, the spirit of youth and freedom, is pitted against the full range of man's evil. The implication here is that Joan's opponents are warped in the making and, driven by evil inner masters, are capable of reaching the limits of sin. Joan, however, is the child of nature, and as such is in tune with the cosmic forces of freedom. A Cauchon serves the inner master of greed and is further corrupted by the outside influence of the English; a Louis serves the twin masters of timidity and cowardice. Joan's master is the

will to be free and a sense of the divine, and when she momentarily submits to the strictures set forth by her judges she suffers exquisite agonies of mind and spirit. Only when she renews her pledge to her inner master can she find peace. "She was sane now and now exhausted; her courage had come back and with it her inborn loyalty to the truth. She was bravely and serenely speaking it again, knowing that it would deliver her body up to that very fire which had such terrors for her... The spirit born for sunshine and liberty so longed for release that it would take it in any form, even that."[80] Here then, is the inner master most obviously at work; elements of freedom and truth were involved in Joan's creation and were the guiding forces throughout her short life. She could no more deny these attributes than Cauchon could deny the duplicity and venom that made up his black soul. Here we have the complete polarization of human nature; contrasted to the goodness of Joan we have the foulness of Cauchon. Despite their differences, however, they are both helpless in a deterministic world.

If we can say that a Cauchon or a Joan is unable to act except in complete conformity to his or her makeup, and except according to the directions of his or her inner master, what can we say about the inhabitants of Dawson's Landing? How much weight should be given to birth, how much to environmental influences, and how much to the promptings of the inner master? I would suggest that we can arrive at no clear-cut answer here because Twain himself had no answer. Yet it is obvious that more than in the other two books, the characters here are the pawns in the hands of a terrible fate. Like the protagonists in a Greek drama, all are inexorably drawn into the common tragedy,--for there is no happy ending in Pudd'nhead Wilson. There is no catharsis here; the reader must share in the guilt for which

Twain provides no palliative. It is true that we can provide some excuses if we apply the doctrine of determinism: the white man is surely a victim of an age-old tradition, the black man equally the victim of generations of heaped up affronts. Both the real and the false Toms are clearly ruined by their upbringing with its underlying slave-master philosophy. Finally, Roxy can be explained and excused when we remember the cruelties of the system which held her in bondage and which threatened to swallow up the one being that she loved. There are clear reasons for the actions of each of the characters and each may with some justification from the doctrine of determinism be excused. How then can we explain the sense of guilty complicity which even the most casual reader must experience at the close of the book.

The answer, I think, lies in some of Twain's remarks in "The Damned Human Race." "While the gospel of determinism may ease the conscience and help to explain the mystery of human action, in the end Twain's pessimism forces him to say that man is essentially evil. Given the moral sense, man has the ability to choose that which is morally wrong. Again I must point out that the Joans and the Eves of the world are exempt from this general condemnation. Otherwise the human race is inherently evil and cannot be saved. "Man is the only slave. And he is the only animal who enslaves. He has always been a slave in one form or another, and has always held other slaves in bondage under him in one form or another."[81] This black pessimism goes far toward explaining the real meaning of Pudd'nhead Wilson. In Joan and Eve we have some of the redemptive quality of love: Adam does improve somewhat through the influence of Eve's love for

him; sinful man does recognize Joan's truth and France is saved because of Joan's love. Because Roxy is tainted by sin her love is unable to redeem the viciousness that is the world of Dawson's Landing. Here there is a totality of evil which cannot be explained or excused. He can only say that the human race is indeed damned.

It is significant that at the end of Pudd'nhead Wilson, the real Tom must suffer because he is a slave in mind and spirit, and the false Tom must suffer because he is a slave in fact. Unable to cope with the horror of slavery, Twain is forced to say that all men are slaves whether they enjoy nominal freedom or not. Even the white masters embrace the chains of their so called honor. Roxy is the ultimate symbol of the inherent slavery of mankind; not only is her body enslaved but her ideals are bound by the corrupt values of her master. To her, legal freedom is meaningless, even here she must serve the white passenger on the river of life. All are caught in the same evil trap from which there is no escape.

Here then are Mark Twain's three women; sometimes the product and always the victim of bitterness and sin. Twain came to a deep pessimism about the human race in general and, to the degree that she shares in its sin each woman must be stained by the evil. Joan, of course, lived in the world but was not of it. She was a child of nature come to save man but not to participate in his corporate sin. Because of her lack of involvement, her life was a triumph though her body was sent to the stake. Eve, however, gives herself to man and in so doing involves herself in his evil. Although she is fated to suffer through him, her love is ennobling and provides some measure of redemption. Roxy is the symbol of man's

brutality and is a culprit as well as a victim. Despite the whiteness of her skin and the reality of her love she cannot escape the admixture of evil any more than she can escape the drop of black blood. In her we see the accumulated crimes of man for which he is justly damned.

CONCLUSIONS

What then can be concluded about these three women as a reflection of Mark Twain's thought? Obviously, he held 'good' women in the highest admiration, judging them to be far finer than man can ever hope to be, and attributing to them a capacity for love and sacrifice unknown to man. On close examination, however, it would seem that admiration for this capacity to love is in direct ratio to the conscious artistry of the piece in which she appears. Joan, of course, is the supreme symbol of uncorrupted love just as Joan of Arc is the symbol of Mark Twain as the conscious artist. Nowhere is there any indication of resentment or selfishness on Joan's part nor is there any indication of the author resenting Joan's overwhelming goodness. Joan is exactly as Twain describes her: pure, idealistic, and selfless.

Although we know little about the actual writing of Eve's Diary, I think that it is fair to conclude that it is not the kind of conscious art that is represented by Joan. The absence of any recorded 'growing pains' and the obviously dedicatory nature of the piece would seem to indicate a certain lessening of control and an increased subjectivity. As in Joan, we are shown the redemptive power of a woman's love, love which can transform even a fallen world into an Eden. Although I do not question the sincerity of Twain's admiration of Eve, there are indications of a kind of resentment of the restrictive aspects of that

love. We are reminded constantly of Eve's life-long struggle to civilize Adam, and Adam himself tells us that he could enjoy Eve's company more if she would only stop talking.[82] Indeed there is a selfish motive behind Eve's love; she needs Adam. She tells us that she cannot survive without him; it is in her interest, therefore, to give way to him if in so doing she can chain him to her. Clearly then, this love is not completely without flaw.

Mark Twain himself said that Pudd'nhead Wilson became a work far different from that which was originally intended. The characterization of a minor figure became so important that it took over the original story and even compensated for a fantastically haphazard plot. Twain's literary guard was down when he wrote this book and I think that it is because of this loss of control that we can see clear evidence of his mixed feelings toward women and the effects of their love. While we may attribute some of his derogatory remarks about Roxy to those prejudices common then as now among whites, particularly those of Southern extraction, it seems to me that more than mere prejudice is involved. The recognition of Roxy's worth coupled with the emphasis on her selfish scheming, suggest this conflict of love, resentment, and enlightened self interest. Just as Tom struggled against an acknowledgment of his mother despite his debt to her, Twain struggled to belittle one who is capable of true nobility. The whiskey, the greed, and the vanity are all part of Twain's attempt to becloud the real issue of a guilty society and represent a clear expression of his ambivalent emotions.

Two of the overwhelming impressions left by the three works are that Mark Twain felt a profound hatred for life and an equally profound distrust

of the sexual relation. During this period of personal loss he frequently expressed the thought that life is a curse and death a blessed release. "All say, 'How hard it is that we have to die'--a strange complaint to come from the mouths of people who have had to live."[83] The greatest character of history, Joan of Arc, was freed of the burden of life while still young in years. For her, life had become intolerable and she chose death to avoid life's compromise with truth. She represents a kind of spiritual freedom and unity which is not of this world. In this context, I think that it is significant that she lives and dies a virgin. Over-simplified as it is, I sense that Twain equates sexual purity with near godliness and because of this equation Joan held such a strong attraction for him. In this sense, therefore, Joan's early death may be called a kind of a reward not only for her heroic deeds, but for her chastity.

Eve is not so fortunate as Joan: she is condemned to live until old age. She is not released until she has endured years of half happy, half sad life with Adam. One senses that the physical relationship is the one real bond between them, but that, in involving herself with man, Eve has sentenced herself to long imprisonment in life. Here then is Twain's middle view: life is not good, but it is made bearable through the love of man and woman. There is, however, some kind of sin inherent in this love for which a penalty must be paid. In this case it is the penalty of long life, but because of the happiness she has brought, Eve is at last released into death.

Although this relationship is that which can make life endurable, it is also that which, if misused, can turn life into unmitigated despair.

Roxy is the result of and the partner in man's bestiality and while we may sympathize with her and find excuses for her, we cannot deny the fact that she is involved. As an accomplice, she cannot escape the consequences of sin and, for her, Twain reserves a most terrible fate: she must live unloved and uncomforted save by a sham religion. She is the only one of the three who is damned, for she is cursed with life.

In these three works we can see the many paradoxes in Twain's thinking; his feelings of guilt are accompanied by protestations of innocence; his sincere admiration of woman shows an undercurrent of resentment; his iconoclasm is hampered by his Calvinistic background as reflected in his determinism, and his unconventional regard for the sexual relationship is in sharp contrast to the kind of thinking which would damn a Roxy. While I cannot say, as does Van Wyck Brooks, that these contradictions are the expression of a life-long repression of thought and talent, it does seem clear that in these three women we can see the reflection of a loving but tormented soul.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Van Wyck Brooks, The Ordeal of Mark Twain (New York, 1920).

[2]Mark Twain, Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, by Sieur Louis de Conte, trans. Jean Franscois Alden. (New York and London, 1896)--hereafter cited as Joan.

[3]Mark Twain, Mark Twain's Letters, arr. with comment by A. S. Paine, (New York, 1917) II, p. 624.

[4]Joan, pp. 7-11.

[5]Joan, p. 27.

[6]Joan, p. 67.

[7]Joan, p. 190.

[8]Joan, p. 12.

[9]Joan, p. 302.

[10]Joan, pp. 23: 43.

[11]Joan, p. 309.

[12]Luke 23: 34.

[13]Joan, p. 311.

[14]Joan, p. 19: 28.

[15]Joan, p. 238.

[16]Joan, p. 318.

[17]Joan, p. 239.

[18]Joan, pp. 317-8.

[19]Mark Twain, "Eve's Diary," The $30,000 Bequest and Other Stories, Stormfield Edition, (New York and London, 1917) XXIV, p. 358--hereafter cited as Diary.

[20]Eve's Diary, p. 367.

[21]Eve's Diary, p. 366.

[22]Eve's Diary, p. 368.

[23]Eve's Diary, p. 366.

[24]Eve's Diary, p. 380.

[25]Eve's Diary, p. 380.

[26]Gladys Carmine Bellamy, "Mark Twain as Literary Artist," A Casebook on Mark Twain's Wound, ed. Lewis Leary (New York, 1962).

[27]Mark Twain, Pudd'nhead Wilson, (New York, 1893-4), p. 22--hereafter cited as Wilson.

[28]Eve's Diary, p. 380.

[29]Wilson, p. 151.

[30]Wilson, p. 10.

[31]Wilson, p. 75.

[32]Wilson, p. 126.

[33]Van Wyck Brooks, p. 40.

[34]DeLancey Ferguson, Mark Twain: Man and Legend, (New York, 1943), p. 262.

[35]Mark Twain, Mark Twain's Notebook, ed. Albert Bigelow Paine, (New York, 1935), p 321-22.

[36]Edith Colgate Salsbury, Susy and Mark Twain, (New York, 1965), p. 385.

[37]Joan, p. 150.

[38]Joan, p. 248.

[39]Eve's Diary, p. 379.

[40]Eve's Diary, pp. 378-80.

[41]Eve's Diary, p. 381.

[42]Brooks, p. 189.

[43] Wilson, p. 295.

[44]Wilson, p. 76.

[45]Wilson, p. 15.

[46]Wilson, p. 23.

[47]Wilson, p. 75.

[48]Wilson, p. 123.

[49]Wilson, p. 29.

[50]Wilson, p. 202.

[51]It would be interesting to explore the extent to which Mark Twain subconsciously identified himself with the two Toms. The real Tom was born free but became a slave; when reinstated he was unable to function as a free human being. The false Tom recklessly gambled away a fortune not his own and betrayed his own inheritance when he sold his mother. Remembering Brooks' thesis that Twain sold his genius for a conventional life which now was threatened with disaster and rembering that Twain was beset with doubts about his creative powers, we can perhaps see a close correlation between the near twins and their creator.

[52]Wilson, p. 36.

[53]Leslie A. Fiedler, "As Free as Any Cretur. . .' ", Mark Twain, ed. Henry Nash Smith (Englewood Cliffs, 1963), p. 133.

[54]Wilson, p. 143.

[55]Minnie M. Brashear, Mark Twain, Son of Missouri, (Chapel Hill, 1934), p. 257.

[56]Dixon Wecter, Love Letters of Mark Twain, (New York, 1949), p. 4.

[57]Brooks, p. 115.

[58]Brooks, p. 114.

[59]Eve's Diary, p. 358.

[60]Eve's Diary, p. 378.

[61]Eve's Diary, p. 364.

[62]Eve's Diary, p. 381.

[63]Love Letters, Introduction, p. 11.

[64]Eve's Diary, p. 381.

[65]Eve's Diary, p. 380.

[66]Mark Twain, Letters from the Earth, ed. Bernard DeVoto, (New York, 1938), p. 10.

[67]Letters from the Earth, p. 20.

[68]Notebook, p. 332.

[69]Notebook, p. 362.

[70]Notebook, p. 340.

[71]Joan, p. 318.

[72]Wilson, p. 15.

[73]Wilson, p. 22.

[74]Notebook, p. 362.

[75]Mark Twain, Mark Twain in Eruption, ed. Bernard DeVoto, (New York, 1922), p. xviii.

[76]Wilson, p. 76.

[77]Wilson, p. 10.

[78]Wilson, p. 123.

[79]Eve's Diary, pp. 378-80.

[80]Joan, pp. 292, 294.

[81]Mark Twain, "The Damned Human Race", in Letters from the Earth, p. 226.

[82]Diary, p. 373.

[83]Wilson, p. 76.

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