THE TREATMENT OF HUMAN CRUELTY
IN THE NOVELS OF MARK TWAIN

THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Cruelty is present in literature and in life whether handled with the velvet glove of the artist or with the sledge-hammer of the artisan. The pain of the one is deceptive, while the pain of the other is omnipresent immediately. Cruelty inflicted through laughter embodies the same principle; that is, the soft-pedaled laugh accompanied by the merest shadow of a sneer can do as much damage to the spirit as the raucous guffaws of an entire hooting, howling audience. From comedy man derives laughter, and within laughter is the element of cruelty; therefore, it will be necessary to discuss several aspects of comedy and laughter as they relate to and clarify cruelty. The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate Mark Twain's awareness of and sensitive reaction to the cruelty which surrounded him throughout his lifetime, and to evaluate his literary use of cruelty for both comic and satiric effects.

In general, comedy is an attempt to expose incongruity through laughter. The incongruity arises from that which is out of proportion, affected, pretentious, hypocritical, or pedantic. It may be the sham, folly, stupidity, cruelty, or vices of men. The method of exposure is
laughter. George Meredith, in his An Essay on Comedy, has as his thesis that comedy arouses "thoughtful" laughter, and thus comedy is an appeal to the intellect. For Meredith, comedy demands a cultivated, intelligent society of men and women. He has placed comedy on a high plane. To laugh at the incongruities exposed by the comic, one must first recognize that which is congruent. One must be intelligent enough to distinguish between the normal and the abnormal, the reasonable and the unreasonable, the consistent and the inconsistent, the ordinary and the absurd; and then he must be able to laugh impersonally when the comic instrument exposes those incongruities. The essence of Meredith's definition of comedy would demand that one think before he laughs, or that one must be able to think in order to laugh at the exposed folly. The "thoughtful" laughter of Meredith's comedy neither condemns nor condones the folly; it is rather an intelligent recognition that the weakness exists and that the exposure of this weakness has not aroused the emotions to either extreme of sentimentality or derision. "You may estimate your capacity for comic perception by being able to detect the ridicule of them you love without loving them less; and more by being able to see yourself somewhat ridiculous in dear eyes, and accepting the correction their image of you proposes."¹

¹ George Meredith, An Essay on Comedy (New York, 1897), p. 133.
Since Meredith's appeal is to intelligence and the belief that society is founded on common sense, his instrument is civilized and critical laughter. He defines true comedy as the expression of a completely rational view of life, holding up to the "thoughtful" laughter of the reader or spectator all that is out of proportion, the act of folly, stupidity, or cruelty. In as much as Meredith's comedy was on a high plane and concerned primarily with the upper strata of society, it is appropriate to consider another attitude toward comedy.

Al Capp has pointed out that "Comedy is based on man's delight of man's inhumanity to man." In the movie "The Tramp" one observes Charlie Chaplin, a figure of incongruity in destitute circumstances, cold and hungry. One laughs the minute he is pictured on the screen because, according to Al Capp, one is sitting comfortably in the theater, with a small bit of change and a ticket stub in his pocket, and will, in all likelihood, be going out for a drink after the movie. One is safe; one is secure in that one is at least better off than Charlie. This security makes one feel good, and when one feels safe and good, one is psychologically ready for laughter; therefore, one laughs at the miserable figure Charlie Chaplin represents. Two thirds of the credit of one's laughter should be given to Chaplin. He is an artist of comedy and knows all the techniques in the playing of comedy. One does not mind

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seeing Chaplin as the bum imagining himself eating a steak and then going so far into his dream world that he cuts the steak and chews it, in mimicry of the fat man in the restaurant. In fact, one enjoys the scene because one knows something Chaplin does not know. One is omniscient; one knows that the tramp is due for a rude awakening, and one knows it ahead of him. This knowledge makes one consider oneself clever. One also anticipates the tragedy that is coming when the bum's dream is shattered—one is going to enjoy that, too. This knowledge makes one feel superior; and one, with all one's human frailties, needs to have one's desire for superiority fulfilled.

Al Capp discusses another feature of Chaplin's art in "The Pilgrim." It illustrates the extent to which man's inhumanity to man can be carried by exposing "the inhumanity of men other men have been inhuman to."³

The refugees travel steerage, of course. They are given one meal a day; one bowl of slops. But not quite one bowl, because at meal time, while there are two rows of refugees seated, facing each other across the table, there is only one row of bowls. Which row of refugees gets a chance at the slops depends on which way the boat rolls, because, while the poor starving wretches must remain seated where they are, drooling and clutching their spoons, the slop bowls slither from one side to the other with the crazy rhythm of the boat.⁴

⁴Ibid.
And for years, the scene has been sending the moviegoers into spasms of laughter because, states Capp, the viewers are impressed by the hellish ingenuity of the shipowners who devised such a plan to debase those pitiful, helpless passengers. Then, too, those pitiful passengers in turn devise ways by which they can cheat each other out of tiny bits of slop. The audience laughs at this double cruelty, and Charlie Chaplin knows his art is making the audience laugh because each member in that audience is safe, comfortable, and warm. That knowledge, that security, gives each member of the audience self-assurance, and that makes him feel superior. When a man feels superior, he is happy.

Al Capp's Li'l Abner is a comic figure, such as Charlie Chaplin represented on the screen, in that he is just plain lost when among beautiful women. Both are failures in their courtships, even though each fails in a different way. Li'l Abner, with his herculean physique, simply does not know what to do about Daisy Mae. This evokes laughter, especially from the male reader, because every man, regardless of his ineptness, would certainly know what to do under such circumstances. Knowing that he could handle the situation better than Li'l Abner gives the contemporary man a sense of superiority and security. He sees Abner reacting stupidly and thinks, "Well, I'm not that bad!" This superiority makes the man feel elated, and when he feels elated he laughs.
The purpose of Al Capp's and Charlie Chaplin's comedy is to produce this sense of personal superiority. One laughs when one observes Chaplin and Li'l Abner in awkward situations, and yet "... we didn't laugh because we were heartless wretches. We laughed because we are normal human beings, full of self-doubt, full of vague feelings of inferiority, full of a desperate need to be reassured."⁵

There is a connection between Meredith's "thoughtful" laughter and Al Capp's "man's delight in man's inhumanity to man." Both make use of laughter to expose the incongruities, shams, follies, and cruelties of man; both use laughter without the emotional antipodes of sentimentality or ridicule.

In general, then, one thinks of high comedy as thoughtful laughter proceeding from intellectual comprehension of human foibles. Low comedy is the opposite of high comedy. Whereas high comedy is an appeal to the intellect, low comedy is characterized by "... quarreling, fighting, noisy singing, boisterous conduct in general, boasting, burlesque, trickery, buffoonery, clownishness, drunkenness, coarse jesting, scolding, and shrewishness."⁶

Much of the comic element in Shakespeare's plays is low comedy. The mechanics in A Midsummer Night's Dream are delightfully funny

⁵Ibid., p. 27.

and laughable. The love scenes between Titania and Bottom show the point where the ideal and the coarsest reality meet. The contrast between the ridiculous antics of Bottom and the blind adoration of Titania is marked by comic inspiration.

Another distinguishing feature of low comedy is that the character is seldom a member of the upper strata of society. He will be one among the rustics, inn-keepers, and knaves; he will not, as a general rule, bear a title or be a member of the upper class.

In both low and high comedy, laughter is not confounded with self-righteous indignation, condemnation, sarcasm, or irony. The reader or spectator recognizes that a sham or cruelty is being exposed; he may even see his own follies mirrored; but he is always detached emotionally and never becomes enveloped or embroiled in the comic situation. The instant he becomes involved, comedy ceases.

Satire is another method by which the shams and cruelties of man may be exposed. There are as many varieties and interpretations of satire as there are of comedy; however, only those areas of satire which seem best to fit the purpose will be incorporated in this study.

Satire may or may not employ laughter. Comedy always employs impersonal laughter—though it may never be more than the shadow of a smile. Satire, an agent of correction, may range from high-spirited mimicry to torture.
Sometimes the satirist tumbles in giggling, thumbing his nose, wielding slapsticks and bladders, smacking people on their fannies, and administering electric shocks. Sometimes he bawls abuse or hisses denunciations, flays his victim and then pours burning oil or acid in the wounds. Sometimes he grimly describes evil fallen into its proper torments, plunged in flame or locked in thick-ribbed ice. The one ingredient common to all these activities, from satire in cap-and-bells to satire with a flaming sword, is criticism.7

For purposes of exposing cruelty, when satire criticizes, it does so with a difference; and the result proposed is an improvement of human beings or human institutions. The medium of satiric criticism may employ ridicule, sarcasm, irony, or invective, or a combination of these and other forms of satire. Generally, satire has two main methods: direct and indirect satire. No satirist uses a single method only, but each becomes associated with that method which is his favorite and which comes easiest to him.

Direct satire is the more obvious of the two and delivers the blows with a sledge-hammer of abuse. Invective is the simplest form of direct satire. Juvenal employed invective in his uncompromising attack on the deceit, luxury, greed, lust, perversion, extremes of wealth and poverty, cruelty, and crime that he saw in his Rome. He lashed at the loathsome corruption about him with vividness, violence, and bitterness.

Invective is the weapon used by Swift in the last voyage of Gulliver in which the Houyhnhnms are shown as the rational example humanity

has not chosen to follow. The Yahoos, nasty in their brutality, are still not so degraded as men, who have corrupted the gift of reason and corroded the beauty of the soul. Swift, not satisfied with the nauseating picture as it is, dared to pour oil on the fire by having Gulliver confess that the sight of his wife and family filled him with disgust because of their similarity to the Yahoos.

A great deal of Sinclair Lewis is a head-on attack at the whole of modern America. His lance has been felt by the small town, business, education, religion, science, the medical profession, policemen, politics, pressure groups, service clubs, parents and children, husbands and wives. His is the social critic's assault on American smugness, provincialism, ignorance, bigotry, and mediocrity. Sinclair Lewis has satirized dullness and hypocrisy from the Gopher Prairies to the Zeniths.

Invective is a form of satire which is born of bitter earnest, and yet much of it contains elements of laughter. Invective can evoke laughter; it need not be the serious agony as illustrated throughout Lewis' Babbitt. A great aid to abusing people and institutions and getting away with it is high spirits. High spirits suggest that the satirist is not really serious, that it is all in fun, that his fury is only a comic fury, mere kidding among friends. For satiric purposes, however, abuse has to be more than funny; it has to be damaging, and to be damaging it must strike one as really true.
Irony is a potent device of indirect satire. Its method is consistent understatement. Irony builds up and develops what the ironist does not mean, and carefully understates what he does. Swift's *A Modest Proposal* is a classic example of the use of irony. The layman's conception is that irony is saying the opposite of what one means, that irony is a kind of "double-talk." It is an appeal to the intellect and demands a very sensitive ear, eye, and mind to be perceived.

Laughter in comedy usually implies recognition and acceptance of some weakness in man. The writer and the observer or reader never come in close contact with the comic; they are always set apart and above, always spectators, observing the comic arts. Satire also exposes some incongruity, some aspect in existence that does not fit properly or conform. On the other hand, satire brings the writer and reader into closer contact with the object of criticism. There are two types of satire—the direct, which is the more obvious ridicule and invective, and the indirect, which includes sarcasm and irony. Comedy will evoke some amount of laughter; satire may incur laughter; but it may also bring rage or tears. In spite of the numerous differences between comedy and satire, both carry one theme for exposure, man's inhumanity to man.

Cruelty is the "disposition to inflict suffering; delight in or indifference to the pain or misery of others; mercilessness, hard-heartedness,
especially as exhibited in action. Physical cruelty is the act of contact with another, either by means of one's own body or by means of some instrument which comes in contact and serves to connect the parties involved so that pain is inflicted upon the party attacked. It is also physical cruelty when one party suffers bodily at the hands of some authority who may not have had any physical contact with the abused party. Mental cruelty is any act which causes an emotional disturbance; it must be inflicted consciously.

Prominent evidences of man's inhumanity to man existing during the lifetime of Mark Twain are the attitudes and acts of cruelty toward slaves and Negroes, the treatment of students in schools and of convicts in prisons, the rough life on the frontiers, and the attitudes toward the physically handicapped and mentally ill. Injustices suffered by the Negro in America, before and after the Civil War, are abundantly documented. The significance of this evidence lies in the fact that Mark Twain was not only personally involved, sometimes as spectator, sometimes as participant, but that he demonstrated an acute sensitivity to these or similar acts of cruelty in his novels.

Mark Twain's experiences with slavery and his reactions to slavery are well known and have been adequately treated.

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Still more constant was the companionship of slaves, young and old, in this community of cabins and small farms, where the "peculiar institution" of black servitude bore less harshly than among the large plantations of the Deep South—not that it was without its punitive incidents. The Clemens children remembered the runaway slave brought to Florida by his six white captors, who tied him up with ropes and left him awhile groaning on the floor of a deserted shack. Nor did they forget the time that the house girl Jennie, scolded for "uppity" behavior by Jane Clemens, had snatched away the whip with which her mistress threatened her—but paid for her insubordination when her white-faced master hurried home, bound her wrists with a bridle rein, and flogged her with a cowhide. 9

We must not assume, however, that persecution of Negroes ceased with the victory at Appomattox. Instances of both individual and mass cruelty toward the Negro were continuous throughout Mark Twain's lifetime.

During the immediate post-Civil War months, where the Negro people showed signs of organization and there was the accumulation of Negro-white unity, the Southern Bourbons sought to repress the Negro threat by force because they feared a loss of authority. As a result, there were not only many individual murders, but also persistent massacres recurred on a large scale. Mark Twain repeatedly denounces this form of cruelty in his works.

The typical mass slaughters of the year 1866 were those which occurred in Memphis, May 1-3, and in New Orleans, July 30. In each case the open connivance and active participation of the city officials and police, with important help

9 Dixon Wecter, Sam Clemens of Hannibal (Boston, 1952), pp. 45-46.
from an abysmally chauvinistic press, were clear. And in each case only intervention by Federal troops—which came tardily—terminated the violence.

In the Memphis outbreak, forty-six Negroes (most of them Union veterans) and two white radicals were slaughtered, about seventy-five more were wounded, five Negro women were ravished, ninety homes, twelve schools and four churches were burned, and several radical whites, especially teachers, were driven out of the city. Evidence of anti-Jewish and anti-alien hatreds also appeared. In the New Orleans affair, the official casualties totaled thirty-five Negroes dead, three whites dead, 127 Negroes wounded, and nineteen whites (including ten policemen) wounded. The Army Surgeon at the scene expressed the belief, in his official report, that about ten more Negroes were killed and another twenty wounded, whose identities he never learned. 10

Before the anti-lynching movement in the United States was well organized, the lynching of Negroes was reaching an exorbitant number. The numbers give only slight evidence to the frightful experiences of the Negro people.

According to the conservative figures of the Tuskegee Institute, 3,426 Negroes have been lynched in the United States from 1882 through 1947. Of this total, 36%, or 1,217 were lynched from 1890 through 1900. This, in terms of seared flesh and broken necks, was part of the mortal casualty list suffered by the Negro people as monopoly capitalism fastened its grip upon them and crushed the protest movements of its victims—Negro and white. 11

The last document to give evidence of the cruelty inflicted upon the Negro is a letter from a Negro minister, the Reverend E. Malcolm

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11 Ibid., p. 792.
Argyle. The letter is dated Baxter, Arkansas, March 14, 1892.

There is much uneasiness and unrest all over this State among our people, owing to the fact that the people (our race variety) all over the State are being lynched upon the slightest provocation; some being strung up to telegraph poles, others burnt at the stake and still others being shot like dogs...

... Will not some who are not in danger of their lives, speak out against the tyrannical South, will not the \[Philadelphia\] Christian Recorder, the \[New York\] Age, the \[Indianapolis\] Freeman and all other journals devoted to the especial interest of the Afro-Americans, speak out against these lynchings and mob violence? For God's sake, say or do something, for condition is precarious in the extreme. 12

While indignities and cruelties were being put upon the Negro throughout the lifetime of Mark Twain, the children in the classroom were also bearing the oppression of the schoolmaster. The influence of this type of cruelty is evidenced in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer.

Providing a written testimony is the following evidence of some school practices in Western North Carolina. The document is dated 1842.

As to school discipline, the mildest form was the "dunce block"; but the switch was regarded as indispensable, and was doubtless in many cases a better persuader than "moral suasion," though some school reformers advocated "moral suasion" only; but it is doubtful if they are any wiser than Solomon, who, in the book of Proverbs, recommends "the rod" as well as reproof, as a means of correction. 13

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12Ibid., p. 793.

13Edgar W. Knight, Documentary History of Education in the South before 1860 (Chapel Hill, 1953), V, 235.
Williard S. Elsbree, author of The American Teacher, studies the evolution of the teacher. Under the chapter heading "The Extension of Teaching Aids" is the following testimony of practices in discipline.

At the beginning of the century it was taken for granted that schoolmasters would maintain order and decorum by the application of the ferule, and school committees looked carefully to the size and strength of applicants in making appointments. The history of the district school is replete with accounts of flogging and the taming of unruly scholars.14

The convict-lease system that evolved in the South after the Civil War is a blight against efforts toward humanitarianism. The following data attest to the fact that injustices were inflicted upon the prisoners during the lifetime of Mark Twain. That he was aware of such injustices is apparent in his novels and other works.

The state was suddenly called upon to take over the plantation's penal functions at a time when crime was enormously increasing. . . . One after another of the states adopted the expedient of leasing the convicts to private corporations or individuals. . . . The so-called "pig law" of Mississippi defined the theft of any property over ten dollars in value, or any cattle or swine of whatever value, as grand larceny, with a sentence up to five years. After its adoption the number of state convicts increased from 273 in 1874 to 1,072 by the end of 1877. . . . The system quickly became a large-scale and sinister business. . . . Responsibility of lessees for the health and lives of convicts was extremely loose. . . .

. . . The degradation and brutality produced by this system would be incredible but for the amount of evidence from official sources.15


This system was not eradicated until after Mark Twain's death.

In the winter of 1841 it came to the attention of Dorothea Lynde Dix that the East Cambridge jail was not only filthy and unheated, but she also saw signs of negligence and brutality and the presence of insane persons locked up in cells. She made a survey which took two years and took her throughout Massachusetts. She recorded her observations in a little notebook. She discovered that East Cambridge was not an isolated case, and she prepared a memorial to the legislature.

Many harmless idiots and insane persons were unjustly confined when they might be set to useful employment, or at least permitted the free use of their limbs. In one almshouse she saw a perfectly harmless insane youth in close solitary confinement in a dark squalid cell, with straw serving as the only article of furniture. When asked why this admittedly mild person was given no opportunity for fresh air or exercise, the matron replied: "O, my husband (the superintendent) is afraid he'll run away; then the overseers won't like it; he'll get to Worcester (Hospital) and then the town will have money to pay."

She discovered another harmless creature, "crazy" for about twenty years, who, as a pauper, had annually been "sold" at the auction block to the lowest bidder. Several years before, he had been placed by his master-for-a-year in an unheated outhouse, and there had frozen his feet, which were now reduced to shapeless stumps. Despite his inability to walk about, chains were nevertheless fastened about his stumps for fear he might crawl forth from his present cell and do some damage!

In yet another town she learned of a young woman, in a complete state of nudity, confined in a stall in a barn, with no bed but straw. There she remained, alone and unprotected, the helpless prey of profligate men and idle boys who were permitted to visit the place at will. This scandalous situation, Miss Dix was told, had continued unchecked
until the repeated remonstrances of an insane inmate of the
town poorhouse forced the authorities to remove the girl to
the presumably safe confines of the institution proper. 16

There are two other historical facts that bear comment because
Mark Twain reflects an interest in their subject matter. First, Con-
gress abolished flogging in the Navy during the year 1853; and The Ameri-
can Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was created in
1866 by the humane societies existing at that time. Henry Bergh was
the single outstanding man who led the group. He had become furious at
the ill-treatment of animals on the streets and determined to do some-
thing about it.

The abuses suffered by the Negro, the convict, the mentally ill,
and the outrages committed on the frontier, as well as in the class-
room, serve as documentary evidence to the cruelties of which man
is capable. These cruelties were commonplace during the life of Mark
Twain. He saw men behaving offensively to their fellow men, and he
reacted to the injustices he saw. Twain's awareness of and sensitivity
to these injustices are evidenced in his writings.

When Mark Twain was a youngster living at home, there was al-
ways a family of cats around the place. He was fond of these creatures
and would give them such unusual names as Sour Mash, Apolinaris,
Blatherskite, and Sackcloth. Twain hated Henry Beebee, who kept a

slaughter house where he killed cats. Twain was kind to animals and seemed to love them. Dixon Wecter makes this comment about his sensitiveness to the creatures on the Quarles farm. "He loved the distant hammering of woodpeckers, the scurry of prairie chickens, and in the blue vault a huge hawk hanging motionless."17

Edward Wagenknecht notes that Mark Twain preferred the independence of the cat, and disliked the quality of servility present in many dogs. "When Edmund Yates visited him, he found in the greenhouse a cage containing a pair of California quails: Mark had bought them from a boy in order to save them, and when spring came, he planned to set them free."18

Wagenknecht states that Mark Twain could not believe that animals are unable to think or converse among themselves. There are examples of this in his works; the birds in A Tramp Abroad, the coyote in Roughing It, the tiger cub in Following the Equator, and the collie dog in "A Dog's Tale," which is an emotional argument against vivisection.

Mark Twain, in his youth, no doubt observed more cruelties inflicted upon the Negro slaves than are recorded in the biographies. Wecter states that Mark Twain, at ten years, saw a white overseer throw a rock of iron-ore at a slave in anger because the slave did

17 Wecter, op. cit., p. 93.

something awkwardly. The Negro was dead in an hour. "... Everybody seemed indifferent about it—as regarded the slave—though considerable sympathy was felt for the slave's owner, who had been bereft of valuable property by a worthless person who was not able to pay for it."¹⁹

As a boy, Twain discovered a fugitive slave's corpse in the morass; this was in August, 1847. In January, 1853, he saw a drunkard in the calaboose burned alive. At this same period in his life, he observed another crude display. It might have been one incident among several of the same type.

The town had its rowdies—like the Hyde boys, Dick and Ed, older than Sam Clemens' gang. Tough and dissipated, they went armed with pepper-box revolvers, which they occasionally pulled to make some one beg for his life, "a cheap way to build up a reputation, but it was effective." Once Ed held his uncle down while Dick tried to kill him with a pistol that refused fire. "I happened along just then, of course," added Mark Twain. About once a month they got drunk "and rode the streets firing their revolvers in the air and scaring people out of their wits. They had become the terror of the town."²⁰

Mark Twain's years in and about the mining camps of Nevada provided him with first-hand experiences with the rough life of the frontier and the violence that abounded in that environment. His autobiographical narrative, Roughing It, is filled with information, sights, and attitudes of the frontier. He observed such western characters as "Lucky

¹⁹Wecter, op. cit., p. 290.
²⁰Ibid., p. 155.
Bill" Thorington, Jack Slade, Sam Brown, and their kind, who lived by the gun and the violence it represented. Roughing It is generally considered one of the best accounts of the West in that it deals adequately with the character and manners of the primitive civilization of early Nevada. Mark Twain's life in the West and the influence that experience had upon him and his literary creativeness have been adequately covered in the Jeanne H. Bass thesis, "Mark Twain's Representation of the American West."

Not all his experiences were with the brutal; he viewed the scenery and revelled in the grandeur of the mountains, but he observed with a sensitive eye and responded with an equally sensitive heart to the injustices dealt the Chinese population in Virginia City. While he was living in boarding-houses and hotels he observed the poor specimens of humanity who lived there. Those unhappy months in the boarding-houses are reflected in his novel The American Claimant. In San Francisco he not only worked for the Call, but he also contributed articles to the Golden Era and the Californian. Twain observed the corruption and vice in the city's politics, especially the police department, and exposed and denounced the corruption. In a letter to his mother he added a postscript stating that he heard five pistol shots and would have to go investigate it. In a second note to the same letter written at five o'clock the same morning, he added, "The pistol did its work well—one man—a Jackson County Missourian, shot two of my friends (police officers)
through the heart—both died within three minutes. Murderer's name is John Campbell."

Mark Twain beheld all those manifestations of man's inhumanity. He saw the slave lynched, the innocent murdered, the guilty escape, the pupil flogged; and he knew about the inequities against the insane, the crippled, the alien. Those injustices were not merely within the experience of Mark Twain; he was sensitive and responsive to them.

At one place or another in every type of literary work Mark Twain wrote, he attacked cruelty. In his sketches, narratives, stories, travelogues, and novels are evidences of his observations of man's inhumanity. It is not within the scope of this thesis to study all Mark Twain's comments on cruelty as they appear throughout his works; but that the subject of cruelty occurred frequently in his works, that he was conscious of it and sensitive to it, is evidenced in his shorter works and travelogues as well as in his novels.

"The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," Twain's first great success, published in 1865, is an amusing and entertaining story. He was writing comedy in this work. Although he was revealing the tendencies of deceit in man (the stranger represents the qualities of dishonesty and crookedness in man), Twain showed easy, tolerant,

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amused acceptance of this weakness. It was cruel to load an innocent frog with quail-shot for the entertainment of a few men, but Twain was not denouncing any vice. He recognized the vice, nevertheless he was sympathetic in his treatment of the stranger and seemed to enjoy the fact that he could identify himself as being one among men. The reader laughs at Jim Smiley because he is a comic character; and he laughs at the way the stranger out-wits Smiley. The reader knows that the stranger has hit a blow below the belt, but the disapproval is merely a recognition of foul play, not emotional condemnation of it.

"A True Story," a story written in 1876, is one that Mark Twain had told to him by his old Negro servant. In spite of the happy ending, it is a rather sad, pathetic, and tender story of "Aunt Rachel's" family strifes during the Civil War period. He wrote the story in the first person, employing the use of Negro dialect to produce an effect. One might expect chuckles because of the employment of the Negro dialect; however, this is one time the dialect was a device used for serious effect, not comic effect. The story shows Twain's capacity for sympathy. He understands "Aunt Rachel's" sorrow. She is not just an old Negro mammy; her story is a symbol of all the oppressed people of her race.

"A Dog's Tale," a short sketch, was originally published in Harper's Magazine in December, 1893. It is a tender and heart-rending story of a mother collie who is loved and mistreated, according
to the whims of human beings. Twain wrote it from the point of view of the collie who views the world of man turned up-side-down. There is evidence of Twain's bitterness toward vivisection. A doctor performs an experiment on the collie's pup and saves humanity from suffering, but the pup dies. The story is a sincere and sympathetic treatment pleading for kindness toward animals and a stinging attack on man's incorrigible capacity for cruelty.

The cruelties of his fellow man impressed Twain, and he has recorded those impressions for posterity. The major purpose of this study is to examine within the novels of Mark Twain those impressions of cruelty. First, physical cruelty will be discussed, then mental cruelty as evidenced in Twain's novels. Though examples have been cited showing man's cruelty to animals, this thesis will consider only man's inhumanity to man.
CHAPTER II

PHYSICAL CRUELTY

Physical cruelty is personal bodily injury intentionally inflicted for the purpose of producing pain or suffering. Of Mark Twain's eight novels, four, The Prince and the Pauper, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, and Pudd'nhead Wilson, include the most notable instances of physical cruelty. These, as well as lesser examples, will be considered novel by novel in chronological order.

There are evidences of cruelty even in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, 1876. Examination day was not only a trial in memory work for the youngsters, but they also suffered from the rod and ferule of the schoolmaster, who was eager to make a favorable showing of his teaching aptitude. Mark Twain relates the punishment inflicted upon the pupils and the agony of the recitation day.

Also in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Injun Joe reveals his character and the extent of his meanness and cruelty when he seeks revenge against the Widow Douglas. It is her husband whom Injun Joe hates; but since he died, Joe is going to make the widow suffer.

"Kill? Who said anything about killing? I would kill him if he was here; but not here. When you want to get
revenge on a woman you don't kill her—bosh! you go for her looks. You slit her nostrils—you notch her ears like a sow!"

"By God, that's—"

"Keep your opinion to yourself! It will be safest for you. I'll tie her to the bed. If she bleeds to death, is that my fault? I'll not cry, if she does. My friend, you'll help in this thing—for my sake—that's why you're here—I mightn't be able alone. If you flinch, I'll kill you, I'll kill her—and then I reckon nobody'll ever know much about who done this business."

"Well, if it's got to be done, let's get at it. The quicker the better—I'm all in a shiver."

"Do it now? And company there? Look here—I'll get suspicious of you, first thing you know. No—we'll wait till the lights are out—there's no hurry."¹

This, however, is included as characterization of Injun Joe, and is perhaps not actual cruelty, since the anticipated torture is not committed. Injun Joe himself dies horribly, while the Widow Douglas survives.

In The Prince and the Pauper, 1881, John Canty is depicted as a sadistically cruel father. In Chapter X, Canty drags the prince, who he assumes is Tom, into Offal Court. Canty's wife and daughters live in constant fear.

"The morrow must we pay two pennies to him that owns this hole; two pennies mark ye—all this money for a half-year's rent, else out of this we go. Show what thou'st gathered with thy lazy begging."

"Offend me not with thy sordid matters. I tell thee again I am the king's son."

A sounding blow upon the prince's shoulder from Canty's broad palm sent him staggering into goodwife Canty's arms, who clasped him to her breast, and sheltered him from a pelting rain of cuffs and slaps by interposing her own person.

The frightened girls retreated to their corner; but the grandmother stepped eagerly forward to assist her son. The prince sprang away from Mrs. Canty, exclaiming:

"Thou shalt not suffer for me, madam. Let these swine do their will upon me alone."

This speech infuriated the swine to such a degree that they set about their work without waste of time. Between them they belabored the boy right soundly, and then gave the girls and their mother a beating for showing sympathy for the victim. 2

Mark Twain infrequently made use of cruelty merely to produce an emotional effect. Doubtless he realized the disadvantage of such a device. In *The Prince and the Pauper*, the prince is taunted and mocked by a crowd because he is claiming to be the prince. One of the mob attempts an attack upon him. Miles Hendon comes to his aid as the crowd scorns the disguised prince. The reader sees the cruelty of a mob.

During the period in which *The Prince and the Pauper* takes place, no one could touch the sacred person of the prince. Should the prince be laggard in his studies and deserve punishment, a whipping-boy was assigned to take the beatings for him. Humphrey was the official whipping-boy for the prince and received the blows with pride.

Mark Twain notes in a footnote that during the reign of Henry VIII, parliament put into effect an act condemning prisoners to be boiled to death. The act, he notes, was repealed when Henry died. Twain also

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notes "The Famous Stocking Case," in which a woman and her daughter were hanged for selling their souls to the devil and raising a storm by pulling off their stockings. In the novel the accused, Giles Witt, is supposed to have poisoned a subject. Witt, without benefit of fair trial, begged Tom to allow him to be hanged rather than boiled in oil.

Canty and his gang of thieves and beggars chat in an old barn outside London. The prince discovers that they have fallen into their ill-gotten trade because of British law which had burned old Black Bess' mother to death. Her crime was palmistry. Many of their band had once been husbandmen who lost their land when farms were changed to sheep-ranges. They were forced to beg, and since British law did not allow begging, they were whipped and sent to the stocks. When freed, they would beg again, get caught, and have an ear taken; if they were taken at begging a third time, they were branded and sold into slavery; should they escape, they would be hunted down and hanged.

Then several of the men in the barn stood up and bared their backs for all to see the scars and mutilations. One, Yokel, gives testimony to the British law.

... My good old blameless mother strove to earn bread by nursing the sick; one of these died, the doctors knew not how, so my mother was burned for a witch, whilst my babies looked on and wailed. English law!—up, all, with your cups!—now all together and with a cheer!—drink to the merciful English law that delivered her from the English hell! Thank you, mates, one and all. I begged, from house to house—I and the wife—bearing with us the hungry kids—but it was crime to be hungry in England—so they stripped us and lashed
us through three towns. Drink ye all again to the merciful English law!—for its lash drank deep of my Mary's blood and its blessed deliverance came quick. She lies there, in the potter's field, safe from all harms. And the kids—well, whilst the law lashed me from town to town, they starved. Drink lads—only a drop—a drop to the poor kids, that never did any creature harm. I begged again—begged for a crust, and got the stocks and lost an ear—see, here bides the stump; I begged again, and here is the stump of the other to keep me minded of it. And still I begged again, and was sold for a slave—here on my cheek under this stain, if I washed it off, ye might see the red S the branding-iron left there! A SLAVE!—that is he that stands before ye. I have run from my master, and when I am found—the heavy curse of heaven fall on the law of the land that hath commanded it!—I shall hang.

It was the custom and the law of the time that those who professed to the Baptist religion were burned at the stake; stealing was punishable by life imprisonment or hanging. The mere word of a lord was evidence enough in the courts to convict the accused. In Chapter XXV, Miles Hendon is placed in prison by his brother Hugh, who has usurped the property of Miles' estate. While Miles and the king are in prison, they hear of the cruelties of the British law. They see two women go up in flames as their children watch the horrifying spectacle. Another woman is to be hanged for having stolen a yard or two of cloth from a weaver; a man accused of stealing a horse and later killing a deer was on his way to the gallows. Another prisoner, a young fellow who had found a hawk, was convicted of stealing it and sentenced to death. And yet another prisoner was an old lawyer who had dared to write a pamphlet

3Ibid., pp. 140-141.
against the Lord Chancellor, accusing him of injustice. He had lost both ears in the pillory, been ejected from the bar, fined £8,000, branded on both cheeks, and given a sentence of life imprisonment.

Miles is sent to the stocks because of his pretensions to brothership with Sir Hugh. Hugh's man begins to beat the king when he utters a cry of horror, but Miles says he will take the boy's lashes. Miles is removed from the stocks and severely beaten.

In The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, 1885, Huck's father appears as one of the most notorious fathers in literature. His capacity for drunkenness, laziness, and cruelty is shocking. Early in the novel, he takes Huck away from the widow and locks him up in a cabin several miles away on the Illinois shore. He beats Huck with a cowhide or a hickory stick or whatever is handy. He returns drunk, having been gone three days, in a dreadful humor.

I don't know how long I was asleep, but all of a sudden there was an awful scream and I was up...

By and by he rolled out and jumped up on his feet looking wild, and he sees me and went for me. He chased me round and round the place with a clasp-knife, calling me the Angel of Death, and saying he would kill me, and then I couldn't come for him no more. I begged, and told him I was only Huck; but he laughed such a screechy laugh, and roared and cussed; and kept on chasing me up. Once when I turned short and dodged under his arm he made a grab and got me by the jacket between my shoulders, and I thought I was gone; but I slid out of the jacket quick as lightning, and saved myself. Pretty soon he was all tired out, and dropped down with his back against the door, and said he would rest a minute and then kill me.4

Boggs, the village drunk, meets a bitter end when he is murdered by Colonel Sherburn. Boggs was considered the "best-naturedest old fool in Arkansaw" when he was sober. When drunk, he would ride up and down the main street yelling abuses. The day Sherburn killed him, Boggs had been insulting him. Sherburn tells him to get out of town by one o'clock, or he will kill him. He is still in town at that time but reeling on foot and appearing uneasy when Sherburn calls his name.

. . . He was standing perfectly still in the street, and had a pistol raised in his right hand—not aiming it, but holding it out with the barrel tilted up towards the sky. The same second I see a young girl coming on the run, and two men with her. Boggs and the men turned round to see who called him, and when they see the pistol the men jumped to one side, and the pistol-barrel come down slow and steady to a level—both barrels cocked. Boggs throws up both of his hands and says, "O Lord, don't shoot!" Bang! goes the first shot, and he staggers back, clawing at the air—bang! goes the second one, and he tumbles backwards onto the ground, heavy and solid, with his arms spread out. 5

Although the king and duke in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn are decadent, brutal characters who sell Jim for $40.00, they suffer a cruel defeat at the hands of a mob. Time and again, Mark Twain's opinion of the mob is evidenced in such typical scenes as that in which the mob runs the king and duke out of town.

. . . and as we struck into the town and up through the middle of it—it was as much as half after eight then—here comes a raging rush of people with torches, and an awful whooping and yelling, and banging tin pans and blowing horns; and we jumped to one side to let them go by; and as they went

5 Ibid., p. 198.
by I see they had the king and the duke astraddle of a rail—that is, I knewed it was the king and the duke, though they was all over tar and feathers, and didn't look like nothing in the world that was human—just looked like a couple of monstrous big soldier-plumes. Well, it made me sick to see it; and I was sorry for them poor pitiful rascals, it seemed like I couldn't ever feel any hardness against them any more in the world. It was a dreadful thing to see. Human beings can be awful cruel to one another.  

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, 1899, is acknowledged by most critics as an attack at the British laws and lines of nobility who lorded it over the commoners, but there are strong allusions to contemporary abuses.

. . . The savage indignation which Twain so loved to unleash found hunting that gratified him; the prey bore some resemblance to the contemporary, without committing him to the consequences of a frontal attack upon modern authoritarianism, convention, and orthodoxy.

The book seems to have had a twofold purpose. By attacking the dead feudal system, Twain could remind the British that they had no right to criticize the Americans; and, at the same time, he could use the dead feudal system of the British to awaken the Americans to their own system of slavery. When Twain satirizes the slavery system in medieval England, he is by inference attacking the abuses of Negro slavery in the United States.

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6 Ibid., pp. 320-321.

As the story progresses, the Yankee and the king visit Morgan le Fay, who is a heartless woman, beautiful but cruel. She kills a page because he loses his balance while kneeling to present her with something, and she feels no guilt because it is her right to do whatever she wants with her property. After the main feast at a banquet, Morgan takes the Yankee and the king down to visit the rack-cell. A young man has been accused of killing a stag. His accuser was masked and near the spot where the dead stag lay; Morgan accepted the man's testimony against the accused without question. Hugo, the accused, is being tortured when Morgan, the Yankee, and the king enter the rack-cell. The Yankee demands the release of Hugo and discovers that he did kill the stag but would not confess because the law states that a convicted man gives up his property to the state. They could torture him to death, but without a confession or conviction, they could not rob his wife and children of their rightful property.

The Yankee explains the cruel customs of the period. Although Morgan le Fay is a cruel woman, in many instances she is not responsible for her conduct and attitude. She is the product of the times. The injustices that she inflicts on her prisoners and slaves are not looked upon as cruel.

No, confound her, her intellect was good, she had brains enough, but her training made her an ass—that is from a many-centuries-later point of view. To kill a page is no crime—it was her right; upon her right she stood, serenely and unconscious of offense. She was a result of
generations of training in the unexamined and unassailed belief that the law which permitted her to kill a subject when she chose was a perfectly right and righteous one.

... Some of those laws were too bad, altogether too bad. A master might kill his slave for nothing: for mere spite, malice, or to pass the time—just as we have seen that the crowned head could do it with his slave, that is to say, anybody. A gentleman could kill a free commoner, and pay for him—cash or garden-truck. A noble could kill a noble without expense, as far as the law was concerned, but reprisals in kind were to be expected. Anybody could kill somebody, except the commoner and the slave; these had no privileges. If they killed, it was murder, and the law wouldn't stand murder. It made short work of the experimenter—and of his family, too, if he murdered somebody who belonged up among the ornamental ranks. If a commoner gave a noble even so much as a Damiens-scratch which didn't kill or even hurt, he got Damiens' dose for it just the same; they pulled him to rags and tatters with horses, and all the world came to see the show, and crack jokes, and have a good time; and some of the performances of the best people present were as tough, as properly unprintable, as any that have been printed by the pleasant Casanova in his chapter about the dismemberment of Louis XV.'s poor awkward enemy. 8

In Morgan's dungeon is a woman prisoner. Her case shows another custom of the period which had become accepted as law. The woman was a commoner who was to be married. A certain neighboring lord, Sir Breuse Sance Pité, sent her to Morgan's dungeon because the girl had refused the lord "le droit du seigneur." She had fought him, and her young husband had thrown the lord out among the wedding guests. The lord was furious with the bride and groom and sent them over to Morgan's because he was out of dungeon space. The two were within

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fifty feet of each other, in total darkness, for nine years, and neither knew the other was there. They asked about one another at first but got no information and soon gave up asking any questions. When the Yankee sees them, they show no signs of sanity; and when placed together at the Yankee's request, they look absently at each other, then begin to stare into space. Through abuse and neglect they had lost their sanity.

While traveling incognito on a pilgrimage, the Yankee and the king observe a troop of fifty slaves chained together that have marched two hundred miles in eighteen days. The master on horseback carries a whip and beats those who falter. There were one hundred slaves in the beginning, but half had died or been sold because they could not keep up the pace. As the Yankee and the king watch, a young mother reels. The master forces the men slaves to hold her as he beats her. One man, her husband, looks away and hides his head in agony. The Yankee comments that their group was impressed with the expert handling of the whip. The pilgrims were kind-hearted people who had become hardened by lifelong familiarity with slavery. After the young girl is beaten, the landed proprietor, who had bought her a few miles back, comes up to get her. She is torn away from her child and husband. Her shrieks are heard by all after they can no longer see her.

Another example of cruelty is illustrated when the Yankee lectures to King Arthur. Arthur is supposed to be disguised, but his
appearance is not stooped enough. He must not appear quite so soldierly, straight, and confident as he does. To effect the demeanor of the low-born, he must slouch his body and carry the weight of the trampled and oppressed. He must appear like a loyal subject in order to satisfy his masters and must show the effects of brutal treatment.

Leaving Morgan le Fay, the Yankee and the king continue their tour of the country. They come upon a woman dying from smallpox. Her story is like the others: her three sons were imprisoned to pay for three destroyed trees belonging to the lord; the woman and the rest of her family had to watch the lord's crops and their own crops; both crops were ready to be harvested at the same time. They had to pay a fine to the lord because part of the family was in prison and not harvesting. Their own crop perished; and that meant the payment of fines to the priest and the lord. They had no money nor food, and, the woman says, she uttered a blasphemy against the Church and the ways of the Church. She said the words in the presence of the priest, who forbade anyone to come near the family; therefore, every remaining member has died from smallpox and no one has come to help them.

As the Yankee and Arthur travel along, they come upon a frightened and yelling mob of half-naked boys and girls. The children have tied one of the youngsters from the limb of a tree. The child was about to choke to death. The Yankee notes that the children were merely playing a mob game they had learned from their parents.
Later the three sons of the woman who died from smallpox escape from the dungeon. The baron's manor is set on fire and he dies. The Yankee and the king hear the story from an elderly couple. The man, a cousin of the three boys, tells the Yankee that relatives of the baron suspected a family of setting fire to the manor; and so all the people in the neighborhood go out to kill the members of that family. They have to take part in the slaughter of their neighbors and friends in order to stay alive. The law is so rigid with respect to the commoners and so free for the nobility that these people were forced to kill their own kind and pretend to sorrow for the deceased baron.

Man's inhumanity to man is further exposed in another conversation between the Yankee and the old man.

". . . Is a man ever put in a pillory for a capital crime?"
"No."
"Is it right to condemn a man to a slight punishment for a small offense and then kill him?"
There was no answer. I had scored my first point! For the first time, the smith wasn't up and ready. The company noticed it. Good effect.
"You don't answer, brother. You were about to glorify the pillory an hour ago, and shed some pity on a future age that isn't going to use it. I think the pillory ought to be abolished. What usually happens when a poor fellow is put in the pillory for some little offense that didn't amount to anything in the world? The mob try to have some fun with him, don't they?"
"Yes."
"They begin by clodding him; and they laugh themselves to pieces to see him try to dodge one clod and get hit with another?"
"Yes."
"Then they throw dead cats at him, don't they?"
"Yes."
"Well, then, suppose he has a few personal enemies in the mob—and here and there a man or a woman with a secret grudge against him—and suppose especially that he is unpopular in the community, for his pride, or his prosperity, or one thing or another—stones and bricks take the place of clods and cats presently, don't they?"

"There is no doubt of it."

"As a rule he is crippled for life, isn't he?—jaws broken, teeth smashed out?—or legs mutilated, gangrened, presently cut off?—or an eye knocked out, maybe both eyes?"

"It is true, God knoweth it."

"And if he is unpopular he can depend on dying right there in the stocks, can't he?"

"He surely can! One may not deny it."

"I take it none of you are unpopular—by reason of pride or insolence, or conspicuous prosperity, or any of those things that excite envy and malice among the base scum of a village? You wouldn't think it much of a risk to take a chance in the stocks?"

Dowley winced, visibly. I judged he was hit. But he didn't betray it by any spoken word. As for the others, they spoke out plainly, and with strong feeling. They said they had seen enough of the stocks to know what a man's chance in them was, and they would never consent to enter them if they could compromise on a quick death by hanging.

"Well, to change the subject—for I think I've established my point that the stocks ought to be abolished. I think some of our laws are pretty unfair. For instance, if I do a thing which ought to deliver me to the stocks, and you know I did it, and yet keep still and don't report me, you will get the stocks if anybody informs on you."

"Ah, but that would serve you but right," said Dowley, "for you must inform. So saith the law."

The others coincided.

"Well, all right, let it go, since you vote me down. But there's one thing which certainly isn't fair. The magistrate fixes a mechanic's wage at one cent a day, for instance. The law says that if any master shall venture, even under utmost press of business, to pay anything over that cent a day, even for a single day, he shall be fined and pilloried. Now it seems to me unfair, Dowley, and a deadly peril to all of us, that because you thoughtlessly confessed, a while ago, that within a week you have paid a cent and fifteen mi—"

Oh, I tell you it was a smasher! You ought to have seen them go to pieces, the whole gang. I had just slipped up on
poor smiling and complacent Dowley so nice and easy and softly, that he never suspected anything was going to happen till the blow came crashing down and knocked him all to rags.  

In the last part of *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, the Earl Grip gives the Yankee and the king two horses and lets them ride into Cambenet with him. In Cambenet they give their thanks and goodbyes; then the Yankee sees the band of slaves, many of whom have gone by the way. He feels pity for them. Suddenly, the servant of Lord Grip handcuffs the two and sells them as slaves. They insist they are freemen, but are unable to prove it.

There is no use in stringing out the details. The earl put us up and sold us at auction. This same infernal law had existed in our own South in my own time, more than thirteen hundred years later, and under it hundreds of freemen who could not prove that they were freemen had been sold into life-long slavery without the circumstance making any particular impression upon me; but the minute law and the auction block came into my personal experience, a thing which had been merely improper before became suddenly hellish. Well, that's the way we are made.

Yes, we were sold at auction, like swine...  

The above quotation not only contributes to the development of the plot, and establishes historical context in that it illustrates a point in sixth-century British law, but more important, it also gives Mark Twain the opportunity to lash out at the slave system in the United States.

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As a writer he chooses to promote social reform by treating allegorically the problem of slavery in the United States. Although slavery had been abolished by an amendment to the Constitution when Twain published *The Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* in 1899, lynchings and other brutalities were still occurring.

Among Mark Twain's manuscripts is a document which states conclusively his purpose in writing the novel:

... *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* was an attempt to imagine, and after a fashion set forth, the hard conditions of life for the laboring and defenseless poor in bygone times in England, and incidentally contrast these conditions with those under which the civil and ecclesiastical pets of privilege and high fortune lived in those times, [and contrast that age] with the life of ... modern civilization. 11

In the introduction to the hitherto unpublished manuscripts of Mark Twain, Bernard De Voto states, in reference to the novel, that "When he wrote fiction, which is to say when the bases of his personality were finding instinctive expression, the human race was the race he had known in Hannibal." 12

In *The Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, the culminating act of cruelty occurs after the Yankee and Arthur have been sold into slavery, chained, and driven through the snow. A woman rushes into their group pleading for protection from a mob of people who want to

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burn her for practicing witchcraft. The slave master demands that she
must be burned where she is, or they cannot have her. His purpose is
to warm his slaves into life by means of the same fire which takes the
life of that innocent woman.

The initial incident that sets the action of the plot underway in
Pudd'ning Wilson, 1894, occurs when Roxy is terrorized with the
thought that her little Chambers some day might be sold down the river.
She switches the two babes, and thus Chambers becomes Thomas and
Thomas becomes Chambers.

From the time that Tom was old enough to know about and inflict
cruelties upon his servant Chambers until Chambers was freed, Tom
took advantage of every opportunity. As babies, Tom would scratch
at and beat on Chambers. Percy Driscoll forbade any form of retalia-
tion. The few times that Chambers dared to return the attacks, he
received such a flogging that he soon learned to take the brutalities
meekly. Chambers was Tom's constant bodyguard and target. Tom
hated his servant for his superiorities, his initiative, and his physique.

He excited so much admiration, one day, among a
crowd of white boys, that it wearied Tom's spirit, and at
last he shoved the canoe underneath Chambers while he was
in the air—so he came down on his head in the canoe-bottom;
and while he lay unconscious, several of Tom's adversaries
saw that their long-desired opportunity was come, and they
gave the false heir such a drubbing that with Chambers' best
help he was hardly able to drag himself home afterward. ¹³

¹³Samuel L. Clemens, Pudd'ning Wilson (New York, 1923),
XVI, 31.
Chambers saved Tom from drowning, but Tom could not stand to be indebted to him. He insulted Chambers and called him a "blockheaded nigger." The gang began to call Chambers "Tom Driscoll's nigger pappy." This makes Tom furious and he says:

"Knock their heads off, Chambers! knock their heads off! What do you stand there with your hands in your pockets for?"

Chambers expostulated, and said, "But, Marse Tom, dey's too many of 'em—dey's—"

"Do you hear me?"

"Please, Marse Tom, don't make me! Dey's so many of 'em dat—"

Tom sprang at him and dove his pocket-knife into him two or three times before the boys could snatch him away and give the wounded lad a chance to escape. He was considerably hurt, but not seriously. If the blade had been a little longer his career would have been ended there. 14

Tom sells his mother, Roxy, down the river, the worst thing that can happen to a Negro. She escapes from her master and works her way back to St. Louis and Tom. She describes her recent life to him. Roxy's complaints are not so much against the master as against his Yankee wife, who was jealous of her and refused to allow her to become a house servant. The wife was the cruel one; she saw to it that the overseer worked Roxy day and night. She demanded that the slaves be whipped. The overseer caught a ten-year-old slave sneaking a "roasted tater" to Roxy and began beating her with a stick. Roxy grabbed it from him and knocked him out with it. After that impudent act, she

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14 Ibid., p. 33.
had to run away. Tom's mental response to Roxy's story was a bitter curse against her; for had she stayed away, everything would have gone along smoothly.

Most of the examples of physical cruelty are found in the historical novels, *The Prince and the Pauper* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. It seems that Mark Twain felt he could expose the injustices of slavery in these historical periods, and by implication attack the contemporary slave system in the United States without risking a libel suit or the outright condemnation of his contemporaries. He might have felt that the obvious distance of time would protect him while he was actually denouncing the inhumanity of man in his present-day America. Although there are many instances of physical cruelty in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Mark Twain did not expose the inhumanity of man in chapter after chapter as he did in his historical novels.

From the accounts given, Mark Twain's position is clear. He recognized man's inhumanity to man. He noted the existence of physical cruelty in the individual and in the mob; he saw cruelty condoned by the laws and by the Church. He exposed man's cruelty in the ages past and in his own contemporary world.

Mark Twain made use of physical cruelty to achieve several literary purposes. Accounts of physical cruelty were often used to advance plot and establish historical context. Many of the people in Twain's
novels are characterized as mean, low persons because they do cruel things. The characters reveal themselves in their cruel acts. This suggests that Twain was not only interested in exposing and attacking cruelty, but also that he was using cruelty for literary purposes.

Mark Twain made use of physical cruelty in his novels in an effort to achieve some kind of social reform. At the core of his literary genius was the need to awaken mankind to its inhumanity. The countless examples of physical cruelty are wholly a basic quality of the author to expose the injustices of man against man in the hope of recreating man's virtues. Twain was never deluded about the natural inclination of man to inflict physical cruelty. Whatever condemnation exists in his novels is placed there purposefully. "Though the reality of simple virtue, decency, kindness, and courage is nowhere denied, the race is in the main ignorant, stupid, cruel, and cowardly."15 During the last few years of his life, Twain gave complete expression in such works as "What Is Man?" and "The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg" to his feelings of futility, disillusionment, and defeat.

15 Bernard DeVoto, Mark Twain's America (Boston, 1932), p. 294.
MENTAL CRUELTY

Mental cruelty is that form of consciously inflicted cruelty which causes emotional suffering. Mark Twain recognized that man has the capacity to delight in the mental anguish of his fellow man. Several of his novels are concerned with the mental sorrow, torment, and anxiety which the characters inflict upon each other. Examples are here considered in chronological order.

The Gilded Age, 1873-74, written in collaboration with Charles Dudley Warner, was Mark Twain's first novel. It is an attack on dishonest and stupid politicians. In it Twain satirizes greed, corruption, and ambition for wealth. The accounts of mental cruelty used to portray character in the novel represent the type of people that Mark Twain had observed in Nevada and in his brief stay in Washington.

In The Gilded Age, the villagers discover, after Mr. Hawkins' death, that Laura is not the natural child of the Hawkins'. They question the family and intrude upon their privacy and sorrow.

... It is barely possible that things might have presently settled down into their old rut and the mystery have lost the bulk of its romantic sublimity in Laura's eyes, if the village gossips could have quieted down. But they could not quiet down and they did not. Day after day they called at the
house, ostensibly upon visits of condolence, and they pumped away at the mother and the children without seeming to know that their questions were in bad taste. They meant no harm—they only wanted to know. Villagers always want to know.1

The endless questions of the villagers were a constant persecution to Laura. She would lie awake at night crying for awhile and then whispering fierce denunciations against them. The greatest damage the villagers caused with their gossip about Laura's background affected her relationship with Ned Thurston. He admitted to a friend that Laura was a nice girl but concluded that the village talk about who her father was had had its effect upon him. He simply could no longer afford to give her any serious attention now that there was a flaw in her reputation. When Laura heard this, she was defiant and miserable.

"The coward! Are all books lies? I thought he would fly to the front, and be brave and noble, and stand up for me against all the world, and defy my enemies, and wither these gossips with his scorn! Poor crawling thing, let him go. I do begin to despise this world!"

She lapsed into thought. Presently she said:
"If the time ever comes, and I get a chance, oh, I'll—"

She could not find a word that was strong enough, perhaps. By and by she said:
"Well, I am glad of it—I'm glad of it. I never cared anything for him anyway!"

And then, with small consistency, she cried a little, and patted her foot more indignantly than ever.2

The first major incident contributing to Laura's unhappiness is the malicious gossip perpetuated by the villagers. Deepening her

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1Samuel L. Clemens, The Gilded Age (New York, 1922), V, 100.
2Ibid., pp. 102-103.
suffering is Ned Thurston's change of attitude. As Laura indicates in
the novel, the chances are that he would have asked her to marry him
had there not been so much "talk, talk, talk."

Laura's affair with Colonel George Selby contributes to the devel-
opment of the plot just as it reveals the emotional anguish suffered by
Laura at the hands of Colonel Selby. He woos her in Hawkeye and then
writes her from Harding, where he is stationed, to come to him. He
engages her in a mock marriage, and they live together three months
when he tells her he is to be ordered South and must leave immediately.
Laura sincerely loves Selby and innocently announces that she will be
packed and ready to go with him. Then is when he tells her that he is
through with her.

Laura heard, but she did not comprehend. She caught
his arm and cried, "George, how can you joke so cruelly?
I will go anywhere with you. I will wait anywhere. I can't
go back to Hawkeye."

"Well, go where you like. Perhaps," continued he
with a sneer, "You would do as well to wait here, for an-
other colonel."

Laura's brain whirled. She did not yet comprehend.
"What does this mean?" Where are you going?"
"It means," said the officer, in measured words,
"that you haven't anything to show for a legal marriage,
and that I am going to New Orleans."
"It's a lie, George, it's a lie. I am your wife. I
shall go. I shall follow you to New Orleans."
"Perhaps my wife would not like it!"

Laura raised her head, her eyes flamed with fire, she
tried to utter a cry, and fell senseless on the floor.3

3Ibid., p. 185.
In Chapter XI, Laura has a meeting with Mr. Trollop to get his support for the fraudulent Knobs University bill. She blackmails him, which constitutes mental cruelty. Without his knowledge, Laura had copied a speech for him which had been written by a Mr. Buckstone. Trollop had not seen the speech prior to giving it before the legislature, nor did he know who wrote the speech. In copying the speech, Laura withheld a page filled with statistics. When Trollop gave the speech, he faltered at the part where the page was missing, and, as a result, was made a laughing stock. At the meeting, Laura threatens to expose Trollop by hiring a man to stand in the rotunda of the Capitol building with the missing page pinned on his breast and labelled "The Missing Fragment of the Hon. Mr. Trollop's Speech—which speech was written and composed by Miss Laura Hawkins under a secret understanding for one hundred dollars—and the money has not been paid."  

Trollop is convinced that Laura will carry through with her threat; and, since his reputation has fallen somewhat anyway, he realizes he cannot afford to risk it any further. Laura lets him know that she is aware of, and can prove, his past ventures with the public moneys. Since she has him so effectively cornered, he promises to vote in favor of the Knobs University bill.

4Samuel L. Clemens, The Gilded Age (New York, 1922), VI, 110.
In the second volume of *The Gilded Age*, Laura has been acquitted for the murder of Colonel George Selby and decides upon a lecture tour. The newspapers lambast her as a crude and wanton woman who desires to take advantage of her recent publicity in order to make money. However, she is sincere in her desire and decides, as a sort of penance, to give up all thought of love. She anticipates an abiding peace of mind from her sympathetic audience. The audience amounts to about twenty-five coarse, common men and women who make cat-calls and hoot at her. A half-drunk man throws something at her. She runs off the stage in a near faint.

"Oh, do not speak! Take me away—please take me away, out of this dreadful place! Oh, this is like all my life—failure, disappointment, misery—always misery, always failure. What have I done, to be so pursued! Take me away, I beg of you, I implore you!"

Upon the pavement she was hustled by the mob, the surging masses roared her name and accompanied it with every species of insulting epithet; they thronged after the carriage, hooting, jeering, cursing, and even assailing the vehicle with missiles. A stone crashed through a blind, wounding Laura's forehead, and so stunning her that she hardly knew what further transpired during her flight.

"If I could only die!" she said. "If I could only go back, and be as I was then, for one hour—and hold my father's hand in mine again, and see all the household about me, as in that old innocent time—and then die! My God, I am humbled, my pride is all gone, my stubborn heart repents—have pity!"

But now the keepers of the house had become uneasy; their periodical knockings still finding no response, they burst open the door.
The jury of inquest found that death had resulted from heart disease, and was instant and painless. That was all. Merely heart disease.  

When, in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 1876, Tom, Joe Harper, and Huck run off, allowing their families to think they are drowned, they are causing emotional anguish. Although it is a childish prank, it, nevertheless, causes mental suffering. 

Huckleberry Finn, one of Twain’s most appealing characters, is oftentimes the recipient of cruelty, and he also inflicts cruelty on others. There are two outstanding accounts where Huck plays practical jokes on Nigger Jim.

... I went to the cavern to get some [tobacco], and found a rattlesnake in there. I killed him, and curled him up on the foot of Jim’s blanket, ever so natural, thinking ther’d be some fun when Jim found him there. Well, by night I forgot all about the snake, and when Jim flung himself down on the blanket while I struck a light the snake’s mate was there, and bit him.

Later, Huck and Jim are separated during a heavy fog. Huck finds Jim asleep and decides to pretend that the episode was only Jim’s nightmare. When Jim tells Huck the events of the evening before, Huck asks Jim if he has been drinking, since he must have imagined such a wild story.

"Oh, well, that’s all interpreted well enough as far as it goes, Jim," I said; "but what does these things stand for?"

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5 Ibid., pp. 298-300.

It was the leaves and rubbish on the raft and the smashed oar. You could see them first rate now.

Jim looked at the trash, and then looked at me, and back at the trash again. 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:

"What do dey stan' for? I's gwyne to tell you. 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 en fine you back ag'in, all safe en soun', de tears come, en I could 'a' got down on my knees en kiss yo' foot, It'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 head er dey fren's en makes 'em ashamed."

The incident immediately after Sherburn murders the drunkard, Boggs, exposes the characteristic of cruelty in Sherburn and the brutality of the mob. As the character of Sherburn is revealed in the killing, so, also, the mass character of the mob is revealed by Sherburn when he denounces them in front of his house. Sherburn is the spokesman for Mark Twain.

"The idea of you lynching anybody! It's amusing. The idea of you thinking you had pluck enough to lynch a man! Because you're brave enough to tar and feather poor friendless cast-out women that come along here, did that make you think you had grit enough to lay your hands on a man? Why, a man's safe in the hands of ten thousand of your kind—as long as it's daytime and you're not behind him.

"Do I know you? I know you clear through. I was born and raised in the South, and I've lived in the North; so I know the average all around. The average man's a coward. In the North he lets anybody walk over him that wants to, and

7Ibid., p. 119.
goes home and prays for a humble spirit to bear it. In the South one man, all by himself, has stopped a stage full of men in the daytime, and robbed the lot. Your newspapers call you a brave people so much that you think you are braver than any other people—whereas you're just as brave, and no braver. Why don't your juries hang murderers? Because they're afraid the man's friends will shoot them in the back, in the dark—and it's just what they would do.

"So they always acquit; and then a man goes in the night, with a hundred masked cowards at his back, and lynches the rascal. Your mistake is, that you didn't bring a man with you; that's one mistake, and the other is that you didn't come in the dark and fetch your masks. You brought part of a man—Buck Harkness, there—and if you hadn't had him to start you, you'd 'a' taken it out in blowing.

"You didn't want to come. The average man don't like trouble and danger. You don't like trouble and danger. But if only half a man—like Buck Harkness, there—shouts 'Lynch him! Lynch him!' you're afraid to back down—afraid you'll be found out to be what you are—cowards—and so you raise a yell, and hang yourselves onto that half-a-man's coat-tail, and come raging up here, swearing what big things you're going to do. The pitiful thing out is a mob; that's what an army is—a mob; they don't fight with courage that's born in them, but with courage that's borrowed from their mass, and from their officers. But a mob without any man at the head of it is beneath pitifulness. Now the thing for you to do is to droop your tails and go home and crawl in a hole. If any real lynching's going to be done it will be done in the dark, Southern fashion; and when they come they'll bring their masks, and fetch a man along. Now leave—and take your half-a-man with you.\textsuperscript{8}

Another instance of mental cruelty is in \textit{A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court}, 1889. It has been brought out that Morgan le Fay is a woman whose cruel actions are the result of her training. She is within her rights according to the law. But her disposition for cruelty is evidenced in one outstanding act of injustice and brutality. She had

\textsuperscript{8}Ibid., pp. 202-203.
put a man of noble birth into her dungeon. He was in a cell where there was a narrow slit pierced through the wall allowing a thin ray of sunlight in. Through the slit the man could see his own home across the valley. He had watched proceedings in the valley for twenty-two years. He had four children and a wife; he had observed four funeral ceremonies that were too solemn to be funerals of commoners or servants. He was in a state of emotional turmoil. The Yankee demands his freedom; and when he returns, the house is filled with joy and tears. All the family are living; some are married and have children of their own. The four funerals were mental cruelty inflicted by Morgan le Day,

In The American Claimant, 1892, the young man, Lord Berkeley, comes over to America to see democracy in action. Taking the name of Howard Tracy in order that his identity remain unknown, the English nobleman stays at a boarding-house in Washington so that he might get to understand the average American people. The individuals in the boarding-house ignore him because he has no work and has not distinguished himself in any way. Since Tracy is British and rather reserved, the fellows do not like him.

Mr. Marsh, the landlord of the boarding-house, is a caustic, spiteful man who takes great pleasure in exploiting his boarders. He enjoys his authority, and the further he can extend his superiority at the expense of some unfortunate, the greater the pleasure he derives from it.
Nat Brady is a young, sickly-looking fellow who by a series of misfortunes and ill health has lost his job. At the dinner table, Marsh has purposely overlooked Brady in serving the Irish stew.

Marsh lifted his head and gasped out, with mock courtliness, "Oh, he hasn't, hasn't he? What a pity that is. I don't know how I came to overlook him. Ah, he must pardon me. You must, indeed, Mr.—er—Baxter—Barker, you must pardon me. I—er—my attention was directed to some other matter, I don't know what. The thing that grieves me mainly is that it happens every meal now. But you must try to overlook these little things, Mr. Bunker, these little neglects on my part. They're always likely to happen with me in any case, and they are especially likely to happen where a person has—er—well, where a person is, say, about three weeks in arrears for his board. You get my meaning? —you get my idea? Here is your Irish stew, and—er—it gives me the greatest pleasure to send it to you, and I hope that you will enjoy the charity as much as I enjoy conferring it."

On one occasion when Tracy walks into a room, all conversation abruptly ceases. He greets the people, but there is no response. The silence is so uncomfortable that he gets up and leaves. The moment he leaves the room, a great shout of laughter breaks forth. He realizes it is their purpose to insult him.

A final example from _The American Claimant_ reveals the extent to which a person will go to create laughter at the expense of another's anxiety. As the story develops, Tracy is not able to pay rent. Marsh takes delight in embarrassing him as the boarders look on. Tracy

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9Samuel L. Clemens, _The American Claimant_ (New York, 1923), XV, 104.
says he has been expecting a cablegram from his father. The idea that
he could afford such an expense makes the crowd laugh. When the ca-
ble arrives, all it says is "Thanks."

The humorist of the house, the tall, raw-boned Billy
Nash, caulkker from the navy yard, was standing in the rear
of the crowd. In the midst of the pathetic silence that was
now brooding over the place and moving some few hearts
there toward compassion, he began to whimper, then he
put his handkerchief to his eyes and buried his face in the
neck of the bashfullest young fellow in the company . . . ,
shrieked,

"Oh, pappy, how could you!" and began to bawl like a
teething baby, if one may imagine a baby with the energy
and the devastating voice of a jackass.

So perfect was the imitation of a child's cry, and so
vast the scale of it, and so ridiculous the aspect of the per-
former, that all gravity, was swept from the place as if by
a hurricane, and almost everybody there joined in the crash
of laughter provoked by the exhibition. Then the small mob
began to take its revenge—revenge for the discomfort and
apprehension it had brought upon itself by its own too rash
freshness of a little while before. It guyed its poor victim,
baited him, worried him, as dogs do with a cornered cat.
The victim answered back with defiances and challenges which
included everybody, and which only gave the sport new spirit
and variety; but when he changed his tactics and began to
single out individuals and invite them by name, the fun lost
its funniness and the interest of the show died out, along
with the noise. 10

These accounts of mental cruelty in the boarding-house are taken
from Twain's personal experiences when he lived in hotels and boarding-
houses where he had observed men like these.

Mr. Driscoll, in Pudd'nhead Wilson, 1894, may not be consid-
ered a cruel person, for he was usually kind to his slaves; but he was

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10 Ibid., pp. 138-139.
capable of brutal treatment on occasion. At the first of the story one of the slaves has stolen money, and Mr. Driscoll calls all the house slaves before him. He threatens them; they deny any knowledge of the money until he tells them he will sell all four of them "down the river."

It was equivalent to condemning them to hell! No Missouri negro doubted this. Roxy reeled in her tracks and the color vanished out of her face; the others dropped to their knees as if they had been shot; tears gushed from their eyes, their supplicating hands went up, and three answers came in the one instant:
"I done it!"
"I done it!"
"I done it!—have mercy, marster—Lord have mercy on us po' niggers!" 11

Mixed emotions are evidenced when Roxy tells Tom who he is. Tom reveals dismay and anger, while Roxy expresses contempt and defiance. Roxy strikes out at him with "You's a nigger!" and he has no recourse. The greatest torture he could realize would be to be a "nigger."

Another example of mental cruelty is found in this novel. Tom's selling Roxy down the river involves physical cruelty; the episode of her betrayal by her son involves mental cruelty. Roxy suggests that she be sold back into slavery in order to pay Tom's debts. He agrees to sell her up the river, then forges a bill of sale and sells her to the Arkansas cotton planter. Tom rationalizes that he has saved time and trouble by selling her down the river, and he tells himself that he will buy her back at the end of the year.

11 Samuel L. Clemens, Pudd'nhead Wilson (New York, 1923), XVI, 16-17.
In novel after novel, by means of one character after another, Mark Twain has exposed the nature of men toward acts of mental cruelty. Although he presented thoughtless juvenile pranks in a humorous way, when he is revealing adult characters in acts of mental cruelty, there is no humor. Twain's treatment is serious satire, and he is nowhere more serious than when he is denouncing the evil of slavery, as in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* or *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. The villagers in Hawkeye, the mob before Colonel Sherburn, and the boarders in *The American Claimant* express Mark Twain's contempt for the aggregate mass who cluster together to inflict mental cruelty upon some one outside their circle.

In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Nigger Jim is Twain's expression of the brave, virtuous man. He has all the qualities which Twain admired, for he is characterized as a faithful, honest, and kind friend who would risk his life and give up his freedom for a friend. When Jim calls Huck "trash," "Here is a tremendous rebuke from the humble to the human race whose cruelty was the strongest pressure in Mark's discontent." Huck is Twain's expression of man's conscience fighting the cruelty and violence of the human race.

Mark Twain's other novels set in America, *The Gilded Age*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The American Claimant*, and *Pudd'nhead*.

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Wilson, show the social reformer flailing out at a welter of organized cruelty from the small village of Hannibal to the metropolis of Washington. Man's predilection for inflicting mental cruelty aroused and infuriated Mark Twain, who was as compelled to expose and attack the injustices of his nineteenth-century America as Swift was those of his eighteenth-century England. "What he knew about was the motives and especially the weaknesses and cruelties of mankind, of men as man."\(^{13}\) Just as his sensitive nature rebelled against cruelty, so his literary genius incited him to express his indignation; and so he became a leading reformer against man's inhumanity.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The biographers of Mark Twain and his own letters and notes reveal his general attitude toward mankind. He was continually writing and speaking in order to urge men to improve themselves. First humor, then ridicule, and finally satire and invective characterized both his speeches and his writings. Among Twain's notes is one dated July 31, 1906, in which he states that he has always preached, that he never wrote his sermons "for the sake of humor."\(^1\) In another notation he comments that the political and commercial morals of the United States "are not merely food for laughter,"\(^2\) for they have become decayed beyond repair because of such licentious men as Jay Gould and his followers. At one time, he opposed a Tammany candidate in an election for mayor of New York by giving bitter speeches denouncing rotten, brutal politics. He attributed the prevalence of lynching to the jury system and the moral cowardice of men who fear the vengeance of the criminal's friends or family. There are numerous evidences of


\(^2\)Ibid., p. 81.
Mark Twain's attitude toward the jury system and mob violence recorded in his autobiographical travelogue, *Roughing It*. Twain was a great defender of the Negro and states in his autobiography that "a 'nigger trader' was loathed by everybody"\(^3\) because he was cruelly separating a slave from his family.

Not only does Mark Twain denounce the brutalities of mankind in his personal notes and public life, but he also makes a point of exposing man's inhumanity in his novels. In a note dated December 5, 1906, Twain records that he wrote *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* not only to show the hard conditions of life in that historical period, but that he was also "purposing to contrast that English life, not just the English life of Arthur's day but the English life of the whole of the Middle Ages, with the life of modern Christiandom and modern civilization,"\(^4\) with emphasis on the latter. It is an established fact that Twain despised slavery. Like Juvenal, Swift, and Byron, he could not view injustices with indifference. The existence of slavery was a torment to his sensitive nature, and he was impelled to denounce it. Behind a setting of sixth-century knight-errantry, Twain attacked, by implication, the social evils of his contemporary America. "It is the crimes of the Gilded Age against which Mark Twain turns his most


\(^4\)Samuel L. Clemens, *Mark Twain in Eruption*, p. 211.
gallant lances in the Yankee, and the fact that he has chosen to make a romance out of his parable does not prove that he was a coward; it simply shows that he was an artist and no mere pamphleteer."\(^5\) Bernard DeVoto states that The Gilded Age, The American Claimant, and Pudd'nhead Wilson display "Mark Twain's absorption in American life, the fiction that most immediately embodies the experience of which he was a part."\(^6\) The Gilded Age is alive with the corruption and confusion of its era. Despite its sentimentalism, Twain moves "alone among the novelists of the time" when "he concerns himself with the national muck."\(^7\) The villages and communities which come to life in The Gilded Age reflect his experience and "are born of Mark Twain's perception of humanity."\(^8\) The characters in Twain's novels show the "intensity of their self-deception, the pettiness of their existence, the cruelty and jealousy and ignorance that are fundamental in their nature."\(^9\) This is consistent with the man whose letters, notes and speeches are filled with views on the need for improved political, social, moral, and ethical practices.

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\(^5\)Edward Wagenknecht, Mark Twain, the Man and His Work (New Haven, 1935), p. 236.

\(^6\)Bernard DeVoto, Mark Twain's America (Boston, 1932), p. 283.

\(^7\)Ibid., p. 287.

\(^8\)Ibid., p. 289.

\(^9\)Ibid., p. 294.
Mark Twain devoted a lifetime, in his writings and in his public life, to censuring "the damned human race," with the desire to awaken it to the virtues inherent within it. He urged and "preached" against cruelty. Twain's purpose was to encourage social reform, and his principal literary methods for exposing cruelty were comedy and satire.  

Cruelty is inflicting suffering upon others. One who inflicts cruelty receives satisfaction or pleasure as a result. Physical cruelty involves bodily injury, whereas mental cruelty involves emotional anguish.

Two literary devices which Mark Twain uses to attack cruelty are comedy and satire. Comedy rising out of cruelty is mental suffering which is not inflicted with the intent to injure. Mark Twain achieves comedy through the device of mental cruelty which is based upon the reader's recognition of incongruity. The effect is amusing, and neither Twain nor the reader becomes emotionally involved with the comic situation.

For example, when the Widow Douglas forces Huckleberry Finn to wear clean clothes and shoes, take baths, pray, eat at the table, refrain from smoking, and watch his posture, her good intentions are

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10 For a complete treatment of Mark Twain as a social reformer see Evelyn L. Harrison, "Mark Twain as a Social Critic," unpublished master's thesis, Department of English, North Texas State College, Denton, Texas, 1944.
torments to Huck, whose suffering is imagined cruelty. This is comic because, while there is an element of mental suffering in the situation, it does not constitute real cruelty since the Widow Douglas has no intent to inflict suffering. One of the commonest elements of comedy is incongruity.

Somewhere between comedy and satire is Mark Twain's use of the practical joke. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck plays practical jokes on Nigger Jim with the dead rattlesnake and by teasing him about the night of the fog when Huck attempted to convince Jim that he had had a nightmare. In both instances the element of comedy is present because Huck is having fun and does not intend to hurt Jim. Yet physical cruelty results in the first instance when Jim is bitten by the live mate of the dead snake, and mental cruelty results in the second instance when Jim is emotionally upset by what Huck intended as good-natured teasing.

Mark Twain also used the practical joke in *Tom Sawyer Abroad*. During a sand storm, the boys' airplane fills up with sand. Tom decides to divide the work of cleaning out the sand. He proposes that he and Huck will clean out a fifth apiece, and Jim will take care of the remainder. Jim does not care for the arrangement.

Jim reckoned it wouldn't be no more than fair if me and Tom done a tenth apiece. Tom he turned his back to git room and be private, and then he smole a smile that spread around and covered the whole Sahara to the westward,
back to the Atlantic edge of where we come from. Then he turned around again and said it was a good enough arrangement, and we was satisfied if Jim was. Jim said he was.  

Tom and Huck are taking advantage of Jim's ignorance of fractions. The boys do not intend to be cruel to Jim, and Jim does not realize that they are exploiting him. They receive pleasure from Jim's gullibility. Jim's ignorance is the source of the comedy, and the reader derives satisfaction through identifying himself with Tom and Huck.

Mark Twain attacked cruelty most directly by means of satire. While comedy arouses laughter, satire is not necessarily amusing. Twain is closer to the object of his criticism when he uses satire. He does more than identify and expose cruelty; he arouses the reader's emotions against cruelty through the literary device of satire. The Prince and the Pauper and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court illustrate Twain's employment of satire against the institutions of slavery in the United States and the feudal system in England.

When satire is strong and direct it may become invective, as in Colonel Sherburn's oral attack on the mob in The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, which reminds one of Swift's employment of invective in the last voyage of Gulliver where the Yahoos are a vivid representation of man, and yet not so degraded as man because man has corrupted the gifts of reason and soul.

With the possible exceptions of _The Adventures of Tom Sawyer_ and _Tom Sawyer Abroad_, Mark Twain has satirized mental and physical cruelty throughout his novels. Satire is employed against cruelty in adults. Twain does not satirize cruelty inflicted by children; childish cruelty is more lightly treated; it becomes comedy or a practical joke.

Mark Twain used comedy and satire to urge social reform. By means of ridicule Twain employed comedy as a literary device to make people laugh at human cruelty. He used laughter as a social weapon to achieve reform. When he exposed cruelty through satire, Twain evoked an emotional resentment against human cruelty; and, again, his purpose was to abolish cruelty and promote social reform.

Throughout his lifetime, Mark Twain was aware of the existence of cruelty in the society around him. His sensitivity to cruelty is reflected in his novels. He developed both plot and characterization through the use of cruelty; he used cruelty for both comic and satiric effects; and he wrote about cruelty as a means of urging social reform.
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