CHAPTER IV

TWAIN ON PROGRESS AND PRIMITIVISM
All Mark Twain's critics unanimously hold the opinion that he ended his career as a bitter cynic and pessimist. As with other ideas, he had also completely lost belief in two important ideas he held dear earlier. Thus the idea that mankind has registered a definite progress through the ages and the idea that man is innately good and capable of doing noble and virtuous deeds did not hold any appeal for him in his declining years.

Though coming from different systems of philosophy, the ideas of progressivism and primitivism, entail certain common beliefs: hope in democracy, equality of all men, realization of one's potentialities and an awareness of the intrinsic humanity of man. So important a part of the social and cultural milieu of the nineteenth century United States, these two ideas fired the imagination of most of its writers. They either embraced these ideas or rejected them but could not ignore them. Mark Twain's reaction to both these ideas, like his reaction to so many other ideas, was queer, curious and marked by his characteristic ambivalent attitude. On the one hand, he accepted the myth of progress but, on the other, lamented the loss of the simple and tension-free society of old times. In the works of this representative writer of America these two strands are
very intricately mixed. In the following pages an attempt is made to analyze Twain's optimistic belief in the idea of progress and his nostalgic yearnings for the lost world of romance which he expresses by presenting a set of innocent characters who are in conflict with the so called progressive society.

II

Twain's optimistic belief in the gradual onward progress of mankind with the evolution of knowledge owes a lot to his comprehensive study of history. He was well read in history and among the works he thoroughly enjoyed were the memoirs of Saint Simon, Casanova, Pepys, Greville, Margravine et cetera. Certain overly subjective and highly colourful accounts of historians like Carlyle's French Revolution as also the interpretation of the history of human thought and conduct like the one sketched in Lecky's History of European Morals and Andrew D. White's Warfare of Science also interested him a great deal. Minnie M. Brashear has made an exhaustive study of Mark Twain's reading in her meticulously researched chapter on "Sam Clemens' Reading" in her book Mark Twain : Son of Missouri. Exploding the
myth that Twain was free from bookishness, she points out that Twain made extensive use of his reading to help out his own narrative. "What he read excited him mentally and emotionally and stimulated him to get his reaction expressed." 2

The greatest stimulation, however, came from his comparative perusal of human behaviour at different periods of history. In this he was greatly influenced by the then current philosophy of history. The historiography of the period stressed an onward development of knowledge and political liberty. A movement beginning with the works of Hume, Voltaire and Condorcet culminated in the works of the English historian Lord Macaulay. Popularly known as 'Whig historians', these celebrated writers did not glorify the past in any way; rather they were interested in the past simply because they thought that it contained the roots of the present.

Expressing his sanguine belief in progress Twain in an unpublished manuscript entitled "On Progress, Civilization, Monarchy, etc." (1880) talks about certain steps by which the western civilization has registered progress from the dark past of our ancestors. The steps discussed by him almost echo the ideas of Condorcet, Macaulay and other champions of the whig hypothesis: destruction of English
serfdom and slavery; loosening of the control of the Church; introduction of representative government and considerable extension of the suffrage; penal reform (reduction of penalties for minor crimes and the abolition of restriction of counsel from state prisoners); army reform; and the gradual stripping of various privileges from the nobility.

The steps enumerated by Twain show that he was more interested in legal and political rather than economic reforms. He held democratic ideals very dear and found them missing in the olden times. Hence his reaction against the middle ages.

All these ideas are reflected in his travel books, and the fiction written at different periods of his literary career. He was constantly using history in his works which provided him a perspective to embark upon a comparative study of human conduct at different periods. In fact some of his major works like *The Innocents Abroad*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, *A Connecticut Yankee* and *Joan of Arc* heavily draw upon Macaulay's thesis that history should provide an imaginative vivification of the past. In fact Twain seems so much obsessed with Macaulay's ideas that Sydney J. Krause is led to think: "If there was one writer Twain would rather have been other than himself, I believe
it would have been Macaulay.  

It was perhaps under the influence of Macaulay and other 'whig' historians that Twain began to consider his generation the most enlightened one. He even conceived material and political progress going hand in hand to bring about a moral progress of mankind. He was happy to note that as a result of the abolition of two wicked institutions -- Catholicism and feudalism -- there is more religious tolerance and an overall spread of democratic ideas. There is equality before law and an absence of organised cruelty. The moral progress of mankind has resulted from the better institutions of today. The most important change that has come about in the attitude of the people is the fact that now a new idea is valued for its own sake. It means that the door to progress is always open.

In The Innocents Abroad, his first literary work of consequence, Twain treats history with irreverence and acknowledges in no uncertain terms the legal, political and technological progress of mankind. Interestingly the book suggests that those who failed to embrace the new material values of science are either dull or superstitious. As the preface of the book makes it clear that Twain is going to appraise everything in Europe and the Holy Land
from his empirical point of view:

it has a purpose, which is to suggest the reader how he would be likely to see Europe and the east if he looked at them with his own eyes instead of the eyes of those who travelled in those countries before him... I think I have seen with impartial eyes, and I am sure I have written at least honestly, whether wisely or not (p.3).

Greatly impressed by the materialistic progress of the time, Twain was unwilling to praise the orient as it presented the spectacles of dirt, dust, decay and degradation everywhere. His disapproval of the 'oriental splendour' also implies his criticism of the people of the East, their life styles, customs and culture which show their backwardness and their inability to keep pace with the development taking place elsewhere. He is especially appalled to notice the punishment system and the taxation policy of these people. They do not have much regard for democratic ideals. Thus the King of Moracco is described a soulless despot for his ruthless taxation policy. The tyrannical ruler of Greece is also ensured for misusing his revenue. The Moorish system of punishment seemed to him very cruel and inhuman and reminded him of the tyrannical rule of the council of Three in Venice of old days where the convicts were put in solitary imprisonment without
light, air, or books. Convinced of the legal progress of his time Twain wryly notes: "Masked judges and masked executioners, with unlimited power and no appeal from their judgements, in that hard, cruel age, were not likely to be lenient with men they suspected yet could not convict (p. 75)."

In sharp contrast to his criticism of the East is his praise of Napoleon III under whose rule France made notable material progress. Twain hails Napoleon as a great builder, an able administrator and one who takes genuine interest in the welfare of the masses. In France administration is such that ordinary life is very smooth and very comfortable. The credit for his type of able and efficient administration goes to Napoleon III, "the genius of energy, persistence, enterprise" (p. 103) who kept pace with materialistic progress.

The image of the past most clearly evident in Twain's art criticism, is also very ugly and unattractive. It is fully identified with Catholicism and feudalism. In Italy he very enthusiastically went to see the celebrated works of the old Masters. His visit, however, sadly turned out to be an unhappy one as the paintings of the old Masters failed to evoke his admiration. After watching the "Last Supper"
Twain regrets the lack of creativity of the artist as they never think to paint this differently, and artists after artists "go on copying it as long as any of the original is left visible to the eye (p. 150)." He however, feels that the copies of the paintings of a Raphael, a Rubens or Da Vinci are superior to the original. But his fellow travellers' tendency of praising the Old Masters in hyperbolic terms really irks him firstly because it implies an unwarranted glorification of the past which did not value creativity and secondly their praise quite wrongly assumed certain values the past.

In the paintings of the old Masters Twain sees the spirit of the middle ages: tyranny, cruelty and unashamed submission to authority. A great artist like Andrea del Sarto immortalised certain tyrannical princes. The paintings of Raphael glorifying such abominable and despicable figures as Catherine and Marie de Medicis are other examples of an artist prostituting his art. Twain protests against the grovelling spirit that could pursue these masters to bring in disrepute their noble talents to the adulation of such monsters as the French, Venetian and Florentine princes of two hundred years ago. He does not accept the justification that the old Masters had to glorify these damnable tyrants
to express their gratitude and kindness towards them because the Princes were the only patrons of art. He very strongly opines: "if a grandly gifted man may drag his pride and his manhood in the dirt for bread rather than starve with the nobility that is in him untainted, the excuse is a valid one. It would excuse theft in Washingtons and Wellingtons and unchastity in women as well. (p. 204)." 

The second part of *Life on the Mississippi* written in 1883, is remarkable for Twain's idealization of the technological and industrial progress achieved by America in the nineteenth century. He even thought that Americans had better and sounder morals than the English and the French. In his journey down the river he was particularly impressed by the new rising American civilization. Comparing this burgeoning civilization with the one of his childhood, he notices improvements everywhere. His heart is filled with pride to see the city of Natchez: "Natchez, like her near and far river neighbours, has railways now... And like Vicksburg and New Orleans, she has her ice factory." He then highlights the contrast between the old civilization and the new by noting that "in Vicksburg and Natchez, in many time, ice was jewelry; none but the
rich could wear it. But anybody and everybody can have it now (p. 325)." Twain proudly notes that the city has powerful machinery, electric lights, good clubs, telephone and sanitary improvements everywhere. To cap it all there is the democratic institution of journalism which in Twain's opinion is a very notable change. These changes characterize the new face of America. "From St Louis northward there are all the enlivening signs of the presence of active, energetic, intelligent, prosperous, practical nineteenth-century populations (p. 461)."

Not only does Twain speak of the changes brought about by the technological revolution to the face of different cities, he also acknowledges the positive impact of the new values on the peoples themselves. Thus the city of Natches is well outfitted with progressive men — thinking, sagacious, long-headed man. He describes the people living northward to St Louis as the once who work and not dream only.

In this book Twain also tries to answer the question as to what happens when a society does not outgrow its decadant institutions. In this case this society is the American South which lags behind the North in every respect. The southerners are still intoxicated with the joy of cock-fighting and the discussion of war. Twain fully identified
the South with feudalism and a false and empty romanticism.

There are many reasons why Southerners still cling to outdated customs and false romantic notions. In Twain's opinion the most important reason is the influence of Sir Walter Scott on the southern mind. His jejune romanticism with its glorification of an absurd and dead past still flourishes in the South even though the whole world has rejected it. In the South "the genuine and wholesome civilization of the nineteenth century is curiously confused and commingled with the Walter Scott Middle-Age sham civilization (p. 375)." Under the influence of Sir Walter's glorification of War every southerner thinks himself a colonel, major or captain. Twain even goes to the extent of holding Sir Walter responsible for the Civil War: "Sir Walter had so large a hand in making southern character, as it existed before the war, that he is in great measure responsible for the War (p. 376)."

The pernicious influence of Sir Walter also extends to the southern writers. The writers write not about and for the present but try to idealize a dead and wicked past. With few exceptions, these writers use obsolete forms and a dead language. In fact so bitter is the feeling of Twain
that he says that the whole south is suffering from "the Sir Walter disease."

The theme of the technological progress presented in *Life on the Mississippi* is fully developed in *A Connecticut Yankee*. In this work Twain compares the nineteenth century with the sixth century and suggests that the nineteenth century with its ideology of liberalism, democracy, and technological progress is better than the sixth century devoted to superstition and dogma. The efforts of modern man to realize material goals are approved by Twain in clear terms.

One of the important incidents that provoked Twain to write this book was the attack of Matthew Arnold on American civilization. Arnold described Americans as hard, practical and materialistic people with little aesthetic sense. Though he praised the American's social and political equality, Arnold excluded political and material achievements from his definition of civilization. However, Twain considered Matthew Arnold's concept of civilization snobbish and set out to prove through his protagonist that the liberty of the masses, and technological and material progress constituted the real definition of civilization. But to say that the book is merely a defence of Americanism and an
attack on British feudal system is to limit the canvas of its satire. Not only does it celebrate the idea of the material progress of the world, America in particular, it is also an expression of an international crusade for democracy as the English critic W.T. Stead has asserted.8

The meaning of _A Connecticut Yankee_ depends on the interpretation of the character of its protagonist, Hank Morgan. He embodies three very important concepts of nineteenth century American civilization: he is a democrat; a technologist; and also a capitalist hero. Transported in the sixth century, Hank Morgan tries to civilize Arthur's England by making it embrace his nineteenth century values.

In the preface of the book Twain says that "the ungentle laws and customs touched upon in this tale are historical, and the episodes which are used to illustrate them are also historical (p. 1)." Without going into the details of the historicity of the episodes, it can safely be said that Hank Morgan, the spokesman of democratic values, attempts to build a system in which these ungentle laws and customs have no place. Twain was fully convinced of the progress made by mankind in the field of law. Here he is simply elaborating the theme he had earlier taken up in _The Prince and the Pauper_ where he had made the dethroned prince
wander among the masses as an ordinary man. King Edward observes the operation of inhuman laws in his land — a typical feature in history before the dawn of civilization — and takes a vow to change these laws when he becomes King again.

Hank Morgan sincerely shares King Edward's sympathy for the masses. He is appalled to see that the Church supported by the cruel political institutions has made the condition of the masses utterly miserable. The nobility enjoys all the benefits of the land. People are put to torture and even death for very petty crimes. Sympathetic towards the masses he pardons a number of 'criminals'. In the end he destroys the very institution of Knight-errantry which is the breeder of oppression and tyranny. In his efforts to alleviate the suffering of the masses by bringing the light of civilization, he becomes a "humanitarian emancipator of the downtrodden peasants."

In his role of the technologist Hank Morgan attempts to industrialise Arthur's kingdom. He is an engineer in the real sense of the word as he himself puts it:

Then I went over to the great arms factory and learned my real trade; learned all there was to it; learned to make everything — guns, revolvers,
cannon, boilers, engines, all sorts of labour-saving machinery. Why I could make anything a body wanted — anything in the world, it didn't make any difference what; and if there wasn't any quick new-fangled way to make a thing, I could invent one — and do it as easy as rolling off a log (p. 4).

With great enthusiasm he sets out to industrialize the sixth century. He establishes factories, patent office and opens many other institutions. By educating the brilliant minds of King Arthur's time he tries to create manpower suitable for rapid industrialization. However, his plans fail to materialize in the end as he has no answer to the awesome power of the Organized Church. Yankee's failure was also necessitated by the demands of realistic fiction because no technological changes took place in sixth century and Twain's presentation of history is also only an alternative history used for the purpose of satire.  

The most important role that Hank Morgan plays in the novel is that of an entrepreneur and a capitalist. The ideology of industrial capitalism that gripped the United States after the Civil War is treated by Howells in *A Hazard of New Fortunes* and Warner in *A Little Journey in the World*. But Twain's book "was the first literary effort of any consequence to treat the entrepreneur sympathetically."
Throughout the book Twain refers to Hank's plan of making money. He spends his energies on the advertising of various products and embarks upon many plans for minting money.

In a brilliantly written article, Lorne Fienberg, clarifies the nature of Hank's economic activity in the novel. Basing his study on the writings of two twentieth century economists, Joseph Schumpeter and Fritz Redlich, he discusses the role of Hank Morgan as an entrepreneur and daimonic figure, with all the crises that the idea of entrepreneurship involves. In the absence of any competition, Hank Morgan establishes full control over the economy of the country. The complex organizations that come into existence as a result of his monopoly capitalism are also characteristic of the nineteenth century capitalism of Twain's time. Finally his downfall is brought about by his inability to control the complex chain of organizations. However, as Fienberg points out, the elements of self-destruction are inevitably inherent in the entrepreneur's very creativity. He further notes that "given this notion of Hank Morgan as a type of daimonic entrepreneur, the ending of A Connecticut Yankee emerges as an integral and inevitable part of Twain's 'fable' of economic progress."
The experience of an age is a very complex and difficult thing which cannot be described in the form of a generalized statement. Thus, to say that a certain age was the age of reason or imagination is only a half-truth because in any age there will be people who think differently from their contemporaries. Further, it is also very important to make a distinction between the private metaphorical world of a writer and his public world inspired by his society's professed beliefs. As a member of society the writer himself may live on two planes: one necessitated by the manifest culture of his country and the other his very own world made of his own felt images and created symbols.

It is the function of literature to deal with such diverse and variegated threads of experience. Mark Twain, exposed to an exceptionally rich variety of experiences, repeatedly stated that literature should come out of a writer's own experience. In fact the fusion of apparently contradictory statements, unrelated themes and the writer's constantly changing mood and hence the change of focus in the same work leave his works very open-ended and make it very difficult for critics to pass any judgement on the writer. Thus it will be misleading to say that Twain's
approval of the idea of progress and his temporocentrism, make him at once a progressivist. The fact is that the elements of primitivism which characterize almost all his writings balance his treatment of the myth of progress. In a single work both these ideas exist side by side.

The belief in primitivism, an eighteenth century philosophy though as an attitude as old as man's thought and feeling, lays stress on the innate goodness of man and a preference for a simple as against a complex society. The extreme primitivists, turning the clock back, clamour for the plain, natural and artless society of the past, the one that can be found in the life style of the tribals, our 'primitive contemporaries.' However, the more moderate primitivists speak of a society where individuals live an honest and 'unsophisticated' life in the absence of warped and mechanical human relations without any amount of intellectual retrogression. Mark Twain perhaps falls in the second category. His was not the chronological primitivism, rather it was as much a love for the ingenuous and guileless life for its own sake as a reaction against the ills resulting from the rapidly changing society of his time.

Twain shared the general anguish of the sensitive souls of his time and while the diplomats and political
thinkers talked about the need of creating new political and social institutions he sought to present through his artistic medium the moral and spiritual values necessary for the regeneration of human society. In this way he was concerned both with the existing society of his time as well as the ideal conception of social relationships. The breakdown of social values in the wake of the industrial revolution was especially very painful to writers like Twain because it signified the betrayal of the myth of America itself. The American myth, remarkable for its high idealism "saw life and history as just beginning. It described the world as starting up again under fresh initiative, in a divinely granted second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrously fumbled in the darkening old world."  

Twain was distressed to realize that not only the old world had fumbled this divinely granted chance but that his own country was also following in the footsteps of the old world. This was not only Twain's dilemma. "By the time of Twain's maturity the American writer had an additional past with which to contend: not only of Europe but the more recent past of America itself."  

What could be done in this kind of hopeless situation.
How could a literary writer help in the rejuvenation of an ideal society based on spiritual values, a society which was the heart-felt desire of many more tormented souls of his time? The European past had been discarded as corrupt and sinful, though it held an aesthetic appeal as the dilemma of writers like Washington Irving and even Twain would testify. America, the celebrated land of present and future possibilities was equally disappointing. Faced with this dilemma some of the American writers, most importantly Twain, turned to their childhood in search of some hope, some values and some possibilities for the ideal society.

Having come to maturity before the civil war, Twain naturally turned his gaze to the pre-civil war village society which, as Salomon points out, "came to symbolize a peculiarly American past -- a past, in this case, with a moral dimension that seemed missing from the present."

The recollection of childhood did provide him an image of repose, contentment, harmony and innocence. And the probe into the pre-civil war society of his time gave him a suitable idyllic setting for presenting this image of innocence in fictional forms. The idea of innocence that Twain associated with childhood or uncorrupted youth was full of many possibilities and potentialities. "It entails
the belief that the individual will, operating in a naturally permissive environment, can dictate right action without recourse either to institutional dogma or to educated reason." In a number of his writings Twain unconsciously attempting a fictional rendering of the myth of America, introduces a hero who is endowed with a number of traits of the new Adam of the American myth: "an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources." This hero is generally shown as involved in a grim battle. The conflict is generally between two value systems presented in the form of a fight between the individual and the community, between the individualistic rural dweller and the socially directed urbanite and between agrarian and industrial values.

The result of this moral battle throws light on the attitude of Mark Twain towards the relative strength of values held by his protagonist or the power of the forces the hero is pitted against. Sometimes this battle between good and evil results simply in the recognition of evil by the
innocent hero. At other times there is either the defeat of one of the contestants or the evasion by the hero or a situation of uneasy compromise between two forces. While presenting this moral drama Twain was painfully conscious of the assailability of the innocence against the strong forces of evil represented by different institutions of society: school, Church, government and commerce and et cetera. It is for this reason that sometimes his characters like Laura in *The Gilded Age*, or Tom in *Adventures of Tom Sawyer* find the pull of the materialistic values too strong to resist and ultimately, much to Twain's anguish, they embrace those values.

The problem of these innocent characters is that they feel morally and psychologically estranged from society. However, their moral alienation does not prevent them from participating in various activities of their social environment. Their psychological alienation, on the other hand is simply an aspect of their response and, as Susan K. Harris points out, "they are at odds with some significant aspect of prevailing belief that they would participate whole-heartedly in the spirit, or spirit of their time."20

Even this half-hearted participation of the hero in this conflict ensures his necessary education. Most of
Twain's fictional narratives deal with the education of its principal character. The protagonist, a native and innocent figure embarks upon a journey of the world which teaches him its ways. Albert E. Stone Jr. points out "the typical Twain story repeats the pattern of initiation rite so familiar to our modern anthropological imagination." At the completion of his symbolic journey the innocent protagonist learns that the outside world is inhabited by evil forces and has no respect for his values. In some of his works, however, Twain reversed the pattern of this journey by presenting a hero with wrong notions about the world. As such his journey is from artificiality to naturalness, from his sophisticated world to the free life in the lap of nature.

The *Innocents Abroad* was the first book in which Twain presented this naive and unsophisticated character. The narrator of the book is a young man full of optimism and romantic illusions about life. He sets out to see Europe and the Holy Land with his knowledge gained from reading of the guidebooks. However, his experiences in Europe completely disillusion him. The works of old Masters, the Turkish bath, the holy air of Jerusalem, the Churches of Italy and so many other celebrated things which looked so
beautiful in books, simply disappoint him. His initiation in life is not a very happy experience for him and it is no wonder that he longs for his lost illusions repeatedly in the book.

In his next important work, *Roughing It*, published in 1872, Twain again presents an innocent character. The first part of this work records the experiences of Greenhorn as he goes to the west. The second part, on the other hand, is almost entirely devoted to an account of the events and the environment of the west. His physical journey is at the same time a symbolic journey from repression to freedom, from the state of being 'civilized' to being 'natural'. The west in this work stands for freedom and release from all sorts of anxieties and cares which characterize city life. This land of freedom provides him with many experiences which shatter his foolish idealism and romantic hankerings but which, in Twain's view, is necessary for his self-fulfilment. However, Greenhorn's education should be clearly distinguished from the education of the narrator in *The Innocents Abroad*. Comparing the two types of education, William C. Spengemann points out that whereas the illusions of the narrator of *The Innocents Abroad* are false, they are desirable because they make
the ugly reality seem less ugly. "In Roughing It, the
authorities are romantic fiction, and although they dis­
guise reality, they are simply hindrances and have no
redeeming qualities. ...In the European book illusion is
preferable to reality, in Roughing It just the opposite
is true." 

Again this naive character appears in "Captain
Stormfield's visit to Heaven." Stormfield, though about
seventy, shares many characteristics of Twain's innocents.
He is childlike, young in spirit and speaks vernacular. On
dearth he is guided by conventional ideas about conduct
and morals. He cares more for social mores and customs
than the free voice of instinct and heart. His education
consists of the shattering of his wrong illusions about life
and heaven. He comes to know that heaven, in this case the
epitome of simple, free and instinctive life, values spirit
rather than the letter of religion and that only in this
kind of atmosphere complete realization of self is possible.

A complete realization of self is, however, denied to
Laura Hawkins, the heroine of The Gilded Age which Twain
wrote in collaboration with Charles Dudley Warner. The book
follows the pattern of the sentimental stories because both
the writers wanted to convince their wives of their ability to
write what an average woman wanted at that time. However, the separation of Laura from the main plot shows that the writer grew interested in her character for its own sake.

The description of Laura, prior to her willing surrender to materialistic values, puts her in the line of Twain's other innocent characters. She is a pretty girl with a sweet ignorance of care and has about her an atmosphere of innocence and purity; she was a vision which could warm everyone and bless and cheer unhappy souls. Furthermore, like Twain's other innocents she is an orphan.

However, she does not remain an innocent throughout the story. She is overcome by a strong desire to have wealth and a career. An additional reason for her loss of innocence is provided by her reading of romantic fiction largely written by her own sex. This gives her a very false and distorted picture of reality. As a result of her false view of life she is easily trapped and seduced by Colonel Selby who appeared to him a brilliant and bright gentleman of a romantic novel. She then goes to Washington where she pursues her materialistic goals with vigour, energy, and without care for morals and scruples. After initial success she fails and dies a very tragic death. At
the end of the novel she presents a very pathetic figure and it is no wonder that before her death she aspires for a world where money does not exist.

The Gilded Age has been interpreted as "a satire on the irresponsible use of wealth by unscrupulous enterpreneurs and self-seeking legislators."

Another critic follows a slightly different line: "the novel's principal attack against court corruption, however, is directed toward abuse of jury system, at the time a nationally recognized disgrace." The fact is that the novel satirizes the whole complex of institutions that corrupt an essentially good human being and deny the realization of her potentialities. Money does play an important part in the tragedy of Laura; but money or jury system for that matter are just some of the forces that make up the materialistic culture of the United States. Moreover, the novel is not merely a satire. It also records the nostalgia of Twain for the rural pre-civil war America of his youth when there was no cut-throat competition, no lust for money and no mechanized relationships.

The same materialistic values are shown triumphant in Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Tom is an innocent character only in a very limited sense. Twain identifies with Tom only
in his satirical treatment of the restricting influence of certain institutions of society like the Church, the school and the family. Conforming to the mores of society he does attend the Church services but the sermons of the clergymen simply create a feeling of boredom in him. At school also he is interested only in practical jokes and not studies. Aunt Polly punishes him with 'captivity at hard labour' by keeping him busy with whitewashing. But Tom does not openly rebel against these institutions. He simply seeks a temporary escape from these institutions by running away to the forest and the river. Henry Nash Smith aptly points out that "the Church and the school are not truly evil, they are merely inconvenient and tedious; Tom doesn't really intend running away for good; his playing pirate is a child's fantasy, and can with perfect appropriateness have its climax in the boy's return."^25

Towards the end of the novel Twain lost some of his verve and enthusiasm in carrying on with Tom and became interested in the character of Huckleberry Finn. This is evident from the lengthy conversation that follows between Huck and Joneses. Huck, an outcast and alienated figure, is certainly an adequate vehicle to present the conflict between society and the free individual, something which
Tom's figure never generates in the novel. Twain did not wish to carry Tom beyond his boyhood because he felt that in his manhood the readers contempt for him will grow. This is because of Tom's complete identification with the dominant values of his society. He becomes rich and respectable as a result of his discovery of a treasure. More importantly he rejoices the approval of his sweetheart, her father and the whole society. Thomas Blues' support to Tom's view that he can at once maintain membership in the respectable adult community and continue his career as its victimizer is disproved by Tom's willing and enthusiastic capitulation to those very institutions against which he was seeking a temporary escape. He even tries to persuade Huckleberry Finn to accept the validity of these institutions by becoming 'respectable' and 'civilized'. Tom's return to society and his new status of the hero was in Twain's view not his victory but moral failure.

The Prince and the Pauper has generally been dismissed as a children's book or at the most as an attack on the monarchy of England. It has also been suggested by critics that the European setting of the book made it difficult for Twain to develop his thesis effectively. However, most of the critics have failed to see a veiled
American setting and a clear American perspective in the story. Tom H. Towers is perhaps the only critic to read "Tudor England as a type of post-civil war America and the rural culture as representing an idealized myth of pre-war and pre-modern beatitude." Henry's rule, and for that matter Tom Canty's too, is identified with a mercantile economy and an extreme form of individualism which in its turn unleashes forces which deny the fulfilment of an individual's potentialities. The countryside, representing the traditional order, on the other hand, provides an antithesis to the rule of Henry with its emphasis on a simple and instinctive life.

The idea of the simple and instinctive life is illustrated most effectively through the principal characters of the novel: Tom Canty and Prince Edward. Tom Canty is born in circumstances which deny his self-fulfilment: a cruel father, discouraging attitude of sisters and an all-pervading poverty. He dreams of riches, power and freedom from his wretched lot. Then, when he is made King because of his perfect resemblance to Edward, his dream becomes a reality. With his commonsense and good heart he does perform his duties effectively. It may be noted that wisdom, common sense and innocence which do not prove equal to the might of the dominant values of society in Twain's other works are
meaningful in this case because they are supported by the institutionalized power. However, established order leaves its pernicious influence on Tom too. He in turn gradually becomes habituated to power though, strangely enough, at the same time feeling a sense of imprisonment in his new role. This identification with power affects his individuality, his intrinsic worth and his innocence. Now the thoughts of his drunken father, poor mother, and pathetic-looking sisters simply embarrass him. Finally when he refuses to recognize his mother, the dominant values of the society have achieved a victory.

However, Tom is not entirely a failure as Tom H. Towers would like us to believe: "Tom is never truly a type of Huck, and the sources of his eventual failure are present in his earliest motives." True that Tom lacks Huck's pure innocence and sincere motives. True that his act of refusing to recognize his mother is a repudiation of his humanity. But Tom always repents a bad act and is smitten by the pangs of conscience after his refusal to recognize his mother. Most importantly Tom himself is instrumental in the end to restore a just order unlike in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* where an unjust order is restored — by surrendering his office to its rightful owner. This suggests
that he was not activated by power; rather he had some of his innocence and good motives uncorrupted by the influence of society.

Edward, more than Tom Canty, typifies all the attributes of an enlightened innocent. In his wanderings through his Kingdom he is made to experience all the evil effects of monarchy and its kindred institutions. He is constantly humiliated, insulted and made fun of by the people who would not believe his words. However, he does not feel any hatred for these people simply because he views them sympathetically with a distance, more importantly from their angle. Participating in various incidents of the novel, he succeeds, though instinctively, in keeping himself detached from the whole spectacle. Thus he is able to have a feel of everything without being a part of it. This detachment is natural because he relies on his instinct and good heart whereas the mass of humanity that is presented in the novel acts according to the dictates of established codes and customs. Not with human beings, but rather with a calf, the symbol of uncorrupted innocence and purity, that Edward establishes a truly authentic bond, and a truly natural rapport. Unlike Tom Canty who views his power in social terms of control and a legitimate authority, Edward
analyses it in relation to nature and the people of the Kingdom.

Edward's political and moral education is a necessary step towards creating a just and equitable order. It makes him more humane, and understanding. With the power at his disposal he is able to translate his ideas into action. One can agree with the view that Tom Canty and Edward both have "an utterly false picture of the world of the other" in the beginning of the novel. By the end of the novel, however, both acquire a balanced view of life because of their varying experiences. Thus they are freed from their old sense of imprisonment. Edward is now fit to play his new role. Rebuking his less fortunate courtiers who did not have any such experience, he says: "What dost thou know of suffering and oppression? I and my people know but not thou."

The book that celebrates the idea of primitivism in the most artistic manner is Huckleberry Finn, the universally acknowledged masterpiece of Mark Twain. Huckleberry Finn is the new Adam, a pariah, instinctively good, living close to nature and uninfluenced by the phoney civilization that the people of United States so blandly followed. The novel very subtly contrasts the values of Huck Finn with
the materialistic values of the United States in the form of a very simple conflict between the individual and the society. Huck, representing the essentially good human being, not only challenges the social mores and ideals but is also in search of some values and moral truths which in Twain's opinion will provide a basis for a new society.

Huck can find these values only by running away from society. In the company of Jim, the runaway negro slave, he forms an ideal community on the raft. The values that govern this community are dictated by Huck's sound heart and Jim's intrinsic humanity. Their society is based on mutual love, understanding, care, and brotherhood. It is only here that Jim is made to realize that he is a dignified human being and Huck is made to cast off his 'social self' and act true to his real nature.

"The community of Huck and Jim", argues A.N. Kaul, "represents the positive half of the meaning of Huckleberry Finn, the half that is complementary to its satire." Thus, because the novel is also a satire, the values of Huck and Jim's community are contrasted with the dominant values of society. This is made possible by Huck's periodic forays into the civilization of the town. He watches with disgust the internecine feud of the Grangerfords and Shepherdsons.
His adventure in the house of death, his visit to Mrs Loftus* and the boarding of the Walter Scott further present before him the image of civilized debasement. Finally he feels sick of humanity when he observes the machinations of the King and the Duke.

However, by its very nature the community of Huck and Jim is very vulnerable. The dominant values of society prove too strong to be conquered by the good heart of Huck and Jim. Innocence survives in the novel only by running away from evil, or by avoiding it. In itself it is impotent and as William C. Spengemann says, it is state of repose and inertia; suggesting satisfaction. It requires no action consequently, only society's invasion of the innocent's freedom causes him to act." It is for this reason that Huck feels happy and free on the raft where there is no civilization. But the attack of the raft by the Duke and the King forces Huck to flee, thus further proving the vulnerability of innocence and by extension of the ideal community that Huck had formed in the company of Jim.

The ending of Huckleberry Finn has been a subject of a lot of critical discussion. Thus critics like Leo Marx and Henry Nash Smith think that in the end of the novel Huck makes a compromise with the dominant values of society. Leo Marx
accuses Twain of a "failure of nerve", and Smith talks about Twain's recognition that Huck's and Jim's quest for freedom was only a dream. He says that "Mark Twain was obliged to admit finally to himself that Huck's and Jim's journey down the river could not be imagined as leading to freedom for either of them... He now destroys it (raft) symbolically, by revealing that Huck's and Jim's journey with all its anxieties, has been pointless."\textsuperscript{33}

However, despite Marx and Smith's view, it will be wrong to say that Twain makes a compromise in the end. Twain does not suggest that the values of Huck and Jim are false. The vision, values and sympathies which are presented in the earlier portion of the novel, also govern the controversial last ten chapters. Tom, the bearer of the news of Jim's manumission loses the respect of readers because of his cruel joke. And most importantly the last sentence of the novel shows that Huck still thinks from his good heart; he still refuses to embrace the values of the dominant society represented by Aunt Sally: "But I reckon I got to light out for the territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she is going to adopt me and sivilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before."\textsuperscript{34}
IV

The discussion carried on in the preceding pages indicates that the ideas of progress and primitivism existed side by side in Twain's work. Not satisfied with material progress only, his heart craved for a life full of innocence and naturalness. He was painfully aware of the might of the established values against which this innocence, exemplified by his various characters, was pitted. It flourishes only when it evades the dominant materialistic values. The narrator of *The Innocents Abroad* experiences it beside the river of Galilee; Huck on the raft and Captain Stormfield in heaven. Only in *The Prince and the Pauper* it has some power of its own but there it is identified with a benevolent monarchy.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century, Twain had almost lost faith in both these ideas. The already wavering faith in material progress was as responsible for his dark vision as the complete loss of faith in man's innate goodness.

Twain believed that the innocence of an ordinary human being was simply powerless. He desperately looked for some figures in history who could sustain his faith in
some of his long cherished values. Perhaps Joan of Arc was one such figure. In her the virtues of innocence and power were blended. Innately good, living close to nature, she had none of the weaknesses of Twain's other innocents. "Joan of Arc can be most fruitfully examined as a final, desperate attempt to establish values apart from the futile treadmill of sin and suffering which constituted the life of man on earth."  

However, despite Joan's magnificent achievements she fails Twain in the final analysis. First, she needs divine help to succeed; secondly she is the lone innately good individual in the presence of a depraved humanity. The view of man presented in Joan of Arc is profoundly pessimistic: selfish, treacherous and untrustworthy. The condemnation of the fifteenth century in the book is there to highlight Joan's virtues rather than to affirm a theory of progress.

In Following the Equator also Twain expresses his grave misgivings about progress and primitivism. The imperialistic lust of various countries convinced him of the disastrous results of civilization which he identified with progress. One very important reason behind imperialism, he came to believe, was the innate depravity of man. If he
was disappointed to see the exploitation of the weak and 'uncivilized' natives in Australia and New Zealand by the civilized and progressive masters, he was equally reluctant to idealize the Kanakas, Maoris and other natives. Thus he associates the cult of Thuggee in India with the depravity of human nature. To his mind, the cold-blooded murders committed by these Thuggs have their roots in the 'joy of killing' a man feels. At another place in the book he philosophizes: "If the desire to kill and the opportunity to kill came always together, who would escape hanging."36

The book that buries the ideas of progress and primitivism most violently is undoubtedly The Mysterious Stranger, published after his death. Satan, the mouthpiece of Mark Twain in this book, typifies the idea of innocence. However, his innocence is different from the innocence of Twain's other characters. He is amoral, insensitive to human pain and suffering and not subject to human failings, weaknesses and limitations. Satan presents a very negative view of history beginning with the murder of Abel by Cain to the catastrophic Wars of nations. He says:

And always we had wars, and more wars, and still other wars — all over
Europe, all over the world. "Sometimes in the private interest of royal families,..." but never a war started by the aggressor for any clean purpose.

It is a remarkable progress. In five or six thousand years five or six high civilizations have risen, flourished, commanded the wonder of the world, then faded out and disappeared and not one of them except the latest ever invented any sweeping and adequate way to kill people. (pp. 718-19)

Not only does the history of civilization present spectacles of war and death, the future as predicted by Satan, also does not hold any bright hope. Giving an inkling into Twain's prophetic vision about the two World Wars, Satan exhibits the future to Theodore: "He showed us slaughters more terrible in their destruction of life, more devastating in their engines of war, than any we had seen (p. 718)."

Satan also assigns a reason as to widespread slaughter and bloodshed. In his opinion man is a worthless creature, "to kill being the chiefest ambition of the human race (p. 719)." Here Twain seems to have lost all faith in the idea of the innate goodness of man. If man is innately depraved, there can never be any worthwhile progress. History also loses all its redemptive value because of this belief. Corruption which is anterior
to man, makes this life meaningless. Now all paths to the belief in the ideas of progress and primitivism were closed. There was simply a meaningless void, a profound sense of despair and a sad shattering of all illusions which make life beautiful.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. An important Mark Twain-Critic Maxwell Geismar does not share this view. He points out that "far from being the embittered old man of the scholarly legend Twain was a revolutionary temperament... to the end." Maxwell Geismar (ed.), Mark Twain and the Three Rs, (Indianapolis, 1973), p.xv. Despite Geismar's assertion to the contrary, it can be said that though Twain continued writing revolutionary pieces to the end of his life, he was aware that this kind of exercise did not mean much in the changed time.


3. For a detailed discussion of this article see, Roger B. Salomon, Twain and the Image of History, (New Haven, 1961), p.27. (The present work owes greatly to Salomon's insights.


5. There were two more reasons behind Twain's strong-worded criticism of the old Masters. Firstly the pictures had the halo of Roman Catholicism around them. Secondly the frontier spirit, with its virtues of independence and self-reliance, influenced him.

6. Mark Twain, Life on the Mississippi (New York, 1950), p.325. (Page numbers of the further references to this work, also from the same edition, are mentioned in the text).
7. Twain's Controversy with Arnold has been discussed by many critics. See John B. Hoben, "Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee: A Genetic Study*, *American Literature*, Vol.XVIII (1946), pp.197-218; D.M. Kckoithan, "More about Mark Twain's War with English Critics of America", *Modern Language Notes*, Vol.LXIII (1948), pp.22-28; and Roger B. Salomon, op.cit., McKeithan and Salomon rightly maintain that Arnold's strictures merely intensified the prejudices against British already held by Twain. They rather provoked him to include modern Britain also within the scope of his satire.


10. The use of history in *A Connecticut Yankee* has given rise to much controversy. The early reviewers of the book, William Thomas Stead and Andrew Lang mistook it for real history and blamed Twain for a strange misreading of history. It is now almost established that Twain's attempt at historical accuracy were sporadic and he heavily depended on Lecky's *History of European Morals* and Malory's *Morte de Arthur* while writing this book. He was more interested in making an imaginative use of history. See James D. Williams, "The Use of History in Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee*, *PMLA*, Vol.XXC (1965), No.1 (March), pp.102-110.


15. Writers like Washington Irving, Fenimore Cooper and Hawthorne turned their attention to Europe for its rich material. They bemoaned the poverty of materials in their own country and thought that works of real artistic merit could not be produced in a country which had no antiquity, mystery or picturesque surroundings.

16. An additional reason for Twain's preoccupation with childhood in his fiction was the commercial value of juvenile literature in the late nineteenth century. The enviable New England tradition had already made the Juvenile writing acceptable and had created a large audience for stories and novels with a child's fantasies and his world.


23. Ibid., p.31.
28. Ibid., p.195.
32. Mark Twain and the Backwoods Angel, op.cit., p.72.