Dealing With Dark Times – The Changing Forms and Functions of Humor in Mark Twain's Later Writings

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von: Ksenia Romashova M.A.

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Gutachter: Prof. Dr. Holger Kersten

Prof. Dr. Hans-Werner Breunig

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Preface

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg, Germany. The research described herein was conducted under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Holger Kersten in the Department of Foreign Languages, Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg, between July 2011 and December 2015.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

This project arises out of an interest in the ways in which Mark Twain, the famous American writer and humorist of the nineteenth century, had to deal with the hard times of his later years in a variety of his activities, both public and private. According to Van Wyck Brooks (1922), Bernard DeVoto (1940), Hamlin Hill (1973), Susan K. Harris (1982), and, more recently, Michael Shelden (2010), scholarship claims to suggest that Mark Twain's later years can be defined as the final period of overwhelming despair, frustration and pessimism, when Twain's life was predominantly full of personal tragedies and failures. Hamlin Hill defines Twain's later years as a kind of "hell" (Hill xvii). In support of this point of view, Tom Quirk (2007) summarized Twain's moods during his final years in a combination of adjectives like "cynical, bitter, angry, suspicious, irrational, depressed, alienated, lonely, petty and trivial, hurt and hurtful" (Quirk 238). Nevertheless, John S. Tuckey, a prominent scholar and editor of a number of Mark Twain's later manuscripts, suggested in the introduction to Mark Twain's *Fables of Man* (1972) "to have a balanced view of Mark Twain's works" (Tuckey 8). He also added that there were Twain's later works where "pessimism of such an outlook is mitigated by humor and irony and by the tender-heartedness that is in contention with the works' tough-mindedness" (3-4). These observations prompt to reconsider the role of humor in Mark Twain's later life and career, so that it is possible to suggest a more balanced and complex interpretation of his final years.

In the project the choice of the time period will be supported by the suggestions presented in the studies of Harold K. Bush's (2008) and Hamlin Hill's (1973), the central focus of which is devoted to Twain's final years. In his book *Mark Twain and the Spiritual Crisis of his* Age, Harold K. Bush finds Mark Twain's years of grief and frustration to start in 1895-1896 when Twain "was extremely fatigued" by "the completion of his around-the world tour" (Bush 233), the tour Twain had to initiate because of the business failures and debts. With the death of his beloved daughter Susy on August 18, 1896, the dark times in Twain's final years entered the main phase. In his notebook, Twain recorded briefly "Our Susy died August 18, 1896 – the cloud is permanent now" *(Mark Twain's Notebook* 354). In his autobiographic notes, Twain gave a deeper and metaphoric description of his feelings and associated the death of Susy to a collapse of his private circle of happiness: "It cannot be replaced [...] It is irrevocably lost [...]" (*Autobiography of Mark Twain* 324). In support of this perspective, in

his book *Mark Twain: God's* Fool, Hamlin Hill suggests that a turning point in Twain's final years started with the death of Susy and lasted till the very end of his life in 1910. Hill also noticed that Twain's old age had a definite influence upon his growing despair and pessimism – since 1900 "In spite of his boundless energy, Clemens was beginning to feel old" (Hill 6). At the same time, the public did not notice Twain's growing despair or his tiring because of age. In contrast to the scholars' criticism, Twain's contemporaries remarked in 1902 that "his hair is gray to whiteness, his figure slightly stooped, though his color is healthy and much reserve strength seems still present" (Scharnhorst 431). A noticeable discrepancy can be found between a prevailing attitude in the scholarly criticism and the image of Twain suggested by his contemporaries in mass media when the major voices in the research define Twain's later years full of despair and frustration, while Twain's public image created by the reporters and interviewers includes an alternative portrait of the writer who was full of power and enthusiasm to continue his active social and public activities and performances.

Nevertheless, Mark Twain's active social life and indefatigable enthusiasm in writing evidently indicate that he did not give up completely when he had to face those moments of sorrow and despair during his later years. More than that, both Hamlin Hill (1973) in his book *Mark Twain: God's Fool* and Tom Quirk (2007) in his book *Mark Twain and Human Nature* suggest that the final years introduced Twain's highest level of "public acclaim" (Quirk 238) and world- spread fame when "Mark Twain, censor and critic" was "rapidly taking the place of Mark Twain, fun-maker" (Hill 21). Twain's final years introduced a new period in his life when he had to cope with the highest level of adoration and acclaim in his social and public images. The public's view did not define Twain's later years as pessimistic or depressive. During his later years "Mark Twain's humor has grown more quiet with the passing of the years, but more subtle as well, more philosophical, with a substratum of wisdom that gives a higher level" (Hill 21). Together with a complexity of his public role during his later years when Twain had to deal with his fame of a humorist, his enthusiasm in social criticism and philosophical observations created a number of contradictions in Twain's later years. That is why it is impossible to interpret Twain's final years exclusively from a perspective of the dark moments in his later life and career. This project does not deny or exclude those dark moments in the life of Twain. However, it focuses on a complex of moments and activities of the writer when he entered his final years. Moreover, the research focuses on the role of humor in Twain's public and private activities or performances during those years. In the frame of this project, Twain's humor and his comic talent can be considered as the central indicators of a complexity of his inner sentiments and thoughts when he had both moments of

sorrow and joy during his final years. For this reason, the primary area of research is devoted to a detailed interpretation and thorough understanding of the ways in which Twain used his humor in a variety of public performances, social activities and in his private life.

To achieve these goals in my study, the collected data for the analysis include a collection of primary sources of Twain's manuscripts, correspondence and his public statements in the forms of interviews, articles and speeches. Twain's later public and private performances are presented in a huge amount of written records and manuscripts – the publications of Berkeley editions include *Mark Twain's Letters to His Publishers* (edited by Hamlin, 1967), *Mark Twain's Which Was the Dream? and Other Symbolic Writings of the Later Years* (edited by John S. Tuckey, 1967), *Mark Twain's Correspondence with H. H. Rogers* (edited by Lewis Leary, 1969), *Mark Twain's Mysterious Stranger* (edited by William M. Gibson, 1969), *Mark Twain's Fables of Man* (edited by John S. Tuckey, 1972), *What is Man? and Other Philosophical Writings* (edited by Paul Baender, 1973), *Autobiography of Mark Twain* Volume I (edited by Harriet E. Smith, 2010), *Autobiography of Mark Twain* Volume II (edited by Benjamin Griffin and Harriet E. Smith, 2013) and *Autobiography of Mark Twain* Volume III (edited by Benjamin Griffin and Harriet E. Smith, 2015) . The collected data for the analysis also includes additional material of non-Berkeley editions – *Mark Twain's Letters* (edited by Albert B. Paine, 1917), *Mark Twain Speaking* (edited by Paul Fatout, 1976), *Mark Twain's Aquarium: the Samuel Clemens-Angelfish Correspondence 1905-1910* (edited by John Cooley, 2009), *Mark Twain: the Complete Interviews* (edited by Gary Scharnhorst, 2010) and *Mark Twain's Book of Animals* (edited by Shelley Fisher Fishkin, 2010).

The objectives of the project were to interpret the use of humor, its role and functions, in a variety of Twain's later activities, and, finally, to present a more balanced overview of Twain's later life and career. This attempt to introduce a more complex perspective of Twain's later life and career can be interpreted by means of a combination of his personal attitudes towards religion, philosophy or politics during those years. I find it also important to be aware of social, national and other cultural peculiarities of the historical time-period when Twain entered his later years, on the verge of the twentieth century.

The methodology of the project combines several approaches. The analysis in the frame of the research requires methods of close reading and textual interpretation. Danielle S. McNamara (2007) defined this method of textual interpretation in the following way - “close reading is a method that involves paying special attention to what is printed on the page by rereading and analyzing particular parts of a text” (McNamara 480). In frame of this project, close reading focuses on interpretation of the uses of humor and other forms of comic in Mark

Twain's writings, manuscripts, letters, interviews, speeches and private notes. This method is aimed to analyze the cases when Twain's humor served to be an indicator of the writer's complexity and a variety of his moods, thoughts and ideas in his later career and life. Close reading is considerably efficient in "exploring the meanings of words and relationships between word-meanings" (McNamara 480). Due to this reason, this method is preferable in the thesis when this strategy is used to note the connections between Mark Twain's uses of numerous forms of humor and a variety of his ideas, inner sentiments and thoughts. The method of text interpretation requires several steps in my study. First of all, it is required to define humor and its forms in Mark Twain's later activities. Secondly, it is necessary to interpret the importance of humor and its role in Twain's later life and career. Thirdly, the role of humor can be interpreted through its connection to moments of positivity during his final years.

Due to the fact that Mark Twain is studied in the frame of peculiar historical period from 1896 – 1910 when definite events from his private life and career influenced his worldview, the methodology also includes an approach of historical criticism so that to demonstrate how important events in Twain's later career influenced his talent and skills as a famous humorist. Generally speaking, Janet L. Smarr (1993) defined this approach in literature studies as "the complex system of relationships in which texts participated at their moment of production as well as the system of relations with the present that makes these past relations visible now" (Smarr 45). In its turn, discussion of biographical studies includes an interpretation of the uses of humor and definite rhetorical forms in Twain's public performances or in his private manuscripts, including his personal correspondence, biographic dictations and notes during the time period of 1896 – 1910. All in all, the analysis follows a chronological approach presenting the study of Twain's activities year by year, from 1896 – up to 1910.

The structure of the thesis includes five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces literary reviews of criticism focused on Mark Twain's final years and theoretical considerations relevant to the topic of humor. Chapter 1 is suggested to introduce the summary of the scholars' criticisms focused on Mark Twain's final years. The summary includes the overview of the major tendencies in the criticism when the earliest studies of Van Wyck Brooks (1920), Bernard DeVoto (1940) and Pascal Covici (1962) insisted on a prevailingly dark portrait of Mark Twain. At the same time, the literary review continues in a chronological order, and moves to the latest studies of Michael Shelden (2010) and Harold H. Kolb Jr. (2014), who preferred to introduce a more balanced portrait of Twain in his role of a contradictory person and writer. Chapter 1 also presents a summary of theoretical considerations focused on the complex

nature of humor. In search of better criteria to distinguish humor in the text, it is found to be necessary to present an overview of theories of humor. Moreover, to suggest humor in Twain's later narrative and rhetoric, it is important to give an overview of numerous forms of humor, their functions and uses. Chapter 2 presents the analysis and interpretation of Mark Twain's style of humor and its role in his later writings and works. In its turn, Chapter 3 is dedicated to summarizing the major findings in the analysis of Mark Twain's style of humor in his later public and social activities including his public performances such as speeches and interviews. Finally, Chapter 4 presents the interpretation of Mark Twain's style of humor in his private later life. This interpretation will be chiefly based upon an analysis of the peculiarities of his humor as evidenced in his personal correspondence with his close friends and with the members of the Aquarium Club, as well as in his private letters, autobiographic dictations and marginalia notes.

In conclusion, this project does not ignore the fact that Mark Twain had to face a spiritual crisis during his final years from 1986 – 1910, the period when he appeared to be dark and desperate in his later activities. On the contrary, the project suggests an observation that Twain's voices of criticism and frustration sounded louder when he pointed out weakness, cruelty and hypocrisy of human nature. However, the role of humor cannot be ignored when the research is focused on Mark Twain's final years. Humor, being complex in its nature, can be suggested as a clue point to present a more diverse and balanced portrait of Twain in his later career and life.

1.2 Literature Review

In this sub-chapter the literature review of the major research criticism on Mark Twain's later career will be presented. To begin with, the final years in the life and career of Mark Twain stand out against a common image of the writer who was considered to be one of the most famous humorists in the history of the American literature. This attitude in the studies of Twain's final years was influenced by definite evolution during the years after Twain's death in 1910. To begin with, Albert Bigelow Paine was the first person who received direct access to the writer's late works and manuscripts. Paine was chosen by Mark Twain as his official biographer soon after they got acquainted in 1901 (Lystra 144). After Twain's death, Paine served as the major editor and executor of Twain's papers. He could control most of the writer's unpublished or unfinished manuscripts. With the support of Twain's daughter Clara, Paine edited the writer's autobiographic dictations, a volume of letters and other manuscripts. These editions included Paine's deliberate censoring and cutting out anything Paine considered was full of despair, anger or contradictions. Paine's major work as the executor of Twain's papers was focused to preserve the image of Twain as the great writer and humorist. Nevertheless, more scholars received access to Twain's late manuscripts and papers. Gradually, the voice in the studies was changing to more critical when scholars preferred to suggest the image of Twain who was overwhelmingly frustrated during his later years. In Van Wyck Brooks's book (1922) *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*, Twain was portrayed as an aging, frustrated and cynical man who was lost in his own duality and contradictions. More than that, the humorous tone of the writer was lost in the final years because Twain became "a victim of arrested development" when "he was balked, he was divided, he had even been turned, as we shall see, against himself; the poet, the artist in him, consequently, had withered into the cynic and the whole man had become a spiritual valetudinarian" (Brooks 40-41). In his book, Brooks provided Twain's biography with a psychological analysis of his personality; he considered the writer's frustrated mood to be the major voice in his later career and life.

Another point of view appeared in Bernard DeVoto's book (1940) *Mark Twain in Eruption.* DeVoto considered that the personal tragedies and failures in the life of the writer had "a coherent development" upon making "a new Mark Twain" (DeVoto xix). According to his point of view, Twain struggled severely with his own fate and had to deal with personal losses by means of his habit to write obsessively during his final years. DeVoto also found the writer to be "repeatedly frustrated" when he wrote so much in "a protracted agony" (DeVoto xx). Decline, despair, guilt and frustration formed the energies of a different nature in the

writer's tone and spirit. Referring to DeVoto, these new energies were predominant in the late career of Twain.

Pascal Covici in his book (1962) entitled *Mark Twain's Humor: The Image of a World* introduced a more detailed interpretation of Twain's style of humor and the role of the comic throughout his long-life career. Concerning the later years, Covici found the prevailing satiric and sarcastic tones of the writer in his works; these tones "without evoking laughter but still suggesting latent humor" were characteristic of the later Twain. According to the scholar's interpretation, in the writer's final years he used parody, burlesque, exaggeration and a poker-faced narration to focus the reader's attention "to an awareness of the discrepancy between what he thinks he is and what he in truth turns out to be" (Covici 217). According to Covici, Mark Twain found the positivity in the potential of humor. However, being more a realist and a social critic rather than a total pessimist, "through his devices of humor, he shows with increasing vehemence that life is what one projects into it, rather than what one merely thinks it to be" (Covici 249).

James M. Cox (1966) in his book *Mark Twain: the Fate of Humor* also found a positive potential in Twain's use of humor during his final years. Cox suggested that the writer's humor was not just his means of struggle and criticism against social injustices and religious issues; his humor "was itself the conversion of real tyranny and slavery into play and adventure" (Cox 80). David E. E. Sloane in his book *Mark Twain as Literary Comedian* similarly argued that Twain's humor was always "crucial in posing his world view" (Sloane 195). The comic traditions of Mark Twain did not disappear in his final years. However, in his later years the writer's humor turned to be "dependent on burlesque fabrications of ethical and realistic scenes" (Sloane 192). One more important perspective on the topic of Twain's style of humor was presented in Kenneth S. Lynn's *Mark Twain and Southwestern Humor.* According to Lynn's research, humor was a primary political weapon for the writer when his ideas were "translated into a comic hyperbole" (Lynn 35). However, underneath the writer's burlesque and sarcasm "the diapason of a deeper feeling can be sensed" (Lynn 96). According to Lynn, in his later years Twain's personal tragedies had a deep influence upon his humorous talent. Lynn suggested that during his final years "Twain was a God-hater" (Lynn 279) who struggled with inner feelings of criticism against religious dogmas during his final years.

During his later years, Twain had to cope simultaneously with his success of the writer and his established fame as a humorist, together with debts, personal failures, health problems and family tragedies. In his book *Mark Twain: God's Fool,* Hamlin Hill (1973) introduced a thorough study of the writer's dark side in his later career. Hill presented a detailed

interpretation of Twain's failures and tragedies, of his inner frustration and disappointment when his pessimism was so deep as to enter the world of total despair. Hamlin Hill suggested that "everything turned to ashes – his business investments, his literary endeavors, and his volatile and unpredictable relations with his family and his oldest friends" (Hill xviii). Concerning Twain's public image, Hill remarked that Twain "paraded with glee and relish wherever the spotlight of publicity shone" (Hill 19). Hill made an attempt to present Twain's complexity during his later years when together with his business failures and troubles within his private circle, the writer reached the peak of his fame and popularity.

However, Hamlin Hill (1973) together with the previous criticism of Van Wyck Brooks (1922) and Bernard DeVoto (1940) ignored the role of humor in Twain's later years, its importance and complexity. This research suggests a contrary point that Twain tuned his humorous voice in a variety of forms – from sardonic statements with some shades of burlesque or satire, and up to sentimentally ironic observations. The choice of forms or moods also depended upon definite factors – whether it was in private or in public. Moreover, the positive side of his humor can be followed in a number of his activities during his final years – in his speeches, correspondence and autobiographical dictations, for instance. Sentimental feelings and memories of the writer were accompanied by his unique humorous tone in his autobiographical dictations, interviews, writings featuring juvenile characters, and correspondence with the young friends of the Aquarium Club.

Nevertheless, the earliest studies introduced by Van Wyck Brooks (1922), Bernard DeVoto (1940) or Hamlin Hill (1973) connect Twain's style of humor to his life full of despair and depression; the times when his inner grief inspired the writer to start his personal struggle with God and society in his private notes and unpublished writings; the times when the writer almost lost his famous humorous tone. For instance, Stanley Brodwin (1973) in his *Mark Twain's Mask of Satan: the Final Phase* defined the writer's mood in his later works as bitter, black or satiric (Brodwin 149). So the research signified that the writer implied the negative side of his humor during his final years. More than that, John S. Tuckey (1972) in his previous studies *Mark Twain and Little Satan: the Writing of the Mysterious Stranger* also thought that it is important to reinterpret and reconsider Twain's final years from the perspective of the writer's ideas of determinism, dream and other philosophic statements. All in all, Tuckey was sure that the artistic and humorous talents of the writer did not fail in the final years. The later experiences and events in the life of Twain did not destroy his humorous talent.

William R. MacNaughton (1979) in his *Mark Twain's Late Years as a Writer* concluded that the earlier research of Brooks, DeVoto and Hamlin Hill greatly exaggerated when they considered the last thirteen years of the writer's life to be just one big failure with "the abundant and pitiful array of manuscripts that he worked on so obsessively and never finished" (MacNaughton 2). MacNaughton stressed the idea that the previous research ignored many of the later activities of the writer; and just few words in these debates were dedicated to the issue of humor and the role of humor in Twain's final years, as well. MacNaughton found the topics for discussion in the writer's final years to be more complex and suggested avoiding such definitions as despair and obsession when examining the final years of the writer.

Most of the earlier studies of Mark Twain and his career in the later years present a prevailing idea that Twain's inner struggles and personal misfortunes destroyed Twain's famous style of humor. According to the conception formed on the basis of the early criticism by Brooks and DeVoto, in his later years Twain was pessimistic and nihilistic because of the writer's increasing attacks against religion and mankind. At the same time, not all studies prove that Mark Twain was so radically pessimistic or negative about God or mankind during his final years. John Q. Hays (1989) in his *Mark Twain and Religion: A Mirror of American Eclecticism* advocated the idea that the writer was "not totally despairing of mankind, only occasionally and with qualification" (Hays 201). Hays thought that the writer "had anger and pessimism before Livy's death in 1904"; and the writer preserved "the same wit, love, enthusiasm, and appreciation for this world after 1904."(Hays 202) To add more, Mark Twain himself noticed about himself in his autobiographical dictations (February 1906) that "the resulting periodical and sudden changes of mood in me, from deep melancholy to half-insane tempests and cyclones of humor, are among the curiosities of my life"(*Autobiography of Mark Twain* 231). These words of Twain can indicate the importance to develop the understanding that the later years were not only full of despair and dark moments in his life. These words make it evident and crucially important to study the later activities of Twain where humor survived in its wide range.

In her book entitled *Dangerous Intimacy: the Untold Story of Mark Twain's Final Years,* Karen Lystra (2004) studied Twain's personality in his final years. The prior focus in Lystra's study is the influence, both positive and negative, of his private circle and family on Twain's writing style and his personal moods. On the basis of her findings and conclusions, it is evident that Lystra considers most of the previous research discredited Twain's image in his later career. Thus, Lystra states that: "through [...] some scholarly gullibility, Twain's old age

has been discredited. He has also been discredited through stereotypes of the aged and a willingness to believe in decline and venality, ingratitude, and superheated ego in a man of notorious celebrity and recognizable vanity" (219). Lystra suggests that Twain was struggling with his misfortunes and inner contradictions by means of creating new private circles of friends and by means of changing his style writing. For instance, Twain's motivation to start his autobiographical manuscript was "the greatest act of courage" when "he was struggling, not to produce a lyrical prose masterpiece, but to overcome his personal demons by writing – the only way he knew how" (221). In her research Lystra agrees with the fact that Twain had to face much disappointment and frustration concerning the human race during his final years. Referring to the humorous voice of Twain in his later career, Lystra finds a considerable change that makes it difficult to find Twain's mainstream humor in his autobiographical notes and dictations. Lystra defines Twain's later style of humor in the following way - "there was a darker, more deeply cynical face to his humor is evident in much of his later writing, especially in the desolate satire of human cruelty, greed and selfishness of *Letters from the Earth* and the evident heartless of fate and the inverse in *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*" (x). However, according to Lystra's observations, this manner of humorous tone could not ruin his established fame and world-wide popularity when "Twain seemed to capture a quintessentially American spirit, a mix of sly humor, cynicism, affirmation, and plain speech that felt both unique and universal and that captivated audiences in the United States and Europe" (1). Furthermore, Lystra argues that in his later career Twain "had contradictory goals – to write a popular novel; to write for his own amusement; to write serious philosophy; to write influential polemics; to write broadly appealing comedy or daringly irreverent and risky satire – and he appeared to be constantly changing his mind about which audience he wanted to please" (59-60). According to Lystra's observations of Twain's hesitations and constant, considerable changes in his humorous voices, his humor and comic tone depended mostly upon Twain's moods and the means by which he was going to entertain the audience. In her research, Lystra's main point of view is that previous studies have overestimated Twain's dark side in his later career and life – her point is that "in his early fifties, he was no less skeptical and pessimistic than in his seventies" (60). According to Lystra's perspective, the writer had a variety of moments of joy and grief during his final moments. Twain hesitated and was experimenting with a variety of his inner voices – the voices of philosopher, humorist, anti-imperialist and social satirist. Moreover, "he grieved but enjoyed working – enjoyed company and playing billiards" (60) at his seventies.

However, recent criticism presented in *Mark Twain and the Spiritual Crisis of His Age* by Harold K. Bush Jr. (2008) defines some spiritual crisis of the writer in his final years when "the aching melancholy" (250) and the writer's overwhelming sentimentality turned to be "symptomatic"(252). According to Bush, Twain's final years were defined as" a profound collapse of his ideological system" (255); "his spiritual struggles are informed by the theological and ethical debates of the same period" (256). Referring to Bush, the writer's losses combined together with his personal and inner controversial struggles with religion and other social issues made him "unable to find a solution, and his musings on the subject were often riddled with contradiction" (256). Moreover, Bush found the writer's common use of ridicule and sarcasm in his later career as the means to cope with these inner debates and contradictions. At the same time, he also defined some positivity in the writer's later life through "Twain's hopeful spirit in communication with some people" (265) when the writer "still entertained the feeling of human sympathy" (266).

In their book *Heretical Fictions: Religion in the Literature of Mark Twain*, Lawrence I. Berkove and Joseph Csicsilla (2010) argue about Twain's later career that:

> In his later years, after he became established, Twain was fairly direct about describing God as maliciously whimsical in works such as "Letters from the Earth" that he set aside to be published after his death. But in his earlier career [...] he was more devious or circumspect about hiding his targets and beliefs beneath dark hints and veiled clues, usually by means of humor and ironic levels of language in his layered style (Berkove and Csicsilla 55).

In this quotation, Berkove and Csicsilla suggest increasing darkness in Twain's later works and life when his ironic and witty observations were replaced by more pessimistic and dark thoughts. Generally speaking, the conventional image of the writer, his career and life in the final years was focused on his portrait of a frustrated and depressed man who faced the hard times of financial failures, personal losses and tragedies. In 1894, the affairs of Twain's publishing house were getting worse, the debts increased; however, his close friend H. H. Rogers did his best to save the business of the writer from the total collapse. The debts made the writer start to lecture when he entered his final years. Definitely, that was a hard challenge for Twain and his family. Moreover, the first stroke of fate happened in 1896 with the death of Susan Clemens, the oldest daughter of the writer. For him Susy was "our wonder and our worship" (qtd. in Messent 165). In the same letter the writer continued with grief about his loss that "Susy was a rare creature, the rarest that has been reared in Hartford in this generation [...] she was above my duller comprehension [...] I merely knew that she was my superior in fineness of mind [...] but to fully measure her I was not competent[...]" (qtd. in

Messent 165). Later, this worship of his daughter inspired Mark Twain in his search of an image of a perfect and smart child in his later writings; and the image he was seeking later in the Members of the Aquarium Club.

Moments of joy and amusement for Twain also happened during his public activities. In his study entitled *Mark Twain: Man in White: the Grand Adventure of His Final Years,* Michael Shelden (2010) finds many examples and situations in Twain's later public activities when his humorous voice was obviously presented. Twain's attempts to amuse the audience by means of ironic observations or witty comments were common in his final years. For instance, the common reaction of the audience towards Twain's funny jokes when he teased the public was like this - "the wave of laughter that swept across the room removed any doubt about the identity of the man in the chair" (Shelden 143). Shelden concluded that Mark Twain had fun with reporters while giving his numerous interviews. His humorous tone prevailed in many of these public activities. According to Shelden's research, Twain enjoyed the games he introduced to his audience. In front of the people, the writer's style of humor full of mockery, irony and ridicule survived in the final years. Shelden believes it was also because the writer never wanted to grow old; his young spirit inspired his humorous voice and playful spirit during his final years. In his final years Twain was struggling with his age and problems in his peculiar way when "he tried to shun any oppressive thoughts of death. He began to take active part in society again, seeing old friends, going to small parties, and giving talks in New York" (xxiv). Shelden found Twain's attempts to escape from his personal tragedies in his active public way of life when "He would make new friends, create a few enemies, pursue some old dreams, develop fresh ambitions, and stir up trouble by testing the limits of what he could say and do" (xxv). The writer seemed to enjoy experimenting with a forthcoming old age and inevitable death by means of comic statements about his death, and ridicule about his own funerals. To some point, Twain's new habit of wearing all white clothes in his final years served "to adopt a new image was inextricably linked to his unavoidable encounter with death" (xxix).

Shelden's research shows an image of Mark Twain as a person whose personal happiness depended strongly upon his private circle of friends and family. In his best mood, Twain had his happy moments in the later years when he was "at the peak of his powers, in the bloom of health, and surrounded by adoring friends and a loving family" (Shelden xxxi). Moreover, Shelden agrees that Twain possessed an amazing strength:

> Ability to face the worst and still find reason to laugh. Sometimes his laughter was derisive, mocking, or weary, but often it was simply an expression of his inexhaustible

> love of the comic and the absurd. He was never so glum that he couldn't find some reason to lighten his anger with a joke (Shelden xxxii).

In this paragraph, Shelden tries to suggest that Twain never ignored a possibility to lighten his most negative mood with some witty observation or joke. At the same time, Shelden does not ignore negative and pessimistic moments of Twain's later career and considers that "much of his writing in his last years is full of rage against the frailties of human nature, the cruelties of life, and the chaos. Surely, the reasoning goes, the bitter, scathing antagonist of the "damned human race" felt overwhelmed by the darkness of the world, and suffered accordingly" (xxx). In his studies, Shelden presents the complexity and contradictory nature of Twain's ideas, moods – Twain as a real man who was struggling with inner sorrows and bitterness, but still found delight in the company of close friends, and purely enjoyed it, and was capable to entertain his audience by the style of comic and wit which was praised highly during his lifelong career. Thus, referring to Shelden's complex portrait of Twain, "it is unrealistic to saddle him with one dominant emotion during his final years, when he was as likely to assume the part of the joker as that of the angry prophet" (xxxi). In his statement, Shelden cannot agree with a tendency to define Twain's later life and career only from a pessimistic perspective. More than that, Shelden advocates the idea of Twain's trait of character that "he was never merely funny. Or merely serious. Rather, he delighted in slyly mixing the two, and loved nothing better than creating confusion between them" (xxxii). This confusion created a preferable playful way of Twain's communication with his audience – his constant transfers from philosophic voices to comic ones puzzled and entertained the people. This confusion could also let Twain experiment with his numerous roles of a humorist, philosopher and social critic, and still save his reputation as the famous funny man.

Finally, during the very last two years Twain's life "had turned tragic and left him alone and ill in a house far too large for his needs, and already haunted by sad memories" (Shelden 397). With the loss of his family circle the writer had to face the final phase of his life when "It was now a paradise lost" (398). However, even after this enormous loss Twain had occasionally a chance to be in a good company. These were rare moments when his positive spirits returned. For instance, in the company of Marion Allens, "His spirits picked up, and he began to smile and joke in his usual manner" (400). All in all, Shelden's research introduced a complex portrait of Mark Twain, of the man who had his moments of sorrow and happiness, frustration and joy, of the man who never gave up his constant struggle with inner fears by means of comic and wit in all their forms.

In the latest research on Mark Twain's style of humor and its role during his lifelong career, Harold H. Kolb Jr. (2014) introduced a detailed and thorough analysis. In his book entitled *Mark Twain: The Gift of Humor* Mark Twain is presented as a writer who "was evolving as a humorist [...] he had become a different kind of humorist – less comic, more satiric, more ironic – but he was still a humorist, and he continued to employ the strategies he had been honing for three decades" (Kolb 251). It is important that his research does not deny the influence of negative factors and experiences in Twain's later career. Kolb agrees that the writer's age, financial failures and family tragedies influenced the humorous voice of Twain. What is more important, Kolb considers that despair can be detected in a wide number of the writer's satiric or ironic observations. The level of Twain's despair or even anger can be defined by a common use of exaggeration in his later works.

At the same time, exaggeration can emphasize the positive, the negative, or simply be neutral. What is more important, Kolb's studies suggest that Twain evolved in his final years but still possessed "his remarkable ability to enliven a discussion with sharp contrasts, surprising similes, apt allusions, and colorful overstatements" (258). Kolb's research does not ignore the existence of "irony, grim, wry or sardonic humor" (274) in Twain's later writings. Nevertheless, his research also finds the moments "when Mark Twain mounts his high horse of satiric attack, he sometimes gets one-sided, piling up the negatives and ignoring whatever virtues the characters being pilloried may have" (317). So Twain's satire and sarcasm appeared when the writer attacked the Church or definite political figures, like Roosevelt or Rockefeller. Even when Twain criticized the mankind, he still found moments when he "was sometimes amused, sometimes outraged by specific inquires" (317). And these moments happened during his lifelong career, earlier and later. Finally, Kolb's detailed analysis of the role of humor in Twain's later years lets him remark about Twain that "it is certainly true that he suffered setbacks, disappointments, and family tragedies, but Mark Twain, early and late, tends to be more complex and interesting, more versatile and varied, than any single theory can account for" (277).

In conclusion, it might be suggested that most of the earlier studies dedicated to Twain's later years emphasized the image of Mark Twain as the man who lost too much and had to cope with his inner grief, despair and frustration. Most of criticism suggested by Van Wyck Brooks (1922), Bernard DeVoto (1940), Pascal Covici (1962) or James M. Cox (1966) ignored the role of humor and its style in Twain's later writings, public performances or private activities. It is often suggested that during his last years the writer turned to be more philosophical and deterministic in his ideas. His voice became more serious, bitter and

powerful. His personal experiences, private tragedies and business failures also had a considerable influence upon Twain's writing style. Nevertheless, only recent studies started to pay more attention to Twain's complexity when it was suggested that Twain's voices in these writings and activities were changing easily and frequently. Paying much attention to Twain's dark inner sentiments and deterministic ideas in his writings, scholars under-appreciated the wide use of rhetorical forms and comic voices of Twain when he entered his final years. Due to this reason, this project will be part of an effort to contribute to a more complex portrait of Twain in which the role of humor in the writer's later years cannot be ignored. As Clara Clemens (1931) once noticed in her memoir *The Father of Three Little Girls: My Father Mark Twain*, "He could easily shift from merry to morose in the blink of an eye, attacking human folly one minute and penning Valentine's Day verses to little girls the next" (Clemens 178).

1.3 Review of Scholarly Considerations in the Topic of Humor

Before diving into the main part of the research, this study needs a few preliminary considerations. The following considerations require discussing and defining key terms, such as humor, its nature, theories, forms and functions. I will furthermore present a summary of criticisms concerning Mark Twain's style of humor and characteristic features of his comic talent that will be referred to again and again throughout this study. Finally, a list of the major forms of humor and the comic will be introduced so that its relevance for the ensuing discussions and analyzes will be evident. As it has been mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, the research strategies include step-by-step interpretation when, initially, it is required to identify humor and its importance within the texts. To identify humorous material in Twain's later activities, it is necessary to define a complex of humorous or comic forms characteristic of Twain in public or private. This identification of humorous material moves forward to the interpretation of the relationships between word-meanings of humorous forms and the intentions of the narration. Finally, this interpretation leads to the final evaluation and analysis of Mark Twain's complexity of inner ideas and moods.

To begin with, since ancient times philosophical or other academic formulations about humor have been tricky, incomplete and controversial. However, it is necessary to summarize some definite criteria of how a text can be defined as humorous. It is furthermore important to interpret the uses of humor and definite forms of the comic in Twain's later career and life. This interpretation includes a definition of what can be considered humorous or comic and the role and functions of forms of the comic or humorous in the later activities of Mark Twain.

There is no universal algorithm for a definite determination whether a text is humorous or not. The first attempts to interpret a text as humorous were presented in the ancient times by the Greeks (Aristotle and Plato) and later by the Latin scholars (Cicero and Quintilian). For instance, Plato's approach in the interpretation of humor was "the prototype of the ambivalence theory (i.e., theories that maintain the idea that humor arises from the perception of two contrasting feelings" (Attardo 19). In his turn, Aristotle studied the nature of the comic in verbal contexts. The philosopher interpreted the phenomenon as a case of something ridiculous, "a species of the ugly", definitely, "something wrong" or "the mask" (Attardo 19). Later the Latin scholars continued to study the nature of humor in its verbal forms. Cicero, for example, underlined five major issues in the topic of humor: 1) what humor is, 2) where it comes from, 3) if it is fitting for the orator to use humor, 4) to what extent it is fitting, and 5) what the genres of humor are (Attardo 28). Another Latin philosopher, Quintilian, also

supported the common idea that humor served for relaxation of the mind (the prototype of a modern relief/release theory of humor). Scholars continued their research of the phenomenon of humor through the Middle Ages until the twentieth century. Modern theories of humor are commonly divided into three main groups, according to three central aspects of humor – cognitive (incongruity, contrast theories), social (hostility, aggression, superiority theories) and psychoanalytical (release/relief, sublimation, liberation theories) (Attardo 47).

Modern theories suggest numerous approaches to define humor in the terms of psychological, social or linguistic aspects. Rod A. Martin (2007) in his book *The Psychology of Humor: an Integrative Approach* considers that in the terms of a psychological analysis humor can be defined as "a laughter-generating play activities or a mental play with words and ideas" (3). He also suggests that "although humor has a biological basis rooted in our genes, it is also evident that cultural norms and learning play an important role in determining how it is used in social interactions" (Martin 4). These words suggest an observation that humor requires an interdisciplinary study when the following aspects are considered important – a time-period, social and cultural peculiarities of a definite time- frame, personal and inner emotional state of a person who produces humor and many other socio-psychological aspects.

Humor appears to be the broadest in its nature and peculiarities. Due to this fact, *The Oxford English Dictionary* suggests a broad definition of the phenomenon when humor is "the faculty of perceiving what is ludicrous or amusing, or of expressing it in speech, writing, or other composition; jocose imagination or treatment of a subject" (Simpson and Weiner 486). These definitions from a psychological perspective assume a complex nature of humor as a human's creative activity which can produce amusement, laughter, fun or a comic effect. In its turn, literary research mostly focuses either on a definite author or genre. However, in literary research a social function of humor cannot be ignored when humor is closely related to the notions of intention (of the speaker / author) and response (of the audience / reader). On the other hand, it can be even more complicated when humor is unintentional. Rod A. Martin (2007) refers to the notions of intention and response when humor is defined as everything that is perceived to be funny in response. The notion of humorous intentions of the author/speaker is presented as definite "mental processes that create a stimulus of amusement and arouse the affective response of mirth" (Martin 5). At the same time, attempts to recreate or universally accept the author's humorous intention can be rather speculative or even misleading. One thing that cannot be denied is that humor is a form of social interrelation when a reader has the capacity to find its humorous meaning. So the reader, for various

individual reasons, can admit that there is no humorous interaction that appeals to him personally; nevertheless the reader recognizes the intended humorous meaning behind it. The notions of intention and response can be considered important within the literary studies, but not sufficient enough for a complete understanding of what can be considered as a humorous text.

However, these definitions prove the essential role of humor to be presented in its social context. In these terms, humor is "a way of people to interact in a playful manner" (Martin 6). Gregory Bateson (2000) in his book *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* suggests that this play "seems to serve important social, emotional, and cognitive functions" (Bateson 26). More than that, Bateson connects humor to paradoxes and freedom and explained the therapeutic implications of humor. With relief theory, the ideas in the works of the theorists like Herbert Spencer (1860), John Dewey (1922) and Sigmund Freud (1928) developed a further discussion in the field of humor and psychology. In his article, John C. Meyer (2000) drew a preliminary conclusion that the use of humor "during the stressful times provides us with a form of release, or liberation from the stress" (Meyer 312).

Together with a relief theory, sociology and psychology can present an explanation of humor's complex nature in the terms of the incongruity theory. According to this approach, humor is used to create a message which can be understood through a frame of incongruity. It also suggests that laughter is caused by violation of the norms and this laughter is the reason of human's emotions (surprise, astonishment, for instance). According to John Morreall's (1983) observations in his book *Taking Laughter Seriously*, incongruity is "a violation of a pattern in someone's picture of how things should be" (Morreall 60-61). In their article, Kara Shultz and Darla Germeroth (1998) draw a conclusion that by violating the norm, the producer of incongruity stimulates not only a case of laughter, but also "develops arguments intending to persuade the audience to share his or her reasoning" (Shultz, Germeroth 23). The phenomenon of incongruity within the topic of humor is mostly connected to linguistic theories of humor. In 1991, Victor Raskin and Salvatore Attardo suggested The General Theory of Verbal Humor (GTVH) (Attardo 222). The main object of the research is the joke, its types and similarities within the text. The scholars are concerned about "the verbal realization of the joke, the wording of the text" (Dynel 153). As a result of their research, Attardo and Raskin (1991) presented "a hierarchical joke representation model" (Attardo and Raskin 324). However, linguistic theories mostly deal with short texts or jokes and cannot be suggested as a key method in literary studies.

Finally, together with socio-psychological, philosophical and linguistic approaches and theories of humor, literary theories of humor can be distinguished. The literary interpretation of humor, its uses and forms in the texts is more relevant and applicable for the research in this thesis. According to Attardo's observation, literary approaches "mix psychological ideas (Freud, and often Jung) with genre theory and scattered observations" (Attardo 51). Rosemary E. Staley (1993) suggested in her book *Structural Incongruity and Humor Appreciation* that literary criticism of humor includes the study of humor at large when an interpretation of "plots, characters and techniques" (Staley 309) comes to the foreground. More than that, the literary approach suggests the following major issues in the studies of the phenomenon of humor. According to Paul Lewis's (1989) observations in his book *Comic Effects: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Humor in Literature*, it is important to develop an interdisciplinary methodology within a literary approach when it will be possible to define the author's peculiar "characteristic ways of using humor" by means of the research of the author's "personality, childhood and personal sense of humor" (Lewis 5). According to this approach, the author's social status, his age, social and philosophic position can be taken into consideration when the peculiarities of the author's use of humor is studied. To understand the peculiarities of humor in the final years of Mark Twain, it is necessary to be aware of his social status, level of his popularity, an importance of his numerous public activities and controversial personal attitudes towards politics, religion, philosophy and others. Such an approach provides both with a complex portrait of Mark Twain and an interpretation of the complexity of his humor during his later years.

A broad literary approach can be considered to give critics an opportunity to understand humor from the perspective of distinguishing its "social and psychological functions, its value as an indicator of both cultural and personal identity" (Lewis 12). Such an approach cannot only underline the complexity of humor's functions not only within the text, plot and characters; on the contrary, this analysis can underline extra contextual features about the author, his/her personal, cultural or social portrait. Finally, this interdisciplinary approach can suggest that "humor is not allowed to be simply amusing" and that it can "reveal [...] a bitter thing to face" (Lewis 13). That is how the nature of humor can be studied more broadly; it is no longer just something amusing or funny – in its nature it is deeper and can be associated with more "serious" and deeper features and states.

All in all, due to the fact that humor is a complex and contradictory phenomenon, it is nearly impossible to present a generalization by any approach to or theory of humor. Crose (1903) also cannot accept any among numerous theories of humor as the universal one, due to

the idea that "humor is indefinable like all psychological states" (qtd. in Attardo 7). Another theorist, Bergson (2005), is also rather skeptical in his book *Laughter: an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*. He suggests that "we shall not aim at imprisoning the comic spirit within a definition" (Bergson 1). Finally, in his book *Semantic Mechanisms of Humor* Victor Raskin (1985) concludes that "humor has defeated researchers […] It has generated a great number of loose, incomplete, unrestricted or circular definitions of itself" (Raskin 7). In spite of a vague possibility suggesting the only universal definition of humor, most critics in humor studies agree on the idea that there is a number of indicators of humor (for instance, uses and techniques of humor), by means of which several categories of humor can be distinguished. The classification of these categories depends upon the functions of the humor. In his book *Humor and Society: Explorations in the Sociology of Humor*, Marvin R. Koller (1988) suggested the list of major uses of humor. A long list of categories includes definite uses of humor can be underlined, the uses that can be found further in the analysis: 1) entertainment; 2) get attention; 3) keep the conversation going; 4) move deep emotions; 5) power tool of critical thinking; 6) relief from stress and strain (Koller 18). The list of the uses of humor suggests the three major features of humor – the use of humor is successful in determining social interrelations; the use of humor can be considered as a means to reduce or escape from stress and negative experience; finally, the use of humor is a serious device to provoke criticism or thinking. All in all, a thorough consideration of the phenomenon underlines the positivity in the nature of humor due to its strong and deep aesthetic, communicative and emotional aspects. Humor "exposes falsity, contradictions, inconsistencies, hypocrisy, nonsense, illogic, defense mechanisms. It questions beliefs, values and prejudices. Humor has a critical function of questioning society, institutions, language, meanings, concepts, and even our own personality, actions and beliefs" (Shibles 87). For this reason, humor cannot be associated only with something that can inspire laughter. The complexity of these functions and uses served in Mark Twain's activities to turn humor into a tool for the humorist to be more like a philosopher, social and political critic and analyst.

In his book *Student Companion to Mark Twain*, David E. Sloane (2001) suggests that Twain preferred to practice "satire, irony, burlesque and caricature" (Sloane 156) in his humorous or witty texts. In the latest research of Harold H. Kolb (2014) entitled *Mark Twain: The Gift of Humor*, Kolb suggests defining Twain's humorous style in the following way - "Mark Twain was capable of writing factual reportage, broad burlesque, parody, straightforward narrative, satire, eloquent description, and serio-humorous prose – sometimes, to the confusion of genre purists, all in the same work" (Kolb 8). Kolb defines Twain as a

humorist who could be simultaneously “amiably comic, sharply satiric, and grimly ironic” (8). In his book *Mark Twain: The Fate of Humor*, James M. Cox (1966) attempted to summarize the major features of Twain's humorous style and underlined three general categories of the writer's discourse: the hoax, the travel letter and the political burlesque (Cox 14-15). These categories serve to be helpful to distinguish Twain's major humorous motives. For instance, the hoax “reports fantasy in the guise of fact in such a way as to invite the reader's belief” (Cox 14). So this motive is based on Twain's imaginative yet mostly humorous descriptions and speculations. A form of a humorous travel letter is based on burlesque when there are no limits in the narrative. This way of humorous rhetoric “expended the personality of the narrator” and “enriched the themes” (15). Twain's style of political burlesque “parodied legislative proceedings” and happened to appear one of the writer's favorite during his later years (15). Cox also noticed Twain's personal invective above all of these three categories which served to “discharging aggression” (16). However, further analysis will suggest more motives and shades of Twain's humorous rhetoric in his private and public life during his later years.

All in all, a complex and contradictory phenomenon of humor, or it is better to say Mark Twain's humor, can be generally defined in the following way – Twain's style of humor is:

> His exuberant transforming of experience, that reveals him to us; humor simultaneously creates, sustains, and expresses his versatile persona. As an active agent for change, humor lets him alter subject and stance at will; it grants him power and freedom. Even when narrating humiliations, he asserts through laughter his invulnerability to painful experiences, his liberation from restraint. By using the creative quirkiness of humor he links moods, events, and people in fresh and unexpected ways, presenting a world that he wants or at least can control (Florence 8).

This definition suggested by Don Florence (1995) in his book *Persona and Humor in Mark Twain's Early Writings* introduces a complexity of Twain's humor and its uses in his early years, while in his later years Twain's humorous style was influenced even more by painful experiences and tragic events. The topic of this influence and a diversity of Twain's humor in his later years will be presented further on in the analysis. Nevertheless, few of Mark Twain’s critics focused on the study of the peculiarities of Mark Twain’s style of humor. According to Harold H. Kolb (2015), exaggeration is the primary means in Twain's humorous rhetoric. Together with exaggeration, Twain uses repetition “to maximize the possibilities of disparity” and “to keep the edge of difference sharp” (Kolb 30). In support of

this observation, Richard C. Hartman (1958) suggested in his book *Dimensions of Humor in Advertising* that "the comic always deals with exaggeration" (Hartman 646). Cuddon (2013) in *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* concludes that exaggeration or hyperbole can be generally defined as "a figure of speech which contains an exaggeration for emphasis [...] There are plentiful examples in writers of comic fiction" (Cuddon 406). Concerning Twain's humor, James M. Cox (1966) found this form of rhetoric "characterizing style" of the writer (Cox 22). Cox considered that this device was the writer's main tool of connection and manipulation between the author and the readers. Conceivably, referring to Walter Blair's book (1993) *Essays on American Humor: Blair Through the Ages*, a wide use of exaggeration can be rooted in the traditions of American humor where this comic form was "the essence" (Blair 57). Harold H. Kolb (2014) also mentions an aspect of aggression in the nature of humor. In this case, "the purpose of this kind of humor is to release aggression, castigate outsiders, slam our enemies, and demonstrate our superiority" (Kolb 45). Concerning Twain's style of humor, Kolb admits some bitterness and negativity in a number of Twain's jokes or witty observations. However, "much of the time he works at the more amiable end of hierarchy humor, where the sting is softened by his ability" (49). Exaggeration exists on all levels of any activities, both visual and verbal. According to Propp's (2009) suggestion in his book *On the Comic and Laughter*, the forms of exaggeration can be classified in three major types: 1) caricature (usually visual); 2) hyperbole (the basic verbal form of exaggeration); 3) grotesque (the highest level of exaggeration, "the absolute comic") (Propp 64). Caricature is generally presented in a form when an emphasis is focused on the visual or observable features. In its turn, hyperbole is "an embodiment of the whole of the ridiculed object" (Propp 65). What is more important, it cannot be always defined as a form of humor or comic. On the contrary, it is ridiculous only when it emphasizes negative and not positive qualities presented in the object of a humorous attack. Finally, the third form of exaggeration – grotesque – is the highest level of ridicule and exaggeration; it "always goes completely beyond the levels of reality" (Propp 67). This allows an author to pass the boundaries of reality and turn to the path of fantasy and burlesque.

The previous passage can suggest that humor in the form of exaggeration can let the author get rid of the limits of the reality and expand the boundaries of the world of creativity, fiction or fantasy. Another form of humor, satire, can also be suggested as a means of emotional and creative release for the author. According to Matthew Hodgart and John Caldwell (2010) in their book *Satire: Origins and Principles*, this release is conducted through his/her "aggressive attack and a fantastic vision of the world transformed: it is written

for entertainment, but contains sharp and telling comments" (Hodgart and Caldwell 12). The functions of satire are included in a mutual entertainment, sharp criticism and moral instructions. In the book *Humor, Satire, and Identity: Eastern German Literature in the 1990s,* Jill E. Twark suggested that "satire may serve to teach or to uplift morally" (Twark 14). Such effect can be noticeable by means of defining the nature of satire. Altogether, satire can be defined as a form of humor when it "is directed pointedly or aggressively against an object to illustrate its flaws or to censure it in some way" (Twark 14). In *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory,* Cuddon (2013) suggests defining satire as a form of comic used "to correct censure and ridicule the follies and vices of the society" (Cuddon 780). Cuddon also quotes Ronald Knox's (1928) viewpoint who considered that "satirist is a kind of spiritual therapist whose function is to destroy the root causes of the major diseases of the spirit, like hypocrisy, pride and greed" (qtd. in Cuddon 780-781). Finally, this form of comic can turn the author's aggression, criticism, ridicule and contempt to be focused on the object's stupidities, vice and abuses. Concerning Twain's style of satiric observations, Don Florence (1995) suggested that Twain's satire "shows the world's stupidities in a playful spirit" when "Twain, unlike most satirists, delights in this ludicrousness, even when criticizing its manifestation in particular human frailties" (Florence 22).

In continuation of the topic of the major rhetorical forms of humor and the comic, sarcasm is a different form of satire. According to G. F. Green and T. S. Barrett's (1865) suggestion in the book *Satire: its Nature and Effects*, sarcasm "merely signifies a bitter speech, a keen reproach or taunt (Green and Barrett 3). In contrast to the use of satire, the use of sarcasm is not instructive or morally didactic. In their article "On the Uses of Sarcastic Irony", Maggie Toplak and Albert N. Katz (2000) define the form of sarcasm as "intending to be more offensive, verbally aggressive, anger-provoking, and mocking" (Toplak and Katz 1473). While satire humorously presents a constructive point and shows the absurdity of a point of view, of a lifestyle, of a situation. In its turn, sarcasm is mostly used in a verbal context or situation as a kind of an introductory or concluding statement when it can be defined as a witty comeback or humorous jab. The producer of a sarcastic statement should keep in mind that it can come across to the recipient as hurtful, demeaning, or even downright cruel. On the other hand, sarcasm is a productive tool in making one's point in a generally uncompromising way. At the same time, satire is a productive tool of ridicule to criticize and instruct. All in all, both of the rhetorical forms can provoke and entertain.

Irony is another rhetoric deviation of satire which conveys a double meaning within a verbal context. However, irony is not so aggressive, radical and uncompromising. Generally

speaking, Jill E. Twark (2007) suggested to define irony as a form of humor or wit and "produced when the intended meaning of a statement is concealed or contradicted by the literal meaning of the words" (Twark 21). More than that, in contrast to sarcasm, irony is not aggressive, on the contrary, it "fosters a sense of community among people" (Twark 22). According to Twark, irony inspires people to join mutual communication by means of a mental game it creates when distinctive levels of complexity and ambiguity are constituted (Twark 21). In *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*, Ross C. Murfin and Supryia M. Ray (2003) suggested that people are puzzled by "a contradiction or incongruity between appearance or expectation or reality [...] A discrepancy may exist between what someone says and what he or she actually means, between what someone expects to happen and what really happen" (Murfin and Ray 220-222). In *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition: Age Communication from Ancient Times to the Information*, Theresa Enos (2010) offers an observation that, owing to this complexity and ambiguity, irony can be classified into two groups - verbal and situation and can be detected by means of a descriptive analysis (Enos 356). J. A. Cuddon (2013) in *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* concludes that "most forms of irony involved the perception or awareness of a discrepancy or incongruity between words and their meaning, or between actions and their results, or between appearance and reality. In all cases there may be an element of the absurd and the paradoxical" (Cuddon 430). James M. Cox (1966) in his book *Mark Twain: the Fate of Humor* considered "the strength of Mark Twain's irony" to be "a means of keeping the action in focus and control […] it nevertheless prevents the intrusion of Mark Twain's anger and bad temper; it is a way of controlling them from the beginning" (Cox 240). According to this observation, it can be suggested that irony was a kind of humor when he could control and subdue his inner pessimistic moods and thoughts.

Finally, a rhetorical form of a world-play or pun is widely discussed in the following analysis. This form of the comic is more frequently found as a topic in the research of linguistics and semantics. Generally speaking, a pun is a play on meaning or on sound. From a semiotic perspective, Arthur A. Berger (1998) defines this phenomenon in the following way in the book *An Anatomy of Humor* - "a pun can be seen to be a signifier that stands for two signifieds. A signifier is defined as anything that can be used to stand for something else. Typically, a signifier is a sound (or word) or object" (Berger 45). Being a play in a form of words, this use of comic serves for pure entertainment and amusement. People enjoy playing with language on all its levels (on the level sounds, words, phrases, sentences, and, finally, on the level of a whole text) - a play on words, sometimes on different senses of the same word,

and sometimes on the similar sense or sound of different words. J. A. Cuddon (2013) in *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* suggested that a pun "is widely spread in many literatures and gives rise to a fairly universal form of humor. Puns are often intended humorously but not always" (Cuddon 711). Mark Twain himself frequently used puns in his activities and defined puns as the "last and saddest evidence of intellectual poverty (Paine, *Mark Twain: A Biography*, Volume I 403).

In conclusion, it is important to summarize the major points concerning a complex and contradictory topics relevant to the analysis – the phenomenon of humor. First of all, there is no universal definition of humor. In the frame of this research, this phenomenon can be only suggested to be defined and interpreted by means of an interdisciplinary approach within a literary study. Moreover, a number of peculiarities should be taken into consideration during the analysis of humor and its uses in numerous activities of Mark Twain in his later years: 1) The purposes of the uses of humor or other rhetorical forms of the comic should be defined in each case (if it is implied for entertainment or amusement, criticism or judgment, establishing of a social communication or a dialogue, reduction of negative emotions and etc.) 2) Humor causes not only laughter, it can convey both positive and negative purposes (by means of this approach, a number of rhetorical forms and techniques can be defined) 3) While analyzing humor, its techniques, forms and peculiarities in text, speech or in a non-verbal situation, a varied number of aspects should be taken into consideration - social status of a producer of humor, social background of the audience or readers, age and gender. Finally, this interdisciplinary approach in the studies of the phenomenon confirms that humor has a complex nature; it exists at all levels of human's activities. The peculiarities of the humorous forms and uses are considerably rooted in a number of emotional, social, cultural and historical aspects. Supported by this evaluation, humor proves to be a serious topic in a number of scholarly studies and disciplines. Together with this evaluation, the analysis of peculiarities of humor in the later years of Mark Twain can be based only on the interdisciplinary approach. As Harold H. Kolb (2014) suggests,

> By humorist, Twain meant a person with a keen eye for disparities in human behavior and the incongruities of life, since humor is always a matter of pairings. Twain's writing is often based on a factual situation, from his experience or historical reading, which he then exaggerates, or challenges, in order to apply pressure, and to provide an alternative understanding. This alternative understanding may be amusing or not, or both, but it is essential to his best works, early and late. Twain instinctively searches for a contrast to a statement, idea, or event, especially one that others may not have noticed. If there is no contrast inherent in his material, he will invent one. (Kolb 7)

In the book *The Art, Humor, and Humanity of Mark* Twain, Minnie M. Brashear and Robert M. Rodney (1959) also noticed that this contrast appeared when “comedy and serious purpose are fairly well-balanced” together with “purposeful irony” and “much irreverence and coarse burlesque” (Brashear & Rodney 189). Brashear and Rodney 91959) suggested Twain's evolution of humor to a more serious tone in his final years when his later experiences and age influenced this transformation. Thus, as the research studies the style of humor in Mark Twain's activities when he entered his old age, it is considerably important to present the overview of the criticism focused on the interpretation of the interrelationships between humor and age. This overview will be introduced in the next sub-chapter.

1.4 Review in Scholarly Considerations in the Topic of Humor and Old Age

In his later years Mark Twain had to face numerous issues and inner conflicts – his fame, age, memories and tragedies. According to Donald Hoffmann (2006), the conflict of his old age and his memories of childhood was the one "he never quite resolved" (Hoffmann 100). For Twain, his old age was "a wanton insult" (Hoffmann 99). Bruce Michelson (1995) also suggested the reason of Twain's growing despair and nihilism in his "business downturns, old age and failing health" (Michelson 211). At the same, Twain's contemporaries could notice his enthusiasm and energy, yet aging appearance. Donald Hoffmann (2006) in his book *Mark Twain in Paradise: His Voyages to Bermuda* quoted one of the writer's contemporaries named Sinclair who recollected his conversation with Twain: "He chatted about past times, as old men like to do. I saw that he was kind, warm-hearted, and also full of rebellion against capitalist greed and knavery; but he was an old man, and a sick man" (qtd. in Hoffmann 99). This quotation may reflect a traditional attitude towards a very famous, yet old, writer. This attitude towards age or old age changed considerably through the centuries. However, it has always depended upon social, and cultural norms, and traditions of each country. Old age has always been defined differently by each country or society in particular. For instance, in the USA in the XIX century old age was defined by means of two approaches – the "good" and "bad" old age. According to Thomas R. Cole's (1992) observations in the book *The Journey of Life: A Cultural History of Aging in America*, there were two types of old age defined by the set of stereotypes of the American society in the XIX century - "the "good" old age of virtue, health, self-reliance, natural death, and salvation; and the "bad" old age of sin, disease, dependency, premature death and damnation" (161-162). So it can be concluded, that each society together with its social, cultural and historical stereotypes has the right to define old age.

Other research conducted by Beth B. Hess and Elizabeth W. Markson (1991) in the book *Growing Old in America* was even more critical in their definition when they considered that the American society in the nineteenth century presented evident attempts of "the demeaning of old age and the marginalization of the elderly" (Hess and Markson 30). Moreover, they found the reasons of commonly negative social understanding of old age which were rooted in the religious traditions of the USA. For instance, New England Puritans "constructed a dialectical view of old age, emphasizing both the inevitable losses and decline that come with aging and hope for life and redemption" (Hess and Markson 30). Referring to Calvinist convictions in the society, "old age entailed physical, mental, and moral deterioration. Pain

and chronic disease were considered part of humanity's punishment for the sin of Adam" (Hess and Markson 31). These attitudes of the society based on religious traditions considered the process of aging to be a direct result of the people being responsible for their sins and failures. One more important aspect of a negative attitude towards old age was rooted in the increase of industrialization of the society. The younger Americans were sure that the old people could not contribute significantly to the economic wealth or labor market of the USA.

In a different academic study of the role of old age in the nineteenth century America, entitled *Growing Old in America,* David H. Fischer (1978) presented the overview of the attitudes towards elderly people in literature and politics. Fischer underlined one positive side of a social image of old age – it was that some proverbs and pieces of literature associated age with wisdom (Fischer 129). At the same time, Fisher suggested that an overwhelming implication of the society was "that age is ugly and beauty is young" (Fischer 130). More than that, the political life of the nineteenth century America presented the constant attacks of "young ambitious politicians of 'Young American Movement' who attacked the elderly politicians" (Fischer 130). According to Fischer's research, America needed young heroes, "the frontiers", with cowboys and young men of the West. So it can be concluded that the nineteenth century American society entered the phase when a cult of youth was developed. Finally, in the research entitled *Beyond Sixty-Five: The Dilemma of Old Age in America's Past,* Carole Haber (1983) found that similar negativity of the nineteenth century American society was spread on two categories – aged people and poor people. With urban and industrial growth, for both categories "job opportunities seemed to diminish rapidly" (Haber 33). To sum it all up, the American society at the time of Mark Twain's final years considered an old man to be lost in personal misfortunes, mental and physical decline, and social incapability.

In spite of these traditional prejudices of the American society, Mark Twain preserved the image of a very popular and socially very active figure in many occasions – he took part in numerous public evenings, meetings and speeches. Being called "America's uncrowned king" (qtd. in Hoffmann 99), he continued to be very active in his professional life as well. Michael Shelden suggests the idea that Mark Twain's old age was "much sadder than many of his contemporaries would have suggested [...] it was also funnier and a lot happier than later generations of critics and biographers have been willing to admit" (Shelden xxx). Shelden advocates a viewpoint that Twain was trapped by the prejudices of the American society of the nineteenth century towards old age when Twain "repeatedly demonstrated an ability to rise above its limitations and tragedies" (Shelden xxxiii). For this reason, it is important for

Twain's critics and biographers to notice that Twain's talent as a humorist can be considered to be this ability of coping with tragedies, prejudices and limitations of his age. The analysis of the use of humor and other rhetorical comic forms in the following parts of the research is considered to suggest the idea that the image of the writer cannot be fully associated with the society's prejudices towards old age and the critics' image of Twain in his final years. There were moments of despair and frustration in the later years of the writer. Nevertheless, the complexity of his humorous and comic voices in his numerous public and private activities can also suggest the idea of both active and positive aspects in Mark Twain's later career and life.

For Mark Twain, youth was the best and most valuable time in the life of every person. In support of this observation, Harold K. Bush (2008) suggested that "Twain almost idolized the pleasant valley of childhood" (Bush 209). John Cooley (2009) adds that Twain's adoration of youth was "his longstanding conviction" that it is "the finest and most valuable time of life" (Cooley 2). As it will be presented in the further chapters, he exaggerated youth as the blessed time for everyone in many of his writings featuring juvenile characters, in his correspondence with the members of the Aquarium Club or in his speeches which he presented in front of a young audience. The writer became truly sentimental and sensitive when he recollected his own youth. Moreover, he treated the company of young children with an evident sympathy and admiration. In one of his later letters in 1901, Mark Twain stated that:

> The whole scheme of things is turned wrong end to. Life should begin with age and its privileges and accumulations, and end with youth and its capacity to splendidly enjoy such advantages. As things are now, when in youth a dollar would bring a hundred pleasures, you can't have it. When you are old, you get it and there is nothing worth buying with it then. It's an epitome of life. The first half of it consists of the capacity to enjoy without the chance; the last half consists of the chance without the capacity. (qtd. in Rasmussen 5)

By means of these words Mark Twain agreed to the common belief of his contemporaries – old age meant the loss of ability to enjoy life. Nonetheless, the writer was able to revive his personal capacities to enjoy life and follow an active social life. But this aspect will be discussed and analyzed further in the research. In their criticism Van Wyck Brooks and Hamlin Hill suggested the period of his old age to be full of despair, pessimism and frustration. They found the reasons for the darkness in the final phase rooted in his old age as well. Van Wyck Brooks thought that "Mark Twain was a frustrated spirit, a victim of arrested development [...] much of the chagrin of his old age" (Brooks 40). Hamlin Hill pointed at the idea that "his old age dulled his creative instincts", and "age was itself a contributing factor"

(Hill 273) of his frustration and failures as a writer. Among the writer's personal failures and losses, his old age and problems which may accompany elderly people can be considered as the prior argumentation for frustration and despair in the final years of the writer. In his book *Mark Twain's Last Years as a Writer,* W. M. MacNaughton (1979) concluded about his final years that "the consensus about Mark Twain as a writer during these last approximately thirteen years is that he was a failure" (MacNaughton 2).

On the other hand, more and more viewpoints in the modern studies of age and humor suggest that together with a set of health problems and a kind of decline in the final years, many of the elderly people continue considerable social and mental activities. Twain's later active social involvement and numerous public performances can also indicate moments of enthusiasm and high mental activity when he had both sad and happy experiences. More than that, modern studies in the field of age suggest that social and public activities contribute much to the positive side in the life during the old age. In the article *Successful Aging,* John W. Rowe and Robert L. Kahn (1997) suggested that aging of an individual cannot be defined only by his/her mental or physical decrease. Each personal lifestyle, his/her mental and social involvement or physical activities contribute to successful aging. Rowe and Kahn confirmed several aspects which positively influence the aging process – participation in highly physical and cognitive activities, and sustained engagement in social life (Rowe and Kahn 433-440). This approach can contribute to the viewpoint that Twain's active social life and his evident enthusiasm in public performances contributed to positive moments in his later years.

In its turn, humor, as a considerable part of an individual's social and mental activities, is confirmed to convey a positive role in an individual's later years. More than that, theorists in the humor studies, Tracey Platt and Willibald Ruch (2010), suggested that successful aging can be defined by a person's ability of having sense of humor - "positive, good-natured humor assists successful interactions in daily life" (Platt and Ruch 232). Similarly, studies have shown direct interrelations between having a sense of humor and coping with stress. The studies were initiated by J. A. Thorson and F. C. Powell (1991), and by N. A. Kuiper, R. A. Martin, and K. A. Dance (1992). In a more recent research entitled *Mood and Human Performance: Conceptual, Measurement, and Applied Issues,* Andrew M. Lane (2007) summarized the scholars' findings that provide with "convincing evidence for numerous psychological benefits of humor" (Lane 202). However, it is important to differentiate positive (irony, wordplay) and negative (sarcasm, satire, ridicule or mockery) forms or sides of the same phenomenon, humor. Scholars agree that humor conveys both "positive and negative emotions" (Lane 202). Sense of humor is multidimensional in its nature (Thorson

and Powell 1993). That is why, it includes “production, coping with, liking, and improving humor stimulus” (Lane 202). In its turn, the physical reaction can differ “from laughter/smile, or tension, uneasiness, and even anger (distress)” (Lane 203). More than that, humor is regularly implied to set positive social connections and coping with age-related issues. According to Damianakis and Marziali's (2011) findings in the article “Community-dwelling Older Adults,” elderly people confirmed using and enjoying affiliative, self-enhancing, self-defeating forms and styles of humor, but none of them could define their humor styles as negative or aggressive. On the other hand, a different sociological experiment by M. Martin, M. Gruenendahl and P. Martin (2001) in their article “Age Differences in Stress, Social Resources, and Well-being in Middle and Older Age”, revealed the results that prove the idea that the elderly people are more commonly used (in contrast to young and middle-aged individuals) of both affiliative humor and aggressive humor. All in all, researchers in the recent studies measure the potential of coping skills of each individual by means of his/her personal level of sense of humor (both production and comprehension) (Thorson, Powell, Sarmany-Schuller, Hampes 605).

In conclusion, modern approaches suggest that definite moments of happiness and joy can continue when a person enters the phase of old age. Being old, an individual may still enjoy his life by means of various mental, social and physical activities. More than that, each person’s sense of humor can be a remarkable tool while coping with both personal and general problems of old age. Thus, humor, sense of humor or numerous humorous activities do not always decline when a person enters old age. Due to each person’s individual peculiarities, humor and sense of humor can be distinguished from the ones when he/she is younger. Elderly people are more careful with the use of humor in their public and social activities. The more the elderly use humor and its forms (both from positive or negative perspectives), the more skillful they are when coping with their personal and general problems of old age. All in all, these findings can serve to be applicable in this research when the personality of Mark Twain is observed from a variety of perspectives. In spite of a considerable number of personal health problems, business failures, disappointments and tragedies, the aging writer implied his humorous voice and comic style in a varied number of later activities. Finally, this fact can be suggested as evidence that Twain both enjoyed many pleasant moments and was coping in some way with his internal experiences by means of humor in many of its forms.

Chapter 1 vividly illustrates evolution in the criticism concerning Mark Twain in his later years. If the earliest studies, the ones by Van Wyck Brooks (1920), Bernard DeVoto (1940) or Hamlin Hill (1973), insisted on Mark Twain's predominant pessimistic and frustrated perception of life, the most recent research, the one by Michael Shelden (2010) or Harold H. Kolb Jr. (2014), tend to offer a more complex portrait of the writer. Yet, just few of the critics, such as James M. Cox (1966), David E. Sloane (1993) or Harold H. Kolb Jr. (2014), focused on the role of humor in Mark Twain's final years. Chapter 1 also notes that a phenomenon of humor is complex and contradictory, with no universal definition or theoretical consideration suggested. Nevertheless, according to a combination of strategies and methods, the project suggests step-by-step interpretation of the texts so that to identify humorous material by means of finding definite forms of humorous rhetoric. Chapter 1 suggests definitions of those humorous rhetoric forms that were characteristic of Mark Twain when he performed in public or kept in private. Interpretation of the uses of hyperbole, pun/word-play, irony, sarcasm or satire "bridges" between the meaning and importance of these rhetoric forms and inner thoughts, moods and intentions of Mark Twain. Finally, Chapter 1 mentions about the importance of the topic of age when it is related to the phenomenon of humor. The chapter suggests that there were prejudices in the nineteenth-century USA concerning old age. However, this part of the research also notes the critics observations about the ways how Mark Twain was coping with his old age. All in all, in this chapter it is tended to conclude that old age is not always associated with decline, despair and loss of sense of humor. According to Damianakis and Marziali's (2011), people do not give up active social life when they enter old age. On the basis of contemporary findings in the field of gerontology, it is suggested that Mark Twain's later years cannot be associated only with decline, personal failures and health problems. Continuing active social life, hard work and mental activities, the writer did not give up numerous moments of joy and communication in public and in private.

Chapter 2. Humor in Mark Twain's Later Writings

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 will be focused on the analysis of Mark Twain's style of humor in his later manuscripts and published material. The choice of these later writings depended upon several criteria. First of all, the initial criterion was the choice of the topics in Mark Twain's later writings. According to William E. Phipps (2003), "religious imagery saturates his writings" (Phipps 1). Phipps added that "religion is also treated positively in Mark Twain's writings" (2). Moreover, Abraham Kupersmith (2009) finds the topic of the human race as the primary preoccupation in Twain's career when Twain "tried to strip away the illusions associated with a self-important, egocentric view of human nature, and demonstrate that human behavior is determined by factors outside of human awareness and control" (Kupersmith 10). Due to this reason, I have chosen those texts where the topics of religion and the human race are treated with much concern and with a humorous approach. Though, I would prefer to define this way of treatment as ironically or sarcastically philosophical, rather than overwhelmingly positive. Secondly, the other criterion for the choice of relevant texts was the identification of frequency and intensity of the uses of a variety of humorous rhetoric forms. The texts, including all the variety of forms of hyperbole, irony, repetition, sarcasm or satire, were considered prior for the analysis. Finally, it was important to include those later manuscripts of Mark Twain, in which the role of humor was ignored or underestimated by the previous studies.

The analysis of Mark Twain's later writings includes the interpretation of the following later works of the writer - "Extracts from Adam's Diary" (1897), "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg" (1898), "A Double-Barreled Detective Story" (1902), "Three Thousand Years among the Microbes" (1905), "The War Prayer" (1905), "Eve's Diary" (1905), "The 30,000 $ Bequest" (1906), *What is Man?* (1906), *Christian Science (1907),* "Little Bessie" (1908-1909), *No. 44, the Mysterious Stranger*[1] (published posthumously in 1916), *The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts* (1969), *Captain's Stormfield's Visit to Heaven* (1909), *Letters from the Earth* (1962), and a collection of later sketches featuring animals. The collection of later sketches featuring animals includes the manuscripts and essays which were composed between 1899 and 1910. This collection includes the sketches entitled "The Bird with the Best

[1] According to Tuckey (1969), it was a bogus version of the novel edited by A. B. Paine

Grammar," "Ants and the True Religion," "The Birds of Birds," "The Pious Chameleon," "The Independent-Minded Magpie," "Hunting the Deceitful Turkey," "Rosa and the Crows," "The Jungle Discusses Man," "The President Hunts a Cow," "The Victims" and "A Dog's Tale". The choice of these later manuscripts depended upon the suggestions of Twain's prominent scholars who devoted their studies to the final years of the writer. In *Mark Twain and the Spiritual Crisis of His Age*, Harold K. Bush (2007) noticed Twain's interest in the Biblical character of Adam when the writer "desired to mock and ridicule" (Bush 217). He also remarked that Twain's *Captain's Stormfield's Visit to Heaven* (1909) was "basically ironic and humorous" (217). Moreover, in the book *The Reverend Mark Twain,* John B. Fulton (2006) supported a similar observation that the story of the Bible inspired "Mark Twain's impulse to burlesque it" (Fulton 87). Among Mark Twain's later manuscripts, Fulton (2006) considered Twain's "Eve's Diary" (1905) and *Letters from the Earth* (1962). In his turn, Harold K. Bush also suggested that special attention "should be given to the literary productions that derived specifically from Susy's death" (Bush 239) - *What is Man?* (1906), *Christian Science* (1907), *No. 44, the Mysterious Stranger* (1916), *and The Mysterious Stranger* manuscripts (1969) are among those later manuscripts. According to Rasmussen (1996), A.B. Paine issued a bowdlerized edition of *The Mysterious Stranger,* silently cut and cobbled from three unfinished manuscripts in 1916. In 1969 the Mark Twain Project published the first edition of Mark Twain's original texts (Rasmussen 329).

What is Man? (1906) and "Little Bessie" (1908-1909) are similar in the form of narration. However, in "Little Bessie" (1908-1909), humor and the role of a juvenile character in the form of a dialogue were underestimated by the previous studies. Due to this reason, this later manuscript requires special attention in the project. Furthermore, in his book entitled *The Short Works of Mark Twain: A Critical Study,* Peter Messent (2001) found some of Twain's later manuscripts where "Twain takes great comic delight" (Messent 211). In Twain's "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg" (1898), "A Double-Barreled Detective Story" (1902), "The 30,000 $ Bequest" (1906), Messent suggested a similar comic approach when Twain "swings from playful and surreal forms of comedy and delight in relativistic uncertainty to writing – both comic and otherwise – of more serious social and moral intent" (211). Tom Quirk also found Twain's "playful contemplation" (Skandera-Trombley and Kiskis 202) in "Three Thousand Years Among the Microbes" (1905).

It can be noticed that Twain's scholars admitted the presence of humor in the later manuscripts when Twain's humorous style changed "in different comic directions from the satiric to ironic" (Messent 211). However, the scholars did not interpret this diversity in

Twain's comic approaches from a perspective to suggest a more complex and balanced conception of his final years. Due to this reason, this project is intended to interpret those later manuscripts by means of a close reading method so that, first of all, to define Twain's humorous style and the uses of a variety of rhetoric forms, and then to analyze Mark Twain's intentions for such word-choice and uses of particular humorous forms. What is more important, these texts were combined according to their specific themes, motives, characters or narrative.

Chapter 2 includes the following sub-chapters. Sub-chapter 2.2 focuses on a detailed interpretation of the role of humor in Mark Twain's later works where the major themes were the human race, heaven and the mysterious stranger. Sub-chapter 2.3 presents the analysis of humor in Mark Twain's later texts featuring animals. Finally, sub-chapter 2.4 is devoted to the study of humorous material and its role on Mark Twain's later manuscripts featuring the Biblical characters of Adam and Eve.

To begin with, the later writings of Mark Twain present his witty, satirical and sardonically wise observations on many issues – human race, religion, politics and social injustice. William E. Phipps (2003) found Twain's treatment "of those realms" "rollicking" when Twain "caricatured all Christians as Fundamentalists" and "surmised that God" was "disappointed over" (Phipps 372) traditional viewpoints of the society and numerous dogmas. This controversial position of the writer can be explained by the fact that he was deeply influenced by the contemporary philosophic ideas of his times. The ideas of Darwin, the concept of determinism and environmental materialism were debated frequently in the later works and notes of the writer. In the book *A Historical Guide to Mark* Twain, Shelley Fisher Fishkin (2002) noticed that Twain faced the time of a remarkable "spread of theories evolutionism into mainstream America" when Darwin and other philosophers influenced Twain to remain "both ethically and philosophically committed to a highly liberalized yet recognizably theistic Christian moralism" (Fisher Fishkin 74). Twain himself entered the active dispute around the topics of determinism, the role of man in the universe and the complexity of the relationships between humans and God in the late 1880s. Briefly speaking, he supported the ideas that humans are governed by the natural laws of the universe. He announced during his speech to the Monday Evening Club on 19 February 1883 that man is "merely a machine automatically functioning" (qtd. in Budd and Cady 129). Also, he introduced a full-dress debate about the issues of training and inheritance as the key influential points in the life of a human being. Fussell (1966), for instance, noticed that the philosophic viewpoint in Twain's later works prevailingly contained "a grotesque medley of

fatalism, misanthropy and cynicism" (Fussell 76). Following the loss of his fortune, the deaths of his favorite children and beloved wife, Mark Twain felt grief when he wrote about the death of his daughter Jean (December 24, 1909): "Would I bring her back to life if I could do it? I would not [...] in her loss I am almost bankrupt, and my life is bitterness, but I am content; for she has been enriched with the most precious of all gifts [...] death" (qtd. in Powers 561). This doleful observation about the phenomenon of death as "the most precious of all gifts" can be traced in one of the later short writings of the humorist entitled "The Five Boons of Life" (1903). This writing contains a philosophic description when the main character faces a possibility to enjoy the five major boons in his life – from love to pleasure. But the outcome brings a doubtlessly grievous conclusion – only death can be the true gift and can bring the only relief. The pessimistic assertion that death is the best friend and can serve to be the final and the only relief can be also found in Twain's list of personal beliefs. In support of this idea, Twain concluded in one of his speeches that "Death, the refuge, the solace, the best and kindliest and most prized friend and benefactor of the erring, the forsaken, the old, the weary, and broken of heart, whose burdens be heavy upon them, and who would lie down and be at rest" (Fatout 30). William E. Phipps (2003) noticed that "like a theologian, tragicomedian Mark Twain dealt with the joy of life and the significance of death" (Phipps 375) in his peculiar manner.

If Phipps suggested Twain to be both a theologian and a tragic comedian, Mark Twain himself could give a chance for a dialogue between a committed Christian and the one who doubts the religious dogmas or the one who has found the irrationalities in the conceptions of the Bible. This form of a dispute can be found in Twain's *What is Man?* (1906) or in "Little Bessie" (1908-1909). At the same time, in his private notes and in the writings which were published posthumously he was willingly frank and obviously critical when concluding that "religions derive their authority from spurious claims by their founders that they had received revelations from God, transmitted to posterity as incontrovertible as holy writ. Bibles diminished the grandeur of the real God by straightening 'him' to the narrow confines of parochial imaginations" (qtd. in Sloane 1). This quotation can suggest the idea that Mark Twain was searching for the truth in his personal studies of religion. He did not deny the existence of God; on the contrary, he announced the existence of God and the weak points in the nature of the human beings, their "ignorance, superstition, and humbuggery" (Sloane 1) and their narrow-minded attempts to falsify the Bible according to their needs and expectations. According to Bernard DeVoto, the main goal of Twain's bitter sarcasm was focused on both the Old and the New Testaments. In *Letters from the Earth* (published

posthumously in 1962), the narrative of Satan suggests: “The Old Testament is interested mainly in blood and sensuality. The New one in Salvation by fire” (qtd. in DeVoto 44). The rigid critique against religious conventions reaches its peak when Mark Twain aims at God. In his private notes Twain remarked that “God’s inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn” (qtd. in Negri 27). More than that, through the words of Satan, Twain points to the fact that God Himself violated, for instance, the seventh commandment “Thou shall not kill” when He brings death to the innocent people and their children (qtd. in DeVoto 52-53).

Mark Twain's bitter condemnation of the Christian dogmas is underlined again through Satan’s letters in which sarcasm of the Sermon on the Mount is pointed out when in the narration the character of Satan remarks that “the mouth that uttered these immense sarcasms, these giant hypocrisies, is the same that ordered the wholesale massacre of the Midianitish man and babies and cattle; the wholesale destruction of house and city; the wholesale banishment of the virgins into a filthy and unspeakable slavery” (52-53). In this case, sarcasm is mostly a means for an implacable critical observation of the clergy. Through the voice of Satan's character and narration, Twain continues his argumentation that “The Beatitudes and the quoted chapters from Numbers and Deuteronomy ought always to be read from the pulpit together; then the congregation would get an all-round view of our Father in Heaven. Yet not in a single instance have I ever known a clergyman to do this” (55).

In his unpublished manuscripts, Mark Twain was able to limit his sardonic observations on rare occasions. Moreover, he made Satan turn into a positive character in his later writings. However, the image of Christ embodies all the negativity of the writer’s critique. First of all, he stresses his personal strong belief that Christ was not the character announced in the Gospel. The witty and bleak notes in his numerous essays presented the overwhelming point of Twain’s view that “the Christian Bible is a drug store. Its contents remain the same; but the medical practice changes” (qtd. in Baender 72). On the basis of this remark, it can be concluded that Twain sardonically interprets Christianity as the following: “Ours is a terrible religion. The fleets of the world could swim in spacious comfort in the innocent blood it has split” (74).

Furthermore, the Bible, being the major and central in the Christian world, inspires Twain’s criticism in the later writings. He considered it to be full of irrationalities. More than that, he was sure that the Bible “is the work of man from beginning to end – atonement and all” (qtd. in Masters 143). According to his observations, the Bible contains no original texts; each was confiscated from the other races’ myths and legends. The debates on the controversial issues of the religion appear in a varied number of Twain’s later writings.

Nevertheless, being an implacable opponent of the church and its doctrines, the writer found evident inspiration to highlight a philosophic or theological monologue, or a multiple discussion in his later works. The biblical characters of Satan, Adam and Eve appeared more frequently in the writer's later works and manuscripts. Once Twain noted sarcastically that he himself was a kind of a "trained Presbyterian conscience" (qtd. in Krauth 94). Mostly, he referred to his religious background or education in a rather sarcastic or ironic way. It can be explained by the writer's personal belief that God is known as "the source of morals, although historical evidence shows otherwise" (qtd. in Neider 43).

It seems that in the later years Twain was longing to explain and reason his personal tragedies and sufferings of his nearest and dearest through his inner debates on religion and human race. Thus some of devotees find religion and their faith as the means for salvation and coping with their problems. On the contrary, Twain used the critical analysis of religion as a psychological means of dealing with his private and inner contradictions and failures. However, on a more profound layer, reaching the peak of the inner conflict, religion turns out to be the reason of most troubles in the life of the humans, as well as, his own. That is why, in his private notes, Twain states firmly that He, God, called "Father", can only "inflict upon his child a thousandth part of the pains and miseries and cruelties upon which our God deals out to His children every day, and has dealt out to them daily during all the centuries since the crime of creating Adam was committed" (Neider 31). The conflicting ideas about God, human race and religion sounded bitterly through Twain's perspective. However, the degree of the bitterness varies in all of the later writings focused on the issues of religion, human race or social ones. Some of the darkest and most pessimistic critical works were left deliberately unpublished or unfinished by Twain. Twain's pessimism or optimism depended upon the topic and plot, upon the characters and setting in each piece of work. Some manuscripts are written in the style reminiscent of personal recollections or sentimental narrations, others present the style of a critical pamphlet, and the rest seem more like satirical burlesques or critical ridicules. For instance, in his later essay entitled "God" (1905) Twain presents an orthodox and generally accepted narration of how God created the universe and the humans. However, the concluding paragraphs reveal the narrative's critical and yet sardonic observation, "the Church still prizes the Moral Sense as man's noblest asset today, although the Church knows God had a distinctly poor opinion of it and did what he could in his clumsy way to keep his happy Children of the Garden from acquiring it" (Twain, *Letters from the Earth* 23). It can be remarked that at the beginning of the narration few attempts to accept the generally recognized gospels of the church can be found. However, the more the description turns to a

traditionally accepted orthodox interpretation, the more sardonic the narrative appears. The development of the inner conflict between the acceptance of the Christian dogmas and the vigorous rejections of them by means of a sardonic criticism or an ironic observation can be traced in this later writing.

In the following sub-chapters of this chapter the analysis of Mark Twain's later manuscripts, essays and sketches will be organized according to the following topics or characters in his later works. According to this strategy, Chapter 2 will be dedicated to the analysis of humor and other forms of comic in Twain's later manuscripts where the central topics are religion and the human race. In sub-chapter 2.2 these topics continue to be the central concern by means of identification humorous material in the narrative. However, a characteristic symbol of a mysterious stranger requires a more detailed interpretation in sub-chapter 2.3. In sub-chapter 2.4, the analysis will be focused on the interpretation of the use of humor and a variety of comic forms in the list of Twain's later writings featuring animal characters. Interpretation of the uses of humor in Mark Twain's later works, featuring the Biblical characters of Adam and Eve, is announced in sub-chapter 2.5. The major findings in the analysis of Mark Twain's later works are required to be stated in sub-chapter 2.6.

2.2 Religion and the Human Race

In this sub-chapter it is important to study the use of humor and other forms of comic style in Mark Twain's later writings on the topics of Twain's great concern – religion and the human race, its place in the universe, its beliefs and conceptions. Lawrence I. Berkove and Joseph Csicsilla (2010) suggested that:

> Few would dispute the fact that religion was a main concern of Twain's during his entire life. From often shockingly heretical perspectives, Twain preached all his life in his literature a distinct departure from a conventional Christian message: that *because of God's malice* life is deceitful and humans are not meant to achieve in it their dearest goals of freedom, happiness, and fulfillment. (Berkove and Csicsilla 1-2)

Thus a problematic topic of the relationships between God and human kind was Twain's main concern in his later years. Generally speaking, Twain doubts the idea that a human being is a noble experiment and masterpiece created by God. In his later works, Mark Twain inclines to the concept of a human being only a small particle in the complex and enormous system of the universe. In a similar way, he develops the idea of a human's insignificance in the processes of the cosmos in a manuscript entitled "Three Thousand Years Among the Microbes" (1905). According to Tuckey (1966), Twain wrote the manuscript "at Dublin, New Hampshire, between 20 May and 22 June 1905. During that time Mark Twain worked rapidly and exuberantly" (Tuckey 430). A. B. Paine (1912) included a short version of the manuscript as *Appendix V* in *Mark Twain: a Biography*. Tuckey (1967) published the entire manuscript in *Which was the Dream? and Other Symbolic Writings of the Later Years*. In this later work, the life of a cholera germ symbolizes the life of each ordinary human being and his role in the processes of the universe. This metaphor in its turn includes a human being as an object of derision. This effect is achieved by the implicit parody of the human's world by means of equalization between the world of millions of microbes in some part of the human's body and the world of the humans and their place in the infinite cosmos. Twain's deliberate metaphoric embodiment of the human's universe into the world of microbes and germs can be interpreted as his intention to ridicule a human being and his environment in the most hard-edged and ruthless way. For instance, there is intentionally exaggerated description when the narrator states that "I loved all the germ-world – the Bacilli, the Bacteria, the Microbes, etc., - and took them to my heart with all the zeal they would allow; my patriotism was hotter than their own, more aggressive, more uncompromising; I was the germiest of the germy" (Tuckey 435).

In a different later manuscript, written by Twain, ridicule is presented when it is addressed against the conventions and ideas of the Christian world. It is entitled *Captain's Stormfield's Visit to Heaven* (1909). According to Baetzhold and McCullough (1996), the first draft was written in 1869 and finally edited in 1909 (Baetzhold and McCullough 138). Entirely finished during Twain's final years, the fable is full of irony, sarcasm and witty observations. This later piece of work presents the ironic narration and metaphoric image of the afterlife of the main character. Referring to the descriptions of the afterlife in the text, when the narrator finds himself in Heaven, there are no people with wings – just because of the fact that they do not know how to use them. They do not wear a halo, they are all not beautiful and young, and they are not warmly greeted by the archangels. And the human's way to Heaven is not that fascinating in the description. The narrator observes that "Well, when I had been dead about thirty years I begun to get a little anxious. Mind you, had been whizzing through space all that time, like a comet. Like a comet!" (Baetzhold and McCullough 147). The mockery in this paragraph is proved by the deliberately ironic exaggeration underlined by the narrator when he compares his life path through the universe to a kind of "whizzing" and "like a comet. Like a comet!" The hyperbole within a similar creates a case of ridicule. The absurdity of the context in the description assists in the creation of the ironic effect. However, this fable does not confirm the writer's voice in a fit of anger towards religion. On the contrary, from the very introductory note of the writer one can feel the humorist's personal sympathy towards Captain Stormfield. The captain was a religious person who possessed imagination and the character that made a certain appeal to Mark Twain. In the story, the narrator sympathizes with all people rejected by society – those who committed suicide or those who had a heartbreaking story of love. The close reading of *Captain's Stormfield's Visit to Heaven* (1909) can also suggest an observation that when the writings of Twain are based on his personal experiences or private interrelationships, a hostile tone of an implacable opponent against the clergy traditions is relieved to a more lenient one that is full of ironic observations and metaphoric references. Here is another gently ironic mockery referred to a common phenomenon of people to give absurd promises to themselves:

> As many as sixty thousand people arrive here every single day, that want to run straight to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and hug them and weep on them. Now mind you, sixty thousand a day is a pretty heavy contract for those old people. If they were a mind to allow it, they wouldn't ever have anything to do, year in and year out, but stand up and be hugged and wept on thirty-two hours in the twenty-four. They would be tired out and as wet as muskrats all the time. What would heaven be, to them? It would be a mighty good place to get out of – you know that, yourself. Those are kind and gentle

> old Jews, but they ain't any fonder of kissing the emotional highlights of Brooklyn than you be. (Baetzhold and McCullough 166)

The paragraph suggests the writer's perception of the weakness in the humans who try their best to cope with personal troubles or inner conflicts by means of giving themselves the expectations that they will never get. They hope that during their afterlife they will have peace in harmony among others. The absurdity of the context is based on the imaginary situation in which people can turn heaven into hell because of their faulty conceptions. Though, the writer's critique is mitigated by personal and private factors. But the central message of the humorist to the readers is clear – that is a metaphoric interpretation of the insignificance of the humans in the everlasting universe. According to Twain, it is absolutely unimportant if people have to go to heaven or hell; he does not idealize heaven, nor hell. That is why the narrator admits about Solomon Goldstein going to hell - "but in the end he was reconciled and said it was probably best the way it was, he wouldn't be suitable company for angels and they would turn him down if he tried to work in; he had been treated like that in New York, and he judged that the way of high society were about the same everywhere" (Baetzhold and McCullough 142). Though, in the afterlife there is one significant difference from life when alive - "there was plenty of sympathy and sentiment, and that was what they wanted" (146). With the same "plenty of sympathy and sentiment" the narration continues with a constant ironic tone:

> "Well, quick! Where are you from?"
> "San Francisco," says I.
> "San fran – what?" says he.
> "San Francisco."
> He scratched his head and looked puzzled, then he says - "Is it a planet?"
> By George, Peters, of it! "Planet?" says I; "it's a city."
> "I don't any such planet – is it a constellation?"
> "Oh, my!" says I. "Constellation, says you? No – it's a State." (Baetzhold and McCullough 151)

This paragraph suggests an observation that Twain could treat the people's narrow-minded perspectives not only with anger or critique, but also with sympathy and compassion. According to Twain, people became so narrow-minded because of education in the church; such education cannot give the true picture of the afterlife. That is why, when the narrator is asked by the old man in heaven if he likes it here, the narrator admits that "I'll be frank with you. This ain't just as near my idea of bliss as I thought it was going to be, when I used to go to church" (Baetzhold and McCullough 157). As the narration goes on, the ridicule of the

human's conceptions about the afterlife in Heaven is more evident. The narrator ironically concludes about the human's expectation of wearing the wings in afterlife:

> But they ain't to fly with! The wings are for show, not for use. Old angels are like officers of the regular army – they dress plain, when they are off duty. New angels are like the militia – never shed the uniform – always fluttering and floundering around in their wings, butting people down, flapping here, and there, and everywhere, always imagining they are attracting the admiring eye – well, they just they are the very most important people in heaven. (Baetzhold and McCullough 164)

In this paragraph the narrative ridicules not only Stormfield's wrong beliefs, but also the human's habit of showing off and constant motivation to become something special. In the eyes of the writer people look more ridiculous, rather than sympathetic in such situations. More than that, people seem to be foolish when they expect to be loved and worshiped by archangels in Heaven. The ironic tone in the narration intensifies, when the narrator remarks:

> The first thing he does when he gets to heaven, will be to fling his arms around Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and kiss them and weep on them [...] As many as sixty thousand people arrive here every single day [...] Now you, sixty thousand a day is a pretty heavy contract for those old people...What would heaven be, to them? It would be a mighty place to get out of – you that. Those are kind and gentle old Jews, but they ain't any fonder of kissing the highlights of Brooklyn than you be. (Baetzhold and McCullough 166)

The voice of the narrative ridicules two other Christian conceptions about the afterlife – all people speak the same language, there is no hierarchy there. Due to this reason, the narrator concludes ironically that "What a man mostly misses, in heaven, is company – company of his own sort and color and language" (175). Finally, when he is asked about the hierarchy in Heaven, a witty observation comes out immediately:

> Oh, a lot of people we never of before – the shoemaker and horse-doctor and knife-grinder kind, you – clodhoppers from where that never handled a sword or fired a shot in their lives – but the soldiership was in them, though they never had a chance to show it. But here they take their right place, and Caesar and Napoleon and Alexander have to take a back seat. (Baetzhold and McCullough 177)

Captain's Stormfield's Visit to Heaven (1909) based on a dreamlike narration highlights Twain's strong conviction that people are mistaken about the image of a happy afterlife. They wish to fly like angels, be greeted as if they are welcome guests, and speak the same language. However, according to Twain's point of view, the afterlife can hardly become an

absolutely happy salvation for everybody. Finally, this desire of people for absolute happiness is ridiculed in the writing.

The idea of the complexity in the relationships between God and the human being was developed profoundly in the collection of writings entitled *The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts* (1969). The collection of writings on which Mark Twain had been working through a long period of time from 1897-1909[2] develops a gloomy idea that not only the life of humans is senseless in the borders of the infinity, more than that, God pays no attention to them, to his creatures. The theme of the microcosmos inhabited by the humans damned by their creator, Philip Traum, is common in the Manuscript. The world of the miniature universe is opposed to a cruel, indifferent image of the Creator who stretches "out his hand and", crushes "the life out of them with his fingers," throws "them away," wipes "the red from his fingers" and "goes on talking" (Gibson 49-50). On living in misery, these little creatures try to argue with their creator, He, with no explanation, "takes the heavy board seat out of" the boy's swing [...] and brings it down, mashing the little people into the earth just as if they had been flies[...]" (49-50).

According to Mark Twain's philosophic position, his central confirmation is focused on the idea that humans are pure machines created by God, the One who decides everything without any explanation or reasoning. Man as a machine behaves according a set of factors and is limited by the number of certain phenomena: "training, custom, convention, association, disposition and environment- in a word, Circumstance [...]" (Tuckey, *Which Was the Dream?,* 485). Twain's later manuscript entitled *What is Man?* (1906) suggests the same idea that is developed in the form of the Socratic dialogue between a "Young Man", an inexperienced and naive character, and an "Old Man", a sophisticated philosopher. Rasmussen (1995) noticed that this book was "published anonymously during Mark Twain's lifetime", and Twain "never publicly acknowledged his authorship" (Rasmussen 509-510). The reason for this can be rooted in the fact that Twain hesitated to present entirely frankly his deterministic pessimism in public. Paul Baender (1973) included this later philosophical manuscript in the collection of Twain's works entitled *What is Man? and Other Philosophical Writings.* In the manuscript, the character of "Old Man" can be suggested as the personification of the writer's deterministic philosophy when the character of the "Old Man" announces the central idea concerning the role of a human being that "God made him a

[2] According to W.M. Gibson's (1969) suggestions in the Introduction to *The Mysterious Stranger Manuscripts*

machine" (214). Each human being acts due to a definite set of limited laws and is not able to break these limits. The darkness and gloominess of this point is revealed by the fact stressed in the writer's later works – the humans are the slaves and none of each of them is higher or freer than the others (214). Furthermore, the narrative emphasizes that it is the fault of God to create the humans like this, and that is God who is accountable to all the sorrow and injustice in the lives of little people. That is the major argument of the writer in his personal struggle against the Church and its principles. "Playing the part of philosophical observer" (Emerson 279), Twain left no place even for his sardonic observations or bitter sarcasm in these texts. For instance, in his later essay entitled "Reflection on Religion" one can hear again the voice of criticism: "God and God alone, is responsible for every act and word of a human being's life between cradle and grave […] and anyone who feels he owes God reverence and worship is a fool!" (Neider 30) Mark Twain repudiates any kind of worship addressed towards God and the clergy. He also doubts the power of prayer as the true means of communication and interrelation between God and the human beings.

Mark Twain's later work entitled "Little Bessie" (1908-1909)[3], "one of Mark Twain's best short pieces of his last years" (Emerson 293), stands out from his later writings. Similar to the form of a dialogue in *What is Man?* (1906), the six "Little Bessie" (1908-1909) chapters explore the role of God in the world of human sufferings and tragedies through a sentimental perspective. In this manuscripts, Twain presented a theological debate about the role of Providence from the side of a juvenile character, Bessie. However, he did it in a gentle, less desperate, though, still in a very profoundly philosophical way. More than that, this sentimental perspective preserved his ironic tone with a shade of ridicule in the narration. However, a question appears when it is necessary to understand why Mark Twain chose a sentimental perspective for a theological discussion in "Little Bessie" (1908-1909). To begin with, sentimentality was a popular means of rhetoric first in Europe (late eighteenth century) and later in the USA. Sentimentalism was closely connected with the religious movements, preaching and teaching of moral values. So this kind of rhetoric was "based on its close connection with the question of morals and psychology of effects" (Herget 4). The phenomenon is "not an entity but a complex of elements" and emotions which express "pity for all humanity" (Ellis 4-5). The writings with a sentimental mood reveal complex relationships between the writer and the reader – "the text relates author and reader on the basis of shared sentiments to achieve sympathy, and to move the reader from sympathy to

[3] See Tuckey (1972), (Tuckey 33).

compassion" (Herget 4). Commonly, the main character is a victim who "is powerless, helpless, innocent, gentle, perhaps, homeless, but in no way responsible for what happens" (Herget 5). Moreover, humor and especially irony can serve an important role in the strategy of the writer. It is admitted that "irony, above all, is alien to sentimental purpose" (Herget 7).

Ridicule in the narration of "Little Bessie" is based on the contrast when evident collision of ideas through the girl's serious question and her mother's easy answering happens. The mother's oversimplification turns to be even more inconsistent when she defines God as the creator of the sorrows and pain in one man's life. This situation resembles the humorist's personal position that God is the creator of sorrows, as well as human is inclined to cruelty and sins. So the burlesque implied in the story intensifies when Little Bessie continues to ask her Mother if God sends these tragedies and sorrows. The Mother's answer is again based on her religious convictions: "Yes, dear, all of them. None of them comes by accident; He alone sends them, and always out of love for us, and to make us better" (Tuckey 34). This one-way thinking together with the little girl's sincerity and curiosity creates the conflict within the narration. This conflict increases further in the text when the child's doubts redouble parody of the situation when her mother fails her dominant role as a teacher in the eyes of her daughter. At the end of Chapter 3, absurdity in the words of Bessie's mother returned appears by the adult's weak attempts to preserve her unruffled calm. In this part of "Little Bessie" Mark Twain discusses the role of a fly and its importance and predestination in the universe. Bessie's mother explains the existence of a house-fly as one of the best examples of God's power. Bessie's Mother concludes: "For some great and good purpose, and to display His power [...] We only know that He makes *all* things for a great and good purpose. But this is too large a subject for a dear little Bessie like you, only a trifle over three years old" (Tuckey 39-40). The comicality in the words of the adult can be observed by her attempts to define a fly as a creature to display God's power that made all things for a great and good purpose. Evident mockery in these lines is addressed to the idea about people's traditional overstatement of God's role and purposes.

All in all, the chapters of "Little Bessie" (1908-1909) introduce a complex of Mark Twain's implicit attitudes towards a theological discussion between the child and her mother. On the one hand, Bessie's mother has failed to become a trustworthy instructor for her daughter. Indirectly, this strategy, when the narration follows to the mother's defeat at the end, can be explained by Twain's skepticism and dark view. On a more profound layer, the narration exposes religious absurdities when Christian dogmas do not work as sound arguments to explain tragedies in human life. Nevertheless, the manuscript also proves that

Twain's skepticism and pessimism can be balanced by means of his sentimental treatment of the character of Bessie and her vigorous, sincere and clever arguments. In the narration, this balance is maintained both when Twain implicitly ridicules the mother's narrow-minded religious viewpoints, and when Twain lets the character of the child draw conclusions in a sincere, brave, yet childish way. As Everett Emerson (2000) noticed, "Bessie's charming naivete makes these few pages amusing" (Emerson 293). The character of Bessie can be interpreted as a means of inspiration for Twain's more balanced attitude towards theological issues.

An essay[4] entitled "The War Prayer" was finished by Twain in 1905 and published posthumously in 1923 due to the reason that Twain was afraid to be judged by his contemporaries (Rasmussen 255). In this essay, Twain focused on the point that people pray blindly for the results that can cause even worse results, such as, hunger, destruction and death. The story presents a metaphoric reference to the Philippine-American War of 1899-1902 (Rasmussen 262). Twain opposed himself against imperialistic strategies of the USA in those times. The blindness of the patriots is intensified by the faulty reasons of their prayers when they entreat to win while they know and want to know nothing about the results of the expected victory. At the same time, the character of the stranger is opposed to the crowd of people overfilled with both measureless patriotism and blind worship. He is the one who embodies a metaphoric position towards patriotism combined together with military ambitions and blind faith in God.

Mark Twain remains both contradictory and prudent in the way he deals with his writings on the religious and philosophic debates. On the one hand, he knows no bounds in the discussion and reasoning through his private notes and unpublished works. In these writings Twain could forget for a short period about his world-renowned image of the humorist and plunge into the announcement of his inner ideas, observations and theories. On the other hand, he supports his strategy by being rational enough not to lose his image as the great humorous writer so as not to be considered an absolute stranger, a lunatic in the society of the USA in his times.

It is important also to mention one more distinctive feature of Twain's later writings – that is an enhancement of the role of Satan in the religious debates introduced in a number of the writer's works. The character of Satan is very complex, definitely ambiguous in his acts and thoughts, and, satirical in his voice. More than that, it seems that the humorist identifies his

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[4] See R. Kent Rasmussen (2008), (Rasmussen 255-260).

creative and philosophic positions with this controversial image of Lucifer, the fallen divine creature. Satan serves to act a "sarcastic questioner of God's ways, writing secret letters to St. Gabriel and St. Michael about the absurdity of man, God's experiment" (Brodwin 217). The character of Satan embodies the one who is capable of rebelling and making a satiric attack towards the Christian preconceived ideas and convictions. His image "figures most often in Mark Twain's writings and who exhibits the richest development" (Gibson 15). According to Twain's theory, Satan senses no morality or immorality because of his disability to convey any feelings. That is why he can state the following: "I am of the aristocracy of the Imperishables. And man has the Moral Sense" (55). Twain found the figure of the fallen angel to be the most favorable to display his own sagely ironic observations about the damned human race.

In fact, Mark Twain's later collection of essays and sketches was entitled *Letters from the Earth* and published posthumously in 1962 by edition of Bernard DeVoto. Bernard DeVoto gave this title to the collection of Twain's later letters and short writings. DeVoto was going to publish it earlier in 1939. However, Clara Clemens, Twain's daughter, was afraid to misrepresent her father's fame and reputation because of controversial topics in those later manuscripts. Only in 1962 she agreed to publish the collection after much consideration and editing.[5] The collection represents the central character embodied in the image of Satan who is promoting a constant and assured mockery of the Creator and its human race. Satan, exiled by God, starts and supports a correspondence with St. Michael and St. Gabriel. In numerous letters addressed to these Saints, Satan reveals his point and view of the stupidity and contradictions of the humans. The image of Satan resembles an ordinary character – that is a man who continues to believe in God; though, he receives only punishments from the Creator in return. Repeatedly, there is an evident and constant ridicule of Christian dogmas, which are provided through Commandments. The overall ridicule is based on the absurdity and contradiction between the two images of the human nature presented in the Bible and in reality. The apotheosis of the writer's critique and sarcasm is presented in the analysis of human absurdity, when Twain through the words of Satan, analyzes the religion and remarks about the beliefs of the Christians.

Through witty sarcasm and biting criticism, the humorist finds the major failings of man in his blind Christian convictions. Moreover, the paradox is the key word to define the clash between the true way in which Christians behave in reality and their delusive image of their

5 See LeMaster and Wilson (1993), (LeMaster and Wilson 461).

activities in holy Heaven based on the biblical descriptions. In his second letter, Satan comments sarcastically on man's solemn promises and their realization in man's lifetime:

> His heaven is like himself: strange, interesting, astonishing, grotesque. I give you my word, it has not a single feature in it that he actually values. It consists – utterly and entirely – of diversions which he cares next to nothing about, here in the earth, yet is quite sure he will like them in heaven. Isn't it curious? Isn't it interesting? (DeVoto 16)

According to Mark Twain, Heaven embodies the environment full of numerous aspects that man can never appreciate in his reality. And then an ironic observation of Satan's narration comes – Heaven is devoid of sex or so-called "the Supreme Act", the only adoration of man's true nature in the Earth. Following this idea, Satan concludes ironically with a doubt if it is worth entering holy Heaven. He admits with an evident ridicule in his voice that "From youth to middle age all men and all women prize copulation above all other pleasures combined, yet it is actually as I have said: it is not in their heaven; prayer takes its place" (DeVoto 6). Further on, in Letters V, VI, and VII Satan conducts several sarcastic attacks while he presents the analysis of God's reasoning in allowing Noah to save all the creatures of the Earth during the flood. His position focuses on a fly. The image of the fly appears numerous times in the Twain's later writings. Mostly, it is associated with the idea that flies can bring nothing except sufferings for people. In saving this humble small creature, Noah, under explicit control of God, also guarantees humanity's further sufferings. According to Twain, flies, being God's creature, can bring pain, death and tragedies. The bitter sarcasm of the writer is revealed when Satan underlines the naivety of the humans who adore their God and endure all the evil.

The narrative exposes cases of biblical hypocrisy in the next letters, when it focuses on the contradictions between the commandments from the Bible and real life. For instance, the commandment of "Thou shalt not kill" contradicts to the actions of man when he is forced by God to commit murder. Satan presents as an argument an episode from the history of how the Israelites, being controlled by God, exterminated the Midianites, women and children among them. According to the writer's position, this proves hypocrisy on God's part.

Mark Twain was always very critical with regard to Biblical mythology. For instance, in *Letters from the Earth* (1969) disagreement with many facts concerning the story of Noah can be underlined. In the narration of this piece of work, factual discrepancies, illogical descriptions and other contradictions in the Bible are ridiculed. For example, the narrator hesitates when he asks about Noah's Ark - "We have to guess at how long it took to collect the creatures and how much it cost" (DeVoto 27). Moreover, he doubts that the number of

creatures he collected was enough – under 5000 of species; though, over 2,000.000 of species exist in the world (27). At the same time, the narrator sarcastically concludes that a fly and over sixty-eight billions of its kind survived owing to Noah's Ark. According to the narration, Noah and his family survived but were full of microbes - "and some hundreds of other aristocrats, specially precious creations, golden bearers of God's love to man, blessed gifts of the infatuated Father to his children – all of which had to be sumptuously housed and richly entertained" (34). In this paragraph Twain's criticism is on the verge of despair and complete denial of God's virtues. However, sarcasm limits the narrator and Twain to plunge completely in this denial and nihilism. To some extent, sarcasm in the narration prevents and saves the writer from crossing this limit; it also gives him the chance to rethink and reconsider human convictions and prejudices.

In the narrative it is also ironically remarked about the role of the three archangels in the creation of the world: "None of the three seemed to want to begin, though all wanted somebody to do it. Each was burning to discuss the great event, but would prefer not to commit himself till he should know how the others regarded it" (DeVoto 11). The ironic observation seems to refer again to human habits and weakness – this deliberate humanization of the Biblical characters intensifies the comic effect and critical tone of Twain. More than that, according to the narration, the only one of the archangels who had enough courage and strength to act was Satan. This overturn of what is good and what is evil in reference to Twain's philosophy lets the character of Satan become a positive one in the narration. The character Satan is intelligent, prudent and sarcastic. He serves to be a mouthpiece of Twain's philosophy, criticism, veiled ridicule and sarcasm. As the narration goes on, the voice of the story-teller, Satan's voice, turns to be even more daring. In his description he ventures to mention about the topic of sex, forbidden by the traditional dogmas of the religion. This deliberate dismissal of the limits in a list of the permitted topics displays an obvious sarcastic and, to some extent, doubting tone of Twain. As proof of his criticism, the narrator goes on: "Results followed. By the name of Cain and Abel. And these had some sisters; and knew what to do with them." or in another description: "The sweeter sex, the dearer sex, the lovelier sex was manifestly at its very best, then, for it was even able to attract gods. Real gods. They came down out of heaven and had wonderful times with those hot young blossoms. The Bible tells about it", and finally concludes that "By help of those visiting foreigners the population grew and grew until it numbered several millions" (DeVoto 26).

Twain's personal beliefs and criticism of religion and mankind can be considered as complex and contradictory. At some points, the use of language in his arguments is raw, it can

scare away many of his devoted readers or the ones who expected to enjoy the comic descriptions or vivid anecdotes from the famous humorist. One point of view is evident – Mark Twain was a staunch advocate of the civil rights in those times.[6] He was a philosopher with a keen eye of a humorist who noticed and underlined innumerable contradictions and inconsistencies that could be noted in the Bible. And the tragedies of his personal life just inspired the writer to search for the answers, rational explanations and the attempts to cope with the very imbalance in his inner world. At the same time, some kind of ambiguity was always presented in his criticism towards God. Sometimes the writer made an attempt to underscore this ambiguity in a more comic way, whether ironic or bitterly sarcastic. More than that, this ambiguity can be viewed a scathing criticism of the person who found himself at the edge of the frustration and disappointment by the end of his later years. He continued his rather intricate way of criticism, indictment and exposure of falsehoods and imperfections within religion.

The major target of Twain's ridicule in his later works is the blind delusion of some people who have been misled by the religious institutions. The writer underlines this moral blindness which is due to personal and inner narrow-mindedness and lack of education. For instance, in the collection of essays and late writings entitled *Christian Science* (1907)[7] Mark Twain presents a critical and accusatory description of Mary Baker G. Eddy, the founder of the "new" church and religion, who made profit of blindness and stupidity of many people. *Christian Science* (1907) includes Book I and Book II.

Book I of *Christian Science* can be defined as an ironic story told from the perspective of an Austrian traveler. In an accident he breaks his bones and requires a surgeon. Unfortunately, the first person he meets is a missionary, an American Christian Scientist, Mrs. Fuller, who is passionate to heal the narrator in her special way. Her main argument is that the Austrian traveler can be healed by sincere and hard prayer. What is even more ridiculous, Mrs. Fuller tries to insist on the idea that his physical pain is just an illusion. The comic portrait of Mrs. Fuller and the absurdity of her argumentation can be distinguished clearly in the text. For instance, definite nonsense can be found in her observation that "One does not feel [...] nothing exists but the mind; the mind cannot feel pain, it can only imagine it" (*What is Man?*, 219) or when she admits angrily that "The cat feels nothing, the Christian feels nothing" (219). For some short period the narrator feels better. However, it can be explained by pure

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6 For more information about Twain's interest in the topic of the civil rights, see Peter Messent (2007), (Messent 85-89); Shelley Fisher Fishkin (1996), (Fishkin 165-168).

7 See LeMaster and Wilson (1993), (LeMaster and Wilson 144).

self-suggestion. But even this short moment of magic is presented by Twain in an ironic way - "Under the powerful influence of the near treatment and the absent treatment together, my bones gradually retreating inward and disappearing from view" (227). Book I also includes a central comic portrait of a horse-doctor who prefers to treat the narrator as he treats his animal-patients - "In the matter of smell he was pretty aromatic – in fact, quite horsy[...] He looked at my teeth and examined my hock, and said my age and general condition were favorable to energetic measures" (228). A burlesque and ridicule in the narrative can be interpreted as a metaphorical reference to the idea that Twain himself "did not accept Christian Science's metaphysical claim that physical matter and sickness is an illusion" (Phipps 325).

In Book II Twain's constant exposure of the personality of Mary Baker Eddy balances between the sarcastic attacks that can touch religious people. However, these bitter words are aimed at the stupidity and vanity of her religion. Twain considered this new religion meaningless, the way to deceive thousands of people, the most detestable means to increase the personal wealth of its founder. As he states many times in his critique, "from end to end of the Christian Science literature not a single (material) thing in the world is concerned to be real, except the Dollar" (*The Complete Works of Mark Twain*, 51). The writer can be even more sarcastic when he confirms "its god is Mrs. Eddy first, then the Dollar" (51). Her personality is presented in his essay about the Christian Science in a condemnatory way through the apparent power of his sarcasm. He intentionally uses exaggerated epithets when he presents his personal characteristics of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy:

> She is the mighty angel; she is the divinely and officially sent bearer of God's highest thought. For the present, she brings the Second Advent. We must expect that before she has been in her grave fifty years she will regarded by her following as having been herself the Second Advent. (*The Complete Works of Mark Twain*, 50)

A combination of exaggeration, epithets, repetitions and superlative forms of adjectives in the description are used to exaggerate the stupidity of Mrs. Eddy's personality and the blind beliefs of so many people who support or follow her church and religion based on misleading and purely false conceptions. According to the position in the narrative, "there is but one human Pastor in the whole Christian Science world; she reserves that exalted place to herself" (*What is Man?*, 335). The sarcastic effect is achieved in numerous ways when the writer intensifies his personal contempt towards the whole conception of Christian Science. More than that, sarcasm is used when the humorist reveals the clash between the ideas claimed by the "new" church and the real condition of the society:

> She has delivered to them a religion which has revolutionized their lives, banished the glooms that shadowed them, and filled them and flooded them with sunshine and gladness and peace; a religion which has no hell; a religion whose heaven is not put off to another time, with a break and a gulf between, but begins here and now, and melts into eternity as fancies of the waking day melt into the dreams of sleep. (*What is Man?,* 337)

Due to the writer's assurance, no made-up religion can improve or change dramatically people's reality full of gloomy events, sorrows and sufferings. Unfortunately, "new" religions are the "old" ways to make small groups people wealthier; though, the rest of people will be deluded again and again. According to Twain's observations, people like Mrs. Eddy make their fortunes by copyrighting their falsities and personal ignorance. As a proof, there is a satiric statement when the narrative turns to a few comments on Mrs. Eddy's policies: "Already whatever she puts her trade-mark on, though it be only a memorial-spoon, is holy and is eagerly and gratefully bought by the disciple, and becomes a fetish in his house" (*What is Man?,* 249).

To add more, Mark Twain refers to an evident and undeniable lack of education of Mrs. Eddy, the founder of the "new" Christian church. Sarcasm is explicitly employed in several critical observations about her style of writing and the use of long and complex words. He defines the level of her language skills as "sophomoric" (*What is Man?,* 272), "bastard English" (272) or "fifteen-year-old English" (272). Whenever, Mrs. Eddy is not able to draw a conclusion, she comes abruptly to the end and states "God is over us all" (275). At the same time, Twain determines a substantial argument for the use of long words in her religious writings:

> We shall never know why she put the word "correspondingly" in there. Any fine, large word would have answered just as well: psychosuperintangibly-electroincandescently-oligarcheologically-sanchrosynchro-stereoptically-any of these words would have answered, any of these would have filled the void. (*The Complete Works of Mark Twain,* 211)

The compound, made-up words create the sarcastic tone of the writer in his critique against vacuous ideas of Mrs. Eddy. According to his critical attitude, her religious writings "exhibit no depth, no analytical quality, no thought above school composition size" (*The Complete Works of Mark Twain,* 211). According to Twain's text, the only talent of Mrs. Eddy is conveyed by means of her commercial ambitions. Nonetheless, being critical to many of the religious convictions, Mark Twain is not only pessimistic when he disputes about Christianity. For instance, he defines the idea of the American Christian being "a clean and honest man, and in his private commerce with his fellows can be trusted to stand faithfully by

the principles of honor and honesty imposed upon him by his religion" (*What is Man?,* 396). Withal, "he has sound and sturdy private morals, but he has no public ones" (396). In agreement to his personal experiment and social position, it is in the human's nature to be noble and honest in private; as well as, it is typical for the same people to violate their high-level morals in public. The writer assures his reader that "There are Christian Private Morals, but there are no Christian Public Morals, at the polls, or in Congress or anywhere else-except here and there and scattered around like lost comets in the solar system" (396).

Being skeptical concerning the church, the writer does not blame people for their blind trust towards those who are in charge of the religious institutions; according to him, it is in human's nature. Twain concludes that "To the credit of human nature it is not possible that they should be otherwise. They sincerely believe that Mrs. Eddy's character is pure and perfect and beautiful, and her history without stain or blot or blemish" (Clemens 206). These words stress the point that the writer's critique cannot be defined as overwhelmingly negative as if he was constantly encouraged by disappointment or inner anger. Mark Twain's comic voice with a hint of sarcasm speaks in favor of the writer's sympathy for human nature which is partially based on his personal antipathy for the religious institutions founded and worshiped by the humans. He concentrates on a more realistic and humanistic world view.

One more important factor requires thorough consideration. John S. Tuckey (1980) and Henry N. Smith (1989) focused on the idea that the same mood can be noticed in the early works of Mark Twain. More than that, they come to the conclusion that Twain's complexity existed during the entire career of the writer. Tuckey underlines the point that Twain preferred to express both counter positions of his character and views, positive and negative; it depended upon which manuscript and the topic he was working on. According to Tuckey (1980), "Mark Twain was unable to stay long in the company of one-sided views and half-truths, especially when they were his own. It is his insistent seeking of the twofold, the duplicitous view that keeps him so interesting" (Tuckey, *The Devil's Race-Track* xiv).

Henry N. Smith (1989) is sure that the constant dualism of the writer is based on two aspects – Twain's recollections and dreams from his own youth and realism. The same duality can be noticed in the writer's reluctance not to be a famous humorist but also to present himself as a philosopher with a strong social view point. His critical observations showed the keen mind of a comic and ironic observer. In 1887 he noted in his private writings, "I cannot see how a man of any large degree humorous perception can ever be religious – except he purposely shut the eyes of his mind and keep them shut by force" (qtd. in Blaisdell ix). That

is why the personalities of the legislative or religious circles turn out to be the targets of the writer's verbal parody and burlesque in Twain's *Christian Science* (1907).

Maintaining his contradictory relationships with religion, Twain concluded that "Although I am not a very dusty Christian myself, I take an exorbitant interest in religious affairs and would willingly inflict my annual message on the church itself if it might derive benefit thereby" (qtd. in Smith 101). It is evident that the literary comedians and the traditions of several nineteenth-century American comic writers had an influence on Mark Twain's style of humor in his critical view point towards religion and politics, in particular. Satire, burlesque, exaggeration, tall tales and anecdotes were the techniques widely used both by Mark Twain and literary comedians who were familiar with social and religious critical perception. Henry N. Smith in his article "How True are Dreams: The Theme of Fantasy in Mark Twain's Later Work" noticed that during those times the humorists were frequently accused of irreverence and were considered to have created the contrast of rhetorical styles embodied a basic conflict of values, the contrast between traditional and Protestant churches. David Sloane continued the idea that Twain "borrowed from the tradition of literary comedy" (Sloane 97) and presented his fight with the religious and social injustices taking into consideration these very techniques like satire, sarcasm, exaggeration and tall tales. Sloane also noticed the influence of Artemus Ward and his style of skepticism on Mark Twain. "Both writers (Ward and Twain) drew comic relationships between religious quackery and the Constitution" (Sloane 97). Finally, he concluded that "Twain was largely schooled by these native humorists" (Sloane ix). This very fight with religious disillusions and social injustices in a humorous manner can be followed in Twain's later writings. In *What is Man?* (1906) the narrative concludes that "God's treatment of his earthly children, every day and every night, is the exact opposite of all that, yet those best minds warmly justify these crimes, condone them, excuse them, and indignantly refuse to regard them as crimes at all, when he commits them" (Twain, *What is Man?* 418). This quotation points at the idea that God possesses a cruel nature when God does not plead guilty for all the sins of the humanity. In this paragraph Twain's words of critique can be defined as more emotional, bitter and abundant in verbal images. Exaggeration is obviously one of the most typical stylistic means when he attacks Christianity. His ridicule of religious mythology is combined with a sarcastic remark about the Bible that "It is full of interest. It has noble poetry in it; and some clever fables; and some blood-drenched history; and some good morals; and a wealth of obscenity; and upwards of a thousand lies" (Twain, *What is Man?* 412).

The degree of emphasis, the means of the philosophic comprehension and targets are complex in Twain's critical verbal rhetoric. Twain attempts a difficult and controversial task to present the complexity in the relationships between God and his piece of creation, a human being. He ridicules the contradictions between what the Bible preaches and the trait of human's character donated by God, cruelty and hypocrisy among them. Twain's critique is more complex and diverse; it possesses both positive and negative aspects. That is why the narrative suggests that the Bible had both "noble poetry" and "some clever fables." Twain was searching for the balance of facts and fables not only in the Bible, but also in the universe. For this reason, he needed a character, the one who could confront with imperfections in the relations between God and man. This unique character appeared to be the character of a stranger in Twain's later manuscripts. A more detailed analysis will be introduced in the following sub-chapter.

2.3 The Mysterious Stranger

In some of Mark Twain's later writings there is a character of a stranger who is counterbalanced to the world of mankind's cruelty and hypocrisy. Usually, the stranger is a narrator in the story, and his voice can vary from subtly ironic to thoughtfully philosophic. Like in Twain's manuscript entitled *No. 44, the Mysterious Stranger* (composed between 1902 and 1908[8], published posthumously in 1916 with the editions of A. B. Paine, and later in 1982 complete version with the editions of John S. Tuckey), the stranger is a dreamer and observer who remarks the disadvantages of the human race. The story is set in a small Austrian village - "Yes, Austria was far from the world, and asleep, and our village was in the middle of that sleep, being in the middle of Austria" (Tuckey 3). This ironic statement can be interpreted as a reference to symbolize people's ignorance and unwillingness to wake from their illusions concerning the world around them. They ignore knowledge, discussion or learning. This habit of mankind meets Twain's sarcastic observation that even the priest, the most honored person in the village, "said that knowledge was not good for the common people, and could make them disconnected with the lot which God had appointed for them, and God would not endure discontentment with His plans. This was true, for the priest got it of the Bishop" (4). Twain also ridicules man's habit to atone for his/her sins. In the narration the process of atonement is presented more like a heathen ceremony, a nonsensical one:

> She must have a picture of the horses painted, and went on pilgrimage to the Church of Our Lady of the Dumb Creatures, and hang it up there, and make her offerings; then go home and sell the skins of her horses and buy a lottery ticket bearing the number of the date of their death, and then wait in patience for the Virgin's answer. (Tuckey 6)

It is very common for the narration in Twain's later works to change completely the traditional viewpoints of the society and turn them from widely accepted into nonsense. So evil turns into good, and vice versa. This substitution creates an ironic voice in the narration. For instance, in the paragraph "It was built by the Devil in a single night. The prior of the monastery hired him to do it, and had trouble to persuade him, for the Devil said he had built bridges for priests all over Europe. And had always got cheated out of his wages" (Tuckey 8). The comic effect is achieved by understanding that not Devil is evil, but people who cheat; that is in the human's nature, according to Twain. In this piece of work Twain constantly attacks the clergy and its imperfections. The narration illustrates the monks "with a great lot

[8] See Berkove and Csicsila (2010), (Berkove and Csicsila 153).

of mock ceremonies" (8). Together with the clergy which influences considerably the people of the village, they possess mostly "degraded idolatry and hypocrisy" (28).

At the same time, Twain leaves some hope in the narration – according to him, the Stranger, No. 44, symbolizes this hope. Due to this reason, the narrator reserves all his sentimental feelings, his desire and aspiration to make friends with No. 44 who is "a marvelous creature" (Tuckey 41). Being opposed to the ignorant and narrow-minded people of the village, the Stranger promotes the narrator to feel young and sentimental again when he "was all girl-boy again" and "couldn't keep the tears back"(59). The narration reaches its climax when the description of the human's cruelty and heartlessness follows. The people of the village try their best to humiliate the Stranger and put him in trouble so that to exalt their own status and ego. Further on, compassion comes only after the Stranger has been humiliated. It is when few sarcastic remarks can be determined - "That was human's nature, wasn't it – when your enemy is in awful trouble, to be sorry for him" (78) and "Well, to my mind there is nothing that makes a person interesting like his being about to get burnt up" (79). According to Twain's concept, it is in human's nature to be cruel and malicious. Nevertheless, No. 44 survives by promoting his inner virtue and nobility "by grace of his right to wear a sword, was legally a gentleman" (85). At the same time, Twain remarks the character's duality by confirming that he "was clever, but ill balanced; ad whenever he saw a particularly good chance to be a fool, pie couldn't persuade him to let it go by" (85). So his noble spirit and kind heart balanced with the moments of boyish or foolish impulses inside him. All in all, in Twain's perception presented in his later *No. 44, the Mysterious Stranger* (1982) life of a human is presented more like "a grotesque and foolish dream" (187). It is the life when the human is fooled by his own illusions and religious convictions taught by the clergy; he is being misled that way so that "He is always pretending that the eternal bliss of heaven is such a priceless boon! Yes, and always keeping out of heaven just as long as he can! At bottom, you see, he is far from being certain about heaven" (116).

To sum up, *No. 44, the Mysterious Stranger* (1982) presents a set of numerous comic devices and humorous forms. Comic forms of irony, sarcasm and tall tales are accompanied by Twain's intellectual disputes, philosophic digressions and metaphysical observations. All together these devices and peculiarities were combined to present Twain's thorough, life-long study of human race from a varied number of perspectives. Being both desperate and pitiless towards people, Mark Twain suggested his readers not to give up and look at the universe around them from a different angle.

A narrator embodied in a character of the mysterious stranger appears also in Twain's late sketch entitled "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg" (1898). In my analysis I will refer to the Berkeley edition of John S. Tuckey's (1967) *Which Was the Dream? and Other Symbolic Writings of the Later Years* which included this later work of Twain. The sketch describes a small town when it is suddenly woken up because of a stranger. In the sketch, the narrator's voice of a disappointed philosopher can be found – because of social injustice, moral issues and political events; these factors influenced the voice of Twain's critique. Twain's increasing critical perspective on all these issues during his later life, his argumentation is shown through a number of ironic statements. The writer's deterministic descriptions are expressed in ironic or sardonic statements in a number of cases. For instance, an ironic tone can be found in a statement about a genre of romance - "Why, it's a romance; it's like impossible things one reads about in books, and never sees in life" (Tuckey 353). In another example, an ironic description highlights a life of an ordinary foreman of Cox's paper, local representative of the Associated Press in Hadleyburg when he finally gets a new long-awaited order - "Send the whole thing – all the details – twelve hundred words! A Colossal order! The foreman filled the bill; and he was the proudest man in the State" (359).

The town of Hadleyburg is known for its people who possess virtue and honesty. They are proud of being trained to have no temptation of money. However, a stranger leaves a sack of gold with a note inside. At the beginning the stranger's game with the people of Hadleyburg promotes the pride of its trained and model residents. The description of their pride and anxiety is definitely ironic:

> Hadleyburg village woke up world-celebrated – astonished – happy – vain. Vain beyond imagination. Its nineteen principal citizens and their wives went about shaking hands with each other, and beaming, and smiling, and congratulating, and saying this thing adds a new word to the dictionary – Hadleyburg, synonym for incorruptible – destined to live in dictionaries forever! And the minor and unimportant citizens and their wives went around acting in much the same way. (Tuckey 360)

Both ironic and exaggerated, the description of their self-admiration and rapture turns out to be even more evident further in the narration when these noble residents being deceived by the stranger's letter and their own pride start hastily to waste much money on credit; they were sure of becoming very rich in the nearest future. Ironically, being trained to avoid temptation of wealth and pecuniary status, the residents of Hadleyburg lose their reputation as one the most uncorrupted and honest towns. The stranger's scheme exposes the model residents and reveals the dark side of their nature. The stranger forces the townspeople to admit that they live in a reality which is full of corruption and hypocrisy. So one of the main characters, Mr.

Richards confesses in the conclusion that "I was clean – artificially – like the rest; and like the rest I fell when temptation came. I signed a lie, and claimed the miserable sack. Mr. Burgess remembered that I had done him a service, and in gratitude (and ignorance) he suppressed my claim and saved me. "And later "and he exposed me – as I deserved" (Tuckey 390). Nevertheless, those who were brave enough to confess their weakness and mistakes die. Ironically or not, the townspeople just change the name of the town, and its good reputation is back again. The town symbolically plunges into its long deep sleep. So the narration ends satirically with the sentence that "It is an honest town once more, and the man will have to rise early that catches it napping again" (390).

Finally, the short story of "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg" (1898) reveals the voice of Twain, and it is full of ironic statements and satiric descriptions of the model residents of Hadleyburg who sincerely and emotionally fought for the reputation of their home town. However, their pride and ignorance turned their heads so that they ignored their guilt and mistakes. The ironic turning point and symbolic twist comes when the temptation of the gold changes irreversibly their lives. Satire and irony in the narration can prove that this temptation forces the townspeople of Hadleyburg to admit their weakness and to learn to laugh at this. However, the new generation of the townspeople changes the name of the town, return its good reputation, and continue doing the same mistakes as the previous generation. Although Twain does not seem to be disappointed about this – according to him, it is human nature. That is why, he has just to admit ironically in the conclusion that "It is an honest town once more, and the man will have to rise early that catches it napping again" (Tuckey 390).

In his later years Mark Twain enjoyed parody of some genres in literature. Being a realist, Twain preferred a kind of melodramatic burlesque rather than a romance, and a parody of a detective story rather than a detective genre, the genre getting popular by the end of the nineteenth century. The later short writing entitled "A Double-Barreled Detective Story" (1902) can be defined as a burlesque parody of a detective story. Twain's voice of parody is constant in the story when the narration unexpectedly switches from seriousness to absurdity, from one story line to another. It combines two stories – the first one tells about betrayal and revenge, and the second turns oddly into complete farce. A betrayed wife insists on her son to find her former lover and his father. A motivation for revenge turns her son into a kind of amateur detective whose character metaphorically embodies the traits of a bloodhound. More than that, Mark Twain adds an absurd story of Sherlock Holmes to the main story. Briefly, the character of Holmes arrives in a Nevada mining camp and soon becomes an accessory to murder at one point and at another accuses an innocent man on the basis that he is left-

handed. The absurdity is redoubled in the narration by another absurdity and reveals Twain's critical attitude towards Arthur Conan Doyle's style of writing. In Twain's "A Double-Barreled Detective Story" (1902) the character of Holmes is more than ridiculous. Ridicule in the narration about Holmes and his arrival is intensified by deliberate exaggeration and epithets. For instance, in the paragraph "The next afternoon the village was electrified with an immense sensation. A grave and dignified foreigner of distinguishing bearing and appearance had arrived at the tavern, and entered this formidable name upon the register" (Tuckey 448). The character of Holmes, "the Extraordinary man" (445), inspires the townspeople's anxiety and interest. However, their anxiety is more than absurd; their exaggerated admiration shows them from not a very positive perspective, as rather silly and narrow-minded. In any way, the character of Holmes is again a symbolic image of the stranger who wakes up a small town, who turns the life in the town in chaos and absurdity, and who, ironically or not, exposes a negative side of his admirers' nature. In support of this idea, the townspeople comment with admiration on Holmes:

> "Look at that head!" said Ferguson, in an awed voice. "By gracious! that's a head!"
> "You bet!" said the blacksmith, with deep reverence. "Look at his nose! look at his eyes! Intellect? Just a battery of it!"
> "And that paleness," said Ham Sandwich. "Comes from thought – that's what it comes from. Hell! duffers like us don't know what real thought is."
> "No more we don't," said Ferguson. "What we take for thinking is just blubber-and-slush."
> "'Sh! Watch him! There – he's got his thumb on the bump on the near corner of his forehead, and his forefinger on the off one. His think-works is just a-grinding now, you bet your other shirt."
> "That's so. And now he's gazing up toward heaven and stroking his mustache slow, and -" (Tuckey 449).

Both prevailingly satiric and ironic tones in the narration of the story can prove Twain's attitude of a humorous realist who has distrust and impatience because of numerous cases of implausibility in Doyle's narrative. Moreover, he evidently attacks Doyle's favorite and most famous character of Sherlock Holmes who can solve any problem, and whose genius and deductive mind were praised highly by the readers. All in all, Twain parodies both melodrama and detective story in this piece of writing; and ridicules those readers who try to find some sense and thought provoking descriptions in the narrative of these genres. On the contrary, Twain's style of a detective story presents a mixture of comic forms. These include nonsense, farce, burlesque, parody and exaggeration of pointless details.

In another later sketch entitled "The 30,000 $ Bequest" (1906) a stranger also drives the plot and changes the life of the main characters, the Fosters, when they receive a letter from a

distant relative that he is going to die soon, and will send Sally Foster a bequest of $30,000. Gradually, the Fosters move in their world of fantasy where they are rich, and their wealth increases highly. So they are waiting for the death of the distant relative as a miracle, good news, opportunity for wealthy happiness. The narration turns into a satiric description in the paragraph:

> Now came great news! Stunning news – joyous news, in fact. It came from a neighboring state, where the family's only surviving relative lived. It was Sally's relative – a sort of vague and indefinite uncle or second or third cousin by the name of Tilbury Foster, seventy and a bachelor, reputed well off and corresponding sour and crusty. (Tuckey 499)

However, the paragraph contains not only an exaggerated description of the main characters' hypocrisy. The paragraph ends with indirect warning to the Fosters; this statement is both philosophic and bitter: "and should leave him thirty thousand dollars, cash; not for love, but because money had given him most of his troubles and exasperations, and he wished to place it where there was good hope that it would continue its malignant work" (Tuckey 499). Nevertheless, the Foster did not notice the warning, they were lost in their world of dreams and aspirations for wealthy future; it was the time when "All day long the music of those inspiring words sang through those people's heads" (500). They forgot about love and care, they almost stopped being interested in their children. So the narration continues with an ironic hint - "There was no romance-reading that night [...] The good-night kisses might as well have been impressed upon vacancy [...] the parents were not aware of the kisses, and the children had been gone an hour before their absence was noticed" (500). Further in the narration, the time of the Fosters waiting desperately for the bequest is presented satirically:

> The grand interest, the supreme interest, came instantly to the front again; nothing could keep it in the background many minutes on a stretch. The couple took up the puzzle of the absence of Tilbury's death-notice. They discussed it every which way, more or less hopefully, but they had to finish where they began, and concede that the only really sane explanation of the absence of the notice must be – and without doubt was – that Tilbury was not dead. (Tuckey 504)

The satiric voice in the narration intensifies just in several paragraphs when the Fosters are informed that the distant relative is finally dead - "he was dead, he had died to schedule. He was dead more than four days now and used to it; entirely dead, perfectly dead, as dead as any other new person in the cemetery [...]" (Tuckey 505). In this and further narration Twain focuses on the idea that with the increasing wealth of the Fosters, their moral values of the good trained Christians collapse. Thus they forget and ignore their family and its happiness –

since they receive the news of the relative's death, they make their business plans prior. Twain treats this turning point in the Fosters' life rather ironically:

> By and by Aleck subscribed to a Chicago daily and for the Wall Street Pointer. With an eye single to finance she studied these as diligently all the week as she studied her Bible Sundays. Sally was lost in admiration, to note with what swift and sure strides her genius and judgment developed and expanded in the forecasting and handling of the securities of both the material and spiritual markets. (Tuckey 507)

Thus the motif of the mysterious stranger is implied in the distant relative, whose death brings in the life of the Fosters nothing but a blind temptation for the wealthy future, a thoughtless desire and anxiety, and, finally, ruins their balanced life completely. So a tragic outcome in their life reveals a bitter conclusion in the narration:

> Money had brought him misery, and he took his revenge upon us, who had done him no harm. He had his desire: with base and cunning calculation he left us but thirty thousand, knowing we would try to increase it, and ruin our life and break our hearts. Without added expense he could have left us far above desire of increase, far above the temptation to speculate, and a kinder soul would have done it; but in him was no generous spirit, no pity, no -. (Tuckey 522)

All in all, the story, being ironic and satiric at the beginning, draws the conclusion which belonged to Twain when he had moments of frustration and a bitter philosophic critique. His personal recollections and philosophic disputes influenced the narrative of the story. At the same time, Twain's comic voice is still strong in the text. It serves to contrast perfectly with some gloomy inner speculations in his later years. His comic talent still survives and assists in drawing the attention of his readers, rather than frightening them by some pessimistic observations. Twain warns his readers of not ignoring both happy and sad moments of life. This warning is presented in a varied number of comic techniques, from friendly ironic to sadly sarcastic.

In conclusion, it is evident that in his later years Mark Twain had his personal struggle with the priorities in his career. He could not agree with human ignorance and blind faith; he criticized cases of contradictions in the Bible and inaccuracy in the narratives of some genres and books of his contemporaries. Thus his comic talent and his flair to change even tragedy into farce and burlesque supported his writing style when he had to focus his narrative on some serious topic. Moreover, his comic talent was at times hard for Twain to control, so he had to rush into different comic forms – from ironic observations to sarcastic conclusions. At the same time, in his final years there were times when Twain preferred to change his comic voice. These were the moments when the writer preferred to be a curious observer, a silent admirer or an amateur zoologist. All these new roles of Twain, the other shades of his comic

talent can be defined in his later writings featuring the characters of animals. The peculiarities of Twain's comic rhetoric style in these later writings will be introduced in the following sub-chapter of this chapter.

2.4 Animals

In this sub-chapter the study of humor and other forms of comic in the writings featuring animals will be presented. To begin with, the stories featuring animals in the later career of Mark Twain are considerably important to be included in the research. This choice is based on the fact that the later sketches and essays featuring animal characters present an opposite perspective of Mark Twain in the role of a philosopher and a critic. In these works, the writer appears more in the role of an amateur zoologist who enjoys observing the world of animals when he can recognize some common features between animals and man. Humor and comic forms of irony, satire and sarcasm can be considered as the prior means for Mark Twain in the role of a curious observer when he announced his ideas of Darwin's theory and the position of man and the nature of man as an animal. As Shelley Fisher Fishkin (2009) noticed in the book *Mark Twain's Book of Animals*, "more writing focused on animals during the last two decades of his life than he had in his entire career up to that point" (19). This observation can be explained by Twain's personal disappointment in the role of human in the universe and his strong worship of animals. According to Fisher Fishkin's observation, "Twain grew increasingly disappointed with his fellow human beings for a broad range of reasons in the last decades of his life. Their treatment of animals was right up there with other failings – cupidity, greed, hypocrisy, arrogance, pride – the list was long" (279). Due to this reason, Twain preferred to embody his own life-long experiences in the animal characters of his later writings. At the same time, there were the animals that Twain hated. For instance, a fly always embodied death and tragedy in Twain's manuscripts. Through the description of a fly Twain expressed his constant anger towards injustices and his evident disillusions towards God. That is why, the stories featuring animals combined both the writer's sincere worship or love towards animals, and the writer's pessimistic and disillusioned voice.

What is more important, from "1899 until his death in 1910, Mark Twain lent his pen to reform efforts on both sides of the Atlantic and became the best-known American author – and, indeed, the most famous American celebrity in any field – to give out-spoken, public support to agitation for animal welfare" (Fishkin 26). So the writer was also the animals' advocate who supported a world-wide struggle against man's cruelty towards animals and medical experiments on live animals. Humor appears in these later writings featuring animals when Twain intended to show man as a grotesque, cruel, irrational and ridiculous creature of God. Due to this point, these writings present cases of irony, sarcasm and satire.

For instance, in his sketch “The Bird with the Best Grammar” Twain ridicules human habits and traits of character. His sarcasm is obvious in an exaggeration like “a vocabularized geyser” in reference to a bird, in the writer's comparison of a blue-jay to an ex-congressman who “will steal, deceive and betray four times of five” and “don't betray to any church” (Fishkin 109). Twain's humorous tone is preserved in the conclusion that “A blue-jay is human; he has got all a man's facilities and a man's weakness. He likes especially scandal; he knows when he is an ass as well as you do” (109). This short story presents Twain's ability to treat human's imperfections in a rather playful yet sarcastic way. Here the writer does not attack a man because of his shortcomings. He suggests that his readers confess to human disadvantages common to all of us.

A similar playful but still sarcastic tone of Mark Twain can be determined in another later short writing entitled “Ants and the True Religion“. In this sketch, Twain describes an experiment with ants when they need to choose their religion with the help of sugar. The narration in this piece of work can be interpreted as the evidence of Twain's curious, but still boyish spirit. His humorous tone can be observed through all the text. Especially, sarcasm appears when Twain concludes about human's need for having his church - “in religious matters the ant is the opposite of man, for man cares for but one thing, to find the only church; whereas the ant hunts for the one with the sugar in it” (Fishkin 110). Twain again presents his critical attitude towards religion; in this very case this critical observation is not displaying his sorrow or pain, on the contrary, Twain is rather teasing his readers. During his later years in the writings describing animals' behavior like “Ants and the True Religion” or “The Bird of Birds” and “The Pious Chameleon” another voice of Mark Twain can be determined – Twain in the role of a curious biologist with a childish spirit, rather than the one of a disillusioned philosopher. In fact, the short stories featuring animals prove the writer's habit of observing the animals, underlining their peculiarities and comparing them to humans. This activity amused Twain and captivated his mind as an amateur scientist. Twain's constant attempt to compare animals and their habits to man entertained the writer and offers an obvious humorous hint in many of these later sketches and essays.

Twain's humor varies from ironic up to more sarcastic by means of numerous cases of hyperbole, similarities, repetitions and epithets. For instance, in the later essay of “The Bird of Birds” Twain describes an Indian crow with an evident amusement and definite humorous implication. First of all, Twain notices ironically about the bird that “he is the hardest lot that wears feathers” and “the cheerfulest and the best satisfied with himself” (Fishkin 131). These cases of hyperbole are followed by a more intense and yet humorous description full of

epithets like “immemorial ages” and “deep calculation” (131). In a few sentences the tone turns to be even more sarcastic when Twain goes on with an enumeration of all the bird's incarnations or “evolutionary promotions” - from “a gambler”, “a dissolute priest”, “a patriot for cash” to “an intruder” and “a busy-body” (131).

Mark Twain was amused not only by comparing animals' habits to man. The writer was truly charmed by the animal's independence and man's naive belief that he/she can tame it. For example, in a later sketch “The Independent-Minded Magpie” there are ironic observations in the narration about a tamed but still independent magpie that “The lady had tamed him, and in return he had tamed the lady” (Fishkin 130). Further on, in another sentence the writer concludes ironically and with an evident sympathy for the bird that “if he was asked to sing he would go out and take a walk” (130). Self-irony and ironic attitude towards human's traits and imperfections (man's cruelty, stupidity and his overstatement of one's role and importance) is a commonly used form that can be detected in the humorous tone of the narration in the later writings featuring animals. This ironic or at times self-ironic voice is usually created by means of exaggeration, nonsense or ridicule in the context of the narration. For instance, in the story entitled “Hunting the Deceitful Turkey” an exaggerated, though still nonsensical and self-ironic narration can be determined: “I followed an ostensibly lame turkey over a considerable part of the United States one morning, because I believed in her and could not think she would deceive a mere boy, and one who was trusting her and considering her honest. I had the single-barreled shot-gun, but my ideas was to catch her alive” (137). Or in another short story of “Rosa and the Crows” Twain refers to an animal's high intellect. The whole story sounds more like an anecdote when an obvious ridicule appears. However, Twain's irony is not addressed personally to the character of Rosa. In fact, the writer sympathizes with her. Moreover, Twain just wants people to be aware of the animal's intellect – and an underestimation of this fact can lead to the situation when a person can find himself in a ridiculous, comic position or role. Due to this reason, the narration moves to the description when the character of Rosa is in comic situation - “She had spread out and stuck up an old umbrella to do service as a scarecrow, and was sitting on the porch waiting to see what the marauders would think of it. She had not long to wait; soon rain began to fall, and the crows pulled up corn and carried it under the umbrella and ate it -with thanks to the provider of the shelter!” (154).

Intermittently, depending upon the topic and emotional involvement, Twain's ironic tone referring to the human race alters to a more sarcastic voice. When the narration is engaged into a more philosophic or deterministic dispute in the text, the writer's involvement becomes

more emotional. For instance, in Twain's later sketch entitled “The Jungle Discusses Man” several sarcastic observations and references regarding the human race can be found. Ridicule and sarcasm can be detected in the context when the narration refers to the topic that a human being is God's favorite pet and best creature. Animals wonder about men:

> “Are they good?”
> “Better than any other God's creatures, my lord. It is their constant boast; it is a cold day when they forget to give themselves that praise.” (Fishkin 157)

The same sarcastic tone is found when the narration goes on with the topic of human habit of being ashamed to be naked:

> “Don't they know that God sees them naked?”
> “Certainly.”
> “Land! and they don't mind *Him*? It must be a dirty-minded animal that will be nasty in God's presence and ashamed to be nasty in the presence of his own kind.” (Fishkin 158)

The first-person narration from the side of the animal characters assists in Twain's intention to ridicule human ignorance, pride and prejudice. More than that, this kind of narration assists in Twain being presented as an advocate of the idea that animals possess high intellect and feelings. Putting the animal in the role of a smart observer and honest judge of the human race, Twain deliberately wants his readers to see how people can sometimes act in such a ridiculous and absurd way.

Being a social and political critic, Twain introduced satire and ridicule in his later short piece of work entitled “The President Hunts a Cow”; in this piece of work Twain's criticism and ridicule was addressed to Roosevelt, the president of the USA, in particular. Referring to the description in the narration of the story, Twain's causticity was introduced to satirize the politician's habit to show off and extol the events and actions of no particular importance. Due to this point of view, cases of deliberate exaggeration and obvious ridicule can be found in the text. For instance, Twain uses such epithets referring the personality of Roosevelt - “the great hunter”, “his Excellency”; or when the narrator concludes sarcastically about the president that “he got so much moonshine glory” (Fishkin 232). In the text several cases of hyperbole can be identified when the narrator introduces the description of an ordinary event, the hunt, yet extolled by the press - “Two colossal historical incidents took place yesterday; incidents which must go echoing down the corridors of time for ages; incidents which can never be forgotten while histories shall continue to be written” (231). In fact, Twain was rather and thoroughgoing in his criticism of some politicians, political systems or regimes. In such cases, the writer's humorous tone always transformed into rigorous satire and sarcasm. More than

that, referring to the topics of politics or religion, Twain preferred to ridicule, denounce and expose the goals of his criticism.

It can be also suggested that the degree of attack and criticism varies a form of the comic in Twain's later writings – from irony to sarcasm or a sardonic statement; it depends considerably on the topic and subject of each piece of work in particular. When being sentimental or sympathetic, the voice of Twain is mostly ironic in the story. For instance, in his later sketch entitled "The Victims" the writer introduces an ironic narration about Little Johnny Microbe who wants to go to a picnic with others germs and microbes – a case of Twain's ridicule in a frame of a fantasy. In this story Twain's ironic narration can be explained due to the writer's evident sympathy towards Little Johnny Microbe who personifies a little naive child who searches for new discoveries and experiences in the adult's world, rather than a kind of an odious microbe. Nevertheless, a more sarcastic tone of Twain appears when he refers to the topics of social injustice, human's cruelty and greed, a tradition of hunting or slavery in this sketch:

> [...] and traded them to an Arab land-pirate for a cargo of captive black women and children and sold them to a good Christian planter who promised to give them religious instruction and considerable to do, and blest the planter and shook hands good-bye, and said "By cracky this is the way to extend our noble civilization", and loaded up again and Went for More. (Fishkin 143-144)

In this paragraph Twain's critique and sarcasm can be addressed to a human's habit of having a kind of sports motivation when hunting. According to the writer's point of view, this motivation revealed a man's true cruelty and greed. On the contrary, the intelligence of animals and sincere devotion to humans promoted Twain's voice of adoration, sympathy, nostalgia and sentimentality in the later writings. For instance, in his later manuscript "A Dog's Tale" (1903) Twain might have presented his personal position of an animal's advocate and as an opponent of any kind of vivisection. The voice of Twain's sympathy and a touching description of the animal's devotion were so manifest that soon after the story's appearance in 1903 in *Harper's Magazine*; "there is such a charming, blending of humor and pathos, coupled with appeal to our sensibilities" (qtd. in Budd, *The Contemporary Reviews* 541). This later piece of work can be hardly defined as a humorous one. Nevertheless, a few cases of irony can be defined in the narration when Twain's critique towards human race appears. Especially when describing the dog's mother, an ironic tone is obvious – about her habit to tell long words, the meaning of which she even did not know: "she liked to say them, and see other dogs look surprised, and envious, as wondering how she got so much education" (Fishkin 165). This ironic observation can be interpreted as a witty reference to human habit

to boast and put himself/herself in a higher position than others. Another case of irony appears on her frequent use of some words, unfamiliar and complicated for both her and others - “she had one word which she always kept on hand, and ready, like a life-preserver, a kind of emergency word to strap on when she was likely to get washed overboard in a sudden way – that was the word Synonymous” (166). The ridicule in the context is focused on the absurdity of the situation when ignorance is redoubled while the dog's mother pretends to be well-educated in the eyes of the illiterate audience. In the first part of the story, the narration idealizes the dog's mother and presents her as kind, gentle and well-educated; however, while a further description when a narrator grows up, the character of the mother develops and refers more and indirectly to satirize human's race, its hypocrisy, ignorance and cruelty.

In the conclusion of this sub-chapter it is important to mention that, in his final years, Mark Twain's focus on animals and animal characters can be explained not only because of his disappointment with human race. Many of his late writings suggest that Twain sincerely enjoyed the company of animals – he entertained and frequently observed the animals' habits with evident scientific and philosophic interests. These activities obviously promoted the writer's positive feelings and emotions. In its turn, a humorous tone in the description of these activities was usually ironic and witty. Moreover, these activities let him compare animals to human beings; this comparison led to a definite humanization of animal characters – so that first-person narration was usually presented from the side of an animal character in these later writings. This technique increased a comic effect and presented Twain's personal critique from a more emotionally involved perspective. At times, the critique included a deeper description of human cruelty, greed or ignorance. At this point, the writer's anger was fueled and promoted a reversal of his ironic tone into a more radical sarcastic, satirical or even sardonic voice. However, at times, Mark Twain treated human imperfections with a more sentimental attitude. Together with animal characters, the story of Adam and Eve promoted Twain's “comic treatment of the thematic issues of creation and the working out of God's law” (Sloane, *Student Companion* 169). Both comic and sentimental treatments of a love story between Adam and Eve suggest the idea that Mark Twain was not frustrated totally – he left his hope and humor to believe in the power of their love. Further considerations concerning the story of Adam and Eve will be presented in the following part of the research.

2.5 Adam and Eve

In the later writings of Mark Twain there were those characters in which he combined his philosophical and humorous voices. These were the manuscripts featuring his favorite Biblical characters of Adam and Eve. During his later years Mark Twain wrote several pieces featuring the main characters of the couple from Eden. Twain's interest in these Biblical characters had a life-long history. They were presented in some of his earlier works, for example, in *Innocents Abroad* (1869) or in *Huckleberry Finn* (1885). According to Howard G. Baetzhold and Joseph B. McCullough, in 1901 or 1902 "Mark Twain decided that Eve should tell her side of the story" (Baetzhold and McCullough xviii). In these later pieces of "Extracts from Adam's Diary" (1897) and "Eve's Diary" (1905), the couple of Eden is presented according to Twain's personal convictions and with an evident tribute to his own experiences. That is why the writer's sentimentality, sympathy and irony can be noticed. Again, these later pieces of writings differ from the others on religion and human race. In these works Twain's sardonic and critical voice is softened by his sympathy and sentiment when he introduces the characters of Adam and, especially, Eve. According to Twain's point of view, the character of Adam embodies the real man who is not that smart or intelligent, though, the one who possesses ego and conviction that he is the central figure in the world. At the same time, in "Extracts from Adam's Diary" (1897) Twain does not attack Adam for his ignorance and arrogance. He gives Adam the chance to announce his side of the story when he met Eve. The development of the relationships between Adam and Eve is presented with deep sympathy, sentiment and humor by Mark Twain. The choice of telling the story from the side of Adam, first-person narration, creates definite comic effect and ironic attitude of Twain. To begin with, Adam calls Eve "the new creature" (Fishkin 144) and only later he chooses to call her "she". The angrier he turns to be, the sillier he looks in the eyes of the reader. And the comic effect increases. For instance, Adam states that "The tigers ate my horse, paying no attention when I ordered them to desist" (145). According to Twain's attitude, this line of words proves human wrong conviction about his place in the universe. Adam's attempt to conduct the world of animals and nature is evidently ridiculed by Mark Twain.

However, Twain gave his character, Adam, a chance to get better through the progress of his relationships with Eve. Twain shows that Adam is capable to love and care, though, in his particular way. In support of this idea, the character of Adam confesses about Eve that "She is a good deal of a companion. I see I should be lonesome and depressed without her, now that I

lost my property. Another thing: she says it is ordered that we work for our living, hereafter. She will be useful. I will superintend" (qtd. in Fisher Fishkin 145). In this passage the ironic effect is achieved by Adam's superficial interpretation of his inner feelings towards Eve. A more evident comic effect and ironic tone of Twain can be detected in Adam's attempt to describe his new-born child:

> In my judgment it is either an enigma; or some kind of a bug [...] I have called it Kangaroorum Adamiensis [...] the kangaroo still continues to grow [...] it has fur on its head, now; not like kangaroo fur, but exactly like our hair [...] I am like to lose my mind over the capricious and harassing developments of this unclassifiable zoological freak [...] I pity the poor noisy little animal […]. (Fishkin 146-147)

The comic effect is achieved in this example by Adam's sincere yet clumsy way of identification of a new-born human being. The names given by Adam vary from "a bug", "freak" to a neologism "Kangaroorum Adamiensis". In his turn, Adam does not even try to think logically and understand that this child is his, that he is the same human being. This arrogance, irrationality and simple stupidity of the character can be interpreted as the ironic attitude of Twain towards human race in general. Even when the child starts to speak the same language as his parents, Adam comes to the conclusion that "Taken together with general absence of fur and entire absence of tail, sufficiently indicates that this is a new kind of bear" (Fishkin 148). Twain introduces the character of Adam as the one who is ignorant, not curious, not open-minded, and not positive. He is not capable to understand or to listen to others.

Nevertheless, in the later writings featuring the couple from Eden the comic effect is achieved not only by means of revealing Adam's stupidity and ignorance. The ironic voice of Twain can be indicated even more by putting the character of Eve in contrast to Adam's. More than that, the character of Adam cannot understand or interpret it in the right way why Eve is searching for living in balance and peace with nature. He ignores nature and its creatures. On the contrary, Eve is looking for harmony and friendship within nature and among its creatures. Adam notices about Eve "If there is anything on the planet that she is not interested in it is not in my list. There are animals that I am indifferent to, but it is not so with her. She has no discrimination, she takes to all of them, she thinks they all treasures, every new one is welcome" (Fishkin 179-180). In fact, the character of Eve is presented with Twain's most sincere sentiment, sympathy, care and love. And this attitude towards Eve shows Twain's pessimistic and disillusioned perception of the damned human race; the perception considered to be a prevailing one in his later career and life.

The positivity in Twain's regard towards the character of Eve can be interpreted as his personal tribute and reference to his own love and care towards his female family members, his wife and daughters. In “Eve's Diary” the character of Eve is absolutely opposed to the one of Adam. Instead of Adam who denies everything because of his narrow-minded and sketchy thinking, Eve first gives several hypotheses and then concludes in a more logic and rational way. She is very curious and constantly searching for new discoveries and knowledge. Her character enjoys talking, getting acquainted with the world and taking care of other creatures. She is fully devoted to her love, Adam. Though, her devotion and love can be only explained by a wide range of her feelings towards Adam. Written the year after Olivia's death, “Eve's Diary” “constitutes the author's moving eulogy to his wife” (Baetzhold and McCullough 19). At the same time, this piece of work displays Twain's sentimental references to his own experiences, rather than his moments of grief and pessimism. Moreover, the moments of sentiment are enriched by Twain's frequent humorous and ironic mood. For instance, the story of Eve starts with the words “I am almost a whole day old now” (Baetzhold and McCullough 20). A case of hyperbole in the first-person narration creates an evident ironic tone. The character of Eve is Twain's embodiment of an absolute femininity; a female with perfect traits and ambitions. She does her best to create her universe of balance, peace, love and care. That is why, in the first-person narration in “Eve's Diary” mostly such epithets as noble, beautiful, perfect, adorable and pretty, and others appear. She admires nature and she adores each creature surrounding her. The descriptions in the way of the first-person narration also show that Twain treats Eve with tenderness, adoration and a bit humorously. In contrast to the frequent ironic tone of Twain in Adam's storytelling, with Eve Twain implies his humorous tone at times in a more cautious manner. For instance, when Eve tries to describe a reptile with much diligence and logic. The comic effect appears only at the end of her detailed explanation. Moreover, it can be considered funny not because of the stupidity, but more because of the lack of experience. Her reasoning of her point of view resembles the monologue of a small child. So Eve explains that “If it is a reptile, and I suppose it is; it tapers like a carrot; when it stands, it spreads itself apart like a derrick; so I think it is a reptile, though it may be architecture” (22). The nonsensical conclusion at the end of this statement creates a definite comic effect.

The narration of Eve is totally controlled by her temperament and impulse. She relies only on her inner feelings; these very feelings make her give precise names to the new things she discovers around her. Some humorous tone of Twain can be detected when Eve sincerely and emotionally confesses that she likes to talk a lot - “for I love to talk; I talk all day, and in my

sleep, too, and I am very interesting, but if I had another to talk to I could be twice as interesting, and would never stop, if desired" (Baetzhold and McCullough 23). This paragraph can also be considered as a reference to a commonly known prejudice about woman's habit to talk a lot. However, in this narration this reference is made more with love and care, rather than with criticism or mockery. In "Eve's Diary" (1905), the character of Eve is naive and feminine. She is sincerely happy when Adam is near her. The moments of sorrow or "heavy days" (24) happen when Adam avoids Eve and hurts her deeply. And Eve wisely concludes that "it gives me dark moments, it spoils my happiness, it makes me shiver and tremble and shudder. But I could not persuade him, for he has not discovered fear yet, and so he could not understand me" (28). More than that, it can be considered that the character of Eve and a touching description of their relationships from the side of Eve could be inspired by Twain's idealization of his wife's image and nostalgic memories concerning his personal relationships with Olivia. The idealized character of Eve in "Autobiography of Eve"[9] studies nature, gives logical explanations and reasons, and, what is even more important, admires Adam. For Eve, "Love, peace, comfort, measureless contentment – that was life in the Garden" (53). The positivity in Eve's treatment of her relationships with Adam inspired sentimentality in the narration. More than that, this nostalgia lets a subtly humorous tone appear through the lines. In its relation to the character of Eve, this ironic tone is completely supported by Twain's positive emotions of adoration, sympathy and care. It is mostly explained by the fact that Eve has the passion to explore the world and live in peace within it by "studying, learning, inquiring into the cause and nature and purpose of everything we came across" (54). A more perceptible ironic tone can be found when Eve explains her love, devotion and affection for Adam - "but I do not love Adam on account of his singing – no, it is not that; the more he signs the more I do not get reconciled to it" (31). For Eve, "It is not on account of his brightness that I love him – no, it is not that" (31). Finally, she finds out that her love can be simply explained by the fact that Adam is a man, as he is - "Then why is it that I love him? *Merely because he is masculine*, I think" or "Yes, I think I love him merely because he is *mine* and is *masculine*. There is no other reason, I suppose" (32). So from the side of Eve's narration, Twain treats her relationships with Adam both tenderly and humorously.

For Twain, the relationships of Adam and Eve symbolized not only his own with Olivia – for the writer these relationships were the symbol of youth and careless, light-hearted times. In support of this, Eve noticed in "Autobiography of Eve" that "So he told me who he was,

[9] According to Tom Quirk (2007), Twain wrote the manuscript in 1901-1902. See Quirk 276.

and who Satan was, and we laughed and cackled over it like the giddy children we were. Oh, careless Youth! oh, golden Youth!" (Baetzhold and McCullough 52) Moreover, Adam's and Eve's affection to each other is displayed in an ironic, yet careful and tender way. Twain's treatment of the story is sentimental when he observes their life story with love, care and subtly ironic critique. He also notices how they, being young and passionate, enjoy the company of each other - they spend time together with moments of teasing and play, like naughty children, who never expect to face "such a thing as grief and heartbreak in the world" (53). Due to this, the narration is accompanied by a tenderly ironic tone:

> "Actually touched me?"
> "One might call it so. Kissed you while you slept."
> "Oh, if I could have known it! But it was better so. It was very indelicate."
> "Criminal, too; it was robbery. Put up your mouth – I will give them back."
> It was done.
> "Adam, if you loved me so, why did you give me such a poor thing as that dandelion?"
> "That was only to test you, dear. I said, if she keeps that, I'll know she loves me."
> (Baetzhold and McCullough 53)

Being a keen observer, Twain records all the positive shades in the relationships of Adam and Eve by means of the first-person narration on behalf of Eve. The humorous tone is tuned to a more ironic one when Eve's narration changes its focus from their relationships to the character of Adam. Moreover, Twain's treatment changes its focus from idealization and nostalgia to a more critical tone, but still tender and humorous. A subtle ridicule of the weak points in the nature of the human race can be determined in the ironic observations about Adam. In support of this idea, it can be mentioned when Eve observes about her beloved man that: "It is he that is building the Dictionary – as he thinks – but I have noticed that it is I who do the work." or that "His spelling is unscientific. He spells cat with a k, and catastrophe with a c, although both are from the same root" (Baetzhold and McCullough 59).

In conclusion, it is important to remark that love story of Adam and Eve was of particular importance and very personal for Mark Twain in his later years. First of all, his attitude towards their story was supported with love, tender and subtle irony – that is contrary to his frequently critical and to some extent desperate attitude towards human race. For the writer, Eve symbolized the best traits of a human race. In his turn, Adam symbolized human imperfections. In his perspective, the character of Eve was a collective image of a person who was wise, prudent, provident and sincere and who was searching for peace, love and harmony in the world of nature. Twain treated the character with affection, adoration and tender. The same feelings can be found in the humorous tone of the narration in the name of Eve.

In his turn, Adam's character was treated by Twain in a more ironic manner. Mostly, it can be explained because of the writer's deliberate presentation of Adam with definite imperfections, common to a human race in general – pride, arrogance, egoism, a blind exaltation of oneself. However, Twain gives this character a chance by means of his evolution and improvement through his relationships with Eve. In fact, these relationships symbolize personally for Mark Twain the best time of his life with his wife, Olivia. For him, the description of the relationships between Adam and Eve embodies his personal memories when he and Olivia were younger, carefree and in love. More than that, the description of Adam and Eve in Eden symbolizes Twain's nostalgia. Due to this, the humorous tone in the writings featuring this couple of Eden is conducted in a special manner with care, devotion and tenderness.

2.6 Conclusion

In the conclusion of this chapter, it is necessary to point out that Mark Twain's bitterness and pessimism cannot be defined as the dominant features in his later writings. The rhetorical style in these writings was more diverse and complex, and the moments of emotional and satirical criticism can be traced in the earlier manuscripts. It is evident that Twain's life-long concern about religious issues, social injustice and imperfections of human nature gave Twain an opportunity to present the diversity of the world, together with a contradictory position of man in this universe. In spite of ambiguity and complexity in his rhetoric and narrative, one factor is clear – he never accepted the blindness of people to social injustice, or the blindness in human traditions to follow religious doctrines. Even in the earlier masterpiece of Twain *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer,* critics could find evidence of Twain's pessimistic side in his comic style. Joseph S. Feeney (1978) suggested that "under its bright surface runs a current of dark bitterness, a bitterness often present in its most humorous moment" (Feeney 4). He claimed that bitterness and cynicism of Mark Twain were presented both in the early and later writings. Furthermore, Feeney stated that religion brings only tragedy in the life of a young boy, Tom Sawyer, and "is found ineffective, destroys happiness and boyish joy, brings fear and repression, and is the butt of jokes and situation comedy" (Feeney 5). The setting of the society in *No. 44, the Mysterious Stranger* (1916) and in "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg" (1898) brought similarities with the depiction of St. Petersburg in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* – it was corrupted from within, full of lies, burlesque and exaggeration. People in all these writings, earlier and later, were lost in their religious delusions and own hypocrisy.

Thus in his later works it is evident that the more dogmatic his characters were, the more ridicule and burlesque could be noticed in the comic rhetoric of the narration. Going back to the figure of Mary Baker Eddy, the description of her figure could not conceal sarcastic criticism. Sarcasm, ridicule, parody, irony and an evident critical position of the writer served to be an attempt to explain the tragedies and injustices of man that could be caused by religious blindness and human hypocrisy. This highly emotional and personally involved combination of ridicule and criticism "of most institutions and people seem to constantly go back to the failure of the institution for the individual to face reality or truth and the insistence on hiding truth or reality behind some religious sham or political verbiage passing for uprightness" (Hays 33). At the same time, Twain "had not abandoned belief in a Creator and seems to have equated that Creator with natural laws" (33). So again it is evident that Twain

was still searching for the truth in his later manuscripts – he hesitated, debated and struggled with his personal doubts in his philosophical and personal interpretations. And this struggle and confusion can be traced through the lifelong career of the writer. Hays comes to the following conclusion about Twain's diversity:

> One side of him knew; the other side hoped. Sometimes one voice was louder than the other, but both voices were always present. Though this division is evident from Clemens's earliest experiences to his later writing, it does not [...] add up to a final negation of life, of the damned human race, of the universe, or of God. (Hays 11-12)

More than that, this diversity in Twain's attitudes towards definite issues and problematic topics can prove the fact that Twain cannot be regarded only as a skeptical pessimist who entered the years of decline and total frustration in his later years. Though, his moral and religious satires possessed the tone of criticism and even despair in many of his later manuscripts and sketches. However, in others his interpretation of mankind or religion sounded more weighted, ironic and balanced. Twain's criticism was less desperate by means of ironic or witty observations in sketches or essays featuring animal characters. Comic effect could increase its impact when animal characters were anthropomorphized in the narration. By means of this strategy, more attention could be drawn to a dark side of human habits or traits of character in a less desperate manner. What is more important, animal characters were generally treated with Twain's sincere sympathy and adoration when he preferred to present them as wise, sincere and devoted creatures, opposite to human cruelty, greed or hypocrisy.

Twain's attitude was similar toward children and juvenile characters in his later years. And reasoning thus the character of Bessie together with her charming sincerity and courage created rather amusing, less pessimistic perspective of Twain's criticism in the later manuscript. His skepticism was more balanced and less desperate when Bessie's clever arguments were opposed to nonsense in her mother's narrow-minded explanations of the role of God in human destiny and life. The character of a stranger also served to balance Twain's skepticism in the character's opposition to human demerits. This opposition promoted comic effect in the narration when rhetoric forms varied from nonsense, farce or burlesque, and up to parody or exaggeration. Finally, in his later manuscripts featuring the characters of Adam and Eve, Twain's voices of despair and frustration were smoothed over because of Twain's deep sentiment and sympathy for these characters. Comic effect was provoked by the polarity of men and women when the character of Eve, simply passionate and enthusiastic, was opposed to the character of Adam, usually simply cynical and superior. This evident polarity of men

and women created Twain's brilliant satire and irony when his skepticism toward human nature turned to be less desperate.

In conclusion, Mark Twain could not deny himself the opportunity to interpret his critical or skeptical ideas about controversial topics of God and human nature. Thus, Twain's personal debate about religion and social issues was a part of his life-long concern with "unconsciously absorbed deep-rooted spiritual contradictions which illuminate the man's long-life rebellion against God" (Hays 27) and "early and late Clemens was a man of immensely eclectic religious views" (Hays 4). However, his inner rebellion against God was not always so fierce, though, always very emotionally involved. Definite motives and characters promoted Twain's critical position, less desperate and more balanced. Comic effect usually appeared to support this more or less balanced criticism when these characters were opposed to the universe full of human demerits. Mark Twain was not limited to one or two comic strategies; on the contrary, his rhetoric style presented a diverse complex of comic forms and humorous tones.

His humorous style assisted Twain's other side of his later public life and career – it was essential feature of his public oratory and performances, including his interviews and speeches. Twain's comic voice in these public activities can be interpreted in the research as a valid proof of the moments when Twain purely enjoyed life and could cope with some negative aspects of his later life in a more balanced manner. The analysis of the writer's humorous style in his later speeches and interviews will be introduced in the following Chapter 3.

Chapter 3. Mark Twain's Style of Humor in His Later Public Activities

3.1 Introduction

Mark Twain's later career and public life did not include only his activities of the writer. Presentation of Twain's public portrait cannot be considered full-scaled without mentioning him as "a great American orator" (Vallin 3) and "the famous American author and humorist"[10]. Moreover, Twain's strategies of comic approach in later manuscripts were opposite to those in his public performances or interviews. In his later manuscripts, Twain's criticism was loud and harsh when he left many of his later works unpublished so that not to ruin his public fame. On the other hand, in his speeches and interviews Twain followed opposite strategies when his skills of a famous humorist could support his criticism to be less desperate. Due to this reason, in this chapter it is necessary to present a balanced conception of Twain in his later public life through the study of the role of Twain's humorous style in his numerous public activities when his humorous talent was especially noticeable during his numerous performances in front of the audience or in the interviews with him. This analysis of the role and style of Twain's comic rhetoric gives an opportunity to interpret the writer's public image from many perspectives.

In any case, Twain's humorous voice differed when he was giving an interview or when he was performing to an audience. Due to this fact, Chapter 3 is divided into two sub-chapters. In the sub-chapter 3.2 the main goal is to define Mark Twain's image of a humorist and his humorous style as the objects of the public's judgment through the words of the journalists and interviewers when he entered the final years of his life. By this approach, I will suggest a sufficiently objective perspective of Twain when he entered his later years of world-wide fame and adoration. In the sub-chapter 3.3 this perspective will be supported by the analysis of Twain's strategies of comic approach introduced from the point of the writer himself when he created his public reputation through his numerous speeches and performances. All together, these two perspectives suggest to introduce a sufficiently balanced view of Mark Twain as a famous orator and humorist when he entered his final years.

Generally speaking, the most common role of Mark Twain in public was that of "a great humorist"[11]. In his book entitled *Our Mark Twain*, Louis J. Budd (1983) claimed that most of the newspapers found the writer to be "a star of all public feasts" (Budd 2). Twain was "a

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[10] See Scharnhorst (2006), (Scharnhorst 525). In *Seattle Star*, 30 November 1905.
[11] See Bloom (2003), (Bloom 197).

national cultural hero" (Regan 87) of his times; and most of the journalists presented overwhelming by positive reaction towards his works. According to perspective in the press, the writer was defined as "the man of boundless optimism, who has never troubled to understand the great tragedies of nations" (7); and most of the printed media found his humor delicate with specific cases of "tender ironies" and "merry quips" (7). However, Twain himself occasionally intended to define directly or indirectly his popularity and fame of "the great humorist." The writer enjoyed this role of one of the most famous and funniest man of his times. Even in his later years he found it possible to enjoy the moments of his fame – the writer admitted once about his mood in the public -"I have had lots of fun [...] I have enjoyed myself [...]" (Neider, *Life as I Find It* 333) In the interview on October 1900 Twain observed both ironically and sadly that "fate has its revenge on the humorist. Now, I have lied so much, in a genial, good-natured way, of course, that people won't believe me when I speak the truth" (Scharnhorst 352). These words prove the writer's ironic intention to make hints about the idea that humorists were not considered serious philosophers in the eyes of the public. Twain pointed at the tradition of the society of not taking the words of humorists as some considerable judgments – the society needed to be entertained by means of skillful humorous strategies.

More than that, it can be noticed that the newspapers possessed an obvious intention to mollify the writer's later period in order to represent Twain from the most agreeable perspective in the view of the public. Most of the interviewers reported about the humorist's "hearty voice" (Scharnhorst 461) and his ability of being always pleasant and hospitable with them. All in all, it can be suggested that the public persona of Mark Twain presented in his interviews and articles can be defined from two major perspectives:

- Public perspective introduced by Mark Twain himself when he appeared in numerous meetings with journalists and interviewers.
- Public perspective presented by journalists in these interviews (the image of the writer was probably created due to extra circumstances – the journalist's interpretation or the editor's/newspapers' opinions and views)

Initially speaking, the writer's fame and his humorous activities (jokes, anecdotes and funny stories from life) can be considered as the central objects for the journalists in their articles or interviews with Mark Twain. However, the style of his humorous activities was interpreted from different perspectives by the media. Some newspapers explained that Twain "posed, if it could be called posing, only in the humorous spirit", yet another suggested that his "affections" were only "acted satires" (Budd 17). All in all, as it was noticed in one of the

obituaries from *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, Twain was an "architect of his own reputation" (19). This suggestion can be interpreted as an observation that the writer could control himself his own image in the public, and he was always aware of how to act in front of the audience.

At the same time, humor was constantly the central issue for the public's attention focused on Mark Twain through all his career and life. Again, Louis J. Budd (1983) suggested that "the most important social fact about Twain was not humor but Twain as humorist, a likeable personality who expanded into a comic hero" (Budd 26). This suggestion of the scholar can explain the traditional public's point of view towards the writer's activities. The public was not so much interested in the peculiarities of his humorous activities – on the contrary, the public view together with the journalists created their own image of the writer, the most preferable and acceptable for those times. Together with Twain's constant control of his public performances, the public created their image of a "likeable comic". From time to time, Twain himself "poured oil on the flames "and intensified the public's interest in his "comic" mission. Moreover, he chose the way of "a humorous hero" and ran "willfully comic challenge to the deadly seriousness of his world" (Budd 26).

Generally speaking, the press discussed several topics focused on Mark Twain in the role of the greatest humorist in the headlines. The correspondents and interviewers were widely discussing the following points when the writer entered the final years of his career and life:

- The exterior and interior being of the aging humorist
- His appearances in the public and trips within the USA and abroad as well

In their articles, the journalists noticed that Twain was feeling and looking much younger than his real age. Several examples from the interviews between1900-1903 can prove this prevalent voice of the press's judgments. In the interview on June 1902 the newspaper which was covering Twain's visit to Hannibal announced confidently that the humorist "was a romping boy also, and now 67, famous, with knowledge of every country on the globe" (Scharnhorst 466). More than that, it can be suggested that the writer clearly understood the importance to preserve his role of a forever young popular figure. In their turn, numerous interviews served to maintain contact with the readers and to convince the public of his appearance, the one that contrasted to his real age. Even in 1906, Twain continued to announce that "I'm a young buck, too. I never felt better in my life, and I'd have you know that I'm seventy-one years young at that" (Scharnhorst 583). Later he believed "that he owes the fact that he feels only 14 years old, instead of 72 [...]" (617).

These attempts to oppose himself to his real age can be interpreted as Twain's inner struggles with prejudices in the society of his times. To struggle with these prejudices, he

implied his humorous skills to play with the public judgments. This game was based on opposing his inner enthusiasm and temperament to his image of an aging public figure. More than that, this contrast intrigued the public and inspired more frequent discussion of the writer in the press. So it can be noted that the media's discussions around Mark Twain combined both his deliberate attempts to oppose to his age and his talent of the famous humorist.

However, the public did not show any attempts to explain Mark Twain's extraordinaire behavior. On the other hand, they simplified and explained his attempts to oppose to his age as a kind of his usual humorous strategy by calling Mark Twain "a sort of living and moving anecdote" (Budd 76). Some journalists tried to differentiate types of Twain's comedy – some of these people found it crude or cruel, others preferred to define his ironic attacks as masterfully well-done and relaxing. However, the writer was always aware of the situation, setting of the conversation and the degree of his critical opinion. He could never let himself rush to the bitter sarcasm or crucial conclusions while giving an interview. He possessed a clear understanding of the fact that an anecdote, for instance, could keep "increasing the newspaper traffic" (120). So did the editors of the newspapers. More than that, Twain took the hint that "the ticketholders wanted a live exhibit of his most typical humor" (126). Beyond doubt, the public were longing for the writer's keen observations and aphorisms. In any case, the readers enjoyed the humorist's funny stories from his life and endless jokes on any topic or event. That is why the writer's interviews were properly supported by all these kinds of the humorist's contrivance and verbal tricks.

At the same time, the contradictions involving contrasting aspects of his persona followed the writer through all his life. It can be suggested that in the late years the spirit of defiance intensified. On the one hand, his typical humor of farce, puns and "parody of highbrow tastes" (Budd, *Our Mark Twain* 89) was based on incongruities. His humor could both amuse and offend his audience. In private, it can be even more offensive (in later manuscripts, autobiographic dictations or in private letters). On the other hand, both Twain and the reporters aimed at the positive and agreeable persona of the writer.

Also, it is important to find the answer to the question whether Twain was truly amused and sincerely enjoyed giving the interviews and creating his self-image of an adorable king of humor; if this part of public communication was the opportunity for an emotional relief or it was still considered to be part of his work in public, a kind of promotion or advertising of his fame. Until the very late interviews the writer supported his status of an adorable humorist who was always able to welcome different people in his house. That is why the interviewers continued to admire his public persona by calling him one of the greatest humorists. And very

infrequently they talked about him as a serious philosopher. Twain could easily start entertaining the journalists and the public by means of a pair of jokes in the interviews. He could remember ironically "after a long séance of heavy dining I am simply unbearable. I guess the United States will be glad to get rid of me for a spell" (Scharnhorst 484). This example vividly depicts the writer's attempt to keep being lighthearted when talking about various topics in his late interviews.

On the other hand, there still existed, a different perspective of Twain's public image in the interviews - "his oldest and most intricate poses, that of a Moralist and instructor of Mankind" (Budd 127). Budd suggested that financial failures and private bereavements redoubled the writer's attempts to be more a Moralist in the eyes of the public rather than a kind of a comic hero (since late 1899). Budd (1983) also noticed that Twain's pride was hurt when he had to cope with business failures, so that he could dissociate himself from the term a bad businessman and to deny the "rumors of his decline" (Budd 129). In June 1902 he admitted that "some years ago I looked ten years older than I do today. That was principally because I was bankrupt at the time. The possession of a lot of debts that one cannot pay is not a disgrace, but it brings an indescribable feeling of humiliation" (Scharnhorst 463). So even in several years after he had had problems with the financial well-being, he found it morbidly offensive to find himself in debts. It still hurt his ego and self-confidence.

At times, he could dare to address dark topics in his later interviews. For instance, since 1899 Twain spoke more about aging and death. Periodically, he enjoyed joking or ironically commenting about his own age. However, a tone of seriousness and a hint of thoughtful sadness remained. And that is where he could face his audience in the role of a teacher or a moralist with a philosophical and critical point of view. In one of the interviews of 1902 the journalist observed:

> His genial humor and imagery brought back the days gone, brought back to life men long since dead, and refreshed everybody. His method of distributing diplomas doubtless never has been duplicated. "Take one, take a good one", he said to the graduates. "Now, don't take two, but be sure and get a good one." (Scharnhorst 463)

When Mark Twain initiated his argumentation about life and death in the interviews, his voice of a philosopher was even more penetrating. However, his thoughts about death were not as dark, neither were they were overwhelmingly or immensely pessimistic. It seemed that Twain promoted his own point of view, and these debates on death and old age proved his inner struggle with the approaching old age. Once he admitted in an interview that he did not know "what an easy thing it is to die. I have since learned that it is like falling asleep. The

hands and the feet grow cold, but you do not know it. Then you are in a kind of dream or trance, and you do not understand that you are dead at all until you begin to investigate the matter" (Scharnhorst 466). This interpretation of death from personal perspective of Twain can serve to be a point in the support of the idea that the writer was not completely under the spell of grief and frustration when he discussed this topic in the interview. According to Twain's perspective, death was presented more like irreversible process, the one nobody should be afraid of.

Nevertheless, it can be noticed that Twain still had many moments of grief and dark memories which he could not keep in secret from the public. He was not able to play a constant role of the greatest and most famous comic hero of the USA. Mostly, these moments of public despair were considered by the media as the periods when Twain had health problems. In one of his later interviews (December 1909, in the *New York Times*) with the writer, it was noticed that "an uncooperative" Twain must be seriously ill because he "always had something humorous up his sleeve to drop casually" (Budd 149). Twain's skills of the greatest humorist were considered as the major aspect of his public persona when his comic talent served to be his casual tool of the entertainment that of the people around him, the audience and the reporters. His numerous stories from his own life sounding more like masterfully composed anecdotes were included widely in the press. For instance, the press enthusiastically quoted Twain's witty story in which he and his colleague-writers decided to start their private business by means of writing obituaries:

> "You see," and Mark grew enthusiastic, "this was the greatest money-making contrivance ever devised and, as I was the originator, I naturally in my heart expected to reap the fruits of my originality" [...] "The scheme was simply this: We were to go to various men and offer to write obituaries of their lives before they were dead, for fifty guineas. There would be no money in a corpse, you know, and he would pay for the obituary while he was alive." [...] "We would say to the man: We can write a fine obituary of you; you pay us fifty guineas, we give you the right to have as many copies printed for you as you desire and then we suppress the remainder of the edition." (Scharnhorst 486)

This witty story of the writer revealed his personal ironic attitude towards both the copyright situation in those days in the USA, as well as, his attempt to cope with the possibility of the upcoming old age and, finally, death. This joke can be interpreted as the one with a tone of black humor when Twain could make ironic hints about the topic in a playful manner.

Further on, on the basis of the later interviews with Mark Twain, it can be suggested that even his private losses and failures could not ruin completely his public image of a joyful,

witty humorist and an attractive orator. On the contrary, it can be noted that even the death of the Twain's daughter, Susy, in 1896 could not let him plunge into complete despair when he was in front of the public. In confirmation of this point, one of the journals in 1901 stated that "Twain would carry on his old game of publicity with still greater self-awareness" (Budd 147). Moreover, at Twain's death the *Chicago Tribune* noticed that the writer ''confined much of his more glancing wit to after dinner speeches and interviews" (149) in his later years. Due to this factor, one more question appears immediately – Why did not Mark Twain deny his role of the greatest American humorist after he had to face personal tragedies and failures? Was it a kind of inner defense mechanism or the attempt to cope with inner despair and moral sufferings, a kind of counterargument towards his self-contradictions? All in all, the answer is rooted more in psychological research rather than in the topic of this research. However, one important factor remained in the later years of the writer - the public observers stated confidently that "he could talk on any topic, even the weather, and glorify it with his humor" (149) when "every subject Mark Twain touched on was illustrated by some anecdote" (Scharnhorst 497). The writer knew precisely when and where to strike the public's attention by a witty observation or a funny story. Almost all the journalists found this talent of the public man named Mark Twain as one of the most unique and precious. And that was exactly what made his persona look so young and full of life in the eyes of the spectators or readers even when he entered the age of 70.

In addition, Twain's wit and intellect always supported him in the creation of the most pleasurable variation of his public appearance. The journalists found Twain to be soft and kind in his public humorous performances. In the interview with the humorist, the *Buffalo Express* found his intellect "mercurial" when he was "darting from idea to witticism and back again" (Budd 155). He played skillfully with the reporter's expectations and almost never failed. He could only admit that the failure of his wit was possible in case that the effect of it could be wrongly transformed through the lines of the page. The correct record of his jokes and witty observations required not only the correct stenography of his words. More than that, his wit was complete only with "crucial gestures and his expert timing" (152).

At the same time, there were the periods in the interviews when the writer felt confident enough to turn into being a critic, when he attached sarcasm to his arguments. Mostly, it depended upon the subject. In the interview with the *Boston Globe* on 6 November 1905, the journalist noticed that "The horrors of the Congo Free State, as told by missionaries, have brought down on the head of King Leopold of Belgium all the vials of Mark Twain's wrath and sarcasm. He has no use for King Leopold, and he has just published a little work entitled

King Leopold's Soliloquy, which shows the monarch of Belgium, who is also monarch of the Congo Free State, in anything but a pleasant light" (Scharnhorst 499). In his turn, the journalist did not hide his attempt to admit the writer's sarcasm and criticism in the most neutral way possible. However, if we take into consideration the humorist's writings and works about King Leopold, a high level of criticism in the voice of the writer can be underlined in the interview; the voice of the writer who always supported the pure and fine idealism of democracy.

As was noted before, the writer was a keen psychologist and had a true understanding of the ways and means how to entertain the public in the wittiest way. The ingredients of his humorous approach included: 1) the polishing of paradoxes of life and of his own; 2) the flirting with the expectation of others; 3) exaggeration and self-irony; 4) nostalgia and "infinite regression" (Budd 158). One of the reporters tried to define Twain's strategy of how he made the audience adore him. The journalist thought that "It is difficult to give an adequate idea of the charm of an interview with Mark Twain. The man breathes the spirit of hospitality, and upon every subject that comes up his quick mind plays with all the brilliance and illuminative power of a searchlight" (Scharnhorst 521). This observation can suggest that the public was usually under the charms of the humorist, who made his audience be entertained and amused by his tall tales, play of words, witty observations together with recollections from private experience. Twain was constantly polishing his style of humorous activities, he continued to flirt with the public's point of view by the means of exaggeration, irony and incongruity; all together these means intrigued, puzzled and entertained the public. On the other hand, Twain's frequent use of his humorous skills could serve a definite relief function for the writer himself. In one of his later interview Twain noticed:

> "What is it that strikes a spark of humor from a man?" Mr. Clemens continued. "It is the effort to throw off, to fight back the burden of grief that is laid on each one of us. In youth we don't feel it, but as we grow to manhood we find the burden on our shoulders. Humor? It is nature's effort to harmonize conditions. The further the pendulum swings out over woe the further it is bound to swing back over mirth." (Scharnhorst 522)

The quotation suggests that Twain found the relief functions of humor to be an important and vital thing for any human being. Especially, its possibility to provide this relief for a person can be evidently necessary when he finds himself in front of the public. Mark Twain agreed that humor could serve to cope with the inner tension, interior worries and desperate issues within each of us. This point of view in one of Twain's later interviews proves that, being a philosopher and psychologist, the writer was incredibly close to the understanding

that humor serves to be a definite psychological means to cope with a number of inner and personal issues.

In continuation of the subject, being so highly popular and open-minded in the eyes of the audience, Twain still suffered from misunderstanding. His complex public figure was hardly comprehended properly by the judgments of the media. Mostly, it happened because of the common and most popular image of Twain – the image of the greatest humorist. At times, Twain himself complicated the situation and mislead the readers of the newspapers' articles. It seemed that the writer sometimes made his role-playing with the public too controversial. So it was hard to comprehend properly in some situations if the writer was joking or telling the truth. One of the best examples of this controversy can be noticed in the following saying of Twain when he admitted that "I never yet told the truth that I was not accused of lying, and every time I lie some one believes it" (Budd 158). On the other hand, in his private writings (in his autobiographical dictations, for instance) he defined himself in a contrary way when he concluded that "I was always honest; I know I can never be otherwise" (Kiskis 242).

These words lead to some definite doubts making it hard to identify the place or situation where the writer was acting in the most sincere way – in public or in his writings, or in some of his later manuscripts left unpublished. His later public activities produced the impression that the writer always found the most appropriate solution so that to keep the position of the king of humor. In spite of the fact that in his later years his voice to convince the audience that he was more than just a humorist turned to be louder. He insisted on the idea that "My teaching and training enabled me to see deeper into the tragedies than an ignorant person could have done" (Kiskis 155). It seemed that Twain could balance and did not intend to plunge fully in the mood of despair and tragedies of the universe. Though, he took a lot of the tragedies of his times close to heart; the writer "shared them passionately" (Budd 166). At the same time, he understood clearly that he should balance between the dark side of life and his world-known image of the greatest humorist. Budd supported this idea saying that Mark Twain "carefully planted enough episodes of humor to balance his heatedness" (166). For instance, when speaking about his age (especially, after his seventieth birthday), Twain could sound serious with a slight hint of his famous wit in the words. For instance, in his autobiography he considered:

> I am nearly seventy-one, and I recognize that my age has given me many good privileges; valuable privileges [...] To all the public I became recognizably old, undeniably old [...] the stream of generous new privileges began to flow in upon me and refresh my life. Since then, I have lived an ideal existence [...] the best of life begins at

> seventy. You have earned your holiday – a holiday of peace and contentment. (Kiskis 137)

In this idealistic description of his age, Twain sounded a bit contradictory when he referred to the common delusions of his times concerning old age and aging. On the one hand, he agreed to his contemporaries who considered old age as the period of "the setting of the sun" or "holiday" (Kiskis 137). On the other hand, his later years of Twain showed his passionate desire and enthusiasm to work and perform. His social and political criticism was heard clearly in his final years. Louis J. Budd (1983) suggested that Twain was "never substantially negative about fighting within the system, Twain waged a daring yet calculated campaign to keep being heard" (Budd 167). Also, his public criticism contained a mixture of "wit, sentiment, camaraderie" which in its turn always "laid down a maze of irony" (172). Thomas M. Parrott noticed that the humorist's "unrivalled powers of ridicule have been steadily directed against conventionality, hypocrisy, affection, and humbug" (177). Twain's emotional position of a critic against social injustices and the tragedies of human life caused by the authorities made his public persona so positive in the eyes of the socialists and anti-imperialists. His piece of work entitled "To the Person Sitting in the Darkness" (1901) was announced as a pamphlet by the New York Anti-Imperialist League. Another socialist in 1905 called Twain "not a humorist but a philosopher, a thinker, a radical, a progressive and an apostle of true democracy" (184). What is more important, this fact can serve as evidence that people and different groups of the society used the public image of the famous writer for their own benefit. For instance, for the social movement of the American anti-imperialists, Twain could be the one who was famous and who was struggling with the foreign politics of the USA and other imperial countries. For the mainstream audience, the writer was the most famous humorist. However, Twain himself combined together these and many other aspects of his public figure. In the following sub-chapter a more detailed analysis of the public image of the famous American humorist will be presented. The analysis will combine the study of the humorist's public image in the later interviews and of the use of humor and numerous comic techniques introduced by Mark Twain in the interviews during the later years of his life and career. This analysis is considered to create a balanced image of the aging writer by means of journalists' interpretations and media's presentations of the writer during those times.

3.2 Features of Mark Twain's Humor in His Later Interviews

As it was mentioned in the introductory part of the chapter, Mark Twain was a world known writer and strikingly popular humorist in his time. He was considered by many to be the greatest writer-humorist in the USA. His major public role was that of Mark Twain, the great humorist, as he was called so often in the interviews. The form of narration in the interviews is presented in the form of a dialogue; sometimes the communication between the narrator, the interviewer, and the writer, Mark Twain, is supported by additional comments and funny stories occasionally attached by the journalist. The public icon of Mark Twain presented in the interviews gives a clear understanding of the writer's position and role in the public through social activities of his during those later years of 1896-1910. No doubt, he had to play the role of the greatest humorist because almost every interview on any occasion in his life, private or public, started with the same titles of high appreciation – Mark Twain, the "famous humorist" (Scharnhorst 496), "good, gray humorist" (516), "the prince of American humorists" (549), "Dean of our humorists", "the greatest living humorist" (605) or "America's foremost living author' (684). Sometimes the journalists felt confident to define Twain by means of high-flown descriptive epithets - "venerable humorist" (558) or "the celebrated humorist" (576). However, Twain was called only few times as "the genial philosopher" (469) and "the serious humorist" (482) in the interviews. This observation can prove the fact that, to some extent, the feelings and expectations of the writer's persona were hurt by the people's attitudes and prejudices based on his solo role of the greatest humorist. In the interviews Twain spoke a lot about the fate of a humorist. For instance, in his later interview he was less ironic when he suggested the point in the rhetoric form- "Why should we forget that the humorist has his solemn moments? Why should we expect nothing but humor of the humorist?" (Scharnhorst 519) He continued in the same interview that "My advice to the humorist who has been a slave to his reputation is never to be discouraged [...] No man need be a humorist all his life" (519). With these words Twain conveyed the idea that everybody always expected him to be only funny. He did not deny that he became the slave of his humorist's image. His most popular and successful early writings made him the slave of humor. However, he himself enjoyed telling jokes, funny stories, anecdotes and aphorisms of his own; though, he preferred to tell them with more natural, less compulsive intentions. The conflict with the public image sounded quite often in the words of the writer who was unsatisfied with his single role of just a funny man.

More than that, in his interviews Twain did not forget to distinguish the quality of humor when he concluded that "the creative quality of humor – the ability to throw a humorous cast over a set of circumstances that before had seemed colorless is, of course, a different thing. But every man in the world is a perceptive humorist" (Scharnhorst 519). On the one hand, the writer warned about the quality of humor and its power. He did not admit it to be a feature of a selected or unique group of people; Twain considered humor to be human quality. Together with this, the writer protested against the common delusion of his times when the humorist was considered to be only funny, with no serious, critical or philosophical nature of his humor. It is evident that the entertaining function of humor can be observed everywhere in our daily life, and a bit of imagination, a bit of "color", in every person can become a considerable assistant in the creation of a joke.

It is also necessary to be aware of the fact that Mark Twain was always aware of his public reputation. At the same time, his acting in interviews was smoothed over by his friendliness, hospitality and sincerity. Moreover, his humor was frank and natural on a more general level; and it could be critical on a more profound layer. In 1900 a big event for the American press was the writer's return from a long, nine-year residence to Europe. The journalists announced the return as highly positive both for the writer and his country. According to his own words, he came back "feeling like a boy, rejuvenated in body and inspirited in mind" (Scharnhorst 345). In the same interview with the *New York Herald* he admitted ironically that "England is the best friend we have got in Europe and we are the only friend she's got on earth" (346).

Twain's ironic or sarcastic observations were frequently politically and socially oriented in his interviews. More than that, his humor and jokes were very personal and autobiographic. He himself was a character, a legend in the newspapers, articles and interviews. And he was definitely strict and with no compromise in his criticism, for instance, of the government's international affairs. Referring to this fact, Twain once admitted frankly that "so I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land" (Scharnhorst 353). In this phrase the sarcastic analogy is presented with the word "the eagle" which stands for the government of the USA, and the word "talons" embodied the image of the international politics of the government.

However, generally speaking, after his return to the USA Twain was prevailingly optimistic in front of the public. He remembered his life in Europe with sincere cheerfulness and playful irony. He remarked about his long-term stay in Europe that "it was one of the biggest jokes I have ever seen, and I enjoyed it immensely" (Scharnhorst 352). Though, the

writer had already problems with health during those years in Europe, he deliberately exaggerated the “fun” he had in Austria with the words “most fun”, “one of the biggest jokes” and “enjoyed it immensely”. This deliberate overstatement created the ironic effect. The interviewer supported the dialogue with the sarcasm, offered by the humorist and added that “Mr. Clemens said that five years ago, when he sailed from Vancouver, he was in bad health and spirits, and that there was but one thing that cheered him up – his debts” (353). So the journalist’s intention in this article was not to go deeper in the details of the writer’s problems and failures – he intended to present a cheerful writer who could cope with his personal troubles easily by means of an ironic interpretation. That was in the mainstream to present Twain in this light-hearted color when he entered his old age – as popular public figure who did not face despair or personal tragedies.

Twain's public image and appearance when he entered his later years turned out to be in the mainstream of the media. Journalists noticed his “hearty voice” (Scharnhorst 461) and “his strength, unusual for a man” of his age (466). “His genial humor and imagery brought back the days gone, brought to life men long since dead, and refreshed everybody” (465). Generally speaking, the public image of the writer was treated with sympathy and appreciation. As well as, the function of his humor in public conveyed only positive feedback. Some journalists observed the boyish tempo of the writer by calling him “a romping boy also, and now 67, famous, with knowledge of every country on the globe” (465). The quote is taken from the article “Mark Twain’s Return to Hannibal” on 8 June 1902. In 1902 many articles in numerous papers highlighted the writer’s visit to the place of his childhood, his meeting with the acquaintances of the past. Special attention in the media was paid to his meeting with his first sweetheart, Mrs. Frazier, and his first professional experience as a pilot. In the interview with the *Hannibal Courier-Post* on 3 June 1902 Twain supported his point of view that his return “to the scene” of his “boyhood has been one of the happy events of” his life (452). The use of humor in this case was closely connected with the boyish temperament of the writer. In the recorded talk with the friend of his boyhood, John B. Briggs, they remembered the funny events and innocent “crimes” of the past. While they walked over the hills of their home town, they met a boy with the bucket of fresh cold water. The boy's mother offered “a glass for the gentlemen” so that the writer and his old friend could drink the water. In his reply, Twain said in his boyish and playful manner: “No glass for me, John, we are boys today and we’ll drink out of the bucket” (458). At the same time, the journalists noticed that Twain's “smiling face was often saddened by memories of the many whom he had hoped to see, yet of whom he found trace only at the cemetery, and some not even there” (466). And

again the media focused on a happy and positive side of the aging writer who had just seldom and short-term moments of sorrow.

On 7 June 1902 Mark Twain was invited on board of a steamboat to act as the pilot. The event was colorfully announced in the local papers in the same style of interpretation as a big funny event, starring Mark Twain himself. He told jokes to the pleased public while he controlled the pilot-wheel. In the article the writer was presented in the following way:

> "That is the last time I will ever play pilot," were the serious words which fell from his lips as he slowly descended the steps from the wheelhouse. Something of solemnity cast its shadow over the gay party. Tears stood in the eyes of old river men. It was only a snatch of sadness. Doctor Clemens ordered refreshments for the crew. (Scharnhorst 461)

Again, the event, being personally serious and valuable for the aging writer, was portrayed and treated by the media as a big performance with some funny jokes from the famous humorist. No doubt, the writer's ego was pleased by attracting public attention. On the other hand, the event awoke memories and was not totally funny for him personally. However, he did not show it directly to the public.

In December 1902 an interesting article was published in *New York Evening Magazine* entitled "Mark Twain: His Wit and Humor". In the article the journalist illustrated a story that happened to the writer once. The journalist made it sound more like a fiction story with Mark Twain as the central character. Though, the journalist made a curious observation at the end of the article when he mentioned that the humorist with "a kindly, gentle face; one would never suspect that grim irony and savage satire lie behind it, ready to rouse at some fresh contact with the shams and affectations of a shamming and affected world" (Scharnhorst 476). The public appearance and image of the writer was getting more and more in dissonance with the writer's expectations to be treated as a serious thinker and writer. It can be suggested that this personal dependence on always being expected to make others be amused and entertained participated in the writer's tendency to become more sarcastic and bitter in his public criticism.

Further on, Twain's public image was always defined as "pleasant, agreeable, hospitable" (Scharnhorst 480) by the journalists during his later years. At the same time, in his inner world Twain was more complex, with some dark and pessimistic hints in his memories, experiences and ideas. In the interview with the *Boston Globe* in November 1905 the writer expressed the idea that could be directly referred to the writer personally when he admitted that "a man who is a pessimist before he's 48 is a fool – he knows too much. A man who isn't a pessimist after he's 49 is a fool – he doesn't know enough" (Scharnhorst 496). According to

Twain's personal position, the age before 48 is associated with unconcern, innocence and lack of sad experience, failures or loses. According to Twain's point, the combination of these features let the people be optimists. At the same time, age is associated with losses, both positive and negative experiences and with knowledge. In its turn, the combination of these features let people turn to be pessimists. This idea can be considered as one which Twain supported. However, the contradictory nature of the writer's personality cannot let us consider it to be the only true idea belonging to Twain's viewpoint.

The contradictions in Twain's attitudes towards many issues can be noticed in his later interviews. The same contradictions can be found in the writer's intention to give interviews – at some point, he was pleased to meet with journalists (this public activity served to be perfect for promotion of his career as the great humorist). By contrast, at times he suggested that he was not a fan of giving interviews. He admitted once in an interview that "I am opposed to interviews. The whole theory of interviews is wrong so far as it concerns a writer. For a politician an interview is something of inestimable value" (Scharnhorst 481). This quotation from the interview dated April, 13 1903 can suggest the writer's conviction that interviews are more beneficial for those who like to promote and pose, the politicians. At the same time, the contradiction is also presented due to the fact that the writer knew clearly that he needed the same for the benefit of his career.

Concerning Twain's comic style in the interviews, it can be suggested that irony, self-irony and sarcasm were among the most widely-used ones. For instance, he enjoyed ridiculing his own bad habits or traits of character. Once he concluded ironically about his habit of smoking too much that "I smoke just as much as I can. Of course, I cannot smoke when I am asleep, but I think that is the only reason I wake up in the morning" (Scharnhorst 464). More than that, he ridiculed in public the troubles which he had to face during those years. The failures in business and financial debts ruined his mood heavily. So when in October 1903 Mark Twain got rid of financial problems and sailed for Europe, Italy, his humorous tone and comic mood modified back to generally optimistic. The journalists reported that "the humorist went abroad with joy in his heart because at the banquet given him at the Metropolitan Club, Colonel G. B. M. Harvey made it known that Twain had signed contracts for his writings that assures luxury to his latter days and a fortune to those he remembers in his will" (483-484). In the same article the writer sarcastically observed: "I love to write my name to checks. It gives a man the impression that he can manufacture money" (484). On the basis of these rather sarcastic observations, it can be suggested that the writer continued his inner struggle with personal failures and business misfortunes by means of measured and dosed uses of sarcasm.

To preserve his public image, Twain masterfully implied just a dosed hint of a slight sarcasm which in its turn could be interpreted as the writer's inner struggles with moments of disappointment or frustration. Preserving his positive mood in the interviews and articles allowed the writer to laugh at his misfortunes or failures with low-pressure, to continue playing the role of a pleasant humorist, the one so adored by the public.

There were the topics for the writer which amused him sincerely. For instance, the accident with the burglars that happened in Twain's life in June 1903. The accident became a true inspiration for Twain's playful and humorous tone in a considerable number of interviews and articles. This topic turned to be a good promotion for the writer's positive image of the funny man in the media. In one of the interviews with Mark Twain in 1903, a journalist noticed about the writer:

> I just wish I knew the fellows on my route," said the humorist, his eyes twinkling with merriment. "I have been expecting them about here, and from feelings of brotherhood, if for no more noble reason, I have been intending to give them a warm reception [...] I would treat them well. In fact, I fear I might succumb to the temptation to treat them too well. Perhaps that is why they have passed my door without giving me a call […]. (Scharnhorst 483)

It seemed that by means of these words Twain created a comic story with the hidden irony. The ridicule in the whole description ("gentlemen" in the reference to the burglars) and sarcastic observation about burglar's habit to "work one neighborhood until" they "feel that" they "have sapped the lemon dry and then we move on to more fruitful soil". The absurdity of the verbal game was intensified by the writer's further deliberate exaggeration by the words "temptation to treat them too well". Finally, the climax of the sarcasm was reached in the phrase "that's one of the fashionable habits they have they never come around when you want to see them" (Scharnhorst 483).

The image of Mark Twain created in the later interviews and articles about him proves that the writer truly enjoyed playing verbal games with a definite comic touch during his final years. In October 1903 Mark Twain was full of expectations and hopes to settle in a comfortable residence – a beneficial cure for his dear wife. So in the interviews and articles of that period the journalists remarked the lively mood of the humorist. He often talked with "a twinkle in his eyes" and gave statements about himself in a playfully ironic or friendly sarcastic manner. Once he compared himself to Rabelais, French philosopher and satirist. This fact explains the reason why Mark Twain compared himself to Rabelais with sympathy and irony. In the same interview the journalist asked the writer about John A. Dowie and expected a joke in return from Twain. John A. Dowie was a missioner, evangelist from Great

Britain who proclaimed new branch in Christianity at the end of the nineteenth century. More than that, his appearance was strikingly strange with his habit to wear fanciful priest robes as the founder of the Christian Catholic Church[12]. Twain's attitude towards religious missionary was rather critical when he did his best to expose missionaries in a sarcastic manner. Due to this reason, the sarcasm could be observed both in the question of the interviewer and in Twain's answer:

> Mr. Clemens was then asked if he had John Alexander Dowie in mind when he wrote the story in Huckleberry Finn of "the King" who was painted with leopard's spots and exhibited in the town hall for monetary purposes. "Well," drawled the humorist, "I can't answer that. I've never seen Dowie with his clothes off! (Scharnhorst 485)

Further on, Twain's answers in the interview were full of sarcasm concerning the government of his home country as well:

> "You know, you've been a taxpayer up there," he said, "and we want to have you back." "Well," said Mark, with ever the same drawl, "I certainly intend returning to America after a year abroad, but I'm not sure whether I am going up to the celebration. I might get taxed for being there. They love to assess you in Tarrytown. (Scharnhorst 485)

The joke is created by the absurdity in the verbal context of referring to the government's intention to tax the writer for his long-term residence abroad. In addition to the comment on this quote it would be important to say some words about Tarrytown. In the late 1890-s the town turned to be a popular residence for rich and famous New Yorkers[13]. Again, the historic background of Tarrytown served to follow the sarcastic mood in the writer's answer. Another peculiar feature of Twain's humorous style in the last years (when he reached the peak of his career) was the use of anecdotes and aphorisms in numerous interviews. In November 1905 a journalist of the *Boston Globe* noticed that "every subject Mark Twain touched on was illuminated by some anecdote or experience or by some caustic observation which usually hit "the nail on the head" (Scharnhorst 497). At the same time, the contradiction of the later Twain was that, although he could have complained about being only funny in the eyes of the public, he was amused and earnest enough to discuss the popular topics of his times with the humorous touch.

It can be argued that giving interviews and playing usually a role of a positive humorist in the eyes of the media served to bring happy moments in Twain's later years. Moreover, giving interviews with a constant humorous touch served to be a ground for Mark Twain to cope with his inner issues. In the same interview with the *Boston Globe* in 1905, Twain noticed that

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[12] See Jim Hewitson (1993), (Hewitson 253-258).

[13] See Carney Rhinevault (2012), (Rhinevault 111-124).

he “never really knew what it was to be old until about five years ago” (Scharnhorst 497). Then he implied his favorite technique of exaggeration when he concluded being “the oldest man in the world” (497). The technique of verbal exaggeration pointed the writer’s irony in these words. At the same time the joke with the age did not end with these words, it developed in the next paragraph, again by means of deliberate exaggeration, in which Twain recollected his meeting with Sir William Harcourt, the member of the British Parliament, in London once. The ironic tone can be underlined when Twain concluded about his acquaintance that “He was born in 1828, and I was born in 1835. I said to him ‘Then I have found the only man older than I am’” (497).

The funny stories, anecdotes and aphorisms are the key forms with humorous touch in the interviews with Mark Twain during his later years. In the same interview in 1905 the journalist remembered some of the writer’s aphorisms. For example, “It’s not best to use our morals weekdays. It gets them out of repair for Sunday.” Or another one – is “It is noble to be good; it is still nobler to show others how to be good, and much less trouble” (Scharnhorst 498). David Mikics (2007) in his *A New Handbook of Literary Terms* defines an aphorism as “a many-faceted observation: speculative and not necessarily witty“; it is “compact and pointed” (Mikics 21). The peculiar features of aphorisms are its laconic form, originality, and easy retention in memory. Especially the implied comic aspect in the aphorism makes the phrase truly memorable. Aphorisms in Twain’s speeches and interviews served to be perfect means to keep the public’s attention, to attract it at times, to amuse and entertain. On a more profound layer, the use of aphorisms introduced the writer’s critical and philosophical point of view.

Also the use of political or social satire can be noticed in Twain's later interviews. On the one hand, it can be linked with the increase of the social and political injustice in the world during that period. As a further matter, the writer was more and more concerned with international affairs from the perspective of his critical and analytical viewpoint. Twain had a lifelong interest in the complex of political debates and discussions. A journalist from the *Boston Globe* noticed in November 1905 that “The horrors of the Congo Free State, as told by missionaries, have brought down on the head of King Leopold of Belgium all the vials of Mark Twain’s wrath and sarcasm” (Scharnhorst 499).

According to this article, Twain criticized the way how the missionaries described the tragedy of Congo, and compared it to “a farce and lie” (Scharnhorst 499). It can be argued that Twain’s emotional criticism and evident sarcasm was focused on exposing farce in missionaries' propaganda. However, in the interviews of that period he was still not as

sardonic or desperate as he could be in his later manuscripts. Nevertheless, his comments were very frank, serious, and with blunt criticism. “Leopold is too well known as a domestic person, as a family person,” said Mark Twain, facetiously, “as a king and a pirate, to believe what he says. He sits at home and drinks blood” (499). The moments of the writer’s frank indignation and gloomy criticism could occur on rare occasions in the interviews during the discussion of the topics which he could not consider with a light-hearted mood.

When Mark Twain reached the age of 70, his age became a popular topic in the media which they used for their own benefit. In the press his age was marked as “the end of his seventieth year of genial beneficence. It has been a long and undisputed reign for the Prince of humorists, and long may it continue!” (Scharnhorst 511). These words (with epithet and metaphor) proved the well-known fame of the writer with noble deeds and intentions. The mood of praise addressed toward Twain was mostly predominant in the press. Nevertheless, he continued to be a indefatigable critic and unflinching supporter in the firm discussions of absolutely non-humorous topics. And again Mark Twain preferred irony in defining his role when he reached the age of 70. The writer announced ironically that “No, sir, not a day’s work in all my life. What I have done I have done, because it has been play. If it had been work I shouldn’t have done it” (517). It is hard to state clearly if the writer believed his own words to be true. On the one hand, he could have considered writing humorous books successful from the point of business, but not so beneficial for the reputation of a serious author. On the contrary, he enjoyed being popular and being considered to be the king of humor. Twain frankly enjoyed the moments when he could play with words in the public; when being a keen psychologist, he was amused by attracting the attention, by puzzling the public. And the dilemma of being both funny and serious struggled within Twain. Also it was his life-time challenge. In one of the later interviews he admitted that “I know it is a difficult thing for a man who has acquired a reputation as a funny man to have a serious thought and put it into words and be listened to respectfully, but I thoroughly believe that any man who’s got anything worthwhile to say will be heard if he only says it often enough” (518).

According to the writer’s words in this interview, honesty and sincerity were the key constituents of serious humor for the writer. This strategy of humorous approach is worth a person’s attention if the writer frankly announces his position and thoughts of value. According to Twain, humor is only one side of human life. However, humor can give a possibility to cope with serious problems in life. Due to this point of view, Twain considered that “Life has both sides. The perception of it can’t be one-sided. Humor is the cure, a temporary escape from the solemnity of life” (518). The relief function of humor can be

clearly distinguished in this position of the writer. It can also explain the writer's personal wish to preserve his role of the king of humor. Being the great humorist let the writer himself cope with the problems in his later years. The use of humor in the interviews let the writer not only promote his role of a funny man, but it also helped Twain to cope with personal moments of gloomy frustration and disappointment.

At the end of 1905 the writer's age and his health continued to be among the most popular speculations in the press. The media admitted that the writer was full of strength. As one of the journalists noticed it was "more accurate to say "that Mr. Clemens was "70 years young" (Scharnhorst 525). Journalists were astonished to remark about the aging humorist that "The surprising thing about him is the absence of an appearance of age" (521). According to journalists' perspective, Twain was full of the spirit of hospitality, and upon every subject that comes up his quick mind plays with all the brilliance and illuminative power of a searchlight" (522). Furthermore, in the interview, Twain discussed the value of humor when he stressed upon the idea of a relief function of humor in the life of people. Twain remarked that humor "is the effort to throw off, to fight back the burden of grief that is laid on each one of us [...] It is nature's effort to harmonize conditions" (522). So humor in Twain's life and career served not only some precise aims of criticism, mockery or denunciation, for instance, but for his personal inner relief.

In January 1906 Mark Twain visited Congress. In the interview with the *New York World* he was more than usually ironic and playful with the representatives of the media. Twain recollected ironically about meeting the Speaker there that "I say he is my old friend because I met him on Saturday night. Any man who meets another on Saturday night has a right to refer to him as an "old friend" (Scharnhorst 534). Then, as his story went on, he turned to a more sarcastic comment:

> "I don't know; politics is a little out of my line," Mr. Clemens said, "but I rather think I would like to be a Senator. The title adds such an air of dignity. Then again, when I think it over I think I would like to be a Congressman. A Congressman appears to have such a happy, carefree existence. He slaps the Speaker on the back and says, 'Hello, Joe! How's things?' That's real democracy; but who ever heard of a Senator slapping the Vice-President on the back and saying, 'Hello, Charley. How's things?' He would need a step-ladder or have to stand on top of a barrel." (Scharnhorst 534)

The deliberate mockery of the Congressman's "busy life" was created by means of the ridicule and absurdity in the context. The derisive tone and odd pathos highlighted the true attitude of Twain towards "a happy, carefree existence" in "real democracy" where the real power of a Congressman was in his ability to slap the Vice-President on his back and ask

something unimportant without ceremony. Sarcasm and self-irony were deliberately so frequently implied in Twain's public performances – in speeches and interviews of the writer. He was also frankly amused while considering the importance of his persona to be of high significance. In the interview with the *New York Herald Magazine* on 15 April 1906 Twain compared the position of the Senator and the humorist as the occupations of the same public value when he concluded that "as a Senator the people would refuse to take me any more seriously than they do in my natural capacity as a humorist...It's a humorist's business to laugh at other folks, not inspire other folks to laugh at him" (Scharnhorst 537). This ironic observation can be interpreted as his personal conviction that the role of a Senator is even more pathetic than that of a humorist. This statement can also prove the Twain's constant self-ironical treatment when he referred to his own importance in society. He could be easily self-ironic and knew that it would amuse the public. Self-ironical approach can be observed in the following statement of Twain when he confirmed that "I love to be an ornament and a figurehead. I'd like to be an ornament and a figurehead all over town" (541). Again and again the deliberate exaggeration created a humorous effect. It can be thus suggested that Twain was one of the major persons of his time in the USA who "has made every American laugh at one time or another during his long life of spreading cheer among his fellow men" (549). But was that the main goal of Twain's professional ego? On the one hand, it can be noticed that it served for a perfect promotion of the writer as the greatest humorist. And his fame allowed the writer to speak loudly about the problems of his times. These moments inspired him considerably and promoted his active public and social life in the later years.

In May 1907 a journalist noticed changes in the appearance of Mark Twain when it was remarked that the writer looked "more than his years" at 71. In the interview entitled "Mark Twain Tells Literary Secret and Many Other Things" in the *Baltimore News*, the humorist talked much about his professional plans and expectations. He told the interviewer about his wish to keep some pieces of work unfinished and unpublished. Twain hoped to leave some works kept in secret from the public and to leave them to his daughter, "who will be my literary executor" (Scharnhorst 590). In the same interview Twain emphasized his conviction that his writings "had a serious philosophy or truth as its basis. I would not write a humorous work merely to be funny" (590). According to Twain's point of view, humor always accompanied his works, however, on a more profound layer, his works included serious philosophic debates. The writer agreed to the point that the key goal for him in writing a piece of historical novel was to tell the truth, not for pure entertainment. The truth and reality are the major components of his professional style. He "never deliberately sat down and 'created'

a character" (607). He found inspiration "out of real life" (607). And humor, as Twain mentioned before in the previous interviews, was the natural component of life. All in all, only few journalists could notice Twain's complexity of both humor and seriousness. For instance, in the article dated back to May 1907 it was remarked that "the serious side of Mark Twain's work, not so generally appreciated as his humorous […]" (607).

The big event of the summer 1907 was Mark Twain's visit to England where he was invited to receive the degree of Literary Doctor from the Oxford University. Twain was mostly ironical or sarcastic in the interviews dedicated to his visit to England. One of the journalists wrote in his article about Mark Twain that "He told the reporters a bit of his plans about the dictation of his autobiography. He pointed sarcastically that it would not be published until he was 'well and thoroughly dead' or it would not go in print until he was 'canonized'" (Scharnhorst 611). One more peculiar topic in Twain's late interviews included his ideas and observations about death or funerals. Twain's observations about his own future funerals included much of absurd, grotesque and farce in combination with self-ironic or comic remarks. One of the interviewers noticed that Mark Twain described his future funeral ceremony as a big event that would attract the public and would promote the writer's popularity:

> "Yes, funeral," replied Mark Twain, with mock gravity. "I'm making arrangements for my funeral now. I'm inviting hosts of people – it's a friendly sort of thing to do, don't you think?" [...] "And as it's going to be a nice, large, showy funeral, one that will attract attention in the newspapers, I've got to hurry up and arrange for it. A little early, you think? Well, all the better. We shall be able to have a rehearsal." [...] "I hope the procession will be about five miles long! There'll be brass bands by the score—say, a brass band every 50 yards, and every one of them playing a different tune! It ought to be one of the greatest things ever seen!" Again he laughed at the prospect. (Scharnhorst 616)

All these words about the moment of overwhelming grief sounded more like grotesque, ridiculous or witty verbal play initiated by the writer. According to Twain's perspective of ridicule and farce, the funeral ceremony sounded more like a cheerful show, exaggeratedly ridiculous and with a cacophony of sounds. This play with the moments of grief provoked the writer's enthusiasm, sarcasm and amusement. It was intriguing for the public; this fact amused and entertained the writer even more. It can be suggested that by means of such activities, Twain was playing with the serious and grievous topics so as to cope with his own sorrows and fears. The same mischievous and playful tone of the writer was revealed in his numerous stories about other famous people of his times; about Rudyard Kipling, for instance, who tried "to steal" his smoking pipes. The writer noticed ironically in one of the

late interviews that Kipling "tried to steal one and failed; then he tried to steal another, but I prevented the theft and gave it to him – probably the only pipe that Kipling ever got honestly!" (Scharnhorst 616) Twain enjoyed playing with deliberate exaggerations and prevailing absurdities in his stories. These moments of delight were when the writer sincerely enjoyed feeling and acting like a small naughty boy. His boyish temperament was noticed many times in the late interviews when he felt "only 14 years old, instead of 72" (617).

It can be suggested that together with Twain's comic talent, his boyish temperament served to be a relief in his final years. This peculiarity of his spirit supported the writer's attempts to escape from the world of his biological age and inspired the moments of joy and amusement in spite of all the sorrows and misfortunes during his later career. A reputation "for being funny" (Scharnhorst 648) was a life-long dilemma for the writer. On the one hand, it promoted the writer's popularity and served as a means to cope with numerous issues in his life. On the contrary, this reputation pressured to promote Twain as a serious writer and philosopher. Due to this reason, the journalists were usually astonished when they noticed the writer's serious side. Also, the gravity of his ideas could usually intrigue the reader and the public. In the interview with Mark Twain in October 1907 Isidore Harris mentioned that "It will, probably, surprise many readers to learn that Mark Twain prefers to be considered as, before all things, a philosopher, and only secondarily as a humorist [...] His polemic against Christian Science [...] though humorously written, he regards as a serious piece of work" (652). The journalist seemed to be careful when mentioning the writer's criticism towards religion and Christianity. At the same time, it can be suggested that the media noticed with surprise the writer's other side, the grave side of his public and professional image.

In 1908 Mark Twain moved to his new residence at Redding because he "became too tired to stay in New York" (Scharnhorst 667). In the big city he got tired of public activities and his constant duty to present speeches in public. In public, Twain presented his private life in the way that enjoyed his life when he spent happy moments in the company of friends and acquaintances. In one of the interviews during that period he made a remark about his new residence that "I felt that I needed rest, and here I am going to get it. We shall have small weekend parties here, and I shall be glad to see my friends" (Scharnhorst 668). At those times the journalists noticed that the writer's humor still survived and "was rare, but of good nature. He felt calm and was very friendly in communication" (668). In spite of the increase of problems with his health and personal losses, Twain continued to do his best to preserve his public image of the funny and friendly humorist. However, as most of the journalists noticed, during the very last two years Twain was turning more to a "half-humorous way" (688). In

June 1909 the writer visited Baltimore. He was getting tired from the voyages quicker, his health became worse. At the same time, in an interview with the *Baltimore Star* "America's foremost living author" (684) kept a sarcastic but sympathetic mood. He presented several sarcastic remarks about Baltimore and its citizens but with a friendly touch.

In October 1909 the article "Miss Clemens Weds" was dedicated to the wedding ceremony of Twain's daughter Clara and Mr. Gabrilowitsch. The writer ventured several ironical comments about the guests who were the witnesses of the happy family event. For instance, he remarked about his close friend Joseph H. Twichell and his family members:

> The Reverend Joseph H. Twichell, of Hartford, is a friend of mine of forty-two years' standing. He married this bride's mother and me thirty-nine years ago. Mrs. Wood is Mr. Twichell's daughter. I knew her when she had only one tooth and preferred a nursing bottle to the Constitution of the United States. She is a mother in Israel now. But this is merely figurative – she really lives in Brooklyn. (Scharnhorst 690)

In this quotation Twain referred both ironically and sentimentally to the fact of how long and how close he was with Twichell's family. Moreover, there is an evident ironic hint in Twain's indirect reference to politics. Finally, he compared the district of Brooklyn in New York to Israel, and hinted ironically at the fact this part of New York was highly inhabited by the Jews[14].

After December 1909 Twain's health declined tremendously. The journalists noticed that the writer "was amiably sad and his familiar drawl lacked the humorous note" (Scharnhorst 692). Very few interviews with the writer were released in the last year of his life. In one of these articles Twain stated that his "work is over in this life and this world" (692). Being confined to bed by poor health and old age, the writer lived "in strict retirement" (695). In the last interview, the one that can be found in Scharnhorst's (2006) *Mark Twain: The Complete Interviews*, dated May 1910 the journalist noticed:

> A beautiful smile lit up his face, which I noticed at once was scarlet, almost livid, against its shaggy frame of silvery hair. His face looked small and pinched and ill. His frame was bent and his walk unsteady. He opened the glass door and with both hands extended he gave me a joyous welcome. And to the creator of Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer and all the other people who have made me and so many others glad, my heart went out in love and sympathy. For just as no human being can read Mark Twain without laughing with him, so none can see him without loving him. For Mark Twain is intensely, vividly, lovingly human. He shook my hands cordially and said in his kindest,

[14] See Abramovitch (2002). "It was in the late nineteenth century, with the influx of large numbers of immigrants, that Brooklyn transformed itself into a major urban center and a major center of Jewish life" (Abramovitch 5).

> most joyous way, "I'm so glad to see you. How do you do? Come right in. Let me take you right through to the parlor, and then I'll call the family." (Scharnhorst 696-697)

According to the interviewer, there was no bitterness in Twain's words or despair in his eyes. Twain was coping with his problems bravely, calmly with a bit of humor in his words and eyes. He also found some strength left to joke cordially even in this last interview. The journalist continued that "a sparkle of humor was in his keen, blue eyes" (Scharnhorst 697). In return, Twain warned the journalist ironically - "But don't recommend me to sightseers. I'm too old a bird to be caught. Besides, I'm going to charge an admission fee. It's a shilling a look [...] Tomorrow it will be two shillings – the next day – three" (697). These words of the writer proved that his ironic tone and ability to entertain his readers still survived at the end of his life. The journalist noticed an obvious decline, but the writer's habit of being funny, keen and witty could be still identified.

In conclusion, it is important to underline several major points as the results of the analysis made in this sub-chapter. The interpretation of Mark Twain's style of humor and comic forms in the interviews and articles during his later years can suggest a more comprehensive and complex study of Mark Twain when he entered his final years – the years of astonishing fame and popularity. The interpretation of the role of humor in these public appearances suggests a more balanced perspective of Twain when he had to cope not only with tragedies and failures, but also with his fame and reputation of the king of humor. This perspective includes the following observations:

- Mark Twain himself was the major architect of his public image and the central promoter of his popularity during these later years.

- His humorous voice and the complex of comic forms and techniques introduced and initiated by Twain himself in the interviews served to be the prior means to create the public image of the writer. Mostly, humor served to create a positive image of Mark Twain in the public – he was friendly, sociable, amusing and agreeable in the eyes of the audience. At times, the moments of gloomy remarks, witty criticism and philosophic observations appeared in the interviews with Twain. However, these moments were interpreted by the press as moments of the writer's illness or as moments of a suddenly unknown and unfamiliar side of the writer – a side of Twain as a serious thinker and critic.

- Being the greatest humorist in the eyes of the audience, Mark Twain continued his inner struggle to cope with the dilemma of his life and career. On the one hand, he frankly enjoyed entertaining the public with well-structured stories full of witty observations and ironic remarks. He was delighted by attracting the attention of the public, by intriguing and puzzling

the audience. Also, he knew clearly that humor in its variety of forms and approaches promoted his fame and popularity. More than that, the relief function of humor assisted in Twain's coping with problems, losses and misfortunes. He himself enjoyed the moments when he could entertain the interviewer together with the readers. However, his reputation of the king of humor limited considerably his opportunities to promote himself as a serious writer and philosopher. Due to this reason, Mark Twain mentioned this issue many times in his later interviews. At the same time, the journalists were usually puzzled and astonished during those moments when the writer changed his witty and comic observations to any serious discussion.

All in all, the analysis of the use of humor in later interviews with Mark Twain was able to present the writer as one of the most popular public figures of his times who was able to control and construct his own public image. Moreover, the complexity of his personality was studied by means of the introduction of a number of issues which he had to cope with during his whole life and, especially, in his final years. In conclusion, these interviews suggest that Twain had moments of happiness when he sincerely enjoyed his life and role of public humorist. Though, his desire to be accepted as a remarkable philosopher and a serious writer always accompanied his other ideas of being a perfectionist in career and business. Mark Twain's public activities also included the writer's numerous speeches on various occasions. The humorous voice of the writer was presented in full in this part of Twain's public performances during his later career. The analysis of the peculiarities in Twain's comic style in his oratory talent will be included in the following sub-chapter 3.3.

3.3 Features of Mark Twain's Humor in His Later Speeches

Public speaking and oratory skills were important aspects of Mark Twain's public reputation. In his later years Twain was actively involved as a speech maker on the occasion of numerous dinners, jubilees, and other meetings. The major collections of Twain's speeches are *Mark Twain's Speeches*, ed. A. B. Paine (1923) and *Mark Twain Speaking*, ed. Paul Fatout (1976). Paine's collection of letters was "carefully selected and bowdlerized" (Long and Le Master 14). In my research, I rely on Fatout's edition of Twain's speeches. In 1976 Paul Fatout was the first researcher who attempted to document all of Twain's known public speeches, readings and lectures. What is more important, Fatout attempted to combine Twain's speeches not only in chronological manner, he also drew attention to major topics, his style and manner in his public performances. As for the choice of criteria for textual basis in the research, I also chose those speeches that present the major topics in Twain's later speeches. Moreover, it is important to summarize the major features of Twain's humorous approach when he performed in public. After having read all the speeches of the writer during his later years from 1896 – to 1909, I underlined the following major topics. First of all, Twain commented on his famous contemporaries. He also commented on his own age, fame and reputation. Less frequently, Twain spoke about the human race, foreign affairs or about his private life. Concerning Twain's strategies of comic appeal in his oratory, humorous forms varied from self-deprecating humor to satire and ridicule. Anecdotes, tall tales and sentimental recollections made the writer's speechmaking style powerful and attractive.

To begin with, Twain's central targets in his witty observations were some of his famous and wealthy contemporaries, including Andrew Carnegie, young Churchill and others. In its turn, the audience considered "everything he says must be amusing and delightful. If they do not feel the fun of it themselves they think they ought to" (Budd 196). So the audience again and again expected to see Twain in the role a humorous speaker, rather than in the role of a speechmaker-philosopher. As Budd remarked, Twain's "speechmaking continued to play ironically with his image as a reformer" (191). The writer's ironic voice served to balance between serious and witty observations in his speeches. So his orator's talent "was ironic with a tilt toward geniality, insightful with touches of profundity" (197). One of the newspapers defined Twain's speechmaking style to be "cosmopolitan about the present and the future, rather positive on moral and social values yet free of religious doctrine" (197) during his later years. According to this observation, it can be suggested that his voice in the public performances was mostly positively critical.

When in his final years Twain "became a social lion and a privileged character, known to everybody from the royal family to the man in the street" (Fatout 319), he could address his ironical and witty observations towards famous contemporaries of his times, from W. D. Howells to Andrew Carnegie. In reference to Carnegie, Twain preferred his sarcastic statements, in one of his later performances - "And as Mr. Carnegie says, he has worked like a mole, underground. We say the mole has been doing great and good service" (421). In another later performance in 1901 Twain remarked ironically about Carnegie building new libraries - "I said to him, 'Are the books that are going to be put into the new libraries on a high moral plane?' If they are not, I told him he had better build the libraries and I would write the books. With the wealth I would get out of writing the books, I could build libraries and then he could write books" (391). Or in his ironic remark about Mr. Putzel who was appointed to be a tax commissioner, Twain noticed - "he stands related to me in a very tender way – through the tax office" (503). Unfortunately, there is no direct record of the public's reaction on the writer's sarcasm in his comments on the richest and most powerful people of his times. At the same time, there was no record of condemnation or critique of Twain's comic style in his later years – he still preserved his reputation as one of the most welcomed and famous writers. This fact indirectly proves that Twain preferred to control the degree of the acceptable critique in front of the audience.

Belonging to the higher circles of American society, Mark Twain could be evidently critical about some "captains of industry" (Fatout 455). At the same time, he was friends and supported the others. Once he admitted sarcastically about Chauncey Depew[15], a Senator and the head of the Railroad System of New York, that he "knew Chauncey Depew before he could walk straight, and before he learned to tell the truth" (455). In the same speech Twain also attacked the figure of Thomas B. Reed[16], a famous politician, though, with his subtle sarcasm - "What's the use of telling the truth all the time? I never tell the truth about Tom Reed – but that is his defect, truth, he speaks the truth always" (455). In this paragraph Twain seems to play with the word "truth" - on the other hand, Twain states that he never tells the truth about Tom Reed; on the other hand, he is ironic about Reed speaking truth always. The trick with the word "truth" puzzles the audience – it turns to be suddenly unclear about the fact who speaks truth. All in all, this puzzle does not hurt the feelings; subtle comic effect serves to amuse and entertain.

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[15] For more information about Depew, see Dodge and Koed (2005), (Dodge and Koed 949).
[16] For more information, see Garraty and Carness (1999), (Garraty and Carness 282).

As it was mentioned before, Twain enjoyed ironic and even sarcastic observations about the famous and authoritative contemporaries of his times. Being sarcastic and harsh in his critique towards Carnegie or Roosevelt, he preferred less bitterness in his ironic observations about others. When criticizing politicians and others in power, Twain was constantly balancing between sarcasm and satire, and he desired to show them as fools. At the same time, on commenting about other famous public figures, Twain was mostly balancing between irony and self-irony, at these moments he purely enjoyed playing the fool. For instance, in one of his later speeches (June 16, 1899) Twain commented ironically about George Augustus Sala, the British journalist and writer[17], - "He went into the whole history of the United States, and made it entirely new to me [...] I knew none of it happened, from that day to this I do not know any history but Sala's" (Fatout 325). Further on, he concluded about his performance that "I have been talking with so much levity that I have said no serious thing, and you are really no better or wiser, although Robert Buchanan[18] has suggested that I am a person who deals in wisdom [...] I should be sorry to sit down without having said one serious word which you can carry home and relate to your children and the old people who are not able to get away" (328). In this paragraph it is evident that Twain is again balancing between keeping his reputation of equally funny and wise. He introduces his complex role in an ironic way by means of exaggeration and latent ridicule so that to amuse the public and attract its attention with his puzzling conception.

However, in his frenzied attacks on politicians and military men Twain was implacable, sarcastic and thoroughgoing. Once he commented sarcastically on Edward Shepard[19] (a Democratic candidate for mayor of New York who had a reputation of an honorable politician, but later accused of being in alliance with Crocker's gang):

> I ate a banana, thinking that by doing so I might conciliate the Italian party of our population and prevail upon them to vote the Fusion ticket. Gentlemen, it was a Tammany banana. Now a Tammany banana is a strange thing. The first nibble of it is white and pure, but all the rest of is rotten and will contaminate. We all have respect for Mr. Shepard. He is the pure part of the banana, but all the rest of the Tammany ticket is rotten, and the best we can do is to get rid of the whole Tammany banana, Shepard and all. (Fatout 414)

In this subtle and sophisticated critique Twain's sarcastic attitude and ironic reference to the politicians are combined. Latent absurdity and contrast between his exaggerated remarks of respect and true attitude intensify the writer's comic voice.

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[17] See Blake (2015), (Blake 20-52).

[18] British writer, journalist and lecturer. For more information, see Harriett Jay (2006)

[19] See Murphy (2013), (Murphy 42-49).

Almost each public performance of the writer was edged by his famous wit, self-irony or ridicule. Budd found in Twain's style of oratory that "he developed a fine touch for mock-megalomania that exaggerated the achievements of his do-gooder side while insisting on its strength" (Budd 197). Fatout also noticed that "the tall tale were with him from start to finish, and an abiding attention to the entertainment of his audience. Yet the substance is rarely entirely frivolous. Sense underlines nonsense, irony is apparent from the beginning, humor may be only a thin veil for astute criticism, and his point of view is sometimes clairvoyantly modern" (Fatout xxvi). The use of exaggeration, ridicule and absurdity were the most common techniques for Twain's wit in the public performances. More than that, his keen eye of an observer and "keen sense of the dignity of humor" (Budd 201) turned his figure into a headliner of numerous articles in his later years.

When Twain was discussed vivaciously in the press; in his turn, he was actively involved in numerous public events, and was frequently called to be "the visible master" (qtd. in Budd 198). On the other hand, he tried to reduce the heightened interest of the public to his private loses and failures, "convincing the press that his grief sincerely wanted privacy" (Budd 202). However, in public he kept the position of being one of the most famous humorists, and could imply in his speeches "old and new anecdotes revolved more briskly" (203). His witty recollections of his personal experiences still continued to inspire new and old stories retold in the most emotional and passionate ways in his later speeches.

Undoubtedly, Twain's use of words and images in his speeches suggested him to be mostly frank to his audience; and, moreover, it proves that he was passionately and personally involved in all problematic issues which he highlighted in the oral performances. His sparkling comic style and subtly included critique created his voice of a witty observer. When "at his finest Twain created the role of court jester to self-esteem, blending argument and ridicule man humbler before himself without realizing he had been insulted" (Budd 223). His hidden attacks and criticism cannot be considered as overwhelmingly desperate. However, it can be suggested that Twain mastered the art of criticism through ridicule in the most sophisticated way during his later years.

The press noticed Twain's talent of an orator who could discuss a variety of topics in his positive, witty and sparklingly humorous manner. The article in the *New York Times* on August, 6 1910 reported about Twain's nature of humor in the later speeches:

> Henry Watterson, who was an intimate friend, as well as a relative, says that he could be spontaneous on occasion, and intimates that he generally was, and was at his best when he was. W. D. Howells, on the contrary, who also was an intimate friend for many years, frankly suggests that when Twain trusted "to the spontaneity in which other

> speakers confide, or are believed to confide, when they are on their feet," the result was "near-failures." And Howells gives an emphatic and eloquent account of the humorist's habitual method: "He studied every word and syllable, and memorized them by a system of mnemonics peculiar to himself, consisting of an arbitrary arrangement of things on a table – knives, pens, boxes, or whatever was at hand – which stood for points, and clauses and climaxes, and were at once indelible diction and constant suggestion. He studied every tone and every gesture, and he forecast the result with the real audience from its result with that imagined audience. Therefore it was beautiful to see him and to hear him; he rejoiced in the pleasure he gave and the blows of surprise that he dealt; and because he had his end in mind, he knew when to stop." (Budd, *The Contemporary Review*s 623)

Mark Twain's audience varied from governors to schoolgirls, so he knew exactly when to put emphasis and present the climax in the story, or on which of his ideas to focus the public's major attention. He felt the permissible degree of his critical voice and applied those techniques of comic and sparkling wit in the speeches which were most adored by his audience. Twain was aware of the means to prevent the negative reaction of the listeners. In his strategies of public appeal, Twain's speeches were armed with the concrete examples from the life veiled in the forms of practical jokes, anecdotes and funny stories with cases of vital incongruity. Once during his public performance Twain stated about the nature of his comic style that "I have not been an alleged humorist. I've been a wise man, a Solomon. I have kept secret the things I have done. Mr. Clark is right in saying that the foundation of humor is seriousness, gravity. Contrast is what brings out humor" (Fatout 354).

At the same time, Twain never forgot about being serious at times. In comparison to his style of performance in the interviews, Twain did not complain so much on the fate of the humorist. On the contrary, his position and comments on being one of the most famous humorists differed from that in the interviews. During the Dinner Speech on April 3, 1909 he admitted that "I am sure I would rather have made people laugh than cry [...] I like compliments. I deal in them myself [...]" (Fatout 640). This deliberate drawing a parallel between a habit of making people laugh and an opportunity to get compliments as a feedback can be interpreted as Twain's conviction that his reputation and the feedback of the audience depended directly upon the style of his comic style. Being serious at this point, Twain never forgot to play a practical joke with the audience and to put his serious viewpoints and ironic witty observations in contrast. Thus in a different speech on January 11, 1908, during his performance at the Lotos Club he commented ironically on the role of compliments in his life that "Now I am beginning to collect compliments, and store them away, as other people collect pipes, and autographs, dogs and cats and books, and such things, I am collecting compliments [...]" (609).

Twain's ironical observations were part of his strategy to entertain and to puzzle his audience. The public was constantly puzzled by Twain's contradictory observations. Ambiguity, contradiction and contrast can be defined frequently in Twain's later speeches when some philosophic statements are followed by a practical joke or an anecdote. For instance, in one of his later speeches Twain starts to reason about the nature of compliments - "Compliments are different and extraordinary. A little girl from a small town in Montana said once she saw a portrait of Twain: "We have got a John the Baptist like that at home, only ours has more trimmings" (Fatout 606).

A comic effect in the story is intensified by the character of a little girl whose sincere and unintentional witty comment turns to be an "extraordinary" compliment in this very case. An ironic tone in this case can be defined by the contract and ridicule in this indirect comparison between John the Baptist and Mark Twain. More than that, the character of a little girl intensifies the positive nature of the joke in this story. Children to whom Twain felt "an indissoluble bond of friendship" (Fatout 596) mostly were direct or indirect assistants in the writer's attempts to create a witty, ironic play in words so that to puzzle, entertain or tease his audience.

The manner of the tall tale or anecdote accompanied Twain's performances rather frequently. According to Carolyn S. Brown (1987), the form of tall tale "is a comic fiction disguised as fact, deliberately exaggerated to the limits of credibility or beyond in order to reveal emotional truths [...]" (Brown 2). Brown also suggests that "the tall tale has held a place of special significance in American life […] the tall tale to be more peculiarly American than other types of humor" (2). According to Brown, "The tall tale state of mind is skeptical, irreverent, defiant […] The tall teller also possesses an energetic imagination […] Finally, the tall tale state of mind tries to cope with fear, social conflict […]" (90). Mark Twain used this form of comic narration "of his transformation" (92), combination of exaggerated farce, personal experience and imagination. During his lifelong career Twain had a chance of meeting hundreds of people, people of all social statuses and background. These experiences were at times transformed by Twain's humorous talent and witty mind into numerous anecdotes and tall tales. For instance, during his visit to London on July 4, 1907 Twain presented one of these half-true and half-farcical stories which could happen with his uncle:

> One was in Chicago years ago – an uncle of mine, just as good an uncle as I have ever had, and I had lots of them – yes, uncles to burn, uncles to spare. This poor uncle, full of patriotism, opened his mouth to hurrah, and a rocket went down his throat. Before that man could ask for a drink of water to quench that thing, it blew up and scattered him all over the forty-five states, and – really, now, this is true – I know about it myself –

> twenty-four hours after that it was raining buttons, recognizable as his, on the Atlantic seaboard. (Fatout 569)

Overwhelming incongruity, absurdity and exaggeration can be determined in the verbal context of the tall tale. Without any hesitation, the compound nature of the comic in this tall tale attracted the listeners, entertained the public deliberately by making them laugh; and the given example presented a common form of Twain's comic performance while giving his speech.

In his later years the topic of age and aging appeared in Twain's public performances. Mostly Twain treated this topic from two perspectives – on the one hand, for Twain the reality of getting old was closely related to his personal memories and recollections of his youth. Being sentimental at these moments, he agrees to the fact that "at seventy years old I find that memory of peculiar value to me" (Fatout 500). On the other hand, to entertain the public and attract its attention, the writer never forgot to include some witty statement with a tone of self-irony when he referred to the topic of age in his later speeches. Thus he recollected ironically when he was a boy that "I was the best boy in that state – and in the United States, for that matter. But I don't know why I never heard anyone say that by myself" (500).

In his speeches Twain did not intend to sound like a preacher in his manner of speaking. Nevertheless, having been invited so many times to give a speech in front of children or young people, he was usually expected to give some wise advice. However, in these cases Twain was usually skeptical or even more ironical about his traditional role of an aging humorist-preacher for the young. In his turn, Twain intended to be more of a friend or a companion for the young public. In October 1908, on the opening of the Mark Twain Library, he pronounced ironically that "It's noble to be good, and it's nobler to teach others to be good, and less troubled" (Fatout 630). In his later activities Twain preferred to idealize youth and maintained his own relationships with the young with much sympathy and adoration. During his speech at the sixty-seventh birthday Dinner in 1902 he recollected the pastime of his boyhood, mostly idealized and worshiped with sentiment during his later years:

> [...] simple life, cheap but comfortable, and full of sweetness, and there was nothing of this rage of modern civilization there at all. It was a delectable land […] It was a heartbreaking delight, full of pathos, laughter and tears […] a treasured place in my memory […] it was a beautiful life, a lovely life. There was no crime […] (Fatout 457-458).

These sentimental recollections of his own boyhood let Twain enter his later years with definite moments of delight, love, laughter. And he could not conceal these positive feelings when giving speeches in front of those who symbolized the best traits of youth in his opinion – sincerity, purity and unrestrained optimism. Thus in his later public activities Twain enjoyed to set his own image in contrast to the younger people. This deliberate contrast created an ironic tone in his speeches, and entertained both the writer and his audience. In December 1905 he admitted ironically about Sarah Bernhardt and himself that "Why, she is the youngest person I ever saw, except myself – for I always feel young when I come in the presence of young people. She and I are two of the youngest people alive" (Fatout 468). Twain's favorite means of exaggeration intensifies both his ironic tone and the deliberate contrast between the reality and the hyperbolized observation in the context.

Undoubtedly, his public performances were a considerable part of his success; these performances served to be for mutual entertainment and communication. For Twain, his famous anecdotes were his special means of communication with the public. As he confirmed once, "After-dinner speeches seem to me to consist of anecdotes, and remarks attached. From observation it seemed to me that the anecdotes are made for the speaker, and just this" (Fatout 450). Anecdotes served to be a comic bridge for the writer's unexpected turn from one topic to another. That was some kind of an entertaining pause and preparation for a new surprising turning point in the speech. And each anecdote usually ended with a wise, but sarcastic conclusion of the writer, when he conveyed his philosophic observation to the audience. As an example there can be presented one of his later anecdotes with the word "sarsaparilla", which is the name of a plant in Central America used both in medicine (mostly, by Native Americans) and as an ingredient of soft-drinks and some kinds of beer[20]. The core of the joke was in the difficulty of its pronunciation, even for a sober person. So Twain continues his speech with the anecdote - "His wife said to him, 'John, when you have drunk all the whiskey you want, you ought to ask for sarsaparilla.' He said, 'Yes, but when I have drunk all the whiskey I want I can't say sarsaparilla.'"And then the writer drew a sarcastic conclusion that "it is much better to leave a man unmolested until the testimony and pleadings are all in. Otherwise he is dumb – he is at the sarsaparilla stage" (454). On the one hand, this anecdote presents a rather ordinary situation when the character of the anecdote finds himself in a silly situation. Moreover, Twain transformed a simple silly story from the reality to a more artistic form

[20] See Duke (1993), (Duke 416).

by means of a play with the complexity in the pronunciation of the word sarsaparilla. It intensifies the comic effect, and forces the superiority of the public over the character of the anecdote. All together, the level of pure entertainment is also redoubled. What is more important, in his later performances Twain was amused by interrupting the pathos around his fame and reputation by some words that convey evident absurdity and nonsense. For instance, once Twain started his speech after having been introduced with much respectful appeal - "Before I get to the higgledy-piggledy point, as Mr. Howells suggested I do" (455). The use of the word "higgledy-piggledy" caused striking contrast in the context for mutual amusement. Moreover, this use of the word proves that Twain was not afraid to display self-ironic statement in front of the audience. At times, he enjoyed to make fun of his traditional role in the public – humorous, but still deeply serious and philosophical speech maker.

While performing in front of the audience, Twain's self-ironic approach to his own figure universally served to create friendly and easy-going connection with the people whom he both knew and did not know. Self-deprecating humor was part of Twain's wit and comic voice in his later performances and speeches. This means of self-ridicule contained a more broad and general ridicule, however, in a more sophisticated way. Moreover, it let the writer promote a friendlier and intimate communication during his speeches in front of a variegated audience. For example, during his performance at Yale Alumni Association Dinner on January 31, 1902, Mark Twain remarked ironically that "I wouldn't except an invitation outside of New York, except to funerals [...] if you don't know what the peculiarities of that club are, I will tell you. It was to take men who were not born to speak and never could be made to speak, so that they could get up at any time and speak" (Fatout 426). In another performance he was again evidently self-ironic when he noted about receiving an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in 1902 at University of Missouri that - "It is perfectly right that I be made Doctor of Laws. People who doctor the laws and the people who make the laws do not have to obey them. Their share of the duties is in making them" (436). Playing with self-deprecating or self-ironical observations served generally for mutual entertainment of Twain and his audience.

It can be suggested that Twain enjoyed to play with self-deprecating observations in the public eyes. This habit of the writer can be widely traced in his later public activities. During his speech at Savage Club Dinner in London on June 9, 1899, Twain confirms ironically that "Perhaps I am not a humorist, but I am a first-class fool – a simpleton" (Fatout 321). Furthermore, he continues his play with the audience and says that, "I was

sorry to hear my name mentioned as one of the great authors, because they have a sad habit of dying off. Chaucer is dead, Spencer is dead, so is Milton, so is Shakespeare, and I am not feeling very well myself "(321). This constant self-promoted play with his age, fame and reputation in public did not only attract the attention of the audience, but also became a considerable ground for his new aphorisms and quotations to be remembered and praised by his audience. More than that, it is hard to be sure if Twain's aphorisms and witty observations were spontaneous in his public performances or were well-prepared and ready for each particular situation. It is also not evident if his speeches were spontaneously organized or not. Twain himself once noticed, again rather ironically:

> But impromptu speaking – that is what I was trying to learn. That is a difficult thing. I used to do it in this way. I used to begin about a week ahead, and write out my impromptu speech and get it by heart. Then I brought it to the New England dinner printed on a piece of paper in my pocket, so that I could pass it to the reporters all cut and dried, and in order to do an impromptu speech as it should be done you have to indicate the places for pauses and hesitations. I put them all in it. And then you want the applause in the right places. When 1 got to the place where it should come in, if it did not come in 1 did not care, but 1 had it marked on the paper. And these masters of mind used to wonder why it was my speech came out in the morning in the first person, while theirs went through the butchery of synopsis. I do that kind of speech (I mean an offhand speech), and do it well, and make no mistake, in such a way to deceive the audience completely and make that audience believe it is an impromptu speech – that is art. (Fatout 327)

This quotation proves the writer's sincere delight when he could trifle together with his audience, or when he had a chance to experiment with the people's expectations and attention. He also was entertained by the audience's feedback and reaction. It is evident from the quotation that Twain learned the skill to organize his speeches in the way to keep the people's attention, to intrigue it by the pauses and sudden changes in the narration when serious topics were abruptly edited to his ironic or witty comments on a variety of topics. Occasionally, Twain introduced odd words in his speech in order to entertain his audience. This approach can be considered as well-organized and non-spontaneous. During his speech on March 23, 1899, at the Jubilee of the Emancipation of the Hungarian Press Twain commented: "Let us not waste this golden, this beneficent, this providential opportunity [...] If you want the Gegenseitigengeldbeitiagendenverhaltnismassigkeiten rearranged and readjusted 1 am ready for that. I will let you off at twenty-eight percent – twenty-seven – even twenty-five if you insist, for there is nothing illiberal about me when I am out on a diplomatic debauch" (Fatout 319). The use of a long, odd, complicated for pronunciation and perception word in German

imitates the complexity of this foreign language, its grammar and word-building. Moreover, it creates a comic effect, both puzzles and amuses the audience.

For Twain, the use of humor and other forms of comic in speeches is a perfect means to stimulate serious thinking. As he stated in one of his later performances, "Humor makes me reflect now tonight, it sets the thinking machinery in motion. Always, when I am thinking, there come suggestions of what I am, and what we all are, and what we are coming to [...]A sermon comes from my lips always when I listen to a humorous speech" (Fatout 330). In his opinion, humor and comic forms can promote the audience's thought; together with mutual amusement the audience and Twain could communicate on a more profound layer, on the layer of thinking and debate. In its turn, his frequent use of exaggeration lets him come closer to the reality, to the truth - "because to exaggerate is the only way I can approximate the truth" (337). And humor is part of Twain's truth and reality, it is based not only on exaggeration or on balancing between reality and fiction, "contrast is what brings humor" (354); and that is not seriousness or gravity. In Twain's opinion, contrast between reality and expectations not only brings comic effect to entertain his audience, but this contrast also puzzled his public with serious conclusions.

Moreover, humor let the writer face the reality of him approaching his seventies not only through a pessimistic perspective. A wide use of numerous comic forms can prove Twain's constant attempt to oppose himself to his age. Since his later performances in 1900 the topic of age appears more frequently in his witty observations and commentaries: For instance, at the end of 1900 he remarked about himself getting older - "Times have changed, I am old. I am reformed, too [...] I am just as competent to run all night as I ever was, and more competent to discuss Scotch whiskey if it good – and I see many before me who can do that" (Fatout 355). In this paragraph the contrast creates an ironic tone when at the beginning Twain admits his aging, and then, on a sudden for the audience, confirms his personal distinction from the traditional characteristics of an old age – he is still full of power to continue the way of life he had before entering the period of aging. This sudden and abrupt contrast displays Twain's amusement and desire to intrigue the audience.

When Mark Twain returned to the USA at the end of 1900, his figure was in the center of the public's attention. In the period from 1900-1903 he attended numerous events and was welcomed by many public circles and societies. At the end of 1900 some of Twain's jokes and witty observations were dedicated to his personal comparisons of the UK and the USA. For instance, on December 6, 1900 the writer remarked ironically - "Returning to New York after an absence of nine years, I find much improvement in it – a great moral improvement. Some

think it is because I have been away, but the more intelligent think it is because I have come back" (Fatout 364). In the same speech he noticed improvements in New York in comparison to those in Europe in a sarcastic way - "The very angels in heaven envy you, and wish they could establish a government like it in heaven" (365). In his comments Twain again creates an exaggerated contrast between the reality and his description. This exaggerated contrast entertained the audience, and could bring true delight for Twain.

At the same time, Twain had enough courage to criticize foreign countries in his public performances without losing his famous and welcomed title of the great humorist. In his speeches the writer attacked with satire or sarcasm many countries, empires like France, Germany or Russia; and defended those countries that were oppressed, the countries of China, Cuba or the Philippines. He was also not afraid to criticize his own country in a witty way when he remarked ironically that:

> If patriotism had been taught in the schools years ago, the country would not be in the position it is in today [...] I would teach patriotism in the schools, and teach it this way: I would throw out the old maxim, 'My country, right or wrong,' and instead I would say, 'My country when she is right.' [...]" (Fatout 390)

Moreover, Twain criticized the habits of human race. Nevertheless, he did it in a more delicate way, than in his later writings or notes. For instance, in his speech on December 12, 1900, when introducing Churchill, Twain found a chance to refer to the habits of human race in a subtly ironic way: "There is no place where people all think alike – well, there is heaven; there they do, but let us hope it won't be so always" (Fatout 367). To keep the public's attention, the writer could not let his bitterly philosophical voice appear; philosophic digressions appeared during his performance; however, they were usually suddenly interrupted by an anecdote or a funny recollection from his life.

On the other hand, in his later public performances Twain could not topics, the ones of his personal concern, such as wars, laws or diseases. On February 27, 1901, the writer noticed with irony that new diseases had been discovered:

> Why, sir, when I listened to all those remarkable names of diseases which our learned medical friends have thrown out to us here this afternoon it made me envious of the man who had them all. I don't suppose I shall ever enjoy the felicity of having them all in the span of life allotted to me, but I am truly thankful for those I have had. (Fatout 385)

The ironic tone in this observation is created by means of clear absurdity and contrast between Twain's intense disgust for microbes and the hyperbolized feigned desire to have all

these diseases. The obvious yet subtle ridicule served to be a skillfully organized form of entertaining the company of doctors and other outstanding scientists.

More than that, in his later public oral performances humor, comic forms and wit were combined together to promote and introduce his thinking. As Twain admitted himself on November 30, 1901, "I have never examined the subject of humor until now. I am surprised to find how much ground it covers. I have got its divisions and frontiers down on a piece of paper. I find it defined as a production of the brain, as the power of the brain to produce something humorous, and the capacity of perceiving humor" (Fatout 423). This clearly philosophical observation is followed suddenly by a less serious, though, more ironic remark "The third subdivision is possessed by all English-speaking people, even the Scotch. Even the Lord Rector is humorous. He has offered of his own motion to send me a fine lot of whiskey. That is certainly humor" (423). There is an evident tendency in Twain's style of public performance to turn abruptly from serious recollections to witty observations or ironic remarks. These turning points in his rhetoric let the writer experiment with his numerous voices and roles during just single performance. Moreover, these sudden conversions from one topic to another, from one mood to another attracted and intrigued the audience.

In front of young people Twain felt even more liberated, in the company of students or young ladies he was at his best – a wide use of anecdotes, funny recollections from the past and witty observations can be found in his later performances in front of the younger audience. For instance, during his speech for the art students in Museum of Fine Arts, St. Louis on June 7, 1902, the writer was enthusiastic to present his best style of oratory comic and wit. Twain's speech is inspired by sincere sympathy and support for the young students; and it is reinforced by few anecdotes and humorous recollections about the British painter Turner and the Mona Lisa. An ironic introduction of Twain proves a prevailing humorous tone in the speech - "Just as soon as you become a master doctor of arts, you know all about it, for you have a better opportunity to know, and from that moment you are competent to teach in these high matters of art. I feel now entirely competent to teach" (443).

In this analysis it is important to mention Mark Twain's seventieth birthday speech that was presented by the writer on December 5, 1905. It took place shortly after the pause in his public activities caused by the death of his beloved wife, Olivia Clemens. Twain's humorous voice is very subtle and scarcely perceptible in the oration, the prevailing tone of which is full of sentimental recollections and philosophical statements. However, his delicate ironic tone can be still identified through the lines of the seventieth birthday speech. His recollections are very touching, sentimental, and still ironic. Twain himself defined this performance as his

“swan-song” - “That was my cradle-song; and this is my swan-song, I suppose. I am used to swan-songs; I have sung them several times” (Fatout 463). Referring to his youth, his comic tone contains delicate ridicule, sympathy and subtle irony. He recollected his first birthday experience: “I remember the first one very well [...] Now, for a person born with high and delicate instincts – why, even the cradle wasn't whitewashed – nothing ready at all. I hadn't any hair, I hadn't any teeth, I hadn't any clothes, I had to go to my first banquet just like that” (462-463). For Twain, his deliberate emphasis on sentimental recollections devoted to childhood and youth not only promotes his positive emotions and delicate comic voice; moreover, it indicates his inner debates and strong resistance to numerous issues of his age. His delicate ironic tone constantly alternates with sentimental philosophical statements in the speech when Twain comments on his entering the period of aging - “It is the time of life when you arrive at a new and awful dignity; when you may throw aside the decent reserves which have oppressed you for a generation and stand unafraid and unabashed upon your seven-terraced summit and look down and teach – unrebuked” (463). These words of the writer sound more like a manifesto, it is highly emotional and positively inspiring. The statement does not present Twain as totally depressed and frustrated; on the contrary, it displays the spirit of the person who continued his struggle with inner dark sentiments, the person who did not give up his coping with failures and tragedies. As his performance goes on, his statements turn to be even more emotionally involved and frank - “I have achieved my seventy years in the usual way: by sticking strictly to a scheme of life which would kill anybody else. It sounds like an exaggeration, but that is really the common rule for attaining to old age” (463). In his opinion, Twain examines his life as a predetermined outline within which he had to face a full range of personal tragedies in order to enter his seventieth in the role of a philosopher who is able to accept his life as it is. At the same time, he agrees to the fact that he had to face his tragedies and failures at their maximum. Thus, according to his deterministic point of view, that was his own unique way; each unique way of life when “we can't reach old age by another man's road” (464).

Deterministic statements and sentimental recollections are a few times interrupted by ironic observations, mostly self-ironic. This style of the oration can be explained by Twain's talent of keeping the public's attention and sympathy when philosophical thoughts were replaced by more light-hearted observations. Following such tendencies in the oration, Twain remarked ironically about his habit of drinking - “As for drinking, I have no rule about that. When the others drink I like to help; otherwise I remain dry, by habit and preference. This dryness does not hurt me, but it could easily hurt you, because you are different. You let it alone” (Fatout

465); or about his habit of ignoring physical exercises - “I have never taken any exercise, except sleeping and resting, and I never intend to take any” (464). Moreover, the tendency to take the strain off deeply philosophical thoughts by periodic humorous remarks let Twain set a more friendly and intimate environment with his audience. Even his sarcastic statements sounded not so bitter or critical within such an atmosphere. For instance, when the writer commented on morals, he preferred a less severe style of his critical attitude:

> Morals are of inestimable value, for every man is born crammed with sin microbes, and the only thing that can extirpate these sin microbes is morals. Now you take a sterilized Christian—I mean, you take the sterilized Christian, for there's only one. Dear sir, I wish you wouldn't look at me like that. (Fatout 466)

The voice of Mark Twain in his seventieth birthday speech can be defined as the tone of the person who is a realist, the person who is sedate, prudent and strong enough to accept his life as it is, with all its happy and tragic moments. Adhering to this perspective in his later years, Twain concludes metaphorically at the end of his speech:

> I am seventy; seventy, and would nestle in the chimney-corner, and smoke my pipe, and read my book, and take my rest, wishing you well in all affection; and that when you in your return shall arrive at pier No. 70 you may step aboard your waiting ship with a reconciled spirit, and lay your course toward the sinking sun with a contented heart. (Fatout 467)

These concluding remarks can be interpreted as Twain's admission of facing his final years with a “contented” and “reconciled spirit”, rather than with anger and bitterness. All in all, his seventieth birthday speech can be considered as the writer's confession in front of his close friends and acquaintances – his public confession to accept this life full of tragedies and some happy moments. In the speeches that followed, Twain was less sentimental; later he preferred to mention his age rather frequently in a more lighthearted, ironic and playful way. For instance, on March 4, 1906, Twain remarked about being seventy in a rather positive and ironic way - “I've just turned into it, and I enjoy it very much [...] Ugly! I was never ugly in my life! Forty years ago I was not so good-looking. A looking glass then lasted me three months. Now I can wear it out in two days” (Fatout 494).

Twain's later speeches were full of witty remarks and ironic conclusions. In public the writer was usually full of energy and enthusiasm to amuse and entertain. Twain's self-ironic tone was predominant when he was introduced to give speech. In his turn, Twain preferred to switch to a self-ironic tone so that to prove his ability of taking his position of one the most famous and respected figures of his times more in a lighthearted and humorous way. In his answer to having been referred to the maxim of human race (March 1906 at Freundschaft

Society Dinner for Charles Putzel), Twain gave an ironic caustic answer - “I am the last person to come out on account of the maxim and tell the truth” (Fatout 505). In respond to having been suggested to be a Supreme Court judge, the writer remarked ironically - “I can't be that, for I know nothing of the administration of justice [...] as I am reasonably familiar with crime, I might have this job” (505). In another public performance on March 29, 1906, Twain ironically referred both to his own demerits and to those of human race in general - “I have invented a good many useful things in my time, but never anything better than that of getting money out of people who don't want to part with it. It is always for good objects, of course” (507). It can be mentioned that for Twain, his constant self-deprecating remarks served not only for pure entertainment and amusement; more than that, in these cases self-ironic observations were the means of delicate, but still sophisticated critique and debate on the topics which occupied his thoughts most of the time.

What is more important, burlesque and playful moods can be also identified in Twain's later public activities. One of the most remarkable of his burlesque roles can be noticed when he entertained numerous guests at a private party for his daughter, Clara Clemens on December, 31 1906. His comic role of a host at the party was widely discussed in the press. Twain played both the role of the host and pretended to be one of the Siamese twins. In the press reviews the writer was presented as a brilliant comic actor who turned his play into pure farce - “When uproarious laughter stopped the show, Mark Twain was lurching tipsily about the improvised stage, and the twin was still putting down drinks” (Fatout 541). It seems that he stirred up the audience's laughter and amusement by means of total farce where he enjoyed entertaining his audience by means of self-deprecating approach:

> We come from afar. We come from very far; very far, indeed – as far as New Jersey. We are the Siamese twins...We are so much in each other, my brother and I, that what I eat nourishes him and what he drinks – ahem! - nourishes me [...] He hasn't touched a drop in three years. [Twin: “Another drink.”]He never will touch a drop. [Twin: “Another drink.”] Thank God for that. [The twin took several drinks.] (Fatout 543)

To create the atmosphere of farce and nonsense, Twain contrasted good with evil by means of announcing the topic of alcoholism through the perspective of the twin characters. According to a wide replicate of this event in the press, the writer's attempts to play in farce in front of the public were beneficial for his reputation and status – this extraordinary behavior of Twain attracted the audience's attention and proved the moments of pure entertainment and amusement in his later life. The topic of numerous rumors surrounding Twain's public figure also inspired the writer's humorous tone during his later performances. For instance, in May

1907 there was a rumor about Twain being caught smoking in a sector of the Naval Academy. This story truly amused the writer and inspired him to relate a number of funny stories and ironic remarks in front of the audience. On May, 10 1907, he gave his self-ironical conclusion concerning the rumor - "I have lived many years in the sight of my country an apparently uncaught and blameless life, a model for the young, an inspiring example for the hoary-headed. But at last the law has laid its hand upon me" (Fatout 550). The writer was delighted by the attention of the press and the public. During his visit to England in 1907, Twain spent his time there with pure delight, and performed with his good-natured humorous tone when giving endless interviews and numerous speeches. From his most positive perspective with a delicate humorous tone, Twain described his meeting with the Queen:

> That she still looks to me as young and beautiful as she looked thirty-five years ago is good evidence that ten thousand people have already noticed this, and have mentioned to her...I have kept the remark unuttered, and saved her Majesty the vexation of hearing it the ten thousandth-and-oneth time. (Fatout 557)

In another speech in June 1907 he remembered with sympathy and delight about the same meeting with the Queen. He again attaches a bit of self-irony in his words so that to refute the rumor in a delicate still playful way - "One newspaper said I patted his Majesty on the shoulder – an impertinence of which I was not guilty; I was reared in the most exclusive circles of Missouri and I know how to behave" (Fatout 557). When Twain returned to the USA, he preferred to tease ironically the public on the basis of the topic of a newly awarded honorary degree (July 1907):

> Doctor Twain, if you please. That is the only title I am using now. Just how my old friends are going to get away from calling me "Mark" is something they will have to work out for themselves, and when they see me in my new cup and gown they will be found to fall. (Fatout 585)

What is more important, Twain seldomly debated on the topic of religion in front of the audience, not in the USA or abroad. If he was in the mood, he let himself refer to this topic indirectly, again in a delicately ironic way. In 1907 after his return to the USA he mentioned ironically that "I like America very much. I was prepared for that question and nearly all the others, but being a good Christian I do not dread the worst" (Fatout 586). This quotation can be interpreted as an example when Twain could treat the topic of religion (the writer was preoccupied by this topic through his lifelong career) in a more flippant way, in a more playful and ironical way. In the same speech Twain had again to refute a few rumors about his visit to the UK. For Twain, rumors served mostly an inspiration for his ironic remarks. So his

answer was mostly like this - “Did the King crack a joke at the dinner? Yes; but I'm keeping that, too. I've got a place in the country, you know, that I have to pay rent for” (Fatout 586).

In conclusion, it can be noted that Twain's humorous voice was presented in its full variety when he gave his public performances during his later career. His comic style and witty remarks served a number of purposes. For Twain as a public orator, his comic style together with its numerous forms (from anecdotes to tall tale) served as beneficial means to attract the public's attention, to promote his fame, to set a more intimate and friendly atmosphere with the audience. More than that, Twain's ironic remarks and witty observations let him experiment with his numerous public roles – the one of a humorist, a philosopher or a shrewd critic. The writer's humorous tone supported his attempts to treat some serious topics with less bitterness, to approach hard issues in a more light-minded manner in front of people of all social positions. Twain rarely announced his critical attitude towards religion in front of his spectators. To add more, he seldom mentioned his family in his numerous speeches during his later career. If he did so, he could mention candidly few words about his close connections with his family members, especially with his wife Olivia - “My wife and me, and we together, out of our single heart”[21] (Fatout 459). All in all, in his later career until 1909 Twain was involved in the routine of interviews and dinners. This active social life of the writer proves the popularity of his humorous style and comic voice in his oratory. During those years, his fame and popularity both flattered his self-esteem and inspired his self-ironic attitude towards his role as one of the most famous Americans of his times. Twain's self ironic treatment of his popularity amused and entertained him personally. Moreover, it was a skillful yet contradictory opportunity to be closer and friendlier with his audience. As Twain once noticed ironically: “I am something of a poet. When the great poet laureate, Tennyson, died, and I found that the place was open, I tried to get it – but I did not get it. Anybody can write the first line of a poem, but it is a very difficult task to make the second line rhyme with the first” (589). The example of this self-ironical treatment of his fame proves Twain's constant attempts to cope with a number of negative moments in his later years. He took steps away from his bitter thoughts and moments of frustration when he performed in front of the audience, and presented the complexity of humorous style – from self-ironical statements to witty comments on social events and famous contemporaries of his times.

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[21] Sixty-seventh Birthday Dinner for Mark Twain, Metropolitan Club, New York, November 28, 1902

3.4 Major Findings and Conclusion

It is important to notice that Mark Twain's diverse and remarkable humorous voice and comic style can be distinguished in a variety of the writer's later public activities. His humorous style and comic rhetoric had much in common both in Twain's later speeches and interviews with him. Firstly, the comic forms of irony, self-irony or sarcasm can be detected in Twain's later public activities. Anecdotes, aphorisms and tall tales combined Twain's major comic approach in his numerous public activities during his later years. Secondly, the writer's witty observations and remarks with a definite humorous touch can be found again in all of these later performances of Twain. Thirdly, when giving an interview or speaking in front of the audience, the writer preferred to take several steps away from his inner dark thoughts and pessimistic conclusions. Moreover, Twain's ability to cope with the dark moments of despair and frustration was presented in his active social and public role of a famous humorist. In its turn, Twain's frequent self-ironic treatment of his personal problems and inner issues in front of the public eye can be interpreted as the writer's ability to struggle constantly with his private contradictions and personal complexity.

In detail, the purposes of Twain's humorous voices in speeches and interviews differ. In the later interviews with Mark Twain, his public image of the famous humorist was presented from the side of journalists and interviewers. The major purpose of Mark Twain's comic rhetoric in its full range of forms seems to serve for promotion of his popularity and public status of the greatest humorist. The complex of comic forms and techniques introduced and initiated by Twain himself in the interviews served to be primary means for this promotion. From the side of journalists and interviewers, Twain's talent as a humorist survived in his later years when this talent assisted in the creation of a prevailingly positive side of the writer in the eyes of the audience – the press defined his comic talent as friendly, sociable, amusing and agreeable. Nevertheless, moments of gloomy remarks, witty criticism and dark philosophic observations that appeared were mainly ignored by the press in the articles and interviews with Twain. However, when these moments were mentioned, the media explained these moments as the episodes of Twain’s illness or as sudden episodes of the writer being serious or thought- provoking. Finally, the interpretation of Twain's humorous talent in the later interviews and articles introduced Twain's personal complexity and lifelong struggle for his position in society, the position and respect he expected from his audience. On the one hand, his self-ironical or self-deprecating remarks concerning his popularity suggested the moments when he was truly delighted by his fame and his reputation as the greatest humorist.

He could enjoy the moments when he attracted the attention of his public, by intriguing and puzzling the audience. At the same time, his reputation as the famous humorist limited considerably his opportunities to promote himself as a serious writer and philosopher. All in all, together with the press, Mark Twain promoted his positive image of the great witty observer. He introduced his comic voice in its full when he appeared to be a central topic in the press.

Nevertheless, when Twain delivered his numerous speeches, his humorous talent was considerable part of his talent as an orator. Seeming to be a spontaneous performance, his comic rhetoric included forms of irony, sarcasm, ridicule and exaggeration. In combination with his oratorical skills, Twain's humorous voice could attract the public's attention, promote Twain's points of view on political events and social problems, and, finally, set a more intimate and friendly atmosphere with the people. More than that, Twain's self-ironic observations and witty conclusions let the writer feel free from the limits of his public fame. This comic manner of Twain made it possible to introduce himself as a philosopher or a shrewd critic in the eyes of the audience, however, in a less extreme form. Self-irony, ridicule and Twain's style of witty remarks combined his unique humorous in the oratory when he could treat some controversial events or tragedies with less pessimism or despair, in a more light-minded manner.

In conclusion, Mark Twain's frequent use of his humorous voice and varied comic forms suggest existence of positive moments in his life and career when he entered his final years. His humorous approach in oratory performances can be interpreted as his ability to cope with dark and pessimistic moments, the moments Twain had to face in his later years. In public, Twain preferred a less bitter, but still a thought-provoking and indirectly philosophic manner of his rhetoric. His humorous style together with a wide use of anecdotes, aphorisms and funny stories from his life experience intrigued, entertained and attracted the audience. Twain did not want his public performances to present his personal radical and uncompromising critical attitudes towards religion, politics or human race. In public, the writer preferred to entertain, to instruct and preach but in a more light-minded tone so that to attract the attention of his audience. He valued his fame and the people's sympathy for him. At times, his humorous tone was replaced by more sardonic, gloomy observations. Unfortunately, these moments did not meet the total understanding and support of the audience. Mainly, these moments of bitterness or pessimism were interpreted as the result of the writer's health problems or his age. Together with his public performances, Twain's later life and career

included his private activities. The analysis of the role of humor in this aspect of Twain's later life will be included in the following Chapter 4.

Chapter 4. Humor and its Role in Mark Twain's Later Private Activities

4.1 Introduction

To begin with, some studies on Mark Twain's later career and life are focused on the fact that during his later years Mark Twain was stressed severely by personal losses (Skandera Trombley, *Mark Twain's Other Woman* 156), business failures (Lystra 105) and dark thoughts (Hays 175,181). At the same time, many of the writer's activities, both private and public showed that the nature of his inner thoughts and feelings was more diverse and intricate. In his letter, dated November 9, 1905, to Rev. L. M. Powers, Mark Twain concluded that "Pessimists are born, not made. Optimists are born, not made. But no man is born either pessimistic holy or optimistic wholly, perhaps. He is pessimistic along certain lines and optimistic along certain others. That is my case" (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2 785). This quotation underlines Twain's direct and confident awareness of his own personality and a definite aspect of duality in it. These words can be interpreted as the evaluation based on the complexity of the writer's mood, emotional experiences and some traits of his character. Moreover, this idea can be considered as Twain's attempt to justify both dark and bright sides of his personality; to justify the moments when he tried to seek amusement, emotional comfort and support. According to Lystra (2004), Twain was also longing for a definite worship at these moments (Lystra 223). At times, he found some kind of salvation and comfort by means of private activities – personal correspondence with his friends and acquaintances, marginal notes and autobiographical dictations. It can be also noticed that Mark Twain's humorous voice can be discovered in a number of his later private activities. Moreover, Twain's humor in his private life can be characterized by its natural and random appearance. In contrast to its role in Twain's public life and career, the role of humor in his private circle was of a different nature. In private, Twain did not have to prove his fame of the greatest American humorist. In fact, he did not need to attract attention or promote his popularity when he communicated with his close friends or acquaintances. In their company, Twain did not wish to criticize, justify or preach by means of his famous humorous voice.

For instance, in his communication with the members of the "Aquarium Club", Twain's humorous voice with a variety of comic forms can be defined as a major source of a playful mood, delight and friendship. In the spring of 1908 Twin gave the name of the "Aquarium Club" to the circle of school-aged girls who became friends with the writer. Twain's frequent communication with the girls started in 1905 and lasted until 1910. This communication also included three hundred letters, telegrams, personal notes and cards (Cooley ix-xix). The analysis of the writer's style of

humor in this correspondence can be considered as a central aspect of this project because Twain's letters to the girls introduces a previously ignored aspect of the writer's private life during his final years. The analysis of the use of humor and other forms of comic in the writer's private correspondence with the "Aquarium Club" introduces a perspective on the writer's final years when his humorous voice suggests the point that those years were complex enough to include both optimistic and pessimistic moments.

In my study, I looked at the following material: published sources for the analysis of humor in Mark Twain's letters include *Mark Twain's Letters*, edited by A. B. Paine (1917), *Mark Twain – Howells Letters: the Correspondence of Samuel L. Clemens and William D. Howells. 1872-1910*, edited by H. N. Smith and W. M. Gibson (1960), *Mark Twain's Letters to his Publishers 1867-1894*, edited by H. Hill (1967), and *Mark Twain's Correspondence with H. H. Rogers. 1893-1909*, edited by L. Leary (1969). Published material for the analysis of Twain's style of humor in his autobiographical dictations include three volumes of complete edition in *Autobiography of Mark Twain* Volume I, edited by H. E. Smith (2010), *Autobiography of Mark Twain* Volume II, edited by B. Griffin, H. E. Smith and V. Fischer (2013), and *Autobiography of Mark Twain* Volume III, edited by H. E. Smith and B. Griffin (2015).

Finally, Twain's private activities also included his critical reading of the works of different authors. Twain was very diligent while reading, and he had a habit to leave his marginalia notes in those books. The marginalia discussed in this study are part of material found at Twain's personal library in his summer residence at the Quarry Farm in Elmira, New York. During my first visit to Elmira in 2013, when I took part in Mark Twain Quadrennial Conference, I worked in the Mark Twain Archive at Elmira College for one week. The major goal of my work there was to find more evidence for Mark Twain's happy moments indicated by humor during his final years. Mark Woodhouse, the director of the Archive, mentioned Twain's marginalia in the books of other authors. Joe B. Fulton (2007) studied Twain's marginalia in the books of the Quarry Farm collection. Fulton suggested the importance of the role of Twain's margins when they presented the ways how the other writers' works influenced Twain's philosophy and methods of composing. However, Fulton's study of Twain's margins did not focus on the writer's later notes with marginalia. Moreover, Fulton did not discuss the role of humor in those margins. In 2015, owing to Quarry Farm Research Fellowship, I had opportunity to continue my study at the Quarry Farm. Together with Mark Woodhouse's [Elmira college archivist] support and advice, I found the material that included Twain's marginal notes written during his later years. For my study, those notes were chosen

where Twain's humorous approach or hint can be noticed. Twain's humorous tone can be found in W. E. H. Lecky's (1869) *History of European Morals*, James B. Elmore's (1899) *Love among the Mistletoe, the Poems* and in Andrew Caster's (1903) *Pearl Island*.

As a result, Chapter 4 will include two sub-chapters. Sub-chapter 4.2 will present the analysis of the use of humor and other forms of the comic in Mark Twain's later private activities – personal correspondence with close friends and acquaintances, autobiographic dictations and marginal notes. Further on, sub-chapter 4.3 will introduce a major addition to previous discussions of the subject, namely an analysis of Mark Twain's humorous voice and comic style in his personal correspondence with the young members of the "Aquarium Club".

4.2 Features of Mark Twain's Humor in His Later Private Letters, Autobiographical Dictations and Selected Marginalia

4.2.1 Private Letters

In parallel to his active public life and career, Mark Twain private life cannot be ignored in my study. The records of his private activities included personal correspondence, autobiographical dictations, private remarks and marginal notes. It should be underlined that a considerable part of these activities presented the writer's predominant concern in philosophy, science, political and social issues of his times, as well as his sound interaction in the matters and events of his family's and friends' circle. At the same time, Twain's humor and comic style appeared under definite circumstances in his private life. When in his final years Mark Twain had to face personal tragedies, and coped with his inner grief and sorrows, his work and activities both in public and private appeared to be his cure and escape from these inner bitter sentiments. In his letter to W. D. Howells on February 23, 1897, Twain admitted:

> The words stir the dead heart of me, and throw a glow of color into a life which sometimes seems to have grown wholly wan. I don't mean that I am miserable; no – worse than that – indifferent. Indifferent to nearly everything but work. I like that; I enjoy it, and stick to it. I do it without purpose and without ambition; merely for the love of it. Indeed I am a mud image, and it will puzzle me to know what it is in me that writes, and has comedy-fancies and finds pleasure in phrasing them. It is a law of our nature, of course, or it wouldn't happen; the thing in me forgets the presence of the mud image and goes its own way, wholly unconscious of it and apparently of no kinship with it. (*Mark Twain-Howells Letters* 664)

In his later letter to Rev. J. H. Twichell on November 19, 1897, Twain confessed again that his active engagement in his writing activities was his best medicine and entertainment during those hard time shortly after Susy's death:

> It was because of the deadness which invaded me when Susy died. But I have made a change lately – into dramatic work – and I find it absorbingly entertaining. I don't know that I can write a play that will play: but no matter, I'll write half a dozen that won't, anyway. Dear me, I didn't know there was such fun in it. I'll write twenty that won't play. I get into immense spirits as soon as my day is fairly started. (*Mark Twain's Letters,* Vol. 2, 656)

Moreover, Twain's lofty aim was to write a book for his personal, professional and moral satisfaction, not for print or sale. In Twain's point of view, such a book can be considered to be the highest delight for him. In his private circle Twain could be frank with his close friend W. D. Howells (May 12, 1899). It is evident that Twain wanted to share his thoughts with him:

> For several years I have been intending to stop writing for print as soon as I could afford it. At last I can afford it, and have put the pot-boiler pen away. What I have been wanting is a chance to write a book without reserves – a book which should take account of no one's feelings, and no one's prejudices, opinions, beliefs, hopes, illusions, delusions; a book which should say my say, right out of my heart, in the plainest language and without a limitation of any sort. I judged that that would be an unimaginable luxury, heaven on earth. (*Mark Twain-Howells Letters* 698)

Twain was longing for an opportunity to share his inner thoughts and personal desires through his close communication with those people whom he respected and trusted. For instance, during his later years he made friends with J. Y. M. MacAlister, to whom he revealed his lifelong, yet both intimate and obvious desire to be taken as a serious writer in the public's view. He considered himself a humorist, yet a serious author who was able to show the reality full of both happy and sad moments in a humorous, more complex way:

> I like to think that "Tom Sawyer" and "Huckleberry Finn" will be looked upon, fifty or a hundred years from now, as the picture of buoyant, dramatic, human American life. I feel, deep in my own heart, pretty sure that they will be. They won't be looked on then as the work of a "humorist" any more than we think of Shakespeare as a humorist now. I don't mean by this to set up a comparison between Mark Twain and Shakespeare: I don't feel competent to do it; and I'm not at all sure that it could be done until Mark Twain's work shall have its fair share of historical perspective. But Shakespeare was a humorist and so, thank Heaven! is Mark Twain. And Shakespeare plunged deep into the deep, sad things of life; and so, in a different way (but in a way that has more than once brought tears to my eyes) has Mark Twain. (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 743)

Concerning an evident presence of Twain's humorous voice in the correspondence with his close friends and acquaintances during his later years, it should be remarked that the writer's humorous tone appeared in a casual and natural manner. Humor was a natural accompaniment of his personality in private, as well as a necessary accompaniment in his public activities. There can be defined two major inspirations for Twain's comic voice to appear in private through the correspondence with his circle of friends. The first one was based on his personal recollections of some funny or amusing experiences and events from his real life. The second one was mostly based on his witty, ironic or sarcastic observations about political and social events during those years. To a greater extent, Twain was frank and sincere when he introduced his wit, sarcasm or irony in his private thoughts, the ones not intended for his audience. For instance, in his letter to Twichell on October 23, 1897, Twain could speak frankly about contradictory topics of religion and national prejudices. His ironic attitude can be seen when Twain disputed emotionally about his personal concern:

> If I had time to run around and talk, I would do it; for there is much politics going, and it would be interesting if a body could get the hang of it. It is Christian and Jew by the horns – the advantage with the superior man, as usual – the superior man being the Jew every time and in all countries. Land, Joe, what chance would the Christian have in a country where there were 3 Jews to 10 Christians! Oh, not the shade of a shadow of a chance. The difference between the brain of the average Christian and that of the average Jew – certainly in Europe – is about the difference between a tadpole's and an Archbishop's. It's a marvelous, race – by long odds the most marvelous that the world has produced, I suppose. (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 647)

In this ironic remark Twain discussed the topic of Jews in Europe, in Austria, in particular. Twain expressed his support for the Jews and his criticism and skepticism about a traditional antipathy of the Christians towards the Jews in Europe. In the later 1890's, the writer became a witness of radical anti-Semitism in Austria when the Jews could not be represented in political parties there. At the same time, an active influence of the Jews in business mostly irritated the public[22].

Further on, in 1899 the Czar of Russia initiated a project for world disarmament[23]. The event prompted Twain's sarcastic, yet brief remark (in his letter to Wm. T. Stead): "The Czar is ready to disarm: I am ready to disarm. Collect the others, it should not be much of a task now" (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 672). This quotation shows that in his private circle of his best friends Twain could reveal his inner anger and bitter sarcasm about numerous topics – wars, imperialism, medicine and religion. Once the writer confessed privately in his letter to Howells on January 25, 1900 that "Every day I write (in my head) bitter magazine articles about it, but I have to stop with that" (*Mark Twain-Howells Letters* 715-16). In the same letter, Twain remarked with a tone of sarcasm that "Privately speaking, this is a sordid and criminal war, and in every way shameful and excuseless. [...] God had his opportunity. He could have made a reputation. But no, He must commit this grotesque folly – a lark which must have cost him a regret or two when He came to think it over and observe effects. For a giddy and unbecoming caprice there has been nothing like it till this war" (716). Twain kept these thoughts in such way when level of his personal bitterness and skepticism could belong only to his private circle. In this critical observation Twain referred both to the war in China (initiated by European empires) and to a traditional habit of these Europeans to start war in the name of religion and the best morals of Christianity. In another letter to Howells (January 26 1900) Twain continued his debate on the topic of religion and war, and drew a sarcastic conclusion that "I notice that God is on both sides in this war; thus history repeats itself. But I

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[22] See Strauss (1993), (Strauss 739-745).

[23] See Wieczynski (1994), (Wieczynski 12).

am the only person who has noticed this; everybody here thinks He is playing the game for this side, and for this side only" (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 694). Twain gained his inner personal freedom to attack the human race in his private correspondence. In another letter to Twichell (January 27, 1900) the writer criticized humanity in his emotional manner: "My idea of our civilization is that it is a shabby poor thing and full of cruelties, vanities, arrogances, meannesses, and hypocrisies. As for the word, I hate the sound of it, for it conveys a lie; and as for the thing itself, I wish it was in hell, where it belongs" (696).

At the same time, Twain's correspondence with his private circle of friends and acquaintances also included moments of happiness, positivity, entertainment and sentimentality in his personal life. Twain's sentimentality could accompany both nostalgic and sad thoughts of Twain in his letters to friends. In his message to Howells, Twain was looking for moral support and understanding from his close friend when he described his inner feelings shortly after Olivia's death (June 4, 1904): "Shall we ever laugh again? If I could only see a dog that I knew in the old times! and could put my arms around his neck and tell him all, everything, and ease my heart [...] Lord, the old friends, how dear they are" (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 759). In his words there can be defined an evident symbolic allusion to the youth and old times, the old times when he did not have to cope with so much grief and personal tragedy as he did in his final years. Twain also referred indirectly to a state of his personal happiness. His personal happiness included a company of old friends, beloved family and adorable pets. He also included an ability to laugh in his state of happiness. In his personal grief, Twain could not let his humorous tone appear. In his letter to F. A. Duneka (October 7, 1906), Twain stated about publication of his later piece of work "A Horse's Tale" (1907). It is obvious that Twain insisted on being considered a serious author. He dedicated this later writing to his daughter, Susy Clemens. He included all his love, sentiment and sympathy in this story. Being precise about illustrations in his books, he did not wish funny pictures to ruin all his deep feelings and thoughts included in the story:

> I hope you will illustrate this tale considerably. Not humorous pictures. No. When they are good (or bad) one's humor gets no chance to play surprises on the reader. A humorous subject illustrated seriously is all right, but a humorous artist is no fit person for such work. You see, the humorous writer pretends to absolute seriousness (when he knows his trade) then for an artist — to step in and give his calculated gravity all away with a funny picture – oh, my land! It gives me the dry gripes just to think of it. It would be just about up to the average comic artist's intellectual level to make a funny picture of the horse kicking the lungs out of a trader. Hang it, the remark is funny – because the horse is not aware of it but the fact is not humorous, it is tragic and it is no subject for a humorous picture. (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 779)

In its turn, Twain's humorous tone cannot be considered as the writer's prevailing means of emotional expression at these moments. Nevertheless, some of these moments were accompanied with a humorous touch. For instance, Twain was amused when he recollected some funny moments from his real life. Usually these recollections were accompanied by his ironic treatment. In Vienna in 1898 the writer had several meeting with the members of the royal family of Austria. Twain recollected one of these attendances in a manner of an amusing adventure of the Americans in Europe. Later in his letter to Twichell (February 3, 1898) Twain told the story of his adventure in a very friendly, playful and ironic way. He remembered the day when he and his wife were invited to the palace of the Austrian princess in Vienna:

> "Her Royal Highness will be back in a very little while – she commanded me to tell you so – and you must wait." Well, the soldiers were there close by – there was no use trying to resist – so we followed the servant up; but when he tried to beguile us into a drawing-room, Livy drew the line; she wouldn't go in. And she wouldn't stay up there, either. She said the princess might come in at any moment and catch us, and it would be too infernally ridiculous for anything. So we went down stairs again — to my unspeakable regret. For it was too darling a comedy to spoil [...] well, Joe, I was in a state of perfect bliss [...] Poor Livy – I couldn't help but enjoy her distress. She said we were in a fix, and how were we going to explain, if the princess should arrive before the rightful Americans came? [...] Livy was in a state of mind! She said it was too theatrically ridiculous; and that I would never be able to keep my mouth shut; that I would be sure to let it out and it would get into the papers — and she tried to make me promise - "Promise what?" I said - "to be quiet about this? Indeed I won't – it's the best thing that ever happened; I'll tell it, and add to it; and I wish Joe and Howells were here to make it perfect; I can't make all the rightful blunders myself — it takes all three of us to do justice to an opportunity like this. I would just like to see Howells get down to his work and explain, and lie, and work his futile and invention less subterfuges when that princess comes raging in here and wanting to know." (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 658)

This paragraph illustrates that there were moments of pure entertainment in the writer's later years. It was a moment of farce in his viewpoint when he treated some ceremonial rules in the royal family with a tone of irony and ridicule, in a manner of a young boy who wanted to play and was searching for some adventures in his life. Moreover, although Twain's family had to face hard times during his final years, they still enjoyed simple things. In confirmation of this, in 1898 Twain noticed with an ironic tone in a letter to Howells that "At the house of an English friend, on Christmas Eve, we saw the Mouse-Trap played and well played. I thought the house would kill itself with laughter. By George they played with life! and it was most devastatingly funny. And it was well they did, for they put us Clemenses in the front seat, and if they played it poorly I would have assaulted them" (*Mark Twain-Howells Letters*

684). A moment of farce was also recorded by Twain in his letter in 1901 when he related a story about the telegraph. This story also amused him deeply by pointing out the stupidity in the system of the telegraph. The writer was considerably annoyed by a slow system of the post. To solve this problem, he talked to a person working at the telegraph. This event inspired his ironic tone when he remembered it later:

> The construction of such a rule would discredit an idiot; in fact an idiot – I mean a common ordinary Christian idiot, you understand – would be ashamed of it, and for the sake of his reputation wouldn't make it. What do you think?"
> He replied with much natural brilliancy that he wasn't paid for thinking.
> This gave me a better opinion of the commercial intelligence pervading his morgue than I had had before; it also softened my feelings toward him, and also my tone, which had hitherto been tinged with bitterness.
> "Let bygones be bygones," I said, gently, "we are all erring creatures, and mainly idiots, but God made us so and it is dangerous to criticize." (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 703)

With an ironic treatment in the story Twain hinted at his personal belief that religion and a system created by humans (in this case it is a system of post) could present a man in an idiotic manner. What is more important, sentimental recollections were appeared regularly in Twain's letters to his close friends. Now and then Mark Twain wrote few lines about his old comrades when he wanted to remember the moments of youth and romance. These thoughts were always recalled with tenderness, sentiment and sympathy. In his letters to old friends Twain replied in his light manner, at times with a humorous touch, yet always with friendly affection and sentiment. In one of his letters to an old friend, Major "Jack" Downing, Twain remarked ironically in reply about their mutual friend (6, Feb. 26, 1899): "Bixby is not 67: he is 97. I am 63 myself, and I couldn't talk plain and had just begun to walk when I apprenticed myself to Bixby who was then passing himself off for 57 and successfully too, for he always looked 60 or 70 years younger than he really was" (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 675). In his letters to his close friends, Twain frequently admitted his delight when reading books of other writers. In his private message (June 24, 1906), Twain commented on a book he read following the recommendations of Howells:

> Howells told me that "In Our Town" was a charming book, and indeed it is. All of it is delightful when read one's self, parts of it can score finely when subjected to the most exacting of tests – the reading aloud. Pages 197 and 216 are of that grade. I have tried them a couple of times on the family, and pages 212 and 216 are qualified to fetch any house of any country, caste or color, endowed with those riches which are denied to no nation on the planet – humor and feeling." (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 797)

This quote does not only illustrate a moment of Twain's personal amusement and delight in his private circle when he was reading books he enjoyed. More than that, it suggests

the writer's point of view that humor is a natural part of happiness, and it can be defined as an important human virtue, one of human "riches". According to Twain, moments of pure delight and happiness can be expressed through laughter. In private, Twain also enjoyed moments when he had a chance to ridicule the topics of philosophical origin. In his letter to Mrs. Whitmore (February 7, 1907), Twain concluded: "But the truth is, that when a Library expels a book of mine and leaves an unexpurgated Bible lying around where unprotected youth and age can get hold of it, the deep unconscious irony of it delights me and doesn't anger me" (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 805). This quotation suggests Twain's ability to soften his anger against religion when he addressed his thoughts to his close friends. Twain could control his dark feelings and pessimistic ideas and turn his tone to rather ironical in his communication within his private circle.

That was a company of close friends and acquaintances cannot be ignored as valuable source for his personal moments of delight and happiness in his private life. The correspondence with them proved that Twain enjoyed simple things in his later past time – his friends' visits to him, when playing billiards or spending time in a company of his family members and pets. For example, in 1904 soon after his wife's death Twain made friends with the Littletons in New York City. The writer's letters addressed to the Littletons suggested his cordial sympathy and sincere affection to them. In confirmation of this observation, in his letter to Mr. Littleton on December 6, 1908, Twain expressed his sincere gratitude by means of repeating his thanks to the Littletons. His humorous tone can be detected in the few lines of the letter, and it proved his true feelings of friendship and need for a good company. For example, in response to sending him tobacco, Twain replied with his slightly ironic and prevailingly friendly tone: "Thank you for delivering into my hands those sumptuous examples of the art of decorating and putting tobacco in the right & reverent way [...]" (Woodhouse, *Choice Bits* 33).

Twain sincerely enjoyed sympathy and cordial affection in others. He respected and needed these feelings belonging to his friends and acquaintances. When being invited to join the company of his true friends and admirers, the writer felt young and happy again. In confirmation of this fact, in his letter to Mrs. Littleton on March 11, 1909 (Twain preferred to call her ironically Mrs. Linthicum in private), he remarked that "It was lovely of you to invite me" (Woodhouse, *Choice Bits* 33), and, further on in the letter, he continued with a more boyish tone in his message that "I'll get a cab & rush to your house. If I find you bedless, don't bother a bit about me. I'll fly to Mr. Coe's or Dr. Rice's & break in" (33). In another letter to Mrs. Littleton on February 3, 1909, Twain again continued in his manner of a friendly

adoration and sincere sympathy. But it was not just a habit of a well-mannered and well-wishing attitude. Twain required these feelings and treatment from the others, and did the same in response. Thus, in this later letter to Mrs. Littleton he mentioned Isabel Lyon with some humor in his tone (before his relationship with Lyon was ruined completely): "Miss Lyon is ill in bed, therefore I am secretary; wherefore brevity's the word, brevity being the soul of indolence" (35). In this paragraph Twain mentioned ironically about necessity to replace Lyon on her position with the duties of a secretary while she was ill. Moreover, this quotation can be defined as evidence that the writer enjoyed ridicule in reference to some private or family matters. He was dealing with some private issues in a more light-hearted manner when he corresponded with some of his close friends and acquaintances. In his letters to them Twain did not bother them with personal issues or burden them with his inner moments of frustration or bitterness. Even in one of his last letters (March 12, 1910) to the Littletons, a few weeks before his own death, Twain felt the same towards his close friends, and found enough inner strength to respond in his characteristic manner. The writer still had enough enthusiasm to ridicule, satirize and tease. At the beginning of the letter a habit of women to wear hats turns to be a central object of his ridicule:

> In thanking you for the picture I can candidly say that whereas there is plenty of beauty under the hat, the hat itself doesn't catch any of it. I won't go so far as to say it is the damndest hat I ever saw, I will only say it is the derndest. Oh who did start this hat lunacy? I believe it is two years since I have seen a (woman's) hat that wasn't a horror. I suppose yours is no worse than the others, but lord knows they are all bad enough. (Woodhouse, *Choice Bits* 36)

The paragraph in the letter vividly shows the moment when the writer could still be amused by casual moments in the last year of his life. These events could still promote his humorous tone. Further on in the letter, Twain informed Mrs. Littleton that he was able to enjoy life when he went "to hear garrison band play", and confirmed that "these are my activities & they are sufficient" for him. Twain continued telling about his activities and remarked that "There are no newspapers, no telegrams, no mo-bikes, no trolleys, no trains, no railways, no theaters, no lectures, no riots, no murders, no fires, no burglaries, no offences of any kind, no follies but church, & I don't go there" (qtd. in Woodhouse, *Choice Bits* 37). His indirect sarcastic conclusion "no follies but church" comes after an enumeration of all the activities Twain was used to. Together with this, the writer's sarcasm is intensified and creates a case of exaggeration. That was characteristic of Twain's comic style during his life-long career. The climax of the writer's deliberate ridicule appeared when he concluded "You go to heaven if you want to – I'd druther stay here" (37).

In conclusion, it can be suggested that Twain's capacity and desire for true friends in his private life was considerable during his later years. Twain's humorous voice sounded mostly in a casual, friendly and playful manner. This peculiarity of the writer's humorous approach in his private environment can suggest that the writer enjoyed contacts with either close friends, or less close acquaintances during those years when he had to face moments of sorrow and delight. In private, Twain did not have to play the role of the greatest humorist. At the same time, his humorous tones varied from ironical observations to sarcastic conclusions. Twain's ironical approach in his judgments usually introduced his critical attitude in a less desperate, yet friendlier and lighter manner. In his letters to close friends, Twain's sarcastic conclusions concerning politics or religion suggested his attempts to feel free out from public boundaries of his reputation and fame. Moreover, the cases of ridicule and witty remarks suggested the moments when the writer wanted to receive delight, to amuse and to be amused in the company of devoted friends. All in all, Twain's style of humor, detected through his style of correspondence with friends and acquaintances, introduced an intimate image in his private and personal environment when he could be frank, sincere, with evident sympathy and love towards those people. Humor in Twain's communication with close friends was not for the benefit of his public image or fame, nor to attract attention to his personality. On the contrary, it served for mutual delight, amusement, fun and sharing of his personal thoughts and observations in his private circle during those hard times of his later career and life.

4.2.2 Selected Marginalia

As a significant remark about Twain's later private activities, it can be noticed that he enjoyed reading the works of other authors when he could leave his personal marks and comments in margins. As it was mentioned in sub-chapter 4.1, Fulton (2007) illustrated the role of Twain's marginalia to his personal copies of books from the collection at the Quarry Farm. Fulton suggested that Twain's marginalia "offer a privileged insight into Mark Twain's creative process" (Fulton 32) in composition of his own works, and *Connecticut Yankee* (1889) in particular. In his study, Fulton followed Lecky's, Macaulay's and Thomas Carlyle's influence upon Twain's philosophy and method of composing. J. R. LeMaster (2013) also mentioned about the role of Twain's marginalia and his style of critical reading when he left comments and marks in the copies of the books from his library. LeMaster suggested influence of several books from Twain's collection at the Quarry Farm upon Twain's later manuscripts[24]. Among the most influential books from Twain's personal library, both Fulton and LeMaster thought of W. E. H. Lecky's *History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe* (1865) and *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (1869). In his turn, LeMaster suggested that Twain's special interest in Lecky's works could be noticed when the revised edition of *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (1869) became a part of the Quarry Farm Library in 1902. Twain's marginalia were written in the summer of 1903.

In 2015, I was awarded an opportunity to look through all the copies of books from the Quarry Farm Library in Elmira, New York. With considerable support and advice from Mark Woodhouse, the head of the Archive at Elmira College, I chose those marks and comments in margins that contained Twain's humorous tone and were written during his later years. All in all, I found three books in the Quarry Farm Collection that were read by Twain and presented his humorous approach when he wrote his notes in margins: W. E. H. Lecky's (1869) *History of European Morals*, James B. Elmore's (1899) *Love among the Mistletoe, the Poems* and in Andrew Caster's (1903) *Pearl Island.*

To begin with, I can suggest that Twain's marginalia in these books presented his critical skepticism and humorous tone. Twain himself defined this kind of bad writing as

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[24] According to LeMaster and Wilson (1993), these later works included Twain's "A Dog's Tale", *What is Man?* and *The Mysterious Stranger*. See (LeMaster and Wilson 450).

"literary hogwash" (Gribben 132). Both for personal entertainment and because of personal concern about the craft of writing, Twain was reading and commenting on in the books from his library in Stormfield. In 1907 in his copy of a collection of poems by James B. Elmore, Twain remarked sarcastically "Hogwash, but not atrocious enough to be first rate" (1)[25]. It seemed that Twain enjoyed reading with diligence, making comments (humorous or not), underlining grammar and stylistic mistakes of the authors. His marginalia with a humorous hint can be interpreted as evidence when such manner of reading was a pleasant private activity in the writer's later years, the activity he treated professionally, skeptically and with a humorous touch. His humorous remarks, ironic or sarcastic, present the writer in his later years when he could enjoy simple activities with his full emotional and professional involvement.

According to Joe B. Fulton (1997), in 1903 at Quarry Farm[26], Twain was busy reading William Lecky's (1869) *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne*. Twain borrowed a copy of this book belonging to his wife's sister, Susan Crane. His marginalia can be found in Crane's copy of the book at Quarry Farm. Being concerned about the human race and its morality, Twain argued with Lecky's ideas about determinism in his comments in margins. In his remarks to Lecky's observations, Twain's tone can be defined as similar to his voice of a philosopher in his later writings on human race. However, Twain responded to a thought expressed by Lecky in the way that "the morality of God is generally different from the morality of men"[27] (17). He added in his characteristic sarcastic and witty manner that: "It is pretty evident that God is a white elephant on those people's hands. For 'different' read 'worse'" (17).

Since 1994[28] a copy of a book *Pearl Island* written by Andrew Caster (1903) from Twain's personal library is a part of the collection of the Mark Twain Archive at Elmira college. As evidence, this copy includes the writer's marginal notes, some of the marginalia indicate his humorous tone. In his article "Flayed and then Hanged: Samuel Clemens Reads *Pearl Island*" (*American Literary Realism*, Vol. 42, 72-78), Mark Woodhouse first noticed that Mark Twain's critical reading *Pearl Island* included definite evidence of the writer's humorous touch when he was purely amused by commenting on the style of Andrew Caster.

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[25] Mark Twain, marginal note in Elmore, *Love Among the Mistletoe, the Poems (*Alamo, Indianapolis: The Author, 1899)

[26] See Joe B. Fulton (1997) in *Mark Twain's Ethical Realism*. (Fulton 21).

[27] Mark Twain, marginal notes in Lecky, *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1869)

[28] See Woodhouse (2009) in *American Literary Realism*, Vol. 42. (Woodhouse 72).

This evidence is based on a prevailing mixture of both ironic and sarcastic tone in Twain's marginal notes to the copy of the book found in his personal collection. The copy of the book presents the writer's numerous remarks, corrections and marginal comments, many of which include Twain's ironic or sarcastic attitudes. Woodhouse describes *Pearl Island* as "the first person narrative of Frank Mayne, a young man who finds himself stranded with his traveling companion Henry Eppington on an island in the Indian Ocean after a shipwreck. The story follows their somewhat predictable adventures with wild animals, hostile natives, volcanic eruptions, and the like" (Woodhouse 72).

The style of Twain's marginalia present his voices of skepticism and criticism. This can be explained by his lifelong concern in criticizing those authors who basically ignored logic in their description, stylistic correctness, and accuracy in details. In the case of *Pearl Island*, Twain found and underlined many of Caster's errors in his book. Twain's criticism was addressed against the ignorance of those writers who were simply lazy and unprofessional when they refused to learn and collect some knowledge about the phenomena they were describing in their works. Moreover, Twain's ironic and even sarcastic tone can be defined in a majority of his marginal notes to a number of Caster's inaccurate descriptions of animals or nature. Thus, Twain concluded sarcastically about Caster's intellectual background that "his natural history is scissored out of the text-books"[29] (119). According to Woodhouse, Twain "also devotes a great deal of attention to those places that display a conspicuous absence of fact or attention in detail" (Woodhouse 73). For example, Caster includes a character of a dog in the narrative. In his turn, Twain is preoccupied to learn more details about the dog when reading and putting his remarks in the copy of the book. For him, these details are important for the story's composition and plot. Due to this reason, several remarks containing the question "What kind of a dog was it?"[30] (58) or "The dog is a retriever or a setter?" (68). Referring to Twain's critical attitude, "the conversations in this book are incomparably idiotic" (2). Constant ignorance of the details in Caster's narrative inspires Twain's constant questions, like "How did he get it?" (21) or "Why won't he?" (15). Further on, Twain's irritation grows when Caster takes clumsy steps in the narrative to create a positive image of his character. To his words "How very thankful we should be that", Twain gives a more emotional remark - "son of a bitch, why don't you pray – and say you are thankful" (63).

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[29] Mark Twain, marginal notes in Caster, *Pearl Island* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1903)

[30] Mark Twain, marginal notes in Caster, *Pearl Island* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1903). Subsequent citations indicated parenthetically.

When some aspects of Caster's style in the narrative (together with grammar or stylistic mistakes) irritated Twain, Caster's factual mistakes or clumsy attempts to include exaggeration entertained Twain tremendously. About one of these descriptions, including a factual mistake, Twain commented on: "3600 oysters in 2 days. A most capable liar – 17 tons" (97)[31]. To another observation in the narrative, the writer remarked sarcastically "wisdom" (69) or "plenty of pearls, now" (96). According to Woodhouse, Twain's numerous sarcastic comments and remarks on the composition and the narrative "seem to be the points where Clemens is amusing himself the most" (Woodhouse 75). Moreover, Twain did not only criticize the style of Caster's narrative. It is evident that Twain also enjoyed definite moments of his personal superiority. In its turn, his humorous voice was based not only on pure entertainment. When reading such writing, his personal self-confidence was proved once again by his understanding that, being a professional and perfectionist, he would never ignore the importance of details and facts in the narrative. Thus, Twain could let himself give such sarcastic comments to Caster's narrative, like "These people are not to be damaged by falling on their heads" (141)[32] "Humor – at last?" (122) or "Unhappy dog: cast away with idiots on an island" (57). Moreover, the best proof of Twain's attitude with a hint of professional superiority can be detected in his final sarcastic remark in the conclusion of the book. When the narrator comes to the conclusion that "Startling, indeed, have been our adventures, some of which we may relate in another volume", Twain states both firmly and sarcastically "If you do, you ought to be flayed and then hanged" (267).

Occasionally, Twain gives witty, yet teasing remarks in return to Caster's primitive descriptions. When the boys repeat the word "pig" a few times, Twain wrote one word "pork" (98) in return. When the narrator tries to describe an extinct animal "a babirussa", Twain added sarcastically with one word: "erudition" (100). At the end of one chapter, when the narrative tries to give a witty conclusion, Twain again finds a reason for a sarcastic conclusion - "Ah, we have a wit in the combine" (109). Moreover, for Twain it seems strained when Caster tries to introduce an idealistic portrait of his characters. Due to this, Twain gives a witty observation - "His occasional humanities are merely for show" (117). He does not believe in the characters' sincerity when they try to save some extinct animals – so he remarks "But you have not respected habitats there – for none of your animals belong there"117).

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[31] Mark Twain, marginal notes in Caster, *Pearl Island* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1903).

[32] Mark Twain, marginal notes in Caster, *Pearl Island* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1903). Subsequent citations indicated parenthetically.

Twain attacks the characters of *Pearl Island* by means of obvious skepticism and sarcasm – for example, in the remark like “The bark is 2 feet thick – they have a job” (140) or in a note like “As fools, these cads are really overdoing themselves” (152). Also he attacks constantly the style of the narrative with criticism - “How artificial all these adventures sound” (144).

To sum up, it is important to notice that Mark Twain approached reading *Pearl Island* with both professional criticism and personal enthusiasm. It is evident that Twain's both skeptical and sarcastic attitude in his marginalia to the book proves that he was interested and amused by exposing a flat narrative, silly descriptions and clumsy attempts to include a humorous tone in the book. Professionally concerned, Twain knew precisely that it is a hard task to write a book and not ignore a complex of components required from a talented writer. Though Woodhouse finds Twain's criticism to be addressed not personally against Andrew Caster, it seems that Twain indirectly criticizes a type of writers who are mostly unprofessional, ignorant and lazy to work hard on their style and skills.

Finally, the nature of Twain's humorous voice in the marginalia to *Pearl Island* is rooted in a number of factors. First of all, its presence in a major part of his remarks proves that Twain was amused by his careful and analytical reading of the book. Combined with his evident skepticism, his sarcastic tone also suggests a hint of the writer's superiority when he could escape from the problems of his own, and feel self-confident enough to give such straight-out remarks and notes. All in all, his habit to read books and write his notes and comments to those books can suggest his active intellectual participation during his final years. His later notes in margins reveal his enthusiasm to develop his personal craft of writing. In its turn, his ironical tone in those later marginalia can be interpreted as evidence that Twain experienced moments of amusement and entertainment by means of this way of private pastime.

4.2.3 Autobiographical Dictations

Twain's private activities also included his autobiographical notes and dictations. He began "to turn serious attention to the composition of the *Autobiography of Mark Twain* from 1897 to 1906" (Trombley and Kiskis 101). For him, this kind of private pastime was a kind of "talk therapy" or "talking cure" (101). According to Trombley and Kiskis (2011), "working with stream of consciousness, free association, memories, and dreams, Twain aimed to tell stories to cope with loss" (101). In January 1906 Twain "began almost daily dictations to a stenographer" (Smith, *Autobiography of Mark Twain*, Vol. I, 1). According to H. E. Smith (2010), during his final years, Mark Twain permitted partial publication of twenty-five short extracts from his dictations for publication in the *North American Review* (Smith, *AMT*, Vol. I, 2). Twain also insisted on a deliberate delay of the complete publication of his autobiographical dictations for a hundred years. Nevertheless, his instructions were ignored when incomplete and edited collections of his autobiographical dictations were published by A. B. Paine, Twain's official biographer, in 1924, by Bernard DeVoto, a curator and editor for Twain's papers, in 1940, and by Charles Neider in 1959. As Michael J. Kiskis suggested, in Paine's edition, Twain "is the literary experimenter and self-conscious satirist"; in DeVoto's, he "is the social and political commentator"; in Neider's, he "is the narrative genius" (LeMaster 56). Kiskis also claimed that "the most coherent of Twain's autobiographies is the one he himself planned and shaped and published in the *North American Review*" (56). At the same time, the first complete edition of the *Autobiography of Mark Twain* was published in frame of the Mark Twain Project in 2010. As H. E. Smith, one of the editors of the complete *Autobiography of Mark Twain*, suggested, "This edition […] relies on the eloquent evidence of historical documents to understand and carry out his wishes for this, his last major literary work" (Smith, *AMT*, Vol. I, 57).

Due to this suggestion, in my study the source material is based on three volumes of the *Autobiography of Mark Twain*: Volume I was edited by H. E. Smith (2010), Volume II was edited by B. Griffin and H. E. Smith (2013). Finally, Volume III was also edited by B. Griffin and H. E. Smith (2015). Volume I of the *Autobiography of Mark Twain* (*ATM*) includes his autobiographical dictations from January 9, 1906, and up to March 30, 1906. Volume II of the *Autobiography of Mark Twain* (*ATM*) combines the texts from April 2, 1906, and up to February 28, 1907. Finally, the most recent edition of Twain's dictations in Volume III presents the collection of the texts from March 1, 1907 and up to the very last dictations in October 21, 1908. To identify relevant material for this section in my study, I have chosen

those dictations of the writer where he discussed serious topics of his lifelong concern with humorous approach. As well as in his later manuscripts or in his correspondence with close friends, Twain thought about the following major topics in his autobiographical dictations: the human race, his youth and family roots, religion, social issues, animals and his fame. My organizational principle in this sub-chapter will be focused on following these topics in the analysis of the role of humor in Twain's autobiographical dictations.

To begin with, Twain's diversity in his approaches to dictate his autobiographical memories and thoughts can be suggested when, on the one hand, some of these dictations included his sincerity and truthfulness. On the other hand, Twain also enjoyed "to manipulate material for humorous effect, to distort the relationship between fiction and reality (Trombley and Kiskis 107). Michael Kiskis also noticed in the introduction to *Mark Twain's Own Autobiography* (1990), "the material" in these dictations "is unified by Clemens' singular voice as it vibrates between rage and reverence, affection and hatred, joy and sorrow" (Kiskis xl). It can be remarked that these autobiographical dictations played a considerable role in Twain's later life. This activity gave him an opportunity to recollect and re-experience the best and worst moments of his life and career. What is more important, it let him experiment with his skills of a storyteller, develop his craft of composing, and escape from the problems he had to face at the moment for a short period of time when dictating. At times, positive moments of the past inspired his humorous tone. In these cases, Twain's dictations included anecdotes, tall tales or farce. For instance, he recollected (dictated in 1907) the habits of his home town when he was a child - "There were no dentists. When teeth became touched with decay or were otherwise ailing, the doctor knew of but one thing to do: he fetched his tongs and dragged them out. If the jaw remained, it was not his fault" (*AMT*, Vol. I, 215). For Twain, his childhood memories were most valuable, yet provoking his best sentiment and humorous tone. In his biographical dictations Twain remembered asking his mother, when she was in her eighties, if she could characterize him when he was a boy. Thus, Twain included his mother's quote in the dictation:

> I was always told that I was a sickly and precarious and tiresome and uncertain child […]
> "I suppose that during all that time you were uneasy about me? "
> "Yes, the whole time."
> "Afraid I wouldn't live?"
> After a reflective pause – ostensibly to think out the facts –
> "No – afraid you would." (*AMT*, Vol. I, 215-216)

This indirect sarcasm through the voice of his mother is an example of how Twain both ironically and sentimentally treated his personal relationships with his mother, as well as his youth and childhood. Twain's ironic remarks about his youth or family roots could appear in his sentimental mood when he was dictating. Moreover, it indicated his amusement and self-ironic mood when he was inspired to dispute about some personal family matters. Once he noticed ironically about one his ancestors having a name of Eschol Seller: "he was doubtless dead by this time, a man with a name like that couldn't live long" (*AMT*, Vol. I, 207). At the same time, mention of his relationship with his wife, Olivia, appeared frequently in his private remarks or autobiographical recollections. Twain's words devoted to her were predominately with much love and devotion. Rarely, an ironic hint appeared when there was an indirect reference to him personally. Twain confessed with an indirect self-irony that "She always said I was the most difficult child she had" (385).

His self-ironical or self-deprecating approach in the dictations could appear when Twain referred directly or indirectly to his fame, ironically or not. Ironic treatment of his fame can be detected in his recollection when he met with the German Emperor Wilhelm II during his visit to Europe in his final years. The event became a headline in many articles. Dictated on February 11, 1907, Twain remarked with a self-deprecating tone:

> If I had been in the Emperor's chair and he in mine, I should have felt infinitely comfortable and at home, and should have done a world of talking, and done it well; but I was guest now, and consequently I felt less at home. (*AMT*, Vol. II, 430)

In combination with Twain's sentimental feelings and ironical tone, animals promoted the writer's delight and amusement when he referred to some events with a playful tone of teasing or ridicule. Evidently, these recollections indicated the moments of simple, yet profound delight in his later years. Dictated on October 8, 1906, Twain remarked ironically that "Early last May I rented a kitten of a farmer's wife, by the month; then I got a discount by getting three" (*AMT*, Vol. II, 248). In his dictations devoted to animals or cats, in particular, Twain always confirmed their high intellect. Once he remembered reading in German to his cats:

> When I read German loud they weep; you can see the tears run down […] I have tried all kinds of German on these cats; romance, poetry, philosophy, theology, market reports; and the result has always been the same – the cats sob, and let the tears run down, which shows that all German is pathetic.
> French is not a familiar tongue to me, and the pronunciation is difficult, and comes out of me encumbered with a Missouri accent; but the cats like it, and when I make impassioned speeches in that language they sit in a row and put up their paws, palm to palm, and frantically give thanks. (*AMT*, Vol. II, 248)

This paragraph does not only serve to be evidence of the writer's true moment of delight, but also indicates his indirect ironic attitude towards the complexity of the German language. Together with the moments of delight in his autobiographical memories, Twain could debate on philosophical issues. His philosophical voice was usually frank, serious, deterministic, and uncompromising when he discussed the topic of the human race. Moreover, the writer criticized human prejudices and delusions about his importance or significance. Twain rarely commented on this topic with a humorous touch. Nevertheless, in his autobiographical dictation on October 15, 1906, Twain remarked ironically:

> It is human nature. We are blown upon the world; we float buoyantly upon the summer air a little while, complacently showing off our grace of form and our dainty iridescent colors; then we vanish with a little puff, leaving nothing behind but a memory – and sometimes not even that. (*AMT*, Vol. II, 258)

The topic of religion came close to Twain's debate about the human race. In this case, Twain preferred indirect sarcasm, masterfully embedding it through the images of his family members, for instance. In support of this point, Twain commented on the article "the Christian Union", the article gives instructions of how to train children in religious way (dictated March 28, 1907): "The article which was full of worshipful praises of Mrs. Clemens as a mother, and which little Clara, and Susy, and I had been hiding from this lovely and admirable mother because we knew she would disapprove of public and printed praises of herself" (*AMT*, Vol. III, 20).

In a different example, Twain's indirect skepticism and criticism can detected through his metaphoric ironic reference to the Bible's mythology (in dictation on January 6, 1907): "For Bermuda is not large, and is like the earlier Garden of Eden, in that everybody in it knows everybody else, just as it was in the serpent's headquarters in Adam's time" (*AMT*, Vol. II, 360). This quotation suggested the complexity of Twain's treatment when he debated on the topic of religion.

More frequently Twain referred to the events of much concern in the society of his times in his autobiographical recollections. At times, these private activities included his witty observations. For instance, when he remarked sarcastically about a tradition of duels in Europe (dictated on January 19, 1906): "But with this difference, that here in the Austrian States the duel is dangerous, while in France it is not. Here it is a tragedy, in France it is comedy; here it is a solemnity, there it is monkey-shines, here the duelist risks his life, there he does not even risk his shirt" (*AMT*, Vol. I, 299). In another dictation, Twain added a sarcastic remark about dueling in the USA that it "suddenly became a fashion in Nevada"

(294), and continued ironically about a participant in a duel: "mainly for the reason that he was not able to thoroughly respect himself so long as he had not killed or crippled somebody in a duel or been killed or crippled in one himself" (294). An indirect ridicule appears in a sarcastic tone through the narrative when it turns into a matter of farce. So definite instructions addressed to the participant in the duel followed: "Take all the risks of getting murdered yourself, but don't run at any risk of murdering the other man [...] Aim below the knee; cripple him, but leave the rest of him to his mother" (295). Twain cannot but ridicule the nonsense in the instructions, and admits ironically "By grace of these truly wise and excellent instructions [...]" (296).

In the same dictation in 1906, Twain recollected his own experience when he took part in the duel, luckily a small bird prevented the duel. This recollection sounded more like one of his tall tales with an element of farce. Indirectly satirizing human belief in providence, his witty observation included: "I don't know what the bird thought about the interpretation of Providence, but I felt very, very comfortable over it – satisfied and content" (*AMT*, Vol. I, 298). At the end of the dictation, Twain concluded sarcastically that "If a man should challenge me now, I would go to that man and take him kindly and forgivingly by the hand and lead him to a quiet retired spot, and kill him" (298).

Among other habits of the society, Twain ridiculed and criticized indirectly anti-Semitism, a characteristic habit of the society of his contemporaries all over the world. For instance, this indirect criticism and ridicule can be defined in his recollections from his own childhood when he met the first Jew (dictated on March 16, 1906):

> We had a collective name for them which was the only really large and handsome witticism that ever was born in that Congressional district. We called them "Twenty - two" - and even when the joke was old and had been worm threadbare we always followed it with the explanation, to make sure that it would be understood, "Twice Levin - twenty-two." (*AMT,* Vol. I, 420)

Numerous anecdotes, funny stories and tall tales were part of Twain's humorous approach in his autobiographical dictations. For example, an anecdotal recollection of the writer's experience when he sold another man's dog for 3 dollars (dictated on January 11, 1906). An indirect self-ironical attitude can be detected in the conclusion: "I had acted honorably; I never could have used the three that I sold the dog for, because it was not rightly my own, but the three I got for restoring him to his rightful owner was righteously and properly mine, because I had earned it" *AMT*, Vol. III, 154). Moments of amusement and delight in Twain's later private activities can be also found in his recollections about the moments when he had

an opportunity to be in a playful mood with his close friends. In this case, Twain made his friends take part in the funny story. Moreover, his friends became a target of his indirect sarcasm and self-irony. In one of his dictations in 1906, Twain remembered Howells commenting on Twain's initiative to start dictating his autobiography. Howells's sarcastic remarks were turned into a tall tale with an indirect self-ironical hint by Twain:

> It is a system which is a complete and purposed jumble – a course which begins nowhere, follows no specified route, and can never reach an end while I am alive, for the reason that, if I should talk to the stenographer two hours a day for a hundred years, I should still never be able to set down a tenth part of the things which have interested in my lifetime. I told Howells that this autobiography of mine would live a couple of thousand years, without any effort, and would then take a fresh start and live the rest of the time.
> He said he believed it would, and asked me if I meant to make a library of it.
> I said that that was my design; but that, if I should live long enough, the set of volumes could not be contained merely in a city; it would it would require a State, and that there would not be any multi-billionaire alive, perhaps, at any time during its existence who would be able to buy a full set, except on the installment plan.
> Howells applauded, and was full of praises and endorsement, which was wise in him and judicious. If he had manifested a different spirit, I would have thrown him out of the window. I like criticism, but it must be my way. (*AMT*, Vol. I, 441)

In his autobiographical dictations Twain could experiment with his style of storytelling. Also, he could experiment with his humorous tone when it was direct or indirectly through the image of his close friend, the image created by Twain. By means of this humorous voice in the narrative, the writer could allow himself to ridicule and tease his good friend, in a very sophisticated, yet sympathetic manner when he noticed that "Howells applauded, and was full of praises and endorsement, which was wise in him and judicious. If he had manifested a different spirit, I would have thrown him out of the window" (*AMT*, Vol. I, 441). His style of storytelling in the autobiographical dictations allowed him to feel more safe and independent when he could ridicule or tease his close friends. It also constructed a more agreeable atmosphere to remark on personal or intimate events from his life.

Finally, in his later years Twain could recollect some story from his real life in his ironical manner. It amused the writer and provoked his humorous tone. In his biographical dictations he noticed ironically about burglars, who tried to break in his residence, that "They are experienced people, - burglars; they know what they want; I should be no help to him" (*AMT*, Vol. I, 344). More than that, his recollections of dealing with the burglars inspired Twain to include an anecdotal story about his experience when he traced the burglar: "that he had thrown away much of what he took […] and I went back in triumph and proved to my wife

that he was a disappointed burglar. I had suspected he would be, from the start, and from his not coming up to our floor to get human beings" (345).

In conclusion, Twain's autobiographic dictations suggest a complex of the writer's activities in private when he could occupy his personal pastime during his later years. It was a perfect means for him to recollect and analyze his past, and interpret his presence. It served to be a ground for experiments with styles and his inner complexity. In their turn, those dictations can suggest that the writer was diligent and enthusiastic when he did not ignore his opportunity to enjoy the moments of memories. These moments let the writer re-enjoy his positive experiences from the past and the present. Thus Twain could be inspired by a mixture of personal moods of delight and amusement, by his childish happiness and boyish playful spirit. His humorous voices could appear together with his sentimental recollections or with his attempts to experiment with storytelling and composing. These humorous shades combined his ironic or sarcastic remarks, and indicated the writer's enthusiasm and ability to cope with the dark moments in his life, and still enjoy moments of delight and amusement in his private circle.

4.3 Humor in Mark Twain's Correspondence with the "Aquarium Club"

4.3.1 Introduction

To begin with, the most precious requirements for Mark Twain's private communication were sincerity, intelligence and amusement during his later years. From this point of view, the source of these virtues became the "Aquarium Club"; it became his "life's chief delight" (Cooley 186). Young girls, aged from 10 to 16, combined Twain's private pen-society named the "Aquarium Club". Various researches defined differently the major role of this friendship with young girls. Hamlin Hill (1973), for instance, considered the "Aquarium" to be "unhealthy obsession" (Hill 181). On the other hand, it can be suggested that the "Angelfish" served "a compensatory function" (Lystra 132). Once Twain admitted that "As for me, I collect pets: young girls – girls from ten to sixteen years old; girls who are pretty and sweet and naive and innocent – dear young creatures to whom life is perfect joy and to whom it has brought no wounds, no bitterness, and few tears. My collection consists of germs of the first water" (qtd. In Cooley xvii). It can be admitted that there was something wrong in the wishes of the old man to "collect" naive and young girls to keep him company. Karen Lystra supposed that they were "his toys, if you will and trophies of his ego" (Lystra133). On the contrary, different studies may support the point that Twain's wish was to have a big company of grandchildren around him, the house full of children and the joy, games and happiness they bring with themselves. He was longing for "surrogate" children; the circle of his own children was almost ruined by the end of his life. When he was younger and had his three daughters by his side, he got inspiration for writing and comfort, had fun playing games with them. He worshiped their talents, certain traits of character and the emotional side of their personalities. And then, when he entered the age of a grandfather he felt the vital necessity for children again. By means of this friendship with the "Angelfish" he constructed himself "a small court of happiness, innocence, and youthfulness, which he set against the ever painful reality of his life" (Cooley xix). More than that, this statement can be regarded as a humorous one when the writer called the girls ironically "his pets" and then continued to a more serious and philosophic idea when he concluded that all he needed for happiness in his age was a company of sincere, unspoiled young people who did not meet with sorrows, injustice and corruption of the adult's world yet. The "Aquarium Club" served to be the place of a positive emotional compensation during the writer's final years. Making friends with the young girls and initiating constant private correspondence with them was his personal effort to fill the

emotional hole in his inner world. In the letters to the girls he often mentioned his loneliness and wished they could write him or visit him more frequently. In his letter to Dorothy Quick Twain reported (9 August 1907):

> I went to bed as soon as you departed, there being nothing to live for […] the sunshine all gone. How do you suppose I am going to get along without you? For five hours this has been a dreary place [...] solemn place, a hushed & brooding & lifeless place, for the Kissed Spirit of Youth has gone out of it, & and left nothing that's worth […] I thought this was my home. It was a superstition. What is the home without the child? It isn't a home at all, it's merely a wreck [...]. (Cooley 49).

The chain of epithets solemn, hushed, brooding proves the idea that Twain often felt lonely. The children together with their youth brought the "sunshine" and temporary salvation and escape from the reality for Twain. "Fictive" grandchildren reminded him of his own youth, the most precious time in one's life, as Twain truly believed in. In one of his speeches on 3 October 1895 he stated that "One of the very advantages of youth- you don't own any stock in anything. You have a good time, and all the grief and trouble is with the other fellows" (Fatout 294). The young campaigners were a beneficial cure to treat the writer's aging with some moments of joy and playfulness, to forget for few minutes about the aging adulthood full of hard moments. What is more important, it seemed that Twain wanted to pretend young as long as possible. In fact, he managed to do it till the late 1909 when the problems with his health and heart attacks replaced and ruined his last optimistic ideas. On September 10, 1909 he wrote to Margaret Blackmer that he admitted his old age as it should be by saying - "I am still a prisoner in the house these past 3 months, with no prospect of getting out for a long time to come. But I guess it'd all right. Infirmities and disabilities are quite proper to old age" (Cooley 264).

The role of humor was mainly ignored when scholars mentioned about the role of the "Aquarium Club" in Mark Twain's later life. John Cooley (2009), the editor of nearly complete collection of Twain's correspondence with the "Angelfish", remarked that these letters "contain explosions of wit, wisdom and humor. Patient readers will be amply rewarded with humorous and imaginative passages reminiscent of Mark Twain at best" (Cooley ix). Cooley suggested that this communication inspired Twain's sentimentality and moments of his best humor.

John Cooley (2009) also suggests the idea of "a platonic sweetheart" as the explanation of Twain's desire to make more pen-friends among young girls. In Twain's essay "My Platonic Sweetheart" the writer recollects his first real-life platonic sweetheart, Laura Wright, whom he met 40 years before he wrote about this experience in 1898. The publishing of this piece of

work was postponed and, finally, appeared in *Harper*'s magazine, December 1912. The story sounds like a fairy love tale in the introductory lines where the narrator recollected that "It was in a dream [...] in the next one I was at her side - without either stepping or gliding; it merely happened; the transfer ignored space [...]''(Ketterer 117).

Then the narrator describes his affection to the girl by considering that "it was not the love of sweethearts, for there was no fire in it. It was somewhere between the two, and was finer than either, and more exquisite, more profoundly contenting" (Ketterer 118). This affection is not the love of man and woman; it is on a different level. It is on the level of a dream, a very pleasant, amusing and fairy. Moreover, the narrator implies the idea of no physical or sexual affection in this relationship. The narrator goes on developing the idea of platonic affinity when he states that "We often experience this strange and gracious thing in our dream-loves: and we remember it as a feature of our childhood-loves, too" (118).

Eventually, Mark Twain transferred the affection he could have experienced at the age of fifteen to the level of a dream that is one of the most estimable for him. This dream was so essential for the writer due to its nature of innocence, ideality and blessedness. Getting in touch with "a platonic sweetheart" serves to be the medium to the world of childhood and the first platonic affection. Being in the company of this young girl, the writer felt like they were "a couple of ignorant and contented children" (Ketterer 119). This friendship seemed to be a perfect and ideal escape from the reality for the writer.

The story of "My Platonic Sweetheart" (1898) is a subtle psychological flashback of a naive and wonderful childhood in the frame of a dream-telling. To sum up, Twain idealized the purity, finest and overwhelming happiness in the relationships between himself and a sweetheart from his memory. The ideas of a dream and magic flashback to the place and time of his own childhood had strong impact during many years of his career. It can be suggested that these ideas could have been fulfilled at some extent in the author's correspondence with the young girls during the time period from 1905-1910. Albert Stone determined Twain's interest in making friends with female children as nothing more than the following: "These Americans tended to look back upon their village boyhoods and girlhoods as simpler times of idyllic happiness. They recollected in present turmoil the tranquil past" (Stone 265). Twain could find and enjoy these moments of "idyllic happiness" in the company of children. Moreover, these were the moments when his voice of the humorist appeared at its full potential. In my study, I introduce the connection between Twain's attempts to set close relationships with the circle of young friends and his voice of the humorist in his correspondence with the members of the "Aquarium Club". Interpretation of this connection

aims to suggest existence of positive moments in Twain's later life and career when his potential of the humorist contrasted to his dark thoughts ideas and thoughts. The analysis of Twain's humorous voice and comic style in his private correspondence with the "Aquarium Club" will be presented in the following sub-chapter 4.3.2.

4.3.2 Features of Mark Twain's Humor and is Role in His Correspondence with the "Aquarium Club"

In his later years Mark Twain continued active correspondence with his close friends and acquaintances. However, communication and exchange of letters with the young members of the "Aquarium Club" suggested important moments of delight during his final years from 1906 – to 1910. To give evidence that the last years of the writer were not overwhelmingly pessimistic and desperate, this part of the present study will present an analysis of the role of humor, its functions and features in his correspondence with the "Angelfish". This analysis will serve to introduce a more balanced portrait of the writer when he had to cope with a number of issues during those years. Moreover, the nature of humor was based on the positive experiences which the writer achieved in his communication with the children. The humor was bright, frank and light-hearted in his letters to them when Twain could enjoy some happy moments in their company.

Twain's first official "Angelfish" was Dorothy Butes. His "heart has never been empty of grandchildren" since the day of their first meeting (Cooley 33). The number of letters with Butes was limited to just a few. In those few letters, Twain announced his warm devotion by saying, "with the affectionate regards of the Author" (Cooley 34). It would be interesting to note that in these first letters to his young pen-friends Twain signed himself as "the Author" or "Mark Twain". Later, his signature would turn to a more personal, private form of address.

The circle of the young girls who became his pen-friends increased during the following years. Later this private society was called the "Aquarium" and, referring to Twain's idea, its members were named the "Angelfish" as the most beautiful and perfect little creatures of the sea-world. From the very beginning of communication with the members of this club, the writer was an initiator of a play in which he, together with the young members, Twain introduced parody of the world of adulthood. He began this play by issuing the official list of its members, and later, in 1908, by announcing the official rules of the "Aquarium Club". It is important to note that all the young members of the "Club" came from prosperous families, most of whom the writer met during his long voyages to Bermuda. More than that, the combination of their creativity and sincerity inspired and charmed Twain. Due to this reason, Dorothy Quick was one of his favorite correspondents. On April 17, 1908, the writer exclaimed in his Autobiographical Dictation:

> What a Dorothy it is! How many chapters have I already talked about her bright and booming and electrical ways, and her punctuationless literature and her adorably lawless spelling? Have I exhausted her as text for talk? No. nobody could do it. At least

nobody who worships her as I worship her. (Cooley 138)

Quick was “a very intense child”, “strong” in her “likes and dislikes” (qtd. in Quirk 36). This fact could explain Twain’s use of the epithets “bright”, “booming” and “electrical” in the description of the girl’s temperament. Exclamations and a hyperbolized emotional involvement in the lines of this letter demonstrated his admiration. Moreover, the writer never forgot to refer to himself in an ironical manner. For instance, in one of the letters to Dorothy he called himself as her “ancient and affectionate friend” (Cooley 45).

Concerning the features of humor in the correspondence, it should be noticed that it was usually very simple, very personal and just true-to-life. His pen-friends were young and intelligent. In these letters the humorist was not Mark Twain, the writer; on the contrary, he was a friend, a surrogate grandfather or a game-partner in billiards or cards. Humor was used for pure entertainment, to inspire them to join some games initiated by Twain himself, to attract the girls’ attention, to tease them or make smile. He was longing for only one thing: he insisted that they should write more and work out their own style of writing. He wanted them to tell him about their routine life or to send him their own stories. He idealized their intellects and creative minds when he received the highest delight by means of their simple and innocent words. He cared for this correspondence a lot and once in his message to Dorothy Sturgis he commented on the importance of her letters when he did not “care for the others, they are Miss Lyon’s affair” (Cooley 170). In his letter to Dorothy Sturgis (Stormfield, December 26, 1908 (Cooley 243)) Twain concluded about a piece of work created by the girl: “That is a perfectly lovely work of art - & done with your left hand [...]” (243). The voice of charmed affection and supportive tone can be noticed in these simple words.

Referring to the chronology of the correspondence between Mark Twain and the young girls, John Cooley suggested several main phases in Twain's communication with the “Angelfish”. The first period started in April 1907 and lasted until 19 June 1908. Twain just found the means to search for positive emotions and moments of mutual amusement when he started to settle his first and initial communication with some of the girls, Dorothy Quick, for instance. The second period began in June 1908 and ended on 5 November 1908. The writer moved to a new summer residence at the Redding, Connecticut. In the letter on June 19, 1908 the first mentioning of Innocence at Home appeared; that was the way in which the writer started to refer to his new place of habitation, the headquarters of the “Aquarium Club”. The final period lasted from 29 November 1908 and ended on 21 April 1910. Because of Clara

Clemens's influence on her father, the name of Stormfield replaced the previous name of Innocence at Home in Twain's letters to the young members.

Generally speaking about the uses of humor in the correspondence, there are a lot of cases of self-irony, self-mockery and soft sarcasm concerning his age expressed by Mark Twain in this communication. Until the end of 1909 he preferred not to take his age seriously in the company of the "Angelfish". In his letter to Dorothy Sturgis on December 6, 1908, he wrote that "A week ago I drifted over the 73-year frontier safely & entered my second childhood in good shape. It was like passing a milestone in the Dark – I couldn't notice that anything was happening. It is very different at 50 & 70. And again at a hundred, of course [...]" (Cooley 239). In fact, the phrase "to drift over" is usually used in connection with the time period and refers to the meaning of "evolution" in the fields of biology and history. Then the writer uses a similar technique "like passing the milestone in the Dark". This stylistic device vividly describes the hard times that Twain had to face during these 73 years. But the letter was addressed to a young girl who was only 12 years old. So no frustration or despair could be noticed in these words, there was only a humorous tone for the delight of the child.

Besides, as it was mentioned before, Twain adored youth most of all in this communication. He jested in one of the messages that "it is better to be a young June bug – than an old bird of paradise" (Cooley 61). This figurative and metaphoric statement focuses on the writer's persuasion that happiness for him is concentrated on youth, simple and innocent, rather than on being famous and prosperous but old. By reason of this, Mark Twain was searching for moments when he could enjoy the company of youth and feel young again. One more example of Twain's facetious attitude toward his age could be observed in the words that he wrote in his letter to Dorothy Sturgis on September 30, 1908:

> You dear delightful Annieanlouise! You cannot realize how much we all miss you, nor what a contenting charm your presence was, nor how it pervaded this house like a fragrance, & refreshed its mouldy and antique atmosphere with "the unbought grace of youth". I wish you were back again. However, if wishing could do any good, you would be already back. (Cooley 211)

The writer used the same quote when he was giving a portrait of Joan of Arc in his essay entitled "Saint Joan of Arc" (1897):

> She would rise before us then, a vision to win us, not repel: a little young slender figure, instinct with 'the unbought grace of youth,' dear and bonny and lovable, the face beautiful, and transfigured with the light of the lustrous intellect and the fires of that unquenchable spirit. (Cooley 213)

Some researchers admitted that the figure of Joan of Arc was of a peculiar interest and devotion in the writer's life and career. One of them noticed that "in Twain's eyes Joan was the incarnation of youth and purity and power. She was a unique instance in history of the young girl whose innocence not merely existed but acted in the gross world of adult affairs. She was the peerless human being, and it was of the utmost importance that she remain eternally a young girl" (Stone 541). That was exactly Twain could find in the communication with the young girls. Their childish purity of intentions and thoughts let him oppose to his dark sentiments. More than that, the children he met did not experience the sorrows and losses which accompanied the writer in his later years.

At the end of 1907, Twain was concerned deeply about his finances. He mentioned this in one of the letters to Frances Nunnally on November 18, 1907. However, there is no fear or despair in the words. He noticed with a hint of friendly devotion that "It would be a charming change to look at you – a change from watching the stocks go down" (Cooley 82). It seems that such interpretation of the failures he had to face suggested the writer's attempts to escape from the reality of the adulthood with the moments of frustration and disappointment in it.

Furthermore, the way in which Mark Twain addressed himself to his young correspondents is of importance in this context. Mainly, Twain called his young pen-friend "sweet little rascal", and the others followed – "little tardy rascal" (Cooley 56) or "you little poor chap", "you dear little rat", and "you dear little tyke" (251). It seemed as if Twain regarded his young friends as the true companions in his games of words. "We were close comrades!" he remarked once (103). The writer himself played with delight several roles in the "Aquarium Club". He defined his roles by numerous signatures and titles which followed some kind of evolution since the beginning until the very end of his correspondence with the girls. Twain signed his letters differently: "SLC" (at the beginning), "slave", "shad", "servant", "admiral" and "major" (end of December 1908) and then again "SLC" (in his last letters).Due to this observation, it can be suggested that Twain's attitude towards the role of these young pen-friends was changing gradually, from the more general and official "SLC" to the very personal and emotional definition of himself as "servant" or "shad". In the message to Margaret Blackmer (11 October 1908) Mark Twain noticed:

> I haven't eaten all the hickory nuts, I'm saving some for you and at noon today I found a good chestnutting place [...]We will exploit it when you come, and see if it will pay us for our trouble [...]according to the new By-law which transforms the Curator into the Admiral and requires the members to say "Admiral", do so and so, "instead" of Mr. Clemens, do so and so [...] I added that by-law last night. Curator isn't a large enough title for me. (Cooley 221)

It sounds as if the writer was always the initiator of the childish games. At the same time, he enjoyed imitating some kind of hierarchy in these plays where he preferred to take some leading role, some exaggerated position with a hint of irony and sometimes even sarcasm. The tone in the letters in 1908 changed to the sarcastically exaggerated when Mark Twain attached the titles of the "admiral" and "major" in his letters to the girls.

On March 12, 1908, Twain wrote from Bermuda to Dorothy Quick and explained the nature of the private circle he made and gave it the name of the "Aquarium Club" when he suggested that "It consists of 5 angel-fish and one shad. I am the shad" (Cooley 120). Self-ironical comparisons to a herring-like fish that is surrounded by a company of little and beautiful creatures can be defined as the writer's attempt to detract from his image as a great writer. By means of this Mark Twain was dealing with the troubles that were part of his life as the greatest humorist. Moreover, this might lead to a more personal and private communication of the writer with the children. At times, the writer turned to the exaggeration and self-irony in his letters to the young girls. For instance, he attached 'C. S. of the A' at the end of the letters – the acronym which stands for one of Twain's epithets which gave for himself in this communication- "Chief Slave of the Aquarium".

Later on April 16, 1908, in his message to Quick Twain defined his role from a different angle. By means of these words some hints of self-irony and psychological dependence of Twain could be noticed. The lack of his own grandchildren and the constant absence of his daughters intensified the feeling of loneliness and dependency. In support of this idea, the writer concluded about his role in this circle of communication that "my Aquarium Club, which consists of a few very choice school-girl angel-fishes and one slave. I am the slave" (Cooley 137). Twain also preferred a tone of teasing with a playful mood when in his letter to Dorothy Sturgis (June 7, 1908) Twain sounded more sarcastic by admitting that "as I am only Honorary President, I don't have to do any work and can therefore stay up here" (169). It seemed that this constant change in the voice of the writer (when he turned from calling himself a "slave" or "shad" to "Admiral" or "Honorary President") can be referred to the writer's childish side of his character. All in all, Twain was always the one who inspired this play with roles, and he definitely enjoyed it.

Coping with the problems of his age and social status, the writer made constant attempts to talk about his age in an ironic way. In his letters to Dorothy Sturgis in 1908, Mark Twain admitted, "I'm too old to skirmish around like an angel-fish" (Cooley 173) or "I am just old enough and rickety enough to dread two journeys" (223). In certain cases his statements about getting older became more sarcastic, when he noticed, "I wish I could have those free-gratis-

for-nothing-voyages-and-nothing-to-do-but-look-at-you every day. I should grow fat and satisfactory" (227). This gentle way of coping with social prejudices about aging and personal problems was supposed to serve as a partial escape for the writer from his role as a social critic and philosopher. Aside from that, it can be assumed that the friendship with the talented young ladies served to satisfy to some extent his personal ego. On April 17, 1908, in his autobiographical dictations Twain continued:

> The accident I refer to, was the advent of Dorothy Butes, 14 years old, who wanted to come and look at me [...] My next prize was Frances Nunnally, school-girl, of Atlanta, Georgia, whom I call Francesca for short [...] My third prize was Dorothy Quick – ten years and ten-twelfths of a year old when I captured her at sea last summer on the return-voyage from England. (Cooley 138-140)

On the one hand, Twain spoke about his friendship with the "Angelfish" in a playful and teasing manner. On the other hand, this quotation can be interpreted as his undisguised ambition to create the private circle for personal amusement and entertainment. Periodically, this ambition was close to jealousy. However, Twain never sounded rude or oppressive. Contrarily, he preferred to cover his dark sentiments in a funny and cheery word-play. In his letter to Dorothy Quick, who was only 11 years old, Twain exclaimed (November 18, 1907) that "I'm longing to see you. Of course you've got a lot of other lovers, and of course they pine to see you – Bache and the rest – but when they pine it's only an individual pine, whereas when I pine for you – it's a whole forest!" (Cooley 82). In this context the pun with the word "pine" was implied. At the beginning of the phrase the writer used the verb "to pine" in the meaning of "to long to/for". In the second half of the sentence the noun "pine" with the direct meaning and verb "pine" were pushed together to create the stylistic effect of exaggeration, the ending of the sentence proved the very mood of exaggeration by the exclamation. These words seemed to sound as a sort of teasing or a kind of humorous cheering. It seemed as if Twain had a habit of introducing numerous games with words in the letters to his young friends. He took his intentions seriously and considered his young pen-friends as absolutely equal interlocutors. He praised their intellectual abilities and was sure in receiving a sincere response from them. Though generally speaking, it was just for mutual delight and amusement. Belonging to the same level in society allowed Twain to raise topics of common interests. In particular he was able to attach a humorous tone when speaking about his honorable friends.

In his message to Frances Nunnally (December 29, 1907), Mark Twain noticed that "Yesterday I went with 70 other slaves of Harper and Brothers to Lake-wood to lunch Mr. Howells out of the country and give him God-speed" (87). This extract from the letter is

marked by a sarcastic observation that describes the Harper's lunch given by the Damned Human Race Club in 1907 (Cooley 86-87). A boyish tempo and a tone of teasing can be noticed in these words when the writer recalls about meeting his close friend William D. Howells. For mutual amusement, the writer was not afraid of initiating a gentle and friendly attack of ridicule. The writer ridiculed in a positive way not only the friends or acquaintances of his age, but also he ridiculed himself and what he was famous for. In one of his letters to Dorothy Quick he gave the list of the menu presented once during the evening given in his honor. It happened at the Lotos Club, one of the oldest literary clubs in the USA; Twain was one of the earliest members of the Club (Fatout 147-149). He purely enjoyed the titles in this menu, among which were: "Innocent Oysters Abroad, Roughing it Soup, Huckleberry FinnFish, Joan of Arc filet of beef, Jumping Frog Terrapin, Punch Brothers Punch, Gilded Duck, Hadleyburg Salad" (Cooley 93) and others. The comic effect is successfully attained by means of the allusion to the titles of the most famous works of Mark Twain. Dorothy could not be there, though she was amused later when the writer gave her the menu. When the girl asked him if he tried everything given in the list, Twain enjoyed the whole situation when he supported the game and answered her that "No. I didn't. I stayed through the Joan of Arc filet, because I am fond of Joan and wanted to do her honor" (qtd. in Quick 151-52).

Being almost always the producer of plays in words throughout their correspondence, the writer sounded rather ironic, delicate, casual and emotional in these letters to the young girls. Moreover, these recollections can be considered to prove the existence of happy moments in the later years of Twain. In his message to Dorothy Quick (March 12, 1908), Twain remembered his voyage to Bermuda when he remarked that he "had a screaming good time [...] And yesterday Miss Lyon and five other ladies were the cruiser's guests and they had a screaming good time too" (Cooley 120). The epithet "screaming" in the combination with the words "good time" defined clearly the prevailing cheerful mood of the writer at that very moment.

It is important to notice that Twain turned to his role of a social critic very few times in this correspondence. For instance, in his message to Dorothy Quick (March 28, 1908) he remarked ironically in passing when he recollected that "The weather is perfect, and if you want some of it for your own use or for sale, please let me know, and I will see that you get all you want – but our government will swindle you on the duty, as it does on all points" (124). This subtle criticism with almost inaudible touch of irony can suggest the idea that the writer could cope with the dark side of his criticism by means of this communication and turn it to its softer version.

Concerning other characteristic comic forms, exaggeration was also a common device in self-ironical statements of Twain in his private letters to the young members of the "Aquarium Club". In his message to Dorothy Sturgis (9 May 1908) Twain admitted ironically in an exaggerated form that "You say you have no picture of me at all. Do you mean a solitaire? There's a plenty, but they are too large for the frame – but they don't belong in that frame, anyway" (Cooley 152). In this example, the writer made the parallel from his persona to the solitaire and the effect of exaggeration was achieved. In its turn the effect with an ironic hint was created. Although, infrequent uses of sarcasm that Twain implied in the letters to the "Angelfish" were never bitter or derogative. Mostly, sarcasm was addressed directly to Twain himself and served to be the tool for self-mockery or teasing of his young friends. All in all, it was just an intellectual game for both sides. One of such cases could be observed in the letter on October 30, 1908:

> Dear Miss Margery:
> Good, you're coming! Well, I am glad. Even dern glad, as Pontius Pilate used to say. I think it was Pontius; at any rate it was the one that wrote Paradise Lost, & was eventually burned by the church for falling down the mountain & breaking the tables of stone. I never cared for him, although an ancestor. He ought to have known he was in no condition to carry things down a mountain & everybody looking at him. (Cooley 226)

John Cooley suggested that passage "could have been written to Margaret Blackmer, Margaret Illington, Marjorie Breckenridge or Marjorie Clinton" (Cooley 226). It can be supposed that it was addressed to Margaret Illington, the only adult female "Angelfish". An evident criticism and a sarcastic reference to Pilate and religious mythology seemed to be more of the adult's topic of interest. Though, the thematic characteristic trait of the major part of the letters within the correspondence of the "Aquarium Club" was identified by less serious topics and interests. That is why it is important to mention that popular topic in their correspondence was devoted to animals and favorite pets of both the writer and the children. In the letter to Dorothy Quick (7 June 1908) Twain asked the girl about her adorable rabbits: "Will it be safe to leave them with Claire Kenworthy? [...] Is she good, and does she go to Sunday school? I think it wouldn't take any rash chances; because if she should eat them – however, maybe she can resist. I will hope so" (171).

The use of irony in the form of word-teasing can be underlined when there is Twain's ironic attempt to draw the parallels between being good and attending Sunday school. Secondly, the writer's supposition based on the nonsense that the girl's friend Claire could eat her pet, rabbits. As was mentioned in the lines before, animals and pets were one of the

central topics in the correspondence. Twain's words dedicated to pets could be considered as sentimental and touching in this communication. For instance, the writer and Margaret Blackmer had a mutual "friend" in Bermuda – Maude, a donkey. Once in his letter (March 2, 1908) to the girl, Twain recollected cordially with an evident personal touch that he "met Maude at the rock this morning, & gave her your message. She was all alone; Reginald had gone off somewhere'' (Cooley 113-114). Moments of joy and sentiment can be traced when Mark Twain attached personal stories about cats and kittens; these animals made the top in the list of the most worshiped friends and members of the family and the Aquarium Club. A humorous hint and caring tone of the aging writer were closely linked with the cases of the personification of the favorite animals and pets. These animals were considered, implicitly or not, the equal and trust-worthy comrades in their company and circle. As a proof of this idea, several examples need to be presented in the research. On April 13, 1908 Twain described to Dorothy Sturgis a pleasant and sentimental moment in his later years when he mentioned about his pet that his "cat came up from the basement to superintend. She leaped upon the table and spread herself out, after her sociable habit and we had to play around her for half an hour, then she went about her affairs" (133). The same pleased tone was observed in the letter to Dorothy Quick (April 28, 1908) when Twain had to admit that "I haven't seen the cat since you went away until tonight – then Tammany came up to play billiards" (148).

According to Twain, his pet, Tammany, was the officer of the Aquarium Club and "the finest cat and the handsomest in America" (231). It was mutual friend for both Twain and the children. Also, it was highly praised in the writer's family circle by its temperament and mentality. Recollecting stories about favorite pets inspired Twain's feelings of both emotional affection and ironical observations. In support of this idea, in his messages to Dorothy Quick in 1908, Mark Twain remarked with a frank pleasure and irony that his family members "have plenty of cats and kittens, now – all descendants of the incomparable Tammany" (Cooley 218). Tammany's kittens, who had amusing names (Billiards, for instance), were also close friends of the "Aquarium Club". A wide use of epithets and hyperbole can suggest Twain's personal happiness and cheerfulness when he recollected funny stories about the kittens. In another letter to Quick in late 1908, Twain noticed that one of the pets, "Sinbad assisted the game for half an hour and was killingly entertaining" (225). The epithets "incomparable" and "killingly entertaining" and the metaphoric use of "descendants" in the reference to the cats intensified the feeling of amusement and adoration expressed frankly by Twain and supported by the children in the response.

Periodically, the writer turned to be even more playful and sarcastic. In the letter to

Margaret Blackmer (January 3, 1909), Twain exclaimed: “Isn’t this bed of mine pretty large! Sometimes it is, but now it isn’t; it’s full of cats and they are all over on my side. I must get a shovel and clear them out!” (Cooley 246). This remark can be interpreted as the moment when Twain was in a prevailingly positive, playful and sociable state of communication with the young pen-friends.

It is important to mention another case when the communication with the young pen-friends served to be a positive way of coping with a private problem for Mark Twain. In September 1908 the Stormfield residence of the writer was robbed. However, this unpleasant event in the life of Twain was turned by him into some kind of a game and humorous interpretation in the correspondence with the members of the “Aquarium Club”. With the assistance of a young friend Dorothy Sturgis, he left the following note on the front door:

> To the next Burglar.
> There is nothing but plated ware in this house, now and henceforth. You will find it in that brass thing in the dining-room over in the corner by the basket of kittens. If you want the basket, put the kittens in the brass thing. Do not make a noise — it disturbs the family. You will find rubbers in the front hall, by that thing which has the umbrellas in it, chiffonier, I think they call it, or pergola, or something like that.
> Please close the door when you go away!
> Very truly yours, S. L. Clemens (Cooley 207)

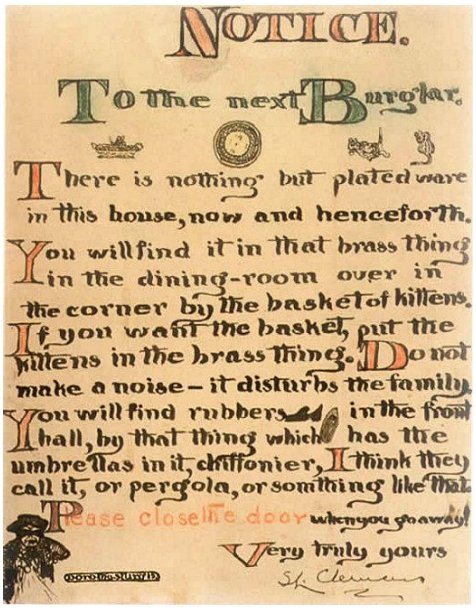


Fig.1. Samuel L. Clemens, Note to the Next Burglar, 207.

The note seemed to be one of the “Aquarium's” games full of ridicule. This note was made with a visible artistic touch. More than that, the implementation of a “stamp” and the drawn figures of cats, mice and a silhouette of a robber can be interpreted as a playful and humorous approaches. The ensemble of these figures intensified the ridicule of the context in the note.

The comic effect was also intensified by the absurdity in the context of the note. The text seemed to imitate a polite recommendation for good robbers of how to commit a crime in the most friendly and polite way. Later, more sarcastic commentary on the robbery could be followed in one of the letters to Dorothy Quick (November 5, 1908) when the writer remarked that "If it was only books of mine that were stolen and not Bibles, I am glad, for the robbers will read those books and become good citizens and valuable men – but they wouldn't need Bibles" (Cooley 231). Sarcasm in these words was evidently addressed not against young criminals who committed the crime; this humorous approach served for the mockery over the traditional idea of the positive sense of the Bible, the book that could turn the young men into "good citizens and valuable men." It can be noticed that through these lines addressed to the young friend Mark Twain ridiculed religious traditions in an indirect way with no evident attack or criticism against its doctrines.

One more attempt of Mark Twain to take the robbery humorously was made in his letter to Louise Paine, the daughter of his close friend Mr. Paine, on September 30, 1908.In the context the verbal teasing could be observed when the writer continued:

> Your father brought back the plated ware today and I have forgiven him, for he didn't know it was plated or he would have not taken it. He thought it was silver: that was the only reason he took it, he said so himself. One is not blameable for mistakes, we all make them. A mistake is not a crime, it is only a miscarriage of judgment. (Cooley 210)

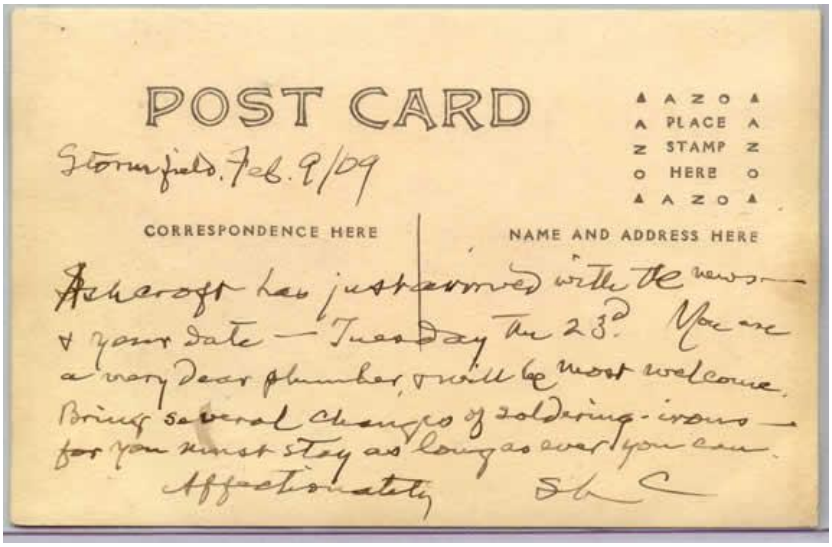
In this example the absurdity of the situation served a beneficial tool for ridicule by means of pun. The author did not intend to prevent the absurdity; on the contrary, he implied it willfully by saying that Mr. Paine committed the crime because of the only reason – he thought the ware was silver plated. The game of teasing continued masterfully in the next sentences, when Twain pretended that he forgave Mr. Paine, the thief in the context. The monologue ended with a parody of preaching, a kind of instruction given by an old man to a young friend. The technique was common in letters to the members of the "Aquarium". Though, Twain's voice of instructions was mostly ironic or teasing with the "Angelfish".

The later period, from 29 November 1908 – 21 April 1910, was entitled in Cooley's research as "the Stormfield period". He observed the tendency of the starting psychological reversal in the "Aquarium Club". Twain wrote to the "Angelfish" less often. It is also important to underline that the general mood in the correspondence changed, and Twain was gradually turning to less cheerful tone in his letters to the young girls. The alteration was rooted in a number of reasons. The girls were getting older and busier. Along with these reasons, the writer experienced hard times with his personal secretary, Isabel Lyon, and his

business manager Ralph Ashcroft in 1909. The new name of the residence appeared – Stormfield, as Dorothy Quick metaphorically suggested that "it became a house of storm and stress, tragedy and tears" (Quick 205). Additionally, the topics in the last "twenty-five known" (Cooley 234) letters were about the writer's health decline, his constant staying in bed and increasing number of his grumbles about the girls' getting older. His humorous voice survived just in several lines. The following example contained the sarcastic reference to the writer's political views when in his message to Frances Nunnally (December 29, 1908), he wrote that he was "a Mugwump (the only one left, perhaps)" (Cooley 244). According to David M. Tucker (1998), the Mugwumps were the rebellions in the Republic Party who idealistically considered fighting against political corruption during the era of Gilded Age. Some of the Mugwumps survived with the beginning of the twentieth century (Tucker vi-x).

One of the last humorous games in words can be found in another letter to Frances Nunnally on February 2, 1909 when Twain remarked about Margery Clinton in a more than ironic way that "The plumber is coming Feb. 23d; a girl you would greatly like. She isn't a M. A., but is not without good qualities, nevertheless. She is official plumber of Stormfield, by her own request, but doesn't know how to plumb. Name, Margery Clinton" (Cooley 249). Incongruity of the context can be suggested when there is deliberate contrast between a wealthy young woman, Margery Clinton, and the imaginary ridiculous position of a plumber in Stormfield that was offered by the writer. It can be remarked that this play with imaginary positions served for an implied humorous effect. The role-play in words continued in the postcard sent to Margery Clinton by Twain. In the postcard it was more intensified by the sentence – "Bring several changes of soldering-irons - for you must stay as long as ever you can." His postcard to Margery Clinton said:

"You are a very dear plumber & will be most welcome. Bring several changes of soldering – irons – for you must stay as long as ever you an. Affectionately, SLC.


POST CARD

Stormfield. Feb. 9/09

A A Z O A
A PLACE A
Z STAMP Z
O HERE O
A A Z O A

CORRESPONDENCE HERE

NAME AND ADDRESS HERE

Ashcroft has just arrived with the news — & your date — Tuesday the 23d. You are a very dear plumber, & will be most welcome. Bring several changes of soldering-irons — for you must stay as long as ever you can.

Affectionately SLC

Fig. 2. Samuel L. Clemens, *a Postcard to Margery Clinton*, 249.

Twain metaphorically expressed his expectation for her visit. The tone of adoration ("very dear") and longing for not staying all alone ("you must stay as long as ever you can") can be traced in the voice of the writer.

In addition to the peculiarities of the writer's style in the correspondence, Mark Twain widely used neologisms and puns with ease in the messages to the girls. He called school friends of Carlotta – "3 Doangivadams" – that is an example of both neologism and pun (Cooley 84). Moreover, the writer permitted himself to act with some extent of flirty; at the same time, no insult or violation in his games of verbal puzzles could be found. This delicate play with witty words seemed to be a definite delight for the humorist. At times, the writer permitted himself to jest and trifle in the context of his private life and intimate circles. And again, he could not allow himself to hurt the feelings of those persons from the private surroundings. In a letter to D. Sturgis (13 April, 1908) he mentioned ironically about Miss Lyon that they "left Miss Lyon on guard against the reporters" (133). In addition, being the person who initiated numerous games, both during private meetings with the girls and in a verbal form in the exchange of letters, Twain sometimes acted unambiguously in his rather childish manner when, for instance, he recollected in his message to Dorothy Quick that "In Bermuda I bought a trinket for your Christmas. But I can't keep it that long. I'll give it to you know" (qtd. in Quick, *Mark Twain and Me* 137). In certain cases he could allow himself to flirt with the "Angelfish" in a playful manner:

> When you came to dinner with the beautiful bows on the back of your head I wanted them, to hang up over your picture in my room […] but I resisted the temptation to steal them. Now for the resistance you ought to give them to me. (Cooley 219)

Or:

> Send me a kiss. No, bring it. (222)

Twain's manner to communicate with the girls can be interpreted as the voice of a beloved grandfather who wanted to enjoy a mutual game and joyful company of his surrogate grandchildren. Moreover, this communication let him cope with his inner dark sentiments when he could forget about his real age and its problems.

In Twain's communication with the "Aquarium Club", ambiguity served considerably and deliberately for comic effect. Their games and role-plays included the so-called rules of the "Aquarium Club" which were issued by the Admiral. Twain used this title for himself in his letters during the summer of 1908. The comic effect can be distinguished when the description of the rules sounded more like a parody of traditions and laws stated in a society where morality and obedience could be considered as part of education for children. Primarily, it can be suggested by Twain's use of high-flown names of the places where children could play and accompany the writer. The use of the titles of "Private Headquarters" (the billiard room), "the Niche of Repentance" or "the Criminal Court" ("a spacious room in the house") implied the implicit irony referred to a habit in the world of adults to give names of importance to the things of no significance at all. The language of those issued regulations imitated deliberately the legislative one. Twain noticed in his letter that "The power to exercise these privileges is lodged not only in the Members as a whole, but may be used by a single Fish if she shall desire to do so" (Cooley 191). More than that, Twain established the society of the "Angelfish" as "the Court" and appointed the following procedure of punishments, taking place in "the Niche of Repentance":

> At other times an Angel-Fish who has been tried & found guilty of conduct unbecoming her high estate. The Court may sentence her to remain in the Niche of Repentance for a period of not less than two minutes nor more than ten. While under sentence she must live on bread & water. (Cooley 191)

The rules and instructions issued by the writer were the tools for the construction of the society of children in which they repeated the adult's world in the most sincere way. The titles and role-play with "official" positions parodied the adults' world of hierarchy in the most agreeable way for the intelligent young friends of Mark Twain. All in all, it can be considered a brilliant game of mind provoked by the writer so that he and the children could enjoy it.

When Twain described the so-called the Criminal Court, he noted in a playful mood that "the Admiral will sit as Judge, & the prosecution & defense will be conducted by the Official Legal Staff of the Aquarium" (Cooley 192). Moreover, in these rules, Twain referred ironically to corruption as part of adults' world. It was entitled "Bribery". So the writer concluded that "attempts to bribe the Court or Jury, by either members or non-members, will be subjected to such punishment as the Judge in his discretion prescribes" (193). All in all, Twain himself created the role-plays with the young friends; and in its turn, this attempt of amusement maintained the varied forms of verbal activities for the humorist – they inspired him, gave him to escape from his problems for a short period of time. It seemed that Twain made up his own world at the home residence and supported the girls' amusement of choosing a role in the imaginary and fairy universe of games and happy moments of their childhood.

It is also important to mention a more influential aspect of the correspondence between Twain and the girls. His correspondence with the "Angelfish" suggests an aspect of Twain's later private life when he could amuse his young friends a lot by means of pictures, postcards, poems and valentines. Visual humor was part of Twain's career and life. Peter Messent and Louis J. Budd (2005) suggested that "the simplest line (no pun) of Twain's visual humor points to his drawings" (Messent and Budd 474). "With his childish drawn" (474) ridicule, Twain made illustrations of his own to his books. In 1870, he "keyed to the Franco-Prussian War" (474) when he drew "Map of the Fortifications of Paris" for the *Buffalo Express* and the *Galaxy*. He also drew a portrait of "William III. King of Prussia", when he understood that his clumsy drawings "had added another ring to his circus as humorist" (474). Twain also made several drawings for his *A Tramp Abroad* (1880) or in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894). At the same time, he did not ignore professional assistance of artists, E. W. Kemble and Dan Beard among them, who worked for Twain's Huckleberry Finn and other books. Twain's prior aim to use drawings of his own or of professional artists was humor. As Messent and Budd noticed, "Twain strained so often to draw humorously that fantasies of success in this mode must have pulled him on [...]" (475). Twain knew about commercial success of visual humor when this kind of humor served to attract his readers by its aesthetic and playful impacts. In his turn, Bruce Michelson (2006) noticed that the role of drawings and pictures in Twain's issued books and manuscripts was focused on both business success and aesthetic play when these non-verbal techniques could bring "aesthetically challenging context" (Michelson 84) for the readers.

In his correspondence with the "Angelfish," Twain used his skills of a visual humorist also in a playful manner to attract and to entertain. When no commercial success was needed, Twain used drawings of his own specially for his private circle. The first means of attraction was a number of pictures drawn by Twain. In the correspondence with the young pen-friends the pictures served more as a visual addition to a humorous context in the stories following the pictures. They served for pure entertainment, a bit of a play and for intensification of a humorous effect. The lines in his drawings are very simple with no background in particular or any colorful background. Usually, these pictures were submitted with the writer's comments. Some of them can be defined as funny and amusing. It can be also suggested that this artistic part in the communication reveals positive moments in the writer's pastime during his later years. Referring to the role of pictures in the correspondence, it can be noticed that most of them appeared during the first period of the communication (until 1908) and only one of them during the second, Innocents at Home's term.

The studies of Earleywine (2011), for example, suggest that picture and humorous ones, in particular, "help the mood of the one who draws" (Earleywine 172). Moreover, other studies found that drawings are "funnier if the humor arose from joining picture to words in such a way that the one 'explained' the other" (Varnum, Gibbons 81). Referring to these statements, it can be suggested that the comic effect intensifies when a funny drawing is followed by a story which explains the drawing below. Usually simple drawings (with no wealth of colors, no complexity of shadows, funny perspective) can be attached with a short and funny story. This combination intensifies a humorous effect, and attracts readers by its playful approach. A joyful expression is usually defined in these stories following funny drawings. The mood of the creator of such a combination is overwhelmingly playful. That is why an introduction of the drawings attached to funny stories from life by Twain himself can prove that the writer was not completely in a mood of frustration and despair. He found ways to cope and escape from a pessimistic mood. To begin with, the first picture was addressed to Dorothy Quick in August, 1907. The comment which followed the picture explained the drawing:

> Do you know what that is? It is a butterfly. Drawn by the artist. The gifted artist. I am the gifted artist. Self-taught. No, I find it is a grasshopper. It is for your collection […] It took more chloroform than was good for it. And so it is sleeping with its fathers (Cooley 53).

Fig. 3. Samuel L Clemens, *A Butterfly*. Cooley 53.

Initially, a case of self-irony can be noticed when Twain calls himself to be an "artist", a gifted one. The repetition of this word for several times creates the effect of exaggeration. An ironic mood is kept in the following paragraph when Twain doubts that he drew a butterfly. Now he thinks that it is a grasshopper. And the joke with the chloroform suggests a general ironic tone of the writer. At the end of the same letter to Dorothy Quick the humorist put an extraordinary and ridiculous picture of "the Busy Bee". Let us explore and comment on the picture.

Fig. 4. Samuel L. Clemens, *The Busy Bee*. Cooley 54.

The first thing that seems ridiculous and unnatural in the picture is the size of "the busy bee". It is enormous and much bigger than the other animal, a cat, for instance, which is running away and a small town with a church below. The trick is made by means of visual perspective. All in all, this picture seems ridiculous at the first sight. Furthermore, the use of the epithet "busy" together with this ridiculous drawing creates the humorous effect in the letter. Definitely, it served for mutual amusement of the child and the writer. The next picture seems to be even more ridiculous by its structure. In his letter to Dorothy Quick on August 26, 1907, Twain drew the following:

> It looks like a fairy tale in the form of a picture. Samuel L. Clemens gave some explanations in the paragraphs below the picture. That big one that has three ears & looks like an angel, isn't an angel at all, it is the mother rabbit. She isn't swimming, she is praying – praying for succor, I reckon, that is, I think that that is her idea […] No, that

> isn't it: she is jumping – jumping over a rope-walk, or a stone wall, or something of that kind & has bumped her stomach against it, poor thing. It is very difficult to tell what a rabbit is really trying to do, in a picture, because rabbits are so irrelevant. It is their nature, when excited (Cooley 58).

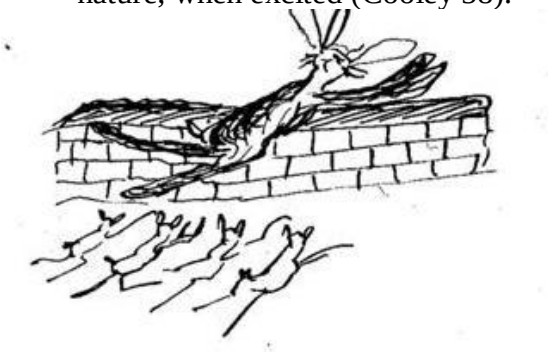


Fig. 5. Samuel L. Clemens, *The Flight of the Rabbit Family.* Cooley 58.

Concerning this evidence, it can be remarked that Mark Twain told this story with a humorous touch in it to evoke the child's amusement and smile by means of this funny drawing. The writer found it beneficial to attach extra visual means, with pictures, to his stories. For this reason, the next story entitled "Deer" in the same letter is supported by both vivid and simple picture. The lines of the drawing are abrupt and curved. It adds some dynamic mood, but the lack of shadows keeps its simplicity. At one point, there is nothing funny about the drawing. On the other hand, the figure of a person standing near the deer attracts attention. It can be suggested that this was a portrait of Isabel Lyon, who was a common friend of the Angelfishes, too. And this female figure can be considered, to some extent, ridiculous. Twain intended to imply a humorous effect in this drawing by means of this figure. It seems as if this figure of a lady is dancing or pointing somewhere. This effect is achieved by the curved lines that construct her dress. This drawing also inspired Twain to tell a new story in the letter:

> There were several of them. They came down the hill from the woods to the house, & stopped a while behind the kitchen to look at the cook. You can see by their eager expression & enthusiastic delight that they had never seen a cook before. Sometimes they go down through woods below the house to get a drink at the lake. If ever they come to the fence, you must be ready, for we will have them to luncheon & photograph them in the act. (Cooley 59)

Fig. 6. Samuel L. Clemens, *Deer.* Cooley 59.

This story with the deer explains that they came to have a look at the cook. Twain continues on, telling Dorothy Quick that the picture shows "their eager & enthusiastic delight". Again, the writer is trying to create some humorous effect and a definite playful tone by attaching these high-flown words to a simple drawing. More than that, these words suggest that the writer was evidently amused and delighted at times in the company of the young pen-friends. At the end of the story, Twain's enthusiasm, fantasy and playful tone continued when he suggested to invite the deer so that they all would "have them to luncheon & photograph them in the act". So Twain suggested D. Quick to take part in this role-play, in this kind of adventure. Further on, in the letter to Dorothy Quick on September 12, 1907, the writer told another story of a new "inhabitant", that was an ordinary "cricket". The story is illustrated again by a simple and childish drawing.

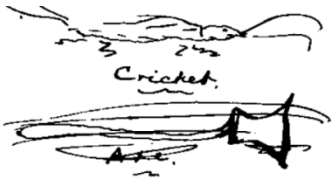


Fig. 7. Samuel L. Clemens, *Cricket.* Cooley 62.

In another letter from Twain to Dorothy Quick (NY, September 12, 1907), the writer again resorted to the help of a combination when a simple funny drawing was followed by a funny short story. This visual form of humor appeared again in the writer's message when he wanted to amuse, entertain, attract and tease Dorothy. So the writer continued in the letter:

> But a cricket was hiding somewhere in the room, & continuously & monotonously shrieking. I endured it an hour (until 10), then removed to another room. I returned at 1, & at 4 but was driven out each time. Last night he drove me out at 9:30, & I returned no more. To-night Miss Lyon will occupy my room & and capture him if possible. (Cooley 62)

The writer recollected the story for pure amusement, both his and of the girl's. The humorous effect was achieved by Twain's intention to describe an ordinary cricket in the room as an unexpected visitor in the house. The verbs "to remove", "to be driven out" proved the effect. So the narrator left it to Miss Lyon to do the worst part of the job and "capture him if possible". Humorous tone in the story with the cricket can suggest that Twain was sincerely amused. At the same time, his humorous tone followed his sentimental thoughts

about the way how he missed Dorothy Quick – "I am a missing-you, Dorothy" (Cooley 62). His dark sentiments did not last long, and soon they are interrupted by his further humorous approach. In confirmation of this suggestion, in his letter to Dorothy Quick (NY, September 12, 1907), Twain noticed that "I think it's an axe, but some think it's a bonnet. But it's for the cricket when I get him – I am quite certain as to that" (63). The visual pun followed these words:

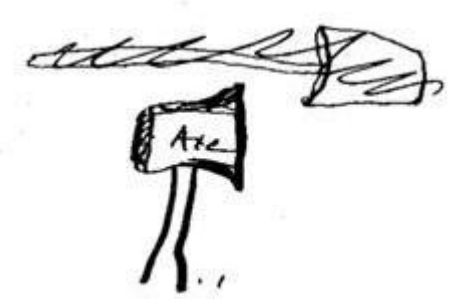


Fig. 8. Samuel L. Clemens, *An Axe.* Cooley 63.

All in all, the illustration by means of the self-drawn picture attached a unique and tightly personal interrelation in the exchange of the letters. They served to be an emotional support of the friendly and equal communication. One of the most entertaining, funny and ridiculous drawings, which Twain addressed to one of the Angelfish, Dorothy Quick, was the picture of Miss Lyon. The lines made her so unreal, weird and disproportional. The weird form of the hat looked more like a bush. The disproportional shape and abrupt lines of the hands made the drawing to be a very childish one. The portrait looked more like a delightful parody filled with boyish cheer and entertainment.

You remember how she looks?

The way she looks.
Good-bye, I love you very much.

SLC

Fig. 9. Samuel L. Clemens, *A Picture of Miss Lyon.* Cooley 67.

It is noticeable from private notes and photos of the writer that Twain loved cats. So did his pen-friends. In the letter on October 3, 1907 he gave a sympathetic and humorous description of his pet. And again the description is followed by a funny drawing by the writer. The cat seemed to smile and sit as an ordinary human being. So in his letter to Dorothy Quick (Tuxedo Park, 3 October 1907) the writer remarked ironically and with evident adoration:

> You should see our cat. It is half grown, & is gay & wise & courteous & very handsome. It has a tail at one end, & two sets of legs, one set of the bow & the other at the stern, & is just as astonishing in other ways. The cat is trying to look like Miss Lyon, but I think it does not succeed very well - & won't, until it has had more practice. It sits up like this. (Cooley 68-69)

Fig. 10. Samuel L. Clemens, *A Cat.* Cooley 69.

The epithets "courteous", "handsome" and "wise" that Twain attached to the description of the cat served to personify the image of the writer's pet. Also, he told about the cat's attempt

"to look like Miss Lyon". Personification is a commonly used figure of speech for creating a humorous effect, especially in poetry and fairy tales. It can be suggested as one of the most frequently used techniques in Twain's letters to the members of the "Aquarium Club" when he recollected the few stories about his pets. One more drawing was attached to this letter. It did not seem humorous. At the same time, Twain noticed about a dog-stranger with his deep sentiment that "that is a heavenly dog here, but he is not ours; he came down to have a visit, & will have to be sent back. He is the long kind" (Cooley 69).

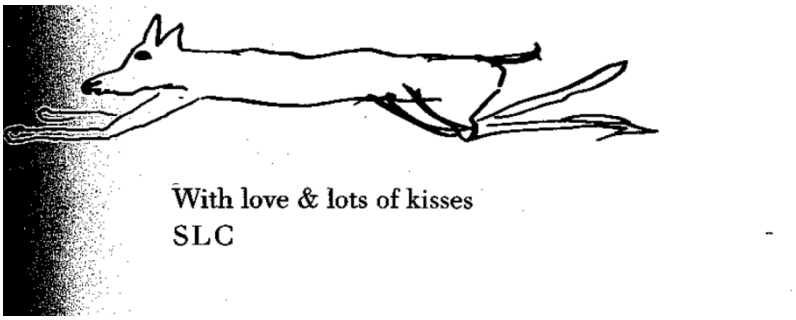


Fig. 11. Samuel L. Clemens, *A Dog.* Cooley 69.

The drawing of the "heavenly dog" was the last one addressed to Dorothy Quick. One last drawing appeared in Twain's letter to Margaret Blackmer on October 24-29, 1908. At the very end of the message the writer left the portrait of his pet, the cat Billiard. The ending of the letter was the following: "You see how lonely you make it by going away from here, you little rascal" (Cooley 223). The lines of the drawing were very abrupt and hardly noticeable; by means of this way of drawing a melancholy mood was created. At the same time, the cat was smiling so it seemed friendly, looking with a sense of understanding and sympathy. Finally, its eyes seemed to hide some trick or play.

Fig. 12. Samuel L. Clemens, *The Cat Named Billiards.* Cooley 223.

What is more important, a few times Twain compared himself to his favorite cat. He complained when he was left all alone without any Angelfish by his side, he went "mourning around, like an old cat" (Cooley 51). This drawing reflected both the traits of the writer himself and some characteristics of his pet, too – both melancholic and sentimental moods of

an aging person who was left alone but still hoped to enjoy life by simple, yet necessarily personal communication with his friends from the "Aquarium Club".

Notably, Twain's simple, yet funny drawings served to be a perfect medium of a joke or something ridiculous for the children. The pictures that were full of parody and ridicule, at the same time, always attracted their attention and served for mutual delight and amusement. It can be suggested that Twain found his droll drawings to be an appropriate technique for revealing his ideas, playful and teasing mood and experiences, uniquely and frankly in the correspondence with Dorothy Quick.

Moreover, Dorothy Quick can be considered as Twain's favorite "Angelfish". She was a wide-eyed observer and beloved companion of Mark Twain when he entered the age of seventy-two. The image of the famous writer was created in her book *Mark Twain and Me* (1961) where she collected her memories and feelings from her childhood when she, an eleven-year-old girl, met the greatest humorist of his times, Mark Twain, aboard a ship in 1907. According to Quick's observations, Twain was not overwhelmingly pessimistic or bitterly frustrated. Together with the analysis of the use of humor in the correspondence of Mark Twain to the young friends from the "Aquarium Club", Quick's recollections about her friendship with the writer can produce an alternative side of the aging writer's portrait. Her memories and observations, inextricably intertwined with both private and public sides in the life of Twain, prove that the writer in his seventies was capable of warm and positive emotions, was inspired by his own attempts to please his young friend and was constantly able to entertain himself and the child. Generally speaking, Quick's sincere and warm-hearted words addressed to her beloved friend and companion in numerous activities and games created the image of a perfect surrogate grandfather for Dorothy.

From the very first lines in her book, Dorothy's attitude towards Mark Twain was full of sincere admiration, childish praise and innocent charm. That is why the chance to communicate with the famous writer is defined in the book as "a heaven-sent opportunity" (Quick, *Mark Twain and Me* 3). The public was always attracted by the writer's white costumes and his snow-like hair. The girl was under the same spell when she noticed his "crop of snowy hair" and his eyes that "were particularly blue and brilliant" (10). More than that, together with the interviewers and journalists, the girl noticed that Mark Twain did not look his age at seventy-two. She observed that "his skin was as smooth and fresh as a child's" in 1907 (3). She never "thought of him as old. To me he was ever youthful, despite his good-natured chatting over being elderly […] He was always so vibrantly alert, so full of the keenest enjoyment of even the simplest pleasures" (209). Only in March 1910 she noticed

finally his real age when she remembered about Twain that “he looked his age for the first time. In fact, he seemed suddenly to have grown older and very worn” (213). According to Quick’s observation, the writer’s real and evident decline started after the death of Jean and the increase of the writer’s problems with his health. It was when his humor decreased and his tone turned to less playful. (December 1909).

According to Quick’s feelings and personal experience which she had experienced in the company with Mark Twain, before the death of his daughter, Jean, he was full of enthusiasm, joyful humor and fun-loving childish character. Dorothy was sure that only with his daughter’s unexpected death when the writer had to experience “the shock of her sudden passing”, in its turn this shock “was a terrific one for Mr. Clemens in his frail of health” (Quick 211). The Stormfield period (November 1908 – April 1910) in the very last years of the writer “proved an unfortunate change” (205) when the writer had to cope with overwhelming losses, increasing feelings of loneliness, and increasing hours when he had to stay in bed because of backbreaking problems with health.

However, referring to Dorothy Quick's book, until late 1908 Mark Twain enjoyed his public activities, was delighted with his popularity and was full of joy and delightful humor by means of which he attracted his public and preserved its adoration. It should be noticed that the writer appreciated the public’s admiration in all its forms. According to Quick, “he enjoyed the attention they paid him and if he had to return to the carriage without an adventure or a compliment of some sort to report, he would have felt very disappointed” (Quick 134). Mark Twain seemed to be an amused collector of stories and compliments from the public which he could later use for his own benefits. The writer was full of enthusiasm concerning the public’s admiration and its attitude; and this side of his fame inspired his childish temperament. In confirmation, Dorothy stated that “Mr. Clemens was surrounded by a circle of admirers who literally hung on every word he said, and he enjoyed it. The man whom his intimates called the 'King' was not adverse to admiration. In fact, he thrived upon it” (45).

At the same time, Dorothy Quick never found the famous writer to be negatively presented in the mass media. On the contrary, he was presented in the colors of his huge fame and widespread admiration. Referring to Quick’s memories, Twain was never arrogant, vain or unfriendly towards strangers or members of his private circle. He had to cope with his fame both in private and in public. His private circle can be defined by a friendly and warm atmosphere with much laughter and positive moments. To corroborate this statement, Dorothy Quick concluded about the writer in his later years that “the real Mark Twain was a happy

man who loved his work, his friends, and who enjoyed tremendously the pleasures of life; not the embittered, frustrated person so many people have written him down to be" (Quick 67-68). In spite of his age and problems, Twain was full of enthusiasm and moments when he could enjoy his life of a very famous writer, a social activist and a perfect companion in games. Dorothy noticed that the writer received moments of delight when he joked in public. His humor was usually full of incongruity, delightful irony, and "delicious satire" (96).

On the basis of Quick's memories, it can be suggested that the writer's activities of merriment in the later years included a lot of his public appearances; Twain enjoyed taking photos with Dorothy, numerous games, jokes and teasing of the child. He was very ironic about his age and always had a kind of "poker face" (Quick 66) with "the twinkle in his eyes" (10) which let the girl understand that he was not really serious when he remarked on being old. Moreover, her observations can suggest that Twain received positive emotions when he initiated some kind of a game with the public when he let himself act like a child. In public the aging writer could have a look "with an expression like a mischievous little boy who knows he has been naughty on his fine face" (24). By means of such extraordinary behavior, the writer could both puzzle and attract his audience. Twain knew how to manipulate the public's attitude and cause mutual laughter and amusement. He also enjoyed to surround himself with public admiration when he received delight by his public appearance in a company with Dorothy. In support of this observation, Quick remembered that Twain asked her to put on her white dresses each day so that they together could "match and present a perfect picture as we pace the decks" (14). It is hard to conclude if such behavior of the writer was for pure satisfaction of his personal ego, or if it was because he had no grandchildren of his own with whom he could match perfectly in public; anyway, these public appearances in the company of young Dorothy inspired moments of happiness in the later years of Twain.

Having created the image of a perfect and charming surrogate grandfather, Mark Twain enjoyed his favorite game of giving bad advice when he could oppose himself to the traditional world of grown-ups who can only instruct and teach their children. Dorothy remembered how once the writer admitted with an ironic twinkle in his eyes that "it's good to obey all rules when you're young so you'll have strength to break them when you are old" (14). These words of the writer can be interpreted as his attempt to act childishly. In its turn, such childish behavior can suggest that his final years did not always mean decline or frustration. No doubt, the writer got frustrated and even angry about social injustices, people's delusions, hypocrisy of politicians and personal losses. At the same time, Twain continued his

emotional, mental and inner fight with all these troubles and misfortunes by means of his active social and public role, by means of creating the circles of devoted friends and beloved companions of different ages.

In Quick's memories of her friendship with Twain, he was presented as the master of humor. According to the girl's impressions, his brilliant, perspicacious humor survived in his final years:

> His speeches were always amusing and clever and never failed to provide laughter and mirth from his audience. He could make them laugh whenever he wanted to, and because of the very good humor into which he put them, he could drive home the point he wished to make – and there always was a point. He would dress it up in giggles and laughs, but its sharpness was still there. He never made a speech that did not have a serious background, a message behind its mirth. (Quick 29)

The observation of the young girl about Twain's nature of humor can underline three major functions of his humor. In the first place, it was positive according to the writer's initial intentions – humor was implied in his stories and speeches for pure amusement and sincere laughter. On a more profound layer, the voice of a keen philosopher and a wise observer can be distinguished who is able to put serious remarks in the form of "giggles and laughs". Twain was able to attract and preach in front of the public in a masterly fashion of the master of humor. His childish behavior puzzled the people, his serious discussions in the form of funny and humorous stories charmed and amused. Dorothy also remembered that the writer constantly was inspired to start new games or jokes – she noticed that "there never was a time when I stayed with Mark Twain that he didn't have something brand new by way of amusement" (Quick 191) for both her and him. He achieved true delight and genuine happiness in everyday games like billiards, charades and pantomimes.

Usually, many people from his circle of close friends and intimates were involved by him in these numerous games. Once Twain introduced Dorothy as his personal business manager. This event intrigued and puzzled the people; and it inspired sincere amusement and delight for both the girl and the writer. Moreover, Dorothy remarked about Twain in his private family circle that "Mr. Clemens was never so happy as when he had a number of congenial people around him, and he rules his little household with a kindly despotism and accepted the homage he always inspired in his own gracious and lovable way" (Quick 189). Twain was like a spoiled child who was a bit of a despot in his family circle. However, this despotism was based on both his enormous love towards his nearest and his desire to cope with his problems and loneliness. That is why, he organized everything in his homage according to the

level of his public image of the great writer and on the basis of his capabilities to love and enjoy life.

Returning to the subject of Twain being the girl's surrogate grandfather, it is necessary to mention that the writer always insisted on Dorothy as a writer. He constantly inspired her to create her own funny stories and created the so-called "the Author's League for Two" in 1907. The writing style of a young child always found his sympathy and encouragement. For him it also provided some kind of positive moments in his later years. More than that, Dorothy remembered other moments when her company could make Twain's dark sentiments disappear. On 21 December 1907 young Dorothy ventured to give her surrogate grandfather a present. Twain could not refuse. And so she remarked that "Christmas Day 1907 was full of gladness, with no hint of sorrow to come" (Quick 145). These were the children who could make Mark Twain feel relieved and support him in his inner struggle with problems and losses. To add more, the girl noticed that also animals (especially, cats and horses) brought "amusing happiness" (111) in the life of the aging writer.

In conclusion, Quick's memories introduced a more balanced perspective of Twain's later private life when she recollected a lot of positive moments in his later life. Her words can be suggested as evidence of Twain's final life when he was capable of enjoyment, amusement, inspiration and attraction. He was able to be a great friend and companion. He was willing to be a perfect surrogate grandfather and a devoted friend who was full of boundless adoration and aspiration to initiate numerous games and puzzles both in public and in private. He inspired himself and inspired his young companion to enjoy life and to continue active writing. All in all, Dorothy Quick found arguments from her child's memories that Mark Twain was associated with "brightness and cheer" (Quick 115) in her eyes when they met in 1907.

4.3.3 Major Findings

To begin with, the analysis of the humorous aspect and its significance in the writer's exchange of the letters with the young girls threw light on a private life of the famous person. Moreover, it suggested that there were numerous moments in his later years when he enjoyed his pastime with the children by involving them and himself in activities and games initiated personally by him. Twain's relationships with the young female companions can be characterized by the overwhelming feelings of protection, care and adoration of the aging writer. He adored their talents and young spirits, and protected their innocence within his private circle. Twain's characteristic role in the private correspondence with the "Angelfish" was that of a surrogate grandfather who was inspired by the young girls' talents. He initiated numerous games and was involved in these plays in his most frank, emotional and joyful mood. He was devoted cordially to their company and was longing for those happy moments when he met the girls or while he was writing his letters to them. More than that, humor served to be this binding power to attract their attention, to entertain and amuse both sides of the communication. To add more, the writer's intentional use of humor can also be considered as a proof of the writer's delight and moments of happiness when he was in the company of the girls or when he was writing letters to them.

Further on, the tone of Mark Twain in the overwhelming part of these letters suggested that activities like that served to reduce stress in the life of the writer. At the same time, their communication with him promoted his own artistic and professional voice of the humorist. The wide use of exaggeration, self-irony and wordplay confirmed the writer's attempts to maintain trust and equality in the communication with the children. The use of varied humorous techniques created an optimal communicative environment with them. In its turn, the positivity of the opportunity to be surrounded by smart children contributed to the light moments in the life of Twain during these final years. A playful and boyish mood of the writer in these letters can be considered as Twain's habit when he enjoyed playing young at heart. The communication in such form with the young female friends gave him this very opportunity to forget about the dark thoughts in his mind and take sincere delight when he could be part of youth in the girls' company. Numerous positive images and characters in their correspondence, the writer's favorite pets and animals among them, can suggest that the writer experienced happy moments in his later years. By means of self-irony and ironic teasing, Twain was able to find opportunities to cope with his personal problems or dark

thoughts. Ironic recollections in the letters suggest an observation that the writer did not give up and was coping with rumors and failures that surrounded his famous public image.

Humor was not only a tool to set an easy-going, playful and friendly communication between the aging writer and his surrogate grandchildren. Humor and its positive role in this communication let Mark Twain construct another channel in his private circle when he could be an observer and admirer of youth. Being a direct participant and an enthusiastic initiator in the circle of his surrogate grandchildren, Twain was inspired and turned to be his playful or boyish manner. This childish or playful tone came together with his worship of youth by means of numerous funny and touching means, for instance, drawings and cards which were addressed to his young friends.

However, the voice of the writer became more sarcastic in some of his letters to the girls. He enjoyed teasing and even flirting with them. Rasmussen refers to a few times that there were debates about the appropriateness of this communication. Rasmussen reports that Twain "was rumored to have behaved improperly with a girl in Bermuda" (Rasmussen, *Critical Companion*, 576), though, no evidence was found. In his studies Hamlin Hill (1973) referred to the "Aquarium Club" and defined it as "harem" (Hill 195). However, there are no proofs of any physical attraction of the writer towards the girls. Admiration, sympathy and ambition to create a circle of clever and sweetheart grandchildren can be identified in the correspondence. Mark Twain found obvious inspiration when he could communicate with smart children. All in all, this communication evidently delighted him personally.

Referring to the analysis in this part of the study, it can be suggested that Mark Twain, being happily preoccupied with the company of the young children, was involved totally and emotionally in his search for happy moments when he communicated with the children. He was attached with the most positive side of his humorous talent. He was longing for sincerity, inspiration and innocent spirit in this communication. Finally, the analysis of the use of humor in these letters with the "Angelfish" discovers evidence that Twain presented his best humor through words and visual means. This part of his private life included positive moments of delight and joy. Definitely, this aspect of Twain's final years cannot be ignored when a more complex and balanced interpretation of this period is needed.

4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be suggested that each of Twain's private activities, from his autobiographic dictations, private notes and correspondence with his friends and acquaintances, occupied much of his leisure time from the period of 1896-1910. Each of these pastimes served for Twain as a personal means to enjoy life, to be entertained, to share his internal thoughts and ideas, to recollect and analyze his past, and debate about the issues of his present and lifelong personal concerns. What is more important, his personal and private pastime let him cope with the burden of the public's judgments and prejudices when he was in his intimate environment. For this reason, the writer was free to announce his thoughts and ideas frankly with passion in his private circles. It also suggested that the writer was diligent, full of energy and enthusiastic in sharing his intimate thoughts and personal remarks when he entered his old age.

Twain's humorous voice can be found in all of his later private activities. However, the level of its expression varied in all of these activities. In the writer's communication with the members of the "Aquarium Club", Twain's humorous voice was very loud. At the same time, in the correspondence with the adult close friends or in his private notes Twain's humorous voice appeared rather seldom. Moreover, the nature and the reasons for its appearance in Twain's private activities were different from Twain's comic voice in public. In his private circles his humorous tone accompanied his private recollections of the past when he took advantage of the opportunity to enjoy again the happy moments of his past. For instance, in his private dictations or notes the writer's comic tone was inspired by his delight and amusement, childish happiness and boyish playful spirit. Varied humorous shades of his comic style combined his ironic or witty remarks, and can be interpreted as the writer's enthusiasm in his attempts to cope with dark moments in his life, and still enjoy moments of delight and amusement in his private circle.

In his private life Twain never forgot about the topics of his personal concern and professional interest. It was always a combination of professional commitment and personal enthusiasm when he was reading the works of the other authors. A tone in his margins to others' works can suggest a complex of his attitudes, including professional criticism, personal skepticism, amusement, delight and entertainment. In many cases it was supported with a humorous touch and comic effect.

Furthermore, Twain's broad circle of friends and acquaintances shows not only his active social life. More than that, it indicated Twain's capacity and desire for true friends and

trustworthy companions during his later years. Being critical about human nature, Twain's complex personality still did not give up the ideas of friendship and true devotion when he had to face so many personal losses during his later years. His active communication and correspondence within a circle of his devoted friends and acquaintances can be interpreted as the writer's struggling with moments of despair and the writer's moments when he enjoyed his life. The correspondence with them was accompanied with Twain's humorous voice, not that constantly, yet still vividly and frankly introduced by the writer. It can be noticed that there was a complexity of comic forms in the letters to his private circle. A variety of comic shades introduced a variety of Twain's personal thoughts and moods in his personal contacts with friends and acquaintances. For instance, Twain's ironic tone introduced his attempt to treat problematic topics in a less desperate, more amicable manner. In his communication with close friends Twain's sarcastic observations concerning politics or religion appeared frequently, and indicated moments of Twain's personal disappointment and frustration. At the same time, the reasons for his sarcasm in private activities also indicated his attempts to cope with these sad moments. Finally, the comic forms of ridicule and witty conclusions presented the private image of the writer when he wanted to entertain and be personally amused in the intimate company of devoted friends.

Together with the company of adult devoted friends, Twain created the private circle of the "Aquarium Club" where Twain could enjoy his pastime and receive delight and happiness in return. Thus, he created a private circle of surrogate grandchildren when he communicated with the most talented representatives of the young generation. In their company Twain was inspired by his personal adoration of the young "Angelfish". In its turn, Twain's humorous talent was represented considerably in this correspondence. His comic skills served to be the binding power to attract their attention, to express his most positive feelings, to entertain and amuse both sides of the communication. Being inspired and delighted in the company of the "Angelfish", Twain introduced his comic voice when a wide use of exaggeration, self-irony and wordplay supported his communication with the girls. The use of varied comic forms created an optimal private environment in Twain's later years. Moreover, the opportunity to be surrounded by the people Twain adored and respected contributed to the moments of delight and amusement in the life of Twain during these final years. All in all, Twain's style of humor in his private activities introduced an intimate image in his private and personal environment when he could be frank, sincere, with evident sympathy and love towards the members of his private circle. Humor in Twain's private life was not for the benefit of his public image or fame, not to attract attention to his personality. On the contrary, it served for

mutual delight, amusement, fun and sharing of definite internal thoughts and observations in his private circle during those hard times of his later career and life.

Chapter 5. Major Findings and Conclusion

In this study I set out to interpret and analyze the style of humor in Mark Twain's later life and career (1896-1910). In doing so, the research presents the analysis of Twain's comic style in a variety of his later activities, both private and public ones. The combination of the approaches in the analysis included close reading and textual interpretation, together with chronological approach, historical criticism and biographical studies. The complex of these approaches and methods revealed Mark Twain's complex and contradictory personality from the perspective of his style of humor and the use of comic forms in his later writings, speeches and interviews, and in his private communication and personal notes. All in all, the study produced the following findings and conclusions:

To begin with, Mark Twain's later life and career included both tragic and happy moments. His later life and career can be defined as much harder times than before. During his later life in the years from 1896 to1910 the writer had to face a variety of tragedies, failures and disappointment. Nevertheless, Mark Twain did not give up his lifelong struggle with inner contradictions and forced fight against personal problems and business failures. His humorous voice and comic talent can be considered as his major accompaniments in his ability to cope with his tragedies and failures.

Second, in his later writings the voices of bitterness and pessimism cannot be ignored or denied, yet it cannot be suggested as the only one or prevailing. The analysis presented in chapter 2 shows that Twain's humorous voice was expressed vividly in a number of writings featuring animals, the character of a stranger and the characters of Adam and Eve. Twain's comic style in these writings can suggest Twain's complexity as a writer. Similarly, it demonstrates his contradictions as a person who had to deal with his personal concerns regarding religious issues, social injustice and human hypocrisy in his later writings. Together with criticism and skepticism, Twain used a variety of comic forms of sarcasm, ridicule, parody and irony. Struggling with his inner dark thoughts, in these later writings Twain used his talent of a humorist not only to criticize and ridicule. The analysis of Twain's comic rhetoric in his later writings presents the writer when his interpretation of mankind or religion sounded less desperate, in a more ironical manner. The comic techniques and forms in these writings can be interpreted as Twain’s attempts to interpret the topics of his concern not only from pessimistic perspectives. The analysis suggests that there were Twain's ideas of both despair and hope, of both frustration and enthusiasm, of both disappointment and entertainment in these writings. Moreover, the analysis in chapter 2 presents evidence when

Twain's voices of despair, pessimism or frustration are smoothed over by means of a varied number of comic forms – from his ironical observations to the context where his sentimental feelings or playful mood can be found.

Third, Mark Twain's humorous voices and comic talent also accompanied his fame during his later years. Thus, the analysis of Twain's style of humor in his public activities (including his oratory performances and appearance in numerous interviews and articles) is introduced in chapter 3. This part of the study highlights comic forms, such as irony, self-deprecating humor, and sarcasm in Twain's speeches and the interviews with him as a headliner-humorist during his later career and life. Moreover, anecdotes, aphorisms and tall tales are part of Twain's manner and style in his numerous public performances and appearances. Being a popular humorist, Twain simultaneously had to cope with his fame and was given a chance to escape from his dark thoughts and entertain these moments of public appearances. Due to this point of view, the analysis suggests that Twain's style of humor in his public activities served to be his personal means to cope with the dark moments of despair and frustration. What is more important, Twain's self-ironical treatment of his personal problems and of some other topics that were of his lifelong concern, for him in front of the public eye can be interpreted as the writer's ability to control his dark thoughts when he could escape from moments of pessimism and despair. Finally, a complex of comic forms and techniques introduced and initiated by Twain himself in his active public and social life. Interviews served to be means for his self-promotion in the role of the famous humorist. All in all, in his public activities Twain preferred a less bitter, but still a thought-provoking and indirectly philosophic manner of rhetoric. His comic style together with a wide use of anecdotes, aphorisms and numerous funny stories attracted, amused and intrigued the audience. For Twain, his public performances did not serve to be the ground for his dark criticism and pessimistic observations concerning the issues of religion, politics or the human race. In public, Twain preferred to entertain and to be entertained, to teach and preach but in a more light-minded manner in order to attract people's attention. Phipps (2003) suggests that "Mark Twain maintained that his humor served a solemn purpose" (Phipps 366). Twain wished his humor to be remembered, he did not want to play the only role of a joke-teller. As he noticed in one of his letters, "Humor must not professedly teach, and it must not professedly preach, but it must do both if it would live forever [...]" (*Mark Twain's Letters*, Vol. 2, 703). He valued his fame and he valued "his moral truths" hidden "in burlesque" (Bellamy 113).

Fourth, together with his active public life, in his private circle Twain preferred his active involvement. In spite of a severe combination of personal loses and tragedies, business

failures and disappointments, and health problems brought about by his advancing age, Twain's activities in private and his humorous voice in these activities can be considered as compelling evidence for some moments of delight and amusement during his later years. The analysis of Twain's style of humor is presented in chapter 4. In this part of the study it is suggested that in his private notes and dictations Twain was full of enthusiasm. For Twain, his private writings can be considered as a perfect means for him to recollect happy moments of his past or youth, and interpret his current situation. In its turn, his humorous voice included prevailingly ironic, self-deprecating or sarcastic observations, and can be interpreted as the writer's attempt to cope with the dark moments in his life, and still enjoy moments of delight and amusement in his private circle. More than that, there were those private occupations of Twain that inspired his humorous voice. For instance, in chapter 4 evidence is presented to show that Twain enjoyed reading and attaching his ironic or sarcastic comments to the books of other authors. His marginalia notations can be interpreted as his comic approach to criticize with professional skepticism. For instance, his humorous voice in the marginalia to *Pearl Island* (1903) can be interpreted as Twain's amusement when he found clumsy attempts or grammar mistakes in the narrative of the book. Finally, during his later years when Twain had to cope with the deaths of his family members, he needed a company of devoted friends and dear close people of his private circle. His private circle of friends and acquaintances included people of all social circles and of a variety of ages. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of humor in Twain's communication with his close friends and acquaintances. The use of humor in his private correspondence with them can be interpreted as a casual and natural phenomenon when the writer did not have to promote his own fame or social status. In his private circle Twain's humorous voice accompanied him in its unaffected and spontaneous manner when he had to face the moments of delight and sorrow. At the same time, the analysis proves that a variety of comic forms and humorous tones was presented in these letters to people who were close to Twain. His sarcastic conclusions or witty remarks served to be beneficial for mutual delight, amusement, fun and sharing of definite internal thoughts and observations in his private circle during those hard times of his later life.

Special attention in my research is turned to the analysis of Mark Twain's use of humor and numerous comic forms in his exchange of the letters with a group of young girls, the members of the “Aquarium Club”. The importance of humor in this part of Twain's private later life is almost unstudied. Due to this reason, I decided to introduce a detailed study of the role of humor in his communication with the “Angelfish”. The analysis of the role of humor in the writer's communication with the young girls presents an alternative aspect of Twain's

private life during his final years when he simply enjoyed his pastime and was amused by numerous activities and games in the company of the children. His personal delight was also rooted in his inspiration and adoration when he found himself in the company of young, talented and sincere young girls. Twain's relationships with the young members of the "Aquarium Club" can be analyzed from different angles. However, the analysis in my research is focused on the role of humor in this communication of the aging writer with the young children. Thus, it can be concluded that Twain's humorous voice constantly accompanied his letters to the girls. Moreover, it was an important part of his games and other activities initiated by Twain himself. His humorous talent turned out to be a necessary tool to create an optimal environment in the company of the children. Moreover, Twain's prevailing, yet subtle use of humor and a variety of comic forms can be explained as an indicator of the writer's cordial devotion, his attempts to create a "circle of surrogate grandchildren" (Skandera Trombley 181) and to have an opportunity to create an environment of happiness and amusement, the environment almost lost in Twain's later years. The analysis also concludes that humor served to be a means to attract their attention, to entertain and amuse them. Twain's intentional, yet sophisticated use of humor can also be considered as evidence that he received back delight and pure happiness when he was in the company of the members of the "Aquarium Club". The frequent use of exaggeration, self-deprecating humor and wordplay confirms Twain's aspiration to maintain his friendship with the girls in the most positive way. In its turn, the private circle of the "Angelfish" contributed to the light moments in his later life when he could be both an observer and part of the company of the young. The approach of close reading and step-by-step contextual interpretation of Twain's use of humor in his communication with the members of the "Aquarium Club" suggests that Twain was happily preoccupied in his self-initiated circle of the young children when he could escape partially from his frustration and despair and could be involved totally and emotionally in his search for happy moments when he was surrounded by the company of the girls. Finally, these moments of delight ad amusement in the company of the children inspired Twain's humorous voice in its verbal and visual forms.

In conclusion, the observations and findings of my research support the proposition that Mark Twain experienced a period of world-wide fame and strongly emotional experiences in his later years. In spite of his age and all the tragedies in his life, Mark Twain still possessed enough of enthusiasm and inner strength to continue his active writing, busy social life and vivacious communication in private. Humor served to be just one component in a complex of aspects which formed his image in public and private. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the

role of humor in Twain's final years can be suggested to highlight an important perspective of his life and career. Twain could be simultaneously cynical and sentimental, critical and praising, tragic and funny, nihilistic and searching for answers in the Bible. I also hope that arguments and findings, suggested in this thesis, will let future studies focus on Mark Twain’s complexity of his talents in a more detailed way where his talent of the humorist cannot be ignored or excluded.

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Eidesstattliche Versicherung

Hiermit erkläre ich, dass die Dissertation von mir selbstständig angefertigt wurde und alle von mir genutzten Hilfsmittel angegeben wurden.

Ich erkläre, dass die wörtlichen oder dem Sinne nach anderen Veröffentlichungen entnommenen Stellen von mir kenntlich gemacht wurden.

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