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MARK TWAIN'S FEMALE CHARACTERS AND NINETEENTH CENTURY CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

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By

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By the turn of the century American women were continuing to shed the Victorian ideals. A consistently growing number actively pursued higher education, spoke for suffrage rights, and sought to expand their horizons beyond the home. Mark Twain experienced this uprising on a personal level; not only did his wife and friends champion suffrage, but his daughters engaged in educational and ambitious pursuits. Consequently, his works reflect his interest in changing social ideas. My paper discusses Twain's experimentation with gender in his relatively lesser-known stories: "Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer Among the Indians", *Joan of Arc, Wapping Alice*, "Hellfire Hotchkiss", and "A Horse's Tale," and "Eve's Diary." While his celebrated *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* portray weak girls, his later writings move toward applauding assertive females. The changing societal and personal factors caused Twain to continually redefine the role of his female characters.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1860-1905 American women were continuing to question the Victorian ideals. Middle class women, in particular, continued to act upon improving their social standing. The growth of women's social organizations and colleges contested the patriarchal idea that women were not fit to pursue education or engage in deep thinking. Women spoke about their rights in increasingly louder voices. Although the home was still regarded as the women's primary responsibility, her sphere began to enlarge. Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) experienced this uprising on a personal level; not only did his wife and friends champion suffrage, but his daughters engaged in educational and ambitious pursuits. His literature explores his interest in changing social ideas. While female characters in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* seem to conform to Victorian ideals, his later female characters begin to show individual initiative. However, as a result of that initiative Twain often gives active roles to female protagonists, ends the narrative, or kills the female. He even explores the consequences of assertiveness with a slave character, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*'s Roxana, and a worldly woman, *The Gilded Age's* Laura Hawkins. By the end of his career, many of his writings move toward applauding more aggressive female characters who are a successful blend of female and male attributes. Twain's most interesting experiments with gender roles occur in *Wapping Alice*, "Hellfire Hotchkiss," "A Horse's Tale," and "Eve's Diary." This suggests Twain does not want to see his young female characters mature and fall, but has difficulty envisioning their success in real-life society. The changing societal and personal factors caused Twain to continually redefine the role of his female characters.

During Twain's writing career (1852-1909), leaders of the movement continued to agitate for change. While they benefited from exposure to other women's ideas in clubs,

they also gained valuable skills not previously attributed to their gender. For instance, they gave public speeches on issues, displaying their logical and oratory talents. Other middle-class women listened to their arguments, and the wave of support continued to help to reform tenements, organize aid for the poor, and raise money for library expansions. By working on such projects, women also developed their skills in problem analysis and dealing with the public. Much of their work was performed under the belief that if women participated in politics, then they could better protect the family and improve national morality. For example, in 1879, Frances Willard became president of the newly-created Women's Christian Temperance Union (Boyer 439). She believed women by nature to be benevolent and sensitive to others; she was equally convinced that men threatened tranquil households by drinking. If anti-liquor laws were to be enacted, Willard realized that women must be granted the right to vote. The WCTU was simultaneously active in welfare reform, health awareness programs, and labor arbitration. As the nation's first mass organization of women, the WCTU boasted 150,000 members in 1890 (Boyer 439). These women were being trained as lecturers, organizers, and lobbyists; roles which redefined the status of women in society.

Women gained confidence to display their intelligence, strength, and ambition in the college setting. Between 1880 and 1900 the percentage of colleges admitting women vaulted from 30 to 71 percent (Boyer 440). By the turn of the century, women made up more than one-third of the total college-student population (Boyer 679). Since women were thought to be less intelligent than men, the earliest women's colleges were founded to guide women toward maintaining feminine demeanors. However, women gradually began to participate heavily in academics, theatre, sports, and college organizations. Women's entrance into an institution formerly dominated by males also indicated a changing public opinion.

During the 1880s, exercise and recreation among middle and upper-class women became exceedingly popular. Associated with health and vitality, outdoor activities were seen to be acceptable for everyone, and these progressive changes were important to women. They moved from playing refined games of croquet to attending coed swimming parties. Bicycling especially appealed to women eager to loosen the restraints of the Victorian Era. Of course, there was much controversy about how a woman should ride a bike, with whom, and what she should wear. Tricycles had been designed to accommodate a large skirt, thus protecting a woman's modesty and rendering bloomers unnecessary. With the invention of the enclosed gears and the coaster brake in 1898, women could ride a two-wheeled bicycle without danger of entangling their skirts (Rothman 35). It was still, however, essential to wear less restrictive clothing, so corsets, crinolines, and skirts slowly disappeared over the decade. The bicycling craze also allowed young women much more freedom of mobility, and so they could enjoy the company of friends, solitude, or travel with men. These recreational activities contributed to providing women with more chances to assert their independence.

Mark Twain explored issues with his female characters in this age of vicissitude. Their behavior has connections to developing events of the time. Not only did the changing social conditions mold Twain's characters, but the real women in Samuel Clemens' life had a large influence on his depiction of the female.

Surrounding Clemens were family and friends who exemplified the developing feminist ideas of the age. Not only did he listen to their opinions, he sought them out, valued them, and tried to learn from them. The first strong woman to make an impression upon him was his mother, Jane Lampton Clemens. Later, his female characters took on many of her individualistic traits. After marrying a dour John Marshall Clemens to spite another man, the vivacious redhead made the most out of the

life she had chosen (Skandera-Trombley 10). Despite his demeanor, she never ceased to dance, attend parades, participate in storytelling, and make a spirited show of herself. After John Clemens died in relative poverty, Jane Clemens scrambled to keep her family together and to make her children comfortable. As working options for women in 1847 were limited, Mrs. Clemens depended on her older children for financial support (Werlock 152). However, she refused to surrender to any financial or emotional difficulties. She never lost interest in attending public events, and always maintained a humorous, energetic personality. Her ability to wade through the tough times of life without being swept away by the current was admirable, and very much influenced her son. He admired her, corresponded with her frequently, and obviously shared her love of pageantry and her role as entertainer. As a tribute to her imagination, he said of her, "If only she could write books!" (Werlock 152), and endowed his female characters with many of her individualistic traits.

While Twain critics J.R. LeMaster and Everett Emerson argue she had a negative effect, Justin Kaplan speculates she had little effect, and Joyce Warren and Laura Skandera-Trombley contend she had a positive effect, clearly Olivia Langdon Clemens must be credited with guiding Clemens' hand to create powerful female characters. Clemens admits, "I never wrote a serious word until I met Mrs. Clemens. She is solely responsible -- to her should go the credit -- for any moral influence my subsequent work may exert. After my marriage, she edited everything I wrote" (Henderson 183).

Not only did she read and edit his works, but her entire lifestyle affected Clemens. She was raised in reformist Elmira, New York, where her mother and other activists sought to change "health care, religious and social activism, and women's education" (Skandera-Trombley 65). Olivia Langdon Clemens was greatly influenced by her intelligent parents, Jervis Langdon and Olivia Lewis, and her aunt, Mary Anne Lewis,

who was a pioneer in the teaching field. Her father, Jervis Langdon, was a trustee of Elmira College, the first U.S. college to be chartered to grant the baccalaureate to women (Harris 2). Her parents believed in social reform and were conductors on the Underground Railroad. They dressed Olivia Langdon Clemens in non-restrictive clothing, and they experimented with hydropathy in an attempt to improve their family's health. Jervis Langdon gave his wife, Olivia Lewis, the deed to their house as a present, an unusual event in 1865, as an indication of his belief in the equality of marriage (Skandera-Trombley 71). Olivia Clemens attended excellent schools up until age sixteen, when her frail health forced her into sanatoriums, but continued her quest for learning by becoming a voracious reader. She also continued taking various lessons that interested her, such as chemistry, philosophy and French.

Clemens expressed his admiration of her intellect when he wrote to his sister during their courtship, "I take as much pride in her brains as I do her beauty" (Skandera-Trombley 125). Susan Harris writes that "Langdon's passion for books was one of the attractions for Clemens, as was his similar passion an attraction for her" (9). He respected her educated opinions, but frequently took on the role of a teacher while trying to influence her into adopting his own. When Clemens wrote, however, Olivia Clemens similarly encouraged him to display values important to her. In a 1908 letter to Archibald Henderson he writes, "She would say to me . . . 'You have a true lesson, a serious meaning to impart here . . . Be yourself! Speak out your real thoughts as humorously as you please, but - without farcical commentary. Don't destroy your purpose with an ill-timed joke.' I learned from her that the only right thing was to get in my serious meaning always, to treat my audience fairly, to let them really feel the underlying moral that gave body and essence to my jest" (Henderson 183).

Olivia Clemens' passion for activism started early in and continued throughout her

life. Her Sunday school teacher, Julia Beecher, was involved in the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and their friendship continued throughout Olivia Clemens' marriage. The Clemenses frequently provided WCTU speakers with a place to stay, and in some cases, financial assistance. Olivia Clemens' friendships colored her view of women's place in society, which in turn influenced the writer she married and lived with for thirty-four years, until her death in 1904. Skandera-Trombley writes that Clemens was "kept well-informed by his female family circle" (Skandera-Trombley 115) concerning women's political battles, and his writings support the claim. In "The Temperance Insurrection" (1874), he writes that "in extending the suffrage to women this country could lose absolutely nothing and might gain a great deal" (115). In an 1875 speech to the Hartford Monday Evening Club he said, "All that we require of a voter is that he shall be forked, wear pantaloons instead of petticoats, and bear more or less humorous resemblance to the reported image of God . . . We brag of our universal, unrestricted suffrage; but we are shams after all, for we restrict when we come to the women" (Skandera-Trombley, Paine 541). Clemens supported women's rights, and his acquaintances influenced his beliefs and works.

Suffragist Isabella Beecher Hooker and Olivia Clemens met as roommates at Gleason's Water Cure in 1860. While there, Olivia Clemens "became well-versed in Isabella's views regarding women's rights" (Skandera-Trombley 136). Hooker later helped form the New England Women Suffrage Association and served as president of the Connecticut branch. She also published suffragist writings, frequently spoke for her cause, and helped pass the Connecticut Married Woman's Property bill of 1877. Furthermore, Hooker firmly believed that a matriarchal government would soon dominate and merge with Christ's kingdom. As a friend of Olivia, Jervis and Olivia (Lewis) Langdon, Hooker invited Clemens to stay at her Nook Farm home during his

first visit to Hartford. The two "intense personalities of Hooker and Clemens obviously made for an explosive duo," but Clemens listened to all she said without argument (Skandera-Trombley 139). Clemens supported Hooker's activities to the extent that he provided her with financial assistance for her cause. When she died, Clemens hailed her as "an able and efficient worker" in the footsteps of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton who, "broke the chains of their sex and set it free" (Skandera-Trombley 141). Clemens clearly supported her fight, and his association with such active women influenced his writing, as this paper will show.

Finally, Clemens' own offspring proved to have the greatest influence on his depiction of the female character. His fictional girls echo characteristics of his own daughters. When they were young, he relished their innocence and sweetness, and created girls like Becky Thatcher in *Tom Sawyer,* and Mary Jane Wilks in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, who resemble them. When his girls matured and moved on to explore the world, his writing shifted. He made women his main subject, exhibited some confusion about how to depict them, and eventually focused on strong female protagonists comparable to the women his daughters were becoming.

Suzy (named Olivia Susan) seemed to affect Clemens' writing most profoundly. She began editing his writing at age eight, and continued to be treated as a young colleague by her father until her death at twenty-four. It was when Suzy reached the age when she could make her own decisions that Clemens found it necessary to impede her individualistic attempts. Shelley Fisher Fishkin writes he was "obsessed throughout his life with the sanctity of female 'purity' and 'chastity'" (67) and " . . . kept an abnormally tight reign on his daughters' social lives" (67). To be young and free was a condition to be admired; to be a woman and free was a condition to be modified.

For instance, Suzy left home and became her own woman by entering Bryn Mawr

in the fall of 1890 (Hoffman 364). She was attractive, thin, charismatic, popular, and involved in many activities. Some critics believe Clemens was uneasy about the changes taking place in his daughter while at school. Andrew Hoffman writes that her "independence broke apart the family circle on which he had relied for support" (Hoffman 365). Also, the Clemenses became concerned with the relationship between Suzy and classmate Louise Brownell. The girls were intimately involved, as evidenced by Suzy's passionate letters to Louise.[1]

In the spring of 1891, Suzy upset her parents by expressing interest in sharing a home with Louise during the next school year. Even though during this time period "Girls routinely slept together, kissed, and hugged each other" (Smith-Rosenberg 48) and "romantic and even sensual notes frequently marked female relationships" (Smith-Rosenberg 50), after both parents visited Suzy at college, they immediately decided to move to Florence. They did this in part to escape the financial burden of their Hartford house, and partly to cure Suzy's "homoerotic desires" which they thought of as an "illness, one that distance and the right spas might cure." (Hoffman 367). They knew she was experiencing great joy and academic and social success at school, but they put a stop to that by an overseas move. The other daughters, also ambitious young women, could easily continue their studies abroad. Clara would simply need a new music teacher, and Jean's language study could continue as usual. Their status as intelligent young girls was secure, and they did not mind the move.

Once in Europe, however, Suzy was miserable, as her parents believed she needed quiet and rest to recover from her unnatural sickness. Perhaps Suzy would have been more miserable at Bryn Mawr due to missing her family, but her letters are achingly desperate. She writes to Louise, "I think this way of talking to you dreadful! The

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[1]Michelle L. Cotton, "Olivia Susan Clemens," diss., Elmira College, 1982.

remoteness of it comes over me in a wave" (Cotton 113), and "My darling I do love you so and I feel so separated from you. If you were here I would kiss you hard on that little place that tastes so good just on the right hand side of your nose" (Cotton 119), "Think of me till I cross this horrible separating tyrannical ocean" (Cotton 123). After time, Suzy became accustomed to living overseas. She eventually even confided to Clara that she felt "not so queer or nervous and that mental difficulty [had] left [her]" (Hoffman 380).

Clearly, the Clemens wanted their daughters to be successful, and tried to give them every opportunity. However, when Suzy started expressing even more unorthodox ideas such as sharing a house with Louise, they pulled her from school and moved to Europe. Clemens appreciated her candid nature and her intelligence greatly when she was young, and frequently brags in his writing of her untamed spirit as a child. When she grew older, though, this wildness was no longer tolerated. She was taken away from the environment in which she thrived, and was guided to conform to what her parents thought was a normal lifestyle. She was not a little girl, and she was not a married woman, and the college girl in between seemed to confuse Clemens. Since several of Clemens' stories feature females struggling to find their identity, one cannot help but think that he was influenced by Suzy's and other college-aged women's situations. He saw his girls developing into individual women, and his stories written throughout their life show the potent effect of a daughter's experiences upon her father.

Many women authors during Clemens' time shared his concerns. In her study, *19th Century American Women's Novels*, Susan Harris comments on the similar irresolvable conflict of many of these novels. Few nineteenth-century women novelists could resolve the female's problem of combining "work, self-reliance, self-gratification, sexuality, and marriage" (Harris 210). The female characters are frequently torn apart by their internal and external struggle. Because these fictional protagonists could not find

satisfaction in the existing society, they chose death over their unfulfilled lives. Triumphant endings would only come when society's ideas developed more fully. Since they were not actually certain how their revolutionary plans could work into society's structure, they were not disrespecting themselves by causing their strong women to die. For instance, in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), Edna Pontillier cannot find fulfillment in her marriage, children, hobbies, or affairs. After making valiant efforts to become her own person, she realizes her world is too repressive to support her struggle. Deciding she cannot live without hope, Pontillier drowns herself. Others such as Fanny Fern's Ruth Hall in *Ruth Hall* (1854) and Susan Warner's Ellen Montgomery in *Wide, Wide World* (1851) do achieve happiness while leading distinctively different lives. Clearly, Twain is exploring similar issues related to the assertive female.

In *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), Twain presents uncomplicated, static female characters. Women in these works are "the embodiment of the female civilizing influence, which is a characteristic he associates with most of his women characters, particularly older women: Aunt Polly, Aunt Sally, and the Widow Douglas" (Warren 795). These famous spinsters "are seen from the limitations of a boyish perspective" (Stahl 673) and exist as ineffective authority figures. Twain does not include any more character depth to these spinster women. The young girls also fail to challenge any traditional gender concepts. In these narratives, they cannot free themselves from peril without the help of capable males. These sweet, innocent, and good girls stand in sharp contrast to the strong protagonists Twain later creates. In fact, when these girls attempt to display some individualistic initiative, they are invariably punished.

Clemens is thought to have started working on *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in 1872, and to have finished it in 1875 (Rasmussen 465). During this period the country

was still in its postwar years, and therefore experiencing accelerated industrialization and rapid economic expansion (Boyer 351). The Panic of 1873 caused the stock market to collapse, which plunged the country into a five-year depression. People worked when they could, and women dominated the domestic employment sector. Only after the telephone and the typewriter came into general use did women make their entry into office positions. Even at this time, their employment was seen as " . . . temporary. Society defined women's real achievement in terms of marriage and the family . . . Few people imagined [women's] national or even local prominence in the emerging corporate order" (Boyer 397). Women had yet to occupy positions of conspicuous authority. With the Civil Rights Act of 1875, the country was concerned with former slaves' rights, and women's rights were yet to become a dominant issue.

The events of Clemens' family life are found in correlative events in the novel. During the creation of *Tom Sawyer* Clemens was focusing on the birth of his first daughters and the loss of his first son. Clemens had difficulty dealing with his and Olivia's grief. He left their Hartford, Connecticut home in August of 1872 to lecture and travel overseas, returned to settle in Hartford in January of 1874, and completed the novel the following year. Andrew Hoffman speculates that Clemens represents the events of his own life in the text (Hoffman 208). Tom witnesses a murder, escapes to an island to find fun, and returns home to his own funeral, where he is essentially reborn. Clemens' son's death, the resulting strain on his marriage, and his escape to and return from England all seem to correlate. His perception of his wife's sorrow and his experience with delicate infant girls may have caused his subsequent portrayal of the female as dependent, fragile, and innocent.

For example, in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, we are encouraged to see Becky Thatcher as conforming to Twain's ideal. Becky is a "lovely blue-eyed creature with

yellow hair plaited into two long tails, white summer frock and embroidered pantalettes" (25). This 'creature', dressed in modest virginal garb, seems to differ greatly from the hardy and mischievous Tom. This difference is emphasized further when, as punishment, Tom is forced to cross the schoolroom to sit with the girls. The line between good and bad was drawn, and Becky was clearly on the pure side. Her femininity so encompasses her being, that Tom feels the need to defend her to Huck. Huck warns Tom against marriage, informing him that he remembers his parents being in constant conflict. Tom answers, "The girl I'm going to marry won't fight" (156). The wording Twain uses reveals much about his perception of Becky's character. It is not that she and Tom will get along, or that Tom will not antagonize her, it is just that she will be complacent and compliant, like a 'good' wife. Huck continues, asking Tom, "What's the name of the gal?" Tom replies, "It ain't a gal at all - it's a girl" (156). Evidently, Becky's exemplary goodness mandates that she should not be called anything less proper than a girl. 'Gal' connotes that she can circulate comfortably in male circles as well as female, and apparently Twain does not intend for that characteristic to be part of her personality.

When the virtuous Becky actually dares to stray from her path of righteousness, Tom must save her and point her in the right direction again. For instance, as Becky passes the teacher's desk one day, she sees that the key is in the lock to his desk drawer. She knows that inside the drawer is a medical book the teacher constantly peruses, but no student knows what material it contains. She cannot control her curiosity, and she opens "Professor somebody's 'Anatomy' book" to reveal "a handsomely engraved and colored frontispiece - a human figure, stark naked. At that moment a shadow fell on the page and Tom Sawyer stepped in at the door, and caught a glimpse of the picture" (132). A surprised Becky tears the page in her haste to close the book. She cries from shame and aggravation, and Tom wonders how this "little fool" can be so "thin-skinned . . . chicken

hearted" (133) and lack a backbone. When the teacher discovers the ruined book, and asks Becky if she tore it, she does not have the faculty to hide her guilt. Tom saves her from a flogging by yelling, "*I* done it!" (135), and so wins her adoration and gratitude. The sexual implications of this anecdote cannot be ignored. Metaphorically, Becky enters into the male sexual world by opening the drawer. The childish flirtation she has engaged in with Tom has awakened her sexual curiosity, and since the key is already poised in the keyhole, she turns it. When Tom's shadow falls on the page of the naked male, male figure is on male figure, so Becky simultaneously sees both the picture and the real live version. Then in a suggestion of the loss of virginity, Becky "tear[s] the pictured page half down the middle" (132). There exists the possibility that someday Becky and Tom could explore sexual avenues as partners, but as Twain is wont to do, he stops the episode before that point. However, the subject has been broached. Becky's healthy curiosity causes her to look at the forbidden book, risking opening her innocent mind, and she fares badly. Her fault lies in the fulfillment of her curiosity about sex. When she is going to be chastened for her weakness, Tom takes the punishment instead, thereby saving her immaculate reputation. Since she now is indebted to him for his nobility, he once again holds power over her. Twain's early females conform to the role society dictates; if they deviate in the slightest, a male will save their virtue.

Obviously realizing she can elude responsibility for her own actions, Becky again later must depend on Tom after she has misbehaved. In this incident, she and Tom stay with a group exploring a cave where the "hide-and-seek frolicking began" which they "engaged in with zeal" (189) until they grew tired and wandered away to uncharted land. They wound "far down into the secret depths of the cave" (189) to admire the "stalactites the length and circumference of a man's leg" (190). When they realize they cannot find their way out of the cave, Becky flings herself upon the ground and begins to cry

hysterically. Only after Tom apologizes for getting them into the situation does Becky regain enough strength to follow him. She reasons that she was as much at fault as he. Eventually, Becky's frail limbs betray her, and while she implores Tom to go explore further, she asks him to check on her so he can hold her hand as she dies. Dependable Tom finds an escape route and returns to Becky, where he must work to convince the despairing girl that she will live. His community lauds his stalwartness, and he quickly recovers from his escapade. Becky takes more time to recuperate, and then looks as though she has suffered from a "wasting illness" (200).

This incident seems to have a double story line - on the surface, a boy rescues himself and his girlfriend, but underlying is the idea that Tom saves the weak Becky from sexual temptation. Clearly, Becky's behavior is not that of an independent or powerful character. First, she slightly misbehaves by traipsing away with Tom, and later is soundly punished. The sensuous description of the surroundings --the "narrow walls," (187) " spacious cavern" (187) and "the secret depths of the cave" (188) -- seem to suggest that the sweethearts were wrong to want to be alone. Clemens' sexually suggestive language suggests that they are exploring pleasing secret places and new experiences, but when the situation becomes too complicated, it scares them. Becky realizes she has done wrong, and she collapses into a pitiful heap, which her strong male companion must coax her out of to continue the search. Her character cannot handle the adversity of behaving badly, and she needs a companion with a backbone to aid her. When Tom finds an escape, he must work to convince Becky that all is not ruined. With disinterest, she tells him "she was tired, and knew she was going to die, and wanted to" (199), but finally "he labor[s] with her and convince[s] her" (199) to accompany him to the exit. He bounces back to his old self, while Becky's appearance gives physical evidence that she has learned from her experience. She stays bedridden for days, and

when she emerges she still looks pale and afflicted. Becky's character is all soft, pure girl-ness, so as a result she must depend upon Tom for her life. Due to her deviance, she must suffer through a harrowing experience, from which she undoubtedly learns. Her days of running to far-off places with males are over, and she has been righted to her good ways once again. She has no means to save herself, feels no shame for being so helpless, and gratefully internalizes her lesson. Becky has all the characteristics of a Victorian ideal, and Tom Sawyer acts as her savior to protect her pure, innocent nature. Tom, of course, is elevated to hero status in the eyes of Judge Thatcher and the community.

Twain exposes his confusion concerning such extreme illustrations of females in his unfinished "Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer Among the Indians." He starts the narrative exactly where he left off in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, wrote and published nine chapters, but never saw the project to completion. Perhaps Twain, in recognition that his daughters were growing older and desiring independence, created a more mature female character. His protagonist was making decisions for herself, and so was already notably different than the girl characters he had previously created.

In his depiction of Peggy Mills, he attempts to depict a new role for a female character. While traveling westward, Huck, Tom, and Jim are taken into the Mills family. Peggy, their seventeen year old daughter, is the familiar model of virtue and beauty. However, Peggy -- the beautiful, compassionate, gentle Peggy -- shows Huck a knife her boyfriend, Brace Johnson, gave her. She explains that he told her if she ever "fell into the hands of the savages, [she] mustn't stop to think about him, or the family . . . [she] must kill [herself] right away" (Twain, 44). Huck does not understand why, but the reader realizes that Brace believes the Indians would rape her. To save her from the horror of rape and the ruination of character if she survives it, Brace believes the knife

will give her a better option. With no man around, Brace expects her to kill herself, because he assumes there is no way she could protect herself from sexual assault and physical harm; she accepts this. He also imposes upon Peggy the patriarchy's traditional view that chastity must be preserved, even to death.

The Mills become friendly with five Indians, one of whom persistently asks for Peggy's knife. After he promises to make a new sheath and belt, the exasperated Peggy gives it to him. Despite her boyfriend's stern warning, she puts faith in herself, and relinquishes her weapon. When she, her sister Flaxy, and Jim are abducted by these same Indians, Peggy does not have the means to commit suicide. There is no one to protect her innocence, and she must stand on her own. When Huck speculates that she would never kill herself while Flaxy was still alive, we are reminded that to do so would be uncharacteristically selfish.

Circumstantial evidence of her rape is found when Brace discovers a bloody scrap of her dress and four stakes driven into the ground. Richard Irving Dodge wrote, in *The Plains of the Great West and Their Inhabitants*, which Twain read, "No words can express the horror of the situation of that most unhappy woman who falls into the hands of these savage fiends . . . If she resists all her clothes are torn off from her person, four pegs are driven into the ground, and her arms and legs . . . are tied fast . . . she is subjected to violation . . . outrage . . . abuse and indignity" (114).

Now, Twain becomes perplexed with his plot. Peggy obviously disobeyed her boyfriend's orders, and found her sister's care more important than her own well-being. Twain can find no satisfactory conclusion, because if she lives, she will be a ruined woman, and if she dies, the previously always-capable men will have failed. Either way, his gender construction of women to this point in his career will have changed. With no protection, Peggy presumably sacrificed herself for the good of her sister. Twain was not

prepared to explore the subject of rape, nor was he able to explore the implication that Peggy made a conscious decision about her future. While she has many characteristics of an early static girl, she would have to assert herself in order to escape, or if rescued, build a new life. Twain leaves her fate suspended. The reader never sees her as impure, as only circumstantial evidence hints at her dilemma. Although Twain seems unwilling to create such a drastically dynamic character at this time, his attempt is a landmark along his path to a more realistic representation of women.

Twain continued experimenting with female characters, and in 1896 created an adolescent who was markedly different than her predecessors. Twain said in 1908, "I like the *Joan of Arc* best of all my books. It *is* the best; I know it perfectly well." This paper hypothesizes that in *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896), Twain combines what he perceived as the best qualities of femininity and masculinity into one being.

He began writing in 1892, the same year the General Federation of Women's Clubs counted 100,000 members, and many female college graduates shelved marriage plans to pursue meaningful careers (Boyer, 439). Social critics called the 1890 new woman "a fast girl: shallow, superficial, and heedless of social conventions" (Boyer, 439). Popular illustrator Charles Dana Gibson's 'Gibson Girl' appeared healthy and happy playing her outdoor sports, but also exhibited idealized physical characteristics. Her wasp-like waist and slender neck proved to be an image few women could or wanted to emulate. Ideas were slow to change, but as women's attitudes about femininity developed, many more sought independence and control over their own lives. Society's conventions, however, still portrayed the home as the women's principal domain.

Joan shares the same concerns as the women of the late nineteenth century. She demands the right to dress as she wants, defends children's rights, and preaches temperance. She successfully persuades her troops to voluntarily stop drinking,

gambling, and hiring prostitutes. Twain shows his support of the women of his era by glorifying their ideals in a fifteenth century counterpart. However, modern reformers had yet to secure society's endorsement.

Twain spends much of the book lauding Joan's exquisite beauty, compassion, and sweetness. Scarcely a page goes by without Twain's commenting on her "face of sweetness and serenity and purity," her "pink skin," or the "gracious nature" of this "fragile girl," this "wise little child." However, such feminine qualities are now coupled with courage, "clear intellect," a mind "the soundest in the village and the best" (52), and a heart that overflows with the "joys and enthusiasms of war" (184). By endowing Joan with the idealistic characteristics of both sexes, Clemens creates a new type of female; one who is equally comfortable in both male and female roles. However, Joan does not make a complete metamorphosis, which was part of Twain's attraction toward her character. Even though Joan assumes a masculine role, she never loses her childlike innocence, and so Twain denies her the chance to grow into a woman. Twain made notes about the fact that some Domrémy women testified that Joan never menstruated, and constantly hints about her lack of physical development in the text. Justin Kaplan states that this "'little woman' (224) would never grow up to be the much heralded but also dreaded "New Woman" of Mark Twain's era" (xxxviii). However, since this girl displays strength, leadership, and commands respect, her character is considerably different from Twain's previous representations. For instance, even though she has pure, flawless beauty, she also wears men's clothing. Her armor is masculine, but in Twain's eyes, it serves only to make her more comely. He lovingly describes that "wherever that fair young form appeared in its shining armor, with that sweet face to grace the vision and perfect it" (145), crowds fell to worship. Joan manages to wear armor, act with the courage of a warrior, and still remain completely feminine.

Joan achieved a blend of stereotypically feminine and masculine characteristics, but never blossomed into a woman. Of course, Twain could not change history and create a wise, long-living heroine. However, his sharp focus on her childlike manner, at an age when most young women show signs of development, displays his desire to view her as an innocent child. As a youth, her leadership could be admired, her actions considered enchanting. But as a woman, the same actions would be deemed threatening to society's political ideas regarding men and women's roles. Twain was not ready to create such a character, as he was still forming his own ideas about womanhood. Given the opposition to women's rights movements, his public was most likely not eager and willing to embrace such a character, even as a historical figure. However, Twain's incorporation of admirable attributes to Joan's character gives a different angle to his literary representation of the female.

Joan knew she was going to die for her cause, but did not shy away from her future. She decidedly led the fight for France, all the while knowing her army would eventually win after her death. Unlike Twain's other female characters, no man had the faculties to protect her from her fate. The strong, capable male figure in the story is the Lord High Admiral of France, named La Hire. He was a childhood hero of Joan and her comrades, and he lived up to all their dreams. He was "of great size and of martial bearing, he was caused in mail from head to heel" (143) and was handsome as he was gallant. However, even such a fine specimen of manhood could not prevent Joan's death.

Of course, Joan did not expect to be rescued, as she knew what the future held, but she did not expect the utter humiliation that befell her. When Joan learned that she was to die by fire, she "began to writhe and sob . . . mourn and grieve and lament" and cries, "Oh, cruel, cruel to treat me so! And must my body, that has never been defiled, be consumed today and turned to ashes?" (449). She has never been touched before, but the

method of execution seeks to violate her unsullied flesh. Society has turned against her, and this defilement of her body parallels the violation of her trust. The leaders of France, Twain and Twain's society, all finally participate in repressing the character of Joan. No one was quite ready for a completely decisive, intelligent, mature woman who assumed massive responsibility for her own fate and the fate of a nation. After all, Mark Twain wrote: "*Everybody's private motto*: It's better to be popular than right" (942).

Roxana *(Pudd'nhead Wilson)* and Laura Hawkins *(The Gilded Age)* are two characters who seem different than Twain's other female characters. Laura and Roxy are different due to race and social background, and both have heterosexual relations; Roxy before the text and Laura within it. They show the aggressiveness and intelligence to change their situations; however, both suffer for it. Roxy's child is sold down the river after all her efforts to prevent it from happening, and Laura dies of a broken heart when public opinion turns against her. Twain's female characters, once they pass the age of sexual initiation, have a difficult time surviving.

Twain features Laura in *The Gilded Age* (1873) which he authored with Charles Dudley Warner. Laura's character was based on the real life case of Laura Fair, a Washington lobbyist who killed her lover and received an acquittal due to emotional insanity (Warren 354). Laura differs from Twain's other characters in terms of her age and sexual history. The narrative focuses on Laura's initiative when she is an adult. She does not move into the lobbyist scene until she is twenty, and does not commit murder until age twenty-eight. She also suffers from the mark of a questionable background, because of her unknown parentage. After her family is killed in a steamboat explosion, the Hawkins adopt the orphan Laura. She marries Colonel George Selby, who tells her shortly after marriage that he already has a wife, and their marriage is a sham. Laura, whose "passion possessed her whole being" (183) moves back home, already a sexually

impure woman. Her husband was not her own, and her perfect, beautiful being has been corrupted. The events suggest that if she had controlled her passion, she would not have entered into this unfortunate relationship. Twain writes, "The lovely woman had a devil in her heart" (186), and this devil affects her subsequent behavior.

Laura manages to make a successful life for herself. She works in Washington under a senator and becomes a powerful lobbyist. However, her attitude toward men changes; she sees them as playthings. She was "at that ripe age when beauty in women seems more solid than in the budding period of girlhood, and she had come to understand her powers perfectly . . . It was keen delight to Laura to prove that she had power over men" (194). Twain implies she uses her womanly charms in a manner unseemly to her gender, since she teases men in whom she has no interest. She does not escape from being punished for such transgressions. She falls in love with Selby again only to have him lie that he will go with her; she then finds he has plans to leave town with his wife. Laura shoots Colonel Selby, and tells onlookers, "He brought it on himself" (153). The newspaper reports her crime "is the direct result of the socialistic doctrines and woman's rights agitations which have made every woman the avenger of her own wrongs" (152). Laura is acquitted of the crime due to insanity, hereditary or momentary. After the trial, she tries to go on the lecture circuit, but is scorned by the public. She has long shown initiative, but feels she has failed at everything. She cries out to God, "If I could only die! . . . My God, I am humbled, my pride is all gone, my stubborn heart repents - have pity!" (299). Her housekeepers find the twenty-eight year old dead the next morning. The jury of inquest rules the death "resulted from heart disease, and was instant and painless. That was all. Merely heart disease" (300).

Twain "has been criticized for having her die at the end of the novel with no other explanation for her death but as a punishment for her transgressions" (Warren 354).

Warren writes that Laura, "like other morally transgressing women in nineteenth-century American fiction, is punished for her deviance: Twain kills her. Twain . . . held very rigid expectations for women" (796). Laura's weak heart cannot stand the pressures of being an aggressive woman challenged by society.

In *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894) Twain's character Roxana is often recognized as another independent woman. Twain began the work in 1892 and said that while working on it he changed its tone from a "farce to a tragedy" (Brodwin 45). He focuses on the fair skinned beauty Roxy; she is a slave and "Only one-sixteenth of her was black, and that sixteenth did not show" (8). She makes the decision to switch her slave child for the white owner's baby to save him from his painful life as a slave. Roxy's self-reliance changes his life -- he will never be sold down the river; he will lead a carefree life. However, her obsequious rearing practices ruin his character. He is selfish and overbearing because "in her worship of him she forgot who she was and what he had been" (77). Many years later, when she asks him for financial assistance, he refuses her. She tells him of his true identity and instructs him how he will pay her and how to behave. What makes the study of Roxy different is that she is not a young woman. When she bears her son and makes her decision she is already twenty years old. However, Roxy's black heritage enables Twain "to endow her with strength of character and individuality. Twain's awareness of her social status frees him from the restrictions that he held so sacred to the image of the genteel woman . . . other Twain maidens never seem to reach puberty" (Warren 154). She is a slave, "and as such does not count since Twain does not perceive her as a marriage candidate" (Warren 796). The agressive and demanding nature appear in a mature black woman, not in a society girl. Roxy's age and race set her apart from Twain's young female characters.

Instead of launching forward in his depiction of the female, Twain takes an

unexpected turn with his story *Wapping Alice.* In this truly bizarre tale, which Twain revised repeatedly between 1877 and 1907, the conventional gender definition is constantly challenged and conflicts are never satisfactorily resolved. Indeed, America was entering the Progressive Era, and many aspects of the country were beginning to develop. The population was turning increasingly urban, which sparked the creation of organizations such as the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union in 1900. A 1903 law in Oregon declared that female industrial workers could only work ten hours a day (Boyer 477). With the influx of immigrants, the suffragettes gained new enthusiasm. They saw the absurdity in the fact that the often uneducated immigrant man could vote, but educated American women were still prohibited. Women nationwide "lobbied legislatures, distributed literature, conducted referenda, and organized marches and rallies" (Boyer 481). Real suffrage victories were still to come, but the political tide was beginning to turn.

Clemens offered "Wapping Alice" for sale to *Harper's Magazine* in 1907, but since they chose "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven," the story was not published until after his death. Many events happened in Clemens' life during his revisions of the story. He suffered the losses of Suzy in 1896, and Olivia Clemens in 1904. He had to deal with Clara's adult concerns and desires and Jean's crippling epilepsy. His confusion of gender roles in "Wapping Alice" reflect the changing structure of his society and his life.

The first version of the story, named "The McWilliamses and the Burglar Alarm" (1882), explained the trouble Clemens' family had with a faulty burglar alarm in their Hartford home in 1877. The story humorously tells the mostly true consequences caused by the malfunctioning alarm. However, Clemens omits the fact that the device was being accidentally set off by his maid, Lizzie, who was tripping the alarm by letting her lover, Willie, enter and exit the house. When confronted, Lizzie tells Clemens she is pregnant,

and ruined because her lover won't marry her. Clemens eagerly takes charge of the situation. He brings Willie, a priest, and a policeman to his house and tells Willie he must choose marriage or an arrest for illegal entry. Predictably, a reluctant Willie marries the girl. The couple operated a restaurant in Hartford for many years, but the baby Lizzie claimed was on the way never appeared.

When Twain wrote *Wapping Alice* in 1897, he distanced himself from the story by changing names and location, and turned Alice into a male transvestite. He believed this change made the story more appropriate for his public; it would "soften" the story, and reduce the risk of "overshocking" (11) his readers. The story follows along the same lines as Clemens' true experience. A young girl named Alice comes to work for the "Jackson's" from Wapping, a historically racy borough of London. She moves into the kitchen annex, which has two entrances; it is joined to the house through the dining room, and also has a separate outdoor cellar entrance. For three mornings in a row, the alarm goes off, and no one can figure out why. When George, Mr. Jackson's 'hereditary servant' (44), explains to Alice how the alarm works, it never troubles the family again. Approximately eight months later, when Mr. Jackson returns from a summer trip, George informs him that he thinks Alice is masquerading as a man to go into town to drink alcohol. Mr. Jackson and George examine the outer entrance door, and discover it has been tampered with so the alarm will not sound. Mr. Jackson confronts Alice, and she pours out an unexpected story. She allowed a temporary construction worker, Swede Bjurnsen Bjuggerson Bjorgensen to sleep in the cellar, as he was out of work. After she showed him how to disable the alarm, he came and went as he pleased for three months. As in the previous story, she admits her pregnancy to an indignant Mr. Jackson. He meets with Bjorgensen, who when confronted with Alice's story, swears he never touched the girl. Faced with his choice, however, Bjorgensen chooses marriage to Alice over

arrest. However, at the end of this story, Alice reveals that she is, in fact, a man. She said Mr. Jackson had "complained that the outcome of the original episode wasn't theatrical enough. She thought she could mend the defect" (67).

When Twain changed Alice's character from a woman into a man masquerading as a woman, he takes away all of her power. Before the change, Alice was a woman who achieved every one of her goals. She had real sexual desires, and so let Bjorgensen into her bedroom, unbeknownst to her employer. When her lover proves to be an "unintended intended" (59), she conjures up a story that will make him marry her. While obviously unethical, it was based on Clemens' life experiences, and the real-life Alice, (Lizzie), did see her goals finally met. However, Twain denies her any power when he turns her character into a man. He thought it shocking that a woman would pursue physical desires, and that a woman would lie about a pregnancy in order to save herself from ruin. After all, this girl was a "fair and modest and comely young creature in blossomy hat and fluttering ribbons and flowing gown" (42), and by her innocent image should harbor no sexual wishes. She looks just like his 'good' girls in her "white summer gown with a pink ribbon at the throat" (56). She is obviously a naughty girl, though, which is why Twain changes her gender. He did not think the story of unethical seduction fit for his readers.

On the surface, a platonic relationship between two men would seem more acceptable than a consummated heterosexual one. Comically, though, Twain's language implies that the male relationship was consummated. His story has many double entendres, which may account for the reason why many publishers rejected it. As Hamlin Hill notes in his afterward to the first published complete text of *Wapping Alice*, Twain noted in 1870 that sodomy was "never mentioned among women and children, and . . . is only mentioned in rare books of the law, and then as 'the crime without a name' -a term with a shudder in it!" (78). It is fair to assume Twain did not expect all his readers to

understand the homosexual implications. For instance, as Hill points out, the names of the characters are suggestively connotative. By making Alice's hometown "Wapping," her name sounds like a fabricated verb -- to wap, or to thump or toss around. The Swede's middle name is "Bjuggerson," which can be seen as a thinly disguised word for buggery. By changing Alice's gender, Twain introduced many new possibilities, none of which included an assertive female living in his house. He preferred to bend the truth and create a story he thought could be construed as more appropriate for his readers. In the end, Alice can be seen as a clever man, expertly fooling everyone involved, and having the last laugh. If Twain had kept her a woman, as in the true story, she would have also won her battle. She would have had her physical desires fulfilled, and obtained a husband, too. Twain did not want to deal with such a naughty girl, however. He would rather explore the effects of a homosexual marriage than a shot-gun wedding. Twain's transvestite Alice, though not technically a woman, displays his discomfort with the assertiveness of the female. By denying her her true gender, he simplifies his story. For Twain, naughty girls were more difficult subject matter than homosexuals.

"Hellfire Hotchkiss," which Clemens began in August of 1897, is his next significant experiment with a female character. The turn of the century was looming, and Clemens' perceptions were beginning to evolve. He had lost Suzy a year before, and was living overseas. With Hellfire, he creates an emancipated woman in modern times. She is independent, respected, intelligent, brave, and beautiful. However, Clemens abandoned the manuscript after three chapters, thereby squelching the future of his first New Woman.

The story concerns two characters: Oscar Carpenter, called "Thug" and "Hellfire," as Rachel Hotchkiss is nicknamed. The townspeople agree that "Hellfire Hotchkiss is the only genuwyne male man in town, and Thug Carpenter's the only

genuwyne female girl, if you leave out sex and just consider the business facts" (121).

In a dramatic gender-role switch, the story opens to reveal Oscar trapped on an ice flow in the Mississippi river and Hellfire poised to rescue him. An admiring crowd is straining to catch a glimpse of poor Oscar, and enthusiastically cheer the "trim and fair girl, bareheaded and riding bareback and astride" (119) who charges upon the scene on a black horse. Her reputation precedes her -- everyone shares memories of Hellfire's past heroics and agrees that if Oscar can be rescued, Hellfire is the only person who can help. Just before Oscar's ice floe is destroyed by snags in the river, Hellfire courageously saves him and helps him swim to shore.

Clearly, Hellfire is a new type of woman. She certainly does not need rescuing, and she has the capacity to deliver others from danger. Indeed, Hellfire's potential seems limitless. Twain gives a lengthy description of her personality, beginning with her "tropically warm heart . . . business head, and practical sense" (125). She was an only child, and spent her childhood with a sickly mother, a busy preacher father, and a nurse who called her Wildcat. She found playing with girls to be disappointing and wearisome, as they cried easily and feared taking risks. After failing to reform them, she moves to the boys' circle. The leader of the group, Shad Stover, tells her to stay away or he'll whip her, so she takes the switch to him and makes him beg for mercy. Twain writes that if she were a boy, she would have then become leader, "but she was a girl, and boys have no manly sense of fairness and justice where girls are concerned" (127). Rachel "trains" with the boys quite happily for years, satisfying herself and astonishing the community. She is more physically adept than any male, breaks horses, boxes, works as a fireman, *and* serves as mistress of her household. Obviously, she is a well-rounded person who excels at all she attempts. She makes no apology for who she is, and her community respects and loves her.

However, when she stops Shad Stover from killing another man by hitting him with a bat, public opinion changes. He and his brother begin to spread gossip "that [the] town had never dealt in before . . . if you leave out the town drunkard's girls, and even that turned out to be a lie" (131). Although a kindly woman assures Hellfire no one believes she behaves indecently with boys, she quips, "You are fifteen years old, now, and in many ways you are seventeen and could pass for a woman, and so the time has gone by for you to be riding astraddle" (132). Hellfire contemplates the news and realizes, "Carpenter is out of his sphere, I am out of mine. Neither of us can arrive at any success in life, we shall always be hampered and fretted and kept back by our misplaced sexes, and in the end defeated by them" (133). Therefore, she decides to reform her way of life completely, and quit doing "ungirlish things." The work, unfinished, ends with Rachel feeling quite content with her "wholesale purification."

Twain's premature ending prohibits any chance of Rachel defiantly challenging society's norms any further and continuing her life as before. Clearly, Twain did not know what avenue to pursue with the rest of the text. The "constant carping on the subject by the popular press meant that New Women were surrounded by caricatures of themselves, and conservative commentators, like the anti-abortion forces of today, never let them forget that they were living in a state of sin" (Harris afterword, 4). Hellfire submits to this stereotype. Of course, Twain did not know how to continue an interesting story featuring a domicile, complacent woman. He once said books featuring "*all* good boys and good girls" were "drearily uninteresting" (Kiskis 213). Therefore, Twain stopped writing, leaving his aggressive, ambitious woman suspended in time. She began the story as an emancipated woman, and leaves it as a suppressed girl, but Twain's glimpse of the future can be detected.

"A Horse's Tale" is one of the last major pieces of fiction that Twain saw

published in his lifetime. The novella was written in 1905 and published a year later. With the beginning of the Progressive Era came a new model for women to emulate. The standard to meet was titled "educated motherhood" (Rothman 5), and its locus was child welfare. Women decided that mothering needed to be taught, not run merely on instinct. Social policy was in part shaped by their ideas, as health clinics for children and mothers, protective codes for factories, and new types of public schools were created. The women's mission "provided the essential rationale for the suffrage movement and contributed to its victory" (Rothman 5). The century's first two decades saw woman's image change from a concerned mother to an educated voter, but social welfare was always the focus. They won the right to vote on the idea that they could then translate their moral standards into legislative codes. Women could make advances for children, animals, and the poor, but they were not yet making advances themselves. Attitudes still needed to develop for them to make a dominant entry into politics, the business industry, and cultural positions of influence.

In 1904, after Olivia Clemens' death, the Clemens family lost its nucleus. Clara and Jean rarely saw their father during the last years of his life, as their relationships had severely deteriorated. Clara was traveling to pursue her singing career, and after extended visits with her father would enter a rest home to "regain her emotional stability" (Cooley xviii). Jean entered an institution, in part because of her epilepsy, and partly because living in her father's house caused anxiety. Clemens himself was dealing with the abject changes in his life, as he watched his family and health slip away.

It was in 1908 that Clemens found some happiness by creating the "Aquarium Club." The club was made up of young girls whom he called Angel Fish, after the beautiful fish he saw while visiting Bermuda. He constantly corresponded with, met with, and phoned the changing group of girls until his death. He said, "I had reached the

grandpa stage of life; and what I lacked and what I needed, was grandchildren" so "I *select*[ed] my grandchildren" (Hoffman 482). He named his Redding, Connecticut house "Innocence at Home" partly as a tribute to his club. He professed to "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 a perfect joy and to whom it has brought no wounds, no bitterness, and few tears. My collection consists of gems of the first water" (Hoffman 483). Since Clemens had experienced a multitude of those negative times, he enjoyed spending time with such cheerful creatures. He played the grandpa role well, as his relationships were evidently chaste. The smart, sincere, beautiful girls he surrounded himself with differed little from his heroine in "A Horse's Tale."

When Twain writes "A Horse's Tale," (1906) he has resigned himself to the fact that society is unprepared to support a wholly independent woman. He can create them, he can adore them, but he cannot ensure their survival. Twain's Catharine Alison seems to have the potential to become powerful female. She grows up independent, assertive, utterly adored, and even experiments with heterosexual feelings. Still, when she first acts decisively and goes distinctly against the social norm, she is violently killed.

The narration begins with Soldier Boy, a horse owned by Buffalo Bill, speaking about his life at Fort Paxton. He is excited about the general's orphaned niece who is about to arrive from Spain. Cathy is described as a perfect blend of feminine and masculine traits, as she has her mother's "charm and grace and good heart and sense of justice," and her father's "vivacity and cheerfulness and pluck and spirit of enterprise" (559). As further evidence of her pure heart, she worships animals, and is predictably attractive. She wins over the entire camp with her good nature.

Cathy's femininity cannot be challenged, as Twain gives a hint of Cathy's feminine sensual side upon her initial meeting with Buffalo Bill. He stops "dead in his

tracks" (562) and gazes dumbly at the child. She leaps to the floor and erupts with, "Oh, you are so beautiful! Do you like me?" (562). He replies that he loves her and she proceeds to play with his "long hair," admire his "big hands," clothes, and carbine. She fixates on every attractive aspect that makes him masculine, and it is only when riding his horse that she says she reaches "the last agony of pleasure" (563). Bill makes her his protégé and teaches her everything there is to know about riding and shooting. Obviously, their relationship has very suggestive connotations, and this serves to make Cathy seem more sensual than a mere girl. However, her attributes are not viewed as negative, but as a charming complement to her assertive behavior. She creates her own army unit in the camp, and all the children, Indians, and soldiers are captivated by her, and cater to her every wish. After she grows older, she goes on a visit to Spain with General Alison and Soldier Boy and decides to stay and live there with her aunt. However, Soldier Boy is stolen, and after desperately searching for months, Cathy sees him in a bullfight ring. She rushes to the side of her dying horse, and is brutally gored by the bull. While she lay dying at home General Alison wrote "she was happy, for she was far away under another sky, and comrading again with her Rangers, and her animal friends, and the soldiers" (595).

Twain allows Cathy to die because the only way he could conceive of such an assertive girl existing was under "another sky" (595) unknown to him. His era and personal life did not create or support women like Cathy, who were at home in the feminine world, with the animals and goodness, and the masculine world, with soldiers, horses, and sexual desire. Society was not yet fit to accommodate such an assertive, decisive, and dominant new woman. Women were in one specific category, and men were in a completely different one. Even though Cathy was capable of blending the two spheres, Twain could not imagine such a woman truly existing. She died because he did

not know how her future could happily unfold. Twain could deftly construct a New Woman character, but the supportive environment required to sustain life had yet to be created.

The issue of female roles again arise in "Eve's Diary." Clemens wrote "Eve's Diary" a year after Olivia died, and many consider it a tribute to his wife. It is the sequel to "Extracts from Adam's Diary" (1893) and tells of Eve's discoveries about her new world. He wrote the article in response to a *Harper's Magazine* request, which publishes it in 1905.

In this story Twain humorously writes about the stereotypical female personality, actions, and feelings. In many ways, Twain outlines the traditional female role embraced by nineteenth century culture. However, since Eve also takes charge in the garden, she shows Twain's capacity to create a young woman, (Adam refers to her as "very young, a mere girl" (32)), with both masculine and feminine traits. Her intelligence and behavior show how she "quickly takes on the role of the first liberated woman" (Warren 4). She may exist as the most successful of Twain's young girls, because unlike Wapping Alice or Cathy Alison, when she shows initiative, she does not undergo a sex change or get killed.

On the first day of Eve's life she reveals an alliance with typically feminine emotions, but also demonstrates a sense of individualistic desire. She mourns the loss of the moon from the sky, but understands why someone would want to possess it, because she also finds it beautiful. She writes, "I already begin to realize that the core and centre of my nature is love of the beautiful, a passion for the beautiful, and that it would not be safe to trust me with a moon that belonged to another person" (10). Eve's passion for the beautiful runs so deep that she is not certain she would want to return a moon if she found one. This idea of selfishness clashes with her core femininity. She has no self-sacrificial

tendencies so common in nineteenth century literature's characters. She knows what she wants, and she knows she has the capacity to take it, and does not consider anyone else who may dislike her decision.

Eve's initiative develops as she grows older. A week later Eve spots a man and he excites her curiosity. She tries to be near him, only to realize he just wants to get away. Eventually she writes that he "was a good deal worried, and climbed a tree. I waited a good while, then gave it up and went home. It is up there yet. Resting, apparently . . . It looks to me like a creature that is more interested in resting than in anything else" (14). Obviously, this passage is meant to amuse the audience, but it also shows Eve's power. She has no fear of the new creature of man, but only desires to befriend him. He, however, runs from her and hides in a tree. The image of a woman 'treeing' a man in this manner displays the active side of the female. Although she goes away overnight, he remains in the tree. His inactivity confuses her, showing the underlying notion that if left to themselves, men would rest all day, and women would resoundingly disapprove of such a lack of productivity.

Twain emphasizes Eve's intelligence through her ability to name. She relates that Adam has no talent in that department, and she saves him from "embarrassments" by saying the name of a creature before he can say the incorrect name. She continues, "I have no defect like [his]. The minute I set eyes on an animal I know what it is" (17). Since Eve is more skilled at naming, she takes the job as her own. The manner in which she treats her ability, however, fits into a typical female role. She does her job without letting Adam know she knows she is better at the task, because she does not want him to be aware that she knows of her superior skill. This image of the woman behind the man fits into a Victorian model of the woman. Eve also says, "I study to be useful to him in every way that I can, so as to increase his regard" (17). Her statement mirrors the

nineteenth-century "image of woman as viewed by and in relation to man" (Warren 797). Twain frames his female character within a traditional attitude; however, she still achieves what she hopes to achieve all on her own.

Twain ultimately addresses Eve's success as an assertive female character. Eve and Adam fall, but Eve writes, "The Garden is lost, but I have found him, and am content" (62). If the fall has occurred, then Eve is sexually experienced. Unlike Twain's other female characters, this does not ensure her death or abandonment. She does not consider the fall a punishment, and instead is happy with her decision. She writes that sometimes Adam does not tell her everything he is thinking, but "it shall not trouble my happiness, which is otherwise full to overflowing" (63). Eve could hardly be more content with her situation. She has named everything using her superior intellect, she has found a healthy relationship, and she has eaten the fruit. Twain cheers her successes the entire journey. This young, pure model of femininity, unlike Twain's other female characters, dies of old age. Like Olivia before Twain, Eve dies before Adam. Adam's "tribute at Eve's grave may be understood as Clemens' tribute to his wife: Wheresoever she was, *there* was Eden. This observation resembles what [Clemens] wrote [in a letter] . . . in 1904, 'Wherever Livy was, that was my country" (Emerson 265). The individualistic female character leaves the world content, unharmed, and loved. Joyce Warren writes, "Eve reflects Twain's recognition of his dependence upon his wife, her cheerfulness, her common sense, and her emotional strength. Whether consciously or unconsciously, in his creation of Eve, Twain acknowledges that a person who provided such strength could not be the passive nonentity of his genteel ideal" (796). The alternately subservient and dominant young Eve relates to the changing role of females in Twain's time.

Twain's individual texts reflect his struggle to understand the rapidly changing

gender roles and conventions of his society. His experimental characters show his confusion concerning how an independent and assertive woman could survive in a male dominated society. Of course, the ambitious real women in his life also had great influence on his writing. While his sexually experienced women receive harsh punishment, often his young girls, like Becky Thatcher, depict stereotypical Victorian girls who need rescuing. When he moves to "Hellfire Hotchkiss" his female protagonist shows a strong independent streak; she is quickly abandoned. Wapping Alice is robbed of her power when she becomes a transvestite, and Cathy Alison's brutal public death signals that such a female, possessing both courage and sensitivity, could not exist. Her fearlessness and sympathy drive her to her horse's side, and as a result, she is killed. Eve proves to be a promising type of character. Though she harbors some unfavorable stereotypical traits, she is mainly intelligent and happy, and lives a long, full life. Her adeptness at working behind the scenes, however, is telling of the developing role of females. Twain, like his society, was uncertain where such different characters and women fit into reality. Twain's experimentation with female characters indicates he and his society were interested in and willing to attempt to understand the changing roles of women.

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The book devotes a large part of the narrative to covering women's history. Boyer identifies women who helped to make momentous changes in America, and he gives specific explanations about how their changes took effect. He integrates individuals' experiences with public events and draws examples from all regions of the country. The text also comments upon Twain's writing in connection to American women and his role in the culture in general.

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This is an edited collection of letters between Twain and his family and friends. They begin in 1868 with Twain and Olivia Langdon's courtship and end with Twain's letters to their friends concerning her death in 1904. This text helps understand Clemens' true personality and relationships. It also gives information on what was occurring in Clemens' life at the time periods he was producing work.

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A slave, Roxy, trades her baby for the white heir's baby, and their environments change their characters. Tom, the new heir, grows into a gambler who kills his uncle, sells Roxy down the river, and when his murder and identity is discovered, is also sold down the river as a slave. Roxy is different because she has a baby out of wedlock and also shows individual initiative. Since she is black, Twain endows her with characteristics he does not give to white female characters.
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The Jackson family cannot understand why the burglar alarm keeps sounding, but after George explains how it works to Alice, it never bothers them again. George tells Mr. Jackson that he suspects Alice is really a man who goes to town to drink, and they discover someone has tampered with the door alarm. Mr. Jackson confronts Alice and she tells that she has been allowing a Swede sleep in the basement, and Mr. Jackson tells Bjorgensen that he has to marry her or go to jail. After he reluctantly chooses marriage, Alice reveals she is a man. The difference between the real life story of Lizzie and the burglar alarm and Alice being a man shows the complexity of Twain's gender stories.

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