

Mark Twain's Travel Books and Empire:

The Transformation of Twain's Views on Non-Western Others and the Western Self

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In this essay, I will explore the connection between three of Mark Twain's popular travel books and Western imperialism in terms of the transformation of his views on the Western self and non-Western others.⁽¹⁾ Although his opposing views are intertwined with each other in his travel books, making it hard to trace his transformations, I will also show the evolution of Twain's view on Western imperialism from pro-Western to anti-Western. This essay consists of three parts. First, it examines Twain's Eurocentric and racist views on non-Westerns others in *The Innocents Abroad*. Second, it discusses Twain's pro-Western imperialistic views on Hawaii natives in his Hawaiian letters. Third, it explores Twain's strong anti-Western imperialist and anti-white supremacist views in *Following the Equator*.

In this essay, I follow the basic definition of "imperialism," that is, the act to destroy, hurt, or change other countries' or other ethnicity's cultures and dominate others and spread their own standards among others with the aim of colonization. However, I will not limit the meaning of "imperialism" only to the act of the colonization, since there are different degrees of imperialism aside from the colonization. Un-colonized countries could also become the target of imperialistic exploitation and violence. Therefore, in this essay, I will also use the term "imperialism" for the exploitation of a variety of resources in other countries. For example, I will call the exploitation of other countries' relics for the exhibitions in their own countries "museum imperialism." I will also use the term "imperialism" meaning the act of transforming or destroying other cultures without self-interest, and perhaps even with the intention of benefiting others. For example, I will call missionary activities destroying other cultures "missionary imperialism."

I. The Innocents Abroad

In Mark Twain's European and Middle Eastern travel book, *The Innocents Abroad*: or,

the New Pilgrim's Progress (1869), which was one of the most popular travel books in the nineteenth century and earned him a national reputation for the first time, Twain's racist and Eurocentric views toward non-Western countries, such as Turkey and Egypt, are obvious. In Paris, he had a chance to see the French Emperor, Napoleon III, and the Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Aziz, reviewing their troops. Comparing the two, Twain says:

NAPOLEN III., the representative of the highest modern civilization, progress, and refinement ; Abdul-Aziz, the representative of a people by nature and training filthy, brutish, ignorant, unprogressive, superstitious—and a government whose Three Graces are Tyranny, Rapacity, Blood. Here in brilliant Paris, under this majestic Arch of Triumph, the First Century greets the Nineteenth ! ⁽²⁾

Then he follows the conventional rhetoric of Western colonization, by justifying the invasion under the name of the emancipation of the “oppressed race.” In Lebanon, he says, “[i]f ever oppressed race existed, it is this one we see fettered around us under the inhuman tyranny of the Ottoman Empire. I wish Europe would let Russian annihilate Turkey a little—not much, but enough to make it difficult to find the place again without a divining-rod or a divining-bell.” ⁽³⁾ Here, Twain shows his mercy toward the people living under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. However, it is clear that the reason for his attack against Turkey is not only its oppressive nature but also his racial or cultural hatred against the people of Turkey. Denouncing the massacre of Christians in Damascus, he says:

It is soothing to the heart to abuse England and France for interposing to save the Ottoman Empire from the destruction it has so richly deserved for a thousand years. It hurts my vanity to see these pagans refuse to eat of [sic] food that has been cooked for us ; or to eat from a dish we have eaten from ; or to drink from a goatskin which we have polluted with our Christian lips, except by filtering the water through a rag which they put over the mouth of it or through a sponge ! I never disliked Chinaman as I do these degraded Turks and Arabs, and when Russia is ready to war with them again, I hope England and France will not find it good breeding or good judgment to interfere. ⁽⁴⁾

His racial and cultural hatred is sometimes intensified to the point where he implies that he also shares with whites the impulse to exterminate native peoples. Surrounded by native Palestinians waiting for him to share his foods, he writes:

They reminded me much of Indians, did these people. . . . They sat in silence, and with tireless patience watched our every motion with that vile, uncomplaining impoliteness which is so truly Indian, and which makes a white man so nervous and uncomfortable and savage that he wants to exterminate the whole tribe.⁽⁵⁾

Here, Twain sees native Palestinians through the lens of internal colonization in America; that is, the extermination of Native Americans.

Although, Twain demonstrates his racist views on non-Western natives in *The Innocents Abroad*, he sometimes severely criticizes the imperialist behavior of his fellow American passengers. Especially, he often denounces the fact that they steal specimens from historic buildings, monuments, and ruins without regard for local opinion. In Egypt, for instance, he denounces a fellow American who tried to break off a specimen from the Sphinx by calling him a "well-meaning reptile."⁽⁶⁾ Here, as he de-humanized native beggars by calling them "vermin," Twain also fairly de-humanizes the greedy American (by calling him a "reptile.") In the nineteenth century, archeology in the Near East became very popular among Westerns who excavated precious ruins and brought precious specimens to their countries and exhibited them in their museums.⁽⁷⁾ *The Innocents Abroad* was based upon Twain's experience as a passenger on a luxurious packaged group tour, The Quaker City Excursion, and the tour was not free from this trend of so-called museum imperialism. Although no archeologist participated in this tour, John Greenwood, an agent of P. T. Barnum, participated as a passenger, and his work was to collect valuable specimens for Barnum's American Museum. Ganzel Dewey writes, "Greenwood had taken an ad in the New York newspaper before departure asking the passengers to help him in his search, promising a special room in the museum devoted to the Quaker City excursion with each specimen labeled with the name of its donor."⁽⁸⁾ Thus, this tour was deeply involved in Western museum imperialism. Twain's anti-imperialist point of view criticized this museum imperialism out of respect for other country's sovereignty. He warns a relic hunter by telling him how serious his crime is under Egyptian law. He says, "We sent a sheik to arrest him if he had the authority, or to warn him, if he had not, that by the laws of Egypt the crime he was attempting to commit was punishable with imprisonment or bastinado."⁽⁹⁾

However, Twain's criticisms of Western imperialism are very limited in *The Innocents Abroad*. It is hard to find anti-imperialistic sentiments other than his position of anti-museum imperialism. One of the reasons for the absence of his criticisms might be that, in Europe and the Middle East, there was not enough chance for Twain to encounter the cruelty of Western

imperialism in order to denounce it. In Europe and the Middle East, most of the non-Western countries he visited were not Western colonies but part of the Turkish Empire. However, with respect to Hawaii, Twain had to reveal his views on Western empires' colonization more clearly since he had to face the dawn of colonization by Western countries, especially the United States of America.

II. Hawaiian Letters

In 1866, Mark Twain stayed in Hawaii for five months as a correspondent for San Francisco's newspaper, *Union*. Six years later, he revised his Hawaii articles and published them as a part of his Nevada & California travel book, *Roughing It* (1872). In *Roughing It*, there are sixteen chapters on Hawaii out of a total of seventy-nine chapters. Although it could not equal *The Innocents Abroad* in its success, *Roughing It* also became popular at that time and was a commercial success.

Although, when Twain lived there, Hawaii had not been annexed to America, American colonization of Hawaii was underway. American sugar planters, for example, gradually began to pressure the American government to annex Hawaii. Twain's strong pro-imperialistic views on Hawaii is clearly shown in his Hawaii newspaper letters which were not included in *Roughing It*. In one article written in 1866, for example, emphasizing the wealth of Hawaii for its sugar production and cheap labor force, consisting of native Hawaiians and Chinese, Twain strongly claims that America should follow the model of European imperialism:

To America it has been vouchsafed to materialize the vision [of annexation of Hawaii], and realize the dream of centuries, of enthusiasts of the old world. We have found the true Northwest Passage. . . . to the enchanted land whose mere drippings, . . . , enriched and aggrandized ancient Venice, first then Portugal, Holland, and in our own time, England—and each in succession they longed and sought for the fountain head of this vast oriental wealth, and sought in vain. The path was hidden to them, but we have found it over the waves of the Pacific and American enterprise will penetrate to the heart and center of its hoarded treasures, its imperial affluence.⁽¹⁰⁾

However, in his Hawaii letters in *Roughing It*, what interested Twain most was the Christianization of Hawaii by American missionaries. He shows both his anti- and pro-missionary views, in his Hawaii letters. For instance, he applauds missionaries for their achievements in spreading civilization among Hawaiian natives:

The missionaries have clothed them, educated them, broken up the tyrannous authority of their chiefs, and given them freedom and the right to enjoy whatever their hands and brains produce with equal laws for all, and punishment for all alike who transgress them. The contrast is so strong—the benefit conferred upon this people by the missionaries is so prominent, so palpable and so unquestionable, that the frankest compliment I can pay them,⁽¹¹⁾

Thus, as Twain supported Russia's attack on Turkey by emphasizing the emancipation of natives from the oppression of the Ottoman Empire, here, he again uses the same rhetoric to justify missionary activities in Hawaii by claiming the benefits for the natives.

However, Twain also notices the violent nature of colonization in Hawaii. For instance, mentioning a violation of chastity among natives, he satirically writes, "doubtless this purifying [from violation of chastity] is not far off, when we reflect that contact with civilization and the whites has reduced the native population from four hundred thousand (Captain Cook's estimate,) to *fifty-five thousand* in something over eighty years!"⁽¹²⁾ Thus, he revealed the brutality in Hawaii under the name of the "spread of civilization" in Hawaii.⁽¹³⁾ His doubts about the "civilizing mission" in Hawaii is also clearly shown in his well-known article he wrote for the *New York Tribune* a year after the publication of *Roughing It*. He satirically says:

We *must* annex those people. We can afflict them with our wise and beneficent government. We can introduce the novelty of thieves, all the way up from street-car pickpockets to municipal robbers and Government defaulters, and show them how amusing it is to arrest them and try them and then turn them loose—some for cash and some for "political influence." We can make them ashamed of their simple and primitive justice.⁽¹⁴⁾

Although, in this way, he occasionally showed his mixed attitudes toward American imperialism in Hawaii, Twain, as a whole, in his Hawaii letters in *Roughing It*, still approved of the colonization of Hawaii as the spread of civilization, which would be beneficial to natives. However, throughout his career, he gradually changed his pro-imperialistic views. Nearly thirty years later, in 1897, his anti-imperialistic sentiment culminates in one book, *Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World*.

III. Following the Equator

Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World (1897) is a round-the-world travel

book. Twain left London in May 1895, crossed America, visited New Zealand, Australia, India, and South Africa, then he returned to London in July 1896, more than one year after he left. This is Twain's last travel book and it was the least commercially successful among his travelogues.⁽¹⁵⁾ This is a book of severe criticism of British imperialism in the world. Although most of the places he visited were British colonies, he usually considered them representatives of white imperialism in general. People Twain denounces are, in many case, not the British, but whites. For instance, Twain satirically introduces the British colonizer's massacre of the Aborigines by poisoned pudding as follows:

The white man's [the man who killed Aborigines by poison] spirit is right, but his method was wrong. His spirit was the spirit which the civilized white has always exhibited toward the savage, but the use of poison was a departure from custom. . . . It was better, kinder, swifter, and much more humane than a number of the methods which have been sanctified by custom, . . . In many countries we have chained the savage and starved him to death ; and this we do not care for, because custom has inured us to it ; yet a quick death by poison is lovingkindness to it. In many countries we have burned the savage at the stake ; and this we do not care for, because custom has inured us to it ; yet a quick death is lovingkindness to it.⁽¹⁶⁾

Here, Twain does not call the man, the British man, but "the white man" which include himself. In addition, he uses the first person "we" when he denounces the cruelty against non-Westerners. Thus, he shows his shared sense of responsibility for the cruelty of Western imperialism. This shared sense of responsibility seldom appeared in his earlier travel books. In *The Innocents Abroad*, although he criticized the Ottoman Empire's imperialism, the target of his criticisms was usually the Ottoman Empire, not the Western countries which actually participated in the same tyranny all over the world. It might be said that this shared sense of responsibility that appeared in *Following the Equator* comes from his sense of closeness to Britain as an English speaking, white Westerner. (Twain lived in England before and after his around-the-world trip, and he wrote *Following the Equator* in England.) However, when we consider the absence of his shared sense of responsibility toward his mother country's imperialism in Hawaii, we should say that Twain transformed his views from pro-Western imperialist to anti-Western imperialist from the 1860s and 70s to the 90s, the time of Western colonization of the world.

Unlike the applause he gives to the missionaries' achievements in spreading Western civi-

lization in Hawaii, Twain denounces white people's "well-meaning" attempts to spread their civilization for the benefit of natives. He says:

...the kindest-hearted white man can always be depended on to prove himself inadequate when he deals with savages. He cannot turn the situation around and imagine how we would like it to have a well-meaning savage transfer him from his house and his church and his clothes and his books and his choice food to a hideous wilderness of sand and rocks and snow, and ice and sleet and storm and blistering sun, ... if he had any wisdom he would know that his own civilization is a hell to the savage—but he hasn't any, and has never had any; and for lack of it he shut up those poor natives in the unimaginable perdition of his civilization, committing his crime with the very best intentions, and gazed at it, vaguely troubled and sorrowful, and wondered what could be the matter with them. One is almost betrayed into respecting those criminals, they were so sincerely kind, and tender, and humane, and well-meaning. / *They didn't know why those exiled savages faded away, and they did their honest best to reason it out. And one man, ... , did reason it out and arrive at a solution: / "It is from the wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."* / That settles it.⁽¹⁷⁾

Thus, in *Following the Equator*, Twain is perceptive enough to see the cruelty and lack of cultural relativism of "well-meaning" and "benevolent" missionary imperialism.

Twain also shows his cultural relativism by inverting the Western hierarchy of superior, white and inferior, colored. Impressed with the Aborigines' ability as trackers and their extraordinary instruments, such as boomerangs and weet-weet, Twain writes, "It must have been race-aversion that put upon them a good deal of the low-rate intellectual reputation which they bear and have borne this long time in the world's estimate of them."⁽¹⁸⁾ He even claims the superiority of the colored people. For example, in Ceylon, he is fascinated with the beautiful clothes of the natives. On the contrary, however, he is totally disappointed with Western clothes. He calls Western clothes "[u]gly, barbarous, destitute of taste, destitute of grace, repulsive as a shroud." Then he says, "I looked at my womenfolk's clothes ... and was ashamed to be seen in the street with them. Then I looked at my own clothes, and was ashamed to be seen in the street with myself."⁽¹⁹⁾ His inversion of the white supremacist hierarchy is not limited to clothing. Surprisingly enough, he even inverts the Western hierarchy of the color of skin. He writes:

Then there would have been the added disadvantage of the white complexion. It is not an unbearably unpleasant complexion when it keeps to itself, but when it comes into competition with masses of brown and black the fact is betrayed that it is endurable only because we are used to it. Nearly all black and brown skins are beautiful, but a beautiful white skin is rare. . . . Where dark complexions are massed, they make the whites look bleached-out, unwholesome, and sometimes frankly ghastly. / . . . / The white man's complexion makes no concealments. It can't. It seemed to have been designed as a catch-all for everything that can damage it. Ladies have to paint it, and powder it, and cosmetic it, . . . , to make it beautiful; and they do not succeed. But these efforts show what they think of the natural complexion, as disturbed. As disturbed it needs these helps. / . . . / The advantage is with the Zulu, I think. He starts with a beautiful complexion, and it will last him through. And as for the Indian brown—firm, smooth, blemishless, pleasant and restful to the eye, afraid of no color, harmonizing with all colors and adding a grace to them all—I think there is no sort of chance for the average white complexion against that rich and perfect tint. ⁽²⁰⁾

As frequently shown in the hierarchical display of a variety of races in world fairs, belief in evolutionary racism was widely shared among Americans in the late nineteenth century. ⁽²¹⁾ For instance, P. T. Barnum, the most popular showman in the nineteenth century America, also popularized a hierarchical notion of race in his show. As Schueller suggests, Barnum usually associated the West with civilization and colored people with bestiality, and in his popular freak shows colored people frequently were exhibited as “primitives.” ⁽²²⁾ On the contrary, Twain's views noted above seem to reflect racist views against whites, since one could argue that white skin is equally as beautiful as black and brown skin. However, when we consider widely shared evolutionary racist beliefs in the late nineteenth century, Twain's views are revolutionary. ⁽²³⁾

Twain also sees the cruelty of British colonization in terms of American history. For instance, when he encounters a scene in which a German man slaps an Indian servant for a tiny mistake, he revives his memory of the slaveholding South fifty years ago. He says:

[The slapping of the Indian] carried me back to my boyhood, and flashed upon me the forgotten fact that this was the *usual* way of explaining one's desire to a slave. I was able to remember that the method seemed right and natural to me in those days, I being born to it and unaware that elsewhere there were other methods; but I was also able to

remember that those unresented cuffings made me sorry for the victim and ashamed for the punisher.⁽²⁴⁾

This cruel punisher was “a refined and kindly gentleman,” who was actually his father. As we have seen, also in *The Innocents Abroad*, when he is surrounded by the Arabian beggars, Twain revived his disgusting memory of Native Americans in the West and showed his impulse to exterminate them all. In both episodes, he goes back to his experience of internal imperialism of America: (1) the extermination of Native Americans as a result of the country's westward expansion, and (2) the exploitation of blacks in the slaveholding South. However, his interpretation of American internal imperialism of these two episodes is totally opposite. In *The Innocents Abroad*, he simply accepts his imperialistic impulse to exterminate Native Americans as a natural sentiment. On the other hand, in *Following the Equator*, Twain perceives the cruelty of slavery which changes even a refined gentleman into a cruel punisher. Fishkin perceptively suggests, “he links the nonchalant ethnocentric arrogance of the imperialist with the equally careless racist arrogance of the slaveholder.”⁽²⁵⁾ Thus, this episode also clearly shows the transformation of Twain's views toward imperialism from pro to anti-imperialist.

However, in *Following the Equator*, as well as in his earlier travelogues, Twain shows his approval of Western colonization. His views on the British colonization of India, especially, are relatively favorable. For instance, he holds in high esteem the British achievement in destroying Thuggee, a native gang of thugs. He says:

That little handful of English officials in India set their sturdy and confident grip upon it, and ripped it out, root and branch! How modest do Captain Vallancey's words sound now, . . . / “The day that sees this far-spread evil completely eradicated from India, and known only in name, will greatly tend to immortalize British rule in the East” / It would be hard to word a claim more modestly than that for this most noble work.⁽²⁶⁾

Twain is not tolerant of violence no matter who, natives or Westerners, commit it. Therefore, when he finds violence among natives, he does not hesitate to denounce them and to show that natives also share savageness with whites. For instance, he gives a detailed and realistic description of native Indian soldiers' hideous massacre of British women and children in Sepoy Mutiny.⁽²⁷⁾ Although this is a rare example in *Following the Equator*, his hatred of violence among natives occasionally leads to an unfair total appraisal of British colonization. He

states:

The signs of the times show plainly enough what is going to happen. All the savage lands in the world are going to be brought under subjection to the Christian governments of Europe. I am not sorry, but glad. This coming fate might have been a calamity to those savage peoples two hundred years ago ; but now it will in some cases be a benefaction. The sooner the seizure is consummated, the better for the savages. The dreary and dragging ages of bloodshed and disorder and oppression will give place to peace and order and the reign of law. When one considers what India was under her Hindoo and Mohammedan rulers, and what she is now ; when he remembers the miseries of her millions then and the protections and humanities which they enjoy now, he must concede that the most fortunate thing that has ever befallen that empire was the establishment of British supremacy there. The savage lands of the world are to pass to alien possession, their peoples to the mercies of alien rulers. Let us hope and believe that they will all benefit by the change. ⁽²⁸⁾

Here, he again, as seen in his earlier travelogues, employs pro-imperialist rhetoric to emphasize the benefit to the natives in sharing civilization. However, unlike the simplistic celebration of Western colonization shown in his earlier travel books, his above argument is actually based on his somewhat pessimistic views of human nature. Preceding the above quotation, he shows the violent nature of human beings who have kept stealing other people's lands from the very beginning of their history. In short, Twain is claiming that the colonization is, by its nature hideous. However, in Twain's view, when we consider the fact that colonization is inevitable, as a result of human nature, British colonization is much better compared with other countries' colonization. In a sense, it seems that the above view is the dawn of his pessimism concerning human nature which continues to undercut his anti-imperialistic views during his last years of his life, after his fight against the imperialism of America. ⁽²⁹⁾

However, as we have seen already, *Following the Equator* mainly shows Twain's strong antagonism toward white supremacism and Western imperialism, and the foundation of his anti-imperialism seems to be based on his cultural relativism. Showing his respect for Hinduism, he writes:

Reverence for one's own sacred things—parents, religion, flag, laws, and respect for

one's own beliefs—these are feelings which we cannot even help. They come natural to us ; they are involuntary, like breathing. There is no personal merit in breathing. But the reverence which is difficult, and which has personal merit in it, is the respect which you pay, without compulsion, to the political or religious attitude of a man whose beliefs are not yours. You can't revere his gods or his politics, and no one expects you to do that, but you could respect his belief in them if you tried hard enough ; and you could respect *him*, too, if you tried hard enough. But it is very very difficult ; it is next to impossible, and we hardly ever try. . . . /To speak plainly, we despise all reverences and all objects of reverence which are outside the pale of our own list of sacred things. And yet, with strange inconsistency, we are shocked when other people despise and defile the things which are holy to us. ⁽³⁰⁾

These sentences summarize almost all of his anti-white supremacist and anti-imperialist views in *Following the Equator*. His criticism against missionary imperialism in Australia, his fascination with the beauty of black skin in India, his praise toward the Aborigine's intelligence, and his comparison between an Indian servant and a slave in the South all show his relativistic views between Western and non-Western culture. Although, in his travel of British colonies, he seldom finds a place respecting cultural diversity, he encounters an ideal place in South Australia. He applauds South Australia, calling it “a hospitable home for every alien who chooses to come” because of its “varieties of religion . . . from pretty nearly every part of the globe.” ⁽³¹⁾ Copying the table of the detailed number of people for each religion, he says:

About 64 roads to the other world. You see how healthy the religious atmosphere is. Anything can live in it. Agnostics, Atheists, Freethinkers, Infidels, Mormons, Pagans, Indefinites: they are all there. And all the big sects of the world can do more than merely live in it: . . . All except the Spiritualists and the Theosophists. That is the most curious feature of this curious table. What is the matter with the specter ? Why do they puff him away ? He is a welcome toy everywhere else in the world. ⁽³²⁾

Although even South Australia must also have had a problem with discrimination, it is clear that Twain's idealistic world is a multi-cultural world, represented by South Australia. However, as shown in the previous quotation, he knows that it is “next to impossible” for each individual (including himself) to follow these cultural relativism and even more difficult

to create a multi-cultural world based on cultural relativism. However, even though he knows it a losing battle, he is deeply involved in his fighting against American imperialism, after writing *Following the Equator*.

Conclusion: After *Following the Equator*

Then, it is left to discuss why Twain's views on Western imperialism changed from his early travelogues to the last one. Why did Twain's racist views about non-westerns change during the last thirty years of the nineteenth century? It seems impossible to answer these questions fully. However, there seem to be two primary reasons. First, both the Turkish Empire and Hawaii were different from British colonies where he visited thirty years later. In *The Innocents Abroad* the places he visited were not the colonies of Western countries, but the territories of nonwestern Turkey. Even in Hawaii, although American colonization had already been underway, Hawaii was not an American colony and the native Hawaii kingdom still held its sovereignty. Therefore, in his early travelogues, he did not have many chances to encounter the forms of Western colonization as severe as what was criticized in *Following the Equator*. As a result, he had no reason to revise his belief in Western superiority.

Second, encountering the cruel events in American past and present, Twain developed as a writer during the thirty years and sharpened his insights into the issues related to race and imperialism. The last thirty years of the nineteenth century, the time Twain developed as a writer, is the period when the cruelty and the corruption of civilization surfaced in American society. In Twain's naming this period "The Gilded Age" and writing a novel of this title, *The Gilded Age* (1873), he severely denounced corporate and political corruption and the American people's greediness for money. (Although Twain himself was, actually, one of the most greedy Americans in the Gilded Age, he was sensitive enough to criticize his own greediness.) Facing this corruption and cruelty, Twain developed his understanding of the negative aspects of the civilization and became one of the most severe social critics in America. After *The Gilded Age* (1873), Twain published his most significant novels challenging the past and present of America. For instance, in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885), he revealed that "the slaveholding society that debases human lives on a mass scale consider [-ed] itself civilized," and depicted "[this] racist society through the eyes of a boy too innocent to challenge that society's norms."⁽³³⁾ In *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889), he portrayed a nineteenth century Connecticut Yankee's attempt to "civilize" the sixth century's English "savages." Similarly to the nineteenth century's Western colonization of nonwhite "savages," Yankee's attempt resulted in mass murder. We might say that this story is

Twain's satire to the Western colonization under the name of "civilizing the world."⁽³⁴⁾ In *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894), a story about the switching of slave and free babies in infancy, Twain challenged "the legitimacy of the entire enterprise of dividing American society into simple categories of 'white' and 'black.'"⁽³⁵⁾ With these keen and developed insights on white domination and the brutality of the modern civilization, Mark Twain encountered the cruelty of the British colonization of nonwestern countries. Viewed in this light, it seems reasonable that Mark Twain, as a matured and insightful writer, severely criticized white supremacy and Western imperialism, as we have seen in *Following the Equator*.

After finishing the manuscript of *Following the Equator*, Twain expressed his feelings in a letter: "It was the only book I have ever confined myself to from title-page to Finis without the relief of shifting to other work meantime; & I would rather go hang myself than do the like again."⁽³⁶⁾ In spite of his hard work on it, it was the least commercially successful of his travel books. Although the reason for its failure is not clear, it seems possible to speculate as to the cause. For instance, as Fred Kaplan has suggested, "subscription publishing, [the way *Following the Equator* was published], had already proved itself unsuited to the changing world of book marketing."⁽³⁷⁾ Moreover, the readers who expected another light-hearted humorous travelogue must have been disappointed with its serious tone represented by his criticism of imperialism. As we discussed, from the 1860s to the 90s, Mark Twain changed from a pro-Western figure to one of the most severe critics of Western civilization. Therefore, it seems reasonable for a lot of readers to have difficulty in adjusting their image of Mark Twain.

Thus, Twain had changed. On the contrary, however, Americans seemed not to have changed. Their views on imperialism and their sense of superiority in Western civilization were basically the same. It is true that Americans seldom showed their desires for external expansion until the 1890s. In the 1890s, as represented by their enthusiastic support for the expansionist, Theodore Roosevelt, many Americans started to support its external imperialism. However, we can hardly say that Americans were anti-imperialists until the 1890s. They justified their internal expansion, for example, Mexican War and Indian War, by using the truly imperialistic rhetoric, "spread of civilization." In short, pro-imperialistic sentiment based on their beliefs in Western superiority seemed to be unchanged from the time of internal expansion to external expansion. As we have seen, Twain deconstructed this belief in Western superiority in *Following the Equator*. Therefore, it seems reasonable that the work was rejected by many Americans at that time.

In 1898, only one year after the publication of *Following the Equator*, America went to war against Spain and annexed the Philippines and Hawaii. At first, Twain supported the war against Spain because he believed that the American government's policy was to free the native people from Spain and help them create an independent government. However, when he read the Treaty of Paris approving the annexation of the Philippines, he decided to become an anti-imperialist.⁽³⁸⁾ He said to the reporter of *Chicago Tribune*, "Well, I am [an anti-imperialist]. A year ago I wasn't. I

thought it would be a great thing to give a whole lot of freedom to the Filipinos, but I guess now that it's better to let them give it to themselves."⁽³⁹⁾ He became vice-president of the Anti-imperialist League and published a series of strong anti-imperialist essays in a variety of newspapers and magazines.

Among his anti-imperialist essays written after *Following the Equator*, "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" (1901), which severely criticized American missionaries in China after the Boxer rebellion, as well as the U.S. Army in the Philippines, generated an enormous response.⁽⁴⁰⁾ One anti-imperial magazine hailed him as "The American Lion of St. Marks" with a cartoon showing him as half-Twain and half-lion. (figure 1.)

However, many of the responses were not so favorable. One journal criticized Twain's blasphemous words against American missionary activity in China with a cartoon titled "Can the Missionary Reach This Old Savage?" In this cartoon, the missionary demands a retraction of "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" and Twain is

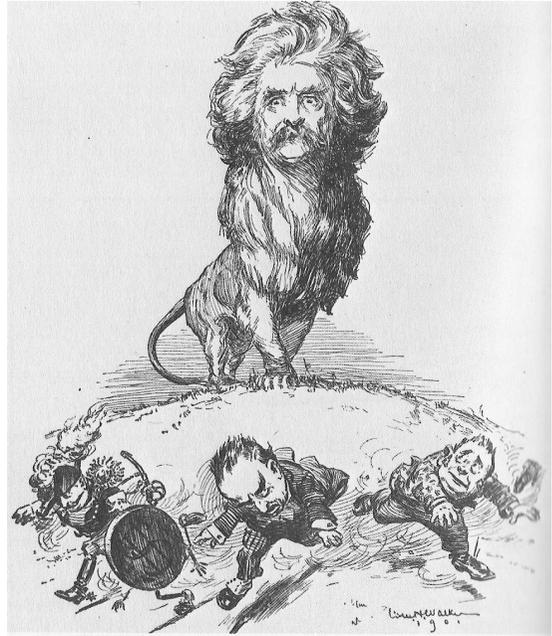


Fig. 1. "The American Lion of St. Mark's" *Life* 37 (28 Feb. 1901) : 166. rep. in Louis Budd, *Our Mark Twain*, 176.



Fig. 2. "Can the Missionary Reach This Old Savage?" *Minneapolis Journal* (23 March 1901). rep. in http://www.boondocksnet.com/gallery/mt_19010323.html

turned into a naked, colored native. (figure 2.) Ironically, as a result of his attack on Western imperialism, created by inverting whites/non-whites hierarchy, his race itself was reversed from a white to that of a non-white. It seems to me that this naked colored "Old Savage" Twain was the fate for this nineteenth century pop hero who challenged the white supremacist hierarchy of the American empire. I would like to conclude this essay with his famous line in *Following the Equator*: "There are many humorous things in the world; among them the whites man's notion that he is less savage than the other savages."⁽⁴¹⁾

NOTES

- (1) See, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, "Mark Twain's Historical View at the Turn of the Twentieth Century." The Kyoto American Studies Summer Seminar in 1999, Keynote Speeches, July 30, 1999. Kiyohiko Murayama, "A Response to Professor Fishkin's Keynote Address" The Kyoto American Studies Summer Seminar in 1999, July 30, 1999. William Macnaughton, *Mark Twain's Last Years as a Writer* (Columbia Missouri: U of Missouri P, 1979). Hunt Hawkins, "Mark Twain's Anti-Imperialism" *American Literary Realism* 25, n2 1993: 31-45. Amy Kaplan, "Imperial Triangles: Mark Twain's Foreign Affairs" *Modern Fiction Studies* 43, n1 1997: 236-48.
- (2) Samuel L. Clemens. *The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrims' Progress*. 1867. (New York: Oxford UP, 1996):126-7.
- (3) *Ibid.*, 443. Twain transformed his views on Russian politics in his later years. He recognized Russian czar as a representative figure of oppressor. Rowe writes, "In his attacks on Chamberlain's conduct in the Boer War and McKinley's annexation of the Philippines, Twain equates these democratic leaders with the German kaiser and Russian czar in their willing deception of the people they represent and conquer." John Carlos Rowe, "How the Boss Played the Game: Twain's Critique of Imperialism in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court." Forrest G. Robinson ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Mark Twain* (Cambridge UK: U of Cambridge P, 1995): 179.
- (4) *The Innocents Abroad*, 463.
- (5) *Ibid.*, 473.
- (6) *Ibid.*, 630.
- (7) See, Malini Johar Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790-1890*. (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1998): 14.
- (8) Ganzel Dewey, *Mark Twain Abroad: The Cruise of The "Quaker City"* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1968): 54.
- (9) *The Innocents Abroad*, 630.
- (10) *The Sacramento Daily Union*, 26 Sep. 1866.
- (11) Samuel L. Clemens. *Roughing It*. 1872. (New York: Oxford UP, 1996): 464.
- (12) *Ibid.*, 477.
- (13) As he earned his national reputation as a writer by the publication of *The Innocents Abroad*, he also earned his national reputation as a lecturer by speaking about his experience in Hawaii. The lecture was titled "Our Fellow Savages of the Sandwich Islands." Amy Kaplan suggests Twain's imperialistic exploitation of materials from Hawaii for his reputation. She says, "[Twain] exploited the material culled from the Sandwich Islands as a kind of cultural capital with which to refashion himself from a regional journalist and to market himself as a national figure" (Kaplan, 239).
- (14) *New York Tribune*, 9 January 1873.
- (15) Fred Kaplan. Afterward. *Following the Equator and Anti-imperialist Essays*. By Samuel L. Clemens. Shelley Fisher Fishkin ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 1996):14.
- (16) Samuel L. Clemens. *Following the Equator and Anti-imperialist Essays*. 1897. (New York: Oxford UP,

- 1996) : 211-2.
- (17) Ibid., 267.
- (18) Ibid., 207.
- (19) Ibid., 343.
- (20) Ibid., 381- 3 .
- (21) See, Robert W. Rydell. *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*. (Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1984).
- (22) Malini Johar Schueller. *U.S. Orientalism: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790-1890*. (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1998) : 153.
- (23) Fishkin insightfully suggests that *Following the Equator* shares its strategy with *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in disrupting the savage-civilized hierarchy. She says, in both of them, "Twain disrupts the hierarchy with a double strategy of 1) underlining and dramatizing the virtue and strengths of character of members of the despised group, and 2) of detailing the unjust and savage treatment they got from 'civilization.'" Shelley Fisher Fishkin, "Mark Twain's Historical View at the Turn of the Twentieth Century." The Kyoto American Studies Summer Seminar in 1999, Keynote Speeches, July 30, 1999: 91-2.
- (24) *Following the Equator*, 351.
- (25) Fishkin, "Mark Twain's Historical View at the Turn of the Twentieth Century.": 92-3.
- (26) *Following the Equator*, 446.
- (27) Ibid., Chapter 58.
- (28) Ibid., 625-6.
- (29) See, Hawkins. Although it seems not so simple, it might be said that the above view is flattering toward English readers who forms the large part of his readership for *Following the Equator*. (Twain published both American and English edition of *Following the Equator* from different publishers at the same time). In *Following the Equator*, he also refers to one of the first attempts of American cultural imperialism against Europe, that is, P. T. Barnum's attempt to buy symbols of England, such as, Shakespeare's house, popular elephant Jumbo, and Nelson's statue. (Barnum actually bought Jumbo.) In general, Twain writes favorably about Barnum's yankeeism to use them as advertisements for his show and his serious intention to preserve Shakespeare's house from the ruination.
- (30) *Following the Equator*, 514-5.
- (31) Ibid., 181- 2 .
- (32) Ibid., 183.
- (33) Shelley Fisher Fishkin, "Racial Attitude." J.R. LeMaster ed. *The Mark Twain Encyclopedia*. (New York: Garland, 1993) : 610.
- (34) Concerning the relationship between *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and imperialism, see, John Carlos Rowe's "How the Boss Played the Game: Twain's Critique of Imperialism in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*." Forrest G. Robinson ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Mark Twain* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1995) : 175-92.
- (35) Fishkin, "Racial Attitude." 612.
- (36) Samuel L. Clemens to Wayne Mac Veagh, August 22, 1897. Quoted by Fred Kaplan., "Afterword." 14.
- (37) Fred Kaplan. Afterword. 14.
- (38) Fishkin, "Mark Twain's Historical View at the Turn of the Twentieth Century." 83.
- (39) Rowe, 178.
- (40) Samuel L. Clemens. "To the Person Sitting in the Darkness." 1901. Jim Zwick ed., *Mark Twain's Weapons of Satire: Anti-imperialist Writings on the Philippine-American War* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1992) : 22-3.
- (41) *Following the Equator*, 213.

