THE NATURE OF MAN'S MORAL DUALISM IN MARK TWAIN'S THE TRAGEDY OF PUDD'NHEAD WILSON

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THE NATURE OF MAN'S MORAL DUALISM IN MARK TWAIN'S THE TRAGEDY OF PUDD'NHEAD WILSON

Mark Twain's Pudd'nhead Wilson has finally attained its rightful place in American literature. Since the first appearance of the novel in the Century,[1] critics have held diverging opinions as to the merit of the novel.[2] In recognizing the true worth of the novel, the reader must be aware that Twain was not writing a mere novel of light intrigue and humor. He theorized that man was neither inherently good nor evil; he was, in fact, a product of his environment. Twain took a set of natural twins, a set of twins with switched identities, and the slave-holding society of Dawson's Landing to examine, test, and prove his theory of determinism. In some ways, The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson is a novel presented as an illusion of a controlled experiment, one in which Twain chose the different variables of the experiment with caution and expertise. The interaction of these variables--slavery, switched identities, and twins--only enforces his hypothesis that man's goodness or badness is caused by his environment and not by his heredity. Twain, therefore, demonstrates vividly a moral dualism--good versus evil--in society that is then mirrored in the individual man.

In Pudd'nhead Wilson, Twain couples the idea of slavery with a twin motif. Twinship is an idea with which Twain experimented several times.[3] However, the concept of twinship reached its maximum development in "Those Extraordinary Twins" and in Pudd'nhead Wilson. In the novel, he portrays not only actual fraternal twins, but also the "twinship" of a Negro slave and a white master. Although several studies have been written on the subject of Twain's use of twins,[4] no one has demonstrated that Twain uses the twins to develop the idea that this moral dualism of good and evil is attributed to man's environment and not to his heredity. In order to carry out his proposition, Twain establishes a rather rigid framework in the novel. Most importantly, he builds the pattern of society versus heredity. Then, in order to prove this statement of societal determinism, Twain incorporates twins to show opposing natures in man. Finally, he enhances his "twinship" theme with color imagery and biblical allusions.

For Twain, man's response or reaction to society is not a new matter. Reflecting on his own life, Twain recalls an incident from early childhood that demonstrates how strong an effect society has on its members. In Following the Equator, he gives a vivid account of his father:

> He punished me those two times only, and never any other member of the family at all; yet every now

> and then he cuffed our harmless slave boy, Lewis, for trifling little blunders and awkwardnesses. My father had passed his life among the slaves from his cradle up, and his cuffings proceeded from the custom of the time, not from his nature.[5]

Mark Twain himself embodies the idea that man was often a product of his environment. He could have two distinct personalities, each reflecting the circumstances in which he was placed. On one hand, he could be a ruffish, loud, bawdy, entertainer; and on the other, a refined, devout, literary gentleman of the East. No matter what the situation, Twain was consciously aware of his reaction to the society around him. In noting this reaction to his environment, several Twain critics have thought that his works and his being were affected by his doubleness. Justin Kaplan suggests in Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain that "He was, at the very least, already a double creature. He wanted to belong, but also he wanted to laugh from the outside. The Hartford literary gentleman lived inside the sagebrush bohemian."[6] Richard Chase further observes:

> There is no doubt that Mark Twain's imagination was affected by the doubleness of his personality and the contradictoriness of his feelings and opinions. He was a gay farceur and a saddened

> cynic, a romancer and a pessimistic determinist, a raffish westerner and a "candidate for gentility," a racial democrat and a hobnobber with Standard Oil executives, a disinterested genius and a commercial opportunist, an author who liked to project his own divided character by portraying twins and dealing in mistaken identities.[7]

The subject of twinship as one of Twain's "fatal temptations" is further developed by Kaplan:

> But twinship along with the cognate subject of claimants of all sorts, also offered Clemens an enormously suggestive if misleadingly simple way of objectifying the steadily deepening sense of internal conflict and doubleness which is suggested by two sets of near-homonyms: Twain/twins and Clemens/claimants.[8]

In his response to determine the nature of man and to possibly resolve his own duality--heredity or environment--Twain began to wrestle with the idea of dual natures. In an entry in his Notebook, dated January 7, 1897, Twain clearly expressed the idea that a person is a project or result of his environment:

> My conscience is a part of me. It is a mere

> machine, like my heart--but moral, not physical; and being moral is teachable, its action modifiable. It is merely a thing; the creature of training; it is whatever one's mother and Bible and comrades and laws and system of government and habitat and heredities have made it. It is not a separate person, it has no originality, no independence.[9]

Although he does mention "heredities," Twain does not elaborate or conclude that they are genetically based. In fact, the "heredities" in this instance could be culturally based, for example as in an established custom of a particular society--notably a slave-holding one.

To help prove his theory, Twain experimented with twins. Twain first began to work with the twinhood theme in 1869. His short sketch on the famous Siamese twins, Chang and Eng, is entitled "Personal Habits of Siamese Twins." Because they are two separate individuals joined by a ligature, they resemble two antagonistic parts of a single being. The story begins with the twins' opposing natures. Chang is quiet, Eng active; Chang a Roman Catholic, Eng a Baptist. In fact, fighting in the Civil War, they are on opposite sides, capture each other, and exchange each other as prisoners. Chang is a teetotaler who becomes drunk on alcohol

consumed by Eng.

These two are forerunners of Luigi and Angelo Capello of "Those Extraordinary Twins." One major difference to be noted, however, is that Luigi and Angelo have only one body which supports two heads and four arms. They, too, are of quite different natures. Physically, Angelo is light, Luigi dark; Angelo has a weak constitution, Luigi a strong one. Angelo is a teetotaler and a Baptist; Luigi is a drinker and a freethinker. When Luigi drinks, the effects are felt by Angelo. When the matter arises as to which one is responsible for kicking Tom Driscoll, neither the jury nor the judge can ascertain who was guilty.

In "Personal Habits of Siamese Twins," as in "Those Extraordinary Twins," the question of how two "parts" of a single being could be totally contradictory to each other arises. If both were a result of their heredity, they should have like interests, beliefs, and constitutions. Yet, in both cases, Twain very markedly flaunts their differences. If they are not a result of heredity, then perhaps their personalities and beings are affected by the environment in which they live.

As Twain's sketch on the Italian twins grew and became encumbered with the characters of Roxy, Pudd'nhead, and Tom, he performed an "operation" on the work: "I pulled one of the stories out by the roots, and left the other one--a kind

of literary Caesarean."[10] This division was more than just a division of stories; it was also a division of characters. When Pudd'nhead Wilson unfolded, Luigi and Angelo were two complete, separate beings. Like the other twins, the new Luigi and Angelo still represented a dichotomy in human nature, extending from physical appearance to philosophical belief. The twins served a very distinct purpose in the novel; they can be compared to the "twins" with the switched identities--Thomas A Beckett Driscoll and Valet de Chambre. In accordance with this same idea, Maxwell Geismar states the necessity for having Angelo and Luigi in the novel.

> The irrelevant twins lead us back to the original set of 'white' and 'black' twins who are interchanged--and hence interchangeable, despite all rigid racial taboos--and who constitute one of Mark Twain's most profound intuitions about not merely 'the race problem' and the nature of slavery--but the nature of man himself.[11]

Although Twain is establishing an important link between the two sets of men, at first there seems to be little connection between them. Because there are several recurring patterns in the novel that help to unite this linking or bond, a reader cannot mistake them as a mere coincidence of plot. One of these patterns that Twain establishes to help solve

this dichotomy in human nature is color imagery. Since Twain is ascertaining that man is good or evil because of his environment, he even chooses his colors to help symbolically represent good and evil.

In examining the two sets of twins, Twain makes a decided color judgment. As far as the Italian twins are concerned, their outward color is their mark of distinction. Twain renders this description of the young men upon their arrival at the Cooper house: "They entered the twins--the hardsomest, the best dressed, the most distinguished-looking pair of young fellows the West had ever seen. One a little fairer than the other, but otherwise they were exact duplicates" (p. 27). However, to assume that they are "exact duplicates" is quite erroneous. As the plot develops, the two become stark, individual personalities. Angelo is blond, abstemious, and passive in disposition; Luigi is dark, drinks whiskey, and has even killed a man. Twain suggests the representation of good and evil in his use of light and dark, or white and black. Although Twain makes no assertion about the causes--heredity or environment--of their striking contrasts, they are opposing figures for a definite reason--to demonstrate clearly different natures of good and evil. Thomas A Beckett Driscoll and Valet de Chambre, however, depict a different example of color usage. Both Tom and Chambers are blond, but society has proclaimed one black and

one white because of their birthrights. In this instance, Twain examines racial color as opposed to skin color. At birth the two boys appear to be "created equal." To an impartial eye, the children have similar physical appearances:

> He [Chambers] had blue eyes and flaxen curls like his white comrade Tom, but even the father of the white child was able to tell the children apart--little as he had commerce with them--by their clothes; for the white babe wore ruffled soft muslin and a coral necklace, while the other wore merely a coarse tow-linen shirt which barely reached to its knees, and no jewelry (p. 9).

At this point, the only difference between the babies is their manner of dress. This is only the initial indication of societal restrictions placed on an individual. The rules that govern society and establish birthright are best expressed by Twain:

> To all intents and purposes Roxy was as white as anybody, but the one-sixteenth of her which was black outvoted the other fifteen parts and made her a negro. She was a slave, and salable as such. Her child was thirty-one parts white, and

> he, too was a negro slave, and by a fiction of law and custom a negro (pp. 8-9).

Therefore, once again these two men can be identified by "their color." Throughout the plot, the use of color reinforces the concept of good and evil. In maintaining this color distinction, the Capellos see different aspects of Tom. The blond Angelo represents goodness and sees it in Tom; the dark Luigi reflects the contrasting opinion of Tom:[12]

> The twins made mental note that he was smooth-faced and rather handsome, and smooth and undulatory in his movements--graceful, in fact. Angelo thought he had a good eye; Luigi thought there was something veiled and sly about it. Angelo thought he had a pleasant free-and-easy way of talking; Luigi thought it was more so than agreeable. Angelo thought he was a sufficiently nice young man: Luigi reserved his decision (p. 48).

Twain does not employ color for characterization alone. As a way of emphasizing the environment as responsible for making a person good or bad, Twain extends color usage to the setting of the story. Once again he works with the color white. In the opening description, he uses this color for more than just descriptive purposes. Twain reveals

patterns of concealed identities and establishes the conflict between good and evil:

> In 1830 it was a snug little collection of modest one and two-story frame dwellings whose white-washed exteriors were almost concealed from sight by climbing tangles of rose-vines, huneysuckles, and morning-glories (p. 3).

These "white-washed exteriors" are very important to the meaning of the book. After all, the entire society of Dawson's Landing, from its FFV to the Italian twins to the slave trade, is "white-washed." This society prides itself on its "white" foundation. As long as an individual can prove his lineage with the white race, he is accepted. His moral nature is not a matter of concern because his indiscretions can be "white-washed" or covered up. These white characters in Pudd'nhead Wilson have to cleanse themselves from various "concealments."[13] Halfway through the book, Twain uses another description of setting to help unravel the cover-up: "The Friday after the election was a rainy one in St. Louis. It rained all day long, and rained hard, apparently trying its best to wash that soot-blackened town white, but course not succeeding" (p. 84). The "white-washed" exteriors are very characteristic of young Tom because he, too, is white-washed. He is visibly white, yet he

conceals his blackness--not his race but his evil nature.[14] Twain suggests, then, that society is purely superficial. It is only concerned about a man's appearance, not about his integrity or worth; so as long as a man is white, he is accepted as "good."

In Pudd'nhead Wilson, color does not serve merely for descriptive purposes. Associated with the use of color and the "white-washed" exterior of Tom is the miscegenation theme. One possibility of this theme shows that Colonel Cecil Burleigh Essex's miscegenation is a sin of the flesh. Yet, this sin can be attributed to Southern custom because it was the fashion of the day that the white master had a black mistress. Stanley Brodwin argues that "Miscegenation becomes the first of several blood-sins, offenses against primal taboos."[15] And, although Leslie Fiedler points out that "Twain's own judgment of sexual relations between the races is not explicitly stated," he does conclude that "there seems no doubt that he [Twain] thought of the union between Roxy and Essex as a kind of fall--evil in itself and the source of doom on all involved."[16] If this idea of original sin is the burden of Essex, a white man, then the blacks in the novel have been wrongly cursed because they are "slaves" to the white man's passions. Tom laments this issue when Roxy reveals that he is black: "Why were niggers and whites made? What crime did the uncreated first nigger

commit that the curse of birth was decreed for him? And why is this awful difference made between white and black?" (p. 44). Roxy is proud of her "white lineage"; yet it is this sexual issue that is to arise as "evil" in her son. While Tom carries the outward appearance of a white man, he contains the evil stain of man's original sin in him because Tom is the embodiment of evil. Characteristically, the thirty-one parts white cannot outweigh the one part black. In this instance, it appears that evil (black) outweighs good (white). Although his sin appears to be inherited, it is not. It is a societal sin--a sin in which white masters can take Negro women for mistresses. Yet, Tom's thirty-one parts white is only another example of concealment of the "white-washed" exteriors. His disguise as a white man is not a cover-up of only one man's misdeeds and murderous act, but a camouflage of the South's slave-holding society and its wrong doings. Tom is the living embodiment of everything his community represents. This miscegenation is not a biblical sin but a social one.

Although Twain does not make a biblical reference to miscegenation, he does use biblical parallels in Pudd'nhead Wilson. One biblical allusion is the "curse of Ham." After Tom's identity is revealed to him, he finds his personality, attitudes, and actions are changing. He attributes this change to the "nigger" in him:

> It was the 'nigger' in him asserting its humility, and he blushed and was abashed. And the 'nigger' in him was surprised when the white friend put out his hand for a shake with him. He found the 'nigger' in him involuntarily giving the road, on the sidewalk, to the white rowdy loafer. . . . He presently came to have a hunted sense and a hunted look, and then he fled away to the hilltops and the solitudes. He said to himself that the curse of Ham was upon him (pp. 44-5).

Because of the significance of "Ham" in the Bible, several associations appear to have definite bearings on the theme of the novel. According to the Bible, Ham is a descendent of Noah's: "Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Jā pheth: and unto them were sons after the flood" (Gen. 10.1). Moreover, the etymology of the "Ham" can be traced to the Egyptian word meaning "black."[17] Although the origin of the word refers to the blackness of the Delta and not to the skin tone of the people, Twain uses the word to enhance his black and white symbolism. Twain most certainly knew the biblical allusions to blackness and the associations of the name "Ham" with the idea of slavery:

> And Noah began to be a farmer; and he planted

a vineyard.

And he drank of the vine, and became drunk; and he was uncovered within his tent.

And Ham, the father of Cā naan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren outside.

And Shem and Jā pheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness.

And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him.

And he said, Cursed be Cā naan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.

And he said Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Cā naan shall be his servant (Gen. 9120-26).

The sin of Ham is neither the sin of pride or lust, nor any of the other major sins against God. Although Ham saw the nakedness of Noah accidentally, his mistake was considered a terrible transgression by the patriarchal society of the Hebrews.[18] Yet the fact remains that Canaan and the Canaanites (who were not Negroid) were to be servants. Ham's fate is determined much in the same manner as are Tom's and

Chambers'. Neither in the Bible nor in the novel are these men's fates based on any genetic or innate qualities that they might have. Their lives are controlled by their environments. Just as the Jewish society proclaims Ham's action a sin and enslaves him, so, too, the slave-holding society of the South proclaims Tom white and, therefore, a free man. In both cases, societal conditioning is the true measure of the man.

To help establish his proposition of societal conditioning, Twain clearly employs color to help develop the theme of good versus evil. On the surface, he contrasts the lightness of Angelo and the darkness of Luigi. This visible color reflects their inner personality. On a secondary level, Twain examines the inner "blackness" of Tom, a product of miscegenation, and attributes his "badness" to the societal customs of the pre-Civil War South. On a final level, Twain incorporates the etymology of the word "Ham" to enhance his motif of blackness. Although Twain does not judge Ham, he does show that society views his actions as a sin. Color is only a part of Twain's experiment to test his ideas of heredity and environment. Alone it proves nothing; it is merely a developmental technique to help convey the idea that society is responsible for man's good or evil qualities.

In generating his use of twins to prove his theory of

heredity versus environment as causes of man's good or evil nature, Twain uses another important technique. He bases the characters of Tom and Chambers on biblical types. This biblical parallel involves the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, Esau and Jacob. Like Tom Driscoll and Valet de Chambre, Esau and Jacob display hatred for one another, and Jacob even goes so far to assume his brother's identity. Jacob is the younger twin brother of Esau, and his name means "supplanter," for when he was born "his hand took hold of Esau's heel" (Gen. 25.26). The men are very different in appearance as well as in disposition. Esau is frank, straightforward, and generous; Jacob is scheming, ambitious, and self-seeking. However, he is not devoid of good qualities. He has a deeper and more stable character than Esau. While Esau is ruled by momentary impulses and has no thoughts except those of present and material goods, Jacob possesses steadiness and consistency of purpose. These qualities demonstrate a sound and genuine character. Jacob shows that through the discipline and experiences of life, the better elements of a character may prevail and become its determining and predominant principles.

Esau, enjoying outdoor life, was a hunter by occupation, while Jacob, quiet and homeloving, was a shepherd (Gen. 25.27). Returning one day tired and hungry from the hunt, Esau consented to sell his birthright to Jacob for the

pottage Jacob had prepared (Gen. 25.29-34). Esau sold his birthright for the momentary pleasure of food. On the other hand, while Jacob's conception of the birthright at that time was probably carnal and inadequate, his desire for it demonstrated his faith.

In Pudd'nhead Wilson, although Tom was not able to sell his birthright, he did renounce his mother by "selling her down the river." In order to help her son pay off his gambling debts, Roxy volunteers to be sold into bondage (p. 80). However, Roxy believes that she is destined for some "up-country" farm when actually she has gone "down the river" to an Arkansas cotton planter:

> So poor Roxy was entirely deceived; and easily, for she was not dreaming that her own son could be guilty of treason to a mother who, in voluntarily going into slavery--slavery of any kind, mild or severe, of any duration, brief or long--was making a sacrifice for him . . . (p. 81).

As Esau sold his brother so, too, does Tom sell his mother for mere monetary gratification. Tom's background has taught him to take what he needs when he needs it. From his childhood, Tom has learned to take everything without any regard for others. Because it is more convenient for him to sell Roxy immediately to the Arkansas cotton planter for

six hundred dollars, he does so. And, because Roxy has overindulged him for years, she must now pay the price of Tom's "learning."

Both sets of men are further associated with "assumed identities." Although Tom and Chambers are not directly responsible for their new identities, Jacob is fully accountable for his. Both Roxy and Rebekah wanted better lives for their sons and felt that switched identities would accomplish their aims. Because Esau was the oldest and his father's favorite, the paternal blessing was rightfully his. Rebekah persuaded Jacob, who was her favorite, to switch identities with his brother and to intercept the blessing. In order to accomplish this switch, he had to wear a disguise of goatskin (Gen. 27.1-29).

Similarly, throughout his life, Tom was pampered, petted, and spoiled. Because in his society he held a position of a gambling, rich, young heir, he needed money to maintain his role. In order to pay for his debts, he had to steal. Therefore, for Tom to carry out his tasks of robbery and murder, he disguises himself as a young girl and a veiled old black woman. Although the motives of each of these men are quite different, the outcome in each case is not to be overlooked--each usurped his "brother's" place.

Tom embodies similarities to both Esau and Jacob. Like Esau, he learns to get what he wants without any thought to

future consequences. Like Jacob, he may employ the same techniques of disguise to achieve what he wants, but obviously not for the same moral purposes. In both instances, Jacob and Tom strive for positions that are not rightfully theirs. It is not the individual man who is important; it is man's place in society that decrees his worth. In the Hebrew society of the Old Testament, being the first born established the birthright and the prominence of the individual. In the society of Dawson's Landing, a man's place was also governed by his birth. If he were born white and free, his position was guaranteed.

To assume that the relationships demonstrated thus far between Pudd'nhead Wilson and the Bible are merely casual is erroneous. Twain knew and was familiar with biblical scripture. Although his father was a freethinker, his mother was a strong Presbyterian. Paul Boller summarizes: "While there is no reason to believe that Twain was ever a devout believer like his mother, it is clear that the Calvinism he imbibed as a boy in the fundamentalistic atmosphere of Hannibal, Missouri, had lasting effects on his thinking."[19]

Although Twain clearly uses color imagery and biblical allusion to help develop his theory that man's goodness or badness is a result of his environment and not his innate qualities, the true test rests with the actions of the

characters in the novel. The plot is based on two sets of twins--a set of natural twins and a set of "twins" with exchanged identities. First, the actions of Luigi and Angelo are very important because Twain makes pointed references to them in his development of Tom and Chambers. Twain uses the Italian twins not only to compare the personalities of dual natures, but also to show slave-owner relationships. Although the Capello's were originally Italian nobles, they also have known abject poverty. Orphaned and left penniless by the loss of their father's debts, the two are seized and forced to be displayed in a cheap museum in Berlin. Angelo tells Aunt Patsy, "It took us two years to get out of that slavery" (p. 28).

This example is not the only instance of slavery involving the twins. They serve in a type of master-slave relationship with the people in Dawson's Landing. According to Henry Chapin, Twain has used the twins to depict an ironic slave-owner relationship between the villagers and the twins. Rowena, daughter of the widow Cooper, twice expresses a proprietary attitude toward the young men. When her mother receives the letter telling of the arrival of the twins, Rowena exclaims, "They're all ours!" (p. 26). Upon seeing the deep interest the villagers display toward the twins, Rowena says to herself "with deep satisfaction, 'And to think they are ours--all ours!'" (p. 29). While mother and

daughter are reveling in their new-found glory, the twins actually hold a "mastery" over the other village people.[20] They represent a nobility that "the society people" deem as worthy. In fact, each received a "My lord" or "Your Lordship" during his introduction.

Twain does not devote important space to the Italian twins. He never makes a judgment as to whether their heredity or their environment is responsible for their opposite natures. However, he does demonstrate in the scenes involving the twins and the people of Dawson's Landing how important society's attitudes are in the acceptance of individuals. While Twain has elaborately set up Luigi and Angelo as a study of dual natures, the true test is finally exercised in the relationship between Tom Driscoll and Valet de Chambre.

In studying the dual natures of Tom and Chambers, Twain examines man as an individual and as a product of his environment. Society of the 1830s in Dawson's Landing was based upon two codes: a white man's and a black man's. In tying together all themes of the novel, Twain makes the issue of white versus black or good versus evil very clear. By switching the identities of Driscoll and Chambers, he hopes to reveal the merits of a man. He demonstrates through the course of the narrative that a man's being is controlled from without and not from within.

The narrative of the novel deals mainly with a young

man's mistaken identity. Tom Driscoll believes he is white, yet according to "a fiction of law and custom," he is a Negro. He lives as a free white man and an heir to wealth (not knowing his claim is false). He learns the truth of his birthright, ruins himself through gambling debts, and finally murders in order to get money. Henry Nash Smith describes Tom's two-sided personality:

> Roxy's son, known as Tom Driscoll during most of the story, is the psychological equivalent of the twins. He is two persons in one: a Negro (according to the definition operative in Dawson's Landing--he has one thirty-second Negro blood) who appears white and is reared as the adopted son of the great man of the town. He is by law a slave but apparently free. The duality of white and Negro introduces the theme of false appearance and hidden reality, which is repeated in Tom's activities as a burglar in the disguise of a woman while he is ostensibly leading the life of the idle young heir to the town's largest fortune.[21]

Once again society accepts a man only on the measure of his appearance. Because society is the governing body which dictates who is white and who black, it is also the body

which accounts for the actions of its individuals. Society is responsible for the "spoiling" of Tom and the displacement of Chambers. The plot of the book centers much more on the usurper Tom Driscoll than the misplaced Chambers. In fact, as a character Chambers never fully develops. Chambers grows up as a slave even though he is actually the rightful heir. In the end, he is restored to his rightful position and "expected" to assume his place in society.

Initially neither man is responsible for his position or identity. Roxy is the instigator of the action. However, even she feels she can justify her plan to switch the infants: "'Tain't no sin--white folks has done it!" (p. 15). She bases her theory on a story that she had heard from a preacher. The story took place in England where a white slave switched her baby with the queen's. In the end, the switched child became king and sold the "true king" down the river to settle up the estate. Roxy feels if "white folks" can do it, so can she.

Even from the start, both children adapt to their various roles:

> 'Tom" was a bad baby from the very beginning of his usurpation. He would cry for nothing; he would burst into storms of devilish temper without notice . . . The baby Tom would claw anybody who

> came within reach of his nails, and pound anybody he could reach with his rattle. He would scream for water until he got it, and then throw cup and all on the floor and scream for more. He was indulged in all his caprices, however troublesome and exasperating they might be. . . . Tom got all the petting, Chambers got none. Tom got all the delicacies, Chambers got mush and milk, and clabber without sugar. In consequence, Tom was a sickly child and Chambers wasn't. Tom was "fractious" as Roxy called it, and overbearing; Chambers was meek and docile. . . . In babyhood Tom cuffed and banged and scratched Chambers unrebuked, and Chambers early learned that between bearing it and resenting it, the advantage all lay with the former policy (pp. 17-19).

The infants are not to be blamed because they have been psychologically and sociologically corrupted by their societies. After all, society dictates the roles the two are to follow. As Twain aptly states in referring to Chambers, their places were "early learned."

At the end of the novel, Tom discovers he is black, and he begins to assume certain slave characteristics. He tends to be meek with the "white folk," yet he remains

"upity" with the "niggers." At the time, Tom attributes these actions to the "nigger" in him. He believes that the "nigger" is an inherent part of him, and he does not allow the possibility that he feels like a "nigger" because society has taught him the "characteristics" of a "nigger." Growing up in the pre-Civil War South, Tom has been conditioned by his environment. Without realizing it, he has learned from his society the manners and attitudes of the Negroes. Just as his actions and responses as a white man are acquired and perfected by the role he plays in society, so are his Negro tendencies.

Tom is not the only one conditioned to his place in life. When Chambers is rightfully restored to his proper place, he is not suited for it. He cannot read, or write, and he speaks in a Negro dialect:

> His gait, his attitudes, his gestures, his bearing, his laugh--all were vulgar and uncouth; his manners were the manners of a slave. Money and fine clothes could not mend these defects or cover them up. . . . The poor fellow could not endure the terrors of the white man's parlor, and felt at peace nowhere but in the kitchen (p. 114).

Both young men are leading lives that are "learned" according to their social stations. Each is locked into his own

fixed role. The real Tom shows how easy it is to make a meek, servile, cringing creature in a society that deliberately manufactures them. Because of his pampered life, Tom is a weakling and physically inferior to his Negro slave. Chambers stands as a proxy for him in games of skill, thefts, and fights; yet Chambers never reaps the rewards. Tom reveals a severe hatred for the Negro when Chambers demonstrates any superiority over him. Moreover, Chambers (the real Tom), with his one hundred per cent FFV blood, can be made to cringe and take all abuses from a "white" man. Once more, this trait is learned and reinforced by his "place" in society.

This learned position or place was to be Mark Twain's thesis for his ideas on heredity versus environment. His childhood was to come back to him over and over again in his writings. The concept of the slave-master relationship was intrinsically embedded in his thoughts. The roles that both slave and master held were learned and reinforced from generation to generation. As he reveals in his writings, learning or training is the key to a man's character. Twain makes a clear distinction between character in animals and character in man: "Inborn nature is Character, by itself in the brutes--the tiger, the dove, the fox, etc. Inborn nature and the modifying Conscience, working together make Character in man."[22]

Twain does not make the distinction in the quality of a man by his color.[23] In one instance from his Notebooks, Twain cites whites and blacks handling jobs equally. Twain refers to a "nigger Consul" from Moracco who had been a slave to the former consul. He was so well schooled that he handled his previous master's job after the consul died.[24] Citing another case in South Africa, Twain notes that the white Boer was a worse leader than the "black savage" he drove out.[25]

Twain feels that a man is what he is because of environmental factors not inherited ones. In reading Pudd'nhead Wilson, one must not accept without question Roxy's long dissertation on Tom's white Essex heritage. In her disquisition, Roxy reveals her belief in innate qualities, or poor genetics, in humans: "It's de nigger in you, dat's what it is. Thirty-one parts o' you is white, en on'y one part nigger, en dat po'little one part is yo' soul" (p. 70). Yet, is Roxy a reliable character? For she, like her son, is only a product of her society. Roxy is bound to conform to society's standards. She knows that the only way for her son to succeed is if he appears to be a white man. Once again, this demonstrates that society judges a man by his appearance and not by his actions. Roxy witnesses the change in Tom, but she cannot understand why because she is blinded by her beliefs: "She saw her darling gradually cease from

being her son, she saw that detail perish utterly, all that was left was master--master, pure and simple, and it was not a gentle mastership either" (p. 21). She later begins to understand when she says: "Bofe of us is imitation white--dat's what we is--en pow'ful good imitation, too-yah, yah, yah!--we don't mount to noth'n as imitation nig-gers. . . ." (p. 35).

For Twain, the idea of training was of utmost importance. Perhaps, he most clearly articulates his thoughts in A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court:

> Training-training is everything; training is all there is to a person. We speak of nature; it is folly; there is no such thing as nature; what we call by that misleading name is merely heredity and training. We have no thoughts of our own, no opinions of our own: They are transmitted to us, trained into us. All that is original in us, and therefore fairly creditable or discreditable to us can be covered up and hidden by the point of a cambric needle, all the rest being atoms contributed by, and inherited from, a procession of ancestors that stretches back a billion years to the Adam-clam or grasshopper or monkey from whom our race has been so tediously and ostentatiously

and unprofitably developed.[26]

This sentiment is more aptly included in an entry in Pudd'nhead's Calendar: "Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education" (p. 23).

Therefore, heredity is an inadequate factor for determining identity as shown by the presence of Chambers, Tom, the twins, and others in the novel. But Twain is also able to dismiss this as a method which can be used for identification. It is society that labels Wilson a Pudd'nhead; it is society that forces Tom and Chambers into their respective roles; and finally, it is society that gives the FFV their importance. Tom Driscoll, at the center of the institution of slavery, crosses the color line in a white disguise that is given him by his society, and yet it is society's blindness that pervades the white world of Dawson's Landing.[27] It is this same blindness that continues and perpetuates the same old fixed ideas that subjugate a person to his allotted role in society. Henry Nash Smith says:

> The training corrupts both the slave by destroying his human dignity, by educating him to consider himself inferior, by building up in him a ferocious hatred of himself as well as of his rulers; the masters by encouraging cruelty toward

> the human beings he is taught to regard as animals, and thus by blunting his sensibilities and fostering an unwarranted pride of place.[28]

As the title implies, the book truly is a tragedy when one considers that society has molded and fashioned two young men into fixed and locked roles. As Jerry Hogan summarizes, "Chambers' 'training' as a slave has permanently scarred his life."[29] Because of this fact, he will be separated forever from the white society he is supposedly restored to. Yet, it is not a tragedy of one man alone; it is the tragedy of an entire nation. For, it is society alone that can perpetuate, change, or stop the injustices that are inflicted on mankind. Mark Twain aptly concludes with a short maxim dated October 13, 1904, which clearly demonstrates that society is once again the determining factor of man's fate: "The skin of every human being contains a slave."[30]

Endnotes

[1] The novel was first published serially in the Century from December, 1893, to June, 1894.

[2] For critics who have found fault with the novel's merit, see Martha McCulloch Williams, "In Re 'Pudd'nhead Wilson,'" Southern Magazine (February, 1894), pp. 99-102; Arthur Hobson Quinn, American Fiction An Historical and Critical Survey (New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1936), pp. 253-4; Joseph B. McCullough, "Pudd'nhead Wilson: A Search for Identity," Mark Twain Journal, 18, No. 4 (1977), 1. For critics who have praised the novel's merits, see F. R. Leavis, "Introduction," Pudd'nhead Wilson, by Samuel Clemens (New York: Grove Press, 1955), p. 9; Leslie A. Fiedler, "As Free As Any Cretur. . .," New Republic, 133, No. 7 (August 15, 1955), 17-18 and No. 8 (August 22, 1955), 16-18.

[3] Twain uses twins, doubles or changelings throughout his fiction. A few include "The Siamese Twins," "The Facts Concerning the Secret Carnival of Crime," "Those Extraordinary Twins," Pudd'nhead Wilson, Huckleberry Finn, and A Connecticut Yankee.

[4] For a study tracing the use of twins as frauds and showing that they are an integral part of the ironic design

of the novel in determining Twain's scheme of pessimism, see Murial B. Williams, "The Unmasking of Meaning: A Study of Twins in Pudd'nhead Wilson," Mississippi Quarterly, 33, No. 1 (1979-80), 39-53. For a discussion of the "twinship" of Negroes and whites, see Barbara A. Chellis, "Those Extraordinary Twins: Negroes and Whites," American Quarterly, 21 (1969), 100-12.

[5] Samuel L. Clemens, Following the Equator, Vol. VI of The Writings of Mark Twain: Author's National Edition (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1897), p. 29.

[6] Justin Kaplan, Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), p. 18.

[7] Richard Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1957), p. 149.

[8] Kaplan, p. 101.

[9] Albert Bigelow Paine, ed. Mark Twain's Notebook (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1935), p. 349.

[10] Samuel Clemens, Pudd'nhead Wilson and Those Extraordinary Twins (New York: W. N. Norton & Co., 1980), p. 122. Subsequent page numbers relating to this book will appear parenthetically in the text.

[11] Maxwell Geismar, Mark Twain: An American Prophet (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), p. 145.

[12] James B. Haines, "Of Dogs and Men: A Symbolic Variation on the Twin Motif in Pudd'nhead Wilson," Mark

Twain Journal, 18 No. 3 (1976), 14-17.

[13] For a complete study of the thematic use of setting see Louis H. Leiter, "Dawson's Landing: Thematic Cityscape in Twain's Pudd'nhead Wilson," Mark Twain Journal, 13 (1965), 8-11.

[14] Throughout literature and popular religion, black has been an outward sign of inward evil. Fiedler cites Shakespeare's "Dark Lady" and the New England habit of calling the Devil "The Black Man," Fiedler, p. 17.

[15] Stanley Brodwin, "Blackness and the Adamic Myth in Mark Twain's Pudd'nhead Wilson," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 15 (1973), 170.

[16] Fiedler, p. 17.

[17] There seems little doubt that this word is the Egyptian name of Egypt (Kem, Kemi, Khēme, or a variant.) Reference to "the land of Ham," for example, may be found in Psalms 105.23 and 106.22. The meaning of the word is "black" which appears in Arabic ahamm and the feminine hamma. For a further explanation see "Ham," A Dictionary of the Bible (1906).

[18] Brodwin, p. 174.

[19] Paul F. Boller, "Mark Twain's Credo: A Humorist's Fatalistic View," Southwest Review, 63 (1978), 152.

[20] Henry B. Chapin, "Twain's Pudd'nhead Wilson, Chapter VI," Explicator, 21 (1963), Item 61.

[21] Henry Nash Smith, Mark Twain: The Development of a Writer (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), p. 174.

[22] Paine, p. 349.

[23] For a contradictory opinion stating that Twain subconsciously believes that the characteristics of whites and blacks are innate and inherited see Jack Wysong, "Samuel Clemens' Attitude Toward the Negro as Demonstrated in Pudd'nhead Wilson and A Connecticut Yankee at [in] King Arthur's Court," Xavier University Studies, 7 (1968), 41-57.

[24] Samuel L. Clemens, Mark Twain's Notebooks and Journals (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), I, 354.

[25] Paine, p. 298.

[26] Samuel L. Clemens, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1979), p. 208.

[27] James M. Cox, "Pudd'nhead Wilson: The End of Mark Twain's American Dream," South Atlantic Quarterly, 58 (1959), 354.

[28] Smith, p. 174.

[29] Jerry B. Hogan, "Pudd'nhead Wilson: Whose Tragedy Is It?" Mark Twain Journal, 20 No. 2 (1980), 11.

[30] Paine, p. 393.

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