

Roxana's Character in Pudd'nhead Wilson by Mark Twain

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Roxana, Racial Identity, and the Plot of Pudd'nhead Wilson

Pudd'nhead Wilson was written by Mark Twain and published in 1894, based on the story of a slave, Roxana and her son whom she exchanged with the son of her master. This novel was enjoyed too much during that time and became very popular. In this fiction, the author explains a life arose from an embryonic idea that was divided to give rise to the novel; thus, the novel shares the time and environment of the 19th century. This paper focuses on the main character of the novel Roxana, while she was trying to save her son from a life of slavery by switching the two children, but she unintentionally ended up enslaving both. In *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, the brothers are identical twins, and the entire novel repeats the double theme. It is an obsession of the writer in the years they wrote this novel.

During the years of Wilson's life, there have been many events at the Dawson Dock. White Negro Roxana gave birth to a white child but remained and changed it with another identical child of an aristocrat to save her son from slavery, but her son became a slave ultimately. She nurses the son of the same aristocratic family born on the same day. Wanting to wrest her son from slavery, Roxana changes the clothes of the children, so the Negro is considered the son and heir of the white rich man and the aristocrat. Son of Roxana, Tom is a spoiled child; he is a coward, a thief, a heartless man. Twain emphasizes that Tom is not a rascal by nature; it is the position of the master that makes him a moral monster.

Accidentally, the town comes Italian twins (in a new version of the story, they ceased to be Siamese twins). The plot of the story is increasingly complicated. There was a murder. Twins are accused of it, but the true criminal is Tom. He also reveals the mystery of the origin of the white nigger. Wilson for many years secretly collects fingerprints of the inhabitants of the town. This allows him to determine who held the knife in which the murder was committed. Fingerprints also told about the substitution that Roxana performed.

Slavery, Domestic Intimacy, and the Hypocrisy of

the Old South

The book tells the story of the slave-owners of the South who take care of children with their Negro slaves and then treat them like slaves. Slavery is shown with hatred. Twain is hostile to the completely musty spiritual world of the inhabitants of the southern town. In this realm of stupidity, selfishness, and racism, not only Wilson but Roxana also lives badly (YVONNE A. AMAR). *[Roxy] had an easy, independent carriage—when she was among her caste—and a high and ‘sassy’ way, withal; but of course, she was meek and humble enough where white people were. (2.13)* Roxana was changing her identification around the white Americans, which seems a bit awful. As the reader understands, the town represented by Twain is not an exception in America. There is something characteristic of the whole country and the claims of its rich people to superiority over ordinary workers, and their indifference to the destinies of the people, the hypocrisy of these immoral people, and the miserliness of the opinions of ordinary people, the hostility of the Philistines to everything pure and good. Wilson’s aphorisms, placed as epigraphs to different book chapters, resonate with the dreary judgments scattered in Twain’s notebooks. He who lived long enough in the world and knew life understands how deeply we owe to Adam – the first great benefactor of the human race (Cade 230-239).

Mark Twain reveals in this novel the American secular anxiety in the uncertainty of reality and fiction and what constitutes identity. The themes of double, duplicity, and disguise are part of Mark Twain’s fabulous obsessions and come together in this account to underline the ambiguity inherent in the same concept of identity: a fiction of law and society. David Wilson – the character who names the play, a frustrated lawyer and detective for more than twenty-three years – lives obsessed with a science that at the end of the nineteenth century was novel and aimed at creating a fingerprint file to identify Without possible error to the individuals and to place them within the racial categories determined by the law. We can see that *[Roxy] had an easy, independent carriage—when she was among her caste—and a high and ‘sassy’ way, withal; but of course she was meek and humble enough where white people were. (2.13)* The white slave Roxana, terrified at the possibility that her baby – also white in appearance – can be sold by the master, changes his son by the master’s offspring in order to save him from the social death he represented The slave system.

Proposed for the first time to the Italian reader in its original form as published in 1894 – this volume encloses two ‘twin’ texts. In his introduction and other notes to the volume, Twain tells of a first sketch in which he experiences the incarnation of two events in one: a farce and a tragedy. Then, he realizes he cannot keep them together and divide them. What is the farcical part of the initial conception of this surgical operation? Wilson is a young lawyer with good hopes but little fortune who, just came to town because of an unhappy joke; he is foolish. He will solve the strange case of children swapped in the cradle by Rowena, the white-skinned slave. Second, two Italian twins are protagonists instead of the original text. However, this is the case in the latter case of twin siblings, and the effect, though it may seem less respectful nowadays, is of a boundless comedy: a paradoxical, two-headed man, the gentle, the other, the one and the other alcoholic (Cade 230-239). Mark Twain, at best of his

fierce humour, investigates the dual nature of the human soul.

Exchanged Children and the Social Construction of Race

Two children are born the same day in the same house in a small town of the old South: Chambers, son of the slave Roxana, and Tom, son of the master Driscoll. The two are apparently white and almost identical. Terrified before the Prospect of seeing Chambers sold 'down the river', Roxana exchanges the children, turning slave into master and master into slave. From This misconception of identities, Mark Twain paints in *The Wilson* a comic Portrait of the fluvial community of his childhood, betraying with keen irony the Obstacles and miseries of his picturesque characters. To the surprise of own and strangers, it will be through the insight of Wilson, his collecting fingerprints and deductive logic that You will finally discover the secret of Roxana and easily understandable and acute testimony of the most cruel and inhospitable condition of human slavery (Jehlen 105-120).

Mark Twain has titles that resist the passage of time, which are valid and this is one of them. It brings together all the characteristics we look for in this collection. It is a quality text by an indisputable author, which also has the appeal of an exciting and intense life. It is a fundamental title in the short works of the author. The text summarizes the ironic and humorous characteristics of the literature of the creators of characters. For this historian of American literature, the magical and dangerous aspect of wealth and fame gave Mark Twain the armour of his principles. The book has the appeal of focusing on two human qualities: talent and virtue. It comes to say that an honest and talented man triumphs in the end, and this is a hopeful message not negligible in the times that run.

Roxanna, the slave a negro woman, white-looking, the mother is capable of doing everything to get her son forward, even changing him when he was a baby for the son of the lord, so that her son may have the possibility of a better life (Jehlen 105-120). However, she realizes that her son has become a bad person, and he has turned into a threat to her son by telling him the truth. This woman knows that being a mother is the same in all races or religions and that mothers are all the same inside. *A profound terror had taken possession of [Roxy]. Her child could grow up and be sold down the river! The thought crazed her with horror. (3.1)* For Roxana as some study says, renegades of the Twainian canon, as they violate the passivity of women to become active women, but unlike their male counterparts, end their history defeated by society. This shows that Twain hardly shows scenes of romantic love in his narratives and none of sensual love. In this sense, we have already seen how Twain tried to conform to the canons of his married life with the daughter of a respectable, decent, and religious Connecticut family. This Puritanism was common in nineteenth-century America, in which men and women maintained a hygienic attitude inside and out, which excluded any sexual appetite and even some sexual curiosity. Letters, which she sent to her fiancée, exemplify this behaviour: You are the purest woman I ever knew and your purity is the most uncommon and precious ornament (Jehlen 105-120).

Humour, Criticism, and the Sadness Beneath Twain's Satire

As we say, the humour of the author is not empty of criticism (although Twain also cultivated the humour) and, in addition, in the case of Twain there is a fund of sadness and incomprehension about the future of the human race, what can be called the feeling Tragic of the humour. This is what Twain acknowledges in his Pudd'head Wilson: everything human is pathetic. In this work, black humour imbued with bitterness towards the world is evident, starting with the calendar notes of the Protagonist, lawyer Wilson, in which he speaks of Adam as the one who brought death to the world.

Twain cultivates absurd humour in The Pudd'nhead Wilson, who blames the Inventory for Tom Driscoll's crime. Being a slave Tom was not included along with the rest of the mass who would have inherited it when its owner died. If he had been delivered to them in the first place, they would have Driscoll, therefore he was not that he had committed the murder, the guilt lay with the erroneous inventory. However, in this type of comedy, the American author pours into works like the Diaries of Adam and Eve, based on the destruction of the rules of logical thought. Twain made jokes about everything, including religion, especially about what is related to the book of Genesis and the figure of providence, as we saw above. He leaves the subject of religion reserved for more serious spaces of his artistic creation. The natural medium of laughter is indifference, which makes it very difficult to make jokes about something that gives us a deep feeling, and it should be difficult for an author to change in comedy the drama of human finitude.

In the novel Pudd'nhead, Wilson expresses this idea in a subtle way in its correspondence. He talks about things that he will never do with his typical irony tells him about the will. It happened to Tom Driscoll, the black that his mother passes as a white man in Pudd'nhead Wilson, who could not change. In short, Mark Twain recognizes that there is a will, but it has nothing to do with conceptions of the just and unjust and is not subject to them (Jehlen 105-120).

Pudd'nhead Wilson and the Mockery of Local Society

The story of Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson, is a mockery of locals, starting with the protagonist himself (who in the end turns out to be, paradoxically, the most lucid) to reach most of the characters. First, of course, Tom Driscoll, the bad person of the story, for which Twain could be accused of racism since the character, although it seems white, is of Black blood that repeatedly humiliates Chambers, a supposed black, who is white: and who comes to say when he discovers his true origin (Watson N.p.).

[Roxy] paused awhile, thinking; then she burst into wild sobbings again, and turned away, saying, "Oh, I got to kill my chile, dy ain't no yuther way—killin' him wouldn't save de chile fum goin' down de

river. Oh, I got to do it, yo' po' mammy's got to kill you to save you, honey." (3.3)

We should not stay with these descriptions of the racist attitude but with Twain's satire and the evolution of its personages, like, for example, going back to the history of Wilson, one of the slaves Roxana, the Mother of Tom Driscoll, who in principle attributes the dishonourable behaviour of her son. We should not stay with these descriptions of the racist attitude but with Twain's satire and the evolution of its personages, in which the final analysis, states, despite her status as a slave, That there is no difference between a white and a black mother when it comes to saving the life of a child (Porter 121-136).

Motherhood, Mastery, and Roxana's Loss of Her Son

[Roxy] saw her darling gradually cease from being her son, she saw that detail perish utterly; all that was left was the master—pure and simple, and it was not a gentle mastership, either. She saw herself sink from the sublime height of motherhood to the sombre depths of unmodified slavery. (4.21)

The novel not only criticizes the racism towards the slaves but also towards the immigrants, of the cities of the Pacific coast, which is where they arrived in greater numbers. Twain speaks in laudatory terms of the Asian population, whose discrimination was known well in his times as a reporter in San Francisco: He has a hard life and is always busy and always. Irony embodies these hypocritical behaviours in the figure of the Sisters of Judge Driscoll, in Puddn'head Wilson, Presbyterian devotees, who receive the approval of the community for their fervour: their reward in clear consciences and the community's approbation. The obligation of respect to the virgins Beautiful only prays, like so many other things, with others (Yvonne 13-19).

False and selfish is Tom Driscoll, who, after leading a lifetime of comforts by supplanting the legitimate heir, being the slave, learns, thanks to Wilson's inquiries with fingerprints, that he is not who he believes to be. Then, instead of feeling empathy for the boy who for so long has lived as a slave and has always been treated contemptuously, personifies that of the straw in the other eye. Paradigm of falsehood is his uncle, Judge Driscoll, in charge of social appearances, who, knowing that Tom tried to convince his (supposed) father (York Leicester) to sell to the alleged slave, chambers (who is his Son), buys it himself to prevent the scandal. The usual image of women in the works of Mark Twain corresponds to the social roles of the time. The novel's male and female characters correspond to a Strict stereotype of the different spheres of social activity: while men are defined in terms of business, women do so in function of their domestic or family activity. Looking at Pudd'nhead Wilson's raffle ratifies this idea: Judge Driscoll, lawyer Wilson's wife and the judge's sister. Diversification of roles involves the characters' character: the man (or boy) is independent, astute, and practical, while the woman is dreamy and weak.

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