

IDENTITY AND THE NARRATIVE VOICE: REPRESENTATION OF “THE SELF” AND “THE OTHER” IN MARK TWAIN’S PUDD’NHEAD WILSON

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Abstract

This essay, titled “Identity and the Narrative Voice: Representation of the Self and the Other in Mark Twain’s *Pudd’nhead Wilson*”, aim at investigating Mark Twain’s *Pudd’nhead Wilson* as a text which portrays the identity of White people as “the self” and Black as “the other”. Narrative voice and characterisation which are aspects of Narratology, and it is also a tool used in analysing the text. Narratology is a theory of narratives, narrative texts, images, spectacles, events and cultural artefacts that tell a story. The result of the study shows that, narrative voice and characterisation are used in the portrayal of identity of the White people as “the self” and the Black as “the other” in the novel. These aspects of Narratology are used to depict the identity of “the self” in a positive light and that of “the other” in the negative one.

Key Words: Narrative voice, The Self, The Other.

Introduction

This study is concerned with the analysis of Mark Twain’s *Pudd’nhead Wilson* as a text that portrays the identity of White people as “the self” and Black as “the other”. As a White man, the author presents, his view of “the self” and “the other”. The essay, therefore, compares the depiction of White characters against that of Black ones by examining the narrative techniques: narrator/narrative voice and characterization.

The question of identity is a very complicated one especially in the 21st century. The word “identity” is derived from the Latin root *idem*, meaning “the same,” and it implies both similarity and difference. The concept has been explored in different disciplines including social sciences and history (Humanities). In comparative politics, “identity” plays a central role in work on nationalism and ethnic conflict (Laitin, 1999). In international relations, the idea of “state identity” is at the heart of constructivist critiques of realism and analyses of state sovereignty (Biersteker and Weber, 1996). And in political theory, the questions of “identity” mark numerous arguments on gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, and culture in relation to liberalism and its alternatives (Fearon, 1999). Thus, Oyserman, 2007 sees Identity as the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is.

According to Pope (2002), “Identity has to do with construction or representation of people” and talking about people’s identities “tends to emphasise the social and historical constructedness of their relations and the political power (or powerlessness) those relations entail” (p. 241). In literature, moreover, this construction or representation of people is done through narration and, as Hamilton (2016) sees it that the construction of identity may be influenced by stereotypical views of a character’s background.

Plot Summary of the Text

Pudd’nhead Wilson is a novel whose plot is structured in three strands. The first plot strand is dominated respectively by Roxana, usually called Roxy, and her son, Tom Driscoll, who are as white as any White American but, because of racism are Negroes and therefore slaves. The second focuses on Pudd’nhead Wilson, a cynical and truth-seeking philosopher from the outside world. Lastly, the third strand presents the Capello twins, adventurers who stop for a while in the Missouri Village of Dawson’s Landing.

The novel depicts a young slave woman (who is also a mother), Roxy, thrown into panic one day by her master’s casual threat to sell some of his slaves down the river, deeper into the more hellish South. Reasoning that; if the master is selling these slaves,

he can as readily sell her baby; Roxy first determines to kill herself and the child rather than lose it to the slave market. Then, she finds another way. Being not only a mother but also the nanny of her master's child whose mother died, she simply switched the infants, who look so much alike that no one suspects the exchange. However, in contrast to their perfect resemblance as babies, the two boys grow up totally unlike.

The Black child taking the White's name of Tom (for Thomas Becket Driscoll), becomes a treacherous and cowardly thief, while the White child, assuming the Black name, Valet de Chambre, shortened to Chambers, is gentle, loyal, honest, and brave. Tom's path of petty crime leads eventually to murder, and his victim is his uncle and guardian, the much-loved benevolent Judge Driscoll. Pair of visiting foreign twins are wrongly accused of the crime and are about to be convicted when Pudd'nhead Wilson uncovers the real murderer who is, coincidentally, the real black. The amiable foreigners are vindicated, the real white man is freed from his erroneous bondage and restored to his estate, and the murderer is punished. Since he is not really a gentleman but a slave, he has to be punished as a slave and is sold downriver.

Researchers and critics have written extensively on the issues of identity especially those of race relations and racial criticism in this novel. Bernard De Voto (1932) made the most comprehensively critical comment. He pointed out "a theme completely tabooed in nineteenth-century American literature, miscegenation" and placed emphasis on slavery as an institution of the time. Fiedler discusses slavery and miscegenation and detects in Twain's unconscious depth of mind "a buried ambivalence" based on the "archetypal symbolism of light and dark". He states that Twain is not free from the prejudice that roots deeply in the American imagination: "black is the outward sign of inward evil." Newman (1999), moreover, is concerned with the identity in his analysis of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, yet, his focus is on the way fingerprint is used to revealed the identity of the characters in the text.

The Self, the Other and the Narrative Voice

Since the term "identity" implies similarities and differences at the same time, its formation is what leads to the creation of "the self" and "the other". Moreover, identity can also be cultural or social, individual or collective. Given that the concern of this study is on the identity of white and black peoples, its domain touches all these aspects of identity especially individual and social identity. Social identity is a person's knowledge that he or

she belongs to a social category or group (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). A social group is a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view themselves as members of the same social category. Through a social comparison process, persons who are similar to the self are categorised with the self and are labeled "the self"; persons who differ from the self are categorised as "the other".

With regard to the narrative voice, Genette (1980) distinguishes between what he calls homodiegesis and heterodiegesis. He coins these terms to replace the traditional first-person and third-person narration. This terminology observes the difference of levels which the traditional classification based on person cannot do. Having specified narrators as either heterodiegetic or homodiegetic, Genette is able to go into more details and introduce a typology of narrators (auto-, extra-, hetero-, homo-, and intra-diegetic narrators). A narrator who is outside the story, and stands on a higher level is a heterodiegetic narrator, while the one who is a character in the narrative on the same level as the story is a homodiegetic one. If the homodiegetic narrator is the principal character of the story, the narration comes to be called auto-diegetic. If there is a framed narration inside the homodiegetic, it is called hypodiegetic. An extradiegetic narrator is one who is one level above the story he narrates while intradiegetic is one who is on the same level as the story itself. The knowledge of this sort of narrator is limited to the level of a particular character in the story.

The narrative of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* takes different formats. The story is told by a heterodiegetic narrator or in what Stanzel (1979) calls authorial narrative situation in which narrative voice uses third person pronoun with some punctuation of first-person narrative voice which featured three times in the text. The first when the narrator says "Then there was Colonel Cecil Burleigh Essex, another F.F.V. [First Families of Virginia] of formidable caliber - however, with him *we* have no concern" (p. 3, emphasis mine). While the second appears when the narrator says "After this long digression *we* have now arrived once more at the point where Pudd'nhead Wilson, while waiting for the arrival of the twins on that same Friday evening, sat puzzling over the strange apparition of that morning - a girl in young Tom Driscoll's bedroom" (p. 57, emphasis mine) and the third "The poor fellow could not endure the terrors of the white man's parlor, and felt at home and at peace nowhere but in the kitchen. The family pew was a misery to him, yet he could nevermore enter into the solacing

refuge of the “nigger gallery” ... But *we* cannot follow his curious fate further” (p. 143, emphasis mine).

The heterodiegetic narrative voice in the text begins with the description of the setting of where the events in the story take place as Montgomery Et al states that “Very often, the text begins by setting the scene and perhaps some initial details about the characters” (2007, P. 259) which he calls the ‘orientation’ of the text. This scene “include a representation of the place where the narrative is to take place” (P. 259). The narrator thus points “The scene of this chronicle is the town of Dawson’s Landing, on the Missouri side of the Mississippi, half a day’s journey, per steamboat, below St. Louis” (p. 1). To further describe the setting, he states that:

In 1830 it was a snug collection of modest one- and two- story frame dwellings, whose whitewashed exteriors were almost concealed from sight by climbing tangles of rose vines, honeysuckles, and morning glories. Each of these pretty homes had a garden in front fenced with white palings and opulently stocked with hollyhocks, marigolds, touch-me-nots, prince’s-feathers, and other old-fashioned flowers; while on the windowsills of the houses stood wooden boxes containing moss rose plants and terra-cotta pots in which grew a breed of geranium whose spread of intensely red blossoms accented the prevailing pink tint of the rose-clad house-front like an explosion of flame. When there was room on the ledge outside of the pots and boxes for a cat, the cat was there-- in sunny weather--stretched at full length, asleep and blissful, with her furry belly to the sun and a paw curved over her nose. Then that house was complete, and its contentment and peace were made manifest to the world by this symbol, whose testimony is infallible. A home without a cat-- and a well-fed, well-petted, and properly revered cat-- may be a perfect home, perhaps, but how can it prove title? (p. 1).

The description of the setting of the novel set in motion the description of the kind of people or the identity of the people living in that setting. Although the identity of the narrator is not revealed up to this point, the voice of the narrator keeps telling the addressee the kind of place Dawson’s Landing is, thus:

Steamboats passed up and down every hour or so. Those belonging to the little Cairo line and the little Memphis line always stopped; the big Orleans liners stopped for hails only, or to land passengers or freight; and this was the case also with the great flotilla of “transients.” These latter came out of a dozen rivers—the Illinois, the Missouri, the Upper Mississippi, the Ohio, the Monongahela, the Tennessee, the Red River, the White River, and so on; and were bound every whither and stocked with every imaginable comfort or necessity, which the Mississippi’s communities could want, from the frosty Falls of St. Anthony down through nine climates to torrid New Orleans (p. 2).

This account shows that the town is situated by the river side which brings some opportunities to the dwellers of the town. The narrator, however, takes the addressee to a different aspect of the description of the setting by stating that “Dawson’s Landing was a slaveholding town, with a rich, slave-worked grain and pork country back of it” (p. 2). This introduces a social stratum and the difference of master-slave relationship that exists in the town.

And as Montgomery et al (2007) observe, some initial details about the characters is what follows the setting of the scene. The text, through the narrator, presents some of the characters out of whom the identity of “the self” and that of “the other” will be curved as Twain writes:

The chief citizen was York Leicester Driscoll, about forty years old, judge of the county court. He was very proud of his old Virginian ancestry, and in his hospitalities and his rather formal and stately manners, he kept up its traditions. He was fine and just and generous. To be a gentleman – a gentleman without stain or blemish – was his only religion, and to it he was

always faithful. He was respected, esteemed, and beloved by all of the community. He was well off, and was gradually adding to his store. He and his wife were very nearly happy, but not quite, for they had no children. The longing for the treasure of a child had grown stronger and stronger as the years slipped away, but the blessing never came – and was never to come (p. 3).

Another character is also introduced thus “the judge’s widowed sister, Mrs. Rachel Pratt, ... was childless- childless, and sorrowful for that reason, and not to be comforted” (p. 3). The narrator, moreover, describes the kind of people York Leicester Driscoll and the two women are as he says ‘The women were good and commonplace people, and did their duty, and had their reward in clear consciences and the community’s approbation. They were Presbyterians, the judge was a freethinker” (p. 3).

Pembroke Howard, is another character introduced by the narrator. He is a “lawyer and bachelor, aged almost forty, was another old Virginian grandee with proved descent from the First Families” (p. 3). Yet, the narrator proceeds to describe the kind of person Howard is as he says:

he was a fine, majestic creature, a gentleman according to the nicest requirements of the Virginia rule, a devoted Presbyterian, an authority on the "code", and a man always courteously ready to stand up before you in the field if any act or word of his had seemed doubtful or suspicious to you, and explain it with any weapon you might prefer from bradawls to artillery. He was very popular with the people, and was the judge’s dearest friend (p. 3).

From what the narrator indicates, one can perceive how nice a person Howard is. Then there was Colonel Cecil Burleigh Essex, “another F.F.V. of formidable caliber” (p. 3) and Percy Northumberland Driscoll, a younger brother to the judge who “was a prosperous man, with a good head for speculations, and his fortune was growing (p. 4).

Dawson’s Landing gained a new citizen, Mr. David Wilson, “a young fellow of Scotch parentage. He

had wandered to this remote region from his birthplace in the interior of the State of New York, to seek his fortune. He was twenty-five years old, college bred, and had finished a post-college course in an Eastern law school a couple of years before” (p. 4). All these nice people that the narrator presents to the reader are white people in the text.

Identity of “the Self”

In the analysis of identity, it is pertinent to look at the character portrayal in the text through some basic parameters, as Pfister (1988) mentions: ‘authorial/figural’ which shows the identity of the characterising subject (whether narrator or character); ‘explicit/implicit’ which indicates whether the personality traits are attributed in words, or are they implied by a character’s behaviour.

Depiction of “the self” (“the self” being the Whiteman since the author of this novel is White) in this text is presented in heterodiegetic narrative voice which Pfister (1988) calls authorial and explicit. The physical formation, mental disposition and social interaction of Whiteman (the self) are rendered to show the superiority of “the self” to “the other”. The description of all the White characters in this novel reveals the unconscious of the author. The novel presents White people in the setting of this novel as good, intelligent and generous.

David Wilson is described as a homely, freckled, sandy-haired young fellow, with an intelligent blue eye that had frankness and comradeship in it and a covert twinkle of a pleasant sort. He is a young “fellow of Scotch parentage who had wandered to Dawson’s Landing from his birthplace in the interior of the State of New York, to seek his fortune. He was twenty-five years old, college bred, and had finished a post-college course in an Eastern law school, therefore educated fellow” (p. 4). For what seems to be an apology by the narrator of the story, Wilson could have been a successful legal practitioner if not for a dreadful remark he made on his arrival to Dawson’s Landing: “*But for an unfortunate remark of his, [Wilson] would no doubt have entered at once upon a successful career at Dawson's Landing. But he made his fatal remark the first day he spent in the village, and it 'gaged' him*” (p. 4). The remark is uttered when Wilson, on his arrival, meets a crowd and a dog nearby starts barking. Annoyed by the incessant barking, Wilson announces to everyone that he wishes he owned half of the dog so that he could kill his half. The crowd can’t believe what a dummy this person is. They assume his remark implies that Pudd’head

expected the other half of the dog to still be alive after he killed his half. And that makes him a complete Pudd'nhead.

The narrator describes him as an intelligent person who has *"interested himself in every new thing that was born into the universe of ideas, and studied it and experimented upon it at his house"* (p. 6). As a result of that, he reveals the identities of the swapped children and solved the mystery the murder case of ... and become popular in the town in such a way that *"Troop after troop of citizens came to serenade Wilson, and require a speech, and shout themselves hoarse over every sentence that fell from his lips – for all his sentences were golden, now, all were marvellous"* (p. 142).

York Leicester Driscoll is Dawson's Landing's chief citizen and a descendent of Virginia's First Families.

He adopts 'Tom' when his brother, Percy Driscoll, dies. He lives by a strict code of honor which leads him to fight a duel in his nephew's place, when Tom is too cowardly to defend his honor himself. He is described as a "fine and just and generous. To be a gentleman – a gentleman without stain or blemish – was his only religion, and to it he was always faithful. He was respected, esteemed, and beloved by all of the community. He was well off, and was gradually adding to his store, in addition to his pride in his old Virginian ancestry, and in his hospitalities and his rather formal and stately manners" (p. 3).

He forms a philosophical society with Pudd'nhead Wilson after he retires from the bench. At the end of the novel, Judge Driscoll is murdered by Tom, as Tom attempts to rob him to get money to pay off his debts. His sister, Mrs. Rachel Pratt, and his wife, "were good and commonplace people, and did their duty, and had their reward in clear consciences and the community's approbation" (p. 3). Thus, the narrator describes these white characters in a positive light.

Moreover, the narrator presents Pembroke Howard as "

a fine, majestic creature, a gentleman according to the nicest requirements of the Virginia rule, a devoted Presbyterian, an authority on the "code", and a man always courteously ready to stand up

before you in the field if any act or word of his had seemed doubtful or suspicious to you, and explain it with any weapon you might prefer from bradawls to artillery" (p. 3).

Then there is Colonel Cecil Burleigh Essex, "another F.F.V. of formidable Caliber" (p. 3); Percy Northumberland Driscoll, brother to the judge, and younger than he by five years "a prosperous man, with a good head for speculations, and his fortune was growing" (p. 4); and Driscoll "was a fairly humane man toward slaves and other animals; he was an exceedingly humane man toward the erring of his own race" (p. 4, my emphasis). All these White characters are presented as respectable and intelligent.

With regards to the social interaction, White people are shown as civil people with good behaviours. When Mr. Driscoll missed some sum of money at home, he threatens to sale his slaves down the river which "was equivalent to condemning them to hell! No Missouri Negro doubted this. Roxy reeled in her tracks, and the color vanished out of her face; the others dropped to their knees as if they had been shot; tears gushed from their eyes, their supplicating hands went up, and three answers came in the one instant. 'I done it!'" (p. 12). For their confession, Mr. Driscoll decides not to sale them down the river. In appreciation to that:

The culprits flung themselves prone, in an ecstasy of gratitude, and kissed his feet, declaring that they would never forget his goodness and never cease to pray for him as long as they lived. They were sincere, for like a god he had stretched forth his mighty hand and closed the gates of hell against them. He knew, himself, that he had done a noble and gracious thing, and was privately well pleased with his magnanimity; and that night he set the incident down in his diary, so that his son might read it in after years, and be thereby moved to deeds of gentleness and humanity himself" (pp. 12-13).

Moreover, to prevent Tom from influencing his father to sell Chambers down the river, Judge Driscoll "had gone privately to his brother ... and bought Chambers. He had heard that Tom had been trying to get his father to sell the boy down the river, and he wanted to prevent the scandal--for public sentiment did not approve of that way of

treating family servants for light cause or for no cause" (p. 25). Thus, the narrator presents White characters as perfect beings: good, moral and civilized.

Identity of "the Other"

The heterodiegetic narrator presents the identity of Black people (the other) in this text through the use of mode of speech, blood, colour, mode of dressing and behaviour as parameters. The first appearance of the black characters in the text starts by disturbing one of the white characters when the narrator states that "One sweltering afternoon ... he was at work over a set of tangled account books in his workroom, which looked westward over a stretch of vacant lots, when a conversation outside disturbed him. It was carried on it yells, which showed that the people engaged in it were not close together" (p. 7). The revelation of their identity in the text begins with the identification of their mode of speech thus:

"Say, Roxy, how does yo' baby come on?" This from the distant voice. "Fust-rate. How does you come on, Jasper?" This yell was from close by. "Oh, I's middlin'; hain't got noth'n' to complain of, I's gwine to come a-court'n you bimeby, Roxy." "You is, you black mud cat! Yah-yah-yah! I got somep'n' better to do den 'sociat'n' wid niggers as black as you is. Is ole Miss Cooper's Nancy done give you de mitten?" Roxy followed this sally with another discharge of carefree laughter. "You's jealous, Roxy, dat's what's de matter wid you, you hussy-yah-yah-yah! Dat's de time I got you!" "Oh, yes, you got me, hain't you. 'Clah to goodness if dat conceit o' yo'n strikes in, Jasper, it gwine to kill you sho'. If you b'longed to me, I'd sell you down de river 'fo' you git too fur gone. Fust time I runs acrost yo' marster, I's gwine to tell him so" (p. 7-8).

And this mode of speech is described by the narrator as "idle and aimless jabber" (p. 8). Throughout the text, black people speak in this mode of speech for they are not incorporated in the white social activities and are also denied proper education; therefore, their English is heavily accented and full of grammatical errors.

To present the racial composition of a person's blood and colour as factors that differentiate one

group of people from the other and relegate the unfortunate race to the very bottom of the social ladder and consider the group as inferior, the narrator states that "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" (p. 9). This is indicated in the cases of Roxy and her child, both of whom appear white and have very little black blood, but are considered slaves nonetheless; therefore different (the other). Thus, it can be seen that racial identity is used at the very beginning of the novel to distinguish the self from the other. Even those individuals with only a fraction of blood of the black people in their lineage were relegated to the denigrated (slaves) class and regarded the others.

Moreover, when Roxy comes to say good bye to Wilson, because she decides to leave Dawson's Landing, he

asked her how she could bear to go off chambermaiding and leave her boys; and chaffingly offered to copy off a series of their fingerprints, reaching up to their twelfth year, for her to remember them by; but she sobered in a moment, wondering if he suspected anything; then she said she believed she didn't want them. Wilson said to himself, "The drop of black blood in her is superstitious; she thinks there's some devilry, some witch business about my glass mystery somewhere; she used to come here with an old horseshoe in her hand (p. 25).

All the backwardness and uncivilization is also attached to those that are black or those with black blood no matter how small the friction as Wilson indicates here that the cause of being her superstitious is because she has a friction of black blood in her.

Another means that is used in this text to present the identity of Black people is by depicting their behaviours. However, Blacks are mainly portrayed in a negative way. Tom, the Black child that occupies the place of the actual heir to the house of Mr. Driscoll, is described right from his childhood as:

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, and let go scream after scream and squall after squall, then climax the thing with "holding his breath" – that frightful specialty of the teething nursling, in the throes of which the creature exhausts its lungs ... 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, howsoever troublesome and exasperating they might be; ...When he got to be old enough to begin to toddle about and say broken words and get an idea of what his hands were for, he was a more consummate pest than ever. Roxy got no rest while he was awake. He would call for anything and everything he saw, simply saying, "Awnt it!" (want it), which was a command. When it was brought, he said in a frenzy, and motioning it away with his hands, "Don't awnt it! don't awnt it!" and the moment it was gone he set up frantic yells of "Awnt it! awnt it!" (p. 19).

This is in contrast to the White boy chambers. He is describing as:

strong beyond his years, and a good fighter; strong because he was coarsely fed and hard worked about the house, and a good fighter because Tom furnished him plenty of practice ... on white boys whom he hated and was afraid of. Chambers was his constant bodyguard, to and from school; he was present on the playground at recess to protect his charge. He fought himself into such a formidable reputation, by and by, that Tom could have changed clothes with him, and "ridden in peace," like Sir Kay in Launcelot's armor (p. 21).

The Black child is portrayed by the narrator as cruel and irrational from every aspect of his behaviours.

When he ask Chambers to fight some group of white boys for him and he refuses, Tom irrationally “sprang at him and drove his pocketknife into him two or three times before the boys could snatch him away and give the wounded lad a chance to escape. He was considerably hurt, but not seriously. If the blade had been a little longer, his career would have ended there” (p. 23). On the other hand, his counterpart, the white boy chambers, is good in all his behaviours.

The text, through the narrator also shows the black people as thieves. When Roxy comes back to Dawson's Landing, after she left for some years, being a free woman, she was wondering where she should go and finally decided that surely “there were many kitchens where the servants [blacks] would share their meals with her, and also steal sugar and apples and other dainties for her to carry home – or give her a chance to pilfer them herself” (p. 40); when they “loaded her stomach with their dinners” she “then stole the pantry bare to load up her basket” (p. 41). Again, when she cornered her son to tell her how he plans to pay up his debt caused by his gambling habit, he told her that “he had been prowling about in disguise, stealing small valuables from private houses; in fact, he made a good deal of a raid on his fellow villagers a fortnight before, when he was supposed to be in St. Louis” (p. 51).

Moreover, when Mr. Driscoll missed another small amount of money “which is a way of saying that this was not a new thing, but had happened before. In truth, it had happened three times before. Driscoll's patience was exhausted. He was a fairly humane man toward slaves and other animals; he was an exceedingly humane man toward the erring of his own race” (p. 10). He determines to punish the culprit which he believes must be one of the black slaves that are in his house as indicated that “theft he could not abide, and plainly there was a thief in his house. Necessarily the thief must be one of his Negroes” (p. 10). They all denied it (which indicates they are also liars), and “the denial was general. None had stolen anything – not money, anyway – a little sugar, or cake, or honey, or something like that, that "Marse Percy wouldn't mind or miss" but not money – never a cent of money. They were eloquent in their protestations, but Mr. Driscoll was not moved by them” (p. 10). He answered each in turn with a stern “Name the thief!”

When he promised them that he would not sell them down the river, “He knew, himself, that he had done a noble and gracious thing, and was privately well

pleased with his magnanimity; and that night he set the incident down in his diary, so that his son might read it in after years, and be thereby moved to deeds of gentleness and humanity himself" (p. 12). However, as he slept well that night because of what he did the others did not as the narrator indicates:

Percy Driscoll slept well the night he saved his house minions from going down the river, but no wink of sleep visited Roxy's eyes. A profound terror had taken possession of her. Her child could grow up and be sold down the river! The thought crazed her with horror. If she dozed and lost herself for a moment, the next moment she was on her feet flying to her child's cradle to see if it was still there. Then she would gather it to her heart and pour out her love upon it in a frenzy of kisses, moaning, crying, and saying, "Dey sha'n't, oh, dey sha'nt!" – yo' po' mammy will kill you fust!" (p. 13).

In this instance, the feeling of belonging to a particular group is presented by Roxy. She shows that her baby and herself are a group, "the self" different from that of the head of the household, Driscoll. Again, her expression did not refer to Driscoll, who threatened to sell her own kind down the river, as one person but as a group different from herself as such "the other" as she says "Dey sha'n't, oh, dey sha'nt!". She mumbles further "No, dolling mammy ain't gwine to treat you so. De angels is gwine to 'mire you jist as much as dey does 'yo mammy. Ain't gwine to have 'em putt'n dey han's up 'fo' dey eyes en sayin' to David and Goliath en dem yuther prophets, 'Dat chile is dress' to indelicate fo' dis place'" (p. 14).

Another means of identification is presented in the mode of dressing. Exploiting this knowledge, Roxy realises that she is the only one recognising the difference in the two children:

She stepped over and glanced at the other infant; she flung a glance back at her own; then one more at the heir of the house. Now a strange light dawned in her eyes, and in a moment she was lost in thought. She seemed in a trance; when she came out of it, she muttered, "When I 'uz a-washin' 'em in de tub, yistiddy, he own pappy

asked me which of 'em was his'n" (p. 15).

She therefore, "stripped off the shirt" off her child and "clothed the naked little creature in one of Thomas `a Becket's snowy, long baby gowns, with its bright blue bows and dainty flummery of ruffles" (p. 14). On the other hand, she "undressed Thomas `a Becket, stripping him of everything, and put the tow-linen shirt on him. She put his coral necklace on her own child's neck. Then she placed the children side by side, and after earnest inspection she muttered: "Now who would b'lieve clo'es could do de like o' dat? Dog my cats if it ain't all I kin do to tell t' other fum which, let alone his pappy" (p. 15). To exploit the knowledge of dress as a mode of identification further, Roxy:

She put her cub in Tommy's elegant cradle and said: "You's young Marse Tom fum dis out, en I got to practice and git used to 'memberin' to call you dat, honey, or I's gwine to make a mistake sometime en git us bofe into trouble. Dah--now you lay still en don't fret no mo', Marse Tom. Oh, thank de lord in heaven, you's saved, you's saved! Dey ain't no man kin ever sell mammy's po' little honey down de river now!" (p. 15).

However, Roxy is not comfortable with what she has done (is it because she is white in complexion?), so she flung herself on her bed and began to think and toss so as to find a justification for what she has done or to remember where something like what she has done happened. Remembering where she has known it happened, "she sat suddenly upright, for a comforting thought had flown through her worried mind" and says:

"T ain't no sin – white folks has done it! It ain't no sin, glory to goodness it ain't no sin! Dey's done it – yes, en dey was de biggest quality in de whole bilin', too – kings!" She began to muse; she was trying to gather out of her memory the dim particulars of some tale she had heard some time or other. At last she said – "Now I's got it; now I 'member. It was dat ole nigger preacher dat tole it, de time he come over here fum Illinois en preached in de nigger church. He said dey ain't nobody kin save his own self.. can't do it by faith, can't

do it by works, can't do it no way at all. Free grace is de on'y way, en dat don't come fum nobody but jis' de Lord; en he kin give it to anybody He please, saint or sinner – he don't kyer. He do jis' as He's a mineter. He s'lect out anybody dat suit Him, en put another one in his place, and make de fust one happy forever en leave t' other one to burn wid Satan. De preacher said it was jist like dey done in Englan' one time, long time ago. De queen she lef' her baby layin' aroun' one day, en went out callin'; an one 'o de niggers roun'bout de place dat was 'mos' white, she come in en see de chile layin' aroun', en tuck en put her own chile's clo's on de queen's chile, en put de queen's chile's clo'es on her own chile, en den lef' her own chile layin' aroun', en tuck en toted de queen's chile home to de nigger quarter, en nobody ever foun' it out, en her chile was de king bimeby, en sole de queen's chile down de river one time when dey had to settle up de estate. Dah, now–de preacher said it his own self, en it ain't no sin, 'ca'se white folks done it. Dey done it–yes, dey done it; en not on'y jis' common white folks nuther, but de biggest quality dey is in de whole bilin'. Oh, I's so glad I 'member 'bout dat!" (p. 16)

The above quotation shows that Roxy relies on the thoughts and actions of the white people for the justification of what she has done. The text therefore implies that black people are not thinkers on their own; they rely on the thinking of the white people in their activities. The unconscious belief of the author of the blacks' inability to think as white people do is, therefore, revealed in his writing, though disguised in Roxy's search of the reason to justify her own actions.

Conclusion

Narrative techniques: heterodiegetic narrator and characterisation are used in the portrayal of identity of the White people as “the self” and the Black as “the other” in this novel. These techniques are used to depict the identity of “the self” in a positive light and that of “the other” in the negative one. The description of all the White characters in this

instance is authorial, thus heterodiegetic, and explicit. It presents White people in the context of this novel as good, intelligent and generous. York Leicester Driscoll was fine and just and generous; Pembroke Howard, was a fine, majestic creature, a gentleman according to the nicest requirements of the Virginia rule; Colonel Cecil Burleigh Essex, another F.F.V. of formidable Caliber and Percy Northumberland Driscoll, was a prosperous man and intelligent. None of them has any problem that the narrator deems worthy of noting. The identity of Black people, ‘the other’, in this text is depicted through the use of mode of speech, blood, colour and mode of dressing. Behaviour pattern of Black people is also presented as their means of identification. They are mainly portrayed in a negative image. Roxana is the Black woman that swap her child, a slave with the child of her master, thus protecting her own son while consigning the rightful heir to the oblivion of a Negro household slave; Tom, the Black child that occupies the place of the actual heir to the house of Mr. Driscoll, is described “a bad baby, from the very beginning of his usurpation” (p. 19), he is too bad that he sold his mother, who elevates him to the place of the heir to the house of Mr. Driscoll, into slavery down the river. The other Black people are presented by the narrator as thieves.

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