

Inter racialism and mixed marriages by extension english literature essay

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



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Introduction

Inter-racialism and mixed marriages by extension form basis for a number of literary works. As various authors present the concept of racism, a number of factors emerge which ideologically shape individual perception of racial identity across the different periods and ages. Most of authors view race as a stationery factor that is there to stay. However, a large proportion agrees that racial affiliated behaviors are dependent on a number of variables. The variables shape the societal approach and perception to racism. Whether or not a white population accepts a black person in their midst is dependant on the social ideologies that guide their belief and practices. Vice-versa is true. Literary authors have crafted these ideas into fictitious and real life stories that interest the readers while conveying distinct messages on racial congregation. While my paper acknowledges that inter-racism is a phenomenon that the society must live with, it draws from a number of vocabulary and aesthetic experience to analyze the relationship between racism and changing times. This has been made possible with the help of a

number of works including Pudd'nhead Wilson by Mark Twain, Light in August by William Faulkner and The Dutchman and The Slave by Amir Baraka. While presenting a number of themes in their writings, these authors seek to seek to disprove the concept that race is a fixed construct by analyzing the conditions by which racial expectations and identification are overturned by transient conditions.

The Light of the House

It has long been accepted that the human community the human community, is defined by kinship relations. This is a central preoccupation of the literary works earlier mentioned. Light in August uniquely drifts away from most literature which value kinship's the basis of relationship and instead presents a scenario where kinship is conspicuously absent. Kinship over-inscription emerges as a result of the absence and is prime to the development organization of Faulkner's fiction. No comparison is related to family legacy throughout the story (Faulkner 32). To understand a narrative that belongs nowhere and to nobody, critics and scholars have collapsed the novel itself into its protagonist: a racially undecipherable orphan child whom no one knows quite what to do with. That is where the problem of kinship begins. Intent on taking the lack of explicit kinship relations as a meaningful form in its own right, He argues in " The Stillness of Light in August" that the novel is the product of a culture whose members are all " strangers to each other" (Faulkner 32). Even their sharing the same piece of terra firma is not enough to convince him that Light in August makes a group out of those who seem to fit into none. For He, there is no group because the novel's central

concern lies with the individual alienated by "modern loneliness" (Faulkner 56). Not surprisingly, then, his solution to the problem of the dilemma embodied in the protagonist of *Light in August* is to claim that he struggles as a 'stranger' ... to become [a] man" To arrive at this ambiguous conclusion, He makes a compelling case that *Light in August* shows how Americans have no histories in common at all because of literary and cultural differences that make each region, its people, and their idiom "the strangest to the others" (Faulkner 65). The author, in "The Community and the Pariah" does assume that some kind of community informs the novel only to conclude that the community is constituted by exclusions. While he cannot yet qualify those exclusions as racially motivated, he does understand the group as an absent or negative force in that all the major characters in the novel exist outside its norms. Patricia McKee's *Producing American Races* supplements Brooks' argument when it contends that this group of excluded humans is made up of women and African Americans whose absence produces a coherent white male community. McKee demonstrates that in *Light in August*, "not one of the central characters ... is a native of Jefferson (Faulkner 56), Mississippi, where the novel takes place," and so the novel's community of white men depends entirely on a group of negative others to make the town their own (Faulkner 56). A community suppressed and denied is, in her estimation, no community at all, but figures into the life of the town as a "darkness, formlessness, corruption, rot, swamp, slime, and other images of an undifferentiated mass" (Faulkner 76). From this sampling of critical opinion, one must conclude that the novel encourages readers to puzzle over the terms of membership and the formation of kin groups, much

as characters within the novel ponder the mystery of the protagonist's origins. The same lack of kinship that motivates reading within the novel motivates reading of the novel. How does kinship vanish? This is not a novel; after all, of a completely isolated, self-generative, and internal individual, one who's thought becomes a subject unto itself, as in the cases of Darla or the dead mother in *As I Lay Dying*. *Light in August* begins with what might strike us as the very embodiment of kinship, a pregnant mother, and the unclear parenthood of Lena Grove herself—her parents are dead and unidentified—and of her child and the protagonist as well, begs the question (Faulkner 56): Does the fact that the novel makes us feel its lack of kinship not imply that such excluded relations of gender and generation were once there and might reappear—as the resolution of the mystery of the protagonist's identity if not the restoration of a community? The book critically examines the human nature within which racial relationships are found yet have little meaning to ultimate human character/behavior. In doing this, the novel provides the answer to the question as to the relation between race and humanity. Following in step with the tradition of his predecessors, he admits that in contrast to Faulkner's other major works, in *Light in August* "kinship is continually denied" ((Faulkner 72). Contrary to such new critical forebears as Cleanthes Brooks, he turns principally to "history" as manifest in tropes of "blood" and to narrative "form" in order to tease out a pattern of kinship even where such a pattern is obviously lacking ((Faulkner 76). He reconstructs "a context for Faulkner's fiction out of historical experience," an experience that to him is grounded in American racial conflict. The fact of this conflict makes it possible to organize kin

relations in a novel that otherwise confounds race. Indeed, the very denial of those relations "constitutes" what he calls—echoing Leslie Fiedler—"America's central gothic experience." Thus he implicitly and ironically suggests that all meaningful forms of kinship, including racial forms of kinship, are missing, repressed and replaced by figures of "passing" and "the uncanny" that Sundquist defines as such in one or more of several oppositions: "concealment and revelation" (Faulkner 71), the "visible" and "invisible", the "veiled and intangible", the "hidden and suppressed." Despite the reasonableness of his new historicism, he all but admits that the novel yields up as many gothic specters as it does tangible groups. To establish the differences that allow kinship to form, it's worth declaring that the blood that fails to evince Joe Christmas's belonging to any group is in fact an "invisible essence of blackness that ... Christmas's white body conceals (Faulkner 71)." "Metaphysical essence" allows simple, and contradictory, to designation as visible something that cannot be seen and thus to insist on "a Faulkner who is not skeptical of racial identity" (151). But if—as I believe is the case—the novel turns race into that which not only refuses outward and visible identification, but also baffles any ontological basis for "racial identity," then Christmas cannot belong to any particular community. Thus critics who turn to race as the answer to group identity in the novel paradoxically base their reasoning on the novel's indeterminate indicators to do so. This principle is in agreement that insofar as he is making an anti-identitarian argument in that any racial basis of kinship is to him essentialist. The idea of race kinship as "metaphysical essence" is precisely the problem of an American culture and "a Faulkner who is not skeptical of racial

identity." To my mind, they have fallen into Faulkner perceives the impalpable connection between a community made of individual identities and one made of something else. Critics snap up the bait offered by the defunct racial codes in the novel when they make racial allegories out of the familial connections concealed behind Christmas's secret origins, hidden beneath his skin or operating at some level of his psyche. Why, might we ask, is it self-defeating to create such allegories? Because Christmas is the means by which kin identity is simultaneously withheld and mystified. By pressing this particular protagonist into some group, one exercises much the same kind of power that Percy Grimm does in cutting Christmas open with a knife. Rather than strive for what the novel withholds, I am interested in what the novel can tell us were we to abandon the compulsive search for kinship. What does it say about the reader's need to know race and the impossibility of doing so? Is it possible, or even desirable, to imagine human relations without some form of kinship? In the characters, Joe Christmas and the maternal shadowy figure of Lena Grove humanity is perceived in the form of race, social class, gender affiliation, family relations, and religious affiliation. These aspects form the basis for kinship and community organization. Reading *Light in August* in terms of the continuity of life across cultural divisions changes how we think of kinship in the novel. Joe Christmas is presented as a model representation of humanity aimed at testing the limits of humanity classification (Faulkner 76). The novel navigates through an experimental process of ingestion, abjection, individual/communal reflection, human instinct and action. These aspects fail to relate bare life aspects to supposed higher human consciousness levels and organization

collectivity which starts and terminates with kinship. The character is rather assumed to present a position within the already existing view of humanity. However, it is vital to state that the novel challenges the background of culture upon which the world is constituted (Faulkner 71). The kinship nomenclature offers an intrinsic and integral language part. He has, I believe, something like the following in mind: Kinship is not only a key part of a larger cultural system, but also is the language of that system itself. Separation of kinship from other categories that distinguish it would be of essence in understanding interracial existence. Kinship in itself is writing and like language it operates as a different system of culture. Additionally, kinship is used to as the basis for individual identity. It is therefore a medium upon which the protagonist and the antagonist's world are evaluated to the stories opinion on race and character. It has been widely perceived that race is a character of kinship. A clear example is illustrated in the family called "the burden". Kinship is symbolically established by the common protagonists designation of a common name other than that perceived to belong to his kinsmen(family). It is this name tag which designates and obligates the groups to a distinct behavior that they associate themselves to. However, no proof exists of any blood ties to such group behaviors. The character lacks direct family affiliation but kills by his appellation. According to Durkheim, a meal taken together creates a unique kinship bond, non racial affiliated that minds the group together. On these bases it cannot be assumed that blood, family or racial relationships are the basis for kinship and individual character. Rather than racial category and kinship languages, names and food offer a common body that brings together communities. Despite being a

radical figure that obscures and manifest through family connections, race does not define individual behaviors. Joe Christmas acts as the novels modern assemblage of individual imagination that lacks traditional community criteria. In the character, Faulkner assembles capabilities and properties which a product of a different racial and ethnic affiliation and hence character, a character that is paradoxically composed of anonymities and backgrounds that lack common descent and do not engage in any kind of cultural interchange (Godden 237). The story presents a scenario that bear exception to normal human thought that readers often associate with members of a group (race). To an extent, Christmas stands out a symbol of another corporate other than which he might have come from. His proclamation that his name is not McEachern but " Christmas", raises a new view of ethnicity and racial identity, hence symbolizing absence of a link between identity and individual's way of life. His name segregates him from household names and the normal practices regulated by the unwritten law of kinship (Godden 237). He does not become a Christian lest he loses his name " Christmas" a name acquired by virtue of having been left at an orphanage door on a Christmas Eve. The origins of his name are thus equally obscure. He does not pray and has desisted from learning catechism as his father does. Additionally he goes without food and eats in isolation instead of joining the McEarchern's for family meals. (Faulkner 85). Despite having been adopted an accepted by McEarchern; to him McEarchern has always been a stranger. Despite being within the family he does not involve himself in their activities.. He further makes himself an exception to kinship rules by denying, refuting and attacking his adoptive parent. Using Agamben's term,

the novel presents Christmas as one who is out of self and outside kinship rules and becomes " the figure of representation of singularity as far as it exhibits irrepresentability. Throughout the novel, various characters attempt- and the novel invites readers-to fix Christmas in terms of race. For Louis Althusser, belonging to a group and being recognized as an individual member within that group requires such acts of " hailing" His account of human existence eliminates the possibility of not being interpellated, as that's what cultures do. Establishing the protagonist adoption of the ' Christmas' name is drawn from as far as the novel allows the reader to, with regard to his origin. Godden translates a child's conception of identity as being translatable from biological to ideological conception founded on ideality (237). Christian supports this ideology by formation of his own individual identity. Faulkner's character basically lacks affiliation to nay group's identity.

The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead

Many critics of Pudd'nhead Wilson have agreed on the extraordinary power of Roxana as a character, while others have attended more to her problematic behavior, such as the radical changes in her demeanor, her white supremacist attitudes, and her capacity for both cruelty and tenderness, and have offered a variety of explanations either to defend or to attack Twain's portrayal (Gilman and Forest 46). The critical response shows a marked tendency, however, to use her sexuality to account for both Roxana's power and the problems she raises as a character. 1 For example, in the most compelling and nuanced analysis of the novel as a whole, James

M. Cox calls Roxana " the primary force in the world she serves" and underscores that force as " sexual." He traces a circuit of power in the novel's plot structure originating in the white, male lust of the Southern slaveholder. What " explains Roxana's power," according to Cox, is the " submerged lust" of the white male, whose " passion" is transferred " from the white wives to the slave mistresses." Roxana serves as the repository of " the guilt of their repressed desires," so that " their guilt is objectified in her repression." Her son, Tom Driscoll, thus becomes " the avenging agent who carries back across the color line the repressed guilt which has gathered at the heart of slavery (Gilman and Forest 46)." Therefore, Tom's assassination of his foster father, Judge Driscoll, is the thematic center of the plot, and his " murder suggests the anarchy which the white society has by its own action released upon it (Newlyn 49)." As Cox tracks the transmission of guilt and desire from the white male through the black female and back onto the white male (Gilman and Forest 46), he also tracks power from its " origin" in the white, male " lust out of which [Tom] was created" down to Roxana, who is only the " immediate source" of Tom's " dark force." If " the power of those who rule has been transferred to those who serve," its origin remains marked at the site of the white, male father, and its final restoration is secured by the " dark comedy" of Pudd'nhead Wilson's ascent to the position of authority left vacant by Judge Driscoll's death. The oedipal pattern, in which white males

Of all our writers, Mark Twain seems most American, as if he, like race, slavery, and the nation itself were referents that couldn't be deconstructed by language. Of course, a deep irony runs right here. Mark Twain is, after all, a pen name, signifying, if it signifies anything, that Mark

Twain is all writing and nothing but writing. Then too, slavery itself was a fiction -- a fiction of law and custom, as Mark Twain reminds us in, and Evan Carton has reminded us about, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Beyond that, this nation was itself a text intruded into history, and a text not even in its "own" language but in the language of the parent nation against which it was rebelling. That leaves race as something different altogether, in that it signifies both the unity and the separation of the human species. As a word in English, the mother tongue yet not the native language of Nature's Nation, race refers at once to the most dynamic activity of humanity as in the race for the Pacific, or the race to arrive on the moon, or the arms race and most inertial essence of the human species: the races of the human family (Gilman and Forest 46). Even such scansion of the terms reveals how culturally loaded they are. Equally important, they are morally loaded, even overloaded. It is impossible for an American to think about race and slavery without feeling a strong moral charge running like an electric current right through the thought, and running strong enough to color it. These volatile subjects do not admit of pure thought, if there is such a thing. If slavery was an absolute contradiction in a free country, its abolition left the issue of race, with which it had been as inextricably bound as one Siamese twin to another, not dead but vividly living as a moral, social, and legal issue. It took a hundred years after the abolition of slavery to settle the legal issues surrounding race, and there is no end in sight for the moral, psychological, and social issues of race and racism. My figure of race and slavery as Siamese This novel remains one of the most thorough literary works to have examined institutional slavery the racial prejudice superficiality. Written

during the era of Jim Crow's segregation, its publishing preceded the landmark segregation case ruling in *Plessey vs. Ferguson* (Gilman and Forest 46). The novel's central character is Roxy who being a white slave does not want the same to happen to his baby. He switches his baby with his master's child and watches her natural, son grow up on wealth and become a heartless slave owner and end up being a criminal (Mark 56). The book generally presents a direct attack on slavery and racially related ideas. In the story, Mark Twain undertakes a deep examination of racial identity. This he does by tracing the switching of a white for a black child. Being one sixteenth African, Roxy bears a close semblance to the white race. Her child is accepted as a white and fits within the white community unnoticed over the years (Gilman and Forest 46). This emphasizes the fact that as the child grows, it is not the races but the circumstances and the environment play a crucial role in shaping individual behaviors. The novel basically revolves around the identity of a confused lawyer. His eccentric ideas and actions have made the community refer to him as Pudd'nhead. Its setting is based in the 1830's when racial segregation was still a ripe issue within the community. The close resemblance of the children offered an opportunity for comparison of racial identities' role in shaping individual (Mark 67). However, unlike the perception held then by the communities, race plays little to shape the children's behavior but rather it is the environment that shapes their behavior. Roxanna's natural child grows up into an arrogant coward and bully. He even attempts to sell off Roxana to pay off his debts accrued in gambling and Roxanna is forced to blackmail him with his true identity. Failure results to him resorting to stealing as a way of earning to pay off his

debts. He murders the judge during the robbery using a knife stolen from Luigi who is obey of the twins recently arrived in the town and well received by the towns community. (Mark 67). Further, the Roxana's natural son causes several disturbances within the area and soon their relationship with judge Driscoll who had adopted him grows sour. He is eventually blamed for the murder of the judge. Generally, Roxana had hoped that his real son would grow up to become an ideal man she had always anticipated. Little she knows that origin or rater background would not play a role in shaping the child's destiny but rather it is the transient conditions in which the child is brought up. The failure of racism is reflected in Roxanna disappointment; having wasted spent 23 years in slavery, only for her own son (kin) to continue her on the false pension of 35 dollars a month (Howe 500). The real heir to the wealth on the other bore the ways and life of the condition with which he grew and lacked any character behaviors that would link him to the real parents (Howe 500). This is generally an assertion of the meager role that race as a factor pays in shaping individuals as compared to the transient conditions in which the persons grow. The carnivalesque drama of doubling, twinship, and masquerade that constitutes Pudd'nhead Wilson and its freakishly extracted yet intimately conjoined story, *Those Extraordinary Twins*, is likely to remain misread and controversial in estimations of Mark Twain's literary achievement as long as the work's virtual mimicry of America's late-nineteenth-century race crisis is left out of account. Readers have, of course, often found a key to the novel's interpretation in the notorious "fiction of law and custom" that make the "white" slave Roxy legally "black" by allowing one-sixteenth of her blood to "outvote" the rest

(Hasratian 77). Like so many parodic moments in the book, however, Twain's joke about voting speaks not simply to general anxieties about miscegenation but more particularly to the deliberate campaign to disfranchise blacks and strip them of legal protections that was underway by the early 1890s (Hasratian 77). Built of the brutal artifice of racial distinctions, both American law and American custom conspired to punish black men and women in the post-Reconstruction years, and Twain's bitter failed fiction, verging on allegory but trapped in unfinished burlesque, has been thought to participate in the black nadir without artistically transcending it or, conversely, without reaching its broader historical implications.

The Dutchman and the slave

The Dutchman story occurs in New York subway where a white woman meets a young black man named Clay. The woman uses her aggressiveness and forwardness to lure Clay and crack the shell around him. Both plays however, focus on black and white relationships and more specifically on the heritage of slaves and the oppressiveness accompanying the heritage. Both additionally, transcend sexual relations across the racial lines (Baraka 35) In Dutchman, a subway ride with Clay, a man in his middle 20's and Lula who is close to 30 and provocative are at the center of the theme. Throughout the whole script, Clay is constantly teased by Lula hinting towards a sex prospect. Lula claims to know about Clay's kind and it turns into insults which climaxed by Uncle Tom's derision. Clay is a reflection of the black assimilationists. On the other hand Lula stands for the liberal whites. The

liberal whites claim to have a lot of information about the black people. Amiri Baraka displays no patience for such. There are three main characters in the other play. These are Grace, and Easley who are a white couple and one black man who happens to be the white woman's ex-husband. Walker leads the liberation movement for the black which aims to annihilate the white population. Grace left Walker due to his commitment to kill the whites whom she is part of (Baraka 35). Despite emerging as a murderer, Walker plays the victim given that the rise of violent racial war was a product of long periods of oppression. Generally the Dutchman is emotionally charged and is often considered to symbolically represent the case of Adam and Eve. In this case a black bourgeois man brutally killed by an insane and seductive white woman who in the scene closes as she prepares for her next victim. Emotional and intellectual fencing between Clay and Lula irrevocably spirals to a symbolic violence act that repeats through the play.

Conclusion

I doubt if there exists any more valuable record for the study of the social history of the Negro in America than the naïve reflection of American social attitudes and their changes in the literary treatment of Negro life and character Deborah (Clarke 400). More sensitively, and more truly than the conscious conventions of journalism and public debate, do these relatively unconscious values trace the fundamental attitudes of the American mind? Indeed, very often public professions are at utter variance with actual social practices, and in the matter of the Negro this variance is notably paradoxical. The statement that the North loves the Negro and dislikes Negroes, while the

South hates the Negro but loves Negroes, is a crude generalization of the paradox, with just enough truth in it, however, to give us an interesting cue for further analysis (Clarke 402). What this essay attempts must necessarily be a cursory preliminary survey: detailed intensive study of American social attitudes toward the Negro, using the changes of the literary tradition as clues, must be seriously undertaken later. This would pave way for an even more in-depth understanding of the variables that define race of an individual. For a cursory survey, a tracing of the attitude toward the Negro as reflected in American letters gives us seven stages or phases, supplying not only an interesting cycle of shifts in public taste and interest, but a rather significant curve for social history (Howe 499). And more interesting perhaps than the attitudes themselves are the underlying issues and reactions of class attitudes and relationships which have been basically responsible for these attitudes (Mitchell 302). Moreover, instead of a single fixed attitude, sectionally divided and opposed, as the popular presumption goes, it will be seen that American attitudes toward the Negro have changed radically and often, with dramatic turns and with a curious reversal of role between the North and the South according to the class consciousness and interests dominant at any given time (Clarke 402). Inter-racialism or relation between different persons from different races. It has remained a fundamental issue across the future and has defined the path and life that many persons and communities have lived. It forms the basis for examination of issues core to racial identification of individuals. Various literary works have however suggested otherwise. This has been possible in this paper by bringing together aforementioned literary works which have

effectively confirmed that race as a factor does not chart the character of an individual but rather it is the transient conditions in which the individual is up-brought in. the scholarship articles discussed above demonstrates the possibility of approaching the racial notion in such a way that racial denial inform the racial ideologies to the positive side. The literary works brings out three aspects of racism which include the high prejudice degrees, the role of strong segregatory patterns and the long historical affiliation of humans to race. Negro life is probably the most notable aspects and effect of race. Various authors have discussed the attitudes that emerge including a feeling of strangeness, domestic familiarity, and moral issues raising controversy, feelings of pity, hatred and bewilderments among others (Howe 501). These attitudes have naturally been unfavorable to adequately approach the Negroes portrayal in the society and have been subject to ne form of stereotype or another (Mitchell 300). A number of related issues arise from the case stories and play discussed. Most evident is the fact that individual chart their own life based on what they want to be. They generally assert that outside influence far supersede racial identity in shaping individual behavior and that all individual. A key issue that relates to race is ethnicity. While race refers to the cultural construction that depends on the social description associated with that particular race, ethnicity defines and experience based identity as an ongoing process/act. Culture, ethnicity and race all contribute to the individual well being but it must be recognize that they do not bar an individual from charting his/her path of choice. The argument hollowness is evidenced by the large number of white persons who are constantly subjected to racial victimization (Clarke 412). Large volumes

of documents exist to prove that systematic and structural discrimination on basis of race is still rife though milestones are made by the day. Time has proved that race has nothing to do with the way humans live they life except that humans themselves use it as a tag for segregation. Racial prejudices are present in all population segments but we must acknowledge that consequences are not at par across all the population divides. While many persons have attributed the plight and constant agitation of the colored persons as an act cause by themselves, this is not true as in most causes the predicament of ne race against the other are defined by the tags that the community have ascribed to them and is often detrimental to their well-being (Clarke 412). notable currently people are dealing with the race issue just as they are dealing with the climate. This include facts denial, and use of unfounded information among others. The text discussed generally reinforce the argument that earlier mentioned that race is not a fixed construct but rather a tag that the society assigns itself to and use to create difference amongst themselves. Rather paper asserts that racial expectations are determined by the transient conditions encountered by an individual. All the three texts reinforce this assertion as we see persons of different background existing within different environments and fail to manifest the background that the society would tag them with. They instead chart newer paths that make them distinct from what the society would have expected. They6 offer premises upon which it may be argued based on facts that race is not the ultimate factor that determines the way of life on an individual.