

The *Doppelgänger* Tale and the Masquerade of Race:
The Enduring Influence of Dumas' *Iron Mask* and Twain's Switched Heroes

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“*L’habit ne fait pas le moine.*”

—French proverb

“Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example.”

—Pudd’nhead Wilson’s Calendar

Mark Twain, *Pudd’nhead Wilson*

“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear—not absence of fear.

Except a creature be part coward it is not a compliment to say it is brave,

it is merely a loose misapplication of the word.”

—Pudd’nhead Wilson’s Calendar

Mark Twain, *Pudd’nhead Wilson*

“What else is love but understanding and rejoicing in the fact that another person lives,

acts, and experiences otherwise than we do and crosswise to our purposes?

For love to bridge these opposites through joy it must not eliminate or deny them. —Even

self-love presupposes an irreconcilable duality (or multiplicity) in a single person.”

Freidrich Nietzsche, “Love and Duality”

Chapter 1:

Doppelgänger Themes in the Works of Dumas and Twain

Fascination with the *doppelgänger* permeates literature, with tales going back to early German folklore. Whether primarily due to the actual adventure or to underlying connection inherent in human nature, the appeal of the *doppelgänger* is enduring. Interestingly, *Merriam-Webster, Inc.*, the “leading language reference publisher,” recently named *doppelgänger* as the seventh most frequently looked up word in its published “Top Words of Summer 2010,” stating that it was “used in reference to the similarity between Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat Pray, Love*, and Julia Roberts, who portrays her in the [currently best-selling] movie” (n. pag.). Although presently known as one’s double, the word’s meaning has varied considerably from its origin, and the aforementioned use of the term to refer to Roberts’ likeness to the character she portrays in the film reflects the evolution of the term. Analyzing the etymology and giving a brief history of the evolution of the term will lay the groundwork for demonstrating the literary use of the *doppelgänger* motif by Alexandre Dumas (1802-1870) and Mark Twain (1835-1910).

Borrowed from the German *doppel*, which in the *Oxford-Duden German Dictionary* is translated literally as “double” or “duplicate,” and *gänger*, which is translated literally as “walker,” “gaiter,” or “goer,” *doppelgänger* consistently signifies a physical double, or the “double-walker” or “double-goer” (“Doppelgänger,” def. 1.). The first known mention of the term is by Jean Paul (1763-1825) in *Siebenkäs*, in which, “[i]n one of the stranger twists of fate in literary history” (Fleming 126), Paul actually coins two original expressions: *Doppelgänger* and *Doppeltgänger*. Using the footnotes in

Siebenkäs, Fleming describes the early beginnings of both newly coined words: “According to Jean Paul, when people ‘see themselves,’ when one ‘goes twice,’ one is a *Doppeltgänger*”; when one has a meal of two courses, in which the second doesn’t come second, but together with the first, this is a *Doppeltgänger*” (126). The first term, *Doppeltgänger*, is defined by Paul as “the name for people who see themselves [*So heissen Leute, die sich selber sehen*]” (126). The second term, *Doppeltgänger*, Paul uses to refer specifically to food that was so superb that “not only was one course [Gang] served but also a second [*Doppeltgänger*] [*nicht bloßein Gang aufgetragen wurde, Sondern ein zweiter, ein Doppeltgänger*]” (126). Although originally capitalized, as all German nouns, the words have since been anglicized to use the lower case “d,” with *doppeltgänger* adopting the original meaning for *Doppeltgänger*. For the purpose of consistency, the term will be regularly referred to throughout this thesis as *doppeltgänger*, unless directly quoted from another source.

The entry for *doppeltgänger* in *The Oxford English Dictionary* directs the reader to *double-ganger*, which is defined as: “The apparition of a living person; a double, a wraith” (“Doppeltgänger,” def. 1.), (“Double-ganger,” def. 1.). According to C.T. Onions in *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, the German word *doppeltgänger* was semi-anglicized by [Sir Walter] Scott and C[harles] Kingsley, often taking the form, “double-ganger” (284). In *Arcade Dictionary of Word Origins: The Histories of More Than 8000 English-Language Words*, John Ayto defines *doppeltgänger* as “a ghostly apparition of a living person, especially one that haunts its real counterpart . . . but in the course of the twentieth century it has become increasingly restricted to a flesh-and-blood person identical to another, double” (19).

Many early tales involving alleged sightings of *doppelgängers* by famous men exist. These tales involve the superstitious belief that when one saw his spirit-double, death or catastrophe to oneself or one's loved one would quickly follow. Some of the well-known men who claimed to have viewed their *doppelgängers* are: John Donne, Guy de Maupassant, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and President Abraham Lincoln. In each case, a *doppelgänger* sighting preceded some type of disaster, further promulgating superstition surrounding the phenomenon. In 1828, Austrian composer Franz Schubert set an untitled poem, written by Heinrich Heine, to music. The song, which Schubert titled, "*Der Doppelgänger*," perfectly illustrates the superstition surrounding any sighting of one's *doppelgänger*:

*Still ist die Nacht, es ruhen die Gassen,
 In diesem Hause wohnte mein Schatz;
 Sie hat schon längst die Stadt verlassen,
 Doch steht noch das Haus auf demselben Platz.
 Da steht auch ein Mensch und starrt in die Höhe,
 Und ringt die Hände, vor Schmerzengewalt;
 Mir graust es, wenn ich sein Antlitz sehe –
 Der Mond zeigt mir meine eigne Gestalt.
 Du Doppelgänger! du bleicher Geselle!
 Was äffst du nach mein Liebesleid,
 Das mich gequält auf dieser Stelle,
 So manche Nacht, in alter Zeit? (Code n. pag.)*

Leon Malinofsky provided the translation of the German poem:

Still is the night, it quiets the streets down
 In that window my love would appear
 She's long since gone away from this town
 But this house where she lived still remains here.
 A man stands here too, staring up into space
 And wrings his hands with the strength of his pain
 It chills me, when I behold his pale face
 For the moon shows me my own features again!
 You spirit double, you specter with my face
 Why do you mock my love-pain so
 That tortured me here, here in this place
 So many nights, so long ago? (n. pag.)

The lines Heine penned demonstrate the superstition surrounding any sighting of a “spirit double,” as *doppelgänger* is translated in “*Der Doppelgänger*.” The torture that the speaker reveals as he views his own features in the face that peers up at the home of his former lover illustrates the haunting characteristic of the *doppelgänger*. Viewing one’s *doppelgänger* was a forerunner of evil.

In addition to Heine’s utilization of the term, many nineteenth-century authors commonly composed stories using the *doppelgänger* theme to denote forebodings of evil. One of the earliest *doppelgänger* tales is *Die Elixiere des Teufels*, published in two volumes in 1815 and 1816, in which E. T. A. Hoffman employs the *doppelgänger* motif through his main character, Medardus. The prisoner Medardus, “proved inspirational for other dark masters of the nineteenth century like Balzac, Poe, Dickens, Baudelaire and

Dostoevsky” (Rau n. pag.). In 1839, for example, Edgar Allan Poe composed a remarkably dark *doppelgänger* story, “William Wilson,” in which the protagonist is murdered by his own *doppelgänger*. Also, in *The Double* (1846), Fyodor Dostoevsky’s utilization of the *doppelgänger* design involves psychological splitting; Dostoevsky employs the device as an apparition or wraith. *The Double*, an ambiguous story of split identities, each with differing ambitions, depicts the hero Golyadkin seeing his *doppelgänger*, Golyadkin Junior, as an exact (albeit ghostly) replica of himself minus the social ineptness, the paranoia, the descent into madness. As the tale unfolds, “Dostoevsky shows that Golyadkin Junior is Golyadkin Senior’s alter ego—a projection both of his ambition and his fears of displacement” (Martinsen xx). This alter ego, surreal in appearance and insidious in objective, haunts Golyadkin Senior, gradually ruining his social standing and his reputation: “It seemed to Mr. Golyadkin senior that his perfidious friend was smiling, that he gave a sly, hurried wink to the crowd of onlookers, and that there was something sinister in the face of the worthless Mr. Golyadkin junior, that he even made a grimace at the moment of his Judas kiss” (Dostoevsky 169). Indeed, as the *doppelgänger*, Golyadkin Junior ultimately usurps Senior’s place, Golyadkin’s deepest fears are realized. In the typically employed use of the literary *doppelgänger* motif, the viewing of his *doppelgänger* brings about malignant results for Golyadkin.

Although initially employed in literature as an apparition—a spirit double—the *doppelgänger* motif has evolved (mainly due to the works of Dumas and Twain) to denote more of a look-a-like, a double. Dumas borrowed from a well-known legend of a masked prisoner to devise an elaborate *doppelgänger* tale with switched look-a-likes in *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Since Dumas’ unique adaptation of the legend, there have

been countless successive tales. No longer does the *doppelgänger* necessarily represent the harbinger of misfortune or signify an evil omen; rather, the *doppelgänger* embodies a wide variety of themes and complex paradigms.

Using the newly adopted *doppelgänger* design, Dumas—and then Twain—separately created narratives involving switched identities which both challenged the accepted social ideals and spawned a plethora of imitations. Dumas' *doppelgänger* version of the masked prisoner became a widely read sensation. Following Dumas' manuscript, Twain penned several variations of the theme including elements embedded within *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and *The Prince and the Pauper*. There is evidence through his letters that Twain read (and enjoyed) Dumas' writings—probably in popular English translations, rather than in the original French. Both Twain and Dumas utilized the *doppelgänger* theme not only to entertain their audiences, but also to draw attention to the social injustices of the day and to emphasize the need for social reform.

Three of the authors' manuscripts especially point the reader to deeply entrenched cultural injustices: Alexandre Dumas' *The Man in the Iron Mask* (1850), *Georges* (1846), and Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1893). These manuscripts dabble with variations of the *doppelgänger* theme, some more overtly than others, but help demonstrate the subtle and not-so-subtle attacks on social evils. Other works by the same authors illuminate significant racial and social aspects embedded in the *doppelgänger* theme: Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844) and Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882). A continuing fascination with the *doppelgänger* indicates deeper significance than mere interest in the adventurous plots. In particular, *The Man in the Iron Mask* and

The Prince and the Pauper have inspired numerous subsequent imitations—not only with a similar theme, but also with a similar plot paradigm.

In the works of both Dumas and Twain, the *doppelgänger* motif exists as more than just a ploy for inventing an exciting adventure. The manuscripts address the serious issue of racial and social inequities. Dumas' and Twain's use of the *doppelgänger* allows a character to cross boundaries hitherto unavailable, effectively presenting to others as more distinctively different than the individual fundamentally understands himself or herself to be. These crossed boundaries result in various benefits: economic, physical, political, and social; yet the underlying angst resulting from hegemonic society often erupts in diverse penalties for the subaltern (those subjugated by the hegemonic group in power, the oppressed)—causing pain, sorrow, and further isolation.

Racial and social implications emerge in the three primary novels that continue to influence both literature and the media. There is evidence suggesting that the doubling may indicate underlying references to racial-related tensions, as well as the idea of “passing”: people of mixed races “passed” for one race (most commonly, although not exclusively, people with some black ancestry “passed” for white) to avoid the negative hegemony associated with being part of a minority race. In *Passing: When People Can't Be Who They Are*, Brooke Kroeger defines “passing” as “when people effectively present themselves as other than who they understand themselves to be” (7). “Passing” allowed a person to have an adventure or obtain a degree of freedom that would be otherwise unavailable. According to Sollors, in *Neither Black nor White yet Both*, “The first American instances in which the word ‘passing’ was used to signify ‘crossing the color line’ would seem to have appeared in notices concerning runaway slaves, and the term

‘passing’—first for ‘free,’ and then for (its later part-synonym) ‘white’” (255).

Additionally, “passing” in history was used for convenience, for opportunity, and in many cases, for personal safety.

“Passing” became more than just a means of presenting oneself as outwardly different; it was a significant means of escaping a life of segregation following what became known as the “one-drop rule” in the American South where if individuals possessed even a drop of black blood, they were considered black and thus exposed to countless restrictions and prejudices. The very idea of “passing,” as Dumas illustrates in both *The Man in the Iron Mask* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and as Twain illustrates in *Pudd’nhead Wilson*, upsets the very *status quo* of established social mores. While “passing with intent to break the law, to cause harm to other people, is unacceptable” (Kroeger 214), both Dumas and Twain whittle away at the foundations of the laws themselves through their subtle denunciations of the existing social conditions. Too often, the occurrence of “passing” pointed to serious flaws in legislation, rather than flaws in the individuals who “passed.” Kroeger’s observation regarding the “phenomenon of passing” suggests the depth of the dichotomy:

Encounters with passing have a way of sharpening perspective on who we are now and on who we are becoming, slipping in an often harsh rebuke to elements of society that might need a good kick into the future. The phenomenon of passing shows how destructive it is to categorize human beings on the basis of irrelevant criteria for the purpose of excluding them. But it also sheds light on what criteria may actually be relevant for this purpose. Yes, passing stories can deepen our appreciation for the wonders

of human mutability and self-invention, even as they expose where the limits are as well as where they ought and ought not to be. (215)

Truly the limits imposed upon justifiable instances of “passing” cannot begin to suggest that “passing” is an acceptable mode for survival. Rather, if one can only attain safety or opportunity through posing as someone other than self, “passing” becomes an escape from a society which is flawed. The *doppelgänger* motif, therefore, in the literature of Dumas and Twain, serves as a means of “passing” as characters step into the role of another to attain a level of safety, opportunity, or convenience not otherwise attainable.

Within the novels of Dumas and Twain, there is strong textual evidence suggesting identity-conflict issues related to class and racial distinctions and discrimination. The texts may be viewed as social critiques of the inequities of the caste system.

Additionally, these texts have proven their enduring quality over time. Despite the injustices that Dumas and Twain delineate in their works and the acerbic attacks upon their societies, both authors enjoyed enormous popularity. However, distinct differences in the manuscripts have influenced the recognition of the authors’ works. Dumas’ recognition among his countrymen subsequently declined—due in part to what has been perceived to be the lower caliber of his work (compared to French contemporaries: Honoré de Balzac, Victor Hugo, Gustave Flaubert, Alfred de Vigny, and others) and due in part to the revelation of his use of ghost writers. Meanwhile, Twain’s fame has persisted, whereas Dumas’ works are often omitted in scholarly anthologies of nineteenth-century literature. Twain’s works are regularly studied in high schools, universities, and graduate schools throughout the world. However, in many of his

manuscripts, Twain employed language that, although widely accepted during his time, became considered as controversial—perhaps even inflammatory—subsequent to the civil rights movement. This use of controversial language led to negative reviews and the banning of his works in many institutions. Twain’s innovative application of the journalistic technique to novel writing, combined with his astute use of humor and relevant connections to human nature, elevate his manuscripts to an admirable pedestal. Meanwhile, among literary scholars, the reputation of Dumas continues to be hampered by his admittedly haphazard method of publishing manuscripts. By his own admission before the Learned Society inquiry on February 17, 1845, Dumas was not responsible for the authorship of all the books published under his name (Fillaire 19). Well-known historian and scholar, Auguste Maquet, collaborated with Dumas on many of his novels (39). Maquet supplied the basic tale, including factual, historical details; then Dumas added the finesse, the creative and imaginative elements. Fillaire lists between fifty and sixty works that Maquet and Dumas composed jointly (128), claiming that they directly contribute to the lack of prominence that Dumas holds among students of French literature.

Additionally, the popularity of Dumas’ writings dwindled due to his particular style. Although popular during the nineteenth century and a particularly strong trait of French Romantics, Dumas’ often interminably wordy paragraphs and his prodigious imagination (combined with frequent inconsistencies within his novels) lack the readability and clarity of Twain’s journalistic style and shorter paragraphs. Yet, Dumas’ accomplishments are irrefutable. In his 1976 biography, *Alexandre Dumas père*, Richard S. Stowe explains that although Dumas “was not a highly cultivated man of letters, a

meticulous stylist, and craftsman of refined and sensitive tastes, a scholar or a thinker,” Dumas’ fiction nonetheless “remains a living part of France’s patrimony” (143-44).

According to Renee Winegarten in her article in *The New Criterion*, Dumas belongs with the masters of literature:

Dumas belongs with those who produced in such quantity that quality and reputations inevitably suffer. Yet Baudelaire (critic as well as poet), while regarding Dumas’s facility of ‘fearful dysentery’ with disfavor, could not refrain from lauding the novelist’s prodigious imagination: “this man . . . seems to represent universal vitality,” he wrote. The sheer energy involved is breathtaking. (35)

Indeed, there is undeniable evidence of the enduring worldwide impact of both authors.

The works of Dumas and Twain continue to influence countless successive *doppelgänger* tales in literature and in the media, including (but not limited to): *The Great Impersonation*, a novel by Edward Phillips Oppenheim, 1920; *The Strange Death of Adolph Hitler*, a 1943 film by James P. Hogan; *The Scapegoat*, novel and film by Daphne du Maurier, 1957; *The Eagle Has Landed*, a novel by Jack Higgins, 1976; and hundreds of children’s cartoons and television sitcoms.

While much of literary criticism and theory has moved away from employing solely traditional critical methods, specifically those that emphasize authorial intent and the relation of the text to its author, emphasizing instead a reader-oriented criticism, certain traditional methods may still prove profitable when viewing the works of Dumas and Twain. In *Literature, Theory, and Common Sense*, Antoine Compagnon describes the “stormy . . . vehement” debate over the place that the author holds in criticism as “the

most controversial issue in literary studies” (29). The literary text itself yields rich insight. Indeed, Falck claims in *Myth, Truth and Literature* that “the essential function of the literary text is one of revelation or disclosure” (90) from which readers glean truth significant to their lives. Furthermore, early critics were also authors who were seeking to glean noteworthy truth from manuscripts other than their own. Falck points out that “some of the greatest traditional critics, such as Johnson, Coleridge, Arnold, Eliot, Lawrence . . . were those who themselves created literature, rather than those ‘who don’t understand the need for it and would never have invented it’” (xii-xiii). Not only did these authors write their own manuscripts, they also consistently sought meaning and truth in the works of others. Without that search for significance, literature becomes subjective ground for any interpretation. In *The Death of the Critic*, Rónán McDonald claims that “[c]riticism, if it is a handmaiden of art, also calls it to account, addresses what it is for and, relatedly, what is its proper mode of expression. This is why the deepest roots of criticism actually lie in literature itself. All written forms double back and ponder their own purpose” (44). To some extent, this raises a question to the validity of criticism performed by non-authors. In the late 1960s, Roland Barthes published “The Death of the Author,” and Michel Foucault challenged critics with his “What is an Author?”. The controversy between “the traditionalists (literary history) and the moderns (the new criticisms)” (Compagnon 31) centered mainly around the role of the author. Writings by Foucault and Barthes delegitimized any authorial significance and any obtainable authorial intent. The resulting critical theories focused on close-readings of the text, avoiding the “traditional literary scholarship” of “historical or philological concerns” (McDonald 13). After decades of critical theory changes, the pendulum swung

dangerously toward looking at literature totally apart from its context. Rising critical theorists failed to note the context; instead “critics were so geared to politics they stopped noticing literature” (122). Although many changes have occurred in accepted critical methods, a more eclectic approach toward literary criticism may approach a reasonably sound textual interpretation. McDonald states that “[g]ood criticism is good judgement, a sense of what will please the common reader . . . and an ability not just to say that the literary work pleases, but also to say *why* it does so” (51). Close readings of texts continue to have significance; and while reader-oriented literary criticism has a certain amount of value, focusing more on the text itself has inherent value. Using a combination of reading the text to determine what the author intends and simultaneously seeking the text to determine the meaning of the text—apart from any attention to authorial intent—provides help with analyzing thematic elements of the works. Subsequently, understanding the historical context for both Twain and Dumas proves efficacious in understanding the class distinctions and the racial issues relating to both “passing” and identity during the period. No contextual investigation into Twain’s and Dumas’ views can possibly dispense with some preliminary examination of the background in which those views evolved and to which they frequently prove to be a response.

When situating the works in their historical setting, it is important to note that although Dumas precedes Twain by a generation—and in *The Man in the Iron Mask*, Dumas writes primarily about issues in the seventeenth century, while he situates *Georges* and Twain places *Pudd’nhead Wilson* in the nineteenth century—both authors use the *doppelgänger* theme to critique social ills. Comparing the authors’ individual representations of *doppelgänger*, as well as their use of the *doppelgänger* motif to

illuminate both racial and social tensions prevalent during the time periods in which they wrote, indicates a connection between the two authors, most likely a borrowing from Dumas by Twain. If the emphasis upon *doppelgänger* themes had proven to be less popular, thereby eliminating (or at least reducing) the plethora of imitations in subsequent centuries, perhaps the interconnectedness of the two authors, as well as their use of *doppelgänger* themes to critique racial and social evils (and to illustrate the psychological issues involved therein), would be more widely recognized. Nevertheless, through a close reading of manuscripts by both authors, such a correlation emerges.

Twain traveled extensively throughout Europe when Dumas' writings were immensely popular. In *Innocents Abroad*, Twain mentions traveling to “Castle d’If” (94), normally referred to as Château d’If, where he speaks of visiting “the damp, dismal cells in which two of Dumas’s heroes passed their confinement” (96). The cell where the masked prisoner was said to have been imprisoned aroused deep curiosity in Twain:

[T]he noisome cell where the celebrated ‘Iron Mask’—that ill-starred brother of a hard-hearted king of France—was confined for a season, before he was sent to hide the strange mystery of his life from the curious in the dungeons of St. Marguerite. The place had a far greater interest for us than it could have had we known beyond all question who the Iron Mask was, and what his history had been, and why this most unusual punishment had been meted out to him. Mystery! That was the charm. (96)

Twain’s fascination was with the mystery itself. In his introduction to *The Man in the Iron Mask*, David Coward states: “Twain would not have given a fig to know beyond question who the man was and why he had been so cruelly punished” (xxiii). It was the

adventure and the secrecy of the tale attracted him. *The Man in the Iron Mask* is not listed separately as one of the novels in Twain's library, according to Alan Gribben in *Mark Twain's Library: A Reconstruction*; however, *The Viscount of Bragelonne* (2 vols.), which includes *The Man in the Iron Mask*, is listed along with thirteen of Dumas' other novels (205). The mere presence of so many volumes written by Dumas in Twain's library is not enough to prove Twain's acquaintance with Dumas' writings. Several other sources document Twain's familiarity with Dumas: "Additionally, in 1885, Twain wrote a note to himself, "Get the rest of Dumas at the German Buchhandlung" (qtd. in Gribben, 206). In July 1880, Twain received a bill from Estes & Lauriat of Boston for twenty-one books "including '1 Iron Mask \$1'" (206). Ample evidence exists showing that Twain not only read Dumas' novels, but found great pleasure in them. Gribben claims that "Dumas' works furnished Clemens with escapist reading on numerous occasions" (205). On 9 May 1872, as another example, Twain wrote to his daughter, Susy, of reading Dumas' novels: "[M]any's the night I've lain awake till 2 o'clock in the morning reading Dumas & drinking beer, listening for the slightest sound you might make" (205). In yet another letter home, in 1877, Twain told his wife: "I had a delightful afternoon . . . I read Dumas & was serene & content" (qtd. in Gribben, 205). Such solid evidence indicates not only that Twain was well-versed in English translations of Dumas' manuscripts, but also that he found the adventures appealing.

In *Georges*, one of his lesser known, but most autobiographical of his novels, Dumas illustrates the marginalization of peoples resulting from mixed marriages. Dumas claimed that *Georges* was wholly his own work, which is corroborated by Claude Schopp in his biography, *Alexandre Dumas: Genius of Life* (318) and others. Although composed

in 1846, *Georges* is set in the early nineteenth century during the Napoleonic Wars. Situated on *île de France* (presently known as île Maurice or Mauritius, which will be discussed further in Chapter Three), an island east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean, the novel deals with the struggling hero of the tale, Georges, who—like the author—is a mulatto, and suffers from the deeply ingrained racial prejudice of the day. As one born of mixed race in a white-privileged society, Georges seeks to make sense of identity and racial inequality. Werner Sollors, in his thorough exploration of literary racial topics, *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature*, discusses the recurring thematic elements involving what he refers to as interracial literature, literature that “works in all genres that represent love and family relations involving black-white couples, biracial individuals, their descendants, and their larger kin” (3). For instance, as Georges, the protagonist in *Georges*, returns home to *île de France* after spending over a decade abroad, he is neither the same man who left home, nor the man who lived abroad. Although Georges is a man of color, the word *mulâtre* (mulatto) appears in the French text over fifty times), his return home is that of a type of *doppelgänger*: Georges is mistaken for white, unrecognized by his own father. Dumas refers to the change in him as a “physical and mental transformation” (49). The world to which he returns treats him cruelly; his “whiteness” has ruined him for assimilating back into the *status quo* of the island. His “blackness” prevents him from achieving the local standing that he both desires and deserves. According to Sollors, Dumas created a problem novel (“Introduction” xix). This term is also referred to as *le roman à these*, which is often used in French and English literary criticism to describe a novel expounding a philosophical or social message. Within *Georges*, Sollors claims, “the

problem of color prejudice that it examines is one that has not gone away and seems particularly relevant in our own days” (xix). Dumas clearly embedded the racial dilemma into *Georges*, a fact which will prove significant when analyzing the novel, and also when looking at other manuscripts of Dumas’ and some manuscripts by Twain.

Close reading will determine discernible connections between Twain’s and Dumas’ works in both thematic elements and in their use of the *doppelgänger* motif to expose social injustices. Twain explores the ramifications of slavery and racism in *Pudd’nhead Wilson*, pointing to gross injustices in the lives of two male individuals, switched at birth by the slave mother of one. Roxy, the beautiful slave who appears white, is actually one-sixteenth black. Due to the “one-drop rule,” Roxy is considered black and can function only as a slave in society. Her children, regardless of their paternal heritage, will always be considered black. In switching her natural-born son, Chambers, with Tom, the son of her master, and the rightful heir to the master’s estate, Roxy offers her son a chance for true freedom and a chance for life as a gentleman. Twain’s use of the *doppelgänger* design to implement Roxy’s switch points to the severe ramifications of racial inequality. The infant swap carries disastrous consequences. Ultimately, the exchange is revealed; but as in the Dumas’ depiction of the fallen hero in *Georges*, the lifelong masquerade—albeit no fault of the boys switched—takes its toll. Chambers, the imposter heir to the master’s estate, grows into a cruel, self-serving man; when caught in a capital crime, Chambers lands in jail and, ironically, ends up getting “sold down the river”—exactly what his mother, Roxy, tried to avoid in the first place (Twain, *Pudd’nhead Wilson* 13). His privileged upbringing means nothing. Chambers is black; therefore, he has no rights. Additionally, Tom, raised as a slave, finds himself

displaced and unable to fit anywhere in his rightful society. In the switched roles of Tom and Chambers in Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, a clear element of unintentional racial "passing" emerges. When nearly white (yet still subjected to slavery) Roxy substitutes her slave son for the son of her master, she initiates a calamitous cycle of events.

Although born as the true heir, Tom has been raised as a slave. Bred to talk like a slave, walk like a slave, show deference like a slave, and remain ignorant like a slave, Tom suffers a serious crisis of identity when he tries to re-enter his rightful place as the master's son. Twain effectively makes a clear connection between the prejudicial treatment of the black slaves and their behavior. Although naturally white, Tom lacks the necessary coping skills to function in the white man's world. Chambers also endures abject consequences when he discovers his true heritage. Raised with the privilege that accompanies a Southern landowner, Chambers lacks the necessary humility and the ability to "scrape and bow" before the white man, making his banishment to slavery even more torturous.

Additionally, Twain's novel *The Prince and the Pauper* serves as a social critique, directly assessing the caste system and its effect upon both aristocracy and the common people. Using the *doppelgänger* design, Twain clearly illustrates the vast differences within the caste system. Two look-a-likes—the Prince of Wales, Edward, and a pauper, Tom Cauty—realizing their close resemblance, switch places. Each thinks the chance to experience a different lifestyle will be an improvement, but each realizes how little he has actually gained through the switch. Through this *doppelgänger* pattern, Twain clearly shows the inequities in class distinction.

What becomes increasingly apparent in the close reading of the texts is a clear connection between the works, despite the geographical separation of the authors. Both Dumas and Twain employ *doppelgänger* themes in their social criticism: the ruling look-a-likes—King Louis XIV in *The Man in the Iron Mask*, Chambers in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, and Henri in *Georges*—grow into twisted self-serving adults; while the paupers—Philippe in *The Man in the Iron Mask*; Tom, the true heir, in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*; and to a lesser degree, Georges, in *Georges*—develop into gentle, compassionate (although completely powerless) adults. Through social and racial discrimination, characters learn to view themselves through tinted lenses, thereby stunting their potential development and stifling their potential growth.

Chapter 2:

Switched Roles in *The Man in the Iron Mask*

The Man in the Iron Mask is Dumas' most famous and popular (although not his earliest) *doppelgänger* tale, a story of espionage and danger, betrayers and the betrayed. Although a complete (and lengthy) novel by itself, *L'Homme au masque de fer*, or *The Man in the Iron Mask*, is actually the third of three volumes contained within the English edition of *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*. The legend continues with the already-familiar musketeer characters—d'Artagnan, Athos, Porthos, and Aramis—portrayed in Dumas' widely-read, first two sections of *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne: Le Vicomte de Bragelonne*, or *Ten Years Later* and *Louise de La Vallière* (the three books were serialized during 1847-1850). Preceding the three manuscripts, and often included with *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne* as a five part series, are: *Les Trois Mousquetaires*, or *The Three Musketeers* (1844), and *Vingt Ans Après*, or *Twenty Years After* (1845). Dumas' four characters, the brave musketeers who vow to serve and protect the king, became famous as heroes in *The Three Musketeers* under the legendary slogan: “*Tous pour un et un pour tous*,” or “all for one and one for all” (Dumas, *Iron Mask* 578). As *The Man in the Iron Mask* progresses, however, the four musketeers emerge more as men than as the larger-than-life heroes the public adored in the earlier novels. The novel is decidedly darker than these as well, partly because the musketeers are aged and frailer than they were in Dumas' earlier publications; and slowly, with the exception of Aramis, they die off one by one.

When referring to *Vicomte de Bragelonne*, which he claimed to have read five or six times, renowned author Robert Louis Stevenson said in a manuscript published

in 1887 that “no part of the world has ever seemed to me so charming as these pages, and not even my friends are quite so real, perhaps quite so dear, as d’Artagnan” (qtd. in Cooper 723-24). Stevenson spoke of returning again and again with joy to Dumas’ novel. In fact, Stevenson’s poignant comments published in 1905 by E. Gosse in *Works* reveal a particular nostalgic musing: “Upon the crowded, noisy life of this long tale, evening gradually falls; and the lights are extinguished, and the heroes pass away one by one” (qtd. in Wren viii). Dumas’ *The Man in the Iron Mask* brought countless hours of entertainment to readers during the nineteenth century despite its enterprising—if somewhat seditious—stab at the reign of Louis XIV.

In a bold step away from the accepted *doppelgänger* design of his day, that of a spirit double, Dumas borrowed details of a well-known legend of a prisoner sequestered in 1698 at the Bastille in Paris, a mysterious prisoner hidden behind a black velvet mask. This veiled prisoner locked in the darkened dungeon of the Bastille simultaneously peaked curiosity and aroused pity among French citizens. Based loosely upon this historical legend of a masked prisoner, Dumas’ novel, *The Man in the Iron Mask*, involves twin heirs to the French throne. Although legends of the masked prisoner varied in content, Dumas adopted the version of the legend involving King Louis XIV—who reigned from 1661 to 1715, the longest reign in European history (although Louis XIII died in 1643, leaving Louis XIV as king, Louis XIV’s mother, Anne of Austria, served as sole regent with Cardinal Mazarin serving as France’s chief minister until his death in 1661). That he wrote his story about Louis XIV, known as France’s “Sun King,” and revered as the king who brought glory and prominence to his country, is not unusual. In 1771, following time spent in the

Bastille, Voltaire wrote a similar account of the masked prisoner which he refers to in *Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary*: “The author of the ‘Siècle de Louis XIV’

[Voltaire] is the first to speak of the man in the iron mask in an authenticated history.

The reason is that he was very well informed about the anecdote which astonishes the present century, which will astonish posterity, and which is only too true” (204).

Voltaire delineates the reasons that the existing theories of the masked man were false, then proceeds to raise intriguing questions. “The Publisher’s Note”—understood to be his own note (206)—which was included in the 1771 edition, and which Voltaire never refuted, goes beyond raising questions. In this note, Voltaire clearly identifies the masked prisoner:

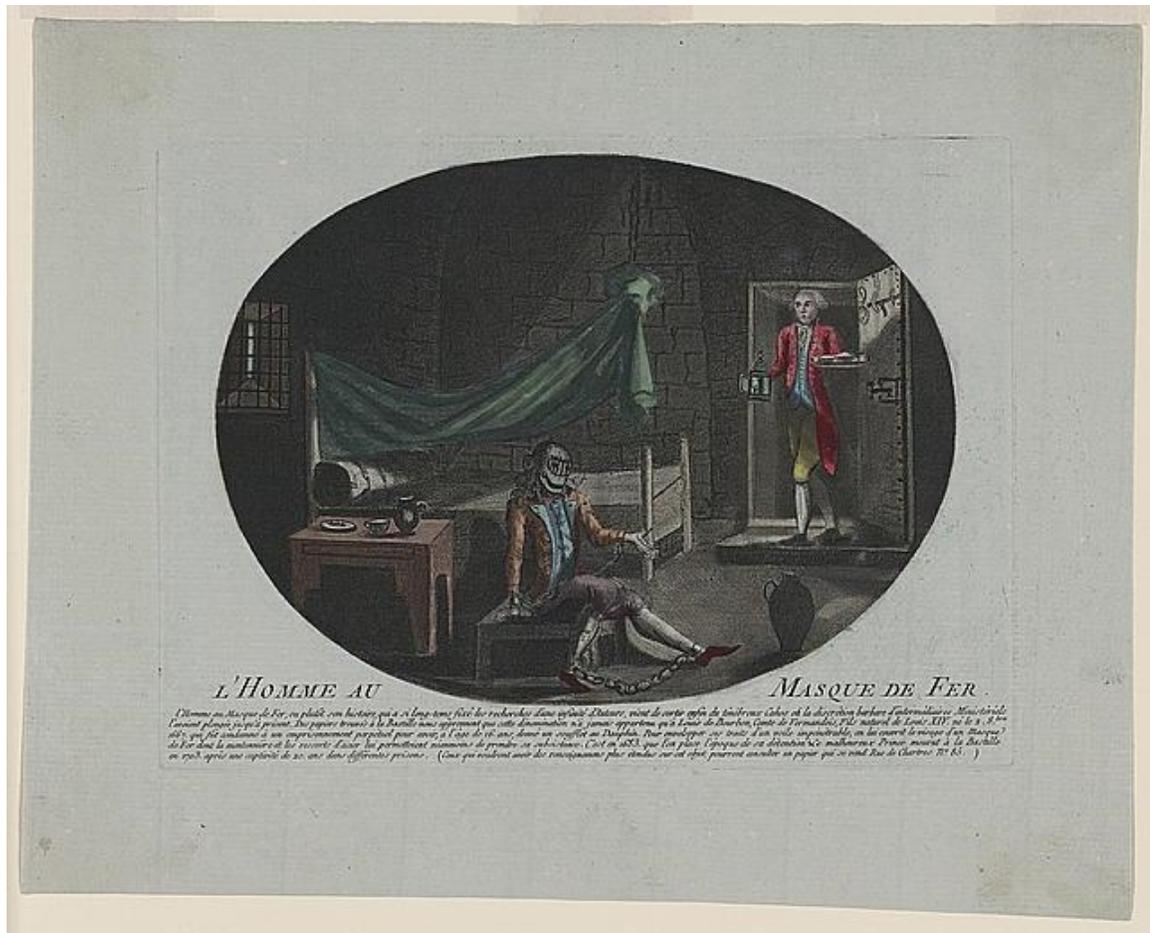
[I]t seems that not only is nothing easier than to imagine who this prisoner was, but that it is even difficult for there to be two opinions on the subject. The author of this article would have communicated his opinion earlier, if he had not believed that this idea must already have come to many others, and if he were not persuaded that it was not worth while giving as a discovery what, according to him, jumps to the eyes of all who read this anecdote . . . The iron mask was undoubtedly a brother and an elder brother of Louis XIV. (207-08)

Voltaire’s innuendoes were widely circulated, due in part to Voltaire’s popularity as an author of fiction and an historian of note, and also due in part to his proffered explanation of the mysterious, masked prisoner, a hugely popular topic for consideration in France during the nineteenth century.

Rumors had long circulated regarding the estrangement of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria. Reports of Louis XIII's bisexual activity also spread; though Louis XIII and Anne of Austria had been married for twenty three years, they had not produced an heir to the throne until the birth of Louis XIV. His birth was sometimes referred to as "the fruit of a happy accident" (Hopkins 59), lending some amount of credibility to Voltaire's veiled accusations. Voltaire named the masked prisoner as the illegitimate, elder son of Anne of Austria; whereas, in Dumas' version, the prisoner is not only the twin, but the younger brother (yet a younger brother with an inherent right to the throne). According to Tighe Hopkins, in his book *The Man in the Iron Mask*, "The legend was not to be world-famous till it had made of the Iron Mask a brother of Louis XIV" (48). Though it resembles Voltaire's explanation, Dumas' account is probably more closely related to a less-known account attributed to Jean-Louis Soulavie (1752-1813), in which the younger twin "was purportedly imprisoned and forced to wear the iron mask from the age of nineteen, when he accidentally discovered his true identity, until his death" (Goodkin 320). Although Voltaire's account of the legendary prisoner was the first in print and the most widely known at the time, Dumas' novel certainly popularized this account to the point that when one hears the legend of the prisoner of the Bastille, he or she, without personally researching the subject, thinks involuntarily of a brother to the king.

An illustration of the common knowledge of the mysterious masked prisoner is the following political cartoon which appeared in France in 1798 (in an unknown publication). The cartoon depicts the masked man as Louis XIV's own son, another account circulated at the time. The groundless story made for some interesting

political material, but was in fact given little credence as anything other than Revolutionary propaganda:



The caption states that the masked prisoner, the “*Louis de Bourbon, comte de Vermandois, fils naturel de Louis XIV,*” the natural son of Louis XIV, was condemned to prison at the age of sixteen by “*le Dauphin,*” the title held by the French heir to the throne, Louis XIV (“*L’homme au masque de fer*”). With dozens of accounts of the legend of the masked man to scrutinize, it is not surprising that Dumas would adapt “*the most popular current theory*” (Macdonald n. pag.), a version closely related to the one recorded by esteemed philosopher and historian Voltaire, the first to record such an elucidation, as the most plausible explanation.

Within all of Dumas' novels exists a ubiquitous sense of adventure—that which appeals to people of all ages, in all walks of life. Imbuing his manuscripts with this sense of adventure came somewhat naturally to Dumas due to his rich and varied personal experiences. Combining exciting bits of history—such as the mystery of a masked prisoner—with his own encounters with adventure served to sharpen the authenticity of his escapades. In fact, Dumas' background sheds some additional insight into both the composition and the popularity of his novels, especially his series of novels beginning with *The Three Musketeers*. His popular fiction, written quickly and often printed without revisions, bore an amazing similarity to some of his own exploits. According to biographer André Maurois—an esteemed novelist and a member of *L'Académie française*—Dumas “knew how to share and satisfy the passions of the masses,” since he himself was also quite a character:

[H]e loved force, justice, and adventure; like them, he divided humanity into heroes and villains; like them, he fretted little over subtle distinctions . . . his life itself is a masterpiece. Dumas was a hero out of Dumas. As strong as Porthos, as adroit as d'Artagnan, as generous as Edmond Dantès, this superb giant strode across the nineteenth century breaking down doors with his shoulder, sweeping women away in his arms, and earning fortunes only to squander them promptly in dissipation. (3)

The reputation Dumas had for wantonness, debauchery, gluttony, and generosity was indeed a well-deserved reputation; his own life served as research for his novels.¹ In addition to reports of his numerous mistresses, propensity for gambling, and steady weight gain, he was said to “give [his money] away, lavish, distribute, and waste [his

money], not amass it for himself” (71). Flamboyant and pretentious, Dumas actively sought adventure throughout his life. Ready to fight, eager for love, willing to dive into politics, and active in social affairs, Dumas lived a life typical of one of his heroes. Claude Schopp, in his 1988 autobiography of Dumas, states that Dumas “was of the race of conquerors and with his pen, he carried on a replica of the Imperial epic. Always more. Not more money, not more power, although he pursued both as a means. Always more life” (337). Dumas indeed lived his life to the fullest. He was often at the center of conflict and just a breath away from scandal (117, 339), yet Dumas’ public adored him in spite of his raucous reputation. His novels were in constant demand, and when his stories were serialized in newspapers, “[h]e kept every newspaper reader in France in suspense” (Schopp 338). In fact, his literary adventures were so popular that sometimes Dumas’ creditors locked him inside a room until he finished a manuscript, knowing that any manuscript with the name Dumas would sell.

Critics complain about Dumas’ “signing off” on manuscripts written with collaborators, but the blame does not belong entirely to Dumas. Though he offered to share the credit for writing *The Chevalier of Harmental* with his collaborator, Maquet, his newspaper editor would not hear of it: “‘A serial bearing the name of Dumas is worth three francs a line,’ said Emile de Girardin. ‘Bearing the names of Dumas *and* Maquet, it is worth thirty sous’” (117). Although Maquet continued to share in the writing of many of Dumas’ novels, the credit thereafter went solely to Dumas. Additionally, Maurois claims that Dumas was not as undisciplined a writer as some critics note, but that he carefully studied the methods of authors of such stature as Sir Walter Scott and Honoré de Balzac, especially admiring their ability to begin “a book

in a boring manner,” yet still managed to “make [their] characters come alive at the very outset by bestowing unforgettable characteristics upon them” (117). Dumas succeeded in capturing his readers’ attention, then capturing their hearts.

Though criticized for his arrogance and infidelity, Dumas was embraced during his day as one who created a lasting portrait of the history of France. Following Scott’s example, Dumas composed tales based on historical facts. When asked to produce a manuscript for serialization in 1838, Dumas “set to work reading reams from French historical chroniclers . . . he carefully studied Scott’s techniques” (Du Plessix Gray xii). Dumas took an intense interest in all of France’s history, devouring anything he could find for the purpose of locating material for his novels. Rather than denounce the ideals of the bourgeois society in which he lived, like many of his contemporaries, Dumas aggressively critiqued its injustices, its evils, and its inconsistencies yet—with a fierce love for and loyalty to his country—simultaneously “held fast to and glorified its dreams and aspirations” (Stowe 144-45). One author notes that interest alone certainly was not sufficient to make him a scholar:

He had little interest in erudition, and no pretension whatsoever at being a scholar or a researcher—“What’s history?” he once asked. “A nail on which I hang my novels.” A characteristically glaring anachronism occurs in *The Iron Mask*: Dumas states that King Louis XIV is twenty-four years old at the beginning of the narrative, which would place the story in 1666; yet in that same span of narrated days we see Louis arresting his Superintendent of Finances, Nicholas Fouquet, an historical incident that occurred in 1661, a mere few months after the king took power. Dumas

could not have cared less. For a decade Dumas and his sidekick, Maquet, rampaged and pillaged through history, inventing, altering, distorting—doing whatever was needed to hold their readers spellbound. (Du Plessix Gray xv)

Nevertheless, the carelessness or liberties Dumas took with historical facts failed to negatively affect his popularity among nineteenth-century readers. The erroneous historical facts, however, are pointed out in scholarly reviews. For example, in her introduction to an anonymously translated edition of *The Man in the Iron Mask*, Barbara T. Cooper refers to “the entirely fictional attempt to replace Louis with his long-hidden, unknown twin” (xvi). The fact that Dumas based his novels on historical facts becomes particularly significant in *The Man in the Iron Mask*, not only with the manner in which Dumas ends the novel, but also in Dumas’ deference to the king’s supremacy.

Given that Louis XIV reigned with absolute authority and was popular for bringing glory to France, Dumas would not have been able to completely denigrate the king’s reign. He also would be inclined to write himself into prison or worse yet, the guillotine, by devising a plot that outwardly rampaged against the throne. Instead, the subtlety with which Dumas interjects political and social criticisms is padded with adventure, drama, romance, and humor. Dumas’ implementation of identical twins in *The Man in the Iron Mask* easily lends itself to employing the *doppelgänger* theme in his political and social critique. While the switched-twins motif creates a dramatic plot, it also introduces the curiosity of station of the marginalized, the one lacking any form of privilege. The marginalized in society is peculiarly forgotten, an enigma that

Dumas points to in the characterization of the second-born twin. Once Aramis reveals Philippe's secret identity to him, the still-imprisoned Philippe says: "Royalty means power, and there is no need to point out to you how powerless *I am*" (Dumas, *Iron Mask* 197). Philippe has spent years in *le cachot* without knowing the reason why. When offered the opportunity to reign in his brother's stead, he cannot begin to conceive of such a change:

"Let me ask you, monsieur, whether a prison is a proper place in which to speak to me of grandeur, of power, and even of royalty itself? Can I believe in splendor whilst we remain here in the obscurity of night? You boast about glory, and here we sit, our words stifled beneath the wretched curtains of a prison mattress! You endeavor to make me understand what it is to have absolute power, and all the time, I can hear, in the corridor, the footsteps of my gaoler, a sound which is more terrifying to you than it is to me. If you wish to inspire me with a little more belief in what you say, take me out of the Bastille, let me get some air into my lungs, put spurs on my heels and a sword into my hand, and then we may be able to come to an understanding . . . let me taste the delights of freedom and of hearing the sounds of river and plain; let me see the blue sky, and the lowering clouds, and I will ask for nothing more." (198-99)

For a subaltern to conceive of power when he or she can barely conceive the reality of fresh air is highly unlikely. Philippe's grasp of the truth in Aramis' revelation of his heritage—his inherent right to the throne of France—is superficial at best. When Aramis addresses him with title, kisses his hand, and bestows him the honor befitting a

king, Philippe is discomfited. His entire life has been expunged; writing him back into the social order as a prince is not merely unexpected—it is a formidable challenge.

Philippe's erasure (the systematic attempt to cancel or eradicate the position and even the memory of a person, a people, and sometimes even a race) begins years earlier when Louis XIII and Anne of Austria become parents. Aramis explains the necessity of erasing Philippe when he delineates the situation to Fouquet:

“You will see. These twins seemed likely to be regarded as the pride of their mother, and the hope of France; but the weak nature of the King, his superstitious feelings, made him apprehend a series of conflicts between two children whose rights were equal; and so he put out of the way—he suppressed—one of the twins.” (Dumas, *Iron Mask* 328)

Once Anne of Austria gives birth to her first son, Louis XIV, the process of “forgetting” the younger twin, Philippe, has already begun. The prison construct serves to wipe out “dangerous voices from the social landscape . . . The prison may do many things: punish, control, reform, discipline, contain, and so on, but in this context its function is to *forget* individuals—to airbrush their bodies, voices, and traces out of the social picture” (Blix 42). A second heir to the French throne presented serious problems to Louis XIII. The solution to the situation in Dumas' account is a means of silencing one potential heir through a process of forgetting: banishment to *le cachot* for life. Although Louis XIII's intentions may indeed have been influenced by the desire to do his utmost for the good of country, these intentions were also tainted with avarice. By avoiding twin heirs, Louis XIII also avoided any potential for civil war or

possibility of shared glory. His legacy would be a kingdom that would continue to strengthen throughout the years.

Dumas skillfully employs the *doppelgänger* motif to suggest political motives in the banishment of the second twin. Later in the story, as Aramis conspires to draw Fouquet into his scheme to overthrow the reigning king—Louis XIV, Aramis states that “[Louis XIII’s] cowardice and superstition led him to dread the consequences which might arise from the fact of there being two heirs of equal rights; he feared a conflict—perhaps civil war—and he suppressed one of the twin princes” (340-41). Aramis explains that the younger twin was raised in the country; then to avoid detection, he was thrown into prison, at the Bastille in Paris. Aramis tells Fouquet, “One of them was the spoiled child of Fortune. Whilst the other was the most miserable wretch alive” (341). Although the brothers’ upbringing clearly differentiates their social status (the twin raised in privilege rules the land, while the twin raised in poverty lands in prison), the upbringing creates a curious effect in the differentiation of their characters. Fouquet questions the equality of the twins’ intelligence, to which Aramis replies: “Oh! in that respect, monseigneur, they are dissimilar. The prisoner of the Bastille is incontestably superior to his brother; and were this poor victim to be raised to the throne, France would have had no master more distinguished for genius and loftiness of character since first she began to be a nation” (343-44). Social standing, Dumas suggests, has little to do with either intelligence or character development—unless the superior development comes through suffering. Yet this social standing was of utmost importance to the French culture, a culture that included a strict caste system to which present-day Americans fail to relate.

Therefore, any American adaptations of the novel include modifications which stray from the French culture. Richard Goodkin's analysis of the 1998 film, *The Man in the Iron Mask*, explains that "the intersection between a courtly culture distanced from [American students] temporally, geographically and politically, and our own culture, from whose standpoint we inevitably view Louis XIV and his contemporaries" (319). Typically, twenty-first century Americans fail to relate to a social system which reveres the crown and holds all others suspect, a system that cannot risk any royal upset, or any confrontation to the throne. Then again, though situated in seventeenth-century France, Dumas wrote from the post-Revolution perspective of the nineteenth century. From this perspective, if the ruling monarchy failed to show justice, or served the public wrongly, he or she deserved to be replaced. For Dumas to write a permanent *doppelgänger* exchange with Philippe replacing Louis XIV on the throne—although writing about an obviously historical situation—would have indeed been seditious. At the time *The Man in the Iron Mask* was published, Darwin's ideas about the evolution of man (first published in 1839) were already becoming widely accepted. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) began applying Darwinian concepts to sociology and ethics, effectively challenging nineteenth-century French thinking.² These philosophical changes, along with the controversial rising lower classes, were creating a stir in European society. Dumas' book addresses this growing controversy with his *doppelgänger* motif: The *doppelgänger* is the decadent aristocrat who has the power and authority, as opposed to the subaltern who better deserves the power because he has developed character and integrity through suffering.

Even when distanced from a hierarchical society, however, one can grasp the dilemma Philippe—as the subaltern—faces. Though superior in intellect and character, Philippe is “nothing” in society, but a prisoner. And in many ways, as prisoner, Philippe is less than nothing. The Bastille is both home and tutor to Philippe. As prisoner, Philippe learns to squelch desires, passions, and hopes for a future. In essence, he learns to forget the outside world, just as the outside world forgets him. Gören Blix discusses the role that prison plays in French Romantic literature: “To imprison someone is to ‘forget’ them—in an active, transitive way—and the prison's function within the larger social topography resembles the role that forgetting plays in the individual psyche” (41). Philippe, as scapegoat, is sent to prison (with the full knowledge of both of his parents) precisely for that reason: complete eradication of the second heir to the throne. If the second heir-apparent is hidden from sight, and thus forgotten, then the social hierarchy has the capability of continuing its *status quo*.

Despite the inherently close kinship of twins, Dumas demonstrates the crippling effect of such marginalization upon the imprisoned twin—as Fouquet claims, “Twins are one person in two bodies” (*Iron Mask* 341), ergo, the *doppelgänger*. Philippe lacks the refinement, the manners, the education and acquired knowledge of Louis XIV. Yet all is not a loss: “Philippe’s suffering has given him the very quality lacking in Louis: sensitivity to others” (Goodkin 325). Unlike the king, Philippe grows in wisdom and character. He fails to desire revenge on those who wronged him.

Philippe also seeks God’s direction. Rather than making a rash decision when faced with the choice of switching places with his royal brother, Philippe sets out on a walk. He has known little else but time and communion with God in prison, so it is

natural for him to seek God's wisdom during this crucial decision-making time. Before leaving for his walk, Philippe says to Aramis, "[P]erhaps God will direct me as to what I ought to do. You shall have my answer in ten minutes" (Dumas, *Iron Mask* 260). When Philippe returns from his walk, having already learned to take his struggles to God within the solitude of his cell, he is ready to face the enemy. He walked with resolve, his "look hardened, his brow contracted and his mouth assumed an expression of fierce determination" (262). The fate of the country was upon his shoulders and he walks forward, a changed man.

What Louis XIV seeks is self-gratification, self-glory. As king, he refuses to be held accountable by anyone: "You appear too much to forget that a king owes an account of his actions to none but God" (529). After the switch, the imposed suffering merely exposes Louis XIV's weak character. Earlier, Aramis warns Philippe that the proposed twin switch will result in trials infinitely worse for the king than they had been for Philippe. While the imprisoned Philippe retains his "physical power and the strength of mind to enable [him] to endure all this misery," Louis XIV as "captive, forgotten . . . will not be able to endure it" (257). Indeed, when he is imprisoned in Philippe's place, the king loses all sense of decorum, all manner of self control. Using a chair in his cell as a battering ram, the dethroned king cries incessantly until he is hoarse; his "frightful cries mingled with terrible imprecations . . . in [cries] more terrible than any [the jailer and Fouquet] had yet heard" (356). Ironically, the prison mask conceals the regal heritage of Philippe; yet the prison walls unmask the true character of Louis XIV. Deep inside the bulwark of the Bastille, Louis XIV nearly goes "mad with rage and terror" (357). Louis XIV lacks the temperance over his own

passions and fears which would enable him to calmly, methodically approach the situation for a resolution. Everyone within earshot and eyesight becomes the victim of the king's wrath.

Part of the romantic appeal of the *doppelgänger* effect is its ability to mask one's inner self. This newly unmasked Louis XIV cannot bear the public humiliation. When Fouquet enters his cell and throws himself at Louis XIV's feet, the king hurriedly attempts to re-mask his cowardice; albeit the damage is in some ways irreparable:

Louis, recalled to himself by this change in the position of affairs, glanced at the disordered state of his attire and, filled with shame at the sorry figure he made and at his own wild outburst and even more deeply mortified at receiving protection, he recoiled sharply. Fouquet could not guess what was passing in the king's mind; it did not strike him that Louis would never be able to forgive him for having witnessed his complete loss of self-control. (358)

Fouquet, unable to bear the injustice against Louis XIV, vows vengeance against Aramis for his duplicity in the crime. Fouquet is directly responsible for the king's release. Rather than honor Fouquet's allegiance, Fouquet is punished because he is eyewitness to the king's shame and weakness. Louis XIV banishes both Fouquet and Philippe. Although neither Fouquet nor Philippe would betray the king, Louis XIV fears that either of the two could destroy his kingdom with the knowledge that each man possesses.

Mere exile of the *doppelgänger* after such a close brush with calamity is no longer sufficient. Louis XIV needs to “erase” Philippe so thoroughly that he will never again supplant his leadership. Therefore, Louis XIV sends a hand-written note, commanding d’Artagnan to arrest his twin. D’Artagnan crumples the received order, yet Philippe insists on knowing all. Reluctantly, d’Artagnon hands him the paper:

“Read, monseigneur,” replied the musketeer. Philippe read these words hastily scrawled by the hand of Louis XIV. “Monsieur d’Artagnan will conduct his prisoner to the Île Sainte-Margu rite. He will take the precaution of covering the said prisoner’s face with a mask of iron, which the latter is forbidden to remove under pain of death.”

“So be it,” said Philippe resignedly. “I am ready.” (373)

Although Philippe himself reads the fated verdict, the words scrawled by his twin brother’s own hand (he was to be imprisoned at  le Sainte-Margu rite), Philippe acquiesces willingly, meekly, unreservedly. Fouquet whispers to d’Artagnan: “this man is every whit as much a king as his brother” (373). Philippe is already well acquainted with the particular horrors of prison; yet when he knows he is to be again imprisoned, he refuses to struggle against the authority. Instead, with the demeanor of one born to royalty, one who knows to put country before personal pleasure, Philippe yields himself as a lamb to the slaughter. Having suffered the loss of his very personhood through his earlier imprisonment, his enforced removal from all aspects of society, Philippe is not merely noble. The dreadful sentence effectively submerges him again into the subaltern; he is, once again, forgotten. Hence, the lamb-like

acquiescence is not so much sacrificial as it is consequential to his marginalization. Marginalization is merely Philippe's role in life.

On the other hand, interestingly, Philippe behaves as if he were indeed predestined to fulfill some grand scheme in life. Blix states that "[t]he condemned man is the irrefutable witness of his own elimination—long before it happens—and he testifies from that blind spot which must at all costs be kept out of view. His discourse is an impossible speech . . ." (51). Philippe's years of living without privilege result in his possession of a servile mentality; Philippe resigns himself to submit to the Power, that place of privilege responsible for his marginalization. Blix refers to the debilitating effect of long-term imprisonment:

If the prison embodies a social form of forgetting, its force of oblivion also extends inwards, and applies as much to the inmate as the world outside. The prisoners may initially be the victims of a policy of forgetting, but once they are jailed, they also become strangely forgetful of themselves, as if their own minds had proven powerless to resist the weight of the walls. (43-44)

There is within Philippe no desire, perhaps even no ability, to fight for himself, to rise above the station into which he has been relegated. Once he receives the command from the "true" king, his twin brother, Philippe retreats to his former self: the forgotten one, the isolated one whose face has been essentially air-brushed from the memory of France.

Dumas—the rebellious romantic—shows that the social and royal advantages that King Louis XIV, the privileged twin, receives from birth—rather than developing

the prince as a strong leader—only contribute to his growth into a self-serving and cruel tyrant. Privilege fails to instill strong moral fiber into the young king; the social advantages instead merely inhibit his character growth. Louis XIV possesses wealth, position, and power; nonetheless, the prince lacks courtesy, kindness, honesty, and humility. He is arrogant, controlling, rude, and boastful. Though he holds the authority to offer a small amount of consolation, a measure of grace to his *doppelgänger*, Louis XIV instead exerts his supreme power as the means of ruining any semblance of comfort that may have been available to Philippe.

In marked contrast, although doomed from the beginning, the dismissed twin, Philippe, suffers rejection by his own mother, the murder of his foster parents, and forced imprisonment—where he is forced to wear a mask, concealing his identity to all who might pass by. This is not “any” mask; it is an “iron” mask which erases any trace of recognition. It erases any hint of similarity to the sitting king. Yet Philippe, the imprisoned and condemned, develops a regal authority, a selfless and courageous response to the circumstances that face him—both when they are to his advantage, and when the circumstances are a severe disadvantage. Within the relationship of Louis XIV and Philippe, the sovereign-scapegoat relationship adds a new dimension to the *doppelgänger* pattern. According to Blix, the relationship between the sovereign and the scapegoat bears a closer look:

The king evidently stands out as the single person with the power to pardon, but this power also situates him outside the law, like the convict, and makes him at once inviolable *and* vulnerable, as susceptible as his own victim to extra-legal violence (revolution, assassination, palace coup).

Both are exceptional beings—sovereigns and scapegoats—who exist only as mutual reflections in a mirror that incessantly risks confusing their identities. Nothing so confirms this proximity as the myth of the *masque de fer*, the legendary prisoner thought to be Louis XIV's *twin brother*, hugely popular in the romantic period. (48)

In the case of Philippe and Louis XIV, the twins are both born to royalty; both are equally worthy of the throne. Yet one rules as sovereign, and the other becomes the scapegoat. Imprisonment and masking become the necessary means of erasing all memory of the scapegoat.

The *doppelgänger* mask conceals the true identity of the twin, both when the mask originally covers the banished twin, Philippe, and later when it temporarily covers the reigning king, Louis XIV. The extreme measures taken during young Philippe's captivity serve to both silence him and mask his royal bearing. This outwardly-imposed mask, the veil that the poverty and marginalization swath him in, prevents any possibility that someone would notice the resemblance between the two men, suspect the truth, and unveil the subterfuge. Since the brothers appear to be true look-a-likes, a masquerade is necessary if one is to be hidden away from the general public. Interestingly, the concealing aspect of the mask actually "erases" Philippe, despite his being heir to the throne and "every whit a king as his brother" (Dumas, *Iron Mask* 373). Hitherto unknown, indeed a secret to the entire kingdom with the exception of a few, Philippe lives a quiet life of seclusion and paucity. Following his brief stint as king, Philippe returns to the isolated position of "non-person," as one of the marginalized. Though deserving of a position in the palace, due to his royal

heritage and his noble character, Philippe fails to maintain the power that was temporarily given him through the *doppelgänger* exchange. He is sent back to be summarily “erased” behind another mask. Meanwhile, Louis XIV returns to the throne altered by his near-catastrophic brush with the lifelong sentence which he imposes upon his brother. He refuses to bend before d’Artagnan:

“Tell me, do you think it would be possible for me, if my power were thus divided, to accomplish the great schemes I have in mind? . . . I am master here, and I will have servants who will set no limits to their obedience, though they many perhaps lack your capacity. But one does not require the limbs to be endowed with intelligence. It is for the head to direct, and the limbs to obey; and it is I who am head.” (Dumas, *Iron Mask* 554)

The king is resolute in his quest for absolute authority; the depth of suffering, indeed the fear of banishment, rather than producing compassion, results instead in a steeled resolution to rule with an iron fist. Given the reputation Louis XIV retains for his glorious role of bringing France into prominence, Dumas could finish with nothing less than this stringent claim to absolutism. Dumas was, after all, weaving his *doppelgänger* tale into actual historical events.

While Louis XIV gains the throne, all is not glorious. Dumas demonstrates that Louis XIV suffers an irreparable loss. While the king gains absolute power over all his subjects, he loses the respect and friendship that he has come to depend on in d’Artagnan. Though this loss is significant, in his extreme shallowness and selfishness, Louis XIV values it not. Knowing that he has lost the “ear of the king,” and along with that, any opportunity for influence that he once possessed, d’Artagnan

says, “But in future your captain of musketeers will be a sort of superior doorkeeper” (555). No longer will the musketeer be a man of authority, a feared protector and advisor to the king. Instead, he would be reduced to a mere symbol of the king’s own vanity—one who holds the door. Louis XIV is not moved by d’Artagnan’s speech; having complete power serves the king’s purpose more than having respect, more than earning admiration, and more than gaining sincere friendship. Although Dumas shows honor to the position of the throne, his portrayal of the king as power hungry, thankless, and vain provides a further critique of the effects of social stratification.

Dumas also utilizes the *doppelgänger* switch between Louis XIV and Philippe to undermine these social existing hierarchies which leave no room for improvement, no possibility for extrication from the class system. The marginalized suffers and becomes isolated within prison, but his suffering is not unique to his position; his *doppelgänger* suffers as well, but he suffers in a different manner. The privileged bears his own burden—the burden of guilt and the burden of power. These burdens lead to the loss of all close relationships and constant fear of once again becoming marginalized. Although both heirs to the throne possess regal blood and bearing, only one may reign as king. For the remainder of his days, now that he knows of his identical twin, to protect his throne, the reigning king will be suspicious of everyone.

A similar *doppelgänger*-like dilemma surfaces in the nineteenth century: both racial and social “twins” exist. With slavery came an increase in miscegenation, resulting in the mulatto: the subordinate racial twin. Slave-owners considered the slaves their “property;” thus, no action against the slave was considered inappropriate. Miscegenation, commonplace in the colonized society, resulted in the birth of many

mulattoes—within themselves a *doppelgänger* enigma. For Dumas, the racial element would have been particularly noteworthy. His grandparents, Marquis Alexandre-Antoine Davy de la Pailleterie, a French nobleman and Marie-Césètte Dumas, a black slave from Saint-Domingue, now known as Haiti, gave birth to Dumas' father, Thomas Alexandre Davy de la Pailleterie. When he enlisted in the French army, Thomas Alexandre took Dumas as his surname. Thomas Alexandre married the daughter of an innkeeper, Marie Louise Labouret, and the couple gave birth to Alexandre in a small village just outside Paris, France in July, 1802. Although his mother rejoiced that he had “milky complexion and blue eyes” (Maurois 11) at his birth, young Alexandre grew noticeably darker as he grew older. The “twenty-five per cent of black blood came out only in his fuzzy hair” (11). Dumas' features were, however, noticeably Negro-like—though not nearly as pronounced as his father's. Labeled a mulatto, Dumas' father was called “*le diable noir*,” the “black devil” (Gorman 14). Despite Dumas' huge success as an author, these visible connections to his black blood were enough to deny him the equal privileges of his white contemporaries.

In *The Man in the Iron Mask*, Dumas shows the detrimental effects of social or class hegemony through the development of the masked twin, Philippe, and through the growth of the son of privilege, Louis XIV. Although given every advantage available to man, Louis XIV's character is critically flawed. Philippe, brought up with few privileges and no power, has strength of character, but he lacks the characteristics to become a strong leader. Twice, the “truth” about Philippe is discovered and the twins are switched. Within this double-ness Dumas further emphasizes his

doppelgänger theme. The twins have the opportunity to enact true change, yet so thoroughly enmeshed within the caste system, each fails to rise to the task. King Louis XIV temporarily replaces his brother Philippe as the masked prisoner at the Bastille, and Philippe assumes King Louis XIV's throne; then the switch occurs again. The damage to both twins is irreparable. Philippe "ends up doubly imprisoned, incarcerated on Île Sainte-Margu rite and inside a mask of iron" (Wren xv). Louis XIV grows increasingly cruel, more selfish, and less tolerant.

For Dumas, true nobility encompasses more than mere birth and position; character and compassion factor into the definition. Within the system of social stratification, however, Dumas illustrates the unlikelihood of the subjugated being able to pass the test of true nobility. The subaltern will always be marginalized. Once Philippe is again imprisoned, Louis XIV takes action against those who witness him in his *doppelg nger* state. Because Fouquet witnesses Louis XIV in his shame, he is to be arrested. The dramatic chase results in Fouquet's magnanimous surrender to d'Artagnan. Though he has ample opportunity to escape, Fouquet submits himself to d'Artagnan's authority and kneels before his captor "with a smile of genuine goodwill" (Dumas, *Iron Mask* 477). D'Artagnan, witness to the extremes of the behavior of both Louis XVI and Philippe, proclaims: "You are not gone then? . . . Oh! Monsieur, the man who is really a king for true nobility is not Louis, at the Louvre, not Philippe at Sainte-Marguerite—it is you, the condemned outlaw!" (477). Arm in arm, the captor and the captive calmly proceed to Fouquet's fate. Dumas elevates the importance of truth, nobility of character, and justice, while illuminating the reality of the worldly acceptance of a hegemonic society.

Although not as pointedly a *doppelgänger* story, in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, published six years before *The Man in the Iron Mask*, Dumas also weaves a complicated plot of treachery, revenge, and masked identity. Through a jealous man's betrayal, Edmund Dantès suffers the loss of his freedom on his wedding day. Even though innocent of the charges levied against him, Dantès is banished to *Château d'If*, the infamous and isolated prison reserved for the most notorious prisoners. Shown to his first cell, a room "that was nearly underground, its bare, dripping walls seemingly impregnated with a vapour of tears," Dantès finds himself imprisoned "alone in the silence and darkness, as black and noiseless as the icy cold of the vaults which he could feel pressing down on his feverish brow" (Dumas, *The Count of Monte Cristo* 67). His heaviness in his new damp, gloomy surroundings creates a marked contrast to the lighthearted joy he feels earlier with his fiancée Mercédès in peaceful beauty of La Réserve, the inn where the betrothal feast took place when "the two lovers went on their way, calm and happy as two chosen souls heading for paradise" (25). While incarcerated, Dantès nearly goes mad in his wretched solitude; however, after about six years, he makes contact with a fellow prisoner and digs a tunnel which connects their cells. Blix states that "[t]he feverish exchange that follows their encounter shows how the reinsertion into a social context succeeds in anchoring Dantès once more in time, space, and identity" (54). Rather than succumbing to his erasure, Dantès develops a renewed sense of person and purpose through his connection with another prisoner. This fellow-prisoner, although physically weak and epileptic, is a brilliant, educated priest: Abbé Faria. Dantès wastes no time; the two quickly develop a friendship which bestows benefits to both parties. Faria gains the physical assistance

and loyalty of Dantès, while Dantès learns from Faria the deep truths of philosophy, history, languages, and science. In some ways, this education is the beginning of Dantès' "passing," so to speak. He begins to grow out of his former self in a way that enables him to learn, behave, and think as the "other" whom he will soon masquerade.

There are, noticeably, repeated images of a subtle *doppelgänger* motif throughout the transformation of Dantès. He begins a complete renovation—a process which takes place from the inside out. In her essays discussing the "subaltern"—those separate from the elite, the underprivileged social groups—Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak discusses the inability of the subalterns to speak for themselves. In their subservient places in society, their voices are unheard because without any form of commonality with the colonizers, they are unable to speak in a culture not their own (*Postcolonial* 312-17). The resultant marginalization takes many forms; the underprivileged face enslavement both physically and psychologically. This type of enslavement prevents the voice of the marginalized from speaking. Due to the destructive element of the dominant culture speaking for the "other," "the subaltern's own idiom did not allow him to *know* his struggle so that he could articulate himself as its subject" (Spivak, *In Other Worlds* 253). Socially, also, barring any extreme changes in circumstance, the subaltern remains subjugated in an unalterable position. Spivak's works illustrate the powerful effect of a hegemonic culture. Dumas shows that society has ruined both Louis XIV and Philippe, in *The Man in the Iron Mask*, for any future good. Neither of the twins is able to maintain the switched role, and the tale ends in disaster. At the same time, Dumas illustrates the power obtained from living as the privileged in both works.

What Dumas accomplishes through the evolvment of Dantès, however, is a direct engagement of the nature of the subaltern. By seeking to comprehend Faria, learn from him, and become in many ways like him, Dantès outwardly ceases to be subaltern. Instead, Dantès—through subterfuge—becomes a member of the privileged caste. This transformation comes through diligence to detail and strict adherence to the educational development much in the same manner that Philippe engages in the transformation process before the switch takes place. Throughout the progression of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Dumas builds a believable social passing: newly imprinted with the wealth of knowledge from Faria, an “other,” Dantès is able to cross over the imaginary class line. Dumas shows that Dantès enters Château d’If as an ignorant—although highly esteemed among his peers—man, and begins the inward transformation which will later enable him to survive outside the prison walls as another. After the priest dies, Dantès cleverly switches places with Faria’s corpse, effectively enacting his escape as the jailers throw him off the cliff and down into the sea: “the sea is the graveyard of the Château d’If” (174). Symbolically, Dantès enters the sea as the dead man, and also as the man unjustly accused of conspiracy. From the water, after cutting himself loose from the sack encasing the “corpse” and the thirty-six pound cannonball tied to his feet, Dantès emerges as another man, the *doppelgänger* of the man that entered the water. This new man is a “freed” man who already enacts the complete “passing” as another. Dantès fully transitions with the help of new-found wealth, which also contributes to class distinction. Dantès emerges from the mere shell of a man that entered Château d’If as one of the privileged. As a freeman, Dantès “passes” initially as an Italian priest, and then as the

Count of Monte Cristo; through his masked identity, Dantès exacts complete revenge upon all who have wronged him.

Dantès disappears from the face of the earth because once imprisoned, like Philippe, he is completely forgotten. So thoroughly is the subaltern erased, that he or she is not sought. Philippe, although born to the inherent the privilege his twin assumes, disappears into the gloomy depths of the prison at Île Sainte-Marguérite. His life is negated as completely as it was before his rescue. Dantès' former self disappears as well; his existence continues solely because he is no longer one of the subjugated. Dantès effectively "passes" into a higher class; thus, he achieves the status and *l'opportunité* to live unfettered. To those who have shown injustice to him, Dantès seeks revenge with calculated coldness and no mercy. The punishment he wreaks upon those who wronged him fails to bring him peace, however. When Villefort reveals the extent of Dantès' revenge—the death of his wife and child—Dantès, now Monte Cristo, "paled at this terrible spectacle. He realized that he had exceeded the limits of vengeance, he realized that he could no longer say: 'God is for me and with me'" (1024). Alternatively, to those who have shown him kindness, Dantès extends mercy, compassion, and material wealth.³ None of his actions, however, bring him true satisfaction. His friend Valentine recounts his dying words to Morrel: "[H]as the count not just told us that all human wisdom was contained in these two words—'wait' and 'hope'?" (1078). Perhaps, finally, at the end, Dantès realizes that his "passing" as the *doppelgänger* of his former self is merely external. The bitterness and desire for revenge with which he lived his life will always bear witness to the imprisoned Dantès.

Dumas wrote for the masses. Thanks to his “rich imagination and love of concrete detail” (Stowe 69), Dumas’ characters come to life on the written page. One critic noted his death in 1871 as a French catastrophe:

I feel sure that in distracted France, when some pigeon flew into the beleaguered city, bearing its tiny packet telling of armies slaughtered, of a country gasping in its last mortal agony, the two short words, “Dumas dead,” caused even in sorrowing Paris additional tears to flow. (Phillips 508)

The larger-than-life author of such enduring characters as d’Artagnan, Porthos, Dantès, and Georges left the Paris that he so loved having “carved a place beside Edmond Dantès and d’Artagnan for [the] hero of [*Mes Mémoires*]”⁴ (Stowe 142)—himself.

Chapter 3: Racial Inequality in Dumas' *Georges*

Georges is known as the most autobiographical of Dumas' novels, even though—until recently—it has been among his lesser-known works. Although written four years earlier than *The Man in the Iron Mask*, and considered by critics to be among his best works, Dumas' novel, *Georges*, never received the prominence of his other manuscripts. Stowe attributes this, in part, to the fact that *The Three Musketeers* appeared only a year after *Georges* was published, yet he states that the book is a “solid, well-written book” (128). This lack of distinction, however, may be attributed to the pervasive thematic element of racial disparity. Werner Sollors, in his introduction to the 2007 edition of *Georges*, explains that this novel is the only one “in which Dumas—the celebrated, though at times also reviled, man of color—focuses on the color complex” (xix). While Dumas' acknowledgement of the problem of racialism⁵ makes *Georges* unique in itself, what adds to the distinctive quality of the novel is the universality of the theme. Not only is the racial criticism relevant to nineteenth-century audience, but it continues to have relevance today. Sollors further claims that “the problem of color prejudice that [*Georges*] examines is one that has not gone away and seems *particularly* relevant in our own days” (xix; emphasis added). Given the resurgent interest in the *doppelgänger* and racial equality, *Georges* presents a unique opportunity to gain insight into the nineteenth-century views from the perspective of the marginalized.

Critical studies, and more specifically, post-colonial and cultural studies, have recently brought to the forefront subtle (and some not-so-subtle) racial themes deeply embedded in novels written during the past several centuries.⁶ Though Dumas' denunciation of racism, miscegenation, and colonialism in *Georges* is markedly overt, his

pointed critique of social stratification certainly suggests the possibility of more subtle criticisms of racism in Dumas' other works. An examination of *Georges* will illuminate some of the less obvious social critiques embedded within the *doppelgänger* theme in *The Man in the Iron Mask* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. *Georges* deals with the struggling protagonist of the tale, Georges, who—like the author—is a mulatto, and suffers from the deeply-ingrained racial prejudice of the day. As one born of mixed races in a white-privileged society, Georges seeks to make sense of identity and racial inequality.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, Dumas situates *Georges* in the early nineteenth century on *île de France*, a small island east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. Interestingly, when Dumas penned *Georges* in 1846, the island was already under British control and had been renamed Mauritius. France initially took control of the island in 1715, five years after the Dutch abandoned it, and named it *île de France*; yet in 1810, the British gained control of the island in the midst of the Napoleonic Wars. The British officially changed the island's name back to Mauritius by the Treaty of Paris in 1814. Although Mauritius retained the existing language and laws, it remained under British control throughout Dumas' lifetime (in fact, Mauritius only recently gained independence in 1968). In *Georges*, the island is restored to its pre-Napoleonic War glory.

Dumas' decision to situate the story in *île de France* in 1810 at the time of the Napoleonic Wars indicates more than a passing whim. Indeed, the significance appears to be tied to his family history—in particular, his father's life. As a young boy, Dumas adored his father. He loved hearing the tales of this valiant French general, hailed by his

fans as “*diable noir*” (Gorman 3), translated as “black devil.” Though “unquestionably a Negro,” in France, Thomas-Alexandre was respected as “handsome, graceful as a tiger, a formidable swordsman, a magnificent rider, and unbelievably strong” (8-9). After a falling out with his father in 1786, Thomas-Alexandre enlisted as a soldier. He dropped his father’s last name, Davy de la Pailleterie, and took his new surname from his mother, Marie-Cessette Dumas, a black slave from the French Indies who had died when he was ten years old.⁷ Under the name Thomas-Alexandre Dumas, the man rose to the rank of general, gaining wide recognition for his illustrious military career. Admired also by General Napoleon Bonaparte, who “knew the value of having such leaders” (Maurois 8), Dumas continued to gain respect in his service to France by wreaking terror upon its enemies. Discouragement crept in, however, as General Dumas’ poorly nourished and ill-clad troops fought in Egypt. During this time, Thomas-Alexandre found that his “heart was no longer in the campaign. The superb mulatto was stricken with a nostalgia peculiar to Creoles” (10).⁸ Though he and the other generals continued to fight, questioning began amongst the leaders which they whispered to one another within their tents. Fearing Bonaparte’s motives to be less than noble, Thomas-Alexandre verbalized his growing fears. He, along with the other generals, “feared that Bonaparte wished to make of them only instruments serving his personal ambition,” (8) an operation that the accomplished military leaders wanted no part of. Unfortunately, Thomas-Alexandre’s private conversation was overheard and reported, provoking serious suspicion from Bonaparte concerning this general’s loyalty. The ensuing sharp disagreement brought about Thomas-Alexandre’s early dismissal from the army. Though he wrote repeatedly to Bonaparte for “his wages in arrears and to petition for resumption of active service” (10-

11), his appeals remained unanswered throughout the remainder of his life. Bonaparte never forgave Thomas-Alexandre; he refused to allow others to speak of this man who had failed to unquestionably honor his leadership. Thomas-Alexandre's reputation as a noble and daring war hero, however, followed him. Though he returned home as a broken man (his health suffered due to his twenty months of captivity in Naples on his way home), Thomas-Alexandre—hailed by General Bonaparte as “the Tyrolean Horatius” (Maurois 8) and “Hercules” (Gorman 15)—had no cause to hang his head in shame. Courageous and decorated, Thomas-Alexandre served France in such a splendid manner that young Dumas—born nine months after Thomas-Alexandre returned home—had a hero within his own household to emulate. Thomas-Alexandre lived in debilitating pain and increasing weakness for another five years before leaving young Dumas and his mother penniless. Young Dumas blamed both God and Napoleon (who carried a grudge against Dumas' father until he died) for his father's death, yet he failed to cling to a lifelong grudge against the general. According to one author, “While Dumas spoke of Napoleon as his father's ‘murderer,’ he could not help admiring the military genius who promoted French *gloire*”⁹ (Winegarten 37). In fact, Dumas so admired the legendary general, that—despite any misgivings he must have felt, knowing how deeply his father had suffered at Bonaparte's hands—he followed in his father's footsteps as a Bonapartist rather than show loyalty to the Bourbons (Gorman 38). Dumas' fictitious tale, woven into the historical *île de France* revolt against British troops, paints the French in a favorable light—despite their ultimate loss. One of Dumas' life-long achievements is his ability to bring the history of the country he so loved to life. Georges follows his father's footsteps in one particular regard: He fights well and achieves military accolades.

Throughout *Georges*, Dumas focuses on a particular aspect of prejudice: discrimination against mulattoes. Georges, the protagonist of the novel, refuses to ignore the exploitation of the mulatto people of his island, *île de France*. George first notices the existing racial prejudice as a young boy when he is powerless to remedy the situation. His first recorded encounter with abject racial prejudice occurs during the beginning of the French Revolution. When British troops threaten the autonomy of *île de France*, Pierre Munier, George's father, desperately desires to join the "courageous band of only eight hundred, bravely holding off four thousand British and two thousand Sepoys" (Dumas, *Georges* 19). Although not only a free man, but also a wealthy landowner, Pierre Munier—neither fully black nor fully white—is refused the chance to fight. The French islanders rise up against him as they prepare to fight, shouting, "'We want no mulattoes among us!' The cry was taken up by more voices and repeated like an unrelenting echo by the entire battalion" (20). When Munier refuses to back down, the white soldiers hurl repeated insults at him. Though their need for fighting men is desperate, the white corps denies Munier the opportunity to fight with their battalion even as a volunteer. The officer sneeringly puts Munier in his place, a place which is definitely not among the white "superiors":

"Do I really need to tell you that you're not wanted here?"

Pierre Munier could have knocked the rotund little man to the ground with one blow, but he remained silent. He met the officer's gaze and then averted his eyes humbly, increasing both the other man's arrogance and his anger.

“What are you doing here?” the small man spat out the words, giving the mulatto a shove with the flat of his hand.

Pierre Munier spoke at last. “Monsieur de Malmédie,” he said, “I had hoped that differences in color would not matter on a day as dangerous as this one.”

The fat man sneered. “You had hoped! What gave you reason to hope?”

(21)

Malmédie’s comment reveals how completely foreign he finds any concept of equality with the mulatto. Even his name—Malmédie—bears a touch of irony. Munier speaks truth when he merely mentions the name “*Monsieur Mal me dit*” which translates as “gentleman who speaks badly to me.” Though Munier is a wealthy and strong landowner with many slaves, to Malmédie, Munier is nothing more than a dog.

Not only is Munier marginalized as a postcolonial subject, he is further marginalized as a mulatto. The color line is drawn as clearly as if Malmédie had carved it into the sand with the muzzle of his gun. As a mulatto, Munier recognizes his place as the subaltern and rarely attempts to rise above his status:

Pierre Munier . . . had from his earliest entry into active manhood adopted a line of conduct toward whites from which he never deviated. Lacking the strength of will to fight such overwhelming prejudice, he had resolved to disarm the whites with continual submission and humility. He had neither the strength nor the will to challenge any white man to a duel, no matter how offensive the man’s prejudice might be to him; despite his wealth and intelligence, he spent his life apologizing for his very

existence. He never sought public or administrative office; he strove only to remain lost in the crowd. (49-50)

When Dumas illustrates the marginalization of peoples resulting from mixed marriages, his writing is vaguely personal. Dumas faced similar internal *doppelgänger* challenges due to his own biracial heritage, although few were as overt as those his characters face in *Georges*. As a child, Dumas blended in with the white neighbors, his mother's relatives, and the general white population. That facile blending began to change, however, when Dumas reached puberty. As a teenager, his changing body looked less like his white relatives and more like those of his Haitian grandmother's. Dumas was "just beginning to reveal signs of a crispness suspiciously negroid, and [had] thick red lips that suggested strawberries against his dazzlingly white complexion" (Gorman 2), and he often faced racial taunting. While Dumas failed to slink into the background, his awareness of the widespread tendency of the subaltern to do so is evident in his portrayal of Munier:

His generosity, born of his excellent heart, to be sure, but also of his timid character, had earned the friendship of his neighbors, but it was rather passive in nature. No one ever thought of returning the favors he granted them; they simply tried to avoid hurting him. Even so, there were always those who, despite his immense wealth, his many slaves, and his spotless reputation, wished him ill on account of his skin color. M. de Malmédie and his son, Henri, were among this number. (50)

Munier's main goals in life appear to be to remain in the background, to avoid drawing attention to himself, and to maintain a peaceful co-existence with the "superiors." Due to

the overwhelming presence and power of the whites as the privileged, Munier hides behind the mask of humility and subordination for safety—not only his own safety, but also the safety of his family and his entire household.

Dumas demonstrates the *doppelgänger* effect of those neither black nor white in his characterization of Munier. The man is refused the opportunity to defend his island—not because he is a criminal. Neither is he refused the chance because he is weak or inexperienced; instead, he is refused solely because he is a mulatto. Both black and white—yet, at the same time, neither black nor white—Munier plays his role as mulatto vigilantly: “Always careful to avoid the slightest quarrel, invariably polite and submissive, he never displayed even the barest hint of the dislike or resentment. Indeed, he would rather lose ten arpents¹⁰ of land than open or even support a court case that would have won him twenty” (50). Nonetheless, Munier refuses to be deterred when denied the privilege of fighting with the white landowners. Considering the island as much his own as the white man’s, Munier must fight for *île de France*—even though he willingly submits to the subjugation throughout his life. He is not merely fighting for his rights as an individual; he is fighting for his country and the rights of all people, even those of his own slaves. Munier chooses the only option available to him: At Georges’ suggestion, he gathers a corps of mulattoes. Interestingly, the resultant alteration in Munier further illustrates the comprehensive effect of marginalization on the subaltern:

Almost at once an extraordinary transformation took place in Pierre Munier. The sense of inferiority that he could never quite shake off in the presence of whites vanished, to be replaced by an appreciation of his own worth. He straightened to his full height, and his eyes—which had been

kept humbly lowered before M. de Malmédie—flashed with energy. His voice grew firm and commanding where it had trembled a moment before. Slinging his gun gracefully over his shoulder, he drew his saber and, motioning in the direction of the enemy, cried, “Forward!”. (23)

Though he would prefer to hide in the background, Munier’s love for country, his patriotic enthusiasm for French soil, overwhelms his reticence to stand up to the “superior.” Thus, Munier, despite the white man’s scorn, chooses to fight for his freedom.

Dumas writes with calculated judgment about the effects of racialism on the entire family. Though humiliated before his sons, Munier cannot afford to oppose the white leader. Munier cannot show courage in the face of his “superiors,” yet he is in every way superior to Malmédie in character, in courage, and in commitment. Once separated from the white man, however, Munier demonstrates that he is a different man altogether, a *doppelgänger*. His humility in the face of the white man is feigned to avoid exposure. Munier is well aware of the attitude that whites take toward what they consider “inferiors”—as exemplified with Dumas’ acerbic remark about Henri’s attitude toward them. Dumas writes, “[H]e needed no further education; he already knew the most important thing: Colored men, *all* colored men, were born to respect him, and to obey” (31). Munier, therefore, in his attempt to evade conflict, masks his nature with a feigned subordination until the white corps of soldiers rejects his offer to serve. No longer suppressed by his “superiors,” Munier effectively “passes” as a one of the privileged—even though he is not passing as anything other than who he truly is. Munier masquerades as the “other” in order to lead his troops into battle; he is “fearless—daring—superb!” (25). Not only does Munier lead the black corps valiantly after Malmédie makes a

“critical error” (24), but Munier also rescues Malmédie’s all-white corps from certain defeat. Through valiant fighting in the battle, Pierre Munier captures the British flag. His courageous leadership and skillful military strategy win the respect, admiration, and loyalty of the negroes whom he leads. Thus, when one of his seriously-injured soldiers is at the point of death, he wants Munier with him. Munier delivers the flag to his son, Georges, for safe keeping. When Malmédie discovers the mulatto’s role in vanquishing the British foe, his jealousy reaches new proportions. Deeply-rooted envy and pride consume the white man. Yet it is his son, Henri, who—reared on racism and the thrill of suppressing the “other”—carries his position too far. He demands that Georges give him the flag, calling Georges a “dirty mulatto” (27) when he refuses. At his son Henri’s insistence, Malmédie demands that Georges give him the flag, and Georges’ father gives in without a fight.

Dumas demonstrates the wide-reaching effects of the racial subjugation through this incident: the subaltern is completely powerless. Georges learns the lesson well at a young age: there is no recourse against the power of the white man. When Georges is forced to turn over the flag that his father, a mulatto, has courageously captured during a battle against the British, he recoils from the injustice. Georges sees his father, Munier, who is “fearless under a hail of musket shot” (Dumas, *Georges* 29), completely powerless before the white hegemonic leadership.¹¹ Georges and his brother Jacques are eyewitnesses to their father’s rejection by his own peers, peers who were financially his equals, and sometimes his inferiors (financially and materially). His white neighbors and fellow landowners reject Pierre Munier merely because he is a mulatto:

It was truly painful to see a man of such deep and noble character yield to so vulgar a bully, but so it was. Even worse, his actions surprised no one.

The same sort of thing occurs every day in the colonies. Brought up from infancy to regard white men as a superior breed, Pierre Munier had allowed his proud spirit to be crushed without even attempting to resist.

(29)

Already marginalized due to his identification with the black race within a white society, Georges is further marginalized by his lack of complete identification with either race. His situation, as a mulatto, carries special consequences. The mulatto, Georges learns, has the stereotypical “right” to be a coward before his white “superior.” Outwardly, George submits, but his inner resolve to stand against the hegemonic behavior is strengthened:

Georges, who was born into the same circumstances as his father but whose weaker constitution had denied him the pleasures of physical exercise, had focused all his energies inward. Like many a sickly child he was mature beyond his years, and instinctively discerned the reasons for his father’s behavior. Even then, though, the man’s pride that surged in the child’s chest prevented him from acting likewise. He hated the whites who despised him and scorned the mulattoes who allowed themselves to be so despised. Very early on, he resolved to conduct himself in a manner completely opposite from his father’s. (50)

As a child, he has no recourse against the hegemony, but he furtively files the memory for the future. From this point forward, Georges knows what he wants: “He wants to

possess what the whites have: a sense of superiority” (Enz 389). Georges relentlessly pursues his goal. Observing that the “moral superiority mattered little without physical strength to match” (Dumas, *Georges* 51), Georges submits himself to a rigorous physical schedule which changes him so thoroughly that his own classmates do not recognize him.

Dumas methodically exposes the debilitating effects of a hegemonic society upon all of its citizens, oppressed and oppressors alike. Sent to Paris to study, Georges lives without the hegemonic oppression he observed daily on *île de France*. Apart from the slave-based island society, Georges fits in with his schoolmates nicely. Appearing white, he matures physically, mentally, and emotionally in the educational environment; yet Georges is exiled from his family and his home, and the seeds of bitterness planted within his soul when he was still a child grow within him. Through both the prejudicial actions of the white “superiors” on the island, and the very lack of such detrimental treatment while Georges studies in Paris, plans for abolishing the subjugation on *île de France* formulate and strengthen within his mind.

Dumas demonstrates through the interaction of the grown sons that prejudice begets prejudice. As son of the “superior” white landowner, Henri Malmédie expects to inherit the same superiority over anyone who is not white on *île de France*. Henri’s reason for denying Georges’ demand for satisfaction is the gravest insult imaginable. Georges appeals to Henri’s sense of honor: “You are not a coward, I know, and I trust you will behave in this matter as a gentleman should” (Dumas, *Georges* 159), yet Henri cares nothing for the respect of “Georges’ kind.” The sneering excuse Henri gives to Georges conjures up memories of earlier dealings with M. de Malmédie: “That I do not fight with mulattos” (159). Just as his father was denied the right to fight alongside his

fellow islanders because of his status as a *mulâtre*, so also Georges is denied his right to protect his honor—and for the same reason. Georges’ response, however, is as unlike his father’s as is his drive for revenge. With a steely resolve, Georges turns his back on the Malmédies and says to the governor, “the fact is that I returned to *île de France* to fulfill my destiny, and I must see it through to the end. I have a prejudice to fight. Either it must destroy me, or I it” (159). There is not a shade of fear in Georges, the fear that urged his father to send him away:

Pierre Munier claimed that he was sending his boys to finish their education abroad, but in reality he had done it for fear of the violent hatred M. de Malmédie now bore against his family. The father was terrified for his sons; they might fall victim to the little man at any moment. It caused him great pain to part with his boys, but he could not bear the idea of their falling victim to the spite and venom of such a powerful man. (30-31)

Though weak and sickly as a marginalized child, Georges’ passion for revenge stems from his distaste for his father’s passivity toward the society which restricts any sense of equality. George vows that he will not rest until circumstances on his beloved *île de France* change: “The child Hannibal,¹² spurred onward by his father, had declared war on an entire nation; young Georges, *despite* his father, would fight prejudice to the death with the same ferocity” (51). Part of Georges’ warfare against prejudice is to disqualify any justification for his marginalization. Georges is marginalized as a mulatto and the descendent of slaves, yet he diligently “attempts to fight off these reproaches by proving that he is neither a slave nor an illegitimate child” (Enz 391). His passion includes proving to his peers that “although he is part black, he can be morally and physically

superior to whites” (391). This same passion for vengeance has imbued Georges with the will to combat the prejudice and the strength to endure the battle.

Henri, also, learns at his father’s feet; yet rather than choose a path diametrically opposed to that of his father’s, Henri follows in the prejudicial footsteps of his father. Dumas’ acerbic portrayal of white “superiority” in the character of Henri de Malmédie leaves little doubt regarding Dumas’ own distaste for such prejudice. In *Georges*, though M. de Malmédie is “superior” to Pierre Munier politically and socially, Munier proves in battle that he is superior to Malmédie in his leadership ability, his physical prowess, and his intellectual strength. Similarly, though Malmédie’s son, Henri, claims his superiority due to his inherent right as a white man, Munier’s son, Georges, is in every way superior to Henri. Georges surpasses Henri in physical strength and appearance, though Henri “rightly considered himself one of the handsomest men in the colony” (87). Georges’ consideration for Sara proves him to be far more charming and chivalrous than Henri. Showing integrity and adherence to his belief in equality, Georges frees all of his slaves and earns their respect. He is well educated, well spoken, and well dressed—all in the latest Paris fashion, making him strikingly more appealing than island-educated Henri. However, this demonstrable superiority fails to pave the way for political or social equality. While Dumas clearly opposes the marginalization of the subaltern, he also demonstrates that the intolerance for other races is a learned behavior: “As for Henri de Malmédie, his mother was far too fond of him to allow such a separation. In any event, he needed no further education; he already knew the most important thing: colored men, *all* colored men, were born to respect him, and to obey” (31). This extreme sense of entitlement prevents Henri from any form of reasonable negotiation with Georges.

Through Henri's arrogance and disdain for all people of color, whether slave or free, Dumas demonstrates the limiting effect that racial discrimination has on the racist's offspring. Henri's ability to achieve greatness is stunted due to his extreme egotism.

Though Dumas paints a dismal view of the hegemonic treatment of the black race, he writes with more ambivalence of the slave trade. Jacques, sent to Paris as a boy, along with his brother Georges, does not fulfill his father's hopes. Pierre Munier says, "I hoped that a proper education might calm Jacques down a bit—cure him of his vagabond tendencies . . . But it seems that God did not approve of my plan. Jacques shipped out on a privateer during a trip to Brest, and I have heard from him only three times since then—always from somewhere on the other side of the globe" (Dumas, *Georges* 46). Though the father is unaware, Jacques' dealings have been much more of a disappointment than merely "vagabond tendencies": while separated from his family, Jacques enters a new profession—that of a slave trader, introducing a *doppelgänger* ideology into the novel. Though the prejudice against the mulatto is emphatically renounced, Dumas takes a much less stringent approach to racial prejudice in general. According to Stowe, Dumas took no particular pride in his mixed-race identity. In fact, in Dumas's personal memoirs, he does not mention the race of his Haitian grandmother. Stowe says that "[t]hough Dumas in all probability expressed his honest convictions about racial prejudice in *Georges*, it seems at the very least unlikely that the book was a deeply felt crusade or personal conviction" (130). The prejudice he personally endured as a mulatto in nineteenth-century French society, however, belies the notion of Dumas' ambiguity; rather it is more likely that the existing ideology caused Dumas to cloak his views with qualifiers and subdued terminology to avoid offending his readership and thereby lose his source of income.

Dumas unequivocally denounces prejudice against mulattoes in *Georges*, yet like another literary contemporary of his, Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), Dumas turns a blind eye to slavery in general. Rimbaud, an accomplished poet, set aside his literary talent and became a slave trader in 1873. Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), on the other hand, celebrated his mulatto mistress in many of his poems, including his *Fleurs du Mal* (1857). The Munier family owns hundreds of black slaves—they treat them humanitarily, as the tale repeatedly illustrates, but they still purchased black human beings from slave-traders long before Jacques joins the profession. Dumas endeavors to justify humane slavery in his description of Pierre Munier's treatment of his slaves:

[T]here were the slave quarters, which indeed no great plantation was without. The center of this area was occupied by a large structure that served as a barn in the winter and a dance hall in the summer. Sounds of merriment issued from the building now: laughter, drums, tambourines, and Malgache harps. The blacks had wasted no time in beginning their three days' holiday. Primitive and uninhibited by nature, they worked and played with equal fervor, and often danced until they dropped from exhaustion. (62-63)

In this detailed description of Munier's slaves, Dumas paints a sanguine picture of willing submission to a magnanimous master. Though treated with kindness, there is undoubtedly a secondary marginalization within the camp as seen when the slaves gather before Munier:

They were startled, however, by the unexpected arrival of the master and his son. They hurried to arrange themselves in rows, each seeking his

proper place, like soldiers surprised by their captain. After a moment of silence, they burst into heartfelt applause and hurrahs of joy. They were well fed, well clothed, and fairly treated, and they adored Pierre Munier as the best mulatto in the colony; a man who was humble with the white and never cruel to the blacks. (63)

Though quick to show appreciation for the compassionate treatment, the slaves know their “proper place”: subordinate. Dumas’ account makes no judgment on the actual institution of slavery. Instead, his reference to slavery seems to be one of acceptance—as long as the slave is treated with kindness and fairness. Stowe claims, “Dumas is more attracted to the paradoxical contrast of views within the Munier family than moved to support or denounce any of them” (130). Indeed, there exists a strange dichotomy within *Georges* that further implies a *doppelgänger* idealology.

When Jacques returns years later to *île de France*, he initially presents himself *incognito* to both his brother and father and sells them “an admirable assortment of blacks” (124). It is particularly noteworthy that the slaves were considered to be especially desirable because they were from far lands and “they were too far from home to harbor any hope of returning there, and thus almost never tried to escape” (123). The fate of the newly captured slaves is irreversible. The messenger who conveys to the newly purchased slaves how “lucky” they are to be purchased by so kind a master is Télémaque,¹³ a Congo native, who shakes Jacques’ hand when it is offered him, “though not without a slight shiver at touching a man who traded in slaves” (125). Though Dumas highlights marked differences in Munier’s kindly treatment of his slaves and Malmédie’s cruel treatment of his slaves, his penetrating insight hints at a deeper sense of dread.

Less obvious, but still recognizable, social critiques embedded within the *doppelgänger* theme can also be found within *The Man in the Iron Mask* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Though Georges—unlike Philippe—wears no outward mask, his countenance is nonetheless masked as he returns from Paris. Once childishly submissive and weak, Georges returns to *île de France* with strength and dauntless resolve to reverse the hegemonic society. Initially unrecognized, Georges “passes” unintentionally as white; then, after falling in love with a white woman, he rejects the possibility of “passing” as white so that he can wreak vengeance upon his enemies. These enemies include not only the Malmédie family, but also all those white people on *île de France* who hold themselves up as “superior” to the mulatto. Georges becomes a *doppelgänger* to right the wrongs committed against his father and against his principles, whereas Philippe, in *The Man in the Iron Mask*, enters the castle as the *doppelgänger* of his brother, Louis XIV, to appease Aramis’ pleas for justice.

Additionally, Dumas appears to include similar critiques of social stratification in *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Analogous to Dantès’ quest for revenge subsequent to his infiltration into society in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Georges embarks on an equally destructive mission of vengeance. While Dantès, in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, enters his new life as a *doppelgänger* of his former comrade in prison, Georges returns from Paris as a *doppelgänger* of his former self. In each case, the protagonist becomes a divided self. Dantès in *The Count of Monte Cristo* adheres to his own strict code of ethics: to those who behaved honorably toward him while he was still among the subaltern, Dantès is a knight in shining armor. In contrast, Dantès, as his own *doppelgänger*,¹⁴ becomes an agent of destruction to those who plotted his demise, wrecking havoc in the lives of those

who betrayed him. This double identity serves to demonstrate the complexity of Dantès' transformation. Born of knowledge derived from Faria's questioning deep within the dungeon, the vengeance begins immediately to alter Dantès' features. Faria says, "I regret having helped you in your investigation and said what I did to you . . . [b]ecause I have insinuated a feeling into your heart that was not previously there: the desire for revenge" (Dumas, *The Count of Monte Cristo* 145). A true philosopher, Faria understands the human psyche; the subtle changes he witnesses in Dantès' features stir the regret, because he envisions a future filled with an unquenchable thirst for vengeance. Indeed, even as Dantès begins his education in mathematics, physics, and foreign languages—this education which enables him to "pass" from subaltern to privileged—he also begins the inward transformation from the light of love to the darkness of bitterness. This bitterness carries Dantès farther along the trail of hatred and revenge than he could ever have foreseen; when he finally reveals himself to his enemy whom he has destroyed, he credits God for the mask which allows him to exact revenge:

"What did I do to you? Tell me! Speak!" "You condemned me to a slow and frightful death, you killed my father and you deprived me of love at the same time as you deprived me of freedom, and of fortune as well as love!" "Who are you? Then who are you? My God!" "I am the spectre of an unfortunate man whom you locked up in the dungeons of the Chateau d'If. When this spectre finally emerged from its tomb, God put on it the mask of the Count of Monte Cristo and showered it with diamonds and gold so that you should not recognize it until today." (1024)

What Dantès expects is a sweet release as he destroys his enemies one by one; what he finds instead is the bitter aftertaste of shame and sorrow. Though he states that God has gifted him with the *doppelgänger* opportunity, when his enemy shows him that his thirst for revenge has caused the death of innocents—the man’s wife and child—Dantès suddenly realizes that this chance he has been given is infused with darkness. Dantès transformation is more complete than traversing from uneducated to educated, poverty-stricken to wealthy. He confesses, “Kind, trustful and forgiving as I was, I made myself vengeful, secretive and cruel—or, rather, impassive like fate itself, which is deaf and blind. Then I launched myself down the road that I had opened, plunging forward until I reached my goal” (1034). The alteration so thoroughly envelops Dantès, that the mask that he wears imprints itself into his soul. Through the *doppelgänger* paradigm, Dumas effectively illuminates the evils of stratification; there are no solutions for those who exchange one life for that of the “other.”

Dumas demonstrates a similar outcome as Georges pursues vengeance against those who stood against his father and his fellow mulattoes. Georges vows as a child that he will never forget the insult and he does not forget. The eponymous hero rises above the white landowners in courage and cunning, and he wins the love of Sara, Henri’s white step-sister (and pledged wife-to-be). Winning Sara’s love is enough to prove to Georges that he has beaten the “superiors”: “By his will alone, by the power of his character, he, a mulatto, had won the love of a white woman” (265). Sara’s love, freely and honorably given, stands as a monument to Georges’ efforts. Indeed, Sara’s unconditional love empowers Georges with the confidence that he needs to face his executors:

Now, Georges felt, he could die. His long struggle had paid off. He had fought prejudice with his bare hands, and—though he had been mortally wounded in the process—he had vanquished it after all. / These thoughts made George radiant as he led Sara into the church. He was no longer the condemned man about to climb the scaffold. Now he was a martyr, surely, joyfully, on his way to heaven. (265)

As Georges takes the hand of Sara in marriage before the scheduled execution, in essence, he “passes” from condemnation to martyrdom. Georges has fought the fight against the racial bigotry, and—in his eyes—he wins by earning the pure love of a white woman. Thus, Georges shrouds himself with the acceptance of his fate, then—*voilà!*—his rescuers whisk him away from the clutches of the guillotine; he finds himself “free” (269) with Sara, Jacques, and their father.

Like Dantès, however, Georges is never truly free of his *doppelgänger* situation. Though he holds dear the love of Sara, the unquenchable thirst for revenge nearly gets Georges killed; he nurtures his grudge to the end. Homeless, penniless, and adrift at sea with his brother, his father, and his newly married white wife, Georges is at least free from the hegemony that so plagued his existence. Yet, he is, like Philippe when he returns to prison, in a continuous state of exile. Georges, with his new wife, is free from the scornful glances, the intimidation, the discrimination, but he and his wife are banished from his *île de France*, his home, “which had so nearly proved fatal to both” (270). Georges’ beloved *île de France*, for which he fought so valiantly, is no longer home; his island is now his enemy’s fortress.

Chapter 4:

Consequences of Slavery, Miscegenation and Unintentional Passing in

Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Like Dumas, Mark Twain incorporates the *doppelgänger* motif in several of his novels, and of greatest interest to this study are *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882), *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1893), and *Those Extraordinary Twins* (1894). Inspired by a poster he saw of conjoined twins—Giovanni and Giacomo Tocci—who were visiting his city,¹⁵ Twain initiated what he thought would be a comedy, but the more he wrote, the more tangled and serious his story became. Twain said that once he began developing the plot, the story traveled in an entirely different vein than he had designed:

But the tale kept spreading along and spreading along, and other people got to intruding themselves and taking up more and more room with their talk and their affairs. Among them came a stranger named Pudd'nhead Wilson, and a woman named Roxana; and presently the doings of these two pushed up into prominence a young fellow named Tom Driscoll, whose proper place was away in the obscure background. Before the book was half finished those three were taking things entirely into their own hands and working the whole take as a private venture of their own.
(126)¹⁶

Twain's solution was to divide the manuscript into two distinct tales, one the original comedy, and the other a tragedy: "I pulled out one of the stories by the roots, and left the other one—a kind of literary Caesarean operation" (125). The resultant novels were *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson, A Tale*, first published in 1893, and *The Comedy of*

Those Extraordinary Twins, published the following year, in 1894. Twain wrote that his earlier novel, *The Prince and the Pauper*, commenced in a similar fashion: “I once started to write—a funny and fantastic sketch about a prince and a pauper; it presently assumed a grave cast of its own accord, and in that new shape spread itself out into a book” (125). Indeed, the final manuscript, *The Prince and the Pauper*, is not the lighthearted tale imitated by the media¹⁷ and portrayed frequently in children’s cartoons; instead, it is a weighty commentary on the ill-effects of social stratification. Using the *doppelgänger* pattern to expose social ills, Twain writes of a young “boy born to a poor family of the name of Canty, who did not want him” trading places with “another English child [who] was born to a rich family of the name of Tudor, who did want him” (*The Prince and the Pauper* 193). With the exchange of the young boys—born on the same day and in the same town—come overlapping lessons in the effects of social and psychological boundaries in the disturbing political divisions embedded within the social stratification. The distinctions of class are diverse and unalterable. Therefore, when the boys trade clothes, they are essentially accomplishing the impossible; each boy steps out of his own world and into the world of the “other.” In that exchange, however, both the prince and the pauper discover that their “dream” of finding true freedom in the life of the “other,” is nothing more than a delusion.

Twain illustrates that Tom and Prince Edward, in their *doppelgänger* switch, trade hardships as well as dreams. In the very absence of fulfillment, when each boy assumes the life of the “other,” Twain points to negative influences upon both: the subaltern versus the privileged, the powerless versus the powerful. While living as a beggar, Tom envisions grander places: “His head grew to be full of these wonderful things, and many a

night as he lay in the dark on his scant and offensive straw, tired, hungry, and smarting from a thrashing, he unleashed his imagination and soon forgot his aches and pains in delicious picturing to himself of the charmed life of a petted prince in a regal palace” (*The Prince and the Pauper* 195). Tom’s daily thoughts become so intertwined with his imagination, in fact, that he begins to change—both his speech and his behavior unconsciously begin to mimic royalty. His growing desire to “look just once upon a real prince, in the flesh” consumes him, until even in his dreams “he [is] a princeling himself” (196). Tom’s dream world intensifies the sordid nature of his natural world, and he daily chafes against the bondage of poverty and the shame of beggary.

At the same time, responsibilities of the crown fill the Prince’s hours, and he longs to embrace a life of freedom. When they first meet, the Prince listens pensively as Tom recounts his neighborhood’s Punch-and-Judy puppet shows, monkey shows, cudgel fights, canal and river swims, races, and Maypole dances. When Tom shares about the “times we make mud pastry—oh, the lovely mud, it hath not its like for delightfulness in all the world!—we do fairly wallow in the mud, sir, saving your worship’s presence” (201), the Prince can no longer forbear. He replies: “Oh, prithee, say no more, ‘tis glorious! If that I could but clothe me in raiment like to thine, and strip my feet, and revel in the mud once, just once, with none to rebuke me or forbid, meseemeth I could forego the crown!” (201). Though the Prince initiates the plan, Tom completely agrees. He has dreamed of this moment all his life. Tom envisions freedom from poverty and the allure of royalty, while the Prince envisions the appeal of nature and freedom from the protective confines of the palace. Thus, the *doppelgänger* plan is hatched; and, immediately, it is well on its way to fruition.

Twain challenged the Victorian notion that behavior equals one's position. Twain's switch of identities demonstrates that clothes do not make the man by having each boy rise to the occasion in his new situation; he uses the *doppelgänger* motif to point out how deceptive outward appearances can be, as aptly illustrated in William Shakespeare's words when, in *The Merchant of Venice*, the Prince of Morocco reads the words from a scroll: "All that glitters is not gold; / Often have you heard that told: / Many a man his life hath sold / But my outside to behold: / Gilded tombs do worms enfold" (2.7). It is highly probably that due to his nineteenth-century upbringing, Twain would have been deeply aware of the rigid ideas that these words belie. In *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, Karen Halttunen refers to the Victorian acceptance of the proposal that the clothes reveal the man: "In a theory that may be called the sentimental typology of conduct, they asserted that all aspects of manner and appearance were visible outward sign of inner moral qualities" (40). Victorian principles included the thought that "[w]ithin the sentimental ideal, dress [was] regarded as an index of character, a mirror of the soul, an outward revelation of inner moral qualities" (159). Moreover, dress and behavior, within the Victorian realm, assumed an outward conformity to righteousness and moral standards with the hope that before long that outward conformity would become an inward reality. Thus, both Victorian modes of behavior and fashionable dress are held up as an outward standard of supposed inward character (165-67). Therefore, when Tom and the Prince exchange clothes, Victorian ideals require that they both receive the amount of respect and deference that the clothes themselves dictate—regardless of the character or virtue of the one within the clothes. The Prince, therefore, when he clothes himself with the pauper's clothes, receives his due treatment as a pauper

and all that entails. Victorian thought also dictates that one born of a thief and beggar was inherently of “lesser quality.” Just as a thief’s child will become a thief, a murderer’s child will commit murder. Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) was an Italian criminologist who believed that criminality was inherited. The ramifications of Lombroso’s ideas of the “born” criminal are presently acted out in the courts; criminals are not always responsible for their acts of crime—they were “born” that way (Rafter and Gibson 3). Following the Lamarckian position, Lombroso espoused the view that acquired traits can become permanent and inheritable (288). From this perspective, John Canty would have passed his traits of habitual drunkenness, abusive behavior, and laziness to his son Tom. Prince Edward would have inherited the stern, compassionless nature of his father. Nevertheless, Twain contradicts the societal *status quo* and portrays each of his look-a-likes, regardless of birth and dress, with heroic qualities. According to Louise Schleiner in “Romance Motifs in Three Novels of Mark Twain,” Twain implies through the individual success of each of the switched boys that “native intelligence and verve will out in sufficiently challenging circumstances, the accident of birth having no importance” (339). Indeed, as each boy immerses himself into his own *doppelgänger* situation, he finds himself facing and overcoming turmoil and tribulations of a sort he has not heretofore envisioned. The life of the pauper, the prince discovers, holds hunger, deprivation, and fear. The life of the privileged, the pauper discovers, includes boredom, rules and regulations, and weighty responsibility.

Like Dumas, Twain quickly dispels any inherent glamour in the life of the “other” inherent in the alterity. Though each boy gains insight from the perspectives of the “other” after making the *doppelgänger* exchange, Twain demonstrates that neither boy

finds freedom in the life of the “other”; instead, the pauper discovers that the glitz and glamour of the palace merely mask the cold reality of imperialism. Apart from the glamour he had envisioned from the outside, the prince faces the reality of poverty. He finds that trudging in the mud is less romantic than he had dreamed; he develops an understanding of the life of the subaltern, thereby deepening his capacity for mercy and compassion during his ensuing reign as king. According to the nineteenth-century notion, a gentleman is born, not bred; a gentleman is a gentleman by right of birth. Twain, on the other hand, contradicts this perception by inserting an uneducated, inexperienced, poverty-bound pauper as the gentleman prince’s adequate, if not equal, *doppelgänger*. Twain’s portrayal of an untutored pauper ruling wisely disrupts the accepted societal norms. Prince Edward acknowledges Tom’s triumphant role as substitute king with grace befitting a true gentleman: “I have learned the story of these past few weeks, and am well pleased with thee. Thou hast governed the realm with right royal gentleness and mercy” (Twain, *The Prince and the Pauper* 345). Newly aware of the plight of the subaltern, the prince generously demonstrates his regained power by enacting radical change in Tom’s situation. He bestows upon Tom and his family the wherewithal to live without begging, to live without the ubiquitous need to scrounge for daily sustenance, and to live with the respect of others. In this seemingly magnanimous gesture by the prince, Twain clearly exposes the ludicrous and harmful nature of an imperialistic society. What should exist as basic rights of human existence becomes a gracious gift in a culture that idolizes the privileged and oppresses the poor.

Interestingly, Twain situates this *doppelgänger* novel in the sixteenth-century British monarchy, much as Dumas situates *The Man in the Iron Mask* in the mid-

seventeenth-century French monarchy. Moreover, just as Dumas' novel points to the unlikely existence of a *doppelgänger* twin of France's most highly revered kings, Louis XIV, Twain's involves the unlikely *doppelgänger* plot of the young British king known for his gentleness amidst economic hardships. During his career, Twain emphasized that his manuscripts were "true," as in historically accurate. Like Dumas, Twain "was reared in an atmosphere where history and biography were regarded as more worthy the attention of a grown man than imaginative writing could possibly" (Wagenknecht 49). Even where his manuscripts contain obvious fiction, Twain introduces notes to support their authenticity; for instance, in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Twain notes, "Most of the adventures recorded in this book really occurred; one or two were experiences of my own, the rest those of boys who were schoolmates of mine. [The characters are] a combination of the characteristics of three boys whom I knew, and therefore belongs to the composite order of architecture" (7). Twain's preface to *The Prince and the Pauper* points to an awareness that he is veering away from the predominantly historical plot: "It may be history, it may be only a legend, a tradition. It may have happened, it may not have happened: but it could have happened. It may be that the wise and the learned believed it in the old days; it may be only that the unlearned and the simple loved it and credited it" (189). Twain leaves the reader to decide for himself.

Moreover, his wording may indicate his inclination toward Romanticism. Schleiner notes that Twain's use of the word "fable" in the original subtitle indicates an intentional alignment with a decidedly romantic motif (340). After describing his proposed plot for *The Prince and the Pauper*, originally known as *The Little Prince and*

the Little Pauper, to a friend, Twain further explains his methodology:

My idea is to afford a realizing sense of the exceeding severity of the laws of that day by inflicting some of their penalties upon the King himself and allowing him a chance to see the rest of them applied to others—all of which is to account for certain mildnesses which distinguished Edward VI's reign from those that preceded and followed it. ("Letter to William Dean Howells" 377)

Twain thereby reinforces the efficacy of the *doppelgänger* pattern in an imperial setting by pointing to the evident differences in Edward VI's reign compared to monarchs before and after his reign. Twain accordingly posits the exchange as a basis for historical social change during the mild-mannered reign of Edward VI.

The plot of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* bears striking similarities to *The Prince and the Pauper*, and, more significantly, to Dumas' *The Man in the Iron Mask*—both in its *doppelgänger* motif and its critique against the social injustices within the caste system. In *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Twain writes a complex *doppelgänger* plot in which a mother switches two babies—for life. Twain—admittedly prone to borrowing others' ideas (whether intentional or unintentional)—undoubtedly borrowed from Dumas, both in thematic elements and in his use of the *doppelgänger* motif to critique social injustices. The three novels include thematic elements of twinning, "passing" for another, switching roles, incarceration, and melodramatic revelations. These novels address the binaries of poverty and wealth, the subaltern and the privileged, the ignorant and the educated. Additionally, the three novels incorporate one main character born to serve and another main character born to reign supreme. Where *The Prince and the Pauper* and *The Man in*

the Iron Mask are consistent, however, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* is ambiguous. Within the novel, Twain writes with his typically-mixed approach; his “satire expresse[s] his exasperation with human failings; his humor expresse[s] his sympathy for the human condition” (Quirk 34). Even the title of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* is indeterminate. Although critics normally shorten the title of the novel to *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, many editions give the title as *The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson*. In the original manuscript, however, Twain’s title, written in his own handwriting, is: *Pudd'nhead Wilson, A Tale*. According to Sidney E. Berger, editor of the Norton Critical Edition of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and *Those Extraordinary Twins*, “The words ‘The Tragedy of’ and ‘And the Comedy’ are printed in very small type, and seem to be more descriptive than titular” (xx). Also, as mentioned previously, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* evolved haphazardly after Twain extracted it from *Those Extraordinary Twins*; whereas *The Prince and the Pauper* originated from a specific plan. Twain sketched the plot for *The Prince and the Pauper* on paper on November 23, 1877: “Edward VI and a little pauper exchange places by accident a day or so before Henry VIII’s death. The Prince wanders in rags and hardships and the pauper suffers the (to him) horrible miseries of princedom, up to the moment of crowning in Westminster Abbey, when proof is brought and the mistake rectified” (Paine, *Mark Twain’s Notebook* 129). Both *The Prince and the Pauper* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson* are written 32 years and 43 years, respectively, after the publishing of *The Man in the Iron Mask*; any strong similarities in the manuscripts point toward a borrowing from Dumas. Given the historical record of Twain’s frequent reading of Dumas’ novels, the similarities seem more than purely coincidental.

Situated in the Deep South during the post-Civil War era, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* is more than an entertaining tale of switched identities. The novel addresses the culturally significant problems inherent within the institution of slavery and miscegenation. Twain accomplishes a critique of this social problem with the *doppelgänger* motif throughout this manuscript. Near the beginning of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Twain establishes a noteworthy thematic feature: "Dawson's Landing was a slave-holding town, with a rich slave-worked grain and pork county back of it" (4). Within the very limits of town, a town much like Twain's own hometown, Hannibal, Missouri, exists the duality of bondage and freedom. Given the history of miscegenation within slave-holding communities, the very nature of the slave-holding town "symbolizes the underlying tension persisting at Dawson's Landing—a tension, however, which has no resolution within the context of the quiet town. The duality of slaveholder and slave, 'white' and 'black,' exists in a finely tuned balance" (Wood 339). Though both entities reside within one village, the dichotomous relationship of black and white, slave and slave owner, creates an inherent conflict. Miscegenation within this situation merely adds fuel to the fire.¹⁸ And as the population of mulatto children rises in this slave-holding town, the social hierarchies become increasingly evident in position and classification. Though all members simultaneously inhabit one town, the products of miscegenation, mulattoes, are nonetheless marginalized to the extent that they are nearly "non-members" of Dawson's Landing.

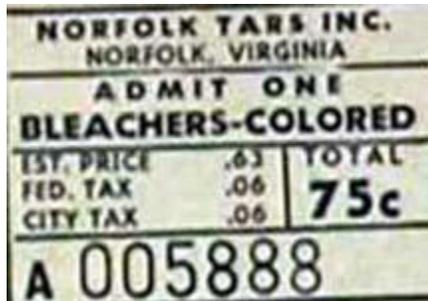
For Twain, the travesty in the miscegenation was not so much the procreation of children as it was the difficulty of knowing where such children belonged once they were born. The *doppelgänger* motif weaves a curious element into the already-dual nature of

the mulatto. Like Dumas' protagonist, Georges, Twain's protagonists, Roxy and Tom, exhibit the duality of race in their own corporeal forms. Though outwardly one race, their mixed blood forces them to identify as one, black, which is, in itself, a form of "passing." This racial ambiguity became increasingly obvious during Twain's lifetime—a time of racial unrest, or "racial hysteria" (Gillman, "The Mulatto, Tragic or Triumphant?" 222)—as debates viciously probed these problematic classifications. According to Sollors, in *Neither Black nor White yet Both*, "Classification schemes of racial names were an eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century obsession" (112). This obsession consumed both Americans and Europeans. During this time, the American South began to adopt the "one-drop rule." In *Who Is Black?: One Nation's Definition*, F. James Davis defines the "one-drop rule" as the ruling that "a single drop of 'black blood' makes a person a black. It is also known as the 'traceable amount rule'" (5). Rather than simplify the classification process, however, this attempt to include all persons with mixed blood merely complicated matters. In fact, the more completely that individuals failed to fit into the binary categories of "black" or "white," the more society longed to classify them. In 1801, French historian, Julien-Joseph Virey, for example, designed a system to categorize people of mixed race based on the fraction of *blanc* and *noir* blood they possessed—from one-half down to one-sixteenth (112-13). Many others, including Mérédic-Louis-Élie Moreau de Saint-Méry—from whom Victor Hugo, in his novel *Bug-Jargal*, derives his system for classifying those of mixed race (Sollors, *Neither Black Nor White* 120)¹⁹—discussed similar methods of categorization which laid the foundation for mulatto classification under the Jim Crow caste system prevalent throughout the American South

from 1877 until the mid-1960s. Socially, though recently declared “free” through the Civil Rights Act of 1866, the black people were relegated to the “back seat” of society.

Twain’s world included racial discrimination of every sort in every aspect of society. Memorabilia in various museums illustrates the extent of the public humiliation of former slaves. Twain’s vivid depiction of Roxy—“as white as anybody” (*Pudd’nhead Wilson* 9)—in this racially segregated society illustrates the extent of his critique.

Although the story takes place prior to The Civil Rights Act, Twain’s distinguishing Roxy as near-white in this slave-holding setting foreshadows her fate following the Civil Rights Act. Susan Gillman states that “[f]or Twain the apparent precision implied by minute fractional divisions (one-sixteenth, one-thirty-second) only underscore their disjunction from reality. All that counts racially in Dawson’s Landing are two categories: black and white” (*Dark Twins* 81). Walking down the streets of Dawson Landing, Roxy appears white; yet, as one-sixteenth black, Roxy will still be unwelcome in the “white ladies only” restrooms, at the “whites only” water fountains, and in the front of the bus. In “The Mulatto, Tragic or Triumphant?”, Gillman observes that “antiblack repression took multiple forms, legal and extralegal; the political and social gains made by blacks under Reconstruction were gradually eroded; and the ideology of white supremacy ultimately institutionalized itself in a series of Jim Crow laws defining the ‘Negro’s place’ in a segregated society” (222). Strategically-placed signs throughout the Southern states left no question regarding that defined place:



(“What Was Jim Crow?” n. pag.).



(“Jim Crow Laws” n. pag.).

For Twain, this racial discrimination carries a double-edge sword, as evident in his portrayal of the nearly-successful *doppelgänger* paradigm in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. With his portrayal of Roxy as both black and white, yet satisfying the requirements of either race, Twain reveals “his conviction that the greater crime of the south was not miscegenation but the white southerners’ unwillingness to admit that mulattoes were, after all, the products of their own lust” (Pettit 334). Twain’s poignant comment scrawled

in “Mark Twain Papers” condemns the Southern churches for their lack of integrity: “In 1906, in response to William Lecky’s remarks in his *History of European Morals, from Augustus to Charlemagne*, 2 vols. (New York, 1903; Clemens copy in MTP), that ‘the chastity of female slaves was sedulously guarded by the Church,’ Clemens scrawled in the margin: ‘This is better than the Southern Protestant Church of America ever did, *nicht wahr* [translated as, isn’t it]?’” (Pettit 334). Though the slave mothers have little choice in the miscegenation, the resultant mulattoes—and their mothers—must bear the heavy price that follows. The worst injustice becomes not the racial mixing, but the discrimination toward racial mixing of any sort. Though Roxy’s son, Chambers posing as Tom, lives within society as fully white, he is essentially “a marked man—a Negro” (Cox 279). It is only a matter of time before the “powers that be” discover the taint within his blood. To fully appreciate the destructive nature of emphasis on racial purity, one needs merely to follow Roxy and Tom and Chambers and Judge Driscoll to their bitter end.

Twain, writing from the perspective of a Southerner during the Reconstruction, refuses to take the easy road, refuses to turn a blind eye to the melodrama of the racial duality. Both in his manuscripts and in his public behavior, Twain consistently sides against the existing discrimination. In a letter to the Yale Law School dean of students, Twain explained his reason for financially supporting a black law student: “I do not believe I would very cheerfully help a white student who would ask a benevolence of a stranger, but I do not feel so about the other color. We have ground the manhood out of them & the shame is ours, not theirs; and we should pay for it” (qtd. in Gillman, “The Mulatto, Tragic or Triumphant” 242).

Life for the former slaves in the Jim Crow South was dangerous. The daily threat of violence, lynching, and mob attacks provoked terror within the “free” black communities. Though no longer officially slaves, black workers faced public humiliation from white merchants who frequently took pleasure in swindling them, and black women who worked as maids for white landowners faced the familiar threat of sexual molestation or rape. The way of life for the subaltern in this system of strict social stratification was difficult before and after the emancipation of the slaves. Louis J. Budd, in *Mark Twain: Social Philosopher*, effectively places Twain’s depiction of miscegenation in its cultural context:

A stunted, warped conscience coiled within the ruling families of Dawson’s Landing, no matter how they glittered when they strolled down the sleepy main street. And if they looked at Roxy coldly in public, some of the gentlemen had a warmer attitude in private. Sold down the river, she found a master who wanted her for a house servant, but his wife—who was “not right down good-lookin’—objected “straight off” and sent her to the fields. As it was, buxom Roxy could brag to Tom that ‘dey ain’t another nigger in dis town dat’s as high-bawn as you is. (154-55)

Roxy brags because her son is the product of her sexual liaison with his white father, though not specifically stated, probably his “uncle” Judge Driscoll. This “high-born” heritage offers her son no reward in the white man’s world, but in Roxy’s mind, the high standing of her son’s birth father gives him special status in the black community.

Neither the “warmer attitude” that white men show Roxy in private, nor the thought that

her Chambers (“masquerading” as the master’s son) might actually be “somebody” in the black community gives Roxy true satisfaction.

Twain’s depiction of the mulatto as particularly ambiguous illustrates the injustice of the socially-accepted norms. The very history of miscegenation symbolizes the underlying tension within the relationships of slave owner and slave in Dawson’s Landing. Additionally, the lack of any visible means of racial identification, such as in Roxy’s and her son Chamber’s appearance as white, reveals the intricacies involved in recognizing and applying local rulings. In “Passing for White, Passing for Black,” author Adrian Piper, himself a mulatto, explains the complexity of any racial categorizing:

The fact is that the racial categories that purport to designate any of us are too rigid and oversimplified to fit anyone accurately. But then, accuracy was never their purpose. Since we are almost all in fact racial hybrids, the “one drop” rule of black racial designation, if consistently applied, would either narrow the scope of ancestral legitimacy so far that it would exclude most of those so-called whites whose social power is most deeply entrenched, or widen it to include most of those who have been most severely disadvantaged by racism. (268)

The very duality of the mulatto creates an appreciable ambiguity.

For many Southern blacks, already significantly marginalized, the categorizing created even further marginalization. Those blacks with a higher fraction of white blood often posed a higher threat; the danger, according to the white Southerner, was for a former slave to become “uppity.” Hence, the white community treated the higher-fraction-of-white mulattoes with more cruelty than they treated blacks with a lower

fraction of white. The *doppelgänger* design fits Twain's critique of the nineteenth-century racial trauma in the American South in many ways.

Dumas and Twain both effectively challenged the nineteenth-century notion that one behaved according to what was in his blood. Not only does Twain criticize the "one-drop rule" with his switched infants who could only be detected through the newly discovered use of fingerprints in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, he also exposes prevalent stereotypes imposed by whites upon the Negro in Roxana's own character. Roxana's mixture of black and white creates a strange *doppelgänger* effect within her person; Roxy looks white, yet she behaves like the black slaves around her. Her very characterization points to the dichotomy Twain faced when writing about slavery: "At the same time that Roxana's small drop of black blood made the point about the tragedy of racial mixture in a slave society, Mark Twain's Victorian teaching demanded that her skin be white" (Pettit 322). Roxana works in the white man's house and bears the white man's child, yet Roxy is every inch a slave. Twain's description leaves no doubt about his own dichotomous view: "To all intents and purposes Roxy was as white as anybody, but the one-sixteenth of her which was black out-voted 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 slave, and by a fiction of law and custom a negro" (Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* 9).

Though the lack of observable color in Roxy creates an appearance of white and all that being white entails, the minute she opens her mouth, that façade drops away. Her speech is typical of the Southern black slave dialect; accordingly, her speech effectively prevents her from "passing" in the white man's world. From her speech alone, "a stranger

would have expected her to be black” (9). In response to fellow-slave Jasper’s flirtatious offer to court her, Roxy promptly rebuffs him in no uncertain terms. Though Roxy lets Jasper know—in no uncertain terms—that he is socially inferior to her, her own dialect leaves no question concerning her social standing in Dawson’s Landing:

You is, you black mud-cat! Yah-yah-yah! I got sump’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? . . . ‘Clah to goodness if dat conceit o’ yo’n strikes in, Jasper, it gwyne 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 gwyne to tell him so. (8-9)

Though Roxy “puts on airs” while associating with the black slaves, her speech keeps her in her “place” when she is around white people. And she has no control over the way she speaks. Roxy’s dialect has been instilled in her from birth; her humble manner toward white people has also been deeply imprinted upon her since before she could speak. For the nineteenth-century Southerner, regardless of his or her color, it is simply the way of the slave.

Twain’s own striking dichotomy, as both Mark Twain and Samuel Clemens, reflects his own type of dual nature, or internal *doppelgänger*, similar to the picture he paints of the mulatto. Though this internal duality will be explored further in Chapter 5, the novel’s ambiguity seems to point to a conscious attempt to avoid writing in a manner than would receive censure while at the same time write in a way that illuminates the injustices. As both Southerner and anti-imperialist, Twain treads lightly on privileged Southern toes: “By painting this woman in a baffling black-and-white collage he tried to

have it both ways: to satisfy the requirements of the Victorian code, while calling down the curse of the South” (Pettit 322). When Twain penned *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, concerns were growing regarding the classification of Negroes. While originally a mulatto was defined as the offspring of a black parent and a white parent, the definition became cloudy as more and more mulattoes had children with blacks or whites. A person one-fourth black became known as a quadroon; a person one-eighth black, an octoroon. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1875 in an attempt to preempt “Southern efforts to undo the Reconstruction and to restore blacks to a very low status” (52). While the Civil Rights Act provided United States’ citizens of all colors equal access to public facilities, it was short lived. In 1883, when this act was nullified by the Supreme Court “. . . with respect to ‘personal acts of discrimination,’ . . . the Southern legislatures passed a flood of segregation statutes . . . [that] prohibited racial intermarriage, required separate seating in trains, buses, theaters, libraries, and stores, and required separate schools, rest rooms, drinking fountains, parks, swimming pools, and other public facilities” (52). Daily, former slaves were marginalized in every aspect of their lives, without respite. Twain’s Victorian upbringing in the slave-holding town of Hannibal, Missouri, laid the foundation for an ideology of white supremacy, yet he rejects that ideology and attempts to address the dual nature of the racial issue in his writing.

Twain’s invention of Roxy as the “white-appearing” slave with her “black-evident” behavior successfully employs an internal *doppelgänger* effect. Though a slave, Roxy’s character is such a strange mixture of both races. At the same time, Twain fails to convincingly portray Roxy as either white or black. According to Pettit—with Roxy, “the problem is not that she is, literally, a mulatto but that Mark Twain had trouble deciding

which Roxy is the real one, the one who looks white or the one who acts black” (329). This ambiguity, however, may actually be intentional on Twain’s part. After all, which Roxy is the real one?

Twain’s *doppelgänger* development of Roxy and Tom as both outwardly white and slave, yet lacking any of the inherent rights of a white person, comes close to shouting its criticism of the duplicitous nature of American treatment of the mulatto. Miscegenation brought large numbers of mulattoes into nineteenth-century America, most commonly through white male slave owners and black slave women. In most slave-holding states, this proliferation was not only tolerated, the behavior was considered acceptable and sometimes even expected: “Sexual contacts between white women and black men were not tolerated, because a mixed child in a white household violated and threatened the whole slave system. A mixed child in the slave quarters was not only no threat to the system but also a valuable economic asset, another slave” (Davis 39). Mulattoes in slave-holding America pointed directly to the unspoken blight on the white American male. Though the slave owners often claimed to be “Christian”—and considered themselves to be the “civilized” race—they frequently reproduced children through their slaves by means of exploitation, coercion, and rape. Slave owners frequently chose slaves with lighter skin—due to a higher percentage of “white” blood—to have in their bedrooms. Twain’s characterization of Roxana is, as one author aptly notes, the “archetypal black matriarchal figure—the combination of mistress and wet nurse who rears the white man’s legitimate children and bears his bastards” (Pettit 329). The embedded irony fails to miss its mark; Twain paints Roxy as a slave who is the

embodiment of the divided self. Through his literature, Twain actively participates in the ideological debate on racial status.

Perhaps the issue was too controversial a topic for Twain to overtly denounce slavery and miscegenation in his works, but the underlying tenets of his tales accomplish the same purpose. With a sardonic tone, in the cynicism his readers have grown to love, Twain actively trounces racism, yet manages to remain innocent to readers. In his short story, "Near-White," in *Gingertown*, author Claude McKay posits the ideology of the mulatto with acuity as he writes from the perspective of the mulatto: "They hate us more than they do the blacks. For they're never sure about us, they can't place us" (96). During the Harlem Renaissance, McKay writes of the dichotomy of the mulatto's position, yet his protagonist in "Near-White" places his loyalty clearly with the black race. He claims that though mulattoes have mixed blood, they "belong to the colored race. Our feelings and our ties are colored. We will find more contentment being ourselves than in trying to climb in among the lily-whites who've done us all sorts of dirt" (96). McKay's book, published in 1932, twenty-two years after Twain's death, drew mixed reviews. By merely representing mulatto characters during an era in which the plight of mulattoes (considered to be problematic) was largely ignored, writers were inevitably taking sides, and Twain is no exception. Before any other American authors, Twain boldly addressed both the difficulty that the mulatto faced and the inherent cruelty of the institution of slavery:

William Dean Howells and Mark Twain had criticized the United States for following the leads of England, Spain, and Germany in expansionist ventures around the globe, and Twain certainly understood slavery in the United States to be a colonial phenomenon. Nevertheless, slavery is for

Twain a venerable example of human cruelty and just another reminder of how little we have progressed from our feudal past. (Rowe 195)

Additionally for Twain, slavery and miscegenation produce catastrophic results for both master and slave. Roxy's impossible condition results in catastrophe for all parties involved. Neither Chambers, the "would-be heir," nor Tom, the rightful heir, achieves any measure of success; furthermore, both Roxy, the slave mother, and Judge Driscoll, father of Tom and possible father to Chambers, reap disastrous results.

Schleiner notes that "with equally 'aristocratic' ancestry, slave and master alike will be damned by their radically different, but equally enervating circumstances" (339).

Pudd'nhead Wilson reveals Twain's sympathy for the underdog, yet at the same time, his disdain for the system that establishes the position of the subaltern. In *Mark Twain:*

Social Philosopher, Louis J. Budd remarks, "Twain left no doubt that the Southerner mistreated his slaves and that owning human beings bred an ugly sense of caste, which let Tom [Roxy's true son, the one with negro blood] ask Roxy's supposed son, 'Who gave you permission to come and disurb me with the social attentions of niggers?'" (154).

Within the irony of Roxy's true son castigating the true heir exists a poignant picture of the institution of slavery as appallingly cruel. Both the master and the slave suffer.

According to Howells, it is never enough for Twain to merely sympathize with the marginalized; instead, he had an inherent "perception that . . . men suffer for their sorrows rather oftener than they suffer for their sins; and when they suffer for their sorrows they have a right not only to our pity but to our help" (179). Twain's

representation of miscegenation differed from typical works of his day. Hugh M. Gloster states that other authors disregarded the dilemma of the mulatto: "Sometimes characters

venerate parents who are a highborn white gentleman and a colored woman, and generally no condemnation is made of such a relationship if the man is as honorable as southern mores will permit” (99). Yet Twain makes no apologies within his works for his version of the American racial dilemma. The problem facing the Negro—and especially the mulatto—in nineteenth-century American South was a problem that resonated deeply with Twain. He witnessed slavery from his youth; he was thoroughly familiar with the condition of the mulatto. In his essay, “Passing for White, Passing for Black,” Adrian Piper eloquently describes the situation from the perspective of the subaltern:

A benefit and a disadvantage of looking white is that most people treat you as though you were white. And so, because of how you’ve been treated, you come to expect this sort of treatment, not perhaps, realizing that you’re being treated this way because people think you’re white, but rather falsely supposing that you’re treated this way because people think you are a valuable person. So, for example, you come to expect a certain level of respect, a certain degree of attention to your voice and opinions, certain liberties of action and self-expression to which you falsely suppose yourself to be entitled because your voice, your opinion, and your conduct are valuable in themselves. To those who in fact believe (even though they would never voice this belief to themselves) that black people are not entitled to this degree of respect, attention, and liberty, the sight of a black person behaving as though she were can, indeed, look very much like arrogance. It may not occur to them that she simply does not realize that her blackness should make any difference. (260)

Piper's insight reflects the attitude that emerges throughout Roxy's discourse in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Roxy sees no reason why "her" son cannot have the opportunity to live the life of the privileged when her "black" son looks in every way as white as the master's son.

When Roxy replaces the master's son, Tom, with her own son, Chambers, she subjects the real Tom to a type of *doppelgänger* erasure within his enforced imprisonment as slave in a similar manner to the way that Dumas' characters are subject to erasure: Dantès in *The Count of Monte Cristo* and Philippe in *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Just as Dantès and Philippe suffer the cold, the hardships, and the isolation of prison, so also the real Tom in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*—the rightful heir—suffers tragically within the prison of slavery. No longer the son of the master, and certainly not the son of Roxy, Tom receives no parental love. Positionally, Tom, as the white heir to the master, is "erased"; he is no longer the heir to the estate, and he has no place to call home. Tom merely finds deprivation, severe physical punishment, and frequent humiliation (20-22). Twain's masterful application of the *doppelgänger* design to subjugate both the real Tom, and eventually Roxy and Chambers, demonstrates a connection to Dumas' ideological application:

Twain connects subjugation to an erasure, an un-writing of time and of the self. Coming of age, the central right denied the prisoner, is seen as a theft of one's estate, in the sense of a futurity attached to one's particular crime that Pudd'nhead Wilson's slave Roxy implements: a switch not only of past identities, but of their future estates. Not just, in other words, a theft

of who the original Tom Driscoll was, but what he was to become.

(Wilson 325)

In fact, *Pudd'nhead Wilson's* very lack of a "fairy-tale" conclusion, such as the one appearing in *The Prince and the Pauper*,²⁰ articulates Twain's conscious acknowledgment of the difficult tension within the duality of slave holder and slave, black and white. As Gillman states, "[W]hen race is represented as a sole, determining social formation, the one determinant of individual identity, then tragedy is inevitably the result both formally and socially" ("The Mulatto, Tragic or Triumphant?" 242). Like Philippe in *The Man in the Iron Mask* and Dantès in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Roxy discovers that "erasure" is neither unproblematic, nor the solution to the problem of subjugation. What the *doppelgänger* motif accomplishes through these novels is unlike any literary proposal of its time. The seemingly innocent exchange of person, position, place, and identity—that erasure of the subaltern—ultimately fails to alter the social stratification and bring about true change. For both Dumas and Twain, the *doppelgänger* effect merely points out the obvious irremediable flaws in social and racial inequities.

Chapter 5:

Final Connections

The anti-racist views that emerge within Dumas' and Twain's works have diversely contributed to the cultural context of literature since the nineteenth century. These sympathies infiltrate the authors' novels and surface in each author's life. The culturally hegemonic ideology rampant in the nineteenth century led many to accept pejorative terminology and situational subjugation as "normal." Other French authors preceded Dumas in writing against slavery as so explicitly illustrated by Claire de Duras (1777-1828), with her novella, *Ourika* (1823); and Victor Hugo (1802-1885), with his novel, *Bug-Jargal* (1826). Additionally, other authors paved the way by condemning social stratification, with works by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), such as *Du contrat social* (1762); works by Voltaire (1694-1778), such as *Candide* (1760); with works by Stendhal (1783-1842), such as *Le Rouge et le Noir* (1830); and, most notably, numerous novels written by Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), such as *Le Père Goriot* (1835). On the other hand, Twain (despite some reports that Twain was himself a bigot) rose above the "norm" to expose and castigate the suppression of the subaltern through the application of the *doppelgänger* pattern in their novels. Whereas there is reason to deplore the institution of slavery and all of its inherent evils, there is more reason to applaud these authors who contradicted the *status quo* of nineteenth-century society to speak against slavery, social stratification, forced miscegenation, and more importantly, their original portrayal of the maltreatment of the products of miscegenation—the mulattoes.

Particularly in light of rising cultural studies involving race, class, and social stratification, the main novels of this study—Dumas' *The Man in the Iron Mask* and *Georges*, and Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*—warrant ever-increasing interest due to their discourse in the inequities of the caste system. Though written in the nineteenth century, the novels contain thematic elements that continue to plague societies throughout the world: discrimination, mistreatment, and warped variations of racism. For the authors to address the inherent evils within the marginalization of the subaltern, whether through caste systems or discrimination, is both relevant and productive.

Recurring media reproductions of *The Man in the Iron Mask*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and *The Prince and the Pauper* reveal a continuing fascination with the theatrical design of the *doppelgänger*. While these novels encourage imitation largely because of their adventurous plot and intriguing characters, the depth of insight with which Dumas and Twain write of social ills adds an enduring quality to the novels. Some of the motion picture adaptations are considered film classics.

Though *Georges* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson* are considered “lesser” works of Dumas and Twain, both novels provide a sharp picture of the ramifications of slavery and miscegenation during the Victorian period, and in doing so, yield noteworthy insight into the authors' other works. Though the slave trade to England was legally abolished in 1807, and in the colonies by 1833, as Dumas and Twain so aptly portray in their novels, strong prejudice continued to plague people on both continents. More significantly, in the ideological debate on racial and social injustices, the novels enter into the globally germane discourse of the subaltern. No culture continues to thrive long-term by marginalizing any of its members, yet slave-holding cultures subsist throughout the

world. As the popularity of the *doppelgänger* theme increases, so also should that of Dumas' *The Man in the Iron Mask* and *Georges* and Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper* and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Their elucidation of the intrinsic problems with social stratification provides a pertinent commentary on discrimination of all types. Though Dumas followed the example of other French writers in his discourse on social ills, his application of the *doppelgänger* motif proves to be an effective variation. Furthermore, Dumas' writings have proved to be more accessible than those of either Balzac or Voltaire (both authors are known for their more cerebral works), which may indicate the reason for Twain's strong interest. At any rate, Dumas' excellent representations of the downfalls of societal caste systems through the use of the *doppelgänger* certainly indicate their value within the classroom. In *Georges*, Dumas paints a complicated picture of the double marginalization of the mulatto, exemplifying his own insight into the difficulties embedded in slavery-based miscegenation. In addition, Twain's "impulse to propound, to moralize, to philosophize dominates [his] writing . . . in the last two decades of his life. It infiltrates *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, his most significant late attempt to revisit the issue of slavery and race that had so preoccupied him" (Krauth 124). In *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Roxy completes the *doppelgänger* exchange of her own son and the master's son in an effort to circumvent the atrocities of slavery; however, her efforts are in vain. Once Pudd'nhead Wilson exposes Roxy's egregious action, Roxy's "true" son, Chambers, gets "sold down the river" (Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* 13)—the very thing she had tried to avoid. The complexity of the plot in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, combined with the lack of any viable solution to Roxy's problem, indicate Twain's insight into the evils of slavery.

Both Dumas and Twain effectively employ the *doppelgänger* theme to draw attention to the social injustices of the day and to emphasize the need for social reform. What becomes increasingly apparent in the close reading of the novels is a clear correlation between the authors and their works. Although separated by the Atlantic Ocean, the two authors apply extremely similar methods in their critiques, and in doing so, they diagnose the cultural condition of the time. The parallel *doppelgänger* themes within the novels include analogous outcomes: the ruling look-a-likes—King Louis XIV in *The Man in the Iron Mask*, Chambers in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, and Prince Edward in *The Prince and The Pauper*—grow into twisted self-serving adults in their roles as the “privileged” leaders; while the paupers—Philippe in *The Man in the Iron Mask*; Tom, the true heir, in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*; and Tom Canty in *The Prince and The Pauper*—in their roles as the subjugated, develop into placid and completely powerless adults. As members of the elite, the privileged class, the king and the prince have little concern for the “other.” Through social and racial discrimination, the marginalized characters learn to view themselves through tinted lenses, thereby stunting their potential development and stifling their potential growth. Through the *doppelgänger* exchange, however, Dumas and Twain manage to confront the cultural climate and encourage a deeper look into the existing dichotomies within the system. Throughout politics, businesses, and even marriages, the overbearing often dominates the subaltern into mediocrity. Like Philippe in *The Man in the Iron Mask*, and the “true” Tom in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, a good person ends up losing initiative and shrinking into a continuing downtrodden position for the rest of his or her life. Dumas’ and Twain’s ability to illustrate the subjugated makes them particularly relevant today.

Their geographical separation notwithstanding, both Dumas and Twain invent similar “solutions” in their novels to address the social ills. In *The Man in the Iron Mask*, Aramis seeks to combat the extremely unjust hierarchy through a *doppelgänger* switch of the royal twins. Though the exchange of the King and his imprisoned brother succeeds, such success is merely temporary. King Louis XIV returns to the throne of France, and Philippe, the subjugated twin, returns to prison—this time with an iron mask to prevent future escape. In *Georges*, Georges seeks violence to combat the subjugation, but rather than finding true solutions to the racialism, his attempts to confront the racism result in complete isolation; Georges is exiled from his homeland and “doomed to live in a double space” (Enz 393). Georges escapes from *île de France* with his new wife and family, but he lacks the sense of purpose and belonging which he sought. Although safe from marginalization, Georges, now adrift at sea, “does not fit in with black society, he despises whites for their assumed superiority, and he scorns mulattoes for their acceptance of these prejudices” (Enz 393). These binary relationships of safety and exile, along with freedom and bondage, together reflect the *doppelgänger* motif within Philippe and Georges. Philippe is both a prince and a prisoner, yet his acquiescence to imprisonment is uncontested. Georges is simultaneously black and white, master and subaltern—liberated, and yet still in bondage to his extreme resentment of the racialism.

Given the time frame of the authors’ works, the probability of Twain’s borrowing from Dumas is high—either intentionally or unintentionally. Twain, knowing that other authors regularly borrowed from works that they read, acknowledged a similar propensity toward plagiarism—though his was decidedly unintended—in a letter to W. D. Howells:

I often accuse [Bret Harte] of being a deliberate imitator of Dickens; and this in turn reminds me that I have charged unconscious plagiarism upon Charley Warner; and this in turn reminds me that I have been delighting my self for two weeks over a bran[d] new and ingenious way of beginning a novel – and behold, all at once it flashes upon me that Charley Warner originated the idea 3 years ago and told me about it! . . . Here are 108 pages of MS, new and clean, lying disgraced in the waste paper basket, and I am beginning the novel over again in an unstolen way. I would not wonder if I am the worst literary thief in the world, without knowing it.

(Twain, *Mark Twain's Letters* 267)

For Twain, to admit to dispensing with an “unconscious plagiarism” implies that his observable borrowing from other manuscripts may also be unintentional. Even if his borrowing of Dumas is unintentional, it is likely that he unconsciously recognized the efficacy of the *doppelgänger* pattern to critique slavery and miscegenation during the many hours he spent immersed in Dumas’ novels. Critics acknowledge the likelihood of Twain’s borrowing from *The Man in the Iron Mask* when Tom Sawyer convinces Jim to use a tin plate to write a message. Coward claims, “If the imaginative involvement of Tom and his creator was complete, it was surely because no story-teller has ever exploited the tale with more panache than Dumas” (xxxiii). But the borrowing itself is anything but unique to Twain. Dumas, in fact, borrowed frequently from other authors for his own novels; Roger Macdonald refers to and delineates the “prima facie evidence of plagiarism aplenty” (n. pag.) in Dumas’ writing of *The Three Musketeers*.

Like Dumas' *Man in the Iron Mask*, *Georges*, and *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and *The Prince and the Pauper* manage to incorporate not only the excitement and thrill of an adventure story, but also the implications and direct criticisms—usually subtle, though often acerbic—of the ideological discourse within social and racial subjugation. Part of the appeal of the novels mentioned is the melodrama of their plots and the intricacies of their characters, but the enduring quality comes from their ability to transcend generations with their underlying message. Both Dumas and Twain address problems that the common man identified with in some manner or other, then *and now*.

Within both authors, the *doppelgänger* motif surfaces in unique ways. First, Dumas, analogous to his protagonist in *Georges* bears the double-ness of mixed race. He embeds his main character, Georges, with that same duality—both black and white, marginalized in a white-dominated society. Georges systematically combats the privileged in an attempt to overcome his situation as the subaltern; his relationship with a white woman appears to him as proof that he has personally overcome racial subjugation. In vying for a position as military leader in the battle, Georges tells the black men who dispute his ability to lead: “*Et c’est un triomphe de plus pour nous autres hommes de couleur . . . car la fille blanche m’aime*” (Sollors, “Introduction” xx), or “Ah! . . . [T]here is another victory for men of color, for the white woman loves me, too” (Dumas, *Georges* 191). Though he wins the love of Sara, the white woman that he loves, ultimately, their relationship fails to prove that Georges is equal to the white man or that he has overcome the marginalization. Instead, as mentioned previously in Chapter 3, Georges ends up forever exiled, much as Dumas was in elegant, upper-class French society. Dumas

suffered the stigma associated with race as well. Though a mulatto, Dumas appeared mostly white, but his contemporaries knew of his mixed race. One author states that “many of France’s literary elite of the period would not associate with Dumas because of the fact that his grandmother was a black slave” (“The Body of a Legendary Black Novelist is Laid to Rest in the French Pantheon” 43). His own marginalization led to deep understanding of the overall plight of the subjugated.

Twain, although not a mulatto, takes on an intentional *doppelgänger* mask when he sets aside his given name, Samuel Clemens, and dons the pen name Mark Twain. Central to the *doppelgänger* premise, Clemens derives his pen name, “Mark Twain,” from his river piloting days. The pen name closely reflects his “other” life, that rough-and-tumble life on the river. Though he uses the name Twain for the remainder of his life, like the *doppelgängers* in the novels mentioned in this study, he is never again solely Twain or Clemens; instead, the man is forever both Twain and Clemens. His friend and colleague Howells, writes of him as “Sam Clemens” in his biography, *My Mark Twain*, rather than using his pen name, Mark Twain, which Howells said “seemed always somehow to mask him from my personal sense” (4). The two names this complex author uses merely hint at an underlying double-ness. In “Mark the Double Twain,” Theodore Dreiser speaks of this *doppelgänger* effect found not only throughout Twain’s works, but also prevalent within Twain’s person:

I discovered that there were really two Twains writing--one who possessed great fame and acclaim for the body of work which everyone knew and approved of as wholesomely humorous, exposing little more than the minor or more forgivable flaws of American character—and another, the

really not-at-all-known Twain who brought the most amazing and Rabelaisian stories of his own composition to the then publishing intermediaries of Harper and Brothers, F. A. Duneka, and Major F. G. Leigh, both of whom had, as they felt, to employ to the utmost their arts of discreet and yet firm diplomacy, in order, as they said, to “protect Mark” from the violent and fateful public conservatism of Americans, if not the world in general, should any of the things he was writing and bringing in ever reach them. (616)

Given the inflammatory nature of slavery and discrimination, Twain took a calculated risk when writing about these issues. Since previous French authors had already laid the foundation for critiquing social stratification (in particular, Voltaire, Rousseau, Stendhal, and Balzac), Dumas’ works posed much less a risk.²¹ *Georges*, however, was different from the well-known novels addressing social ills of his day. Dumas’ risk lies in his portrayal of the mulatto as the ill-accepted subaltern in both black society and white society. His use of the *doppelgänger* motif to illustrate the double marginalization of the mulatto reveals the depth of the mulatto’s subjugation: he is accepted by neither the white race nor the black race. In *Georges*, Dumas shows that while the whites despise the Munier family for being also black, the blacks distrust them for being also white. With his character Antonio’s poignant remark, “He is too attached to the whites” (191), Dumas reveals the presence of an underlying fear in the exhibited prejudice. Written into both authors’ novels, conflicts within miscegenation, slavery, and social stratification form foundational ideas regarding place and identity. Dumas’ decision to incorporate miscegenation into his historically-grounded *Georges* speaks both of his own passionate

distaste for discrimination and his desire for change. Being a mulatto, Dumas knew firsthand the duality of race and the sharp pain of marginalization (even though his own brushes with racism were milder than those he portrayed in *Georges*). Dumas stepped away from his normal tales of adventure and romance in *Georges*. Though adventure and romance are indeed present, *Georges* is far less an adventure novel than it is what critics call a “problem” novel, *le roman à thèse*: Dumas’ only novel to overtly deal with the nineteenth-century “problem” of racism, and in particular, that against mulattoes. Sollors claims that “George’s disguise is that he is often taken for white; and like d’Artagnan he has to face his eternal antagonists, but in George’s case the antagonists he confronts are also the embodiment of color prejudice” (“Introduction” xix). Dumas’ personal involvement with the marginalization of the mulatto drives the novel.

As for Twain, whatever he may have wanted to write, he limited himself. According to Dreiser, Twain failed to write scathingly against the injustices he witnessed because of constraints from his family (his wife often edited his work); instead, he entertained his public: “because it was so glamorous and so grand, and he hated to hurt people, and there was his publisher's investment in his books, and what his good friends thought of him, he did not dare to revolt! He feared what they would say” (625). Another critic agrees that Twain restrained himself for the sake of propriety. According to Peter Messent, Twain actually spent time abroad to avoid embarrassing his family because his “comic irreverence, combined with mannerisms and behavior that were the product of a very different early environment than the majority of his genteel Hartford and Boston friends and acquaintances, meant that he was always likely to commit social misdemeanors of various types” (40). Yet underneath the surface, Twain seethed at the

limitations. The reality of what would occur if he stepped away from what was expected of him kept him in line. Twain knew “[t]hat ostracism awaited him, as it awaits every man who will not march with the crowd. And so, eventually—pain and morbidity. He could not do this, and he could not do that—write, for instance, a towering indictment of anything American” (Dreiser 626). Dreiser calls Twain’s lesser-known work, *What is Man?*, “far reaching and cruel,” and states that in his novel, *The Mysterious Stranger*, Twain has “conceived life from the depths of a giant despair” (619). Yet his earlier works lack such an overtly pessimistic approach. Instead, humor buffers the criticism. Dreiser poses an intriguing question: “But of what was Twain so terrified?”; then he suggests that societal constraints kept him from blatantly revealing the intent behind his veiled anti-racist ideology (621). Throughout his main novels, Twain presents a unique mixture of the humor and the tragic in life. Though his criticism of social ills emerges in his more widely-known novels, Twain still remains constrained by the conventions of society.

Therefore, Twain’s choice to write *Pudd’nhead Wilson* during nineteenth-century political and social unrest—is a particularly bold move, knowing that no matter how subtly he presented the critique, the message would emerge. Leslie Fiedler praises the book as one “which deals not only with the public issue of slavery, after all, long resolved—but with the still risky private matter of miscegenation which most of our writers have chosen to avoid” (248). Other critics scorn the idea that Twain’s critical insight is intention. For example, in *Mark Twain and Human Nature*, Tom Quirk mentions that the “layered and often ironic complexities” (209) in the novel are probably unintentional. Quirk also states that Twain did not allow “himself to probe subterranean impulses” (209) that Robert Louis Stevenson did with his *doppelgänger* pattern in *Dr.*

Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, but instead used an “extremely serious but still antic treatment of race in *Pudd’nhead Wilson*” (207). By exchanging her marginalized son for the son of the master, Twain’s protagonist, Roxy—herself a product of miscegenation—enters the racial debate merely by her status—black, and therefore subjected to slavery, yet by all appearances, white.

The research is far from comprehensive. Topics touched briefly in this study, such as double-ness within an author’s personhood, racial-based slavery, masking, Dumas’ authorial legitimacy, and Twain’s contempt for imperialism warrant further study. An analysis of Dumas’ works with particular emphasis on culturally significant elements relating to the *mulâtre* might prove culturally significant, especially since the mulatto is no longer as completely marginalized as in the nineteenth century. Additionally, a comparative study between the works reviewed in this study and Twain’s *What is Man?* and *The Mysterious Stranger*, both published posthumously, would prove especially interesting since they reveal more of his deepening cynicism (or perhaps even a “less-masked” cynicism?). Considering Twain’s fascination with twinning, doubles, and the *doppelgänger* motif, such research might reflect more of Twain’s own dualistic ideals—such as his tendency toward both romanticism and realism, his veiled criticism of the slavery that his own father’s family was a part of, and his combined nature as both frontier man and gentleman.²² Although not mentioned in this study, Twain’s novel, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court* weaves many of the same thematic elements; comparing Twain’s various approach to the social stratification that he denounces within his own novels might reveal more of his ideology. Twain’s work gradually darkened and

deepened with cynicism during his latter years; further study probing into the two-sided nature of Twain's work might reveal underlying reasons for this change.

Although the topic was barely breached in this study, in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, the novelty of fingerprints plays heavily in Pudd'nhead Wilson's crime-solving ability. Newly discovered, fingerprinting devices became the certain means of identification for the switched boys. A further study situating the means of identification in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* in a study of identity theory would prove to shed supplementary light on the dualistic identity of mulattoes. Twain illustrated how the expanding technology exposed the superficiality of racial discrimination. Even more relevant would be including a comparison of this portion of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* to current criminology techniques. The latest technology of solving crime through DNA has revealed multiple errors in sentencing criminals and has exposed the fallacy of racial profiling. Black men who had been arrested, sometimes merely on suspicion of a crime because of their color, filled American prisons. Using DNA technology, law enforcement officers have been able to exonerate many individuals who were actually innocent.

Another intriguing study would involve David Wilson's ability, in *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, to strike at the heart of a matter with his poignant maxims—yet the residents of Dawson's Landing still considered him to be the town idiot, or a “pudd'nhead.” Wilson's nonsense story about half a dog would be an interesting starting point to further discuss the marginalization of the mulatto in the American South during the nineteenth century. George E. Marcus brings up an interesting connection to Wilson's tale: “The most obvious metaphorical referent for the ‘half a dog’ story, then, is the internal racial division of persons of mixed blood, and the attribution, in folk belief, of a person's

particular character to it” (201). Marcus contributes to the premise that Twain’s story involves multi-levels of the doppelganger motif, calling Pudd’head Wilson’s referent an “internal doubling” which functions “as a ‘doppelganger within’ when [Tom’s] true identity is revealed to him” (201). Lastly, comparing Dumas’ and Twain’s use of the *doppelgänger* to the dual nature that Paul speaks of in the New Testament, the old nature and the new nature, the body and the soul, would prove to be a fascinating study. Multiple dichotomies exist in literature and nature, largely unexplored; sifting through such dualities would shed light on human nature and add additional insight into Dumas’ and Twain’s manuscripts.

Notes

1. The lengthier biographies, written by Frank Wild Reed, *A Bibliography of Alexandre Dumas Père*, Richard S. Stowe, *Alexandre Dumas père*, and Claude Schopp, *Alexandre Dumas: Genius of Life*, support Maurois' statement. Dumas lived "at a gallop" (Schopp 210). Like his larger-than-life characters, Dumas embraced every aspect life earning him a reputation that matched those that came alive in the pages of his manuscripts.

2. Spencer adapted Darwin's ideas, and he came up with the phrase "survival of the fittest" which seems to influence Dumas' plot—Louis XIV, though mean-spirited and weak in character, has the strength and the power to survive in the long-term race for the throne.

3. According to Justin Kaplan, author of *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain: A Biography*, 1966—for which he won a Pulitzer Prize Award for biography and a National Book Award—Twain's own life somewhat mirrors that of Dantès, which may be part of the reason that Twain enjoyed Dumas' novels:

Mark Twain was himself a treasure hunter, always looking for his own island of Monte-Cristo and beguiled all his life by get-rich-quick schemes. Money was Mark Twain's dream, his friend William Dean Howells said, 'and he wanted more and more of it to fill out the spaces of this dream.' Appropriately, to extend the parallel with Edmond, on his first visit to France Mark Twain made an excursion to see the dungeons of the Château d'If. (Kaplan, "Treasure and Vengeance. (Rereading)" 143)

This likeness marks yet another connection between Twain and Dumas' novels.

4. In *Mes Mémoires*, Dumas' last published manuscript, the author wrote over three thousand pages of his memoirs. The pages were written "from memory and—like almost everything else Dumas wrote—too hurriedly" (Stowe 141), yet they testify to the life that Dumas lived. Stowe says that the man that he revealed through his novels appears in his memoirs "more concrete and more complete, more flamboyant and more alive than ever" (141).

5. Racialism here refers to the belief in "racial superiority, inferiority, and purity based on the conviction that moral and intellectual characteristics, just like physical characteristics, are biological properties that differentiate the races" (Tyson 381).

6. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Julia Kristeva, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Werner Sollors, all forerunners in cultural critical studies, have collectively written numerous books highlighting the effects of colonialism, racism, and prejudicial behavior of any form. Some examples are: Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (1999) and *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (2006); Kristeva's *Séméiotiké: recherches pour une sémanalyse* (1969) and *Crisis of the European Subject* (2000); Gates' *The Signifying Monkey* (1989) and *Tradition and the Black Atlantic: Critical Theory in the African Diaspora* (2010); and Sollors' *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (1999) and *Ethnic Modernism* (2008).

7. While still in Haiti, Thomas-Alexandre Dumas reportedly sold three of his illegitimate children born to Marie-Cessette Dumas to finance his return to France with his son, Alexandre (Winegarten 37).

8 . A person of mixed race, specifically European and African descent—the Creole—was thought to be emotional, subject to depression. Perhaps this was due to their subjugated position in society.

9. Though *gloire* is literally translated from the French as “glory,” the French term *gloire* is much more than that. *Gloire* includes glory, fame, passion, and patriotism. When French patriots say with pride that Napoleon restored *gloire* to France, they refer to the passionate pride in and love for country—a country full of the glory of victory, the splendor of art, the fame of literary excellence.

10 . Arpent: a pre-metric agrarian standard of measure equal to approximately .85 acre, 58.5 meters squared, or 192 feet squared. The arpent is still used in Quebec and in some formerly French sections of Louisiana.

11. This is ironical since Alexandre Dumas’ own son, Alexandre Dumas fils (1824-1895), himself a latter nineteenth-century novelist and dramatist of note, *Le dame aus camélias*, or *Camille*, 1848, likewise scorned his father for doing the same thing, and other behaviors.

12. Hannibal (247-183 BC), or *Hanba’al*, (in his own Punic language, literally “mercy of Ba’al”): a Carthaginian military leader whose reputation for brilliant leadership and military accomplishments spread far and wide.

13 . Télémaque, another ironic name (see the comment regarding the name, Malmédie, on page 59), is named in the title of Fénelon’s late eighteenth-century novel (1699) addressing the French monarchy with instructions for being a good ruler. A famous novelist, François Fénelon (1651-1715) is known also as a compassionate and enlightened French Roman Catholic priest. Fénelon was a tutor to the duc de Bourgogne and wrote *Les aventures de Télémaque*—a political treatise of sorts, severely criticized the policies of Louis XIV and resulted in Fénelon’s public disgrace—for his student.

14. See pages 48-50 in Chapter 2. A closer connection is made between Dantès and the *doppelgänger* design.

15. Although the exact date that Twain viewed the poster is unknown, the Tocci twins arrived in the United States in 1891 for an extensive tour. They planned to stay for about a year, but the twins were so well received as a “freak show,” that their one-year tour stretched into five years. They were paid about a thousand dollars a week.

16. Twain included this explanation in the beginning of *Those Extraordinary Twins*. Though not listed formally as an Introduction, his notes actually come before Chapter 1, in the section where the Introduction would normally appear.

17. “The Parent Trap,” one of Disney’s popular *doppelgänger* movies, loosely imitates *The Prince and the Pauper* and *The Man in the Iron Mask*. Both the 1961 version of “The Parent Trap,” starring Hayley Mills, and the 1998 version, starring Lindsay Lohan, involve twinning, switched identities, and masking as a means to alter domestic problems. Although the identical twins were separated at birth in Disney’s film, the girls trade places when they are teenagers in an effort to reunite their divorced

parents. Thematic elements that the movie borrows from the works of Dumas and Twain include: twinning, trading places, “passing” as another, and using the *doppelgänger* motif to expose and remedy a “social” problem—in this case, the divorce of the girls’ parents.

18. Historians have long noted the existence of sexual relations between slave and master, but have typically considered it a “problem” for the slave. However, Nell Irwin Painter argues that miscegenation was harmful to the white race as well as the black race. (“Of Lily, Linda Brent” 242). The perpetrators of the situation clothed their acts with secrecy, self-deception, and sometimes violence. No one escaped the evil consequences of the slave holder’s actions.

19. According to Sollors, Hugo’s definitions came from Moreau de Saint-Mery’s adaptation of Franklin’s work. Hugo claims that “every man who is not eight parts white is black . . . We are assured . . . that there is always perceptible on a particular part of the body the ineffaceable trace of its origin” (qtd. in Sollors 120).

20. Twain concludes *The Prince and the Pauper* with a type of “everyone lived happily ever after”—the only exception being poor Tom’s abusive father. Prince Edward tells Tom, “. . . and thy father shall hang, if thou desire it and the law consent” (345). Twain’s only other comment regarding the final outcome of the father is: “Tom Canty’s father was never heard of again” (347).

21 . French author, Claire de Duras, first published her novella, *Ourika*, anonymously due to the inflammatory nature of her themes. Duras was the first post-Revolutionary white author to write about issues involving interracial love.

22. Consider, for instance, Twain's comment following the overwhelming success his novel, *Innocents Abroad* (1869), received in Boston. Kaplan relates the following response to Twain's rave reviews: "Clemens reacted with both gratitude and relief. 'I am as uplifted and reassured by it as a mother who has given birth to a white baby when she was awfully afraid it was going to be a mulatto,' he wrote, a comment which even forty years later Howells thought was too indelicate to repeat in print" (*Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain* 149). Though his novels trounce slavery and expose the detrimental effects of miscegenation within a slave society, his response appears flippant and dangerously close to fueling actual racist statements, yet the "relief" that many women felt was all too real in the nineteenth-century South. According to one scholar, "Since miscegenation can culminate in 'passing' the color line, the arbitrary changeling device functions as the comic equivalent of historic possibility and can legitimately dramatize the last phase of a society trapped by its secret history" (Cox 279). Thanks to a history shrouded in secrecy, there were more than a few women who unexpectedly gave birth to a mulatto child.

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