Huckleberry Finn as an African American Figure in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

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How to cite:
Shrestha, Prithvi (2001). Huckleberry Finn as an African American Figure in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Tribuvan University, Kathmandu Nepal, MA thesis. (Unpublished)

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HUCKLEBERRY FINN AS AN AFRICAN AMERICAN FIGURE
IN ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

By
Prithvi Narayan Shrestha

A thesis submitted to the Central Department of English, TU,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in English

Central Department of English
Kirtipur, Kathmandu
December 13, 2001
Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

This thesis submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Prithvi Narayan Shrestha, titled Huckleberry Finn as an African American Figure in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research Committee.

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Acknowledgements

Many various people have contributed to make the present research what it is now. First of all, I am very grateful to Prof. Dr. Abhi Subedi, Head of the Department and the Research Committee, Central Department of English, T.U. for allowing me to work on this topic. I am very much indebted to Mr. Sanjeev Uprety, my research supervisor, who always encouraged me with his invaluable suggestions and continuous guidance in spite of the distance and time. Without him, who also provided me with the support materials, this project would not have been possible. It would be an injustice if I did not mention Dr. Arun Gupto, who guided me patiently through the process of writing the thesis proposal at the time when I was unsure about what to do.

I am enormously grateful to Prof. Shelley Fisher Fishkin, University of Texas, who supported me by providing the support materials as well as encouraged me via emails. It was actually her book, which helped spark much of my research work.

In the early stages of the present study, Ms. Elwyn Kelso, Australia, played a significant role to structure it. I would like to thank her sincerely for her meticulous reading of the partial draft of this study.

I am indebted to Dr. Dale Rosenberg and Peg Rosenberg, Pennsylvania, USA, for sending me two invaluable books particularly for this study. At the same time, I am very grateful to Mr. Bam Dev Sharma (Pokhara) and Mr. Prabhat Sharma (now in the US), who helped me get two very useful books from the USA for this project.

I would like to thank Mr. Govind Raj Sharma and Mr. Krishna Prasad Adhikary (Pokhara) for providing me some support materials for this research. I am equally grateful to Mr. Sundar Tamang and Mr. Ram Chandra Thapa, the Librarians of Gandaki Higher Secondary Boarding School, Pokhara, who were always willing to help find the relevant materials in the library. Similarly, I would like to thank Mr. Krishna Bahadur Thapa for allowing me to frequently use the computer for checking the draft work at the beginning.

I am very much grateful to Mr. Emile Hassan, a Hollywood star, who happily sat with me for a short interview on West African Culture in spite of his time constraints.

My brother Bharat was always willing to run from place to place or help me explore on the Internet to get the right materials. Without his efforts, this study would have been incomplete.

The staff at Quality Computer Center, Putalisadak Kathmandu and Indreni Computers, Pokhara have made printing this work a remarkably painless process.

My son Sandesh, oftentimes presented himself as a trickster and a guileless talker and reminded me of many episodes of Huck Finn. This helped me understand the book better.

My wife Monica, who always supported and encouraged me, put up with arranging my scattered manuscripts and finding the right books with patience. Without her good understanding and altruistic supports, I would not have completed this study.
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Chapter - 1

Introduction

It is almost unanimously agreed that Mark Twain's work Huckleberry Finn presents itself as a rich cultural text. While discussing it, the majority of the critics have basically focused on issues like structure and language, especially its imagery and symbolism, such as the meanings of the river, the raft and the quest itself. Other critical debates include considerations of Huck as an American 'Adam' and as an 'Innocent' who confronts the problems of slavery, injustice and violence; as also the new challenges for American democracy that were being posed by the events after the Civil War. At times Huck is interpreted as a New World worshipper. In addition to this there are arguments that Huck Finn is a descendant of South-western humor and the tall tale tradition pioneered by Davy Crockett, Johnson Jones Hooper and George Washington Harris.

There is another view on Huck, which presents him as a kind of an accomplice who helps Jim escape from his owner because both of them find themselves as outcasts on the margins of an unjust society, as a result of which a genuine bond of friendship develops between them. Their shared flight from oppression becomes more important than their race, age and legal/social status. From this perspective the narrative ceases to be Huck's adventure but rather becomes Jim's quest for freedom. This happens because of Huck's instinctive humanity.

After the late 1980s, the author's own attitudes on race and the issue of whether the novel has had a negative effect upon race relations in the USA have been investigated by the critics and scholars alike. Some scholars have focused on
Twain's use of speech dialect and his discourse. Others have tried to trace the sources that helped Twain shape his art including *Huckleberry Finn*. At the same time, there are some critics who argue that *Huckleberry Finn* has been too much lauded as a cultural idol. There are claims made that Samuel Langhorne Clemens was very familiar with African American traditions, which he experienced first hand through the playmates of his youth or his own African American servants. These experiences may have molded his literary imagination, especially *Huckleberry Finn*. Emory Elliott observes in his 'Introduction' to *Huckleberry Finn* that "Twain quite consciously added to his depictions of America many representations of the speech humor, strengths, wisdom, religion and folk tales of African American culture that were already integral to the meaning of American life". As Clemens grew up in slave-holding Missouri, he had black playmates as a child. Consequently, the nuances of African American speech, with its often mocking parody of white speech always echoed in his ears. Following this perspective, Elliott argues that Twain "[...] admired creativity and inventiveness in all people and stretched himself beyond his society's prejudices in perceiving what Toni Morrison has recently called 'Africanist presence' in American culture" (xv).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In spite of these critical stances, there are still some questions regarding the protagonist, *Huck Finn*, which have not been addressed yet. For example, one might ask why Huck is so submissive whenever there are white (authoritative) people around him, whether it be Pap or Tom or the Duke or the King. Other questions include the silence of Huck and the identity of his mother. For example, one might wonder whether she was a slave woman who was "naturally dead", with no
obligation to her offspring. We might also ask if Huck Finn was Pap Finn’s illegitimate son because miscegenation was strongly rejected in the South then, as a result of which Twain did not show that Pap Finn had a son illegally from a slave woman. There can be other similar questions as to why Huck finds Jim rather a nurturing motherly figure. One may wonder whether Huck was “lighting out for” a mamma, like his own (that slave woman), that he could find in Jim and why Twain silences her. Similarly one may wonder if Huck could be a Mulatto and if it is for this reason why Pap treats him so cruelly. At the same time one might ask whether there could be any connection between The Signifyin(g) Monkey and Huck’s narrative strategy or between the African American trickster tales and Huck’s narrative voices. This study has made attempts to address these questions.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to unveil the African American voices in Huck’s character and to study the narrative strategies used by Mark Twain in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn in the light of the cultural studies approach. Huck’s deserting the St. Petersberg oppressive society, his incurring risk to rescue Jim from his owner, the way he tricks people and disguises himself, and the way he narrates the events are the main issues which are focused in this study. This study has tried to prove that these elements are not just inherent to the fictional world of the novel but also significant to understand the cultural role Huck takes.

1.3 Hypothesis

This study assumes that the cultural voices that Huckleberry Finn assimilates are molded by the African American cultural traditions.
1.4 Significance of the study

While this novel is mostly seen as the story of a white American male figure and his childhood adventure, this study is completely different due to its cultural studies perspective in examining the novel and its chief protagonist. This helps one to see the novel from a different vantage point which enriches the understanding of the novel and its characters as cultural constructs or subjects. This study does not seek for the superficial and the most obvious meanings of the text, but it rather approaches it from cultural studies approach in order to unveil the real motives of its protagonists which are themselves seen as situated within specific cultural contexts.

1.5 Methodology

This study is textual. Attempts have been made so as to reveal the text and its protagonists as cultural constructs. Besides, relevant materials and research papers on Twain's life and his work Adventures of Huckleberry Finn were extensively read. In order to find more recent works on the study, the Internet was also explored. Similarly, the detailed study of American multiculturalism vis-à-vis African American culture was done in order to apply it to analyze the text.

1.6 Delimitation

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is not seen as a novel of adventure or racial discrimination. Neither is the novel studied from the perspective of social realism which are common. The character of Jim is studied only when it was considered relevant in order to study the character of Huck. The main focus of this study was on the analyses of Huck's character.
1.7 Organization of the Study

This study has been divided into five main headings/chapters together with their sub-headings/subdivisions. The first chapter introduces the background of the study, briefly examining Mark Twain in the tradition of American novels. This also provides a general outline of the study. The second chapter focuses on the critical reviews of the protagonist Huckleberry Finn by various critics. The theoretical aspects of Cultural Studies approach, with an emphasis on American Multiculturalism and its application to study literature, have been discussed in the third chapter. The purpose of the fourth chapter is to analyze Huck’s cultural voices with respect to American Multiculturalism, with the main focus on African American culture. This chapter examines the following issues: (I) Twain, Huck and History; (ii) Huck, Jim and Black English Vernacular (BEV); (iii) Huck, His Mother and Mulatto; (iv) Huck, Slave and Silence; (v) Huck, Twain and Tricksterism; (vi) Huck, Twain and The Signifyin(g) Monkey; and (vii) Huck, Jim and Cultural Conflict. Finally, the concluding chapter presents a synopsis of the research as a study of Huckleberry Finn from the perspective of American Multiculturalism.
Chapter II

Review of Literature: What Critics Say about Huckleberry Finn?

At the time when Mark Twain was writing Tom Sawyer, he knew that he had another story to tell which would be heavily based on his childhood experiences and his youth in his native town of Hannibal. Therefore, no sooner had he finished Tom Sawyer, he started working on a sequel, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Twain took a critical decision that would radically change the direction of American fiction. He chose a child – Huck – to narrate the story. Huck had already appeared in Tom Sawyer, about whom there were already adverse comments made by the reviewers. The genteel culture of New England of the 1870-80s saw Huck as a "a vulgar, 'low class' delinquent and symbol of what was worst in the emerging American character" (Elliott xi). However, the book was also appreciated by a number of other critics. For example, Ernest Hemingway writing in the 1930s in his book The Green Hills of Africa wrote that "all modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn [...] All American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since" (qtd. in Inge V). In the same vein T. S. Elliot writes that "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is the only one of Mark Twain's various books which can be called a masterpiece" ("The Boy and the River" 286). To Trilling, too, it was "an almost perfect work" ("A Certain" 285).

Although these are only a few comments on the book, they indicate that Huck Finn is perhaps one of the most debated books in the American literary canon. In order to shed some light on Huckleberry Finn as a character, some of the views of the critics from the past and the present are presented in the next few pages. Depending upon their critical stance, Huck is interpreted as an adventurer, as a Bad
boy/ immoral person, as Twain's autobiographical character, as American Adam, and a tall tale/Southwestern humor hero.

2.1 Huck as an Adventurer

An adventure can be defined as a journey, activity, or experience that is strange, exciting, and often dangerous, and an adventurer is a person who undertakes such a journey or activity for his own profit by sometimes using unscrupulous methods. The most obvious and dominant feature of Huck Finn is the journey down the Mississippi, which is undertaken by Huck as well as Jim. There are a lot of excitement and risks throughout the journey. Huck is exceptionally courageous and determined to take the voyage. When Huck "lights out" to undertake his adventure, he is alone and away from human civilization. The Mississippi river looks vast, dark and sometimes spooky. Furthermore, Huck and Jim travel mostly at night while hiding themselves during the day time. According to Sir Walter Besant, anyone is awestruck and enraptured at the idea of making a voyage during nights along the gigantic, flooded and tidal river. Besides, as both Huck and Jim have run away as fugitives, they are being searched for, which makes this adventure even more nerve-breaking. They are not only threatened by the frightful river but by their pursuers, who shoot guns to terrify them. Many a time Huck confronts slave hunters who were in pursuit of Negro slaves. Had they found Jim, They would have captured him for a handsome reward, which Miss Watson had proclaimed.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn uses the structures of a picaresque novel; and like its English predecessors, it presents a series of adventures of the chief protagonist. Therefore, S.S. Mehar compares it with Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, Fielding's Tom Jones, Smollett's Gil Bilas and Cervante's Don Quixote and declares
that it has a loose plot with no scheme or design like other adventure novels (137-38).

Twain himself seems to say that it is an adventure story and nothing else as he warns his readers and critics: "Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral on it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot" (2). This points out that the novel should be approached at the superficial level only as he warns the critics who try to search for its underlying meaning. According to Mehar, Huck is the central character although he is simply a child. He is neither a romantic hero nor is he a rogue. It is a picaresque novel full of adventure (138). In Mehar’s opinion, the title itself suffices to regard it as adventures of the main character, Huck Finn, like any other characters of the traditional fiction full of adventures (139). However, it is not the adventure of a brave and courageous hero like Hercules and Ulysses. Twain’s hero does not openly rebel against the social and moral degradation but shows it with a frank but secret condemnation. Mehar, further, opines that this child’s adventure does not bear the quality of a serious epic in grand style but his adventure is coupled with boisterous humor (172).

Similarly, reinterpreting Henley’s view, Inge affirms that both Huck and Tom Sawyer share similar traits and takes this volume "as a record of the adventures which befell him" (25). He opines that the actions and experiences of its protagonist fill anyone with sheer bewilderment.

Besant conforms to Twain’s claim that it has no motive, moral or plot. He sees the book as "a panorama in which the characters pass across the stage and do not return" (45). He opines that the real adventure commences with Huck’s life in the cabin where his father has held him hostage, constantly threatening and abusing the
boy in his semi-drunken state. According to him, the climax of Huck's adventure begins mounting henceforth. It is Huck's real adventure which involves a great deal of excitement and risks. Huck's actions like his self mock-murder, his paddling down the massive river with swirls and swishes of currents and the booming of guns in the vicinity of Jackson Island are hair-raising. Similarly, to Besnart, Huck's meeting with Jim, their search for fruit on the island, Huck's visit, in disguise, to the old woman (Judith Loftus) and their voyage down the river during the nights make one "tight, rapt, hypnotized, deaf and blind to all the world " (44).

2.2 Huck as a Bad boy/ an Immoral Character

Mark Twain completed Adventures of Huckleberry Finn in 1884. However, it was not published in the USA until 1885 because Twain wasn't sure whether it would be hailed or rejected by the readers of the time. Therefore, it was published in England (i.e. 1884) first instead of America. The book disturbed and offended many of the reviewers who called it "vulgar, rough, inelegant, irreverent, coarse, semi-obscene, trashy and vicious" (Marx 291). On top of that at Concord in Massachusetts, still the Mecca of genteel New England cultural aspiration, it was banished from the local library as presenting a bad example for youth. The first reaction to the book came within a month of its publication when the public library committee of Concord decided to ban it from their shelves on the ground that it was more suited to the slums than to intelligent people. Their denouncement of the book came with their statement:

The Concord (Mass.) Public Library Committee has decided to exclude Mark Twain's latest book from the library [...]. It contains but little humor, and humor, and that of a very coarse type. [...] as the veriest trash [...]. [It is]
rough, coarse and inelegant, dealing with a series of experiences not
elevating, the whole book being suited to the slums than to intelligent,
respectable people. (qtd.in Inge vi)

Twain's use of dialect and first person narration from an unschooled child's
perspective were shocking to the cultural elite of the time. The reviewers, especially,
feared that the book would dissuade people from complying with the norms and
values of the social convictions but instigate them to rebel against the social
convictions but instigate the rejection of civilization by its protagonist leads humans
not to progress and advancement but to backwardness. Pritchett considers Huck a
natural anarchist and bum and thinks that he can live without civilization (76). Breten
similarly observes that most characters in the novel are degraded and their actions
involve crimes, rebellions, deceptions, lies and cruelties. That is why, the novel has
nothing noble to offer. Those critics who believe in the didactic purpose of a literary
artifact don't find anything of the kind. Even the main protagonist, Huck, can't stand
civilization. He loves disorder murder, chaos, etc. He is an orphan with no identity.

Widow Douglas tries to "sivilize" him but in vain. He witnesses injustice like the
cheating of innocent and vulnerable people of the coastal towns and villages from the
two notorious frauds, the fake King and the Dauphin, but he never tries to intervene
and disclose the truth. He tolerates the objectionable deceptions of the frauds, who
can be presented as humans at their worst.

Breten focuses on the immoral side of the novel when he observes the villainy
and the wickedness of the character thus: "Twain takes his heroes from the strange
and motley world between the Mississippi and the Pacific. Lowly heroes indeed but
what a variety! [...] Whatever they may be doing, complete rascals" (qtd.in Mehar
158). This means Huck is also a rascal from this perspective. He lies and cheats during his voyage.

Even during the contemporary time the book has suffered severe censorship for some other reasons. William J. Scheik, the editor of *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*, notes:

Recently more than a dozen separate attempts have been made in the United States to ban *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from classrooms and school libraries. An instance in Texas occurred in November 1990, when a Plano City Council member moved that this book be in every way "removed from our classroom atmosphere" because it causes "racial hurt". During the last ten years *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has been the fifth–most popular target of censorship in America. (qtd. in Graff and Phelan 334)

The reviewers from the past were concerned with the influence of Huck on the young minds of the white children. However, the question now being raised concern Huck's treatment of Jim, and his attitude towards the black population in America. Julius Lester, for example, is glad that he did not read the book when he was a child. Furthermore, he is very much sympathetic to those who want the book banned. He believes that his children's education "will be enhanced by not reading *Huckleberry Finn* [...] It is the frozen sea, immoral in its major premises, one of which demeans blacks and insults history" (342). Huck keeps on tormenting Jim during his voyage down the Mississippi. He also works as an accomplice with Tom to fool Jim. Though Huck does have almost Hamlet-like interior monologues on the right and wrongs of helping Jim escape, they are the "evidence of an inability to relinquish whiteness as a badge of superiority" (343). Huck's final assessment of Jim was, "I knowed he was white inside" (ch. 40). In this sense, Huck cannot be a moral character as he
possesses the one-sided view of the white people who never treated the African Americans as another human being but a plaything. Lester argues that the often-quoted and much-admired closing sentences of the book, which Huck/ Twain said are a sheer adolescent vision of life: freedom means being free from restraint and responsibility. Though Huck says he has "been there before", "he has not" "been there before". Neither have too many other white American males. These people including Huck and Twain believe that "freedom from restraint and responsibility represents paradise. The eternal paradox is that this is a mockery of freedom, a void" (347). Huck is running away from responsibility and restraints. One can not escape from it all the time. Lester concludes that "No matter how charming and appealing Huck is, Twain holds him in contempt" (348). He cannot be a respectable person and can not serve the moral purpose of literature.

On the basis of the series of these critical comments by both black and white critics it can be inferred that neither of them can stand Huck as a character of high morality or decency.

2.3 Huck as Twain's Autobiographical Hero

Mark Twain himself has said that he modeled Huck on a white boy called Tom Blankenship. However, there are analogies drawn between Twain's childhood and experiences and Huck. This means some critics believe that the novel contains some autobiographical elements, which can be seen in the chief protagonist, Huck Finn. An analogy is drawn between Twain's childhood days and Huck's adventure in the novel by the scholars like Bernard de Votto, A. B. Paine and Dixon Wecter in the early 20th century. The first and foremost is the bond of attachment between Huck and the Mississippi. Twain was only four years old when his family moved to
Hannibal, a riverside town. To Mehar, the time Twain spent in Hannibal had an indelible effect on the novelist as he infers: "In fact the most impressionable period of Twain's life was spent here. Later when he drifted to journalism and writing, he located most of his major stories and plots against the backdrop of the great river, Mississippi, with which he was thoroughly acquainted as a boy" (7). It shows that Huck's fondness for the river is the echo of Twain's paramount rhapsody for the river. Thus, Huck seems to be the spokesman of Twain, who has a strong attachment towards the river. Twain himself said that Huck was the only really independent person in the community, who was envied by all, including Twain himself. Twain wrote, "This is Huck Finn, a child of mine of shady reputation. Be good to him for parent's sake" (qtd. in Inge, IX). Through Huck Twain has expressed his own desire for freedom. Huck was an unlettered, "unwashed, insufficiently fed" boy who "had as good a heart as any boy had. His liberties were totally unrestricted" (qtd. in Fishkin 14).

Twain had an uncle named Quarles who was a farmer and had twenty Negro slaves to work on his farm. Huck's visit to Arkansas seems to reconstruct the reminiscence of Twain's own visit to his uncle's farm when he was eleven or twelve, and the enormity of cruelty experienced by Jim as a captive in the Phelps farm is evocative of his uncle's treatment of his slaves. Furthermore, Twain himself was candid about this preference for black playmates throughout his youth. He recalled "I was playmate to all the niggers, preferring their society to that of the elect [...]" As Twain noted in his Autobiography, "All the Negroes were friends of ours, and with those of our own age we were in effect comrades" (both qtd. in Fishkin 33). Huck does the same. He prefers Jim to any white people including Tom Sawyer.
An analogy can be drawn between Huck's relationship with Pap Finn and Twain's relationship with his father though the latter's was not as hostile as the former's. Therefore, Brooks says, "The weary discouraged father struggling against conditions amid which as he (Huck) says a man can do nothing but rot away" (296). It indicates to the wretched economic condition of his father, which, to some degree, is similar to Huck's alcoholic father's pitiable condition. Twain had to give up his studies because of the nearing bankruptcy of his father. Huck relinquished his studies due to his hatred for schooling. It is, therefore, possible that if Twain had completed his formal education at school and college, he would not have created a protagonist who disliked schools. Twain's father's dwindling economic condition is not different from that of Huck's parasitic father, who seems to be an embodiment of Twain's father. Like father Pap, Twain's father, too, had gone through an ordeal owing to the collapse of his business. The presence of Twain's father failed to provide Twain a sense of security, which can be detected in Eliot's comment that sums up that his father's presence emphasizes Huck's loneliness, and that Huck views his father with a terrifying detachment (105). Now it is obvious that both Twain and Huck have missed a paternal care however obligatory it may seem.

Trilling makes an assumption that the novel is the outcome of Twain's visit to the Mississippi when he comments thus: "It was perhaps the direct result of the visit to the Mississippi he (Twain) had made earlier [...] His boyhood and youth on the river he so profoundly loved had been at once the happiest and most significant part of Mark Twain's life" (81). This is exactly what Huck feels when he is on the river. To Eliot, too, the relationship between Twain and the Mississippi is inseparable, which can be explored in Huck's continuous desire to be in the company of the great river. The reason why the river is so precious for the novelist, according to Eliot, is two
fold: "Mark Twain knew the Mississippi in both ways: he had spent his childhood on its banks, and he had earned his living matching his wit against its currents" (109). Although Twain had become a mature man by the time the novel was written, his nostalgic feelings about the experiences of his childhood days and his life as a steamboat pilot are vividly depicted in Huck's journey down the Mississippi. Huck's love for the Mississippi is as powerful as Twain's.

2.4 Huck as Descendant of Tall Tale Tradition/ Southwestern Humor

A tall-tale is a folk tale seized by the activity of tall talk and construed as a lie. A tall talk is a narrative skill and a philosophical stance. In such tales, according to Neil Schmitz, "The teller unerringly bombards us with pertinent hyperbole, artfully digresses, takes us in, draws us into the field of deception, and makes us at last complicit" (471). Southwestern humor arose from this tall tale tradition. Both of these were popular during the Jacksonian democratic era in America. In a way, the works were politically motivated to mock at Jackson's notion of "Common man." Mark Twain kept himself well informed about the literary traditions before he became a celebrity. Therefore, many critics like Kenneth Lynn, Walter Blair, Pascal Covici, Jr. and David Sloane believe that "Huck Finn was a direct literary descendant of such earlier vernacular figures" (Fishkin 38) as Simon Suggs, Sut Lovingood, or Petroleum V. Nasby. Twain has used his knowledge of the tradition in Huck Finn. An important feature of tall tale/Southwestern humor is the use of dialect (vernacular), which is extensively used in the novel and, especially, in Huck's narrative voices. Similarly, in Southwestern humor, working class white characters are used. This is obvious in Huck Finn too as Huck, Pap, frauds all come from such background.
Mark Twain did not imitate his predecessors like Augustus Long Street, Johnson Jones Hooper, or George Washington Harris as they did, who created the characters like Ransy Sniffle, Simon Suggs and Sut Lovingood respectively. Some critics argue that Twain has given the personality traits of these characters to Huck. For example, Huck is regarded as a "white trash", a trickster figure and physically an unattractive boy. Not only did Twain give these traits to Huck but also he directly based some chapters on the stories of these characters. The most famous of the Simon Suggs stories, for instance, is "The captain Attends a Camp-Meeting". It is commonly assumed that "Mark Twain based his chapter "The king Turns Parson" in Huck Finn upon this story of Suggs as the imposter revival minister who steals the collections and takes advantage of the innocent young women" (WWW.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/swhumor.html). The sketch parodies the religious zealots of the time, who would have been figures in rural area camp meetings among the lower socio-economic classes of society. While Hooper and Harris took a stab at Jacksonian Democracy, Twain did so at the political situation of his time in a subtle way. He aimed at the hypocrisy of the political leaders—the racial discrimination in the US in spite of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Fishkin, too, confirms that "Twain's earliest sketches are clearly indebted to the work of the Southwestern humorists"[...] The newspaper humorists like Browne and Longstreet "played a role in the creation of Huckleberry Finn as well" (38). Huck may have been related to Simon Suggs or Sut Lovingood or Petroleum V. Nasby on Pap's side of the family. In the same vein, Toni Morrison writes that" the novel masks itself in the comic, parodic, and exaggerated tall tale format "(55).

Regarding the vernacular speech, Schmitz observes that tall tale tradition brought it, boxed, into American literature which "in the Adventures of Huckleberry
Finn [...] Mark Twain releases [...] from that box. It is the only discourse". This discourse belongs to no other than Huck on the whole, as he is the narrator. He further claims that "Because of this achievement, the sketch in Southwestern humor is often regarded only as an anticipation, a recursive form happily filled with racy folklore. It is as though Harris, Baldwin, Thorpe, et al were gradually and collectively dreaming themselves into Samuel Langhorne Clemens" (489). The dream was materialized in Huck Finn. Therefore, John Donald summed up that Twain "had the advantage of having been born later as well as innately superior to the rest of them" (qtd. in Fishkin 40). He has made it his own.

2.5 Huck as the American Adam

American literature is distant from its ancestor—the British literature. The major works in American literature possess a certain distinctiveness and this distinctiveness can largely be attributed to the influence, both positive and negative, of the American Dream—a influential myth in American literature. The important aspect of this myth cluster is the Myth of Edenic Possibilities, which "reflects the hope of creating a second paradise, not in the next world and not outside time, but in the bright New World of the American continent" (Guerin 186). From the time the early European settlers started cultivating the New World, it was seen as a land of boundless opportunity, a place where human beings, after centuries of poverty, misery, and corruption, could have a second chance to actually fulfill their mythic yearnings for a return to paradise. Frederic I. Carpenter points out that although the Edenic dream itself was "as old as the mind of man" the idea that "this is the place" (qtd. in Guerin, 187) was uniquely American.
The concept of the American Adam, the mythic New World hero, is closely related to the myth of Edenic possibilities. R.W.B. Lewis has, thus, described the American Adam:

a radically new personality, the hero of the new adventure: an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources." (qtd. in Guerin 187)

Many critics believe that these qualities can be found in the protagonists of Mark Twain and his contemporaries. Huck Finn, too, bespeaks characteristics. According to Guerin, "Huck Finn epitomizes the archetype of the American Adam" (189). Because of the mythological implications of the book it has been highly esteemed throughout the world as it "embodies myth that is both universal and national" (189).

From the American mythological perspective, Huck himself is the symbolic American hero; he epitomizes conglomerate paradoxes that make up the American character. Guerin observes that Huck "has all the glibness and practical acuity that we admire in our businesspeople and politicians, he is truly a self-made youth, free from the materialism and morality-by-formula of the Horatio Alger hero" (190). He is in possession of the simple modesty, the quickness, the daring and the guts, the stamina and the physical skill that Americans idolize in their athletes. Guerin admires that Huck also "displays the ingratiating capacity for buffoonery that we so dearly love in our public entertainment" (190). He concludes that "He is [...] the good bad boy whom Americans have always idolized in one form or another" (191).

Lionel Trilling has admired Huck as a New World worshipper, and has suggested that he is a symbol of character to be emulated by all Americans. He, too,
confirms that Huck is an American Adam, a New Man who still possesses an instinctive knowledge of what is right and just, as every child does before training succeeds in supplanting that original truth with prejudice. Therefore, Emory Elliott affirms that "The honest, pragmatic, and democratic Huck [...] had become by 1885 figures in the fading American Dream" (xxxviii).

So far, critics have looked into the matters like the adventurous nature of Huck or Huck having resemblance to Samuel Langhorne Clemens's real life. Similarly, some critics found Huck as a terribly immoral character, who could spoil the young minds if they are allowed to read his adventure. Others tried to trace the genealogical source of Huck Finn, or they tried to interpret him from a mythological perspective.

However, these critics have not fully explored Twain's (Huck's) narrative and cultural voices, without which the study of Huck as a character remains incomplete and superficial, too. They have studied him either from traditional critical stance or from genealogical and mythological perspective, which can not shed enough light on Huck. Furthermore, the relationship between Huck and the African American characters in the novel can not be fully realized within the frame of the critical stance taken by these critics. Therefore, it is necessary to see Huck through the myriad of lenses of cultural studies. Then only it is possible to talk about his narrative language, his silence, his trickster role, his Signifyin(g) skills, his mother, his historical connection, and his being entangled in the cultural conflict. Therefore, this research will be an analysis of Huck's narrative and cultural voices with the help of cultural studies approach. An attempt has been made to throw some light on this approach in the following chapter.
Chapter III
Theoretical Background to the Study

3.1 Literary Theories and Literary Studies

Literary works have been written for centuries and they have been interpreted and re-interpreted by academic and non-academic readers for ages. Their way of making sense of a particular literary artifact is not the same. They differ as their perspectives are also different. It happens because they have been trained consciously or unconsciously in different ways to 'read' a work of literature. In a general sense, these 'ways' could be called literary theories because they are theories about how we should read literary texts. Such theories make assumptions about these texts, put forward hypotheses regarding the nature of literary texts or make claims about the ways they should be read. The reader's meaning of a text depends upon the theoretical stance taken by her. Therefore, it is possible to have many layers of meaning of a single text. For example, William Golding's Lord of the Flies has been interpreted as a political, philosophical, religious, or sociological novel. Similarly, Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights has been regarded as the picture of political situation during the Victorian England or women's struggle for their freedom or the British culture of that time.

Even the readings, which we call 'natural' or 'spontaneous' to perceive a text, are unconsciously dependent on the theorizing of older generations. It is a "dead theory which is sanctified by time and has become part of the language of common sense" (Selden 3). This shows that even before the conscious development of the theories like New Criticism, Marxism, Structuralism, or Deconstruction, readers relied on a particular theory to study a literary piece. Therefore, one has no choice whether
to side with a particular critical theory or not. It is unavoidable as it starts as soon as a literary work is created. Practical decisions like what to publish, what to teach, what courses to take, etc. "require us to judge some texts as better or more important than others" (Graff and Phelan, 5). Not a single person but a larger community does the value judgements. Once a work gains canonicity, its place becomes so natural to us that we hardly question it. For instance, we never question the position of Muna Madan in Nepali literature; it has become beyond question.

In his 'Literary Theory', Jonathan Culler observes that "Theory is often a pugnacious critique of common sense notions, and an attempt to show that what we take for granted as 'common sense' is in fact a historical construction, a particular theory that has come to seem so natural to us that we don't even see it as a theory" (4). As a critique of common sense and exploration of alternative conceptions, theory questions the very premisses or assumptions of literary study. In other words, theory interrogates the assumptions that might have been taken for granted. For instance, Huck Finn in Huckleberry Finn traditionally/ naturally perceived as a white male American (Euro-centric) but now it has become a case in controversy.

Each literary text gives an obvious meaning. However, as a form of art, it also conveys the hidden or implied meanings as well. When we start exploring these meanings, we have to depend on the unspoken assumptions and attitudes that are written in the text. The result may not be the same as the author had intended. Gerald Graff and James Phelan have rightly pointed out that it is useful [...] to think about whether a text may convey assumptions or implications about, say, gender or sexual orientation, even though it is not directly addressing these matters even though its author might not recognize the implications that a critic finds in the text. Since literary works deal with
men and women in interaction, do they not inevitably convey assumptions and attitudes about gender and desire (and language and power and culture and many other things that go hand in hand with representing human life)?" (5)

In short, theory involves speculative practice: accounts of desire, language, narrative strategies, and so on, that challenge received ideas. By doing so they incite one to re-think the categories with which s/he may be reflecting on literature.

Now we can see that any sort of reading of a literary text is directed by a particular theory. If one follows romantic theories, s/he emphasizes the writer's mind and life; a reader who assimilates phenomenology focuses on her own experience as a reader; a formalist concentrates on the writing itself in isolation; a Marxist reader considers the social and historical context as fundamental; and a structuralist reader pays attention to the codes we use to construct meaning.

At present literary theory has become an inherent part of literary studies. As each theory focuses on one particular aspect of a literary work, it is essential for a reader to see the text from diverse theoretical perspectives, which enrich her understanding of the text. However, no theory is monolithic; one may lay stress on one aspect while another lays emphasis on something else. The new theories are built on what has been achieved in the old theories. The current theories in practice are the result of this. Application of one theory leads to another. In this process, the reader always wants to know more and painfully questions the presumed results and the assumptions on which they are based. The application of theory answers the question what the text is about. To find out what is obvious can not be the purpose of theory; it is the hidden meaning. The attempts to probe the hidden meanings can cause debates. Such debates, according to Graff and Phelan, "typically focus not on what was explicitly said but on what was assumed to go without saying and on the
attitudes and meanings attached to those assumptions"(5). This eventually helps solve the problem of the interpretation of the text. For example, *Hamlet* could be interpreted as 'the breakdown of Elizabethan world order' (New Historicism), or 'men's fear of sexuality' (Feminism), or 'the unreliability of signs' (Deconstruction). In the same way, Jane Austen's novel *Emma* could be presented as 'the moral development of Emma, the character' (traditional criticism) or 'frailties and flaws of the conservative established culture/society' (New Historicism) or 'the female overpowering in a male dominated culture' (feminist criticism).

We do not read all texts the same way. As we develop our skills and scholarship in particular ways, some theories and their practices become more suitable than others do. Therefore, it becomes important for us to have several theoretical strings to our bows to enable us to handle different kinds of texts effectively. We do not read texts for the same purpose. Depending upon our purpose, we apply a particular theory to study a text.

However, in recent criticism, there has been a growing tendency of putting the conflicting ideas in dialogue, which, it is believed, has produced good results. This helps "create a broader and more inclusive canon and to develop a new theoretical approaches to literature[,] the new approaches to literature-...[are] a very positive force" (Graff and Phelan 11). Cultural Studies approach embraces these notions. This will be discussed in the next few pages.

3.2 Cultural Studies

Cultural Studies "designates the critical analysis of both the production and reception of all forms of cultural institutions, processes; and products; among these literature counts as merely one of many types of 'symbolic constructions"' (Abrams
It is a cross-disciplinary enterprise whose chief concern is, Abrams further writes, to identify the role, and the historical changes, of the social, economic and political forces and power-structures that produce, sustain, and propagate the meanings, "truth", value and relative status of diverse cultural phenomena and their institutions— including the institutions of traditional literary production and study, and even of their own field of cultural study". (253-4)

According to Wilfred L. Guerin, et.al. cultural studies approaches generally share four goals: first, "Cultural studies transcends the confines of a particular discipline such as literary criticism or history" (240). In their introduction to Cultural Studies, Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler emphasize that the intellectual promise of cultural studies lies in the attempts to "cut across diverse social and political interests and address many of the struggles within the current scene" (qtd. in Guerin 240). Methodology may include textual analysis, semiotics, deconstruction, ethnography, interviews, linguistic analysis, and psychoanalysis. Second, "Cultural Studies is politically engaged" (Guerin 241). Cultural critics study the power structures of society. They question the inequalities within power structures, and try to restructure the relationship between dominant and subordinated cultures. Meaning and individual subjectivity are cultural constructs, so they can be reconstructed. Third, "Cultural studies denies the separation of 'high' and 'low' or elite and popular culture" (Guerin, 241). All forms of cultural production have to be studied concerning other cultural practices. Cultural studies examines everything that is related to a society's beliefs, institutions, and communicative practices, including arts (241). Fourth, "Cultural studies analyzes not only the cultural work that is produced but also the means of production" (241). Like the Marxist critics, cultural critics also try to find answers to such paraliterary questions as who supports the author? Who publishes:
her work? How is it distributed? And so on.

Jonathan Culler observes that "work in cultural studies is...deeply dependent on the theoretical debates about meaning, identity, representation, and agency..."(44). Cultural studies did not come into being unexpectedly. It developed from two sources: one is from French structuralism which treated culture (including literature) as a series of practices whose rules or conventions should be described"(Culler 44). Many cultural critics and anthropologists did this and paved the way to the present situation. One of the most influential was Roland Barthes who studied a range of cultural activities like professional wrestling, advertising or French wine. Barthes not only studied high literature but also food and fashion. This encouraged "the reading of the connotations of cultural images and analysis of the social functioning of the strange constructions of culture" (45).

The other source of contemporary cultural studies is Marxist literary theory in Britain. Especially the works of Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart have become influential in cultural studies. They sought to recover the voices of a lost culture -- popular culture. They encountered another culture- a mass culture- that developed from European Marxist theory. Popular culture is an expression of the people while mass culture is an ideological imposition on people. These two cultures had interaction, which has become crucial to the development of cultural studies.

Cultural studies is driven by the tension between "the analyst's desire to analyze culture as a set of codes and practices that alienates people from their interests and creates the desire that they come to have, and on the other hand, the analyst's wish to find in popular culture an authentic expression of value" (Culler 46).

In cultural studies the question of 'agency', according to Jonathan Culler, "is the quest of how far we can be subjects responsible for our own actions and how far
our apparent choices are constrained by forces that we do not control" (46). There is a tension between the desire of self-expression and the ideological imposition, that is, we being constructed as subjects by cultural forms and practices. As we live in a society that practices certain cultural forms, we can not be aloof from them. We are always addressed by those forms in various ways. For example, advertisements address a person as a particular sort of subject - a customer who values certain qualities - and by being repeatedly hailed in such a way, s/he comes to occupy such a position. In short, the society imposes its cultural traditions and values upon us regardless of our choice and we become a certain kind of subject.

Another issue in cultural studies is identity. Cultural studies explores the problematical character of identity and the multiple ways in which identities are formed, experienced and transmitted. Cultural studies has, therefore, taken interest in the study of the unstable cultures and cultural identities that arise for groups like ethnic minority or women that have found it problematic to identify with the larger cultures they find themselves in. Here the dominant culture marginalizes the ethnic minority, like the "Majhis" in different parts of Nepal, and women. Their identity is formed on the basis of how they are made subjects by the dominant cultures. How the society acts upon them contributes to the formation of their identity. In other words, this is a given identity to a subject. This becomes important in cultural studies.

Cultural studies is not really a discrete "approach" at all, but rather a set of practices. As Bratlinger points out, cultural studies is not "a tightly, coherent, unified movement with a fixed agenda", but a "loosely coherent group of tendencies, issues and questions" (qtd. in Guerin 298). It is composed of elements of Marxism, new historicism, feminism, gender studies, anthropology, studies of race and ethnicity.
Film theory, sociology, urban studies, public policy studies; those fields that study social and cultural forces that either create community or cause division and alienation. Cultural studies involves scrutinizing a cultural phenomenon and drawing conclusions about the changes over a period of time. A prominent place is also given to the "undertaking to transfer to the center of cultural study such hitherto 'marginal' or 'excluded' subjects as the literary, artistic, and intellectual productions of women, the working class, ethnic groups, and colonial, postcolonial and third world cultures" (Abrams 254).

Cultural studies, in principle, includes and encompasses literary studies, examining literature as a particular cultural practice. It arose as the application of techniques of literary analysis to other cultural constructs. Cultural studies "treats cultural artifacts as texts to be read rather than as objects that are simply there to be counted. And conversely, literary studies may gain when literature is studied as a particular practice and works are related to other discourses" (Culler 48). Raman Selden rightly observes that "Non-literary texts produced by lawyers, popular writers, theologians, scientists and historians should not be treated as belonging to a different order of textuality: Literary works should not be regarded as sublime and transcendent expressions of the 'human spirit', but as texts among other texts" (105).

Cultural studies examines any kind of activities that have something to do with our day to day lives. A writer's work may undergo fluctuations of popularity and canonicity, like Huckleberry Finn which has at times been banned from libraries and schools, and other times has been hailed as "the great American novel". These things depend upon the power-relations in the society, the taste of readers and how the educational institutions treat a particular work at different stages of history. These studies show that literature does not occur in a vacuum separate from most of the
other concerns of our lives. In other words, cultural studies is very crucial to understand, analyze and enjoy a literary artifact from different perspectives.

As stated earlier, like literature itself, cultural studies is not a unified practice; it includes the debates, controversies or conflicting ideas. Stressing the same, Gerald Graff and James Phelan observe that "It is a common prediction that the culture of the next century will put a premium on people's ability to deal productively with conflict and cultural difference. Learning by controversy is sound training for citizenship in that future" (v). Because of all these facts, cultural studies has become a significant approach to study literature in this new century. Furthermore, the works like Huckleberry Finn respond well to cultural studies approach.

Currently there are three cultural studies approaches in practice: (i) British cultural materialism which has been defined by Raymond Williams as "the analysis of all forms of signification, including quite centrally writing, within the actual means and conditions of their production" (qtd. in Culler 130); (ii) New Historicism which has been described by Louis Montrose as "a reciprocal concern with the historicity of texts and the textuality of history" (qtd. in Abrams 249), and Abrams notes that "a text, whether literary or historical, is a discourse which, although it may seem to present, or reflect, an external reality, in fact consists of what are called representations [...] verbal formations which are the 'ideological products' or 'cultural constructs' of a particular era, and that these cultural and ideological representations in texts serve mainly to reproduce, confirm, and propagate the power-structures of domination and subordination which characterize a given society" (249); and (iii) American Multiculturalism, according to Shelley Fisher Fishkin, is "the move to make previously marginalized voices central to the curriculum in American universities" ("Reframing" 2). As defined by historian Vicki Ruiz, "Multiculturalism [...] reclaims
and interprets lived experiences heretofore excluded from the American mosaic (qtd. in Fishkin 2). This dissertation will particularly focus on the third approach (A. M.), especially it may be used to interpret Huck Finn.

3.3 American Multiculturalism

American literature was always regarded as male dominated Eurocentric creation until the late 1980s. American history was also written from the Eurocentric standpoint, which never acknowledged the contribution made by the people of color and women who often remained voiceless and faceless. But when the Civil Rights Movement and Women’s Movement gained currency in the USA in the 1960s, it was revealed that the voiceless and the faceless “had not only voices and faces, but histories and paper trails, as well as dreams of sitting in the boardrooms themselves! Empowered by political movements that acknowledged their right to express themselves and their needs in the present, they began to recover the voices of their past” (Fishkin 2). African Americans followed by women, Asian Americans, Chicanos, and Native Americans, engaged in massive efforts of recovery and reclamation. The marginalized voices heretofore have again been recovered and given value.

American universities, colleges and schools included works by only white authors in their syllabi even until the early 1970s. For example, they did not teach any works by Dunbar, DuBois, Hurston or Hughes. Similarly, history lessons did not include the freedom struggle led by Martin Luther King, Jr. The voices of those people who contributed to mold the common history and culture of the US had been erased; their cultural narrative had been impoverished. According to Lillian Robinson, “To do so implies that only those who already have social power have
anything to say about human experience and its meanings, that only they possess the imagination, insight and wit to say it well" (cqd. in Fishkin 5). Slaves and immigrants mostly built what we see as the United States now. In short, American culture has always been multicultural. Nevertheless, it was not accepted. The truth had been concealed in order to facilitate the dominant white culture.

However, in the early 1990s, certain important questions were emerging: what is literary “whiteness”? What is literary “blackness”? Was canonical American literature purely “white”? The firmly rooted idea of “whiteness” in American literature was analyzed, challenged and probed. There were findings that the roots of mainstream American culture were cultures of color, and the roots of black American culture were white. So it has turned out that the can-ons the opponents of multiculturalism were fiercely defending was less “white” than it had been thought, and the black voices the multiculturalists were reclaiming were less “black” than it had been thought. Values of truth and accuracy make one understand the ways in which multicultural traditions shaped the canonical literature, and the ways in which the canon molded writing by noncanonical writers throughout American history. It boils down to the fact that there has always been an interplay between “whiteness” and “blackness” in American literature.

Responding to the aforementioned emerging questions, Toni Morrison in her book *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and Literary Imagination*, launched an eloquent and provocative challenge to the privileged, naturalized “whiteness” of American literature. She challenged the critics to examine the mainstream American literature for the impact Afro-American presence has had on the structure of the work, the linguistic practice, and fictional enterprise in which it is engaged. Since the early 1990s attempts have been made to trace the link between the canonical American
literature and other cultures and traditions silenced hitherto. Even the major fiction writers of 19th and 20th century like Melville, Twain, James and Howells have given way to the polyphonic voices of American culture instead of being Eurocentric as interpreted traditionally. Scholars have found out that Afro-American presence in American literature is almost unavoidable.

Similarly, William D. Pierson in Black Legacy: America’s Hidden Heritage tracks the use of satiric traditions from Africa to the New World. Pierson notes that satirical songs functioned as a mechanism of social control in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century African societies, allowing the weak to voice grievances against the strong with impunity. He explores the ways in which the satirical songs functioned in colonial African cultures and then moves to their manifestations in the antebellum American South. He concludes, “the legacy of African culture is important to the understanding of America” (qtd. in Fishkin 9). However, it does not mean that only the white learned (though denied) from the other races in the US. ‘Others’ also learned from the white. It is now recognized that there has been a constant process of cultural exchange that has continued throughout American history. Therefore, Roger Abrahams in Singing the Master: The Emergence of African-American Culture in the Plantation South argues that a great deal of the culture of the South took shape not in the slave quarters or in the Big House, but “in the yard between” the two, “in contested areas betwixt and between two worlds” (qtd. in Fishkin 9).

Of course, Latinos, Asian-Americans and native Americans have also played significant roles to shape today’s US culture. However, “no other ethnic or cultural group in America has shared anything like the experience of American blacks; Africa, the transatlantic or Middle Passage, slavery, Southern plantation traditions, emancipation, Reconstruction, Post-Reconstruction, Northern migration,
urbanization, and racism" (Guerin 257). Therefore, Ralph Ellison in Shadow and Act remarks that any "viable theory of Negro American culture obligates us to fashion a more adequate theory of American culture as a whole" (qtd. in Guerin 256). Similarly, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars observes that

The society we have made simply will not survive without the values of tolerance. In addition, cultural tolerance comes to nothing without cultural understanding. In short, the challenge facing America in the next century will be the shaping, at long last, of a truly common culture, one responsive to the long silenced cultures of color. If we relinquish the ideal of America as a plural nation, we've abandoned the very experiment that America represents. (176)

It has now been acknowledged that American culture is polyphonic; at the same time, partitions fostered through nationalism, racism, and sexism, which have not been bridged yet. Of course, there has been a great increase in the tendency of inter-racial marriage in the 1990s. Though race has been increasingly seen by historians and social scientists as a construct invented largely to assign social status and privilege, it is still "a feature of American life riven with powerful contradictions and ambiguities; it is arguably both the greatest source of social conflict and the richest source of cultural development in America" (Guerin 254).

Fishkin observes that

what is known throughout the world simply as 'modern US' culture is a culture that is, in large part, shaped by African and African-American roots. British travelers to America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries picked up on this: the blend of African and African-American traditions with British and Anglo-American traditions was a big part of what made American language and culture so different from British language and culture". ("Reframing" 13)

Similarly, art historian Robert Farris Thompson stated: "To be white in America is to be very black.
If you don’t know how black you are, you don’t know how American you are” (qtd. in Fishkin 13). This suggests that American culture is a blend of various cultures.

In spite of the prevalent wisdom that “traditional, canonical American literature is free of, uninformed and unshaped by the four hundred-year-old presence of, first, Africans and then African-Americans in the United States...” Toni Morrison argues that “The contemplation of this black presence is central to any understanding of our national literature and should not be permitted to hover at the margins of the literary imagination”(4 -5). She concludes, “this Africanist presence may be something the United States cannot do without” (47).

The works on multiculturalism have unveiled the long-silenced and marginalized cultures and voices- those that were "othered" for centuries. They have encouraged one to see any American writer’s work from different angles. However, one may ask what is the link between cultural studies and American Multiculturalism. American Multiculturalism developed in the early 1970s whereas cultural studies developed in the late ’80s and ’90s. Similarly, cultural studies is a theoretical and analytical practice whereas American multiculturalism is before anything else, a political stance. Cultural studies, however, is politically engaged in practice. Therefore, American Multiculturalism becomes an important method of cultural studies and thus, has been taken as the major stance for study in this dissertation. Under this come African and African American cultural traditions, which have played an important role to shape American literature: both canonical and non-canonical. This is briefly described below.

3.4 African American Literary Tradition

It has now been discovered that the long silenced, marginalized and Othered African American cultural tradition has played a signal role in molding the American
culture. In the same way, the African American literary tradition has contributed to the canonical American literature in order to make it distinct. However, this fact is not easily accepted. In this particular section of this chapter, an attempt will be made to shed some light on African American literary tradition. Since it is not possible to trace the whole of African American literary tradition in a research of this kind, I will only describe those aspects of African American culture that are directly relevant to the present study.

3.4.1 Tricksterism

Trickster figures are common to almost all cultures in the world. They can be animal or human tricksters. Though other cultures too have trickster figures in various mythological and cultural forms, they are particularly notable in African American culture (Guerin164). Trickster figures are found in trickster tales like that of Brer Rabbit, Brer Wolf, Brer fox, and Sis Nanny goat which were part of the Wolof folk tales brought to America by the Hausa, fulani, and Mandinka and other African tribes. Other West African tales of animal tricksters were also introduced together with the import of the slaves to the New World. The hare story is also found in parts of Nigeria, Angola, and East Africa while the tortoise stories are found among the Yoruba, Igbo, and the Edo-Bini peoples of Nigeria. These tales, wide-spread among the Mandinka and Wolof, are common in African American folklore in the United States. The Ananse (spider) stories were Akan in origin and remained completely intact in the New World. There are a number of African peoples who also have story cycles about human-tricksters. The stories of Yo in Benin, the lay cycle of the Iraqw in Tanzania, and the Zulu Uhlakanyan stories can be taken as examples. The slaves when brought to America found the subtle ways of subverting the white authority
(masters) through such animal trickster tales (as in Ananse stories) in which the weaker animal gets the upper hand. For example, in these stories, Ananse, the spider, traps the snake, the tigers, the bees, etc. which are much stronger animals; Ananse tricks them in various ways and becomes the authoritative figure in the animal world. Shedding more light on the traits of the African American animal trickster tales, John W. Roberts, in his article 'The African American Animal Trickster as Hero', notes that "Africans enslaved in America continued to perform trickster tales because they could identify with the witty creature to whom nature had assigned an inferior position in the animal kingdom, a position not unlike that of African people in the human order"(100). He further notes that "the focus on obtaining food was a direct result of the shortages imposed on them by the slave masters. Tricksterism was thus justifiable response to the dehumanizing experience they encountered as slaves"(qtd. in Guerin, 288). The slaves were not given enough food which means they had to find some clever ways out. Similarly, Ronald Sundstrom rightly observes that "The trickster figure has been in the American signifying on "racial" politics since the beginning of "racial" politics in North and South America and the Caribbean. The trickster was a figure in the mythic systems of native Americans and enslaved Africans, and was immediately put to the task of subverting the white man's racial order" ("Laughing to Keep" n. pag.). These people identified themselves with the trickster hero, which was a kind of silent revolt against the white authority.

In the works of the canonical writers like Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois, Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes and Ralph Ellison, the trickster "is apparent in the irony that they expressed toward 'race' and American 'racial' politics. As figures in the African American literary tradition, these authors have connection
with the tradition of the trickster in African American folklore, and thus, with the trickster in the West African mythic tradition" (Sundstrom).

### 3.4.2 Repetition as a black figure

Repetition functions as a figure of black culture which signifies not the repetition of the "original" as it is, but a repetition that repeats the original with a difference. In African American tradition one repeats in order to produce a difference. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. claims: "We are able to achieve difference through repetition: as Ralph Ellison puts it, we 'change the joke and slip the yoke'" ("Criticism in the Jungle" 10). In this tradition, the writers do not create something absolutely new but play with the text(s) that have preceded theirs.

As in African American culture the European culture too practices repetition, but it is to be seen "accumulation and growth" and is different from 'repetition' in black culture which sees it as 'circulation and flow'. James A. Snead argues that in black culture, "the thing [...] is there for you to pick it up when you come back to get it". This points to the notion advocated by the Russian Formalist Shklovoski that the things already exist and it is the author's job to put them together in an organized way using his or her individual technique. Goals, or ends are "always deferred" ("Repetition as a figure of black culture" 67). The purpose is latent. As in nature (eg. Seasons, etc.) there is cyclical 'y in black culture, which is like the black maxim that 'what goes around comes around'. It is because of such cultural tradition of repetition in African and African American culture, the literary figures from African American descent practice it extensively. Every black writer repeats or imitates the earlier works, but with revision. For example, the writers like Ralph Ellison and Ishmael Reed often heavily draw on jazz music while writing their novels. They take the
subject matters or an episode or some lines from their predecessors' works and revise them to show their familial past. This black tradition has been recovered in European literature as well. We can find it in the works of James Joyce (Ulysses), Tom Stoppard (Travesties), etc. Snead concludes that "the outstanding fact of late twentieth-century European culture is its ongoing reconciliation with black culture". But the mystery may be that it was very hard and undesirable "to discern the elements of black culture already there in latent form, and to realize that the separation between the cultures was perhaps all along not one of nature, but one of force" (75). This has happened for centuries as the white imposed only their own culture on the African Americans too. It is the white who divided the culture on the basis of the people's color.

3.4.3 The Topos of (un)naming

The topos of (un)naming is another important feature of the African American culture. This actually developed after slavery had flourished in the New World. When the Africans were brought to America, their original names were ignored. Their masters baptized them by giving them Christian names. Later when they became freemen, they still had some connection with their owners as the slaves were given the master's surname which they continued to use. For example, if John was owned by the Hatchers, he would be called 'John Hatcher' or 'Hatcher's John'. Hence it was not a proper title by which to denote a freeman; it was changed to 'John S. Lincoln' or 'John S. Sherman'. Here the title 'S' stood for no name but as a kind of pride. This additional middle name is a kind of self-designation as a symbol of freedom. Without it there would be no complete social and economic freedom. Kimberly W. Benston points out that "The unnaming of the immediate past (Hatcher's John, etc.) was
reinforced by the insertion of a mysterious initial, a symbol of the long unacknowledged, nascent selfhood that had survived and transcended slavery." He further notes that "the association with tropes of American heroism ('Lincoln', 'Sherman', etc.) was also an act of naming, a staging of self in relation to a specific context, revolutionary affirmation" ("I yam What I am" 153). This is, in a way, bidding farewell to the bitter immediate past as well as reviving the identity that was suppressed. At the same time, by connecting him with heroic American figures, the freeman is naming himself as a kind of silent revolt.

(Un) naming is the unspeakable figure of an unnamable African linguistic difference, the visual sign of which is an unadulterated blackness. In its earliest forms "the act of unanaming is a means of passing from one mode of representation to another, of breaking the rhetoric and 'plot' of influence, of distinguishing the self from all else [...]" (Benston 153). The African American kept this cultural practice which was 'unknowable' to their masters or Euro-Americans; the blacks were marginalized. Because of this, they (Un)name the white name for 'the blackness of blackness'. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. observes that "Every black act of naming is [...] simultaneously an act of (un)naming, an act of linguistic appropriation "(Criticism in the Jungle" 17). It is an important black trope which is used to play with the signs (language). Naming someone is a linguistic appropriation and it is the same to unname that person. "All of Afro-American literature"Benston concludes, "may be seen as one vast genealogical poem that attempts to restore continuity to the ruptures or discontinuities imposed by the history of black presence in America." It is so because "For the Afro-American [...] self creation and reformation of a fragmented familial past are endlessly interwoven: naming is inevitably genealogical revisionism" (152). This is true as the African American authors are always concerned with their
identity. Every time they try to weave their present with their familial past which has been erased by the dominant culture. It points to the fact that these writers want to be 'original' (unnamed the past) as well as be linked to the ancestors.

3.4.4 The Signifying Monkey

The Signifying Monkey is "a theory of formal revision" developed by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who describes it as often being "characterized by pastiche" and most importantly, "it turns on repetition of formal stuctures and their difference. Signification is a theory of reading that arises from Afro-American culture; learning how 'to signify' is often part of our adolescent education" ("The blackness of blackness" 285-6). This theory plays on signs, which is common to African/African American cultures. It may repeat the structures of the past works; however, the purpose or the meaning will be different. The Signifying Monkey is a trickster figure "who dwells at the margins of discourse, ever punning, ever troping, ever embodying the ambiguities of language" (286). As it sits at the margins of discourse, it can easily trick the readers who take word for word meaning. Furthermore, it makes the language more complicated.

Gates argues that the Signifying Monkey did not come into existence out of the blue; he traces its link with a mythological figure in West African culture: Esu or Esu-Elegbra. It is a trickster figure of Yoruba mythology which was carried across the Atlantic as slavery started in the New World in the seventeenth century. The slaves continued to practice their culture under different circumstances as their position in the new place was different. This points to the fact that they practiced the African culture with a difference. The basic features, nevertheless, remained the same. Of course, Esu has been called by different names in different countries. For example,
he is called Exu in Brazil, Echu-Elegua in Cuba, or Papa La Bas in the Loa of Hoodoo in the United States (The Signifying Monkey 4-5). Whatever they were called, they shared the same features of the divine trickster figure Esu. In each case Esu is regarded as the sole messenger of the gods, who interprets the will of gods to man (6). This indicates that Esu is the interpreter like a critic. It helps one to read signs not literally but figuratively. The slaves in the New World found this feature of Esu quite useful in their oral narratives as they could not read or write. However, they revised this practice to suit their needs in a new situation. According to Gates, that revised form was (is) the Signifying Monkey among the African Americans as its function is equivalent to that of Esu (11). He further observes that "The Signifying Monkey remains as the trace of Esu, the sole survivor of a disreputed partnership. Both are tropes that serve as transferences in a system aware of the nature of language and its interpretations" (20). Both of these tropes defy the denotative meaning of the discourse as well as the determinate meaning of a discourse. They both act as tricksters and as mediators, and their mediations are tricks.

The Signifying Monkey is mostly found in the narrative poems. In such poems, usually there are three animals: the Monkey, the Lion and the Elephant. The Monkey is a trickster figure who is full of guile, tells lies, and has rhetorical genius. He does not like the Lion’s self-imposed status as King of the Jungle. That is why, he tries to demystify it. The Monkey knows that he is no match for the Lion in terms of physical power; however, the elephant is. Now his task is to get the Lion caught with the Elephant. For this purpose, he uses his rhetorical trick of mediation. He utters the insults about the Lion’s closest relatives, which were supposed to have been said by the Elephant. As the Lion feels his status being challenged, he rushes to the Elephant only to be severely beaten and dethroned. Then the Lion returns to the
Monkey and realizes that the Monkey was Signifyin(g) upon him. Even when the Monkey is in a tight corner, he is able to reconcile with the Lion, again Signifyin(g). The slow-witted Lion recognizes it and warns him. However, the Monkey continues to do it as soon as the opportunity favors him as the Monkey says, "You might as well stop, there ain't no use tryin' / because no motherfucker is gonna stop me from signifyin'" (58). It is the way the monkey plays on the language that tricks him. Gates observes that "for Afro-Americans, the signifying Monkey tales inscribe the nature and functions of formal language use and its interpretation." He further notes that the Monkey is "the figure of the text of the Afro-American speaking subject, whose manipulations of the figurative and the literal both wreak havoc upon and inscribe order for criticism in the jungle" (The Signifying Monkey 42).

Signifyin(g) is modes of figuration themselves. It may include "marking, loud-talking, testifying, calling out (of one's name), sounding ,rapping, playing the dozens,and so on" (Gates 52). The Signifying Monkey does not exist as a character in African American literary tradition, but as "a vehicle for narration itself".

The signifying monkey is the figure of a black rhetoric practice in African American speech community. The blacks appropriate the standard English language to make their own. The Signifying monkey uses his language of Signifyin(g) which obscures the apparent meaning. Gates concludes that "The Monkey [...] is not only a master of technique, he is technique, or style, or the literariness of literary language; he is the great Signifier. In this sense, one does not signify something, rather, one signifies in some way" (54). Therefore this trope can be very useful to study any American literary work as they blend different cultures in the US.
These are the main features of African American literary tradition which will be applied to examine the links between Huck Finn's cultural/narrative voices and African American culture in the next chapter.

4.1 Twain, Huck and History

Mark Twain always writing himself into his fiction when Twain was writing, he avoided writing on Reconstruction. Yet, the time when Reconstruction was aimed in the South and the notorious race riots against the Black people, was an important step in order to examine the Black people and their whole experience of the South. The federal troops were withdrawing from the South where they were occupying the civil rights of the people.

In the beginning and after the end of the Civil War, Mark Twain says, "Slavery: The Mississippi Valley. From Fifty to Fifty years ago! Yet, in other words, it was about the valley along the Mississippi River during the 1860s and early 1870s. During this time because of Eli Whitney's invention of cotton gin, the plantation owners of the South were becoming more prosperous and employing field hands, and these slaves bought by them to keep their plantation economy (cotton culture) becoming.

The Southerners strongly felt that slavery was essentially to run their economy and lives were their valuable property. They could not do without it. Therefore, the Southern owners always advocated preserving slavery in the South. Phelps plantation is the example Twain has used in Huckleberry Finn. Similarly, Twain was also aware of the Black Reconstruction of Ulysses S. Grant's administration. Consequently, that he has presented for his reading him at last though not sure whether his remember was permanent or for a while. In the light of these facts, we can infer that Twain had an interest in history and the contemporary sociopolitical troubles of the 1860s-40s.
Chapter - IV

Cultural Studies in Practice: Huckleberry Finn as an African American Figure in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

4.1 Twain, Huck and History

Mark Twain started writing Huckleberry Finn in 1876 when Tom Sawyer was published. He started working on Huckleberry Finn at the time when Reconstruction was failing in the South and the notorious secret white society - Ku Klux Klan - was taking its shape in order to silence the black people and their white supporters in the South. The federal troops were withdrawing from the South, where they were safeguarding the civil rights of the black.

In the beginning just after the title of the book Mark Twain says "Scene: The Mississippi Valley, Time: Forty to Fifty Years ago". In other words, it was about the society along the Mississippi River during the 1830s and early 1840s. During this time because of Eli Whitney's invention of cotton gin, the plantation owners of the South were becoming more prosperous and employing field hands, that is, more slaves bought by them to keep their plantation economy (cotton culture) booming. The Southerners strongly felt that slavery was a necessity to run their economy and slaves were their valuable property. They could not do without it. Therefore, the Southern leaders always advocated preserving slavery in the South. Phelps plantation is the example Twain has used in Huckleberry Finn. Similarly, Twain was also aware of the Black Reconstruction or Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation that he has practiced in Jim freeing him at last, though not sure whether his freedom will be permanent or for a while. In the light of these facts, we can infer that Twain had blended history and the contemporary social/political practices of the 1830s-40s as
well as 1870s-80s. As an honest artist, Twain could not cheat his readers. He told the "truth, mainly" without any "stretchers" this time.

Huck Finn in Twain's novel presented as a Southerner has helped free a 'nigger' from his owner. It is important to place such a character within the historical context within which Twain wrote. During the 1830s and 1840s, there were people who helped the slaves run away to their freedom. This was widely practiced by the Abolitionists and the freed slaves. They established a secret network of Underground Railroad. It was a kind of method used to help the slaves escape to their freedom. Here we can see the connection between this and Huck Finn. This can be linked to the plan Jim had which he tells Huck on the Jackson's Island. He wanted to keep to "de Illinois side" of the Mississippi River while heading towards Cairo. There he could go up the Ohio River which Huck describes as "big clear river" (79) as opposed to the muddy waters of the Mississippi instead of going down the Mississippi on both sides of which were the Slave States - Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana. Elliott notes that

Although Illinois was officially a 'free state', it was generally not a safe haven for fugitives since many people sympathized with the Southern slave-holders. In addition, in Illinois there was a system of indentured labor, which allowed for the arrest and forced labor of vagrants who had no papers. In addition, the area of Illinois near Cairo was dominated by pro-slavery people in the 1840s who were always searching for fugitive slaves. Thus, Jim's safest path to freedom was up the Ohio and beyond the pro-slavery men to the Underground Railroad found in cities like Cincinnati and then on to Canada. ("Notes" 277)
Huck could help him as a 'conductor' of the Underground Railroad, who helped Jim escape from slavery. Many slaves were freed by this way then. According, to Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopaedia volume 17, by this means "50,000 slaves, valued in excess of $12,000,000, escaped from the South during the 1850s" ("Negroes" 207). Twain must have known this fact, which inspired him to tell us the truth of the American cultural history in the guise of Huckleberry Finn. Moreover, Huck himself has made a history as he starts his narrative by saying "YOU don't know about me, without you have read a book by the name of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer but that ain't no matter"(3). He expects the reader to know his history. This indicates that the history of the time the book was published as well as the impact he had laid on the society through his image in that book is significant to understand him.

Almost all critics agree that the flow of the story up to Chapter 16 runs smoothly, but a number of difficulties arise to interpret the story when the raft is smashed by a steamboat. Some thought Twain ran out of ideas and some believed he wanted to finish the story hurriedly. However, it would be fascinating to see the historical context around 1876 when he was writing the book. The raft that carries both Jim and Huck to freedom is smashed. It was the same year that the Reconstruction in the South came to an end. There were no hopes that the freedmen would be free at all. There were new methods developing to oppress them. For example, the whites started lynching the blacks, convict leasing, the system of sharecropping, etc. Again in 1877 the Federal Troops were withdrawn from the South which encouraged the white supremacists to carry out their cold blooded activities against the black population, and terrorized them in the South in spite of the Civil Rights Act of 1875, which was declared illegal in 1883 by the Supreme Court. It was now worse than slavery; life became more insecure for the blacks. These fears
or opinions were expressed in the contemporary journals which Mark Twain, himself a journalist, must have read widely. As a result, he stopped writing the book and, as Elliott observes,

wrote the later chapters in the 1880s after the failure of Reconstruction, when the Ku Klux Klan was growing and its reign of terror and the lynching of African Americans had begun. As a writer of social realism and as an increasingly disillusioned American, Twain would not let himself or his audience blind themselves to the injustice and suffering that existed in the United States of the 1840s or the 1880s". ("Introduction" xvii)

The hypothetical fear Frederick Douglass had expressed in 1862 came true: "black people had been emancipated from the relation of "slavery to individuals, only to become slaves of the community at large" (qtd. in Fishkin 73).

Mark Twain also must have been aware of the Fugitive Slave Law 1850, which allowed the whites to capture any runaway slaves even in Free States and return them to the owners. At the Phelps Farm, Jim has been captured by the frauds (especially the King) for some reward on him. Uncle Silas keeps him in the cabin log, which reminds us of Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Elizabeth Beecher Stowe, published in 1852. Twain must have been fully aware of the sensation it caused as a result of which he did not write his work in a direct way as an outlet for his voice. He rather employed the 'signifyin' - the double-voice. Actually this theme of Fugitive Slave Law runs throughout the novel as long as Jim is not declared a freeman on the Phelps Farm where he was recaptured twice and 'sold' once, all for the same reason: reward on him.

As we read further on (ch. 21-22), we find more historical reference in the text. For example, Colonel Sherburn shoots Boggs for no reason except that he was annoyed. The location is 'well below the State of Arkansaw' (perhaps the State of
Louisiana). Sherburn gives a long speech. He talks about lynching and killing people at night by the masked people. It hints at the ancestors of Ku Klux Klan still active in different forms during the 1870s-80s, terrorizing the blacks in the South. Pro-slavery supporters rode at night wearing hoods and causing a lot of violence. These things must have been in Twain’s mind while writing these chapters.

Considerations of these historical facts offer us a possible understanding of Huck Finn or why Twain made Huck give up the journey to freedom in the novel. Shelley Fisher Fishkin notes that “The confirmation of these fears during the next eight years [i.e. 1876-1884] may well have induced him to end his novel with an unsatisfying farce that reflected the travesty that ‘freedom’ had become for African Americans in the post-Reconstruction era, both in the South and in the North” (74). Bernard de Votto called the ending of the novel “chilling descent” which mirrors the equally chilling descent embodied in that chapter of history. Reflecting on Reconstruction W. E. B. DuBois said, “The slave went free, stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again to slavery” (qtd. in Fishkin 74). We see exactly the same that can happen to Jim though he has been freed by Miss Watson. In the last few chapters, Tom Sawyer knew that Jim was freed by her. Nevertheless, he pretended not to know it, like his white brethrens capturing the free slaves. Jim and Huck’s, both of their future is bleak. Jim may again be caught by the plantation owners as a cheap field hand, seeing him as a vagrant and probably accusing him of being “intent to steal”. Huck, similarly, “got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she’s going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can’t stand it. I been there before” (262). He indicates that white ‘sivilization’ is not safe for him. Therefore, he wants to escape white culture.
Mark Twain's knowledge of the cultural history of contemporary America must have played the paramount role consciously or unconsciously in shaping Huckleberry Finn. Once Twain said to an interviewer in 1907, "I never deliberately sat down and 'created' a character in my life. I begin to write incidents out of real life." (qtd. in Fishkin's "Mark Twain"). When he says "incidents out of real life", it definitely refers to the period he mentioned in the book and the cultural practices that were practiced then. The analyses made so far points to the fact that Huck presents himself as a historical figure and an African American helping to free a runaway slave. Huck's character as an African American will be more revealed when we examine his speech through the lenses of the characteristic features of Black English Vernacular in the next section.

4.2 Huck, Jim and Black English Vernacular (BEV)

In his Explanatory note on Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain tells us this:

In this book a number of dialects are used, to wit: The Missouri Negro dialect, the extemest form of the back-woods South-Western dialect; the ordinary 'Pike-County' dialect; and four modified varieties of this last. The shading have not been done in a hap-hazard fashion, or by guess work; but painstakingly, and with the trustworthy guidance with these and support of personal familiarity several forms of speech. I make this explanation for the reason that without it many readers would suppose that all these characters were trying to talk alike and not succeeding. (2) [emphasis added]

While Mark Twain describes to us which dialects he had in his mind while writing the novel, he doesn't tell us who spoke which dialect. He admits that while choosing the
dialects he did not do it "in a hap-hazard fashion, or by guess work"; he was familiar personally with the dialects spoken in Missouri, and he chose them "painstakingly". There is no doubt that the slaves like Jim and Jack speak Black English Vernacular ("Missouri Negro dialect"). However, one would certainly ponder over which dialect he used for Huck. Though Twain does not make it clear which dialect Huck speaks, it is generally regarded that he speaks ordinary 'Pike-County' (Missouri) dialect (David Carkeet 330). However, a close examination of his speech shows that his dialect is closer to Jim's or Black English Vernacular (BEV). At the phonological level, though, Huck's speech is different from Jim's or BEV, his syntax and diction, and cadences and rhythms of his sentences are closer to BEV. In "The Dialects in Huckleberry Finn", David Carkeet points out that "Grammatically, Huck's and Jim's dialects are very similar". He further notes that "Lexically, Jim's dialect differs from Huck's only in a few exclamations [...]". He also admits that "Huck and Jim share a rule producing nonstandard forms" of English(317). Now, if Huck's speech is examined in the light of these statements and others, one will find that his speech is closer to BEV/Jim's.

For example, both Jim and Huck use the word "powerful" as an adverb to mean "very". For example, Huck says: "I was powerful lazy and comfortable"(35; ch.8); and Jim says: "l'uz powerful sorry you's killed [...]"(41; ch.8). Both use adjectives as adverbs. For instance, Huck says:"Jim was monstrous proud about it"(7; ch.2); "Everybody said it was a real beautiful oath [...]" (p.8) and so on. Similarly, Jim says: "She pecks on me all de time and treats me pooty rough" (40; ch. 8). The words "monstrous", "real" and "rough" should have been "monstrously", "really" and "roughly" respectively in Standard English.

Both Jim and Huck use the expression "light out" to mean "run away". For example, Jim says: "I lit out mighty quick, I tell you"(41; ch. 8). In the same way,
Huck says, "But I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest" (262). These examples show their similarity at the semantic level.

Using present participle with 'a'-prefix is another important feature that can be found in both Jim and Huck. For example, Huck says, "He set there a-mumbling and a-growling a minute [...]" (20; ch. 5); "The next minute I was a-spinning down stream soft [...]" (33; ch. 7). Similarly, Jim says: "[...] but dey wuz people a-stirrin' yit [...]"; "I see a light a-comin' roun' de p'int [...]" (41; ch. 8), and so on.

Both Huck and Jim use "knowed" and "clumb" as the past of "know" and "climb" respectively. Huck says, "I went down the front garden and clumb over the stile [...]" (16; ch 4); "I knowed he would see I was wet" (30; ch. 11). In the same vein, Jim says: "[...] bekase I knowed ole Misus en de widder wuz [...]" (41; ch. 8); "So I clumb up en laid down on de planks" (41; ch. 8).

Similarly, both Huck and Jim use the word "a body" very frequently to mean "a person". Huck says, "[...] but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body's flesh crawl" (19; ch. 5). To mean the same Jim says, "en how's a body gwyne to hit um wid a rock? How could a body do it in de night?" (42; ch. 8).

Both Huck and Jim both say "set" to mean "sit" and "sat". For instance, Huck: "Miss Watson's big nigger named Jim, was setting in the kitchen door "so he set down on the ground betwixt me and Tom". The same is expressed when Jim says: "I's gwyne to set down here [...]" (6; ch.2).

Both Huck and Jim use the expression "I reckon" to mean "I suppose or think". Huck: "$I$ reckon I had hunted the place over as much as a hundred times" (24; ch.6); "$I$ reckon I was up in the tree two hour "(38; ch.8). "$I$ reckoned they killed him too" (49; ch. 10); "It was as big a fish as was ever caught in the Mississippi, $I$ reckon" (51; ch. 10). Similarly, Jim says, "$I$ rek'n he's ben dead two er three days" (47;
ch.9): "I reck'n'd at by fo' in de mawnin I'd be twentyfive mile down de river" (42; ch. 8); "Den I reck'n'd I'd inves' de thirty five dollars right off" (43; ch.8). These examples show their similarity at the semantic level.

One also finds that Huck and Jim use the "done" structure in similar ways. Huck: "to show who done it "(7); and Jim: "Huck done it" (83).

It is found that the redundancy of subect is a characteristic feature of both Huck and Jim's speech. Huck says, "The widow Douglas, she took me for her son"; "But Tom Sawyer he hunted me up [...]"; "The widow she cried over me [...]" (3; ch.1).
Jim: "Ole Missus she pecks on me all de time [...]" (40; ch. 8); "De wider [widow] she try to get her to say [...]" (41; ch.8).

The double negation is another prominent feature, though found in some non-standard variety of English, which is "particularly common in BEV" (Pratt and Traugott 333). This occurs frequently in Huck's speech. So does in Jim's. Huck says, "Don't ask me nothing then I won't have to tell no lies"(17; ch.4); "But it warn't no use"(18; ch. 4) "It wouldn't pass nohow"(18; ch. 4). Similarly, Jim says, "en don't run no resk" (18; ch. 4); "I hain't ever done no harm to a ghos' [...] en doan' do nuffin [nothing] to Ole Jim"; "I couldn't git nuffin else (39); "but I ain't no mo' now" (41).

At the syntactic level, Huck uses the conjunction "and" to link any number of sentences, which show no urge towards subordination. It is also true to Jim. Huck says:

The stars was shining, and the leaves rustled in the woods ever so mournful; and I heard an owl, away off, whoo-whooing about somebody that was dead, and a whippowill and a dog crying about somebody that was going to die; and the wind was trying to whisper something to me and I couldn't make out what it was, and so it made the cold shivers run over me. (5)
Similarly, Jim says:

I 'uz hungry, but I warn't afeard; bekase I knowed Ole Misus en de widder wuz goin' to start to de camp-meetn' right after breakfas' en be gone all day, en dey knows I goes off wid de cattle 'bout daylight, so dey wouldn' 'spec to see me roun' de place, en so they wouldn' miss me tell arter dark in de evenin. (41)

Both Huck and Jim use "a" instead of "have" in conditional perfect tenses in the same way. For example, Huck says, "we could a touched him" (6); "If I'd a knowed what a trouble it was to make a book I wouldn't tackled it [...]" (262). Jim says; "Well, you wouldn't a ben here 'f it hadn' a ben for Jim, You'd a ben down dah in de woods [...]" (46).

It is also found that Jim and Huck use "been/ben" in the same way. Huck says in his famous line: "I been there before" (262). Jim also says: "en I tole you I ben rich wurst [...]" (261). Huck says "been" only because he attended school. Otherwise, he too would have said "ben" like Jim. Tense marking in Standard English is an important feature, which is done differently in BEV. J. L. Dillard, a linguist, observes that

[...] tense, although an obligatory category in Standard English, can be omitted in Black English sentences. The sentence

...he go yesterday....

is perfectly grammatical, provided the surrounding clauses or sentences give the needed time cues. Action in the past may thus be represented by the base form of the verb [...] (qtd. in Fishkin 44)

Dillard further notes that "whereas in Standard English every verb in a sequence (in a sentence or in a related series of sentences) must be marked as either present or past, in Black English only one of the verbs need so be marked - although more than
one may be marked" (qtd. in Fishkin 45). As Janet Holmogren Mckay notes, Huck often "shifts tense within the same sequence " (qtd. in Fishkin 170). We find this grammatical feature central to Huck's speech. It is also true to Jim's speech. For example, Huck says,

Another night, when we was up at the head of the Island, just before daylight, here comes a frame house down, on the west side.(46)

Pretty soon it darkened up and begun to thunder and lighten" so the birds was right about it. Directly it begun to rain, and it rained like all fury, too, and I never see the wind blow so.(45)

We done it, and then peeped down the woods, through the leaves. Pretty soon a splendid young man come galloping down the road, setting his horse easy and looking like a soldier (99)

Similarly, Jim says:

I got hurt a little, en couldn't swim fas', so I wuz considerable way behine you, towards de las'; when you landed I reck'ned I could ketch up wid you on de lan' 'dout havin' to shout at you, but when I see that house I begin to go slow. (102-3)

Well I wuz dah all night. De wuz somebody roun' all de time. 'Long' bout eight er nine every skift dat went 'lonh wuz talkin' 'bout how you' pap came over to the town en say you's killed.(41)

The verb inflection '-s' to denote simple present singular in Standard English is used differently in BEV. Traugott and Pratt point out that

some speakers of BEV do not have the third person singular present tense inflection in underlying structure since they never express it. Others have a verb inflection that on first sight corresponds to the Standard English one, but
it is used with all persons (e.g., I walks) and in fact functions as a present tense-marker, not a number-maker. (Linguistics for Students of Literature 330)

This feature can be found in Jim and Huck's speech too. However, this feature may not be regular in both. Huck says: "I rouses up and rests on my elbow and listens; pretty soon, I hears it again" (35); "and I do believe he cared just as much for his people as white folks does for their'n" (141-2). Jim, similarly, says: "You wants to keep 'way fum de water as much you kin" (18); "You go en git in de river again whah you b'longs [...]" (39); "Well, one night I creeps to de do" (41); "I owns myself, en I's wuth eight hund'd dollars" (44). In these quotes, the inflection 's' is used only to mark the present tense rather than the number.

Regarding the question how Black Huck's speech was it would be interesting to see an American dialect scholar named James Harrison's article entitled "Negro English" published in Anglia in 1884. In this article he mentions some specimens of "Negro English" which are characteristic of Huck's speech as well. The following use of the words and expressions can be found in both Harrison's "Specimen Negroisms" and Huck's speech though some words are spelt differently:

"Powerful" and "monstrous" to mean "very" (in Harrison, "Powerful" and "monst'ous);

"Lonesome" to mean "depressed";

"I lay" to mean "wager";

"To tell on" to mean "there is no use in" (in Harrison, "taint no use", this can also be found in Jim's speech);

"Study" to mean to "meditate";

"Squash" to mean to "crush";

"To let on" to mean "to pretend";
"I reckon" to mean "I suppose, think or fancy" (in Harrison, "I reckin");

"Considerable" and "tolerable" as adverbs to mean "very" or "pretty" (in Harrison, "considerbul" and "tolerbul");

"Disremember" to mean to "forget" (in Harrison, dis'member") [Regarding this Fishkin notes that "Toni Morrison uses the word 'disremember' in a somewhat similar manner in Beloved (274)" as pointed out by Emily Budick in her personal communication with Morrison.]

"If I'd a knowed" to mean "If I had known"; and

".... Light out for" to mean "to run for" (in Harrison, "to light out fer")

(Fishkin 43).

Using serial verbs or the tendency to describe every detail of an action or event from start to finish with its own special verb has been regarded a trait of "Black English". In other words, segmenting an action while describing it is a feature of "Black English". This kind of feature is very common in the Niger-Congo language family. For example, Ayo Bamgbose, an African linguist, notes that a speaker of this language family would say, "He took knife cut meat", meaning, "he cut the meat with a knife" (qtd. in Fishkin 47). Mervyn C. Alleyne finds that the same "syntactic structure also exists in Afro-American, and the rules which account for it are basically the same in Afro-American as in Kwa languages [African language]" (qtd. in Fishkin 47). The same thing must have happened to Huck Finn too. Fishkin notes that "The Niger-Congo subfamily of languages to which the Gur sub-group [...] and the Kwa subgroup (including Yoruba) belong, is the largest in Africa, and included the languages originally spoken by the majority of slaves imported to America" (172). Huck's speech, too, must have been influenced by it.
If we look at the following paragraph from Chapter 32 in which Huck goes to the Phelps Farm, we can find the characteristic feature - "every detail of an action by using a special verb" - of Black English Vernacular:

When I got halfway first one hound and then another got up and went for me and of course I stopped and faced them, and kept still. And such another pow-wow as they made! In a quarter of minute I was kind of a hub of a wheel, as you may say - spokes made out of dogs - circle of them packed together around me, with their necks and noses stretched up towards me; a barking and howling; and more a coming, you could see them sailing over fences and around corners from everywheres. (198)

In this paragraph, Huck tends to segment each action into its component parts instead of putting them together under one umbrella term. For example, it would have been possible to say, "When I got [...] one after another came to attack me, and of course I didn't move..." in Standard English.

In the like manner, there is a strong argument made by Shelley Fisher Fishkin that the characteristic patterns of Huck's speech is modeled on a real black child – Jimmy - he had known, "a bright, simple, guileless little darkey boy [...] ten years old, a wide-eyed, observant little chap" (14). Fishkin points out that for some years Twain had thought about using Jimmy as a model for the voice of a narrator in a work of fiction. When he finally made Huck the narrator for the novel, he drew heavily upon the speech patterns and "the syntax and diction, the cadences and rhythms" of Jimmy's African American speech. Twain actually did not get Huck to speak the 'Missouri Negro dialect', which is spoken by other African American, characters. But she points out that he did weave into Huck's speech very significant elements of the vocabulary, grammar, and syntax that were not part of the standard English as
taught in the public schools, but which were very much present in the speech of African Americans of the period (13-40).

Though Huck’s speech patterns were never questioned beyond their being a Southern dialect, this analysis of his speech shows that African American speech features helped shape his speech, regardless of his pronunciation.

### 4.3 Huck, His Mother and Mulatto

The bright stars scatter everywhere
Pine wood scent in the evening.

A nigger night,
A nigger joy.

I am your son, white man!
A little yellow
Bastard boy.

-Langston Hughes ("Mulatto" 1739)

Huckleberry Finn’s identity as a white male figure has been accepted for more than a hundred years since the publication of the novel (1884). However, this identity of Huck is not ahistorical. The Western culture treated him as it used to do to other previous figures in literature. It was a purposeful suppression of any other possibilities and this oppressive culture taught the same thing to its citizens as it was the easiest way to continue its domination over other minority cultures or women. By doing it, the future domination was also secured. From generation to generation, the same message was handed down: Huck is an American white male. This concept was so deep-rooted that it became a universal truth. As Huckleberry Finn has been a canonical text in American literature, it is essential for the dominant culture to read it
the way this culture reads it. Therefore, Paul Lauter concludes that this kind of concept is "a construct, like a history text, expressing what a society reads back into the past as important to its future" ("The Literatures of America" 16). That society cannot break away with the achievements it has made if it wants to continue. That is why it was necessary for the Eurocentric culture/society to defend what it said earlier about Huck Finn so that its territory will not be invaded by any strangers. However, such concepts have been interrogated and challenged after the new development in cultural studies in the 1980s or 1990s. America as a multicultural country could not continue to favor only Euro-American culture. The cultures of color were also explored and it was found that they played a significant role to mold present-day America. In other words, the literatures of colored people also played a significant role to bring modern American literature to its present state. However, the worst thing was that the women's voices had always been silenced, no matter whether the white or the colored. When white females had been ignored or rejected as a subject of study, even if studied kept isolated from the tradition, we can imagine what may have happened to the black/slave women. Definitely, they were marginalized and even erased from the cultural/literary history of America. In cultural studies these silenced and marginalized voices have been recovered and given importance. This has helped see every American literary text in different ways. So it is because of cultural studies that present study is made possible.

The novel does not give any detailed account of Huck's mother. All we know about her is that she is "dead" and she "couldn't read and she couldn't write, nuther, before she died" (20: ch.5). It is in reference to this that one can talk about Huck's mother's obscured identity. It is so because Twain has cleverly erased her from the center-stage of the novel. However, according to Mary Allen Good, Twain had "the
theory that the male of the species was rough and crude, and needed the softening and refining influence of a woman, or, if necessary, many women. The primary function of the woman was thus reformation of man" (qtd. in Walker 488). Huck Finn has not been commonly considered a novel about woman in nineteenth-century American society. That is so because "Men occupy center stage in Huck Finn: women stand toward the back and sides of the novel, nagging, providing inspiration, often weeping or hysterical." (Walker 486) [emphasis added]. Now this makes clear that women are assigned subordinate/ minor and indirect roles in the novel. It is even more difficult to trace Mum Finn's (Huck's mother, hereafter, called as such) role as she virtually gets no attention either from Twain or critics. She almost does not exist at all. But once we examine the cultural practices then and now, the picture will change.

Twain has presented very few black female characters in Huck Finn. Those who are represented in the text are given very stereotypical roles. We encounter them at the Grangerfords', the Phelps farm and Miss Watson's. Actually, their presence in the story is not at all felt. They do not have any significant roles to play except to "stand toward the back and sides of the novel." Mum Finn, too, has the same fate or even worse. But she is lurking at the heart of the story though erased from it. She is not physically present in the story as it must have been difficult for Twain to allow her to be physically present because she must have been a woman of color - a slave woman. Huck's mother as a slave woman does not have any role to play because as Toni Morrison observes that "slave women are not mothers, they are "naturally dead," with no obligations to their offspring [...]" (21), she is not treated as a mother; she is a farm hand or a house maid. She is not like other white women who have the responsibility to rear their own children, for which a slave woman may
also be responsible, though not for her own. However, Twain has other characters represent as Huck’s mother in the novel. They are not only women but also a man. Among the women, Mrs Judith Loftus, Widow Douglas (partly) and Aunt Sally give Huck motherly care. Judith Loftus teaches Huck how he should act if he really wants to disguise as a girl. Moreover, she offered him help as she said, "[...] If you get into trouble you send word to Mrs Judith Loftus, which is me, and I’ll do what I can to get you out of it" (57; ch. 11). It is like a mother giving her word to the child. Widow Douglas also appears to be a motherly figure; Huck does not have any grudges against her, he has grown a soft corner for her. Huck says, "The widow she cried over me, and called me a poor lost lamb. And she called me a lot of other names, too, but she never meant no harm by it." (3; ch. 1). The only trouble was that she was going to "sivilize" him. Aunt Sally appears in the Phelps episode. She treats him very kindly and looks after him well. She mistakes him for Tom Sawyer, which Huck allows her so as to make his mission a sure success. Though Huck finds a way out when Tom Sawyer himself arrives on the scene, he realized that he has been caught in an awkward situation after Aunt Polly’s arrival. She tells the truth about Huck. However, Aunt Sally tells him "Oh, go on and call me Aunt Sally, I’m used to it, now, and ‘tain’t no need to change" (259, ch. 42). She wants to adopt and "sivilize" him.

The relationship between Huck and Jim is more intriguing than any others. Almost from the beginning these two characters are together and risk their lives for the sake of the other. There is no doubt that Jim is a male slave. He is the most positive figure in the novel. He never protests or loses patience even when he is "resking" his life. He is mostly passive and silent. That is why Guerin notes that "Jim’s tenderness is the book’s most feminine quality. And with the exception of Jim, it is almost entirely absent in the men Huck encounters" (226). Huck always feels home
whenever he is with Jim. That is so because Huck finds a nurturing motherly figure in Jim, he finds his lost mamma in Jim. His mamma was a slave woman unable to rear her child. It is Jim who fulfills his need of mother. Guerin further observes, re-interpreting Paulette Wasserstein, that "Jim enacts a mother's role, a moral touchstone" (226). It is through Jim that Huck learns how to survive which was first taught by his mother feeding him on her breast. Moreover, as Guerin points out, the concept that "femininity is a role is important to Huck's learning about role-playing by people in society in general, and it points toward the arbitrariness of the role assigned to blacks in the south" (227). Jim takes the traditional role of a mother: making fires, washing pots, showing hospitality to guests, etc. As Huck mostly acts on his instincts, instinctively he must have found his mother – that slave woman – in slave Jim; same race and similar traits.

Walker argues that "The virtues that Huck begins to develop - honesty, compassion, sense of duty - areidentified in the novel as female virtues " (488). Huck learns these "virtues" mostly from Jim. He teaches these to him "by example rather than precept" (441). So Jim's position here is that of a female as "sexual identity is not necessarily correlated with sex. In other words, that biological sex does not directly or even at all generate the characteristics conventionally associated with it. Culture, Society, history define the gender, not nature" (Myra Jehlen 506). As female is a gender role given by society, Jim embraces it and turns out to be a female (mother) figure.

In the same vein the novel could be viewed as Huck's quest for "contact with the feminine through its challenges to gender identities as well as race " (Guerin 226). We can observe that whenever Huck encounters the male characters, except Jim, he always has to struggle for survival whether it is Pap Finn or the King and the
Dauphin or even Tom Sawyer. So it is "rather [. . ] a flight from masculine authority to seek out alternatives " (Guerin 226) He finds the "alternatives" either in Jim or "the archetypal mother"- the River. Huck can enjoy his real freedom from the white oppressive culture, which always treated him cruelly, in the big Mississippi River and with Jim. The river is a part of nature – the wilderness. Therefore, it is natural for the Africans / African Americans (both Jim and Huck) to feel more comfortable in the river as Europeans/Euro-Americans think, according to Hegel, "The Negro [including African American] represents the Natural Man in all his wildness and indocility" (qtd. in Snead 63). These two characters can't stand "sivilization" as defined by the western culture. They can be happy only in Nature- the places uncultivated by Euro-Americans. Because of this, Huck "got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can't stand it" (262) [emphasis added]. There is little influence of the white in the Territory and it can be a better place for Huck until they come to cultivate it.

When Huck tells lies about his family, he always tells about a dead or sick mother and a threatened sister or female family friend throughout the story. His mother hovers at the margins of the story (because she is not white), and because of this, she has been obscured or ignored by critics. Actually, her identity is one of the central things to the understanding of the novel.

It would be more revealing to see how even the established black female writers were treated in the 1950s, unlike the male black writers. Gwendolyn Brooks was a Pulitzer-prize winner. She had been treated very differently and with biasedness by the reviewers and critics. When they could place Ralph Ellison in the tradition, who was relatively unknown then they described Brooks's novel Maud Martha "stood alone" – no history. Mary Helen Washington observes that "Not one of
these reviewers could place Maud Martha in the tradition of Zora Neale Hurston's Their Eyes were Watching God (1937), Dorothy West's The Living is Easy (1948), or Nella Larsen's Quicksand (1928) (258). Like Martha, the character, Mum Finn had been silenced. Now one can see why Twain silenced her: she has no history, so she cannot be placed in the tradition. In short, she does not exist. She suffers the double-marginality of the black females. However, Huck's mother through her mighty power of silence and evasion, controls the story, of which Twain may or may not have been aware. Here, what John Wideman writes in "The Black Writer and the Magic of the Word" seems quite relevant:

Afro-Americans must communicate in a written language in varying degrees is foreign to our oral traditions. You learn the language of power, learn it well enough to read and write but its forms and logic cut you off, separate you from the primal authenticity of your experience, experience whose meaning resides in the first language you speak, the language not only of words but gestures, movements, rules of silence and expressive possibilities of facial and tactile understanding a language of immediate, sexual, intimate reciprocity, of communal and self-definition. (qtd. in Lauter 25) [emphasis added].

Mum Finn did not learn to "read or write" so that she could not be separated from the primal authenticity" of her experiences. Above all, she follows the "rules of silence". This status of Mum Finn helps explain the relationship between Pap Finn and Huck Finn.

Now one may wonder whether Huck Finn was Pap Finn's illegitimate son. Miscegenation/inter-racial marriage was not a common phenomenon in Twain's time or during the 1830s-40s or 1870s-80s; it was also stigmatized in the white society. Pap Finn was socially and economically on the bottom rung of the hierarchy. He
must have secretly married Huck's mother. When it had been known to the other white folks, he must have been looked down on, and as a result, he took to alcohol for a kind of relief. It was because of her and Huck Finn, Pap Finn was disgraced in the society. Furthermore, even Pap Finn's identity as a white man is questionable as Huck describes him in chapter 5: "There wasn't no color in his face, where is face showed; it was white; not like another man's white, but a white to make a body sick, a white to make a body's flesh crawl—a tree-toad white, a fish-belly white" (19) [emphasis added]. He was not like other white men regarding his appearance, perhaps brown.

Pap Finn always tormented Huck Finn; he thrashed him whenever he was angry. One wonders why a father should treat his child in such cold blood. Perhaps, he cannot have a child who has brought so much disgrace to his whole life; he wants to get rid of Huck. Because of this he takes him to a lonely log cabin near the river, where he locks him up. Like the slaves during that time of history, he has been kept in it. He wants to murder his child. However, it does not happen literally; it is, however, rumored that Pap Finn killed his son. In order to make it true, Twain makes Huck die a symbolic death. Everybody in the town believed that Pap Finn killed his son. Then he commits suicide or is killed. All these things help us see Huck as a Mulatto rather than a purely white American. His skin color may be closer to Euro-Americans, which is a boon to him.

With the power of silence, Huck's mother finds her way through the agency of other characters in the novel. That is why Huck feels more comfortable with them. Now it boils down to the fact that Huck was born of a slave woman and lost her physically throughout his life. He found her in some white women partly but most of all he found her in Jim. This shows that Huck was a Mulatto - an African American.
His character as an African American is portrayed better when seen through the lenses of slave culture in the next section.

4.4 Huck, slave and Silence

Twain wrote *Huck Finn* between the late 1870s and the early 1880s. However, he writes that the scene is of forty or fifty years back— the time when cotton culture was booming in the south. As a result, more and more farmhands were required to produce more cotton. Leon L. Bram, et al state that

The invention of the steam-engine and the spinning jenny and especially the perfection of the cotton gin increased the capacities of textile plants in Great Britain and the northeastern U.S. This led to the growth of the plantation system for the production of cotton in the South, with a consequent increase in the number of slaves. *(Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopedia, Vol.17, 206)*

Because the slaves were employed to work in the cotton plantation, they did not need any formal education. Therefore, in the south "after 1831 the education of Negroes was declared unlawful" (206 ). The Southerners feared that education would make the slaves aware of their situation and rebel against them. So we find that the slaves (or ex-slaves) who educated themselves had to do secretly or had to be lucky enough to have a kind master. Huck, too, had a kind mistress-Widow Douglas—because of whom he was literate. However, Jim was not fortunate enough as Miss Watson was strict and unkind to Jim, and she "alwuz pecked" on him; nobody could expect her to provide opportunities of education to Jim.

Another important hotly debated issue in the antebellum South then was the abolition of slavery, of which Twain is well aware. But the Southerners had always argued that slavery was necessary to the plantation economy. After 1830, "some
southern leaders began arguing that blacks were inferior to whites, and therefore, fit for their roles as slaves. Even many southern whites who owned no slaves took comfort in the belief that they were superior to blacks " (181) . This kind of attitude in practice can be seen in chapter 42 when the white people want to hang Jim. Huck comments that " the people that’s always the most anxious for to hang a nigger that hain’t done just right, is always the very ones that ain’t the most anxious to pay for him when they’ve got their satisfaction out of him" (254-5) . They did’nt treat the blacks as human beings. This is obvious in the Phelps episode when Aunt Sally asks Huck: "[...] Anybody hurt? " Huck replies, " No’m. Killed a nigger" Then Aunt sally remarks, "Well, It’s lucky because sometimes people do get hurt" (199, ch. 32) . So "niggers" are not "people"; they are not human beings. It does not matter if a "nigger" is a killed. At the same time, Huck’s awareness about the Abolition movement can not be ignored when he says," People would call me a low down Ablicationist and despise me for keeping mum-but that don’t make no difference. I ain’t a going to tell and I ain’t a- going back there anyways" (40; ch. 8) . As Huck’s voice is that of African American, it does not matter even if the white call him Abolitionist; after all, he is not going back to western " sivilization"/ slavery. If we examine Huck’s relationship with the slaves and the whites in the novel, Huck as an African American can be better revealed.

Jim as a slave didn’t have any western formal education-though he taught himself African American culture. Other African Americans do not seem to be significant in the novel except Jack who was to look after Huck at the Grangerfords’. Huck receives his cultural training mainly through these two characters: Jim and Jack. Both of them teach him how to survive in the Anglo-American oppressive culture. Basically, Jim teaches Huck survival through silence or passivity,
compassion and African American cultural beliefs. Similarly, Jack teaches Huck the
lessons of signifyin(g) as "part of our adolescent education" (Gates 286). (This shall
be dealt in a separate section later.) Actually he does not learn anything significantly
positive from the white people in the novel. All of them that Huck comes across
during the journey down the river are frauds, thieves, robbers, cutthroats, hypocrites,
etc. All he learns from them is that white Americans mocked at Jacksonian
democracy (the "common man") and what America was founded for: individual
freedom. Everywhere he found himself and his company entangled in such socio-
cultural situations.

From the beginning Jim is good to Huck and continues to be an affectionate
parental figure—till the end. Jim consciously or unconsciously takes the full
responsibility to train Huck on African/African American culture for life. He begins
with slave superstitious tales and beliefs. He introduces Huck to witchrides in dream
(ch.2). According to Fishkin, it is commonly found in African American folk tales (63).
She notes that the whites exploited the black belief of "night-riders in order to
control the slaves". She claims that there is "a direct line from these early efforts to
intimidate the slaves to the terrifying night rides of Ku Klux Klan" (84). It is necessary
for Huck as well to be aware of it if he wants to survive.

There are other beliefs as well which Huck learns from Jim In chapter 9, Huck
says: "And besides, he said them little birds had said it was going to rain [...]" and
further down he says, "Pretty soon it darkened up and begun to thunder and lighten;
so the birds was right about it" (45). In the course of time he teaches Huck more
African American cultural beliefs-like:

And Jim said you mustn't count the things you are going to cook for dinner,
because that would bring bad luck. The same if you shook the table-cloth after
sundown. And he said if a man owned a bee-hive, and that man died, the bees must be told about it before sun-up next morning, or else the bees would all weaken down and quit work and die" (42).

Huck gradually experiences life, especially hardships in life. He also tests the beliefs taught by Jim and finds them true. As a white male, he would not have listened to him but would have protested. Due to his African American heart, he accepted them as part of his cultural training.

While still on Jackson's Island Huck learns from Judith Loftus that some white men are coming to hunt for Jim, the fugitive slave. He rushes back to the island and wakes up Jim: "Git up and hump yourself, Jim! There ain't a minute to lose. They are after us" (58; ch.11). Huck is already "dead." Therefore, he need not be afraid of anybody and does not have to run away. Then, one may wonder why he says "They are after us." He is also like Jim, the fugitive slave, running away for freedom from white authority. He did not say, "They are after you" because there is no real difference between him and Jim, except for his skin color which he uses as camouflage while journeying down the Mississippi. The skin color does not matter, it is the heart. Every time they are in trouble - the encounters with the slave hunters - Huck works as camouflage to Jim. If he did not have African American heart, he could sell Jim down the river and be rich (earning $2001) as other white folks were desperately trying.

Toni Morrison claims that the blacks contributed a lot to the shaping of the character of novels and the author's creative imagination. Reflecting on **Huck Finn**, she remarks that" It becomes a more beautifully complicated work that sheds much light on some of the problems it had accumulated through traditional readings too shy to linger over the implications of the Africanist presence at its center" (54). Both
Huck and Jim are, of course, the heart of the novel. She further writes that on Huck
[...] Mark Twain inscribes a critique of slavery and the pretensions of the
would be middle-class, a resistance to the loss of Eden and the difficulty of
becoming a social individual. The agency, however, for Huck’s struggle is the
nigger Jim. And it is absolutely necessary [...] that the term nigger be
inextricable from Huck’s deliberations about who and what himself is”. (55)
She concludes that ”[...] there is no way, given the confines of the novel, for Huck to
mature into a moral human being in America without Jim” (56). So slaves are an
inherent part of Huck’s disposition.

According to Emile Hassan, a Hollywood actor and an African American, it is
African (esp. west African) culture once you give your word you must keep it,
otherwise, it will bring ill-luck (personal communication). Huck knows it very well and
in spite of occasionally conflicting ideas in his mind he keeps his word. In chapter 8,
Huck wants to know how Jim came to be on Jackson’s Island. Jim says:

"Maybe I better not tell."

"Why, Jim?"

"Well dey’s reasons. But you wouldn’t tell on me ef I’uz to tell you, would you,
Huck?"

"Blamed if I would, Jim."

"Well, I believe you, Huck. I-I run off."

"Jim!"

"But mind, you said you wouldn’t tell you know you said you wouldn’t tell,
Huck."

"Well, I did. I said I wouldn’t and I’ll stick to it. Honest Injun I will [...]". (40)
One may wonder why a white boy should "stick" to what he said. Any white southerner would "tell on" Jim and earn money, and so why not Huck. It is not Huck's culture to sell human beings as commodity. Moreover, he can not betray Jim once he gives his word. Jim knows it well: "Dah you goes, de ole true Huck, de on'e white genlman dat ever kep, his promise to ole Jim " (63). If Huck has to betray anyone, it is the white people whom he does rather than Jim. He has done so many times in the story. For example, in chapter 16, while sailing down the river, Huck encounters two slave-hunters on a skiff, who ask him " .... is your man white or black? " Huck betrays them : "He's white" (83). He never tells lies or betrays Jim or other African American characters in the novel. If he tells lies or tricks them ever he terribly repents " by and by". For example, Huck lies to Jim that he was on the raft when they were actually separated in the fog. Jim rebukes Huck: ".... En when I wake up and fine you back again; all safe en soun; de tears come en I could a got down on my knees en kiss 'yo' foot I's so thankful En all you wuz thinking about wuz how you could make a fool uv ole Jim wid a lie [..."](77) Then Huck reflects ,"

But that was enough . It made me feel so mean I could almost kissed his foot to get him to take it back.... I don't do him no more mean tricks, and I wouldn't done that one if I'd a knowed it would make him feel that way "(80). Further in chapter 40, Huck says," I knowed he was white inside "(247). Huck knows Jim very well. It is just the opposite to what the other white think about him.

Bram et al note that "Running away was so common and so costly that it gave rise to an entirely new occupation , slave hunting " (207). This is what exactly happens in Huck Finn also , both are running away from Euro-American "sivilization". If Huck were a Euro-American, he would not have to flee with a fugitive slave. Twain also presents Huck as a kind of commodity like Jim : Pap Finn, like a slave hunter ,
captures Huck Finn and keeps him in an "old log cabin" (that's where slaves are allowed to live). By capturing Huck, he could claim six thousand dollars which is not a joke. That is why he locks Huck up though the latter escapes with his own tricks like Jim.

Another fascinating side of Huck's character is the way he behaves with the white people. When he is with Pap Finn, he says only those things that he is asked. He never tries to protest or rebel against him at the surface level. He is so submissive. He just accepts it when Pap Finn taunts him or tries to murder him. He finds subtle ways through silence to subvert him like the make-believe murder of himself in the log cabin. If he had tried to defy what his father did to him or told him, he would not have been successful. It is the way of slave culture. The slaves are expected never to question their masters or what they have been asked to do. They must be obedient and quietly do what they have been asked to do. Huck reflects on the same thing when he and Jim encounter the king and the Dauphin (frauds):

"It didn't take long to make up my mind that these liars warn't no kings or dukes, at all, but just low-down humbugs and frauds. But I never said nothing, never let on; kept it to myself; it's the best way; then you don't have no quarrels, and don't get into no trouble. If they wanted us to call them kings and dukes, I hadn't no objections, 'long as it would keep peace in the family [...] the best way to get along with his [Pap's] kind of people is to let them have their own way."

(115)

Huck and Jim just obey what they have been told to. They do not ask any questions to them. The only thing they try to do is run away from them. Huck does the same at the Grangerfords'. He is only a silent observer. He does not try to manipulate the other people as his "comrade" Tom Sawyer does. Then, when Huck goes to the Phelps Plantation in search of Jim, he is found passive. He lets others
(white people) act on him. It is even more obvious when Tom Sawyer re-appears in this episode. Huck is totally silent and passive. It happens the way it does because Tom carries the Euro-American values like treating a freed slave like a plaything or dehumanizing the people of color. As Aunt Polly reveals that Jim had been freed by Miss Watson, Huck now knows why "Tom sawyer had gone and took all that trouble and bother to set a free nigger free, with his bringing-up" (260). Certainly it was not possible for people like Tom to set a slave free which is possible for people like Huck.

At the same time we can draw some connection between the slave narratives and Twain's characterization of Huck, especially as Twain was very much familiar with the genre of slave narratives. Lucinda MacKethan offers a fascinating analysis of parallels between slave narratives by Pennington, Brown, and Douglas and chapter 17 of the novel:

When Huck crawls up the bank on the Kentucky side of the river, he is set upon by dogs and threatened by guns before he is taken into the Grangerford house, much in the way that Pennington was attacked when he was caught in Maryland... The generosity with which the Grangerfords welcome Huck is reminiscent of Pennington's description of his arrival at a Quaker Pennsylvanian's home, where wet, cold, and hungry, he heard the magical words, "Come in and take thy breakfast, and get warm." Once the Grangerfords adopt Huck, he becomes an observer of this southern slaveholding family in much the same position as Brown was as he observed life in Dr. Young's household. And finally, when Huck tricks Buck Grangerford into helping him to remember the alias he invented when he arrived, he employs a strategy that duplicates one that Frederick Douglass devised. (qtd. in Fishkin 200)
Maybe because of all these things, Ralph Ellison and his brother identify with Huck instead of Jim. "After all, they are not identifying "against" their race: rather they are choosing which of two black voices in the book they find more appealing." (Fishkin, 107). This can be seen in the novel itself as well. Whenever Huck is with Jim, both of them speak more freely and feel more comfortable. Both are active, too. There is no barrier between them—class or color. In spite of his skin color, Huck's voices and his silence reveal him being closer to Jim or African Americans rather than Tom Sawyer or any other Euro-Americans. This is further explored when Huck is seen as an African American trickster figure in the next section.

4.5 Huck, Twain and Tricksterism

There is only one world, and that world is false, cruel, contradictory, misleading, senseless [...] We need lies to vanquish this reality, this 'truth', we need lies in order to live [...] that lying is a necessity of life is itself a part of the terrifying and problematic character of existence.

- Nietzsche, The Will to Power.

Trickster tales are perhaps, common to all the cultures in the world and this means they are universal. Again the tales from one culture may be similar to the one from another culture. For example, we may find similarities between the African/African American trickster tales and those found in Nepali culture like the story of the lion and the rabbit. However, trickster figures are particularly regarded notable in African American and American Indian cultures. As Mark Twain lived in the Southern slave-holding society, this study especially focuses on his use of his knowledge of African American trickster figures in shaping Huck's character.
Huckleberry Finn is full of lies, evasions, impersonation, false leads, and unexpected reversals. These things show that Twain was very much familiar with the culture of trickster tradition. It is not only Huck, who acts as trickster, but Twain also does. 'Mark Twain' the 'author' gives us this warning before the story begins:

Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted;

persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.

BY ORDER OF THE AUTHOR

Per G.G. CHIEF OF ORDNANCE

Many critics dismiss Twain's warning saying that it is just another dash of Twain's humor, but in fact it seems shrewdly prophetic in the way that it indicates the issues around which the controversies would arise. Emory Elliott rightly observes that

The protest in the 'Notice' is like Brer Rabbit's pleas that he not be tossed in the briar patch [which is actually a safe place for him] for it draws the critics' attention to exactly those areas which Clemens wanted them to examine most thoughtfully; his reasons for writing the book; the actions of the characters and their consequences; and the application of the narrative to important issues in our own lives and times. (viii)

The three simple terms, which Twain has used, are shorthand for those modes of inquiry that literary critics often employ for organizing literary analysis: literary biography (motive), literary technique (plot, or the narrative method); and meaning and interpretation (moral). Samuel Langhorne Clemens inserted the trickster role to the 'author' 'Mark Twain' which in the terminology of [steamboat] piloting means to take note that the river is now 'two fathoms deep' (Elliott ix). He took a safe passage
in case of any possible trouble. Twain acted as a trickster figure. He lied to the people simply because he wanted to tell the truth indirectly.

It is Huck who mainly acts as a trickster in the novel. He is the narrator, too. Twain had him tell the trickster narrative rather than simply a tale as it "is a story, told orally, which includes at least one well-formed Kernel Tale together with other optional materials" (Edwards 95). In the novel there are sub-plots that are not structurally relevant to the narrative. For example, the actions in the 'Grangerfords' episode don't contribute to the structure of the narrative. It points to the facts that Twain has presented a trickster narrative with a difference or revision. Instead of getting the narrative told in the third person point of view, he got a vernacular narrator (Huck) to tell the story. Though Mark Twain gets Huck to tell lies, "the lying trickster [...] actually allows for a point of view that may just tell the truth" (Guerin 287). Huck tells us the truth of American democracy after Emancipation experienced by the black population. Guerin further points out that "As a non-white voice from "outside" middle-class culture in the nineteenth century, the trickster helps construct Huck's honest, uncorrupted point of view" (Guerin, 387). Huck, though a white boy, carries the voice of a colored culture that helps him tell us the truth in the subtle ways.

Usually the African trickster tales mention the shortage of material necessities in the life of the trickster hero and his (her) community. (S)he tries to obtain those things even through breaking social ties by deceiving or cheating, which isn't perhaps acceptable in white culture whereas it is accepted and even respected in African/African American societies as John W. Roberts observes that "material shortage was [is] an aspect of the natural order and that behaviors which involved [involve] trickery were [are] appropriate under such conditions" [105]. This may not
be directly applicable to the African Americans as they produced abundant amount of food, but it was the slave master who controlled it; it was artificial. Certainly there was lack of individual freedom and humanity, which was caused by the slave master. Therefore, the slaves always identified themselves with the trickster hero through whom they could see their silent rebellion being expressed. H. Nigel Thomas has rightly observed that the "white man is unethical [and] the black man is victim; [and] the black man must deal with such unethical behavior as he is able... Thus to be black in America and survive necessitates being a trickster" (qtd. in Fishkin 65).

As Huck, too, has the traits of trickster hero, Jim never wants to part with him and always calls him "Huck, honey". Jim can see his freedom in Huck. Jim knows that even if Huck sometimes tortures him, it is momentary and at the surface level. He "infused the trickster's [Huck's] actions with a kind of morally integrated not readily apparent on the surface" (Roberts 107). At the surface level, Huck doesn't seem to be a morally integrated person, because of which there is a lot of controversy over his morality. However, once looked into the deep level, he turns out to be morally an integrated person. Confirming it as a cultural perspective, Roberts points out that "In a social and natural environment in which individuals must struggle for their physical survival, harmony, friendship and trust become ideals difficult to sustain, while deception, greed and cleverness emerge as valuable behavioral traits "(104). One can see the same happening to Huck in *Huck Finn*. Huck's friendship with Mrs. Loftus or Buck Grangerford is momentary; and it remains so until he achieves what he needs or wants. His friendship isn't long-lasting and it is his deception or cleverness that counts here. However clever Mrs. Loftus might be, Huck completed his mission of achieving the information from her about the slave-hunters. She was duped. Huck's friendship with Buck, too, was short-lived not because he was shot
dead but because it was time for him to see Jim. Furthermore, he knew that there
would be trouble if he stayed on.

Regarding the traits of African American trickster figure, Ronal Sundstrom
writes that in its many incarnations it
is an ironic figure. (S)he is the embodiment of elusiveness, ambiguity, and
liminality. As such, the trickster is holy and a comic figure continuously in
trouble as (s)he pushes the boundaries of morality, custom, and nature. As a
liminal being and the embodiment of liminality the trickster as both a literary
trope and a mythic being resists simplification, clarity, unity and logical
ordering. The trickster is a complex figure that breeds complexity, and revels
in the complexity of life- it resists, as Robert Pelton argues, 'the univocal
mind'; 'that great enemy of the muddiness of human life' (http://
/www.usc.edu/dept/comp-lit/tympanum/4/sunstrom.htm) [emphasis added].

One can observe these traits in Huck Finn as well. He is skillful at escaping from the
oppressive society or any kind of trouble he is caught in. Oftentimes his identity is
ambiguous. Even at the beginning of the novel, there is an ambiguous tone reflecting
his ambiguous identity. In the first paragraph he speaks as though he is writing Huck
Finn and later on (towards the end) he complains of how hard it is to do it. But he
confesses that his existence arises from another book by a Mark Twain, who
'mainly' told the truth (but also lied) about events which he, Huck, knows
factually. We have several layers of narrative reality here with the problem of
what 'truth' might be in such an environment. (Guerin 290)

His voice is ambiguous. At the same time he is constantly in trouble as he travels
down the Mississippi because he pushes the boundaries of the dominant culture
and tradition. Huck is such a complex figure that he defies any of his being
simplified, because of which there is so much dispute over his character and so
many interpretations are possible.
Whether African or African American trickster tales the trickster hero always dupes the stronger and larger animals like a "Lion, Elephant and Hyena [...]" (Feldmann as qtd. in Roberts 103). It is the same with Huck as Mrs. Loftus and Buck or the slave-hunters are all more powerful than him. However, he is able to trick them. Mrs. Judith Loftus is deceptively congenial but dangerous as well because her husband is out hunting for Jim with a band of slave-catchers. Huck has nothing but his wits. However, he "turns her efforts to expose him as a fraud into a joke on her; convinced she has found him out she persists in believing he's a runaway 'prentice'" (Fishkin 66). She does not know that Huck came to acquire the information. In the same way a night after staying with the Grangerfords, Huck forgot his name. As a result, the only option was to dupe Buck into spelling his (Huck's) name. On the surface level though Huck was testing Buck's spelling talent, he was actually getting Buck to tell him his own name which he had forgotten (that was George Jackson). It was not possible by asking him directly. Huck's action in both the cases "represented the most advantageous way of securing individual interest without disrupting the social order" (Roberts 106). His relationship with both of these characters and their attitudes toward him remained the same. Similarly, Feldmann observes that "On the whole, he [African trickster] shows a singular indifference to sex in favor of food or the sheer enjoyment of making a dupe of others" (qtd. in Roberts 103). Huck, too, shows "a singular indifference to sex" as we can see in the Wilkses sisters episode. In this episode, Huck's concern is how to dupe the king and the Dauphin rather than flirt with Mary or the Hare-lip. He enjoys tricking the frauds.

Twain inserts the trickster role to Huck's character on other occasions, too. This actually starts from the time Huck says, "They're after us!" (ch.11) as he has "to
save himself and Jim from detection and betrayal" (Fishkin 66). In chapter 16 when Huck encounters the two slave-hunters (white men) searching for five runaway 'niggers', they ask him: "Is your man white or black? "(83). They want to see for themselves, which Huck brilliantly pretends to allow them so eagerly. He is desperate that he is almost found out. However, he concocts a plan to tell a lie that it is his father on board the raft, who has smallpox. As the slave-hunters become suspicious of his entreaties, they believe that his father really has smallpox and decide to get away in spite of Huck's "desperate" situation. Therefore, Mr. Parker (one of the slave-hunters) apologetically said: "I reckon your father's poor, and I'm bound to say he's in pretty hard luck. Here-I'll put a twenty dollar gold piece on this board, and you get it when it floats by. I feel might mean to leave you, but my kingdoms! It won't do to fool with small-pox, don't you see?" (84).

The other man too offers him twenty dollars and apologizes for being unable to help. Further down, Mr. Parker again says, "[...] If you see any runaway niggers, you get help and nab them, and you can make some money by it", and Huck replies, "[...] I won't let no runaway niggers get by me if I can help it" (85). No, sir; he will let all the runaway 'niggers' get away if he can as he is doing so while promising them. Huck is playing a dangerous game by walking on very thin ice. Perhaps, it is the most brilliant trick he ever played on the white people to save Jim. Of course, Huck says the felt bad and did the wrong thing after his trick, but it was merely the trick of the trickster author 'Mark Twain' It is a lie that tells the truth like a child who says that her father is not hiding under the bed when asked by a money lender as he is actually hiding. William Andrews even compares Huck's smallpox lie with the fugitive slave W.C Pennington's, who also used it to deceive some slave catchers (Fishkin 179).
Another important occasion when Huck uses his trickster skill is at the time he encounters a white boy. Huck exploits the popular racist stereotypes at the same time undermining them. He asked the boy if he had seen a strange nigger and gave the description of his dress. The following conversation is noteworthy:

"Yes"

"Whereabouts?" Says I,

"Down to Silas Phelps's place, two miles below here. He's a runaway nigger, and they've got him. Was you looking for him?

"You bet I ain't! I run across him in the woods about an hour or two ago, and he said if I hollered he'd cut my livers out and told me to lay down and stay where I was; and I done it. Been there ever since; afeard to come out" (190)

Here Huck's purpose as a trickster, is to find out the information about Jim and his captor. Huck has been able to avoid arousing suspicion. Even in the Phelps episode Huck tricks the Phelps family into believing him to be Tom. He takes the risk to set Jim free, In each case, his skin color as well has helped him. Huck's role as a trickster figure helps us to explain why he uses the N-word to refer to the African Americans. It is not to humiliate them, but he has used it only to camouflage his trickster role.

Though some critics have argued that Tom and the frauds are all tricksters, they cheat or deceive either for sheer fun or personal profit. Huck tricks for his and Jim's survival; it is not his choice but due to the artificial conditions created by the oppressive hierarchical society/culture. On the whole, Huck is an incarnation of the African American Trickster and 'Mark Twain', too, remains the same to us. Like African American trickster myths both Huck and Twain teach us that each human is "an imaginer of life," And like those myths, by breaking boundaries and fusing
contradictions, Huck and Twain provide for hope and open up possibilities where we
dared not imagined they would be. Beneath the surface, the novel dramatizes both
the dream and the denial of the dream, both the spectacular boldness of the promise
of liberty and justice for all, and America's spectacular failure to make that promise a
reality.

4.6 Huck, Twain and the Signifying Monkey

Signification is the Nigger's occupation.

- Traditional

The Signifying Monkey is a major trope of black discourse. It is a theory of
Afro-American criticism, developed by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. The theory has been
derived from the signifying Monkey tales which seem to have had their origins in
slavery. It was a common speech technique among the slaves to avoid any kind of
trouble from the slave master while subverting the dominant culture. The Afro-
American rhetorical strategy of Signifying(g) is a rhetorical practice that is not
engaged in the game of information-giving. It rather requires one to see the indirect
or latent meaning of the text. Therefore, Gates argues that

Signifying(g) epitomizes all of the theoretical play in the black vernacular, [...] the Signifying Monkey is the figure of a black rhetoric in the Afro-American
speech community. [...] He is the principle of self-consciousness in the black vernacular, the-meta-figure itself. Given the plays of double at work in the
black appropriation of the English-language terms that denotes relations of
meaning, the Signifying Monkey and his language of Signifying(g) are extra-
ordinary conventions, with Signification standing as the term for black rhetoric,
the obscuring of apparent meaning. (53)

This points to the fact that a black discourse should not be read searching for the surface meaning as
given by a dictionary. It defies the literal meaning of a given text. As Mark Twain was familiar with the black vernacular tradition - the Signifying Monkey, Mark Twain and his protagonist, Huck Finn, have exploited this trope in the text.

Mark Twain warns the reader with his 'Notice' just before he begins his narrative. This warning has been interpreted in many ways since its first publication. One may wonder why on earth should a novelist warn his readers. What he is doing here is, however, performing the act of Signifying that consists of a "double-voice". Mark Twain is testing his skill of Signification, as Fishkin notes that he learned from African Americans- "the power of satire-satire in African American vein, the indirect, double-voiced variety of satire known as 'Signifying'" ("Mark Twain"). Twain's warning is 'double-voiced'. Those readers who take it as dictionary meaning, which operates on the syntagmatic axis, never think of its deeper meaning. As a result of this, they take at his word and read the novel as a "boy's book" or a sequel to Tom Sawyer. His warning helps him avoid any accusations of subversive intentions in Huck Finn. Here what William D. Pierson has to say about African satire seems quite relevant: "African satire seemed especially to enjoy lampooning Europeans with whom they had dealings. Through the satire of derisive songs African societies discouraged unpleasant and dangerous face to face confrontation" (qtd. in Fishkin 64). Mark Twain's purpose was, too, to prevent himself from any unpleasant face-to-face confrontation. However, the novel turns out to be "the corrosive satire of the white society" (Finkin 63). Twain lampoons the white supremacy and their dehumanising the African Americans. For example, Twain allows Pap Finn to rail against the "Gov'ment" that permits a black college professor to have a voting right to his own. Similarly, when Huck tells Aunt Sally that he had a boat accident, she says, "Good gracious! Anybody hurt?" Huck replies, "No'm killed a Nigger". Aunt
Sally remarks, "Well, it's lucky, because sometimes people do get hurt" (199; ch. 32) [emphasis added]. In both the cases as Ronald Sundstrom notes that "in the face of the cruel absurdity of this nation's [America's] "racial" politic, sometimes the most subversive act we can do is to laugh" (www.usc.edu/dept/comp-lit/tymppanum/sundstrom.html), Twain is laughing at American "racial" politics and the deep-rooted socio-cultural traditions.

It is now widely accepted that Signifying(g) is a figurative language of which black people have always been master: "saying one thing to mean something quite other has been basic to black survival in oppressive western cultures. Misreading signs could be and indeed often was fatal" (Gates in "Criticism in the Jungle", 6). Many readers have "misread" Huck Finn. Therefore, they criticise both Mark Twain and Huck for producing a "white trash" and being an immoral character respectively. As in the Signifying Monkey tales in which the Monkey signifies on the Lion, Twain has signified on those readers. They have not been able to read the "silent text" beneath the surface text or the Standard English text. There are gaps what the words say on the surface and what they really mean, which is central to the understanding of African American Signifying(g) (Fishkin, 60). Fishkin further points out that Twain himself has pointed out the gaps. It is certainly owing to this fact that every time we read Huck Finn we find something both new and rewarding. This explains as well why the book and its chief protagonist have troubled so many literary critics and scholars across the globe for more than a century. In fact, Twain was trying to train his readers to read between the lines, which some did while others didn't.

The most telling example of Signification used by Twain in Huck Finn can be found in Chapter 18 in which Jack, a slave appointed to look after Huck while staying
with the Grangerfords, wants Huck to see "a whole stack o' water-moccasins." Jack knew that Huck would be curious to see them. Huck asks him to lead him to the place. Huck is a little suspicious about it. Therefore, he wonders, "He oughter know a body don't love water-moccasins enough to go around hunting for them. What is he up to any way?" (102). After walking about a mile, they come to the woods, Jack, however, leaves Huck alone as he tells him he has already seen them and doesn't bother to see them again. To his utter amazement, Huck finds his 'ole Jim' instead of snakes. But Jim wasn't surprised. Later he says, "[...] Dey's mighty good to me, dese niggers is en whatever I want to do fur me, doan' have to ast 'm twice, honey. Dat Jack's good nigger en pooty smart". Then Huck comments, "Yes, he is. He ain't ever told me you was here, told me to come, and he'd show me a lot of water-moccasins. If anything happens he ain't mixed up in it. He can say he never seen us together, an it'll be the truth" (103). We can argue that in such a case Jack was signifying. He critiques the sign that is the word "water-moccasins", whose literal meaning is "black and red banded snakes". He is playing with the word, which is a risky game like playing with real "water moccasins". If he were found out, he would be in great trouble as it was a crime to protect a fugitive slave (Jim). But he was clever-"pooty smart" and never mentioned anything about Jim. He did a slave's job of keeping Huck entertained by taking him for sightseeing. At the same time he is signifyin(g) on the conventional slave discourse similar to what Gates calls "repetition with a signal difference" (The signifying Monkey 51). Jack repeats the discourse (action) but to mean something which is both very different as well as subversive. Here, Huck, too, knows or acquires what Jack is referring to, as Gates observes, citing Mitchell-Kernan, that the speaker and her/his audience must realize that
Signifying is occurring and that the dictionary-syntactical meaning of the utterance is to be ignored. In addition, a silent text, as it were, which corresponds rightly to what Mitchell-Kernan is calling 'shared knowledge' must be brought to bear upon the manifest content of the speech act and 'employed in the re-interpretation of the utterance.

As soon as Jack asks Huck he grows suspicious of what Jack is saying leading him by asking "What is he up to anyway?" This suggests that Huck already knows that he is not going to be led to a "stack o' water-moccasins", but something else. That "something else" was, he realizes, Jim. He has the "shared knowledge" of Signifying(9).

Gates' trope of repetition with a signal difference is applicable to the tradition of novel itself in America. It has been traced that Twain has used his knowledge of South-western humor and tall-tale tradition in his works. It would be interesting to see it in the light of Gates' trope. While Twain's predecessors used South-western humor or tall tales to advocate the interest of the Southern slave-holders, he used it to critique the evils of slavery in the South especially and the US in general including both antebellum and postbellum periods. Though there are a number of critical descriptions of the South-western humor these descriptions seem to agree in defining certain features as characteristic of this genre:

**Characteristics**

- Arose from the tall-tale tradition seen in Davy Crockett
- Characters include the "ring-tailed roarer" or braggart whose mishaps are larger than life and solutions are ingenious, the confidence and the mighty hunter.
- Use of dialect, earthy language and incidents, crude physical humor, cruelty.
- Conflict with nature described in a humorous way so as to control the version of the tale and make the wilderness more manageable.
- Often an element of triumphant trickster, or the trickster who is himself tricked or bested in a trade.
- Use of stock characters
- Almost exclusively a white male literature written for an intended audience of educated men.

The forms
- The sketch
- The anecdote
- The hoax
- Author reports wonders of the western frontier; most hoaxes masquerade as travellers.
- Author hints at fictionalizing role and tries to tip off the readers.

As we read Huck Finn we find almost all of these features, though with an artful revision similar to what Hurston calls "re-interpretation". Twain uses the dialect/vernacular, but the purpose is not to ridicule the principal characters and nature, unlike South-western humor. According to Fishkin, the characters like Sut Lovingood and Simon Suggs, who are thought to have shaped Huck's character, are cruel whereas Huck does not show any. Similarly, there are tricksters like Huck, Jack or Jim (or even the frauds) in Huck Finn too. However, their purposes are not like that of South-western humor. They rather teach us survival skills in the oppressive western world. Twain did not intend his audience to be only educated men, they include children or adult and men or women. And regarding the form, Huck Finn almost sounds like all these forms mentioned above. But it is more than that: "a highly subversive social critique" (Fishkin, "Mark Twain"). In South-western humor,
there is always an aristocratic, composed narrator. The stories are told in the vernacular but related to the reader as seen by the narrator who provides a superior and disconnected vantage point, looking down his nose at the lower classes and often including a didactic lesson at the beginning and/or end of the story. This viewpoint enables the reader to scorn and ridicule these hyperbolic caricatures for sympathy or comparison. This is the ideal position for the upper class to enjoy privilege of their 'not me' instinct... revelling in the condescension of look what I am not "("Southwestern Humor"). Twain has skillfully revised South-western humor to suit his political and socio-cultural purpose. He has a vernacular, working class narrator who is unlettered. It is his point of view, rather than a detached narrator's that the novel follows. When we are reading, we never have distant vantage point and we have full sympathy for him and Jim. Twain has signified on any didactic lesson by warning the readers with his 'Notice.' In short, Huck Finn is a formal revision of this tradition at a most extreme level. This is similar to what Ellison states in a refutation of Irving Howe's critique of his work: "I agree with Howe that protest is an element of all art, though it does not necessarily take the form of speaking for a political or social program. It might appear in a novel as a technical assault against the styles which have gone before" (qtd. in Gates 107). Gates calls it "Formal Signifyin(g)" (9) or formal revision. Twain, too, has assaulted technically against the styles that preceded his.

Twain's decision to turn the entire narration of the novel over to Huck Finn himself was, perhaps, to test the limits of Realism's appetite for 'Otherness' (Elliott xvi-xvii). This means twain has othered Realism like African American discourse or culture which was othered by the white. He refers to the real events or people. However, they are presented in a different way. He has given the full responsibility to
Huck to test this brand of realism. He makes, as Gates notes, allusions, to the texts preceding *Huck Finn* as a part of signifyin(g) (*The Signifying Monkey* 9). It is obvious at the beginning of the novel when he introduces himself as coming from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. He often alludes to the Bible, but not for religious purposes. He talks about Moses and the Bulrushers (ch. 14) or King Solomon’s chopping of the children (ch.14) or old Leviticus (ch.24). He makes allusions to history, too, when he talks about Capet, the name of the French dynasty founded by Hugo Capet (ch 21) or “Boston’s harbor overboard” (ch.23) - "a precursor to the American revolution, the Boston Tea Party (1777) was a protest against England’s tea tax in which the colonials, disguised as American Indians, jettisoned a shipment of English tea into Boston’s harbor” (Elliott 280) or William Fourth, an English King (1765-1837) (ch.26). However, the most striking allusion is the one he makes to Romanticism which had a dreamy influence on the South, and it presents itself as a critique of Romanticism. Huck alludes to the British novelist Sir Walter Scott (1771-1830) in Chapter 14 (p.68), of whose novels “Twain had a low opinion” (Elliott 278). At the surface level, Huck is referring to a boat that is wrecked, but Elliott notes that it is “a sarcastic reference to the British novelist Sir Walter Scott” (278). This is to urge that Huck (And Twain) is Signifyin(g) on his Romantic novels. Similarly, Twain makes another allusion to the Romantic poet Thomas Moore when Aunt Sally talks about a boat called *Lally Rook* that "blowed out a cylinder-head". It refers to Moore’s Romantic epic poem *Lalla Rookh* (1812), and to the actual boat *Lalla Rookh* which was "a sidewheeled steamboat that operated along the Mississippi river from 1838 to 1874" (Elliott 282). In both the cases Twain’s "double-voicedness" is at work. Literally both could refer to the actual boats, but the silent texts beneath them referred to the Romantic novelist and the Romantic poem both wrecked.
In the same way two characters, Huck and Tom, are in sharp contrast to each other. Huck is practical and a realist and Tom is impractical and a Romantic. At the surface level, one may not find this contrast which can be found only if one recognizes the "double-voiced" discourse (as Bakhtin says) of the text. Huck narrates that Tom talked about Don Quixote (Cervantes' hero), who is a Romantic hero (ch.3). Frequently we find Tom comparing himself with such Romantic heroes and his adventures with theirs whether it is to form a band of robbers or to free Jim. The chapters from 33 onwards are devoted to freeing Jim who is already free and Tom has the upper hand almost throughout these chapters. Many critics argue that Twain has failed to piece the story together. But what Twain and Huck are doing here is Signifyin(g) on the promised Emancipation of the US black population and American democracy; they are laughing loudly at the American political and cultural hypocrisies of the time. Huck is Signifyin(g) quietly on Tom; and Twain is similarly subverting American "racial" politics how a freedman is (was) actually treated by the white Americans. Had he written it directly, the book would not have been this much successful and debated so hotly.

Fishkin argues that Twain may have acquired the skill of Signifyin(g) from a slave called Jerry, which may or may not be true. But from the arguments presented above, they certainly point to the fact that Twain armed himself with the African American brand of satire of Signifying(g) which enabled him to laugh at American "racial" politics then and now.

4.7 Huck, Jim and Cultural Conflict

Literary works are believed to represent or reflect the culture of the community that the author belongs to. Mark Twain's works, too, as it is widely accepted now,
reflect the culture of the antebellum as well as post-bellum America. Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is especially notable in this context. However, the book does not portray a univocal culture; there are conflicting cultures, especially the white dominant culture and the black marginalized culture - to use Bakhtin's term - heteroglossic culture. Some characters like Tom Sawyer, Miss Watson or Judith Loftus distinctly represent the longstanding dominant white culture whereas other characters like Jim and Jack voice the black expressive culture. However, one certainly wonders which of the two cultural voices Huck Finn represents in the novel. Similarly, one may ask why Huck endures so much mental conflict in the course of his actions. It is also equally important to probe whether Jim has played any signal role to cause it. An explanation, as Fishkin notes, could be this: "Individual artists may be alienated from the dominant culture even if economically and socially they would seem to be a part of it [...]" (108). Twain, too, must have been alienated from the dominant culture and created a character like Huck. These questions will be addressed in this section.

Although some critics have tried to give psychoanalytic interpretation to Huck's mental conflict, it can be better understood if it is studied from the cultural studies vantage point. Such a perspective suggests that the latent African American cultural voice has caused the conflict. At the beginning, Miss Watson tried to bring him up by teaching him the values of white Christian American culture. He could not stand it, and as a result, he ran away from it. The rest of his life in the novel is spent almost all the time with Jim. It is Jim who taught Huck the true meaning of humanity and he implanted the African American culture in Huck subtly at the same time. This is true when Peaches Henry says, "As the two fugitives ride down the Mississippi deeper and deeper into slave territory, the power of Jim's personality erodes the
prejudices Huck's culture (educational, political, social and legal) has instilled "(370). Huck gradually discovers that Jim, despite the efforts of white society to brutalize him, is a noble human being who deserves his protection, friendship, and respect.

Huck's language, though simple on the surface level, is quite complex. Huck actually speaks two languages: one - the white, and the other - the black. The two languages are battling within him. Referring to the same, Messent writes that one is "the words the dominant culture has given him to use concerning the slave," the "language of the authorities which has helped form him," and the other is "that language which has emerged during and out of the conversation with Jim on the raft - that of equality and friendship, one rooted in pragmatic experience of doing, and acting" (qtd. in Fishkin 161). This can be found on many occasions in the course of his journey with Jim down the Mississippi. For example, Huck and Jim miss Cairo in Chapter 16. Huck says, "That disturbed Jim - and me too." One wonders why Huck is "disturbed" because it makes no difference to him whether he goes to a Slave State or a Free State. Again, when Jim talks about his own freedom, Huck describes it by saying that, "it made him all over trembly and feverish to be so close to freedom". He goes on to say that "it made me all over tremble and feverish, too, to hear him" [emphasis added]. At the same time Huck was disturbed because they missed Cairo - the only outlet to freedom for Jim, and he felt "trembly and feverish [...] to hear" Jim talk about his long awaited freedom. It is certainly due to the two voices Huck speaks. It is further depicted when he says, "[...] who was to blame for it [Jim's freedom]? Why me"(81). His conscience, which Twain calls "deformed conscience," tells him that his morality, according to the dominant culture, rests on the expression of his regrets thus: "But you knewed he was running for freedom, and you could a paddled ashore and told somebody" (82). On the other hand, he feels he shouldn't
do it. The conflict between the two languages is so strong that he "got to feeling so mean and so miserable I most wished I was dead" (82). While Jim was "talking out loud" about his imminent freedom, Huck was talking to himself - he was in a dilemma. He thought, "let up on me- it ain't too late, yet- I'll paddle ashore at the first light, and tell " (82). After he said it, he felt easy and happy as if he got something off his chest. But it is easily said than done. Jim tells Huck when he paddles off: "Jim won't ever forgit you, Huck; you's de bes' fren' ole Jim's got now" (83). While padding off to betray Jim Huck describes what he felt,"[...] all in a sweat to tell on him [...] I went along slow then, and I warn't right down certain whether I was glad I started or whether I warn't" (83) [emphasis added]. Huck's loyalty to African American culture is tested in this chapter. While still in a great dilemma, Huck encounters a skiff with two slave-hunters on board. When they ask him, "Is your man white or black?" Huck does not respond promptly. After struggling hard, he tells a lie: "He's white" (83) [emphasis added]. Later Huck talks about feeling weak and sick when he couldn't give Jim up. But he also interrogates himself, "[...] would you felt better than what you do now?" Then he promptly answers, "No; says I, I'd feel bad - I'd feel just the same way I do now" (85). Now he understands: "it's troublesome to do right and ain't no trouble to do wrong, and the wages is just the same" (85). According to the Euro-centric culture, it is wrong to let Jim go away and it is right to hand him over to a white 'gentleman.' His African American voice wins over. This conforms to what Ronald Sundstrom, citing W.E.B. Du Bois, proclaims,

"Du Bois expresses a desire that the African American would 'merge his double self into a better and truer self.' The self that would emerge, however, would be hybrid and no less complex. As Du Bois remarked, '[I]n this merging he[the African American] wishes neither of the older selves to be lost'. Thus,
the 'two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings,' and 'two warring ideals' would be reconciled and united, but the double consciousness, the critical second sight, would remain" (www.usc.edu/dept/cpmp-lit/lymanum/4/sundstrom.html) [emphasis added].

There is another important occasion when this conflict is manifest. In chapter 31 Huck can not decide promptly whether to inform Tom Sawyer about Jim or not. Huck thought it would be better for him to be with his own family if he had to be a slave again. On the other hand, it would be disgraceful and he would be blamed for Jim's escape. Jim would be treated even more cruelly. He had so much tension, "It made me shiver [...] it was because my heart warn't right, it was because it warn't square, it was because I was playing double. I was letting on to give up sin, but away inside of me I was holding on to the biggest one of all" (192) [emphasis added]. His biggest sin, according to his American (white) self, was to help a slave run away. At last he decided to write a letter to Miss Watson. Soon after it, he "felt as light as a feather [...] and my troubles all gone [...] all glad and excited" (192). After writing the letter, he "felt good and all washed clean of sin for the first time I had ever felt so in my life" (192). But he is still undecided. He sits thinking back to the time when he and Jim traveled down the big river and everything that they did together. Once again his two selves were warring. That is why he "was a trembling, because I'd got to decide" (193). Finally, he decides: "Alright, then, I'll go to hell" (193) [emphasis added] and tears up the letter. This is the climactic moment in the novel as well as in Huck's life. He could have chosen the easier path and lived a happier life but he did not betray his true friend Jim. He decides to take up the wickedness whatever the cost may be because it "was in my line, being brung up to it, and the other warn't " (193) [emphasis added]. From the dominant cultural standpoint, it might seem wicked, but
it is the right thing for him to do. Mark Twain himself echoes the same thing when he described the central and constitutive irony in the novel: "A sound heart and a deformed conscience come into collision and conscience suffers defeat "[emphasis added]. Huck's "deformed conscience" is the internalized voice of public opinion, of a conventional wisdom that found nothing wrong in the institution of slavery and held as mortal sin any attempt to subvert it. Conscience, as Mark Twain remembered from his boyhood in a slave-holding society, "can be trained to approve any wild thing you want it to approve if you begin its education early and stick to it "(both qtd. in Kaplan 354). Huck knows that Tom Sawyer, "with his bringing-up" would never be able to set a slave free. But Huck follows the dictates of his sound heart and commits a sin as well as a crime by helping Jim to run away from his legal owner. His sound heart represents African American culture and his "deformed conscience" points to white culture. Jay Martin, too, expresses similar view about Huck Finn as he observes that "To oppose his father, then, was to identify with the black- to imagine that Uncle Dan'l or Uncle Ned and Jennie were his real parents and that, like Tom and Valet in The Tragedy of Pudd'nhead Wilson, he too was divided; his selves were interchangeable, but his real self was a black child disguised as a white man "(qtd. in Fishkin 162) [emphasis added]. His two selves contradict and eventually, the black self defeats the white self.

According to William Dean Howells, Mark Twain is "the most desouthernized of southerners" (qtd. in Kaplan 356). It must be because of this, Twain created Huck, a white southerner, who acted in such a way - American African American. Due to Huck's "double-play" regarding his cultural voice, Huck has become such a complex figure for more than a hundred and fifteen years. Huck gives us pain as well as makes us laugh at the same time. When the cultural conflict is severe or high, we are
in a writhing pain, and when it is mild or subtle, we laugh almost losing our bones. To conclude it, it is now evident that Huck carries two cultures within him: white American culture and African American culture, both of which contradict with each other though the latter one gains upper hand. Thus, Huck turns out to be an African American figure.

The Life of Samuel Clemens and His Reputation of Huckleberry Finn, 19.

Twain's novels have never exactly been accepted as a rich source of American cultural history of the time and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is perhaps the best of them all. This book has been admired for decades. The novel shows Twain's familiarity with his own native culture (white) and African American culture, but as he lived in the slave-holding families and society in the South both before and after the Civil War, it may not be possible to say exactly what he felt about the two cultures as also suggested by Graff and Poskan who say that Mark Twain 'was a man of paradoxes, [+] he successfully created and managed public persona quite different from his private self' (18-20). By using a pseudonym of "Mark Twain" he will be private self, and yet from his public persona. Some critics have been the wisest of his life being reflected even in Huckleberry Finn regarding his insistence about whether he wanted to criticize the hypocrisies of American society. It involved in it. From the text, however, it can be inferred that he had never ceased sense of the significance to save or a culture that was non-native for him. Black culture, because of his constant character with his themes in his creative
Chapter - V

Conclusion:

Huckleberry Finn, Twain and African American Culture

Mark Twain is the American writer with the name recognition [...] the one who has most deeply entered into the American cultural imagination, the one whose image and influence have been most widely disseminated across high and popular culture.

Graff and Phelan, The Life of Samuel Clemens and the Reception of Huckleberry Finn, 19.

Twain's novels have now widely been accepted as a rich source of American cultural history of the time and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is, perhaps, the richest as of them all. The book has been admired for decades. The novel shows Twain's familiarity with his own native culture (white) and African American culture, too, as he lived in the slave-holding families and society in the South both before and after the Civil War. It may not be possible to say exactly what he felt about the two cultures as also suggested by Graff and Phelan who say that Mark Twain "was a man of paradoxes [...] he successfully created and managed public persona quite different from his private self" (19-20). By using a pseudonym of "Mark Twain," he kept his private self aloof from his public persona. Some critics have seen the paradoxes of his life being reflected even in Huckleberry Finn, regarding his ambivalence about whether he wanted to criticize the hypocritical American society or succeed in it. From the text, however, it can be inferred that he had learnt/acquired some of the significant traditions of a culture that was non-native for him - black culture - because of his constant interaction with the slaves in his life time.
from his childhood in the yard betwixt and between the slave quarters and the Big House.

Those critics, who are not willing to acknowledge the multicultural or polyphonic voices that Mark Twain launches in his novel, simply go for the surface meaning of the text. These critics have severely criticized the book, and especially, its chief protagonist for the immoral tone it carries. That is why they see it simply as a "white trash." Similarly, some others saw the book as an adventure story for children, and Huck as an adventurer. However, his adventure was not only for pleasure or profit. There was a mission to be accomplished: freeing Jim from the institutionalized slavery of the South. Mythological interpretations have also been made by some other critics who present him as American Adam. They could not go beyond white American Dream, which Mark Twain, the novelist, defies. While he uses myths, the sources of those myths are often a marginalized culture whether it is American Indian or African American culture. The present study tried to show that African American cultural myths influenced Twain more than any other myths. Twain, some believe, must have imitated the Southwestern humor or tall tale tradition. Nevertheless, it has already been argued that it is not a blind imitation or any form of plagiarism. Like the African American letters, he revised the form with a signal difference. Whatever interpretations have been made regarding the form, style, theme or authorial intention until now, they are not complete. Therefore, cultural studies approach has helped this study to even explain the intriguing relationship between Huck and Jim.

From the historical perspective, Huck Finn has served the purpose of either an abolitionist or an Underground Railroad conductor. However, he does not take Jim up the Ohio River to the north or Canada. He takes him down to the South
where slavery flourished... He did it because he was "playing the double." He is a trickster figure helping Jim to escape. He is Signifyin(g) on the white Americans. In terms of his language, too, Huck reveals himself further by using Black English Vernacular or BEV (like Jim's) dominated language. His vocabulary, syntactic structures and semantic patterns are very close to BEV. His language may slightly differ from Jim's because Huck went to school (where he learned Standard English) for some time and he lived with Widow Douglas and Miss Watson. Similarly this research has revealed something which was unspeakable in the past and which has not been researched adequately yet. This concerns the figure of Huck's mother. Perhaps, except the psychoanalytic critics who talk about his symbolic mother - the Mississippi River, others never mentioned his mother. This study has shown that Huck was a Mulatto born of an illegitimate relationship between Pap Finn and a slave woman. It is evident from what Christopher Looby says about interracial heterosexuality: "We know from countless sources that slave masters frequently used their female slaves sexually" (543). It may be argued that Pap Finn was not rich enough to keep slaves, but it is equally likely that he may have been forced to adopt Huck as his son by the slave master from the Big House. Twain did not want to bring disgrace to a white man by revealing it. It can also be argued that the presence of Huck's mother's absence is always felt and fulfilled through different people, both male and female.

Another important trait that this study focused upon is Huck's silence, which can be associated with slave culture. When his enemy or friend like Tom is more powerful, he resorts to silence at the same time subverting such people. This is even more revealing when Huck is interpreted as an African American trickster figure and the Signifying Monkey. Given both of these roles to Huck, he turns out, as this study
has shown, to be a very subversive protagonist in the racist world of the novel. Twain has given these roles to Huck in order to launch the attack of what Frederick Douglass calls "scorching irony" over American racial politics and hypocritical democracy. Finally, the hybridity of his culture provides the explanation to Huck's dilemmas, and delayed and contradictory actions and decisions. Thus, this study through a use of American Multicultural perspective and cultural studies suggests that Huck is not purely a "white" American, but he is a white African American.
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