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RACE RELATIONS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF BLACK IDENTITY

Jean Bruno TOZAI, Ph. D
jbtozai@yahoo.fr
Jeannot DJASSENE
djassene.jeannot44@gmail.com
Enseignants Chercheurs
Département de Lettres Anglaises/E.N.S
UNIVERSITÉ DE BANGUI

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on Black identity in Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Wright's *Black Boy*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Tar Baby*. These works of fiction illustrate how Twain's Wright's and Morrison's ideas of racial rejection are related to the problem of skin colour. This study attempts to demonstrate, using the characters of the four novels, that there is always at least one character whose desire to come back to his/her roots is not easy to achieve. It shows the process of uprooting influenced the main characters as it led to alienation, frustration and marginalization. Besides, the blacks' stays in America, whether successful or not, are considered as a source of inspiration for Twain, Wright and Morrison whose works seek to bring both Black and White communities together.

Keywords: *Racism, Black Identity*

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article porte sur le problème de l'identité du Noir américain dans les œuvres intitulées : *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Black Boy* de Richard Wright, *The Bluest Eye* et *Tar Baby* écrits par Toni Morrison. Ces romans traitent un thème similaire, lié à la question de la ségrégation raciale. A travers les personnages choisis, nous démontrons grâce à une approche comparative, les conflits d'ordre historique, social et politique rencontrés par les Noirs aux Etats-Unis d'Amérique. Après avoir passé de longs séjours en Amérique, les Noirs sont toujours confrontés à l'aliénation, car ils ont été déracinés. Le retour à leurs racines pose un dilemme. Ils sont toujours opprimés dans le nouveau monde. Les résolutions de leurs problèmes posés demeurent sans suite favorable. Dans cette perspective, la problématique de l'histoire des Noirs américains ; et l'étude de leur identité constituent des points clés qui préoccupent Mark Twain, Richard Wright et Toni Morrison.

Mots clés : *Racisme, Identité des Noirs*

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INTRODUCTION

This article seeks to situate the question of Black identity in the right perspective and thus assesses it from the point of view of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Black Boy*, *The Bluest Eye* and *Tar Baby*. It traces the history of race relations in America from the period of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade through its abolition to the dawn of Civil Rights Movements. Twain, Wright and Morrison wrote in the post-abolition era, but the aspects of racial identity they wrote about could not be divorced from the history of the slave trade as well as the discovery of the New World. We are more concerned with historical, political, social and economic issues that have affected and continue to affect Blacks, the fact of being black in the wake of emancipation. These questions are relevant in exploring the problems of black identity in Twain's, Wright's and Morrison's novels under study in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The History of Race Relations in the United States of America

This section seeks to examine the history of race relations in America. We will assess the blacks' identity and culture. America was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492. It is a continent inhabited by a diversity of people. A diversity of people means also a diversity of cultures. African-Americans have had a sorrowful development that characterized their life experiences. The coincidences in these sorrowful stories told by Twain, Wright and Morrison are full of traumatic events and are also due to extrinsic reasons related to colonialism and racism. What characterizes the Jewish refugee and the African-American fugitive is a foreignness planted in them by the colonizer or slave trader. Petar Ramadanovic says that "it is because of the singular character of trauma that we can encounter each other and that we are implicated in each other's trauma" (*Diacritics* 90).

The history of the African Americans started in the sixteenth century with peoples from West Africa. They were taken by force as slaves to America. Then, in the seventeenth century, West African slaves were taken to English colonies in North America. After the discovery of the New World, black Americans continued to be enslaved with four millions in bondage prior to the Civil War. Believed to be inferior to white people, they were treated as second class citizens. Yet not all blacks were slaves. There were free blacks some of whom owned slaves.

According to the naturalization Act of 1790 limited U.S citizenship to whites, only white men of property could vote. After the whites' arrival, they occupied the continent and could be found

in certain regions such as Peru, Central America and Mexico. They created some remarkable civilizations (Course with Dr. François Séhoulia 1994).

The first black slaves arrived via Santo Domingo to the San Miguel de Gualdape colony that is located in the Winyah Bay area of present day South Carolina. This colony was founded by a Spanish explorer named Lucas Vazquez de Ayllon in 1526. The first recorded blacks in British North America, including most of the future United States, 'were twenty and odd Negroes.' They came to Jamestown, Virginia, via Cape Comfort in August 1619 as indentured servants. As English settlers died from harsh conditions, more and more blacks were brought to work as laborers (ibid.).

One of the first martyrs to the cause of American patriotism was Crispus attacks, a former slave, who was killed by British soldiers. In the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, Black slaves worked mainly on the tobacco, rice and indigo plantations of the southern coast. After the American Revolution many colonists, particularly in the North where slavery was relatively unimportant to the economy, began to link the oppression of black slaves to their own oppression by the British and to call for the abolition of slavery. According to Pierre L. Vanden Bergh, after the war's end, however, the new U.S constitution tacitly acknowledge the institution, counting each slave as three-fifths of a person for the purposes of taxation and representation in congress and guaranteeing the rights to repossess any field for service or labor, an obvious euphemism for slavery (*Race and Racism: A Comparative Perspective* 151-152).

In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, freedom to Huck means escaping from what is called civilization. On the contrary, for Jim, escape means escape from slavery. Huck's state of mind is free in society. He maintains his sense of self just like others (Tuire 29). African immigration was mostly developed in the seventeenth century. Progressively, toward the end of this country, their numbers increased. Some millions of Africans were brought to America by means of captivity. They were sent to English colonies. Europe had a remarkable effect over the improvement of the New World. Why did the slave trade was not practiced anywhere else except in Africa? How did writers react in their fictional works in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in America? From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, African societies were confronted by Europeans' powerful issues. Their trade boards were settled in all the costs.

Everywhere else, Europeans were more interested in the establishment of contact, which was usually pacific, with the coastal states. They were not attracted by the slave trade. Thinkers say that it was America's colonial exploration which led them to search in Africa considerable manpower that they did not find in their own regions. Slavery in America began when the first African slaves were brought to the North American colony of Jamestown, Virginia, to help in the production of such lucrative crops as tobacco. Slavery was mainly practiced throughout the American colonies in the seventeenth century and African American slaves helped build the economic foundations of the new nation.

According to Kathryn Vanspanckeren in *Outline of American Literature* (1994), the invention of the cotton gin solidified the importance of slavery to the South's economy. By the mid-nineteenth century, America's westward expansion, along with a growing abolition movement in the North would provoke a great debate over slavery that would tear the nation apart in the bloody American Civil War. Critics argue that though the union's victory freed the nation's four million slaves, the legacy of slavery continued to influence American history, from the tumultuous years of Reconstruction to the Civil Rights Movement that emerged in the 1960s, a century after emancipation.

John Bishoff in "The Novels of Toni Morrison: Studies in Thwarted Sensitivity," published in *Studies in Black Literature* (1975), posits that:

History teaches that in the early seventeenth century, European settlers in North America turned to African slaves as a cheaper more plentiful labor source than indentured servants. After 1619, slavery spread throughout the American colonies and deprived the African continent of six to seven millions of its healthiest and ablest men and women. (63)

Like Wright, Twain recalls a time from his childhood when he sneaked out to a slave cabin to listen to a slave's ghost stories whose rhetorical powers he realized later. Both Wright's and Twain's childhood experiences have much to do with the various stories they wrote. In comparing Twain's, Wright's and Morrison's novels, we have come to see that they reveal the very intimate history of African Americans. Their characters are accustomed to living in a world where the ordinary life seems to be an extraordinary one. Reconstruction represented an attempt to reintegrate the South after the Civil War and it gave blacks a more secure place in society.

Moreover, Dorothy Salem, in “Slave Resistance in the Journey: A History of the American Experience” (1997), states that in the late eighteenth century, with the land used to grow tobacco nearly exhausted, the South was confronted with an economic crisis and the continued growth of slavery in America seemed in doubt. Around the same time, the mechanization of the textile industry in England led to a huge demand for American cotton, a southern crop whose production was unfortunately limited by the difficulty of removing the seeds from raw cotton fibers by hand. A young Yankee School teacher named Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, a simple mechanized device that efficiently removed the seeds. His device was widely copied and within a few years the South would transition from the large-scale production of tobacco to that of cotton, a switch that reinforced the region’s dependence on slave labour.

Bernard Bailyn, in *the Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967) posits “the most authoritative statement of the nature of political liberty” (36). According to him, “the American writers cited Locke on natural rights and on the social and government contract” (27). As Ronald Hamowy has shown in his review of *Inventing America*, Wills’ attempt to Locke’s special status among the founding generation is not successful. Wills says: “The only sustained attack on Locke in the Revolutionary literature appears to be Jonathan Boucher’s remarkable sermon of 1775, on Civil Liberty, Passive Obedience, and Nonresistance” (29).

Many Black Southerners who travelled to the North were truly haunted by the South. However, their love-hate relationship with the South was always more that of love than hate. Morrison herself in *Tar Baby*, claims that the South was a place not wholly terrible nor wholly pleasant (Radka 8-9). A movement to abolish slavery in America gained strength in the northern United States, led by free blacks such as Frederick Douglass and white supporters such as William Lloyd Garrison, the founder of the radical newspapers *The Liberator*, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, who published the bestselling antislavery novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852). While many abolitionists based their activism on the belief that slaveholding is a sin, others were more inclined to the non-religious Free-labors argument which held that slave holding was regressive, inefficient and made little economic sense.

Douglass explains that free blacks and other antislavery northerners began helping fugitive slaves escape from southern plantations to the North via a loose network of safe houses as early the eighteenth century (*American Slavery* 125). The success of the Underground Railroad helped abolitionist feeling in the North. It also increased sectional tensions, convincing pro-

slavery southerners of their northern countrymen's determination to defeat the institution that sustained them.

Since men were born free and, as such, were each other's equals, the power to rule had to rest upon the consent of those governed. Wills dismisses this interpretation as not truly reflecting what Jefferson had in mind when he wrote "all men are created equal" (142). In its place, he puts forward a notion of equality derived from the writing of Hutcheson. Equality for Hutcheson, is a fact of man's social existence and it derives from his innate moral sense (ibid.). When the declaration of Independence states that "all men are created equal," it means that all men, whatever their physical or intellectual differences may be, share a common moral sense. While the traditional argument leads its readers to be concerned with questions of consent and the rights of the governed, Wills' reading of the Declaration will focus men's attention on questions of affection and duties toward others (207-217).

Experts observed that another tenuous compromise was negotiated to resolve the question of territory won during the Mexican war. Four years later, however, the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened all new territories to slavery by asserting the rule of popular sovereignty over congressional edict, leading pro-and anti-slavery forces to battle it out with much bloodshed in the new State of Kansas. Louise A. Christopher, in "Slavery's Champions Stood at Odds: Polygenesis and the Defense of Slavery," published in *Civil War History* (2007), believes that outrage in the North over the Kansas-Nebraska act spelled the downfall of the old Whig Party and the birth of a new, all-northern Republican Party (379-412). The Supreme Court's ruling in the Dred Scott case, involving a slave who claimed his freedom because his master had taken him into a free territory effectively repealed the Missouri compromise by ruling that all territories were opened to slavery (Ibid.).

The abolitionist John Brown's raid at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, in the nineteenth century aroused sectional tensions even further. Executed for his crimes, Brown was hailed as a martyred hero by northern abolitionists and a vile murderer in the South. Organized political and social movements to end slavery began in the mid-eighteenth century. The deep feeling of the Independence rallied many black Americans to the revolution on both sides. J. H. Franklin, in *A History of Negro-Africans* (1980) clearly depicts blacks living conditions as slaves. Part of the negative impact can be seen in the beginning of desegregation in the South of the United States of America (1-14). As Blacks were known as slaves in some previous centuries, their

identity became a troublesome theme in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries because of various revolts. According to Wills, the term “property” was connected to a strain of political thought, of which Locke was a major figure that emphasized man’s selfishness (231-237).

It should be pointed out that Jefferson opined that blacks are inferior, “must be hazarded with great diffidence” (143).

Adamu Pangmeshi in his Doctoral dissertation entitled, “The Nexus of Exile, Gender and Madness in Selected Works of Doris Lessing and Bessie Head” (2009), says:

The struggle against apartheid was also extended to the labor community. But the struggle here was crippled by a lack of unity among the working class, which was polarized along racial lines although it was initially difficult to organize workers into a suitable manner. (13)

In the same way, we lay emphasis on racial rejection in America. The similarity between apartheid and racial segregation is that both terms mean division among people because of physical skin color. The difference is that “apartheid” was practiced in South Africa, while “racial segregation” was practiced in the United States of America.

Annie Sussel in “*L’Anglais au Bacalaureat*” (2002-2018), says that though all ethnic minorities suffer from discrimination, it can be argued that no group has been as sorely tried as the blacks. In the days of slavery, some Blacks rebelled against their White masters. Others moved to the North or even to Canada, with the help of the Underground Railroad, a clandestine organization. At the end of Civil War, all attempts to reconstruct a mixed society were checked by the activities, of the Ku-Klux-Klan and the general hostility of the Whites. The doctrine of “separate but equal” finally prevailed. In fact, it means the acceptance of discrimination and of an inferior status for the Blacks. The twentieth century has witnessed the creation of associations whose aim is the actual integration of the Blacks. In 1964, the Civil Rights Act gave the blacks equal rights, theoretically at least, but integration had not yet been achieved. This and other similar failures may explain why some Black Nationalist movements preferred to demand the creation of a separate Negro nation within the borders of the U.S. In spite of the measures taken, racism still prevails in the U.S (Hutcheson 293-299).

In the socio-political domain, some thinkers emerged in the nineteenth century. All of the Northern States had abolished slavery. They set measures in place then gradually reduced them.

Four of the Northern States had adopted policies to at least gradually abolish slavery. To maintain the political balance between slave and free states, Kentucky was created a slave State from Virginia and Tennessee was created a slave State from North Carolina. Martin Luther King Jr. began his famous “I Have a Dream Speech” (1963) on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. He uttered this speech as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of America. While the struggle for freedom has made progress since that historic gathering, it remains unfinished business. On that day, one from living on a lonely Island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr, in “I Have a Dream” (1963), notes: “I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation” (Par. 1). Critics have asserted that the first part of this message has been taken to heart while the second has been forgotten. This second freedom is not individual freedom but rather a form of collective freedom. It is the freedom to live unharmed by the collective consequences of individual actions, even if those actions are not intended to harm individuals.

It is, therefore, man’s freedom that determines the experience of an undiminished life. The gift of the universe, our creator, God or whatever one believes, is the source of the miracle of life. King, in *Stride Towards Freedom: The Montgomery Story* (1958), says that blacks must grow to view unintended harm as injustice in the same way he views bigotry and prejudice as injustice.

Séhoulia, in his unpublished “Courses in American Civilization” at the University of Bangui, explained that slavery itself was not widespread in the North, though many of the region’s businessmen grew rich on the slave trade and investments in southern plantations. Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, all of the northern states abolished slavery but the so called “peculiar institution” remained absolutely vital to the South. He said that though the U.S Congress outlawed the African slave trade, the domestic trade flourished and the slave population in the U.S nearly tripled over the next fifty years. It reached nearly four million with more than half living in the cotton states of the South. When talking of slaves, probably we will mention the aspects related to slave-holders.

This article seeks to talk about the effects of discrimination on the society and the individual in Twain’s, Wright’s and Morrison’s novels. It shows historical real lives and society as they faced discrimination for a variety of reasons in many ways. On the one hand, *Black Boy* does not

focus on gender issues but it discusses some of the gender differences between men and women. Wright's mother is an excellent example of this, as she tries to help her family but fails to do so because she cannot work and earn small wages as she is sick. Wright also dwell on things such as prostitution in various ways, mainly with the African American women in the hard times of the Great Depression.

On the other hand, Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Tar Baby* focus on both racial rejection and gender inequality. In her works, slavery comes up as a disengaging point in the history of America. For example, she portrays Jadine (*Tar Baby*) as an example of an African woman who does not identify herself in terms of her African American origin but her exceptional beauty which offers her a well-paid career in the modeling industry. On the contrary, Morrison represents Pecola (*the Bluest Eye*) as a character who suffers from the quest for "beauty".

However, Twain's examination of discrimination has shown that it is a sickness that has plagued the American community. He has also thought deeply about the existence of discrimination in the world. Caribbean Americans have always been seen as maintaining an ambivalent relationship to their American citizenship and as having a keen loyalty to their Islands of origin. J. Rutherford says that "transnationalism itself is fundamentally a twentieth century phenomenon, finding its origins in very specific historical conditions during the opening decades of this century" (9).

Like Wright, Twain is an important leading figure who set against himself a cynical and hypocritical world. In his *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, he raises the question of motive for mankind. Twain praises the moral education of a young boy whose better impulses overcome both self-interest and the negative forces of his culture. Twain's *The Tragedy of Puddn'head Wilson*, Chesnut's *The Conjure Woman* and Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Tar Baby* deploy Gothic strategies to give voice to the unspeakable experiences which are closely associated with slavery. Bell Hooks in *Reel to Reel: Sex and Class at the Movies* (1996), says:

Gothic strategies allow writers from the repressed class, race or gender to transgress against the main discourse, thereby providing a location of radical openness and the possibility of communication. In this sense, the Gothic opens a space not only to articulate the broken voice of suffering but also to produce a counter hegemonic discourse. (153)

In an essay entitled “Trans-national America,” Randolph Bourne says that World War 1 had revealed the failure of the “Melting pot” that is, the theory of American national culture. As the war awakened a powerful feeling of national antagonism in Europe, so did it activate a strong sense of nationalism within the United States.

This article examines how the history of race relations in America can be seen as a counter-discourse based on the abject, which is always working against the abject process that is imposed by the dominant discourse. In this writing, we try to focus on how the racial abject crosses over the boundary of the dominant privileged society. We also try to demonstrate how the writers we study wield strategies to conjure up sites of resistance. World War 1 had profound implications for the development of a radical black consciousness among Caribbean American intellectuals (Ramadanovic 54-67).

As black intellectuals became aware that the principle of national self-determination did not apply to them, the underlying imperialism of the League of Nations became more and more apparent.

The Politics of Race, Migration and the Construction of Identity

In this section, we intend to focus on the construction of a transnational community of blacks of uncertain identity. We notice that the transcultural mixture are based on both language and culture, including the globalization of migration. The postmodernist view of identities/diaspora consciousness is also analyzed in various aspects. We try to assess these different ideas through critical works about Twain's, Wright's and Morrison's fictional world.

Richard Macksey et al. in *Twentieth Century Views, Richard Wright: A Collection of Critical Essays* (1984), say that the construction of a transnational community of blacks of “doubtful nationality” is an interesting figure for a racialized, denationalized, Caribbean American ethnicity. While, Hall has identified the ethnicities of the late twentieth century as embodying and contradictory movement from national to ethnicity as a source of identity. Our understanding of black transnational migrants' identity as a new ethnicity as early as the 1910s benefits from Hall's insights and sees Caribbean intellectuals' politics of identity in ways which are similar to Fanon's sense of national culture.

However, Thomas W. Safran, in *Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return* (1991) observes that black transnationalism does not consist of fluid border-crossing

identities, rather, it also provides a sharp sense of the political exclusions created western imperialism (83). The exclusion of black subjects from the originating political conceptions of modernity, nationhood, self-determination and democracy forced Caribbean intellectuals in the United States in two interdependent direction (99). On the one hand, this exclusion afforded them a keen critical insight into the nature of modern imperialism. On the other hand, their “transnationalism” involved the ability to link questions of national identity to American international relations (“Deconstructing and Comparing Diaspora in Kokot W. Tololyan and Alfonso C.” *Diaspora, Identity and Religion* 9-29). Critics mean by “Black transnationalism” the creative development of new internationalist alternatives to the nationalism of the imperial states.

Gilles Deleuze in *Negotiation 1972-1990*. Trans. M. Joughling (1995) says: “the problem of origin (is) no longer a question of starting or finishing. The question is rather what happens between” (121). The effect of mass migration has been the creation of radically new types of human beings. That is, people who root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as in material things because they are so defined by others.

S. Gireshaber and G.S Canella, in “From Identity to Identities: Increasing Possibilities in Early Childhood Education,” published in *Embracing Identities in Early Childhood: Diversity and Possibilities* (2001), point out:

Identities are also linked to society, power and circumstance which in turn are linked to a person's lived experiences which are shaped by their various groups memberships based on gender, ethnicity, religion and occupation which result in multiple lived experiences. (3)

Postmodernism highlights the historical and social grounding of individuals. It discusses groups which recognize the complex nature of individuals as members of complicated, heterogeneous societies. This offers an opportunity to examine individuals and groups in their wider discourses and less confined identities (173), while K. Woodward, in his introduction to *Identity and Difference* (2003), notes that identity provides us with a location in the world and presents the link between us and the society in which we live. It provides a conceptual tool with which to understand and make sense of social, cultural, economic and political changes (1-6). He also explains that identity is not a static location and contains traces of its past and what it is to become. J. Rutherford, in “A Place Called Home: Identity and the Cultural Politics of

Difference,” published in *Identity Community, Culture, Difference*, asserts that identity is a contingent, a provisional full stop in the play of differences and the narratives of our own lives (9-27).

G. Belay in “The (Re) construction and Negotiation of Cultural Identity in the Age of Globalisation,” published in *Interaction and Identity: Information and Behavior* (1996), say:

The English, Scottish and Welsh migrants in Australia are classified as a single group for census purposes as coming from the United Kingdom. This leaves no room for categories of classification such as Indian-Australian. These people may come from the different states in India with diverse cultural characteristics and identities. (320)

Diasporas result in the scattering of people due to war, oppression, poverty, enslavement, indenture, genocide and the search for economic and social opportunities. Migration results in opening the diasporas’ culture to new influences and pressures. According to Gilroy, the diaspora is a concept which offers new possibilities for understanding identity to visualize a future, to form social solidarity not necessarily determined by place or nationality (*There An’t No Black* 304).

Fictional characters in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Black Boy*, *The Bluest Eye* and *Tar Baby* are alienated. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2010), defines the term alienation as “the act of estranging or state of estrangement in feeling of an individual by the society, feeling and faith in an attempt to achieve personal and spiritual salvation.” The struggle against racial rejection leads Wright to perpetual displacement in terms of exile. Like Wright’s work, most of the texts that are written by Twain and Morrison are naturally meant to criticize racism in America. That is the reason why most of the texts were being prosecuted. We notice that most African writers base their writing on the effects of racial rejection with its adverse effects on the black minority. For example, both Twain’s and Morrison’s writings were several times censored by the white majority.

In “Identity, Authenticity, Survival: Multicultural Societies and Social Reproduction” (1994), Anthony Appiah, points out that new identities may replace “One kind of tyranny with another” (*Multiculturalism Examining the Politics of Recognition* 163). Just as a dominant group in the culture at large insists that the marginalized integrate by assimilating to dominant norms, so

within some practices of identity politics dominant sub-groups may in theory and practice impose their vision of group's identity onto all its members (149).

As Jennifer L. Barclay in "The Great Degree of Perfection: Disability and the Construction of Race," in *American Slave Law* (2014), states:

The criminalization of blackness rested on antebellum legal reasoning that regarded enslaved blacks as inherently disabled. As blackness came to represent various forms of disability in U.S legal thought, court decisions used racial reasoning to inflict physical punishments on the bodies of black subjects. Barclay analyzes state laws and court decisions that disabled African Americans as legal persons and physical as embodied humans. (27)

It is this experience of black slaves that Wright ties to capture in *Black Boy*. We observe that Wright recalls the plight of the Africans that were sold into slavery between the early 1700's and 1860's through the connivance of their own fellow Africans. In "Southern Labor Law in the Jim Crow Era: Exploitative or Competitive." *Journal of Economic History* (1984), Jennifer Roback, explains the consequences of placing the well-being of the convict in the hands of penitentiary officials. In at least one respect, the lease system was worse than slavery. The slaveholder could expect to profit from a slave's future output for his entire working life and thus had an incentive to maintain the slave's health.

Conclusion

This study has shown that African Americans were depicted in various manners in American fiction. Twain, Wright and Morrison are widely acclaimed for strong sense of historical responsibilities, which throughout their works are preoccupied with elaborating African Americans' experiences. Their fictions are based on the conflicts between past and present; on cultural dialogue and the healing power of the American community. To tackle this painstaking exercise, the Review of Related Literature, including Critical Race theoretical approaches have been used to analyze *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Black Boy*, *The Bluest Eye* and *Tar Baby*. This study has equally focused on the relationship between race and gender, concepts that are at the core of discrimination in U.S.A.

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