and "Mark Twain is the father of American Literature" (Faulkner). In reference to the latter quote, Dr. Alam expressed his favouritism towards Herman Melville's Moby Dick and said that he was not entirely willing to call "Huckleberry Finn the greatest but rather the second greatest novel ever written in American literature".

He spoke elaborately of both *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* and other works prior to the creation of these two. In addition, he focused on Twain's journey through life, from a steamboat pilot to becoming one of the greatest writers of all times and also emphasised the peak points in Twain's life.

Mark Twain began his career writing humorous stories using Jonathan Swift's tradition of satire, but soon evolved into a 'chronicler of the vanities, hypocrisies and murderous acts' of mankind. With *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain blended rich humour and social criticism. Additionally, as a master of rendering colloquial speech, he was able to create and popularise a unique literary piece. Twain, through his experiences of travelling to Nevada via Utah, observed the odd details and eccentricities in people - most of which are often depicted in his writings.

Dr. Alam concluded his paper by talking about two kinds of Americans, the optimist and the pessimist. He further stressed Mark Twain's views on different aspects of life. He pointed out that Twain was a "red-hot imperialist", an adamant supporter of abolition and emancipation ("freedom of slaves") as well as a feminist supporting women's suffrage movement.

The end of Dr. Fakhrul Alam's presentation proceeded to mark the beginning of the first session of the conference titled "Reading and Re-reading Mark Twain". Mazharul Islam, Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, IUB, was the moderator. Andaleeb Choudhury, Jr. Lecturer, Dept. of English, IUB, presented the first paper, "Gender and Transformance: the Role of the Female in Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer". Her paper focused on the close text analysis of Twain's most celebrated children's novels and the transformative effects that the female characters created in these novels have on Twain's youthful protagonist. She emphasised how the feminist critics have often dismissed Mark Twain's ideas, despite the fact that one is likely to find women all over his work. Elaborating on this Ms. Choudhury added "Women ruled his heart, his home...". She also pointed out the issues of feminine sexuality and how each female character is portrayed as idealistic compared to the ugly, superstitious and hypocritical male characters. She concluded by noting how Twain subverts the traditional roles of gender and reassigns the power to women in his two novels.

The other presenter of this session was Saara Zabeen, Lecturer, Dept. of English, IUB who presented a paper on "The introduction of Tom Sawyer's adventures to the students of IUB to develop their reading habit". The idea of the paper was mainly on encouraging students to develop a healthy reading habit and she attempted to do so by introducing '*Tom Sawyer*' in the course "English Reading Skills". Alongside this, her paper also aimed at portraying the reaction of the students to reading of the original version of this book. Ms. Zabeen also shared some of the comments made by the students on this book before she concluded.

Despite the large number of inaccurate translations, these publishing houses still produce a good sum of excellent translations from time to time, such as the "*The Prince and the Pauper*" by Mark Twain.

At the end of session one, the audience asked questions to the speakers based on the papers they presented. Ms. Lauren Lovelace showed great enthusiasm and bombarded the speakers with her questions and shared her own theories as well. Alongside Ms. Lauren, Prof. Niaz Zaman, Supernumerary Professor of Department of English, DU, and Advisor of Department of English, IUB, humorously pointed out a picture of Mark Twain wearing a dress and asked questions on Twain's view on cross-dressing. In response, Andaleeb Choudhury explained how Twain endorsed cross-dressing and gave examples of how he classified men and women.

After a short tea break, the second session titled "Mark Twain in Bengal" kicked-off, with Dr. Niaz Zaman as the moderator. Dr. Akimun Rahman, Associate Professor, Dept. of Modern Languages, IUB, presented her paper "Reckless Boys: A Comparative Study of Protagonists of Mark Twain and Sharatchandra Chattopadhyay". She explained in Bangla that the aim of her paper was to dissect the texts of these two famous writers and draw a comparative study of the protagonists in Mark Twain's novels and Sharatchandra Chattopadhyay's '*Shreekanta*'. The aim of this paper was two-fold - firstly to compare the heroes of Mark Twain and of Sharatcandra Chattopadhyay and secondly, to inspect whether Sharatchandra Chattopadhyay was influenced by Mark Twain.