

Mark Twain's adventures of Huckleberry Finn consideration of racism and audience

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Abstrak

"Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, possibly the greatest book in American Literature, has made many people uneasy. Every single aspect of the book has been subjected to approval and disapproval and it is likely that various controversies will persist. A good book is always more interesting to investigate than a poor one. This novel not only causes the controversy but it is also at the same time the victim of the controversy. As long as the novel is seen and used as adult reading, it is unlikely that censorship will ever touch it. At the utmost people will condemn and criticize the novel. But if the novel is seen as a children's book with the belief that books enjoyed and read by children can help to shape their values, attitudes, and understanding, then Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is likely to provoke censorship — the possibility of being removed from library shelves. Today, as in the past, adults select most of the books children read — teachers, librarians, publishers, parents, reviewers, educators, school boards. It is always their judgement, not the children's, that decides whether or not a book is suitable for them. Their uncompromised and sometimes unfair indictment brings about the appraisal of the book which can lead to censorship, first, on moral grounds and later on racial grounds. By the standard of one hundred years ago, at the time the novel was published in 1885, the attacking of the novel was based on moral grounds that covered the ungrammatical language used in the book; the picturing of Huck as unwashed, not going to school, not going to church, smoking, using bad language, dressing poorly; the picturing of Pap Finn as rough, a drunkard; the irreverence and the profanity shown in the novel; and the use of the word "nigger" (see Ch.3.3 and 5.5). Today the attack has shifted to racial grounds covering the portrayal of Jim and the other blacks in the novel as stereotypes who are superstitious and inferior; the dialectical speech; the unpromising relationship between Jim and Huck; the unconvincing attack against slavery; and the use of word "nigger" which is seen as insulting and demeaning to blacks"