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Posted on 14 September 2017 By Mark Twain

A Nineteenth Century Boy From A Mississippi River Town Recounts His Adventures As He Travels Down The River With A Runaway Slave, Encountering A Family Involved In A Feud, Two Scoundrels Pretending To Be Royalty, And Tom Sawyer S Aunt Who Mistakes Him For Tom Why have I never read Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn before Was it Twain s copious use of the N word I vaguely recall a primary school teacher abruptly halting a class read aloud session, perhaps because of that Was it the air of earnest solemnity that surrounds so called classics Sheer laziness No matter I ve read it now, and I ll never be the same again Hemingway was right when he said and I m paraphrasing all American literature comes from Huck Finn While it d be entertaining to read as a kid, it s even rewarding to approach as an adult Savour that wonderful opening paragraph and tell me you can t hear Holden Caulfield in the cadences 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 That book was made by Mr Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth That is nothing I never seen anybody but lied one time or another, without it was Aunt Polly, or the widow, or maybe Mary Aunt Polly Tom s Aunt Polly, she is and Mary, and the Widow Douglas is all told about in that book, which is mostly a true book, with some stretchers, as I said before. Everything to come is in those opening lines, penned in that distinct, nearly illiterate yet crudely poetic voice You get a sense of Huck s humility compared to Tom Sawyer s

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braggadocio his intelligence a cute postmodern nod to the author the idea that storytelling contains stretchers but can also tell the truth and the fact that everyone lies, including Huck Especially Huck He gets into so many tight spots that part of the joy is wondering how he ll get out of them.The outlines of the plot should be familiar Huck, a scrappy, barely literate boy, flees his abusive, alcoholic father by faking his death and travelling the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers with Jim, an escaped slave, on a raft.Huck s gradual awakening to Jim s plight is subtle and touching, never sentimental In a sense the book chronicles his growing conscience And the colourful characters he and Jim meet and the adventures they have add up to a fascinating, at times disturbing look at a conflicted, pre Civil War nation.We meet a Hatfields vs McCoys type situation a group of rascals who put on a vaudeville style act and try to fleece rubes a scene of desperation and danger on a collapsed boat We witness greed, anger and most of the other deadly sins all from a little raft on the Mississippi And before the midway point, we see the toll that a cruel joke can have on someone s feelings.To a contemporary reader, some of the humour can feel a little forced, and the gags do get repetitive, particularly when Huck s savvier, better read friend Tom enters the scene.And then comes a passage like thisWhen I got there it was all still and Sunday like, and hot and sun shiny the hands was gone to the fields and there was them kind of faint dronings of bugs and flies in the air that makes it seem so lonesome and like everybody s dead and gone and if a breeze fans along and quivers the leaves it makes you feel mournful, because you feel like it s spirits whispering spirits that s been dead ever so many years and you always think they re talking about YOU Wow You can see, hear and feel what he s describing Hard to believe this was written than 150 years ago.In the book s closing pages, Huck tells us thisIf I d a knowed what a trouble it was to make a book I wouldn t a tackled it, and ain t a going to no Well, gosh, Huck, it war worth all yer trouble We re darn glad you dunnit Yessir. After reading Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, I realized that I had absolutely nothing to say about it And yet here, as you see, I have elected to say it anyway, and at great length Reading this novel now, at the age of mumble mumble, is a bit like arriving at the circus after the tents have been packed, the bearded lady has been

Disneyland: Inside Story

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depilated, and the funnel cake trailers have been hitched to pick up trucks and captained, like a formidable vending armada, toward the auburn sunset All the fun has already been used up, and I m left behind circumnavigating the islands of elephant dung and getting drunk on Robitussin Same story, different day How exactly did I make it through eight total years of high school and undergraduate studies in English without having read any Mark Twain but a brief and forgotten excerpt from Life on the Mississippi Isn t this illegal by now I mean, isn t there a clause in the Patriot Act an eleventh commandment a dictate from Xenu Isn t Huckleberry Finn, like Romeo and Juliet and To Kill a Mockingbird, now an unavoidable teenage road bump between rainbow parties and huffing spray paint Isn t it the role of tedious classic literature to add color and texture to the pettiness of an adolescence circumscribed by status updates, muff shaving, and shooting each other Or am I old fashioned Let s face it In the greater social consciousness, there are two stars of this book 1 the word nigger and 2 the Sherwood Schwartz style ending in which Tom Sawyer reappears and makes even the most casual reader wonder whether he might not be retarded Huckleberry Finn, for all his white trash pedigree, is actually a pretty smart kid the kind of dirty faced boy you see, in his younger years, in a shopping cart at Wal Mart, being barked at by a monstrously obese mother in wedgied sweatpants and a stalagmite of a father who sweats tobacco juice and thinks the word coloreds is too P.C Orbiting the cart, filled with generic cigarette cartons, tabloids, and canned meats, are a half dozen kids, glazed with spittle and howling like Helen Keller over the water pump, but your eyes return to the small, sad boy sitting in the cart His gaze, imploring, suggestive of a caged intellect, breaks your heart, so you turn and comparison shop for chewing gum or breath mints He is condemned to a very dim horizon, and there s absolutely nothing you can do about it, so you might as well buy some Altoids and forget about it That boy is the spiritual descendant of Huckleberry Finn The nigger controversy is there still one is terribly inconsequential It almost seems too obvious to point out that this is a firstly a period novel, meaning it that occurs at a very specific historical moment at a specific location and b secondly a first person narrative, which is therefore saddled with the language, perspective, and nascent ideologies of its

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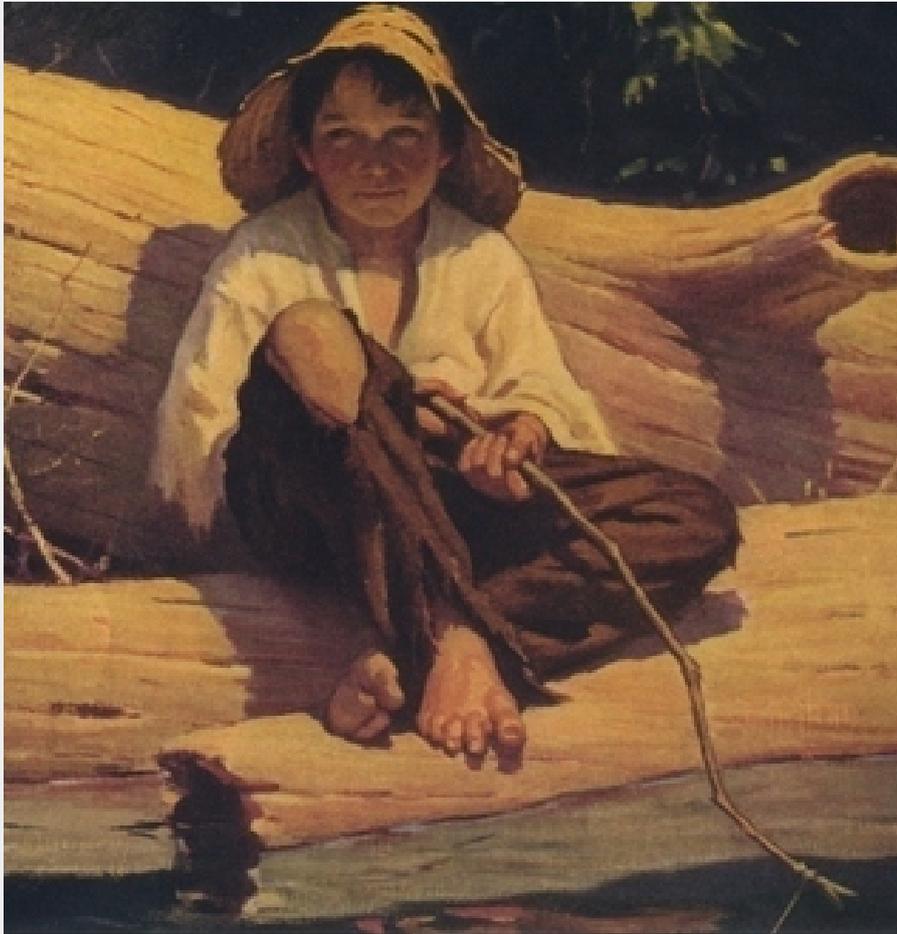
narrator Should we expect a mostly uneducated, abused adolescent son of a racist alcoholic who is living in the South before the Civil War to have a respectful, intellectually enlightened perspective toward black people Should the character of Huck Finn, in other words, be ahistorical, anachronistic Certainly not, if we expect any semblance of honesty from our national literature Far troubling to many critics is the ending of Huckleberry Finn, when by a freakishly literary coincidence Huck Finn is mistaken for Tom Sawyer by Tom's relatives, who happen to be holding Jim the slave on the run in hopes of collecting a reward from his owners There are all sorts of contrivances in this scenario the likes of which haven't been seen since the golden age of Three's Company which ends with Tom arriving and devising a ridiculously elaborate scheme for rescuing Jim All in all, the ending didn't bother me as much as it bothered some essayists I've read That is, it didn't strike me as especially conspicuous in a novel which relies a great deal on narrative implausibility and coincidence Sure, Tom Sawyer is something of an idiot, as we discover, but in a novel that includes faked deaths and absurd con jobs, his idiocy seems well placed In the end, I suppose the greatest thing I can say about this novel is that it left me wondering what happened to Huck Finn Would his intellect and compassion escape from his circumstances or would he become yet another bigoted, abusive father squiring another brood of dirty, doomed children around a fluorescently lit Wal-Mart This is a rant I found Huckleberry Finn on my bookshelf had been changed to Huckleberry Finn Robotic Edition Some very pc authors and editors took it upon themselves to change the N word to robot They then rewrote the book to take away any mention of humans and to roboticise words such as eye which becomes something like optical device The illustrations have also been changed I have no problem with this, but I do have two major issues with this edition. The first problem is with the librarians who think think this is close enough to the original that it should be combined and therefore share the ratings of Mark Twain's original book There was a long discussion in the librarian thread where some librarians thought it was essentially the same book, perhaps most So it was combined and the edition of the book I read was changed to that one I DID NOT read The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Robotic

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Little Man of Disneyland

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The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

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