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Contact: Jessica Moody, VP Marketing  
(800) 562-2139 x101  
jmoody@greyhouse.com

## **Salem Press Announces a New Addition to the Critical Insights Series: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***

Salem Press is proud to announce *Critical Insights: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, edited by R. Kent Rasmussen, Editor of *Critical Insights: Mark Twain*. Despite the fact that Mark Twain's novel has been examined and re-examined in scores of books and hundreds, if not thousands, of articles for more than a century, its ability to continue raising new questions and suggesting new perspectives is demonstrated yet again by the fresh ideas in the thirteen new essays in this new volume. In selecting topics for these essays, one of the editor's primary goals was to encourage innovative ways of looking at *Huckleberry Finn*. Within this volume, readers will encounter many perspectives they have never before seen articulated in print. They will, of course, revisit some familiar questions about such issues as slavery and racism in the novel, Jim's degradation in the so-called "evasion" chapters, and Huck's narrative voice and Mark Twain's use of dialects. However, they will also find these and other issues examined from fresh and wholly original perspectives.

The first section of the volume, **The Book and Author**, contains the Editor's views on Mark Twain and what makes *Huckleberry Finn* worthy of study. Essays in the next section, **Critical Contexts**, examine *Huckleberry Finn* in its broadest cultural and historical contexts. The section opens with a penetrating exploration of how the novel traveled from Mark Twain's pen to the printed page in "'Bessie' or 'Becky': Should We Care about Text?" Its author, Victor Fischer, is a veteran editor of the Mark Twain Papers and Project at the University of California in Berkeley, which prepares the most authoritative editions of Mark Twain's works ever published.

In "Huck's Reception during Three Centuries," Kevin Mac Donnell surveys the book's history, citing numerous specific examples of what critics and readers have said about the book.

In 2011, Alabama's NewSouth Books published editions of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* from which that offending word was removed in order to make reading the novel more acceptable to students, especially African Americans. Not surprisingly, those editions became the focus of a heated national controversy about "censorship" that settled hard on the scholar behind them—Professor Alan Gribben of Auburn University at Montgomery. In the next essay, "Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer Expelled: Censorship and the Classroom," Professor Gribben himself recounts, for the first time at length in print, the full story of the NewSouth editions.

Another nineteenth-century novel even more closely associated with slavery is Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852). Stowe's story of the oppression of enslaved African Americans so riled northerners during the 1850s, it is generally credited with playing a role in starting the Civil War that would lead to the abolishment of the "peculiar institution." In 1996, novelist Jane Smiley

published an influential essay in *Harper's Magazine* comparing Mark Twain's and Stowe's treatments of slavery. She concluded that not only is *Uncle Tom's Cabin* vastly superior but also that *Huckleberry Finn* is essentially a failure as an antislavery novel. In "Huckleberry Finn vs. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as Antislavery Novels," Jocelyn A. Chadwick takes issue with Smiley's conclusions.

The next section, **Critical Readings**, contains nine essays exploring more specialized topics that provide additional fresh insights into *Huckleberry Finn*:

- "Animating the Unsaid: Between the Lines in *Huckleberry Finn*" by Jon Clinch
- "'How a body can see and don't see at the same time': Reading Humor in *Huckleberry Finn*" by Tracy Wuster
- "The Reluctant Author: Huck Finn's Metafictional Partnership with Mark Twain" by John H. Davis
- "Is *Huckleberry Finn* a Picaresque Novel?" by Robert C. Evans
- "Identity Switching in *Huckleberry Finn*" by Linda A. Morris
- "'Pow-wows of cussing': Profanity and Euphemistic Variants in *Huckleberry Finn*" by Sarah Fredericks
- "Why Huck Finn Can't Stand Being Sivilized" by Philip Bader
- "'Huck Finn, He Hain't Got No Family': Home, Family, and Parenting in *Huckleberry Finn*" by John Bird
- "'It's *Tom Sawyer!*' (No it ain't . . . it's Huck Finn!)" by Hugh H. Davis

Each essay in *Critical Insights: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* includes a list of Works Cited and detailed endnotes.

In the final section, **Resources**, a **Chronology of Mark Twain's Life and Legacy** is featured, followed by a selection of further reading. Also included in this volume is a **Bibliography**, biographies of the **Editor** and **Contributors**, as well as an alphabetical **Index**.

The *Critical Insights* Series distills the best of both classic and current literary criticism of the world's most studied literature. Edited and written by some of academia's most distinguished literary scholars, *Critical Insights: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* provides authoritative, in-depth scholarship that students and researchers will rely on for years. This volume is destined to become a valuable purchase for all.

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