小吉恩·愛德華·維思博士畢業於堪薩斯大學（University of Kansas），目前擔任帕特里克·亨利學院（Patrick Henry College）的教務長和文學教授，協和神學院（Concordia Theological Seminary）克拉納赫研究所（Cranach Institute）所長，《世界》雜誌（World Magazine）和「桌邊談話」（TableTalk）的專欄作者。他是18本關於基督教和文化不同方面書籍的作者，包括《字裡行間的閱讀：文學作品基督徒指南》（Reading Between the Lines: A Christian Guide to Literature）和《想像力的救贖：用你心靈中被忽視的部分來榮耀上帝》（Imagination Redeemed: Glorifying God with a Neglected Part of Your Mind）。

「所有現代美國文學都從馬克·吐溫的一本書開始，這本書就是《哈克貝利·費恩歷險記》（Huckleberry Finn），」海明威說。「所有美國作家的著作都受這本書的啓發。這本小說堪稱前無古人，後無來者。」

這本書出版於1884年，是第一部用美國俚語寫成的小說，以穿越美國自然和社會景觀的史詩般旅程爲特色，從一種特別的美國人角度出發，探討了獨特的美國問題。

與其他經典作品不同，當代讀者出於「要讀名著」的責任感而翻開很多經典文學著作，但在閱讀時感到非常困難，而《哈克貝利·費恩歷險記》則讓人重新感受到閱讀的所有樂趣。馬克·吐溫將一個個懸疑、冒險和情節曲折的故事與令人難忘的人物、深刻的主題和破壞性的社會諷刺結合在一起。吐溫不僅是一位偉大的小說家，也是一位偉大的幽默家。他是爲數不多的能夠同時做到嚴肅和幽默的作家之一。《哈克貝利·費恩歷險記》的讀者會發現自己讀的時候笑得很開心，甚至會被感動到流淚。

故事是以湯姆·索亞（Tom Sawyer）的街頭頑童朋友哈克·費恩的視角和聲音講述的。故事開始時是《湯姆·索亞歷險記》的續集，在密蘇里小鎮上有更多有趣的惡作劇，直到哈克那位酒鬼和流氓父親到來，情節開始變得嚴肅。在逃離父親的過程中，哈克發現自己也在幫助奴隸吉姆逃向自由。他們乘著木筏順著密西西比河漂流而下，一路上遇到了各種冒險和豐富多彩的人物，從捲入哈特菲爾德和麥考伊式爭鬥的家庭到一對自稱是英國公爵和法國合法國王的騙子。他們的目標是到達伊利諾伊州的開羅（Cairo, Illinois），在那裡他們可以沿著俄亥俄河向北走，爲吉姆獲得自由。但他們錯過了轉彎，在奴隸制土地裡越漂越遠。

在密西西比河上，哈克學會了不把吉姆當做什麼「財產」——當他們上岸後，人們就是這樣看待他的，而是把他當做一個人，一個願意爲哈克犧牲自己的朋友。這部小說是一篇深刻的論文，論述了把其他人當作單純剝削對象時的罪惡，它是所有文學作品中對奴隸制和種族主義的最感人的控訴之一。

然而，正如馬克·吐溫式的諷刺，《哈克貝利·費恩歷險記》今天在許多圈子裡——特別是在公立學校——被列爲禁書，因爲人們指控它有種族主義。這本書，就像它所使用的19世紀南方方言一樣，使用了"N"開頭的單詞稱呼黑人。吉姆雖然是小說的道德中心，但有時卻被認爲是一個種族刻板印象，吐溫的一些幽默似乎讓人聯想到以前用來展示黑人但被看爲有種族攻擊的「小戲班」式描述。

因此，正如它經常做的那樣，風格勝過內容，看似膚淺的細節甚至使人們無法看到背後的含義。

但是，如果讀者不能超越「N」開頭的這個單詞，我建議暫緩閱讀這本書。據報導，諷刺是最難掌握的言語方式，因此，如果讀者在小說中只看到種族主義，而沒有看到馬克·吐溫攻擊這種種族主義的方式，他們還沒有準備好接受這部小說。

我們常常認爲，關於兒童的書是爲兒童準備的。情況並不總是如此。實際上，小說中除了種族主義之外，還有很多內容會讓現代父母感到不安。兒童吸菸、孩子們喝酒、孩子們離家出走。孩子們隨意在鎮上游蕩，做一些危險的事情，如在河裡游泳和進入山洞，並且在沒有成人持續監督的情況下進行。（與我那些受到更多保護的孩子的童年相比，我的童年更像哈克·費恩，但現在又對孫子孫女加倍保護。）當時的文化就是這樣，讓《哈克貝利·費恩歷險記》成爲一本適合成年人的書。

但馬克·吐溫不是對基督教有敵意嗎？好吧，在他的最後幾年裡，吐溫是一個痛苦的人，他抨擊宗教，還對聖女貞德培養了一種近乎天主教的崇敬。但在《哈克貝利·費恩歷險記》中，他諷刺了基督教的教義和當時基督教文化之間的衝突。例如，格蘭福德（Grangerford）一家熱情而善良，充滿了對基督教的真誠虔誠和善舉——只是他們與同樣虔誠的雪珀赫德森（Shepherdsons）一家有血海深仇，他們世世代代都在殺害對方——儘管沒有人記得這一切是如何開始的，也沒有人記得他們爲什麼如此仇恨對方。

小說的轉折點是哈克決定違背他的良心和他在主日學裡所學的一切，幫助吉姆獲得自由。哈克描述了他一開始如何決定扭轉自己的生活，並通過將吉姆交給他的合法主人來遵循正義的道路。但後來，在看到吉姆的人性後，哈克決定幫助吉姆逃跑，儘管這是在偷竊，儘管這一罪行肯定會使他受到永恆的譴責。「好吧，那麼，」哈克決定。「讓我下地獄吧。」這句話不得不讓任何一個基督徒感到害怕。但是，我們不能靠善行得救的一個原因是，當我們行善時，認爲它們會使我們獲得天堂，這就剝奪了善行本身的道德意義。我們的罪性是這樣的，我們甚至可以爲了一個自私的動機而做善事。對哈克來說，道德世界是如此顛倒，以至於一件壞事（背叛朋友）被認爲是一件好事，而一件好事（幫助朋友）被理解爲一件壞事。哈克沒有做正確的事來換取永恆的獎賞，而是做正確的事——愛和服務他的鄰舍——儘管他以爲這將給他帶來永恆的懲罰。同樣，更多的諷刺會讓許多讀者感到厭煩。但總的來說，對基督徒來說，忍受對虛僞和他們自己的非基督徒態度和行爲的諷刺是件好事。它們有助於使我們不斷悔改。在小說最後一節，貧窮但賢惠而現實的哈克與他的朋友湯姆·索亞再次相遇，後者有著中產階級的身份和瘋狂的浪漫理想。海明威說，我們應該跳過這最後一部分，這部分只是變得愚蠢，把高貴的吉姆更多地變成了小丑。在結尾處，哈克決定做美國人在遇到棘手的問題後總是會做的事（當他們可以做的時候）。「擴大我們的領土」——到西部去，到邊疆去，開始新的生活。這基本上就是馬克·吐溫離開飽受戰爭摧殘的南方前往內華達州銀礦的做法。這部小說提醒基督徒讀者，罪惡深入人心，深入人類社會，它使我們都成爲奴隸；它喚醒了人們對自由的渴望，這種渴望只能來自爲使我們自由而死的基督。其他人可能不會從這個故事中領會到這些。但基督徒會。

譯：DeepL；校：JFX。

https://tc.tgcchinese.org/article/gene-veith-a-novel-every-christian-should-consider-reading

Gene Veith: A Novel Every Christian Should Consider Reading

SEPTEMBER 9, 2014

I am doing a blog series on Novels Every Christian Should Consider Reading.

Gene Edward Veith Jr. (PhD, University of Kansas) is the provost and professor of Literature at Patrick Henry College, the Director of the Cranach Institute at Concordia Theological Seminary, a columnist for World Magazine and TableTalk. He is the author of 18 books on different facets of Christianity and culture, including Reading Between the Lines: A Christian Guide to Literature and Imagination Redeemed: Glorifying God with a Neglected Part of Your Mind (releasing in November). He blogs at Cranach (hosted by Patheos) and can be followed on Twitter at @geneveith.

“All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called Huckleberry Finn,” said Ernest Hemingway. “All American writing comes from that. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since.”

The book, published in 1884, was the first novel written in a distinctly American dialect, featuring an epic journey through the American physical and social landscape, written from a particularly American sensibility, and exploring uniquely American problems.

Unlike some classics, which a contemporary reader approaches out of a sense of duty and reads with great difficulty, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn brings back all the pleasures of reading. Mark Twain combines a tale of suspense, adventure, and melodrama with unforgettable characters, profound themes, and devastating social satire. Twain is not only a great novelist, he is a great humorist. He is one of the few authors who can be serious and funny at the same time. Readers of Huckleberry Finn will find themselves laughing out loud, even as they are moved to tears.

The story is told from the point of view and in the voice of Huck Finn, Tom Sawyer’s street urchin friend. It begins as the sequel to Tom Sawyer with more amusing pranks in small town Missouri until the plot gets serious with the arrival of Huck’s murderous father. In escaping from him, Huck finds himself also helping Jim, a slave, escape to freedom. They float down the Mississippi on a raft, encountering adventures and colorful characters along the way, from families engaged in a Hatfield-and-McCoys-type feud to a pair of conmen who claim to be an English Duke and the rightful King of France. The goal is to reach Cairo, Illinois, where they can head north on the Ohio River to freedom for Jim. But they miss their turn and drift deeper and deeper into slave country.

On the Mississippi, Huck learns to see Jim not as a piece of property—which is how he is seen when they go ashore—but as a human being, a friend who is willing to sacrifice himself for Huck. The novel is a profound treatise on the evils of treating other human beings as mere objects to exploit, and it is one of the most moving indictments of slavery and of racism in all of literature.

And yet, nevertheless, in an irony of Mark Twain proportions, Huckleberry Finn is not allowed to be read today in many circles—and particularly in public schools—because it is charged with racism. The book, like the 19th-century Southern vernacular it is written in, uses the “N-word.” Jim, though the moral center of the novel, sometimes comes across as a racial stereotype, with some of Twain’s humor seeming reminiscent of the old racially offensive “minstrel shows.”

Thus, as it so often does, style trumps substance, with seemingly superficial details preventing people from even being able to see the underlying meaning.

But if readers cannot get beyond the “N-word,” I’d recommend holding off on Huckleberry Finn. Irony is reportedly the most difficult figure of speech to master, so if readers see only racism in the novel and not the way Twain is attacking that racism, they aren’t ready for this novel.

We often assume that books about children are for children. That isn’t always the case. There is actually much more than racism in the novel that would make modern parents squirm. Children smoking. Children drinking. Children running away. Children roaming all over town at will, doing dangerous things like swimming in the river and going into caves, and carrying on without constant adult supervision. (My own childhood was much more Huck-Finn like than that of my much-more protected children, who are now even more protective with my grandchildren.) The culture being what it is, let Huckleberry Finn be a book for adults.

But isn’t Mark Twain hostile to Christianity? Well, in his last years, Twain was a bitter man who inveighed against religion, even as he cultivated an almost Catholic veneration of St. Joan of Arc. But in Huckleberry Finn, he satirizes the conflict between what Christianity teaches and the cultural Christianity of the time. Thus, the Grangerford family is warm and kind, full of sincere Christian piety and good works—except that they are engaged in a blood feud with the equally devout Shepherdsons, and they have been killing each other’s children for generations, even though no one can remember how it all started or why they hate each other so much.

The turning point of the novel is when Huck decides to violate his conscience and everything he had been taught in Sunday School by helping Jim attain his freedom. Huck describes how he decided to turn his life around and follow the path of righteousness by turning in Jim to his rightful owners. But then, getting a glimpse of Jim’s humanity, Huck decides to help Jim escape, even though this would be stealing, and even though this crime would surely condemn him eternally. “All right, then,” Huck decides. “I’ll go to Hell.” That line has to make any Christian cringe. But one reason why we cannot be saved by our good works is that when we do them thinking that they will cause us to merit Heaven, that takes away their moral significance. Our sinful nature is such that we can even do good works for a selfish motive. With Huck, the moral universe is so topsy-turvy that a bad work (betraying a friend) is thought to be a good work, and a good work (helping a friend) is construed as a bad work. Instead of doing what is right in return for an eternal reward, Huck does what is right—loving and serving his neighbor—even though he expects it will earn him an eternal punishment. Again, more irony that can put many readers off. But in general, it is good for Christians to endure satires against hypocrisy and their own un-Christian attitudes and behavior. They help keep us in a state of repentance. In the last section of the novel, the poor but virtuous and realistic Huck meets up again with his friend Tom Sawyer with his middle-class status and wildly romantic ideals. Hemingway says that we should skip this last part, which just gets silly and turns the noble Jim into more of a clown. At the very end, Huck decides to do what Americans always used to do (when they could) after running into intractable problems: “light out for the Territory.” Go West, head for the frontier, start a new life. That’s basically what Mark Twain did in leaving the war-torn South for the silver mines of Nevada. The novel reminds the Christian reader that sin goes deep into the human heart and into human society and that it makes us all slaves; and it awakens a desire for freedom that can only come from Christ, who died to set us free. Others may not get that from the story. But Christians will.

https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/gene-veith-a-novel-every-christian-should-consider-reading/