

100 Banned Books: Censorship Histories of World Literature

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Introduction © 1999 by Ken Wachsberger

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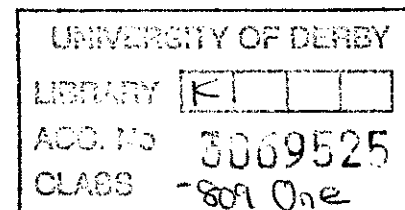
—N. J. K.

For Jonathan, Andre and Daniel

—M. B.

*To my son, Robert Gregor, and to all young people who will try to
make the world they have inherited a better place*

—D. B. S.



INTRODUCTION

I am honored to be writing this introduction to *100 Banned Books: Censorship Histories of World Literature*, but sad that this discussion is concerned less with the distant past than with current events. Unfortunately, censorship persists, even though, as Margaret Bald, author of the section on books banned for religious reasons, observes, “When you look back over centuries at censorship and see the incredible range of books and authors whose works were suppressed, you can only be struck by how absurdly ineffective and useless it has been in the long run.”

The First Amendment is the greatest vision America has given to the world: it ensures the freedom of expression and of religion to all who visit or live here. My family and I visited Europe for the first time last summer. While in Germany, we happened to park on Avenue of the Jews. I didn’t know if the street’s name was a vestige of Nazi anti-Semitism, a memorial to victims of the Holocaust or simply a record of those who used to populate the neighborhood it traversed, but I remained disconcerted even as I visited a Jewish temple that had been rebuilt by a Christian community after being destroyed by the Nazis on Kristallnacht.

We did not travel to Iran, but it is not necessary to have done so to have heard of the *fatwa*, or religious interdiction, against Salman Rushdie and his novel *The Satanic Verses*. Delivered in 1989, the *fatwa* amounted to a death sentence against the author, who has lived in hiding ever since. Even though the *fatwa* was officially lifted in 1998, religious conservatives have resolved to carry it out.

In Bangladesh, feminist columnist and author Taslima Nasrin has had bounties placed on her head for her uncompromising stand against patriarchal religious traditions that she sees as oppressive to women.

Americans live in relative freedom. Yet censorship also has been a menace throughout U.S. history, from the time of Roger Williams and other early colonial freethinkers. Southeast Michigan, where I live, recently experienced embarrassing spectacles of First Amendment repression by left- and right-wing advocates. In Ann Arbor, members of a welfare rights organization claiming to speak on behalf of liberal members of the community threw stones at members of the Ku Klux Klan. In neighboring Belleville, science teachers were forced to tear pages with references to abortion from science books.

The latter is an example of social censorship, the prohibition of ideas that make some people uncomfortable. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* was censored by the Alabama Textbook Commission in 1983 because it was “a real downer.” Portions of the book were cut by her Dutch publisher because of references to her menstruation and a friend’s growing breasts.

Many of our richest literary works—*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, *Catch-22*—have been censored at one time or another. Advancing technology has provided more diverse targets—the record, film and television industries and the Internet—for school boards, local governments, religious fanatics and moral crusaders to take aim at as they work to restrict free expression and the freedom to read, watch and listen, in order to shield their children, and you, from original or disturbing thoughts.

100 Banned Books contains selections from Facts On File’s four-volume Banned Books series, which I edited, about books banned or censored for political, religious, sexual or social reasons. Each of the 100 books is discussed individually through summaries of its contents and censorship history. While many of these books have been legally “banned”—prohibited “as by official order”—all indeed have been banned in a broader sense: targeted for removal from school curricula or library shelves, condemned in churches and forbidden to the faithful, rejected or expurgated by publishers, challenged in court, even voluntarily rewritten by their authors. Censored authors have been verbally abused, physically attacked, shunned by their families and communities, excommunicated from their religious congregations, and shot, hanged or burned at the stake by their enemies. The 100 works in this volume include novels, histories, biographies, children’s books, religious and philosophical treatises, poems, polemics and other forms of written expression. Their censorship histories are inspiring.

* * *

NOTE: Works whose titles appear in *SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS* have their own entries in the volume.

—Ken Wachsbarger

LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON POLITICAL GROUNDS



The phrase “suppressed on political grounds” casts a shadow of a heavy-handed government blocking its citizens from receiving information, ideas and opinions that it perceives to be critical, embarrassing or threatening. This image, unfortunately, is too often reality. It is not, however, limited to dictatorships such as those of Hitler’s Nazi Germany, Stalin’s communist Soviet Union and Suharto’s Indonesia. The governments of democracies also participate in attempts to censor such critical material in order to protect their own perceived state security.

Further, the impression that censorship for political reasons emanates only from national governments is mistaken. The second common source of such activity is at the local community level, generated by school board members or citizens, individually or in groups, who attack textbooks and fiction used in schools or available in school libraries. In contrast to censorship challenges at the national level, challenges at the local level are aimed at the political values and images that children are receiving. Over the years, the chief targets have been socialism, communism and the portrayal of the Soviet Union. A companion concern is the portrayal of the United States. Examining flaws in American society is deemed unpatriotic to these critics, who become concerned when past and present policies of their government are questioned in school textbooks. At the center of their objections has been the fear that the Soviet Union would be viewed too positively, or the United States, too negatively.

The 25 censored titles discussed in this section vary considerably in subject and form. Some texts have extensive or impressive censorship histories. *The Grapes of Wrath* was challenged and burned within months of its publication in 1939 and has been subject to attacks for more than 50 years. The censorship of Solzhenitsyn’s books by the Soviet government gained international notoriety. Other works appear to have had limited censorship exposure. However,

not all objections are formalized or publicly announced; others are reported only in local newspapers. Self-censorship by teachers and librarians is common; I recall the comment of a librarian who accounted for the lack of challenges to her collection through her tactic of not ordering books that were censored elsewhere. Further, not all attacks are identified forthrightly; it is apparently more difficult to protest the politics of a text than it is to protest its offensive language. This is evident in the treatment of many of the contested books discussed in this volume. *Catch-22* by Joseph Heller, for instance, was censored for social reasons. Lee Burress, who had conducted five state and national surveys of censorship of school library and classroom materials, referred to this mask as the “hidden agenda” of censorship.

The accounts of these attacks at local levels may seem to the glancing eye diversified and transient; those at the national level may appear remote and arcane. These multiple streams of curtailed thought, however, combine to form a treacherous current. Its undertow can ensnare the mind in the tangled weeds of ignorance and irrationality. Denied both in individual incidents and en masse is the sine qua non of democracy, the right of fundamental inquiry, the ebb and flow of thought.

—Nicholas J. Karolides
University of Wisconsin—
River Falls

ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

Author: Erich Maria Remarque
Original date and place of publication: 1928, Germany; 1929, United States
Publisher: Impropylaen-Verlag; Little, Brown and Company
Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

He fell in October 1918, on a day that was so quiet and still on the whole front, that the army report confined itself to the single sentence: All quiet on the Western Front.

He had fallen forward and lay on the earth as though sleeping. Turning him over one saw that he could not have suffered long; his face had an expression of calm, as though almost glad the end had come.

This final passage of Remarque’s renowned novel enunciates not only the irony of death of this unknown soldier, but also the irony of the wartime communiques that announced that there was nothing new to report while thousands were wounded and dying daily. (The German title of the novel, *Im Westen Nichts Neues*, translates as “nothing new in the West.”) The final passage also signals the irony of the title, a bitterness that pervades the entire work.

There are many unknown soldiers in the novel on both sides of the trenches. They are the bodies piled three deep in the shell craters, the mangled bodies thrown about in the fields, the “naked soldier squatting in the fork of a tree . . . his helmet on, otherwise he is entirely unclad. There is one half of him sitting there, the top half, the legs are missing.” They are the young Frenchman in retreat who lags behind, is overtaken—“a blow from a spade cleaves through his face.”

The unknown soldiers are background. The novel focuses on Paul Baumer, the narrator, and his comrades of the Second Company, chiefly Albert Kropp, his close friend, and Stanislaus Katczinsky, the leader of the group. Katczinsky (Kat) is 40 years old; the others are 18 and 19. They are ordinary folk: Müller, who dreams of examinations; Tjaden, a locksmith; Hää Westhus, a peat-digger; and Deteling, a peasant.

The novel opens five miles behind the front. The men are “at rest” after 14 days on the front line. Of the 150 men to go forward, only 80 have returned. A theme—and the tone of disillusionment—is introduced immediately, the catalyst being the receipt of a letter from Kantorek, their former schoolmaster. It was he who had urged them all to volunteer, causing the hesitant ones to feel like cowards.

For us lads of eighteen [adults] ought to have been mediators and guides to the world of maturity . . . in our hearts we trusted them. The idea of authority, which they represented, was associated in our minds with a greater insight and a manlier wisdom. But the first death we saw shattered this belief . . . The first

LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS



In 1989 an edict from Tehran brought a shocking reminder of religious censorship, regarded by many as a spectre from the distant past of the Inquisition and the burning of heretics. The Ayatollah Khomeini's death decree against author Salman Rushdie and the widespread banning of Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses*, for blasphemy against Islam was a startling example of a phenomenon that is as old as history and, with the current wave of religious fundamentalism, as recent as today's headlines.

Censorship has existed in every society to protect the prevailing moral and social order. Book censorship in Western culture can be traced to the earliest years of Christianity, when the church began to suppress competing views as heretical. In the second century, the Council of Ephesus burned superstitious works and prohibited the *Acta Pauli*, a history of St. Paul, and in the fifth century, the pope issued the first list of forbidden books.

The flood of unauthorized Bible translations and religious tracts that followed the invention of the printing press in 1450 and the rise of religious dissent during the Protestant Reformation motivated the church to expand its censorial functions. In 1559 Pope Paul IV published the first *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (Index of Forbidden Books). The Index, sometimes referred to as the Roman Index, was administered by the Roman Inquisition. It was binding on all Roman Catholics, who represented most of the population of continental Europe, and was enforced by government authorities. At the same time, similar Indexes were also prepared by theological faculties in Paris and Louvain and by the Spanish Inquisition.

As church and state in Europe began to separate in the 16th century, national monarchies instituted their own mechanisms of religious and political censorship to supplement or substitute for that of the church. In the areas where they had political control, the new Protestant faiths began to ban the writings of Catholics or dissenters.

From the earliest times religious orthodoxy and politics have been intimately connected. To be a heretic was often to be considered a traitor, subject to punishment by secular authorities. And manipulation of religious sensitivities for political purposes has a long and sordid history, with recorded examples dating to the trial of Socrates, in 399 B.C.

As Europe became more politically fragmented and means of communication more sophisticated, state censorships were rarely thorough enough to prevent forbidden books from circulating. By the 18th century, the proliferation of underground publishing, as France's book censor Malesherbes said, meant that "a man who had read only books that originally appeared with the formal approval of the government would be behind his contemporaries by nearly a century."

It is impossible to discuss religious censorship of books without referring to the Index of Forbidden Books, described as the most successful censorial device of modern times, undoubtedly the most enduring. When it was finally abolished by the Vatican in 1966 after four centuries of existence, however, it had outlived its effectiveness. The church had long before lost the authority to enforce it and the list was widely viewed as anachronistic.

In the 42nd and final Index issued in 1948 and in print until 1966, of total of 4,126 books were still prohibited to Catholics: 1,331 from the 17th century or earlier, 1,186 from the 18th century, 1,354 from the 19th and 255 from the 20th century. Though many were obscure theological titles or works that were controversial in their day but had been forgotten for centuries, literary and philosophical classics by dozens of authors representing a Who's Who of Western thought were also included, among them, Bentham, Bergson, Comte, Defoe, Descartes, Diderot, Flaubert, Gibbon, Hobbes, Hume, Kant, Locke, Mill, Montaigne, Montesquieu, Pascal, Rousseau, Sand, Spinoza, Stendhal, Voltaire and Zola. Rather than banning books, the church's post-Index book censorship has focused primarily on sanctioning dissident Catholic theologians for their writing or pressuring the occasional Catholic author to hew to orthodoxy.

Though the First Amendment prevents government authorities from practicing religious censorship in the United States, individuals and organized religious fundamentalist have successfully pressed to remove books viewed as anti-Christian from public and school libraries and curricula. The majority of these instances have focused on perceived immorality, profane language or treatment of sexuality, rather than religious content per se. Their targets have included textbooks that teach evolution without presenting the alternative theory of "creationism," books said to promote the religion of "secular humanism" and, in a growing trend, material with references to Eastern religions, "New Age" thought, witchcraft or the occult.

Although Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* is the most notorious international case of book censorship in this century, it is not unique. Authors in Muslim countries

face increasing threats to their freedom of expression and their safety both from governments that censor or prosecute those whose writing is offensive to Islamic religious authorities and from unofficial militant Islamic groups.

Egyptian intellectual Farag Fouda and Algerian novelist and journalist Tihar Diaou, among scores of Algerian intellectuals, were murdered during the 1990s by fundamentalist terrorists. In 1994, the Egyptian Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz was stabbed and seriously wounded. Other writers, such as Taslima Nasrin of Bangladesh, have been driven into exile by death threats or, like Egyptian novelist Alaa Hamed, sentenced to prison for blasphemy. The writing of feminists such as Nasrin, Nawal El Saadawi of Egypt and Fatima Memissi of Morocco, who challenge interpretations of Islamic dogma that restrict women, has particularly angered both governments and Islamist fundamentalists.

The books discussed in this section represent a sampling of the thousands that have been targets of religious censorship over the centuries. They include texts of the world's major religions, novels and classic works of philosophy and science representing the intellectual heritage of Western civilization. They also include contemporary works that offended church authorities, governments or Christian or Muslim fundamentalists. A few entries—Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, for example—chronicle censorship attempts in the United States that were ultimately unsuccessful but that merit attention because they involved legal challenges.

Many of these books were branded with the charge of heresy. Heresy is defined as opinion or doctrine that is at variance with orthodox religious teaching, or, as religious historian David Christie-Murray observed, "the opinion held by a minority of men which the majority declares is unacceptable and is strong enough to punish." Others were tarred with the brush of blasphemy, speaking in a profane or irreverent manner of the sacred. All were censored because they were seen as dangerous—to orthodoxy, to faith and morals or to the social and political order.

The history of censorship is one of inhumanity, of lives and livelihoods lost, talent or genius snuffed out, work unfinished, withheld, deleted or destroyed. Literary history and the present are dark with silences, Tillye Olsen has written. It is also a history of rebellion, of defiance in the face of mortal danger and perseverance against harassment, discouragement and disdain.

Yet to review the censorship of the books discussed in this section is to be struck by the futility of religious censorship. As historian Leonard W. Levy observed, the verdicts of time mock judgments and alter sensitivities. Insurgent faiths become established and revolutionary ideas lose their power to shock. For centuries censorship has created best-sellers because as Montaigne said, "To forbid us anything is to make us have a mind for it." Like water leaking slowly through a dike to become a steady trickle or a flood, words and ideas inexorably elude the censor's grasp.

"A book cannot be killed," commented Moroccan writer Nadia Tazi on Rushdie's censorship, "it lives and dies on its own. Once the 'vases' are broken, the fragments of life spread throughout the world; voices escape, going their adventurous ways; and there are always encounters, mutations, and festivals of the spirit."

—Margaret Bald

THE AGE OF REASON

Author: Thomas Paine

Original date and place of publication: 1794-95, France

Literary form: Philosophical treatise

SUMMARY

The Anglo-American political theorist, writer and revolutionary Thomas Paine was one of the greatest pamphleteers in the English language. *The Age of Reason*, an uncompromising attack on Christianity based on the principles of rationalism, became the most popular deist work ever written.

The son of an English Quaker, Paine emigrated to America in 1774 and became active in the independence movement. His pamphlet, *Common Sense*, published in January 1776, called for the founding of an American republic and galvanized the public toward independence.

In 1787 Paine returned to England, where he published in 1791-92 *THE RIGHTS OF MAN*, a work defending the French Revolution and attacking social and political inequities in Britain. It was to sell an estimated half-million copies in the next decade and become one of the most widely read books in England. Indicted for seditious libel by the British government for *The Rights of Man*, Paine fled to Paris, where he participated in the French Revolution as a member of the National Convention. For 10 months in 1794, during the Reign of Terror, he was imprisoned by Robespierre and the Jacobins before being rescued by the American ambassador to France, James Monroe.

On his way to prison Paine delivered to a friend the manuscript of part one of *The Age of Reason*, which was published in Paris in 1794. After his release from prison he completed part two, which appeared in 1795. During his stay in France, Paine became convinced that popular revolution against the reactionary activities of the French clergy, who plotted against the revolution in alliance with the forces of aristocracy and monarchy, was leading the French people to turn to atheism. In *The Age of Reason*, Paine resolved to rescue true religion from the Christian system of faith, which he regarded as a "pious fraud" and "repugnant to reason."

Paine, in common with many prominent American and European intellectuals, such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Voltaire and Rousseau, was a deist. Deism, a religious expression of scientific rationalism, proposed that the existence of God could be inferred from the order and harmony of creation. Deists saw formal religion as superfluous and scorned claims of supernatural revelation as a basis for belief. God's creation, deists believed, was the only bible.

In *The Age of Reason*, Paine popularized deism, removed it from the sphere of the intellectual elite and made the philosophy accessible to a mass audience. Though the book was described as "the atheist's bible" by the book's critics,

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LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON SEXUAL GROUNDS



Changing social mores have moved many books formerly forbidden because of explicit sexual content out of locked cabinets and onto the open shelves in libraries and bookstores. Many such books have also entered high school and college classrooms to be read by students who little realize their notorious pasts.

A changed society has taken literary criticism out of the courts. In 1961, the United States Supreme Court pondered if D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was lewd or literary. By 1969, the novel was required reading in college literature courses. The same is true of other works, such as James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Vladimir Nabokov's , Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* and Voltaire's *Candide*, all once banned and considered indecent. When did the "obscene" and the "pornographic" become the "erotic" and the "classic?"

Dirty words alone are not enough to make a work erotic, although many books in the 19th and early 20th centuries were banned simply for that reason. Similarly, many books have been banned because they discussed or alluded to such familiar social phenomena as prostitution, unwed pregnancy and adultery, among them Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*. Neither can reasonably be termed an erotic or pornographic work, yet both books were banned for their sexual content.

In 1957, the U.S. Supreme Court changed its definition of obscenity to refer to works that had sexual content but no "redeeming social importance." This redefinition sent Americans in search of works both erotically interesting and socially redeeming, and thus legally sexually titillating. Anonymous Victorian novels, the underground pornography of their day, joined art books with lavish reproductions of Japanese and Indian erotic painting and sculpture and explicit psychological case studies of sexually "abnormal" behavior as the standard middle-class erotica of the early to mid-20th century. During that time, American courts tried obscenity cases and

pondered the literary merits of *Fanny Hill*, or *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure, Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *Ulysses* and *Tropic of Capricorn*.

By 1970, the barriers were down and the Report of the United States President's Commission on Obscenity noted that "Virtually every English language book thought to be obscene when published, and many similar books translated into English, have been reissued by secondary publishers. The entire stockpile of 'classic erotic literature' (e.g., *The Kama Sutra*, Frank Harris, de Sade, etc.) published over centuries has thus come onto the market."

As formerly banned works gained acceptance, many novels published in the last two decades have benefited and freely include sexual detail and gratuitous sex scenes. Society's view of sex has changed and many books that would once have been condemned as pornographic or obscene now become best-sellers. Even cheaply produced "adult" books that do not pretend to any purpose other than sexual arousal are now easily available to willing buyers through direct mail and retail stores. The legal line between pornography and erotica has disappeared, and the differences are now defined more according to aesthetic appeal than to content.

But, how is "erotic" different from "pornographic?" Nineteenth-century booksellers coined the term *erotica* to describe risqué writing found in such classics as the poems of Catullus, the satires of Juvenal and love manuals such as the *Kama Sutra*, as well as that perennial favorite, *Fanny Hill*, or *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748-49), the subject of the first U.S. obscenity trial in 1821. These early works bore no resemblance to the cheaply produced, and cheap-looking, books of the mid-20th century. The market catered to men of means who could well afford the lavishly illustrated deluxe editions that satisfied what was termed their "curious" tastes. Patrons paid handsomely for their pleasure.

The growth of mass demand for erotica required mass production, and cheaply produced pulp novels with lurid covers and plotless texts appeared in great number. These contrasted strongly in appearance with the lavishly illustrated and expensively produced gentlemen's erotica of the 19th century, but they were identical in purpose. Price was the primary distinguishing factor. The differences became so blurred that the 1970 Report of the United States President's Commission on Obscenity struggled and failed to define what was obscene and pornographic, and thus illegal.

The definitions were no clearer in 1986, when the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography (often called the Meese Commission) revealed that its findings were inconclusive regarding the dangers of pornography. Although the Commission recommended intensified enforcement against child pornography and material showing sexual violence, the Commission members hedged in their recommendations regarding all-text materials. The panel recommended "extraordinary caution" in regard to prosecuting those who distributed materials that contained no photographs, pictures or drawings.

"The written word has had and continues to have a special place in this and any other civilization." Designating as among the "least harmful" types of pornography "books consisting of the printed text only," the Commission observed that such text might not always meet its criteria for pornography, that it be "sexually explicit and intended primarily for the purpose of sexual arousal."

The century and a half of obscenity trials regarding literature came to a halt, and the old argument was invalidated. Those who could read could indulge themselves in the provocative power of words that arouse, stimulate and titillate—they were consumers of "erotica." The less literate, more likely to view X-rated videos or picture magazines that arouse, stimulate and titillate, were indulging in "pornography." The appeal of the categories is the same, but their audiences differed as did the assumed consequences.

The goal of this section of works censored on grounds of sexual content is neither to deride nor defend either the mainstream erotica or the pulp pornography that has been published over the centuries. Instead, it is to illuminate changing cultural attitudes toward the erotic, through a survey of the legal fate of classic and representative works in centuries past as well as in the 20th century.

—Dawn B. Sovà, Ph.D

the anonymous *Young Girl's Diary*. The magistrate's court ruled in favor of the publisher.

In 1923, Supreme Court Justice John Ford tried to suppress *Women in Love* after his daughter brought the book home from the circulating library that had recommended it to her. Ford founded the Clean Books League and worked with John Sumner, secretary of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, to achieve the passage of a "clean books" bill in the New York legislature. He also favored upholding and strengthening existing obscenity laws. Incensed by the action, Lawrence sent Ford a telegram from Taos, quoted on page 580 of the February 24, 1923, issue of *Publishers Weekly*:

Let Judge John Ford confine his judgment to courts of law, and not try to perch in seats that are too high for him. Also let him take away the circulating library tickets from Miss Ford, lest worse befall her. She evidently needs an account at a candy shop, because, of course, 'Women in Love' wasn't written for the Ford family. . . . Father and mother and daughter should all leave the tree of knowledge alone. The Judge won't succeed in chopping it down, with his horrified hatchet. Many better men have tried and failed.

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LITERATURE SUPPRESSED ON SOCIAL GROUNDS



The broad nature of obscenity laws has made possible a wide interpretation of what constitutes an essentially "obscene" literary work. The language of American law stresses work that "depicts or describes sexual conduct in a patently offensive manner." The law also specifies that the "average person, taking contemporary community standards, would find that a work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest." Often what this has meant in reality is that works containing words deemed "vulgar" by specific members of a community or presenting interracial or homosexual relationships that are unacceptable to the standards of a given community acquire the label "obscene." These are social factors, the topic of this section, and they are distinctly different from erotic, religious and political content.

Censors have so frequently applied such general guidelines to published writing that a wide range of literature has been declared "obscene." This section avoids such generalization. Instead, the books discussed here are literary works that have been banned, censored or challenged because of language, racial characterization or depiction of the drug use, social class or sexual orientation of characters, or other social differences, that their challengers have viewed as harmful to readers: thus Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is included, while D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is not, even though both have been banned in the past for being "obscene"; the first has attracted the label because of its language and depiction of race, while the second contains graphic sexual description and has been banned for its erotic content. The following books have been censored because their subject matter and characters do not conform to the social, racial or sexual standards of their censors.

The goal of this section is to identify and discuss books that have been censored as obscene, in centuries past as well as in the 20th century, either

because the authors or the works did not conform to the social expectations of their censors or because they contain socially unacceptable ideas or speech. Taken as a whole, the entries provide a fascinating view of socially motivated censorship.

—Dawn B. Sovà, Ph.D.

THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

Author: Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens)

Original date and place of publication: 1884, London

Original publisher: Self-published

Literary form: Novel

SUMMARY

This novel relates the adventures and struggles of a rambunctious young southern boy in the early 19th century. Told from the first-person point of view, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* portrays river life in a developing America, and young Huckleberry Finn's adventures while on the journey from boyhood to manhood. The story begins with Huck's escape from his brutal father, and follows him up the Mississippi River as he and his slave friend Jim run from authorities and various other scoundrels.

As the novel opens, Huck reminds readers that many of his adventures have already been detailed in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. He states that the \$12,000 that he and Tom had found in the previous novel was invested for them and was earning interest. As the novel opens, Huck, who now lives with the Widow Douglas and Miss Watson, expresses annoyance with the amount of concern placed on making him conform to society. Huck sees no point in this lifestyle and yearns to be a rambunctious youth, as is his nature.

As the narrative progresses, Huck's father, the town drunk and a general burden on society, learns of Huck's recent wealth. He kidnaps Huck and holds him hostage in a shack in a remote area outside the town. While Huck waits to be either freed or rescued, his father repeatedly beats him, leaving Huck convinced that escape is the only feasible solution. To accomplish this, he conjures up a plan to make it appear that he has been murdered. Succeeding in his plan, Huck flees to safety on Jackson's Island, where he is reunited with Miss Watson's runaway slave, Jim. Jim is also hiding, fearful that he will be caught and punished for leaving his mistress. Huck agrees not to speak of Jim to anyone, and the two become partners. Aware that men are looking for Jim, the two decide to leave the island in search of adventure and the free states.

They board a raft that they found on the island and begin their journey. By day they hide on land, and by night they travel on the river. All goes well until one night when, during a violent storm, the raft is torn apart by an oncoming steamship. This experience not only almost ends Huck's young life, but it also separates him from Jim.

Huck swims to shore and finds himself in the midst of a feud between two families, the Grangerfords and the Shepherdsons, and he is immediately attacked by members of the Grangerford family. He states his name as George Jackson and explains quickly that he fell off a riverboat and was washed ashore. He stays with the family for a short time, enjoying their lifestyle and making