

Sorry, billy, you're not allowed to read that

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“ Nigger” is a derogative term that is used to describe people of African American origin. It is a word that not many educated people use today. But in Mark Twain’s world of Huckleberry Finn it is a word that is used in everyday life.

In the book’s time period, “ nigger” was used playfully, jokingly, good-naturedly. So when Twain scholar Alan Gribben and NewSouth Books planned to release a more politically correct version of Huckleberry Finn, where they plan to remove all the derogative words and replace them with “ slave”, many people question whether censorship had gone too far. With every little word of every paragraph being scrutinized and dissected, being politically correct has been the rule of thumb of most publishers and parents. Most would agree that children should make their own presumptions about ideas in books. Most would agree that being politically correct is not the most important thing to worry about in literature. From 2007 to 2008, 85 books were banned.

And the years before 79 books were banned from libraries/ schools. But the creator of the Banned Books Resources Guide, Robert P. Doyle, says that 85% percent of challenges to library materials go unreported. So there might be even more books that have been banned from schools and libraries. With all these books being banned and challenged, most of them turn out to be classics in literature.

And children will not be able to enjoy them because they are not politically correct. An example of this would be when Chinese censors banned Lewis Carroll’s Alice books because they thought that “ Animals should not use

human language". Although this is an extreme example, American censors aren't any better. Once in America's history, the Los Angeles Public Library removed Edgar Rice Burrough's novel Tarzan of the Apes on the grounds that Tarzan supposedly lives in sin with Jane. Even though the Tarzan challenge happened back in 1929, books are still being banned because people think their morals are backwards and they aren't politically correct. Another note on how censorship should not happen is that it can turn people against one another.

Censors can accuse teachers, authors, librarians, or even parents of wanting to corrupt their children. When Lubbock High School's English Department, in Lubbock, Texas, set for the Freshmen class to read I'm Down by Mishna Wolff, most people thought of it as another assigned reading assignment. But as students read more into it, and then as their parents also dug into it they noticed it wasn't all sugarplums and fairies. With all sorts of obscene language around every paragraph and period, parents set out to get the book out off the reading list. And they succeeded. No later than when students had just bought the book, all quizzes and thoughts of I'm Down were halted.

Parents accused the English Department of making Freshmen students read inappropriate materials. Although the book did contain heinous language, it was to be understood that the author grew up with that kind of lingo. It was normal for her to hear the " F-Bomb" being dropped around every sentence. So to change the language in a book to appease a grumpy parent would be akin to changing how a folk tale ends to make a stubborn child happy. Maybe instead of having students stressing out over if they just bought a book that

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they didn't need, schools should create committees of parents to help set the book list.

And if they don't want all that work, the list should be left alone and Mishna Wolff should be allowed to have her childhood make people laugh. With every moral and main idea being questioned in children's books, authors are feeling the heat. Well-known children's authors all over speak about how challenging to see what can be "appropriate" for children and how they can incorporate big truths into their books without being stopped by censors. Norma Klein, a censored author speaks about how she's actually honored that she was censored. To have your book censored means that it's making a social impact on the world and that people are taking it seriously.

She's in good company with Judy Blume and William Faulkner, and Daniel Defoe. All of them have made the list of "Banned Writer's in America". Klein and Blume both wrote books about sincere, realistic stories for young adults that some adults found alarming. But aren't those authors just trying to make life easier for kids by being honest with them? Most adults believe now that childhood is a time of innocence. But with TV being more violent and overflowing with sexual innuendo, most children don't have the same innocence that their parents want for them. So they turn to the children's section in the back of a bookstore or a library for their children.

They don't expect to see that their children are reading about slavery or war or anything like that. Bring on the censors. Politically correctness is on every publisher's mind when reading a prospective admission. But should it be the

only thing? Next time when a book from your school or your children's school is banned, think about the why.