

Children's literature- focus on language and literacy

[Family](#)



16 March Children's literature I reviewed Mark Twain's "The adventures of Tom Sawyer." As the novel suggests, the book is full of adventure. Tom Sawyer, who is tired of all the rules and regulations of his aunty Polly, runs away from home to an Island where he tries to leave without depending on adults. This leads him to witnessing a murder and it culminates in his search for treasure. The main idea of the novel is to bring into light that conflict that children have with adults and how dangerous independence could be for minors. However, Mark Twain seems to deliberately make his protagonist a "bad boy." Tom is constantly on the wrong side of the law and his mischief knows no boundaries. He even decided to appear at his own funeral just so as to surprise the people that were mourning him.

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer is a 1876 story set out in Hannibal, Missouri along the Mississippi river. The choice of the setting for the novel is probably influenced by the fact that Mark Twain, the author, lived in the region. The society of Missouri was a peaceful society and that provides a great backdrop for the conflict that Twain draws in his novel between the adults and Tom Sawyer and his buddies who eventually run away in pursuit of their freedom.

This novel is directed to young children. Twain deliberately used the present day slang in his writing. He was more interested in communicating effectively to the young ones than in meeting the editorial standards of his time. Here is an excerpt to illustrate this:

" Hang the boy, cant I never learn anything? Aint he played me tricks enough like that for me to be looking out for him by this time? But old fools is the biggest fools there is. Cant learn an old dog new tricks" (Twain 2).

Apart from the language used, the protagonist (Tom Sawyer) is also a child

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and this resonates well with Twain's target audience of children.

I chose to review this book not only because it is considered one of the best American novels but also because it is packed with adventure. The adventure in the book would make any child enjoy reading it. However, the book may easily send the wrong message to the young ones. The fact that the protagonist rebels against every law and still enjoys his life might just inspire children to be rebellious. The carefree attitude that Tom Sawyer has throughout the attitude was meant to show the importance of freedom but this might not be interpreted so by young readers. Parents and educators should therefore play an active role to ensure that the children do not get the wrong message from the novel.

This book was written as a novel so it is better read individually by the children. However, group readings could also be arranged in a class setup by teachers. Since the novel has a theme that will easily connect with the young readers, the parents or teachers can easily connect with their children by engaging in discussions about the theme of the book. Since the novel is written in a conversational manner, teachers can arrange for a short play based on the book to help the children to understand the book even better.

Works Cited

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Montgomery : New South Books, 2008. Print