

## About This Volume

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Robert C. Evans

This volume, like all the others in the Critical Insights series, is divided into several sections. The book begins with a “flagship” essay by a major scholar. In the present case, that scholar is Alan Gribben, one of the world’s leading experts on Mark Twain. Gribben also happens to be the editor of controversial editions of two of Twain’s greatest works—*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and, especially, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. It is the latter book, of course, that is widely considered one of the very greatest works in all of American literature. But it is also *Huck Finn* (as it is affectionately called) that has recently been perhaps the most often “challenged” or “banned” book of any great work of fiction, at least in the United States.

The problem, of course, is that Huck, the novel’s narrator, so often uses the so-called “N” word in telling his story. That word appears over two hundred times in the course of the book, and its appearances there have frequently elicited objections from concerned readers, especially concerned African American parents whose children have been required to read the book (and encounter that word) in the public schools and in classroom discussions. Gribben, of course, knows better than almost anyone that Twain’s purpose in using the “N” word was in fact to *satirize* racism (as well as to reflect, faithfully, the ways some people actually spoke in the nineteenth century).

But Gribben began to hear, repeatedly, from teachers who also loved Twain’s masterpiece, that they were now reluctant to teach the book. Sometimes they feared criticism for doing so; sometimes they genuinely did not want to hurt the feelings of their African American students; sometimes both motives were involved. In any case, Gribben began to worry that Twain’s great book had become the object of silent censorship: it wasn’t, often, being overtly *banned* from public schools but was, increasingly, being quietly ignored

or simply dropped from high school curricula. More and more, students were no longer being exposed to one of the greatest works of American fiction ever written.

Gribben decided that one way to deal with this dilemma might be to produce editions of Twain's two most famous books in which the "N" word was replaced with the less inflammatory word "slave." He knew that this alteration would arouse controversy, but he had no idea just how *much* controversy it would provoke. For weeks and even months, his decision was the subject of highly heated national and even international condemnation. Few of the people criticizing Gribben had any idea that he had devoted his entire life as a scholar to studying and celebrating Twain. Few cared that he defended himself by trying to explain that he had only wanted to make sure that *Huck Finn* was no longer silenced in American high schools. In his contribution to this book—which consists of a self-interview—Gribben explains his motives and responds to his critics.

As it happens, Gribben's interview is perhaps the perfect "flagship" essay for the present volume. Anyone who reads the entire book will see that issues of race and ethnicity have increasingly become *the* central issues (besides graphic descriptions of sexual behavior) in recent attempts to challenge, censor, or ban literature. The "N" word has become *the* most controversial word of all the terms that have led parents and others to try to limit what and how other people (especially children or young adults) can read.

Following Gribben's self-interview are four essays in the volume's Critical Contexts section. Each of these four essays is designed to offer a particular emphasis. For example, Richard Obenauf's essay on censorship in medieval England has an explicitly historical focus. This essay is designed to give students a model of how to examine any topic from a historical perspective. The next contextual essay, by Kelly Snyder, is intended to give readers a sense of the critical background to issues of censorship, not only by listing valuable secondary works on this topic but also by considering several of those works in detail. The third contextual essay—another piece by Richard Obenauf—is a kind of critical lens. In other words, it shows how the topic of censorship can

be explored by focusing on one particular work (in this case the medieval morality play known as *Mankind*). Finally, the last of the four contextual essays is deliberately designed to use the method of comparison and contrast. In this case, Robert Donahoo, a leading scholar of Flannery O'Connor, compares and contrasts O'Connor's works with several others inspired by hers. It is not a coincidence that O'Connor, like Twain and others discussed in this book, is most often controversial because of her use of the "N" word. Like Twain, O'Connor intended to satirize the racists who use that word in her fiction, just as she also, like Twain, wanted to record authentically the ways people of her time actually sometimes spoke and thought. But O'Connor, again like Twain, has now become difficult to teach and discuss because she *did* use the "N" word. One value of Donahoo's piece is that he shows how fruitfully various *black* artists have responded to O'Connor's writings.

The next section of the volume—which is also the longest section—consists of ten "Critical Readings" essays. The first two of these pieces are less essays per se than compilations of historical documents. Both offer examples of the kinds of debates that flourished, in the early twentieth century, about two topics that have remained central to most debates about censorship: sex and race. The first piece reprints a 1908 article by Basil Tozer warning writers and publishers that if they did not themselves refrain from creating and issuing suggestive fiction, governments might actually impose repressive official censorship. Tozer's essay provoked various interesting responses.

The next historical piece reprints documents concerning attacks on a racially offensive film. These documents—a letter, a newspaper interview, and a detailed narrative—all grew out of efforts in 1915 to censor, suppress, or at least condemn D. W. Griffith's famous movie, *The Birth of a Nation*. This was an important early work of American cinema, but it quickly became controversial because of the ways it negatively depicted black people and, in fact, endorsed the behavior of the Ku Klux Klan. The newly-formed National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) waged a vigorous

campaign to challenge and even ban the film—a campaign the organization proudly detailed in one of its publications.

In a different kind of piece altogether, Robert Evans next looks at early poems by the great modern Greek poet C. P. Cavafy, who is also widely considered one of the great homoerotic poets of his or any other time. Evans stresses a different kind of censorship than has been emphasized previously: *self-censorship*, in which a writer cannot write what he might otherwise want to write for fear of being attacked either in print or in the flesh. In two successive essays, the English scholar Nicolas Tredell deals with two of the most famous examples of attempts at twentieth-century censorship: D. H. Lawrence’s scandalous (for the time) novel *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and William S. Burroughs’s perhaps even more scandalous novel titled *Naked Lunch*. Tredell explores both works less by examining actual efforts to censor them than by discussing censorship as a broader cultural and fictional theme. He shows how the ultimate failure to suppress Lawrence’s book helped create a much freer attitude toward fiction from the 1960s onwards, and he shows how, in Burroughs’s book, censorship—or the lack thereof—is central to the novel’s own meanings.

The next two essays—by Phill Johnson and Robert Evans, respectively—deal with recent efforts to challenge Harper Lee’s famous novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Here, again, Lee’s use of the “N” word was the major point at issue. Like Twain and O’Connor, Lee used the word satirically and historically: she sought to attack racists while also reflecting, honestly, the racist language and mentality of the era in which her novel was set. Johnson’s essay reports on numerous recent efforts to keep Lee’s book out of public school classrooms. Evans’s article focuses, in detail, on one particular case. He quotes extensively from people who either favored or rejected attempts to ban the book. Some of the evidence he cites is particularly heartfelt and revealing and suggests how difficult it can sometimes be to decide between the need to protect free speech and the desire to shield people from pain.

An essay by Liyang Dong deals with yet another kind of alleged censorship—the kind that can arise within the literary community

itself, especially when two important authors are feuding with one another and bystanders feel a need to take sides. Dong shows how Frank Chin, an early and very influential Chinese American author, took offense at the fiction of Maxine Hong Kingston, a younger colleague who, according to Chin, had betrayed her people by buying into white prejudices about China, Chinese people, and Chinese Americans. Kingston, initially, felt threatened by Chin's strident criticism. Eventually, however, Kingston gained the upper hand, so that Chin later felt that he was, in effect, being censored by Kingston and her allies.

Dong's essay, like others in this book, shows how issues of race and ethnicity (and, possibly, sexism) have influenced recent examples of censorship. Meanwhile, an essay by Darren Harris-Fain (the noted scholar of science fiction and graphic fiction) explores efforts to challenge Alison Bechdel's gay/lesbian graphic novel *Fun Home*. Like Evans's earlier essay on Cavafy, this piece by Harris-Fain explores the ways in which members of sexual minority groups have responded to efforts to censor them. The closing Critical Readings essay, by Robert Evans, offers a detailed report about a very recent controversy concerning alleged censorship. This controversy took place in 2017 and 2018 in the Conejo Valley school district in California. Sherman Alexie's novel *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* was the initial title that came under suspicion, but as the controversy mushroomed it soon became clear that more than two hundred other titles might be affected by the school board's decisions.

Some members of the board wanted to flag mature books with an asterisk on syllabi and on materials available to parents. These books had already been identified, by the State of California, as intended for "mature" readers; advocates of the asterisk policy wanted to alert parents to that fact. However, opponents of the new policy saw it as an effort to censor books and deprive teachers of their right to teach what they considered appropriate. Most of the objections to books, in this case, centered around objections to mature sexual language, but supposed racial and ethnic insensitivity were also often mentioned as reasons for concern. The Conejo Valley

case illustrates that debates about alleged censorship are very much alive and well in the United States today, as long before.

The final section of the present volume provides a variety of resources, including a list of suggested further reading materials, an additional bibliography, information about the editor and the contributors, and an extensive index.

# The Coming Censorship of Fiction

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Basil Tozer et al.

Editor's Note: One of the most interesting debates about censorship in the early twentieth century was provoked by a 1908 article by Basil Tozer. Tozer warned that the increase of sexually suggestive (or even explicit) fiction might make it likely that an official censor of fiction would be appointed in Britain. Such a censor already existed for drama. Tozer's essay prompted a number of replies by both British and American writers, a sampling of which follows his essay (reprinted below). Especially interesting is the emphasis many of the writers give to the roles and motives of women in writing so-called "Fleshy Fiction."

## Tozer's Essay: The Coming Censorship of Fiction

Though it seems but yesterday, it must have been quite twenty years ago that a book from Ouida's pen used to be deemed *ipso facto* an unclean thing by the great body of the public that borrows its novels from the lending-libraries.<sup>1</sup> At that time there were mothers who would take precautions to prevent, or try to prevent, their daughters from reading Ouida's novels, just as there were daughters who kept Ouida's works well out of sight of their mothers. Some fathers, too, looked askance at the yellow covers with the Ouida trademark, and I well remember an elderly man of great integrity but narrow views who caused his pretty grandchild considerable pain by snatching *Moths* out of her hands and burning it before her eyes. Then there were contemporaries of Ouida's who followed in her wake, some few even who stepped in where Ouida with her true sense of artistic perspective would not have thought of treading. Their books were of course banned too by certain strait-laced people of those days who pretended to discover "impropriety" in books that none but an out-and-out Mrs. Grundy would have censored,<sup>2</sup> and that emphatically no man or woman of the world—I mean by that no man or woman of intelligence and devoid of hypocrisy and cant—could by any possibility have objected to. Twenty years ago! In face of the extraordinary change that has taken place within the last few years

in the tone of a great deal of our lending-library fiction, the thought is as strange as the reflection that a century ago a lad was strung up on a gibbet for robbing the Brighton *Mail* of half a guinea.

When, two years ago, I had the temerity, in an article headed “The Increasing Popularity of the Erotic Novel,” published in the *Monthly Review*, openly to draw attention to the change for the worse that was coming over modern novels of a particular class, a section of the newspaper Press at once cried out that the statements made were false in every detail. But soon other writers took the matter up, among them no less distinguished a philosopher than Dr. William Barry, whose anonymous article, “The Fleshly School of Fiction,” published in the *Bookman* of October last, created a profound impression and was quoted throughout England, also on the Continent and in America. By some his bold assertions were warmly upheld. By others they were angrily condemned. As an outcome of the controversy that followed—for a time it almost resembled an agitation—we find in the Preface to The Literary Year-Book for 1908 the guarded statement that “the *Bookman*’s campaign against ‘The Fleshly School’ has elicited, among some welcome protests, a few slightly interested opinions, and on the whole it must be said that the tone of some new novels remains objectionable.”

The enormous financial success that has resulted from the circulation of the “fleshly” books referred to, books devoid of literary merit but made attractive to a great body of the general reading public by certain unveiled descriptions which they contain, has led to the writing of a vast amount of filthy fiction by persons, many of them obviously women, who until now had never tried to write anything for publication. Through the courtesy of two publishing houses of good standing I have been afforded the privilege (sic) of examining a number of manuscripts of this description that have quite recently been submitted to them. In almost every case it becomes obvious that the writers have been “inspired” to produce the illiterate and disgusting stories referred to, mainly through their having thoroughly saturated their thoughts with the garbage of the same sort—only less so—that was published early in last year. They have apparently argued thus: “There is nothing clever, or extraordinarily attractive,

in these books; therefore they must have sold as largely as they have done only because of their plain-spokenness. I believe I could write stuff like that myself. Anyway I will try. And I will go one better than even these people. And presently I shall be rich beyond the dreams of avarice!” And with that they have sat down and set to work.

Unfortunately for these people, though fortunately for the reading public, only a small proportion of our publishers are willing to debase their calling, and to bring their firms into disrepute with the body of the public that is right-minded, by placing upon the book market meretricious filth of the sort referred to. The would-be authors who at present are making the round of the publishing houses with prurient manuscripts to sell, seem not to be aware of this. A remarkable trait in some of these unhealthy-minded writers is their extraordinary self-assurance—in several cases it amounts almost to effrontery. Thus a young man who recently sent to a well-known publishing house one of the coarse productions that publishers of fiction are growing accustomed to receiving frequently, had the self-assurance to compare his work with that of two of the most distinguished of our modern novelists, adding that in his opinion “the descriptive passages in those men’s books” were at least as plain-spoken as his. As rational would it be to compare the suggestive photographs that are sold secretly in all large cities, and almost openly in such places as Port Said, with the undraped figure of the Venus of Medici. Yet another writer of the modern fleshly school contrasts her unpublished stories with the masterpieces of Loti and de Maupassant, unable apparently to realise that the fleshly element—if I may so describe it—in the works of our great masters of French and of English literature is in most cases incidental to the narrative, and not its *raison d’être* [reason for being or existing].

All that, however, is in a sense by-the-way. The question we have now to face is, What has the future in store for English novelists, and for the scores of men and women who earn a livelihood by producing fiction of a lower grade than novels, if presently they find themselves securely muzzled by a censor chosen and appointed as our existing censor of plays is chosen? It is easy to smile incredulously at the suggestion and say that a censor of fiction never will be appointed.

Men and women laughed outright when it was first suggested that the office of censor of plays might one day be created. How inimical to the interests of the reading public, not to mention the rank and file of novelists, the appointment of a censor of fiction would be, is almost too obvious to call for comment. Judging, indeed, by the example set by our censor of plays, the probability is that many admirable works of fiction would be condemned unjustly owing solely to the censor's inability to discern the difference between a powerfully-written story true to life, and one with nothing to "recommend" it but its undisguised or its thinly-veiled eroticism. Indeed the appointment of an official censor with power to forbid, wholly upon his own responsibility, the publication of any work of fiction to which he might take exception, would come near to being a calamity. For what would happen if such a man should chance to be a person exceptionally ignorant of letters, or unduly biased in one direction or several directions, or abnormally strait-laced? The ably-written moral story with a sexual problem wrapped up in its pages might be banned simply to satisfy some favourite whim. The moral story of illicit love probably would be suppressed on the ground of its being too plain-spoken in parts of its dialogue, or in some of its descriptive passages. Novelists with a true knowledge of human nature, with facility to express themselves, and with the gift to paint in words living and vivid pictures for the gratification of thousands of men and women of intellect and culture the world over, would be compelled to abandon their avocation—would be to all intents muzzled into silence.

All this, I maintain again, may come about, and, if it does, whom shall we have to blame? Only the handful of writers who within the past year or two have been launching upon the book-market works of fiction—they cannot rightly be termed novels—that grow steadily filthier with every new book they write. One could almost think this handful of writers congratulated itself each time one of its members succeeded in getting placed upon the market a story a little coarser than any that had preceded it, and that then and there the remaining members set to work to try to write a book obscener still. If only such books had merit in addition to their eroticism, as so many of

the French novels have, one might be tempted to look—wrongly, no doubt—with greater tolerance upon their pruriency. But of the books referred to that have been published of late years, hardly one has the semi-redeeming qualification of literary style or merit. Can one feel surprise, then, at the outcry that is being raised by a body of our leading men of letters at the degradation of the modern novel by the writers of the fleshly school?

Though this question has been commented upon more than once in some of our newspapers, all that has been written, even about the actual spread of eroticism, is infinitesimal by comparison with what has been said, and is still being said, by thinking people throughout the country, and by the feeling of indignation and disgust that has been aroused. Some months ago the Bishop of Norwich referred in one of his sermons to the growth of eroticism in the modern novel of a particular class, but the majority of those who feel most strongly upon the subject are impotent to interfere. Many thousands of persons scattered throughout the country realise that something ought to be done to prevent the little clique of writers referred to, and their unintelligent imitators, from further prostituting English literature, and apparently the bulk of them wish sincerely that something could be done to stop it. There, for the moment, the matter rests, but it cannot rest for long. Let a few score more of the fleshly narratives be launched upon the book market, and sold in their tens of thousands, and without excitement, or any sort of preliminary demonstration, we shall find ourselves saddled with a censor of fiction who, rest assured, will quickly shut down not merely the fiction that is admittedly filthy, but in addition a vast amount of excellent work that most certainly ought to be published. Then, and only then—when, of course, it will be too late to enter a protest that will mend matters—our British novelists will rise up in arms and metaphorically rend those among their colleagues who will have been directly to blame for the introduction of this unjust muzzling order.

That the foregoing prognostication will be derided by some publishers of novels, by some novel-writers, and by plenty of novel-readers, I know full well. All I ask, then, of the sceptics and the

scoffers is that they keep well in mind the statements just set down, and note carefully what transpires within the next few years. For that the output of fleshly books will continue, and perhaps increase, is probable. Quixotic indeed would it be to imagine that so valuable an asset as a book that must run through edition after edition, and that consequently can be deemed even before publication to be almost a gilt-edged security, is likely to be kept off the market because a few objectors openly expound views and theories contrary to general opinion. Let it also be remembered, however, that the instalment of a censor of fiction must affect adversely not writers only. For the creation of such an office will hit many publishers a hard blow. It will hit the booksellers too. It will hit also the lending libraries. And it will hit, though less severely, what are called the “popular” magazines, while some of the daily journals, especially those provincial papers that owe their circulation in a measure to the popularity of their serial stories, will feel the touch of the censor’s claw.

As a natural result of the reign of a literary censor, indeed as the only result possible, the book-market will be flooded with stories that will be neither flesh nor fowl,—stories invertebrate, cold and flaccid. The late Sir Walter Besant told me once that he had just received a letter from a correspondent who expressed extreme indignation at his, Sir Walter’s, having made a male character in one of his stories kiss a woman to whom he was in no way related, and to whom he was neither married nor affianced. “Until now,” the letter ran, “I have thought your books quite safe to give to my daughter to read, but in future I shall not be able to put a book of yours into her hands until I have read it myself.” Probably there are thousands of men and women who think as that man thought. What would the condition of English literature be with such a man as censor? Only recently some of Sir Walter Scott’s classics were banned on the ground of their “impropriety” by a committee of local provincial magnates appointed to select volumes for a certain public library. With that precedent before us nothing in the way of prudery seems impossible. Certainly a heroine moulded on the lines of Mr. Thomas Hardy’s beautiful Tess would be blue-pencilled, as they say on the Turf, “from start to finish.” Mr. Eden Phillpotts would never

be allowed to give us another *Secret Woman*, for that memorable scene in the bracken would have made the censor blush. In future the monks of the Order of Robert Hichens would be compelled by the censor to refrain from pirouetting with pretty girls on the parched plains of Egypt or in any other of Allah's gardens. Even Mrs. "Malet" would be forced to strangle her art and to come up, or rather sink down, into a line upon the level of the commonplace, for though another legless lad might manage to crawl unchecked past the censor, most assuredly another woman as seductive as the *houri* who in the small hours enticed poor Sir Richard Calmady to his fate, would be stamped out of existence on the spot.

There are, as already implied, many admirable modern works of fiction that no right-minded man or woman not hide-bound by senseless scruples, or by alleged religious prejudice, or by the grotesque teachings of a Mrs. Grundy who should have been relegated to her grave long ago, can well object to. The volumes to which reference has just been made are among them. Other works of the sort are in preparation as I write, and surely all who are able to appreciate human, powerful and well-written stories—"evenly-balanced" stories, as some of the reviewers term them—must look forward to reading such books as soon as they appear. Is it worth while, then, when books of this kind are to be had, to rot away the intelligence of a great body of the reading public, especially of boys and girls in the most impressionable period of their existence, by saturating their minds with a train of thought made up of descriptions of filthy scenes, filthy acts, and a dialogue of double entendre, and in doing so run a grave risk of presently checking abruptly the output of any novels apart from stories that will be colourless, insipid, and mawkish—stories, in short, that will be wholly devoid of any sort of human emotion? All who live with their eyes open, and are able to look ahead, must admit that the writers, publishers and booksellers who together are deliberately prostituting the English novel, are wittingly or unwittingly imperilling their own future prosperity.

## About the Editor

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**Robert C. Evans** is I. B. Young Professor of English at Auburn University at Montgomery, where he has taught since 1982. In 1984 he received his PhD from Princeton University, where he held Weaver and Whiting fellowships as well as a university fellowship. In later years his research was supported by fellowships from the Newberry Library (twice), the American Council of Learned Societies, the Folger Shakespeare Library (twice), the Mellon Foundation, the Huntington Library, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Philosophical Society, and the UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies.

In 1982 he was awarded the G. E. Bentley Prize and in 1989 was selected Professor of the Year for Alabama by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. At AUM he has received the Faculty Excellence Award and has been named Distinguished Research Professor, Distinguished Teaching Professor, and University Alumni Professor. Most recently he was named Professor of the Year by the South Atlantic Association of Departments of English.

He is a contributing editor to the John Donne *Variorum Edition* and is the author or editor of more than fifty books (on such topics as Ben Jonson, Martha Moulsworth, Kate Chopin, John Donne, Frank O'Connor, Brian Friel, Ambrose Bierce, Amy Tan, early modern women writers, pluralist literary theory, literary criticism, twentieth-century American writers, American novelists, Shakespeare, and seventeenth-century English literature). He is also the author of roughly four hundred published or forthcoming essays or notes (in print and online) on a variety of topics, especially dealing with Renaissance literature, critical theory, women writers, short fiction, and literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

## Contributors

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**Jane Addams** (1860-1935), the first woman winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, was famous as an author, sociologist, public intellectual, defender of civil rights, champion of women's rights, and advocate for world peace.

**C. E. Bentley** (1859-1929) was an African American dentist from Chicago, where he became a leader of the local branch of the NAACP. He eventually became national treasurer of that organization. He was recognized as a leader in dental medicine during his era, especially as an advocate of oral hygiene.

**Robert Donahoo** is professor of English at Sam Houston State University in Texas. A former president of the Flannery O'Connor Society, he is the coeditor of *Flannery O'Connor in the Age of Terrorism: Essays on Violence and Grace* (2010) and the forthcoming *Approaches to Teaching the Fiction of Flannery O'Connor* from MLA. In 2014, he codirected a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute, "Reconsidering Flannery O'Connor," and he has published essays and journal articles on O'Connor, as well as on the drama of Horton Foote, Larry Brown's *Dirty Work*, the novels of Clyde Edgerton, postmodern American science fiction, and Tolstoy's *Resurrection*.

**Liyang Dong**, an independent scholar who holds two masters degrees in English from Chinese and American universities, has extensive collegiate teaching experience both in the United States and in China, her country of birth. Her extensive research into a variety of literary topics has been funded repeatedly by a number of different agencies in China. Her published work includes the following essays: "On the Limitation of Task-Based Teaching Methods in College English Teaching," "The Features and Function of Register and Its Application in English Teaching," "A New Photographic Interpretation on the Formation Mechanism of Context Metaphor," "On the Application of Eclectic Interactive Teaching Approaches in English Teaching," and "A Well-Wrought Metaphor—Doctorow's Pessimism in *The March*."

**Alan Gribben**, editor and publisher of the *Mark Twain Journal: The Author and His Era*, is the biographer of the University of Texas library founder Harry Ransom, editor of multiple editions of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, coeditor of *Mark Twain on the Move: A Travel Reader*, and author of dozens of articles on Twain's intellectual background. For fifteen years he reviewed books and articles about Mark Twain for *American Literary Scholarship, An Annual*. His three-volume *Mark Twain's Literary Resources: A Reconstruction of His Library and Reading* (2019) reflected five decades of research. [www.alangribben.com](http://www.alangribben.com).

**Darren Harris-Fain** is an honors professor of English at Auburn University at Montgomery, where he teaches British and American literature and American film history. He is the author of *Understanding Contemporary American Science Fiction: The Age of Maturity, 1970-2000* and the editor of three volumes on British fantasy and science fiction writers for the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. He has published essays on literary fiction, science fiction, fantasy, and comics in more than thirty books, including *Teaching the Graphic Novel*, *The Cambridge Companion to the Graphic Novel*, *The Cambridge History of the Graphic Novel*, and *The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction*. His previous contributions to the Critical Insights series include essays in the volumes on Harlan Ellison, Rebellion, Ken Kesey's *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and Survival.

**Phill Johnson** earned a doctorate in law and a masters in library science and has spent thirteen years in law school administration, mainly with the University of Illinois and the University of Missouri—Kansas City (UMKC) law schools. In addition to being involved with the libraries at each institution, he managed the IT Department at UMKC and regularly taught on a variety of topics. He assumed his current role of dean of the library at Auburn University at Montgomery, Alabama, in 2015. His publication history mostly involves topics related to libraries, though he also continues to publish in the legal field. A recent article on attempts to censor Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* was widely praised by experts on Ellison.

**Mary Childs Nerney** (1865-?) was the executive secretary of the NAACP from 1912 to 1916. She led the campaign against the film *The Birth of a Nation* after W. E. B. Du Bois, the organization's leader, refused to do so.

**Richard Obenauf** graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of New Mexico before earning his MA and PhD in medieval and Renaissance English literature at Loyola University Chicago. His research centers on tolerance and intolerance, censorship, political and religious heresy, and the history of ideas, with secondary interests in satire, textual criticism, and genre theory. Since 2010 he has taught interdisciplinary courses on literature, history, and politics in the Honors College at the University of New Mexico.

**Kelly Snyder** is an independent scholar with a special interest in pluralistic and thematic approaches to literature.

**Basil Tozer** (1868-1949) was a prolific British author of essays and books, including such works as: *The Horse in History*; *The Riddle of the Forest*; *Vengeance*; *Confidence Crooks and Blackmailers: Their Ways and Methods*; *The Story of a Terrible Life: The Amazing Career of a Notorious Procuress*; *Practical Hints on Shooting*; *The Elusive Lord Bagtor*; and various others.

**Nicolas Tredell** is a writer and lecturer who has published 20 books and more than 350 essays and articles on authors ranging from Shakespeare to Zadie Smith and on key issues in literary, film, and cultural theory. His recent books include *C. P. Snow: The Dynamics of Hope*, *Shakespeare: The Tragedies*, *Novels to Some Purpose: The Fiction of Colin Wilson*, *Conversations with Critics* (an updated edition of his interviews with leading literary figures), and *Anatomy of Amis* (the most comprehensive account so far of the fiction and nonfiction of Martin Amis). He formerly taught literature, drama, film, and cultural studies at Sussex University and is currently consultant editor of Palgrave Macmillan's Essential Criticism series, which now numbers 86 volumes, with many more to come. He is a frequent speaker at a wide variety of venues, most recently at the 2018 Literary London Conference at the University of London and the Second