Critical Analysis Of The Adventures Of Huckleberry Finn

In literature, few times does an author cause such stark controversy from opposing sides of critics. On one side, they praise and hail the author for writing a masterpiece of literary text, and on the other spectrum, it draws immediate fire and distastefulness for the reader and commentators. Mark Twain, the author of The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, relished in this, not caring much for both sides, but the very thought of many critics judging him and his books appeased him (PBS.org). The reason why there were many commentators on Twain's books was because he didn't follow the stereotypical way in how books were written in the 1800s. Many of which were written in the style of Romanticism, where the author celebrates the individual and the "imagination" (Craftyhouse.com). Twain practiced literary realism, with the definition boiling down to "represent familiar things as they are" (Sparknotes.org). Twain understood that the style and setting is paramount to the story, almost as acting as an additional character to the story. This is why many critics had such jarring displeasure with The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, because many of the people in the novel, including the main character Huck, had immoral aspects of their character. This was quite the opposite of Romanticism, a style very prevalent in the late 1800s. From the lack of respect for religion and adult authorities, all the way towards the ungrammatical vernacular used in the text, Twain didn't give much to spare for praise for critics during his time alive when he wrote The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.

Almost foreseeing that the book will cause fearsome controversy, Twain notices and even warns the reader that the text should not be analyzed for the motive, moral, or plot or "punishment" should follow (Twain 1). Twain also brings up the fact that the characters will sound as if they live in the region in which the story takes place. This is textbook literary realism. Twain is very persistent on making sure the reader understands that the text will not be grammatically, morally, and even politically correct. This is just a preface so that the reader passes unwanted judgement on how the text is read. This is also a preface for critics who might be "eager to dissect his work" (Cliffnotes.com). Interesting enough, this notice could also be seen as a poke at Romanticism and its writers which included the likes of Edgar Allan Poe, John Keats, and Mary Shelley (Craftyhouse.com). As mentioned before, Romanticism was the prevalent style of books written in the late 1800s to early 1900s, a stark contrast in the way of how The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn will be written in.