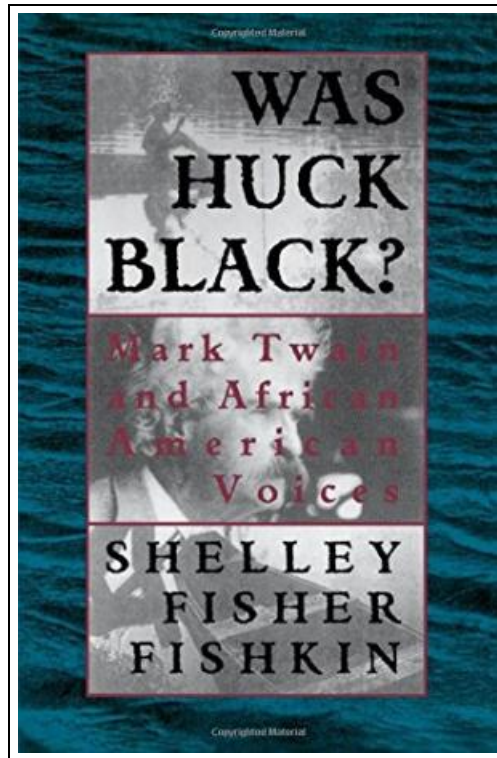


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WAS HUCK BLACK?: MARK TWAIN AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN VOICES (PAPERBACK)



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Oxford University Press Inc, United States, 1994. Paperback. Condition: New. Reprint. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.Published in 1884, *Huckleberry Finn* has become one of the most widely taught novels in American curricula. But where did it come from, and what made it so distinctive? Shelley Fisher Fishkin suggests that in *Huckleberry Finn*, more than any other work, Mark Twain let African-American voices, language, and rhetorical traditions play a major role in the creation of his art. In *Was Huck Black?* Fishkin combines close readings of published and unpublished writing by Twain with intensive biographical and historical research and insights gleaned from linguistics, literary theory, and folklore to shed new light on the role African-American voices played in the genesis of *Huckleberry Finn*. Given that book's importance in American culture, her analysis illuminates, as well, how African-American voices have shaped our sense of what is distinctively American about American literature. American literary historians have told a largely segregated story: white writers come from white literary ancestors, black writers from black ones. The truth is more complicated and more interesting. While African-American culture shaped *Huckleberry Finn*, that novel, in turn, helped shape African-American writing in the twentieth century. As Ralph Ellison commented in an interview with Fishkin, Twain made it possible for many of us to find our own voices. *Was Huck Black?* dramatizes the crucial role of black voices in Twain's art, and takes the first steps beyond traditional cultural boundaries to unveil an American literary heritage that is infinitely richer and more complex than we had thought.



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