

ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

UNCENSORED

Week 3



LITERATURE
MEET THEATRE.

Book-It Repertory Theatre and Newspapers In Education shine new light on Mark Twain's American classic *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Learn how the company brings words on a page to life on stage; find out why Mark Twain stopped writing his book and what inspired him to finish it; and see how you can experience the story and make it meaningful in your life today.



From left, publicity shot of Jim and Huck. Caption: Jim (Geoffery Simmons) and Huck (Christopher Morson) in "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: Uncensored"; photo by Alan Alabastro.

To this day, the popularity of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* continues to be joined to an enduring controversy. Though most now agree that Twain's novel is an important contribution to the American literary canon, his language remains a sticking point for critics. Particularly, his use of "the N-word" has made *Huck Finn* the fourth-most-banned book in the United States, according to an Associated Press article. As recently as 2011, writers have attempted to sanitize Twain's language by removing passages deemed provocative or racially insensitive.

Clearly, Twain's thoughts on race in America are as pertinent now as they were a 100 years ago, and that is, in part, the artistic inspiration for bringing the work to the stage today. Book-It is eager to learn how the community thinks and talks about the novel, what its message is today, and where we are as a nation because of it.

Book-It and its community partners Humanities Washington, Northwest African American Museum, and Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas, invite you to bring your thoughts,

JOIN US FOR

Twain Talks: Community Conversations on the Human Race and Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

April 24, 27, 28 and May 5
Schedule and details at book-it.org

observations, and questions about Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, and the state of race in America for a series of **Twain Talks**. See dates below and visit book-it.org for details.

Three distinguished Mark Twain scholars are coming to Seattle to lend their unique views to the conversation on April 27 and 28. Meet them:

- **David Bradley** is an associate professor at the University of Oregon and author of two novels, *South Street* and *The Chaneyville Incident*. He was featured in a 2006 "60 Minutes" story covering a sanitized edition of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. In a 1985 talk at the Mark Twain Memorial, he said, "Sam Clemens was white. But who here among you has ever seen Mark Twain? Mark Twain was black."
- **Shelley Fisher Fishkin** is a professor at Stanford University and author of *Was Huck Black? Mark Twain and African American Voices*, in which she writes, "We cannot understand fully that key strain of American literary history that runs from Twain to Hemingway and Ellison ... without taking into account the African-American roots of Twain's double-voice, ironic art." Fishkin was a program adviser on Ken Burns' documentary *Mark Twain*.
- **Jocelyn Chadwick** is a professor at Harvard University. She consults for school districts across the U.S. and has taught students of all ages. She authored *The Jim Dilemma: Reading Race in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, where she writes that *Huck Finn*, "challenges the white reader to learn about and experience a traumatic and debasing period in American history." Chadwick was also a program adviser on Ken Burns' documentary, *Mark Twain*.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: Uncensored by Mark Twain, conceived by Jane Jones and Judd Parkin

Directed by Jane Jones at the Center Theatre at the Armory
April 16-May 12

Tickets: 206.216.0833 | book-it.org

ATTEND THE EVENTS

Saturday, April 27, Book-It will host a between-show, box supper discussion of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* at 5 p.m. This will be a moderated conversation between the cast, the scholars and the community focusing on our adaptation and Twain's work in American literature. Bring your questions to the table!

Sunday, April 28, in a panel discussion, the scholar trio will wrestle with Twain's hardest issue, race, as it relates to and stems from *Huckleberry Finn*, at the Northwest African American Museum from 2-4 p.m. This structured conversation will be facilitated by Book-It with support from our partners in the community.

In addition to these events, Book-It and the Central District Forum for Arts & Ideas will also host post-show "After Glow" conversations in the Center Theatre lobby on April 24 and May 5. These moderated discussions will be a chance for the audience to talk about their experience of the show and the novel and to talk directly with some of the people involved in the production.

