



The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism

By Henry Louis Gates

Download now

Read Online ➔

The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism

By Henry Louis Gates

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s original, groundbreaking study explores the relationship between the African and African-American vernacular traditions and black literature, elaborating a new critical approach located *within* this tradition that allows the black voice to speak for itself.

Examining the ancient poetry and myths found in African, Latin American, and Caribbean culture, and particularly the Yoruba trickster figure of Esu-Elegbara and the Signifying Monkey whose myths help articulate the black tradition's theory of its literature, Gates uncovers a unique system for interpretation and a powerful vernacular tradition that black slaves brought with them to the New World. His critical approach relies heavily on the Signifying Monkey--perhaps the most popular figure in African-American folklore--and signification and Signifyin(g).

Exploring signification in black American life and literature by analyzing the transmission and revision of various signifying figures, Gates provides an extended analysis of what he calls the "Talking Book," a central trope in early slave narratives that virtually defines the tradition of black American letters. Gates uses this critical framework to examine several major works of African-American literature--including Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo*--revealing how these works signify on the black tradition and on each other. The second volume in an enterprising trilogy on African-American literature, *The Signifying Monkey*--which expands the arguments of *Figures in Black*--makes an important contribution to literary theory, African-American literature, folklore, and literary history.

↓ [Download The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-America ...pdf](#)

📖 [Read Online The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-Ameri ...pdf](#)

The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism

By Henry Louis Gates

The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism By Henry Louis Gates

Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s original, groundbreaking study explores the relationship between the African and African-American vernacular traditions and black literature, elaborating a new critical approach located *within* this tradition that allows the black voice to speak for itself.

Examining the ancient poetry and myths found in African, Latin American, and Caribbean culture, and particularly the Yoruba trickster figure of Esu-Elegbara and the Signifying Monkey whose myths help articulate the black tradition's theory of its literature, Gates uncovers a unique system for interpretation and a powerful vernacular tradition that black slaves brought with them to the New World. His critical approach relies heavily on the Signifying Monkey--perhaps the most popular figure in African-American folklore--and signification and Signifyin(g).

Exploring signification in black American life and literature by analyzing the transmission and revision of various signifying figures, Gates provides an extended analysis of what he calls the "Talking Book," a central trope in early slave narratives that virtually defines the tradition of black American letters. Gates uses this critical framework to examine several major works of African-American literature--including Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo*--revealing how these works signify on the black tradition and on each other.

The second volume in an enterprising trilogy on African-American literature, *The Signifying Monkey*--which expands the arguments of *Figures in Black*--makes an important contribution to literary theory, African-American literature, folklore, and literary history.

The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism By Henry Louis Gates Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #156980 in Books
- Published on: 1989-12-14
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 6.13" h x .65" w x 9.25" l, 1.00 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 320 pages

 [Download The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-America ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-Ameri ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* By Henry Louis Gates

Editorial Review

Review

"Apart from suggesting new ways of looking at black literature, this original work is a singular contribution to linguistics, anthropology and rhetoric. Notwithstanding the considerable resources upon which he bases his case, Gates works with a lightness of touch and a style of reasoning that makes the exercise of following the construction of his argument most exciting and provocative."--*The Tribune*

"Copiously researched, re-orientes our understanding of American culture and letters."--Uzoma Esonwanne, *University of Michigan*

"Perhaps the most important critical statement regarding the rhetorical underpinnings of a black narrative discourse. For a general graduate course on cultural theory, I have found no better introduction text on the topic."--David William Foster, *Arizona State University*

"An important book....*The Signifying Monkey* displays an impressive array of scholarship coupled with a wide-ranging knowledge of diverse materials and a visible creative energy which synthesises these into a coherent and convincing thesis....an immensely stimulating work which deserves a wide readership."--Sandra Harris, *Reviews in American Studies*

"Eclectic, exciting, convincing, provocative, challenging....Gates gives black literature room to breathe, invents interpretive frameworks that enable us to experience black writing rather than label it in terms of theme or ideology. From this perspective his book is a generous, long-awaited gift....Like great novels that force us to view the world differently, Mr. Gates' compelling study suggests new ways of seeing."--John Wideman, *The New York Times Book Review*

"Like the African-American trickster figure who circumscribes the shifting center of this most impressive work, Henry Louis Gates resists simplification.... Gates has provided the foundation for a potentially accessible, politically useful, and academically sophisticated discipline of "comparative black literature." He will clearly play an important role in determining whether that discipline realizes its potential." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*

"Brilliantly original. Besides the work of Houston Baker, I cannot think of a more exciting reassessment of black literature that has been published in many years. *The Signifying Monkey* has the feel of a seminal work,

likely to reshape the course of black American literary criticism for years."--*The Washington Post Book World*

"The appearance of *The Signifying Monkey* [is] one of the most significant events in the development of [African-American] studies in the next decade. Bold, ambitious, original....Brilliant...[it] deserves to be read widely."--W.J.T. Mitchell, Editor, *Critical Inquiry*

"The Rosetta Stone of the American multi-cultural renaissance."--Ishmael Reed

"Breath-taking in the scope of its argument and in the energy and insight that it brings to reading individual texts, the matrix of the [African-American] tradition, and the Signifyin(g) practice that binds the 'Afro' to the 'American' in [African-American] writing and speaking."--James Olney, *Louisiana State University*

About the Author

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is Chairman of the Department of Afro-American Studies and W.E.B. Du Bois Professor of the Humanities at Harvard University. He is the author of *Figures in Black*, *Loose Canons*, and *Colored People*; general editor of *The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers*; and general editor of *The W.E.B. Du Bois Institute* series.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sarah Winship:

What do you think about book? It is just for students because they are still students or the idea for all people in the world, the actual best subject for that? Just you can be answered for that issue above. Every person has different personality and hobby for each and every other. Don't to be compelled someone or something that they don't wish do that. You must know how great in addition to important the book *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. All type of book could you see on many options. You can look for the internet methods or other social media.

James Jones:

This *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* tend to be reliable for you who want to certainly be a successful person, why. The key reason why of this *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* can be one of many great books you must have will be giving you more than just simple examining food but feed a person with information that might be will shock your prior knowledge. This book is usually handy, you can bring it everywhere and whenever your conditions in e-book and printed kinds. Beside that this *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* giving you an enormous of experience like rich vocabulary, giving you test of

critical thinking that we know it useful in your day pastime. So , let's have it and enjoy reading.

Joseph Sutton:

This The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism is great publication for you because the content that is certainly full of information for you who else always deal with world and also have to make decision every minute. That book reveal it data accurately using great arrange word or we can say no rambling sentences in it. So if you are read this hurriedly you can have whole facts in it. Doesn't mean it only will give you straight forward sentences but challenging core information with splendid delivering sentences. Having The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism in your hand like having the world in your arm, facts in it is not ridiculous one. We can say that no book that offer you world within ten or fifteen tiny right but this publication already do that. So , this is good reading book. Heya Mr. and Mrs. occupied do you still doubt which?

Rex Pelkey:

In this period of time globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information better to share. You can find a lot of references to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. The book that recommended to your account is The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism this book consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented how can the world has grown up. The words styles that writer use to explain it is easy to understand. The actual writer made some research when he makes this book. That's why this book acceptable all of you.

**Download and Read Online The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism By Henry Louis Gates
#4ZAD125E9KH**

Read The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism By Henry Louis Gates for online ebook

The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism By Henry Louis Gates Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism By Henry Louis Gates books to read online.

Online The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism By Henry Louis Gates ebook PDF download

The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism By Henry Louis Gates Doc

The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism By Henry Louis Gates Mobipocket

The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism By Henry Louis Gates EPub