



Reading Africa Into American Literature: Epics, Fables, and Gothic Tales

Keith Cartwright

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The literature often considered the most American is rooted not only in European and Western culture but also in African and American Creole cultures. Keith Cartwright places the literary texts of such noted authors as George Washington Cable, W.E.B. DuBois, Alex Haley, Zora Neale Hurston, Ralph Ellison, William Faulkner, Joel Chandler Harris, Herman Melville, Toni Morrison, and many others in the context of the history, spiritual traditions, folklore, music, linguistics, and politics out of which they were written. Cartwright grounds his study of American writings in texts from the Senegambian/Old Mali region of Africa. Reading epics, fables, and gothic tales from the crossroads of this region and the American South, he reveals that America's foundational African presence, along with a complex set of reactions to it, is an integral but unacknowledged source of the national culture, identity, and literature.

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