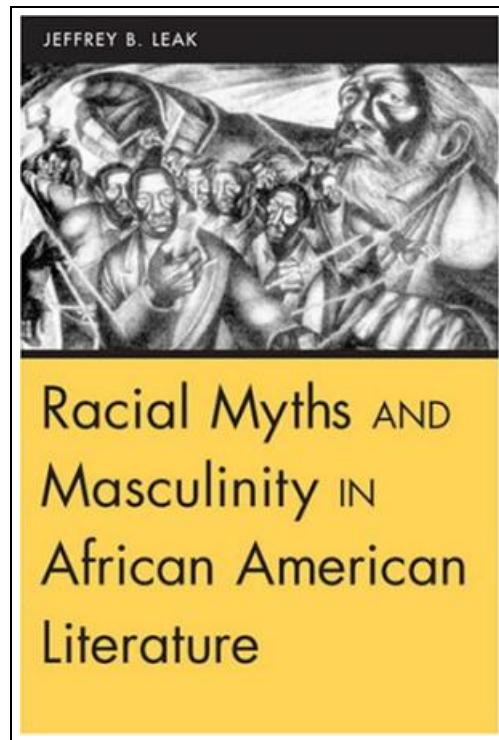


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RACIAL MYTHS AND MASCULINITY IN AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE (HARDBACK)

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University of Tennessee Press, United States, 2005. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. The portrayal of black men in our national literature is controversial, complex, and often contradictory. In *Racial Myths and Masculinity in African American Literature*, Jeffrey B. Leak identifies some of the long-held myths and stereotypes that persist in the work of black writers from the nineteenth century to the present: intellectual inferiority, criminality, sexual prowess, homosexual emasculation, and cultural deprivation. Utilizing Robert B. Stepto's call-and-response theory, Leak studies four pairs of novels within the context of certain myths, identifying the literary tandems between them and seeking to discover the source of our culture's psychological preoccupation with black men. Calling upon interdisciplinary fields of study: literary theory, psychoanalysis, gender studies, legal theory, and queer theory, Leak offers groundbreaking analysis of both canonical texts (representing the "call" of the call-and-response dyad) and texts by emerging writers (representing the "response"), including Frederick Douglass and Charles Johnson; Ralph Ellison and Brent Wade; Richard Wright and Ernest J. Gaines; and Toni Morrison and David Bradley. Though Leak does not claim that the "response" texts are superior to the "call" texts, he does argue that, in some cases, the newer work—such as Charles Johnson's *Oxherding Tale*—can address a theme or offer a narrative innovation not found in preceding texts, such as *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. In these instances, argues Leak, the newer texts constitute not only a response to the call text, but a substantial revision. Leak offers the first in-depth criticism of black masculinity in a range of literary texts. In a final chapter, he expands his discussion to the emerging field of black masculinity studies, pointing to future directions for study, including memoir, film, drama, and others. Poised on the brink of exciting new trends in scholarship, *Racial Myths and Masculinity in African American Literature* is...


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