



Transforming Scriptures: African American Women Writers and the Bible (Paperback)

By Katherine Clay Bassard

University of Georgia Press, United States, 2011. Paperback.
Book Condition: New. Revised ed.. 218 x 150 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.

Transforming Scriptures is the first sustained treatment of African American women writers intellectual, even theological, engagements with the book Northrop Frye referred to as the great code of Western civilization. Katherine Clay Bassard looks at poetry, novels, speeches, sermons, and prayers by Maria W. Stewart, Frances Harper, Hannah Crafts, Harriet E. Wilson, Harriet Jacobs, Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison, and Sherley Anne Williams and discusses how such texts respond as a collective literary witness to the use of the Bible for purposes of social domination. Black women's historic encounters with the Bible were, indeed, transformational; in the process of turning cursing into blessing these women were both shaped and reshaped by the scriptures they appropriated for their own self-representation. Two important biblical figures emerge as key tropes around which women fashioned a counternarrative to the dominant culture's curse on black female identity: the talking mule from Numbers 22 and the black but comely Shulamite of Song of Songs, the Queen of Sheba. Transforming Scriptures analyzes these tropes within a range of...



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