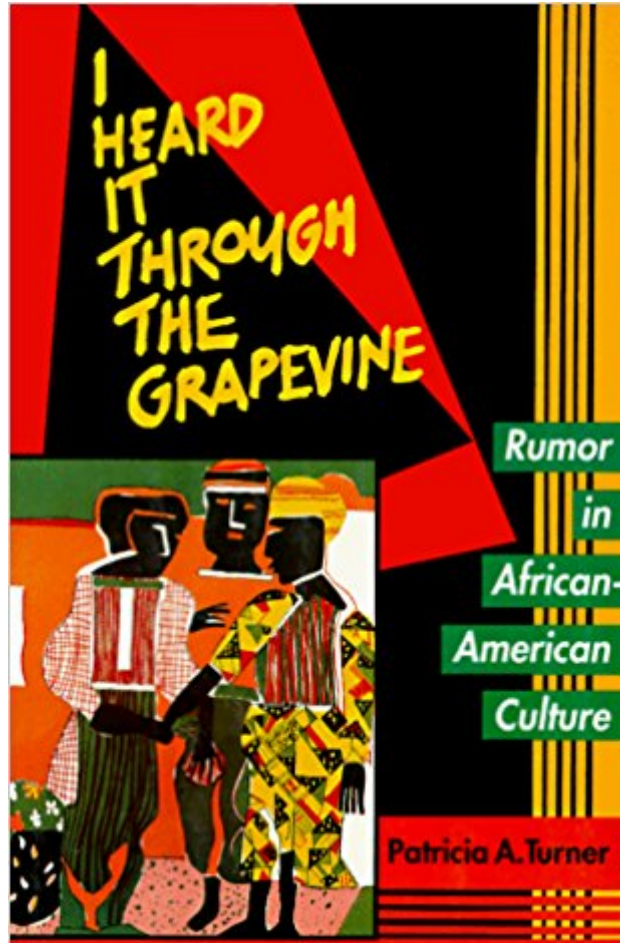


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I Heard It Through The Grapevine: Rumor In African-American Culture



Synopsis

This book divides into two basic parts. In Chapters 1 and 2 I discuss historical examples of "rumor" discourse and suggest why many blacks have--for good reason--channeled beliefs about race relations into familiar formulae, ones developed as early as the time of the first contact between sub-Saharan Africans and European white. Then in Chapters 3-7 it explores the continuation of these issues in late-twentieth-century African-American rumors and contemporary legends, using examples collected in the field. Because Turner was able to monitor these contemporary legends as they unfolded and played themselves out, rigorous analysis was possible. What follows, then, is an examination of the themes common to these contemporary items and related historical ones, and an explanation for their persistence. Concerns about conspiracy, contamination, cannibalism, and castration--perceived threats to individual black bodies, which are then translated into animosity toward the race as a whole--run through nearly four hundred years of black contemporary legend material and prove remarkable tenacious.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This could have been a very good, if not great book. Mainly due to the author having a huge amount of bias of the left wing academic ivory tower variety, racial bias (I believe the author is one of these black "intellectuals" that every University seems to have one or two of working for them), poor research and just general stupidity there's not much worthwhile stuff to glean from this book. The main purpose of this book is supposed to have been how rumors of the conspiratorial/persecutional

sort, most I wouldn't even call conspiracy theories, they border on folklore, have a history of running wild throughout the black community. She gets started trying to debunk the long standing historical belief of whites that blacks in Africa indulge in cannibalism. While to state the obvious its only a tiny percentage that do it, even now it is not uncommon. Just in the past few months I've ran across articles on BBC where blacks were killing and eating Pygmies and Albinos. Albinos from certain countries in Africa have even been granted political asylum in European countries. So cannibalism in Africa is not a fantasy or an isolated incident. She does good when she talks about how many of the most violent race riots in American history were started because of false rumors. The blacks would hear some wild story that the KKK threw a black baby in a river or whites would hear about some heinous act that a black had allegedly committed and the rumor would run through the town by word of mouth and one or both sides would go crazy resulting in many people being killed.

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