

venus play suzan lori parks

venus play suzan lori parks stands as a groundbreaking work in contemporary American theatre, fusing historical fact, poetic language, and innovative stagecraft. This article explores the origins, impact, and significance of Suzan-Lori Parks' celebrated play "Venus." Readers will discover the fascinating story behind the play, its main themes, Parks' unique writing style, and the historical context that inspired this powerful drama. We'll also examine how "Venus" has been received by critics and audiences, explore its staging and production history, and analyze why it remains a vital part of modern theatre studies. Whether you are a scholar, theatre enthusiast, or new to Suzan-Lori Parks' work, this guide offers a comprehensive and accessible look at "Venus" and its enduring relevance. Continue reading to uncover all there is to know about "venus play suzan lori parks" and why it continues to captivate audiences and spark important conversations.

- Background of Suzan-Lori Parks and Her Influence
- Overview and Synopsis of "Venus"
- Historical Context and Inspiration
- Main Themes in "Venus"
- Structural and Stylistic Innovations
- Critical Reception and Awards
- Staging, Productions, and Legacy
- Conclusion

Background of Suzan-Lori Parks and Her Influence

Suzan-Lori Parks is a celebrated American playwright known for her innovative approach to storytelling and her exploration of African American history and identity. Emerging as a major voice in the 1990s, Parks has received numerous accolades, including the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Her work is recognized for blending poetic language, non-linear narratives, and bold theatrical experimentation. Parks' influence extends beyond playwrighting, as she has also contributed to film, novels, and teaching, shaping a new generation of writers and artists. Her dedication to tackling complex social issues, challenging conventions, and giving voice to marginalized perspectives has

cemented her place in the canon of contemporary theatre.

Overview and Synopsis of "Venus"

"Venus" is a play by Suzan-Lori Parks that premiered in 1996. The drama centers on the life of Saartjie Baartman, a South African Khoikhoi woman who was exhibited in 19th-century Europe under the name "Hottentot Venus." The play traces Baartman's journey from her homeland to the exploitative spectacle of European freak shows, examining the intersection of race, gender, and colonialism. Parks' script weaves together historical fact and imaginative interpretation, giving voice to Baartman's story in a way that challenges audiences to confront uncomfortable truths about history and society.

Throughout "Venus," Parks employs a chorus-like ensemble called the "Venus Chorus," who narrate and comment on the action, providing both context and critique. The play moves between scenes of spectacle, personal moments, and surreal interludes, creating a layered and emotionally resonant narrative. Parks' portrayal of Baartman is both empathetic and unflinching, presenting her not just as a victim but as a complex individual navigating a hostile world.

Historical Context and Inspiration

The story of "Venus" draws from the real-life experiences of Saartjie Baartman, who was taken from South Africa to Europe in the early 1800s. There, she was displayed as a human curiosity due to her physical features and became a symbol of colonial exploitation and scientific racism. Parks' play uses Baartman's life to shed light on broader issues of objectification, dehumanization, and the legacy of imperialism.

Parks was inspired by the historical records and the persistent questions surrounding Baartman's life and treatment. By dramatizing this narrative, Parks invites audiences to reflect on the ways in which society continues to commodify and marginalize bodies deemed "other." The play's historical grounding is essential to its impact, as it connects past injustices to present-day conversations about race, gender, and representation.

Main Themes in "Venus"

"Venus" delves into multiple themes that resonate powerfully with contemporary audiences. Parks uses the story of Saartjie Baartman to explore:

- **Objectification and Exploitation:** The play examines how individuals, particularly women of color, have been objectified and exploited for entertainment and profit.
- **Race and Colonialism:** Parks highlights the intersection of race and power, illustrating how colonial attitudes fueled scientific racism and cultural appropriation.
- **Identity and Agency:** Despite her circumstances, Baartman is depicted as a person with desires, dreams, and agency, challenging one-dimensional portrayals of historical figures.
- **Spectacle and Audience complicity:** The play implicates the audience in the act of viewing, prompting reflection on voyeurism and ethical responsibility.
- **Memory and History:** Parks grapples with how stories are told, who gets to tell them, and the erasure or distortion of marginalized voices.

These themes are woven throughout the play, giving "Venus" its emotional depth and intellectual rigor.

Structural and Stylistic Innovations

Suzan-Lori Parks is renowned for her distinctive stylistic choices, and "Venus" exemplifies her innovative approach to playwriting. The play's structure is non-linear, blending direct address, fragmented scenes, and musical interludes. Parks employs repetition, poetic language, and Brechtian techniques to disrupt audience expectations and create a sense of critical distance.

A key structural feature is the "Venus Chorus," a group of actors who both narrate and comment on the unfolding action. This chorus serves to contextualize events, break the fourth wall, and challenge the audience's passive consumption of the narrative. Parks also integrates songs, stylized dialogue, and surreal imagery, crafting a theatrical experience that is both emotionally affecting and intellectually provocative.

Critical Reception and Awards

Upon its premiere, "Venus" received significant attention from critics and scholars. The play was lauded for its bold subject matter, inventive form, and the depth of its historical inquiry. Parks' willingness to confront uncomfortable aspects of the past and her skillful blending of fact and

fiction were particularly praised.

"Venus" earned Suzan-Lori Parks the 1996 Obie Award for Playwriting, further establishing her as a leading figure in American theatre. The play has since become a staple in academic curricula and is frequently discussed in analyses of contemporary theatre, postcolonial studies, and African American literature. While some critics have debated aspects of its representation, the consensus remains that "Venus" is a vital and transformative work.

Staging, Productions, and Legacy

"Venus" has been staged in various prominent theatres since its debut, including its world premiere at the Public Theater in New York. Each production has brought new interpretations to the material, with directors and actors exploring the nuances of Parks' script. The play's demands on performers and creative teams are significant, given its complex structure and challenging themes.

The legacy of "Venus" is evident in its continued relevance and the conversations it sparks about representation, history, and ethics in the arts. The play has inspired subsequent generations of playwrights to push boundaries and address difficult topics with honesty and artistry. It remains an essential work for understanding the evolution of American theatre and the ongoing struggle for visibility and justice.

Conclusion

The enduring power of "venus play suzan lori parks" lies in its fearless engagement with history, its innovative theatricality, and its profound empathy. Suzan-Lori Parks' masterpiece challenges audiences to reconsider the stories we tell, the lives we remember, and the ways in which art can illuminate both pain and possibility. As scholarship and productions continue, "Venus" stands as a testament to the transformative potential of theatre and the necessity of confronting our collective past.

Frequently Asked Questions about venus play suzan lori parks

Q: What is the central plot of "Venus" by Suzan-Lori

Parks?

A: "Venus" follows the life of Saartjie Baartman, a South African Khoikhoi woman exploited in 19th-century Europe as the "Hottentot Venus." The play explores her journey from Africa to Europe and the exploitation she faced.

Q: What themes are explored in "Venus"?

A: The play explores themes such as objectification, exploitation, race, colonialism, identity, agency, and the ethics of spectacle and audience complicity.

Q: Who was Saartjie Baartman, and why is her story important?

A: Saartjie Baartman was a real historical figure known as the "Hottentot Venus," whose exploitation in Europe symbolizes the intersection of racism, colonialism, and the objectification of Black women.

Q: What makes Suzan-Lori Parks' writing style unique in "Venus"?

A: Parks uses non-linear storytelling, poetic language, repetition, a chorus, and Brechtian techniques to create a distinct and thought-provoking theatrical experience.

Q: When and where did "Venus" premiere?

A: "Venus" premiered in 1996 at the Public Theater in New York City.

Q: Has "Venus" received any awards?

A: Yes, Suzan-Lori Parks received the 1996 Obie Award for Playwriting for "Venus."

Q: How does "Venus" address the concept of audience complicity?

A: The play implicates the audience through the use of a chorus and direct address, prompting viewers to reflect on their own role as spectators and the ethics of viewing stories of exploitation.

Q: Why is "Venus" considered an important work in American theatre?

A: "Venus" is important for its bold exploration of historical injustice, its innovative theatrical form, and its influence on discussions of race, gender, and representation in the arts.

Q: What is the legacy of "Venus" in contemporary theatre?

A: "Venus" has inspired new generations of playwrights, remains a subject of academic study, and continues to provoke important conversations about history and representation.

Q: What is the significance of the "Venus Chorus" in the play?

A: The "Venus Chorus" functions as both narrator and commentator, providing historical context, guiding the audience's interpretation, and challenging passive engagement with the story.

[Venus Play Suzan Lori Parks](#)

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Venus Play Suzan Lori Parks: A Deep Dive into Black Female Identity and Power

Are you intrigued by groundbreaking plays that challenge societal norms and explore the complexities of identity? Then you need to delve into Suzan-Lori Parks' Venus. This blog post offers a comprehensive exploration of this powerful and provocative play, examining its themes, characters, historical context, and enduring legacy. We'll unpack the complexities of its portrayal of black female identity, the power dynamics at play, and its lasting impact on theatre. Prepare to be captivated by the brilliance and unsettling beauty of Parks' masterpiece.

H2: Unpacking the Historical Context of Venus

Suzan-Lori Parks' *Venus* isn't just a play; it's a conversation with history. Premiering in 2008, the play confronts the legacy of Saartjie Baartman, a Khoikhoi woman from South Africa who was exhibited as a freak show attraction in Europe during the 19th century. Baartman's story is a chilling example of colonial exploitation, racism, and the objectification of black women. Parks doesn't shy away from the brutality of this history, but instead uses it as a springboard to explore themes of agency, self-representation, and the enduring fight for dignity.

H3: Saartjie Baartman's Tragic Story: A Foundation for the Play

Understanding Saartjie Baartman's story is crucial to grasping the depth of *Venus*. She was paraded as a spectacle, her body exoticized and dehumanized for the amusement of European audiences. Parks' play doesn't aim to simply recreate this history; instead, it confronts the viewer with its implications, forcing them to confront the lingering effects of colonialism and racism on the representation of black women.

H3: Beyond Historical Fact: A Fictionalized Exploration

While rooted in Baartman's real-life experience, *Venus* is not a strict biographical account. Parks uses fictional elements to explore the psychological and emotional landscape of a woman stripped of her identity and subjected to relentless objectification. This fictionalization allows for a deeper examination of the internal struggles and resilience of the character, moving beyond the limitations of historical documentation.

H2: Analyzing the Characters and Their Relationships in Venus

The play's characters are complex and multi-layered. The central character, known simply as "Venus," is not a passive victim. Parks portrays her as a woman capable of fierce resistance, even within the constraints of her horrific situation. The other characters – the various onlookers, the showman, and even the historical figures – serve to highlight the power imbalances and the pervasive objectification inherent in the situation.

H4: Venus: A Symbol of Resilience and Resistance

Venus, far from being a mere spectacle, embodies the strength and resilience of the human spirit. While trapped in a dehumanizing situation, she retains a spark of humanity, a capacity for love and longing that refuses to be extinguished. Her silent acts of defiance, her subtle shifts in demeanor, are potent expressions of her refusal to be completely defined by her captors.

H4: The Other Characters: Mirrors of Societal Attitudes

The supporting characters are crucial in revealing the deeply ingrained prejudices and power structures that allowed Saartjie Baartman's exploitation to occur. They represent a range of responses to Venus, from voyeuristic fascination to detached indifference, reflecting the complexities of colonial attitudes and the complicity of those who benefited from the system.

H2: Themes Explored in Suzan-Lori Parks' Venus

Venus is a rich tapestry of interwoven themes, all stemming from the core narrative of Saartjie Baartman's exploitation. The play explores the devastating effects of colonialism, racism, and the objectification of black women's bodies. It also tackles the themes of agency, self-representation, and the ongoing struggle for dignity and respect.

H3: The Power of the Gaze and the Spectacle of the Body

The play constantly draws attention to the power of the "gaze," highlighting how Venus is reduced to an object of visual consumption. Parks forces the audience to confront their own complicity in this process, prompting reflection on the ways in which we consume and represent other people, especially marginalized communities.

H3: Reclaiming Agency and Resistance through Performance

Despite the horrific circumstances, Venus finds ways to reclaim agency, albeit subtly. This reclamation often takes the form of subtle acts of resistance and agency within the confines of her performance, challenging the very system that seeks to define her.

H2: The Enduring Legacy of Venus

Venus remains a powerful and important piece of theatre, prompting ongoing discussions about race, gender, colonialism, and the representation of marginalized communities. It's a play that challenges audiences to confront uncomfortable truths and to consider the lasting effects of historical injustices. Its enduring power lies in its ability to spark dialogue and inspire critical reflection.

Conclusion

Suzan-Lori Parks' Venus is not merely a play; it's a crucial intervention in our understanding of history, race, and the representation of black women. By confronting the brutal legacy of Saartjie Baartman, Parks compels us to examine the lingering effects of colonialism and racism, prompting critical self-reflection on our own complicity in systems of oppression. The play's enduring power lies in its ability to provoke uncomfortable truths and inspire lasting change.

FAQs

1. Is Venus a historically accurate portrayal of Saartjie Baartman's life? While inspired by Saartjie Baartman's story, Venus is a fictionalized exploration of the themes and emotions surrounding her experience. It's not a strict biography.
2. What makes Venus a significant work of contemporary theatre? Its innovative approach to historical trauma, its exploration of complex themes of identity and resistance, and its powerful portrayal of black female agency make it a landmark play.
3. How does the play engage the audience? Parks utilizes a variety of theatrical techniques to confront the audience directly, forcing them to confront their own preconceptions and complicity in systems of oppression.
4. What are some key themes beyond the historical context? The play delves into universal themes of objectification, power dynamics, the search for identity, and the resilience of the human spirit.
5. Where can I find more information about Saartjie Baartman? There are many academic articles and documentaries available online that delve deeper into the life and legacy of Saartjie Baartman, providing further context for understanding the play.

venus play suzan lori parks: [Venus](#) Suzan-Lori Parks, 2012-12-15 Suzan-Lori Parks continues her examination of black people in history and stage through the life of the so-called Hottentot

Venus, an African woman displayed semi-nude throughout Europe due to her extraordinary physiognomy; in particular, her enormous buttocks. She was befriended, bought and bedded by a doctor who advanced his scientific career through his anatomical measurements of her after her premature death.

venus play suzan lori parks: Venus Suzan-Lori Parks, 1998 THE STORY: In 1810, The Venus Hottentot (as she is dubbed)--a young black woman with an enormous posterior--is lured away from her menial job in South Africa to tour the world and make lots of money. Once in England, however, she is sold to a freak s

venus play suzan lori parks: Venus Suzan-Lori Parks, 1997 Parks' latest and most controversial work.

venus play suzan lori parks: Exploring the Black Venus Figure in Aesthetic Practices , 2019-07-15 Tracing the figure of Black Venus in literature and visual arts from different periods and geographies, Exploring the Black Venus Figure in Aesthetic Practices discusses how aesthetic practices may restore the racialized female body in feminist, anti-racist and postcolonial terms.

venus play suzan lori parks: The Book of Grace Suzan-Lori Parks, 2016-03-01 [Suzan-Lori Parks'] dislocating stage devices, stark but poetic language and fiercely idiosyncratic images transform her work into something haunting and marvelous.—Time An original whose fierce intelligence and fearless approach to craft subvert theatrical convention and produce a mature and inimitable art that is as exciting as it is fresh.—August Wilson Named one of the 100 Innovators for the Next New Wave by Time magazine, Suzan-Lori Parks is a truly original voice of the American theater. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and a MacArthur Genius Award, Parks is renowned for her groundbreaking language, theatricality, and an aesthetic that continues to evolve in unexpected ways. Her first full-length play since her award-winning Topdog/Underdog, The Book of Grace is a scorching three-person drama in which a young man returns home to south Texas to confront his father, unearthing deep-seated passions and ambition. The play premiered in spring 2010 at the Public Theater, where Parks is in the midst of a three-year residency as the first recipient of the theater's master writer chair. Suzan-Lori Parks is a playwright, screenwriter, songwriter, and novelist. Her plays include Topdog/Underdog (winner of the 2002 Pulitzer Prize), In the Blood (a 2000 Pulitzer Prize finalist), Venus (OBIE Award winner) and Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom (OBIE Award, Best New American Play).

venus play suzan lori parks: The America Play and Other Works Suzan-Lori Parks, 2013-10-15 Parks has burst through every known convention to invent a new theatrical language, like a jive Samuel Beckett, while exploding American cultural myths and stereotypes along the way.... She's passionate and jokey and some kind of genius.--Vogue A collection of plays and essays by one of America's premier playwrights. Includes the essays Possession, from Elements of Style, and An Equation for Black People Onstage, and the plays Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom, Betting on Dust Commander, Pickling, The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World, Devotees in the Garden of Love, and The America Play.

venus play suzan lori parks: 365 Days/365 Plays Suzan-Lori Parks, 2006 On November 13, 2002, the author decided to write a play every day for a year. She began that same day. The result, completed exactly one year later, is this collection of 365 plays.

venus play suzan lori parks: Father Comes Home From the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3) Suzan-Lori Parks, 2015-06-01 By turns philosophical and playful, lyrical and earthy, Father Comes Home from the Wars (Parts 1, 2 & 3), swoops, leaps, dives and soars, reimagining a turbulent point in American history through a cockeyed contemporary lens . . . The finest work yet from this gifted writer.—The New York Times Thrilling. . . . A masterpiece . . . A story that engages the deepest possible issues in the most gripping possible ways.—New York Offered his freedom if he joins his master in the ranks of the Confederacy, Hero, a slave, must choose whether to leave the woman and people he loves for what may be another empty promise. As his decision brings him face to face with a nation at war with itself, the ones Hero left behind debate whether to escape or wait for his return, only to discover that for Hero, freedom may have come at a great spiritual cost. A devastatingly beautiful

dramatic work, *Father Comes Home from the Wars* (Parts 1, 2, & 3) is the opening trilogy of a projected nine-play cycle that will ultimately take us into the present. Suzan-Lori Parks became the first African American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Drama for her play *Topdog/Underdog* in 2002. Her other plays include *The Book of Grace*, *In the Blood*, *Venus*, *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*, *Fucking A*, *Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom* and *The America Play*. In 2007 her *365 Days/365 Plays* was produced at more than seven hundred theaters worldwide. Parks is a MacArthur Fellow and the Master Writer Chair at the Public Theater.

venus play suzan lori parks: *In the Blood* Suzan-Lori Parks, 2000 THE STORY: In this modern day riff on *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester La Negrita, a homeless mother of five, lives with her kids on the tough streets of the inner city. Her eldest child is teaching her how to read and write, but the letter A is

venus play suzan lori parks: *The Problem of the Color[blind]* Brandi Wilkins Catanese, 2011-06-07 Catanese's beautifully written and cogently argued book addresses one of the most persistent sociopolitical questions in contemporary culture. She suggests that it is performance and the difference it makes that complicates the terms by which we can even understand 'multicultural' and 'colorblind' concepts. A tremendously illuminating study that promises to break new ground in the fields of theatre and performance studies, African American studies, feminist theory, cultural studies, and film and television studies. ---Daphne Brooks, Princeton University Adds immeasurably to the ways in which we can understand the contradictory aspects of racial discourse and performance as they have emerged during the last two decades. An ambitious, smart, and fascinating book. ---Jennifer DeVere Brody, Duke University Are we a multicultural nation, or a colorblind one? *The Problem of the Color[blind]* examines this vexed question in American culture by focusing on black performance in theater, film, and television. The practice of colorblind casting---choosing actors without regard to race---assumes a performing body that is somehow race neutral. But where, exactly, is race neutrality located---in the eyes of the spectator, in the body of the performer, in the medium of the performance? In analyzing and theorizing such questions, Brandi Wilkins Catanese explores a range of engaging and provocative subjects, including the infamous debate between playwright August Wilson and drama critic Robert Brustein, the film career of Denzel Washington, Suzan-Lori Parks's play *Venus*, the phenomenon of postblackness (as represented in the Studio Museum in Harlem's *Freestyle* exhibition), the performer Ice Cube's transformation from icon of gangsta rap to family movie star, and the controversial reality television series *Black. White.* Concluding that ideologies of transcendence are ahistorical and therefore unenforceable, Catanese advances the concept of racial transgression---a process of acknowledging rather than ignoring the racialized histories of performance---as her chapters move between readings of dramatic texts, films, popular culture, and debates in critical race theory and the culture wars.

venus play suzan lori parks: *Topdog/underdog* Suzan-Lori Parks, 2002 THE STORY: A darkly comic fable of brotherly love and family identity is Suzan-Lori Parks' latest riff on the way we are defined by history. The play tells the story of Lincoln and Booth, two brothers whose names were given to them as a joke, foret

venus play suzan lori parks: *Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom* Suzan-Lori Parks, 1995 Length: 4 parts.

venus play suzan lori parks: *The Red Letter Plays* Suzan-Lori Parks, 2012-12-15 *In the Blood* is an extraordinary new play...It is truly harrowing...we cannot turn away, and we do not want to. The play strikes us as Hawthorne claimed his first glimpse of the scarlet letter struck him, with a sensation not altogether physical yet almost so, as of a burning heat, as if the letter were not of red cloth but of red-hot iron.'---Margo Jefferson, *The New York Times* The playwright who has burst through every known convention to invent a new theatrical language, like a jive Samuel Beckett, while exploding American cultural myths and stereotypes along the way [John Heilpern, *New York Observer and Vogue*], has written two haunting riffs on Hawthorne's *The Scarlett Letter*: *In the Blood* and *Fucking A*. Hester La Negrita of *In the Blood* is an unapologetic mother of five illegitimate

children—my treasures, my five joys—who practices writing the alphabet to help herself one day get a leg up. The letter A is as far as she gets. Hester Smith of *Fucking A* works the only job available—abortionist to the lower class, in order to save for a reunion picnic with her imprisoned son. Her branded A bleeds afresh every time a patient comes to see her. These are two mature, beautifully crafted, inventive and poetic plays by one of the most unique voices writing for the stage today. Suzan Lori-Parks is also the author of *The America Play* and *Other Works* and *Venus*, both published by TCG. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

venus play suzan lori parks: *The America Play* Suzan-Lori Parks, 1995 THE STORY: Once upon a time there was a theme park called the Great Hole of History. It was a popular spot for honeymooners who, in search of post-nuptial excitement, would visit this hole and watch the daily historical parades. One of these visi

venus play suzan lori parks: Suzan-Lori Parks Deborah R. Geis, 2008 The latest addition to the Michigan Modern Dramatists series offers an indispensable guide to Parks's dramatic works, taking a close look at her major plays and placing them in context. Deborah R. Geis traces the evolution of Parks's art from her earliest experimental pieces to the hugely popular *Topdog/Underdog* to her wide-ranging forays into fiction, music, and film.--pub. desc.

venus play suzan lori parks: Understanding Suzan-Lori Parks Jennifer Larson, 2012-11-15 Understanding Suzan-Lori Parks is a critical study of a playwright and screenwriter who was the first African American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Suzan-Lori Parks is also the recipient of a MacArthur Genius Award, a Whiting Writers Award, a CalArts/Alpert Award in the Arts, two Obie Awards, and a Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts. In this book Jennifer Larson examines how Parks, through the innovative language and narratives of her extensive body of work, investigates and invigorates literary and cultural history. Larson discusses all of Parks's genres—play, screenplay, essay, and novel—closely reading key texts from Parks's more experimental earlier pieces as well as her more linear later narratives. Larson's study begins with a survey of Parks's earliest and most difficult texts including *Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom* and *The Death of the Last Black Man in the Whole Entire World*. Larson then analyzes *Venus*, *In the Blood*, and the *Lincoln Plays: The America Play* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *TopDog/Underdog*. Larson also discusses two of Parks's most important screenplays, *Girl 6* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. In interpreting these screenplays, Larson examines film's role in the popularization and representation of African American culture and history. These essays suggest an approach to all genres of literature and blend creativity, form, culture, and history into a revisionary aesthetic that allows for no identity or history to remain fixed, with Parks arguing that in order to be relevant they must all be dynamic and democratic.

venus play suzan lori parks: Getting Mother's Body Suzan-Lori Parks, 2004-04-13 Pulitzer Prize winner Suzan-Lori Parks's wildly original debut novel, *Getting Mother's Body*, follows pregnant, unmarried Billy Beede and her down-and-out family in 1960s Texas as they search for the storied jewels buried—or were they?—with Billy's fast-running, six-years-dead mother, Willa Mae. *Getting Mother's Body* is a true spiritual successor to the work of writers such as Zora Neale Hurston and Alice Walker—but when it comes to bringing hard-luck characters to ingenious, uproarious life, Suzan-Lori Parks shares the stage with no one.

venus play suzan lori parks: 100 Plays for the First Hundred Days Suzan-Lori Parks, 2018-06-26 In reaction to the extraordinary events of the first hundred days of the presidency of Donald J. Trump, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks has created a unique and personal response to one of the most tumultuous times in our recent history—a play diary for each day of the presidency, to capture and explore the events as they unfolded. Known for her distinctive lyrical dialogue and powerful sociopolitical themes, Parks's *100 Plays for the First Hundred Days* is the powerful and provocative everyman's guide to the Trumpian universe of uncertainty, confusion, and chaos.

venus play suzan lori parks: The Hottentot Venus Rachel Holmes, 2016-05-19 The acclaimed biography of Sarah Baartman, once a slave and later a showgirl 'A significant and timely

book ... Holmes has produced a laceratingly powerful story' Frances Wilson, Literary Review 'Impeccable ... In telling her extraordinary story, Holmes's fascinating book illuminates the forces which dominated her age, and resound in our own' Sunday Telegraph In 1810 the slave turned showgirl Sarah Baartman, London's most famous curiosity, became its legal cause célèbre. Famed for her exquisite physique – in particular her shapely bottom – she was stared at, stripped, pinched, painted, worshipped and ridiculed. This talented, tragic young South African woman became a symbol of exploitation, colonialism – and defiance. In this scintillating and vividly written book Rachel Holmes traces the full arc of Baartman's extraordinary life for the first time.

venus play suzan lori parks: The Embodiment of Disobedience Andrea Elizabeth Shaw, 2006-07-27 Despite the West's privileging of slenderness as an aesthetic ideal, the African Diaspora has historically displayed a resistance to the Western European and North American indulgence in 'fat anxiety.' The Embodiment of Disobedience explores the ways in which the African Diaspora has rejected the West's efforts to impose imperatives of slenderness and mass market fat-anxiety. Author Andrea Shaw explores the origins and contradictions of this phenomenon, especially the cultural deviations in beauty criteria and the related social and cultural practices. Unique in its examination of how both fatness and blackness interact on literary cultural planes, this book also offers a diasporic scope that develops previously unexamined connections among female representations throughout the African Diaspora.

venus play suzan lori parks: Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus Clifton Crais, Pamela Scully, 2021-10-12 Displayed on European stages from 1810 to 1815 as the Hottentot Venus, Sara Baartman was one of the most famous women of her day, and also one of the least known. As the Hottentot Venus, she was seen by Westerners as alluring and primitive, a reflection of their fears and suppressed desires. But who was Sara Baartman? Who was the woman who became the Hottentot Venus? Based on research and interviews that span three continents, Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus tells the entwined histories of an elusive life and a famous icon. In doing so, the book raises questions about the possibilities and limits of biography for understanding those who live between and among different cultures. In reconstructing Baartman's life, the book traverses the South African frontier and its genocidal violence, cosmopolitan Cape Town, the ending of the slave trade, the Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, London and Parisian high society, and the rise of racial science. The authors discuss the ramifications of discovering that when Baartman went to London, she was older than originally assumed, and they explore the enduring impact of the Hottentot Venus on ideas about women, race, and sexuality. The book concludes with the politics involved in returning Baartman's remains to her home country, and connects Baartman's story to her descendants in nineteenth- and twentieth-century South Africa. Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus offers the authoritative account of one woman's life and reinstates her to the full complexity of her history.

venus play suzan lori parks: **Suzan-Lori Parks in Person** Philip C Kolin, Harvey Young, 2013-12-04 This collection of interviews offers unprecedented insight into the plays and creative works of Suzan-Lori Parks, as well as being an important commentary on contemporary theater and playwriting, from jazz and opera to politics and cultural memory. Suzan-Lori Parks in Person contains 18 interviews, some previously untranscribed or specially undertaken for this book, plus commentaries on her work by major directors and critics, including Liz Diamond, Richard Foreman, Bonnie Metzgar and Beth Schachter. These contributions combine to honor the first African American woman to receive the Pulitzer Prize in drama, and explore her ideas about theater, history, race, and gender. Material from a wide range of sources chronologically charts Parks's career from the 1990s to the present. This is a major collection with immediate relevance to students of American/African-American theater, literature and culture. Parks's engaging voice is brought to the fore, making the book essential for undergraduates as well as scholars. The Introduction of this book is freely available as a downloadable Open Access PDF at <http://www.taylorfrancis.com> under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

venus play suzan lori parks: **White Noise** Suzan-Lori Parks, 2019-08-13 From the Pulitzer

Prize-winning playwright of *Topdog/Underdog* comes a play about race and friendship in a deeply flawed society.

venus play suzan lori parks: *Suzan-Lori Parks* Philip C. Kolin, 2014-01-10 The first African American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama, Suzan-Lori Parks has received international recognition for her provocative and influential works. Her plays capture the nightmares of African Americans endangered by a white establishment determined to erase their history and eradicate their dreams. A dozen essays address Parks's plays, screenplays and novel. Additionally, this book includes two original interviews (one with Parks and another with her long-time director Liz Diamond) and a production chronology of her plays.

venus play suzan lori parks: *White* James Ijames, 2018-06-18 Gus is an artist. Vanessa is an actress. Gus wants to be presented in a major exhibition for artists of color, so he hires Vanessa to perform as Balkonaé Townsend, a brash and political artist that will fit the museum's desire for "new voices." Everything is great, until Balkonaé takes over and Gus has to deal with the mess he's made. This play spins out of control as it explores issues of race, gender, sexuality, and art.

venus play suzan lori parks: *Embodying Black Experience* Harvey Young, 2010-07 the highly predictable and anticipated arrival of racial violence within a person's lifetime --

venus play suzan lori parks: *The Red Letter Plays: in the Blood and Fucking A* Suzan-Lori Parks, 2020-04-23 Two haunting riffs on Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*, from a leading American playwright. Hester La Negrita of *In the Blood* is an unapologetic mother of five illegitimate children, whose daily struggle among many is to master writing the alphabet, to help herself 'one day get a leg up'. She remains unable to get further than the letter A, scrawled in chalk beneath a railway bridge. Suzan-Lori Parks' play *In the Blood* was first staged at the Joseph Papp Public Theater, New York, in 1999. It was shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2000. Hester Smith of *Fucking A* works the only job available - back-street abortionist - in order to save for a reunion picnic with her imprisoned son. Her branded A bleeds afresh every time a patient comes to see her. *Fucking A* was first staged at the DiverseWorks Artspace in Houston, Texas, in February 2000.

venus play suzan lori parks: *Water by the Spoonful* Quiara Alegría Hudes, 2013 THE STORY: Somewhere in Philadelphia, Elliot has returned from Iraq and is struggling to find his place in the world. Somewhere in a chat room, recovering addicts keep each other alive, hour by hour, day by day. The boundaries of family and communi

venus play suzan lori parks: *Stick Fly* Lydia R. Diamond, 2008-12-17 Adept at capturing the experience of the upper-middle-class African-American, Diamond lays out two families' worth of secrets in this precise play. With only six characters, she constructs a vivid weekend of crossed pasts and uncertain but optimistic futures. On Martha's Vineyard, an affluent African-American family gathers in their vacation home, joined by the housekeeper's daughter, who is filling in for her mother. The family patriarch is a philandering physician; one of his sons has followed in his footsteps, while the other, after numerous false starts in a variety of careers, is a struggling novelist. Both bring along their current girlfriends, to meet the family for the first time. With such highly--perhaps over--educated vacationers, the conversation and the barbs fly, on subjects ranging from race to economics to politics. But there is also more than enough human drama, which reaches its climax when an old family secret comes out. Through lively exchanges and simmering wit, the family tackles a history filled with complications both within the family and in the outer world.

venus play suzan lori parks: *Spunk* Chic Street Man, Zora Neale Hurston, George C. Wolfe, 2000 THE STORY: Hurston's evocative prose and Wolfe's unique theatrical style blend to create an evening of theatre that celebrates the human spirit's ability to overcome and endure. Utilizing the blues, choral narrative and dance, the three tales focus

venus play suzan lori parks: *King Liz* Fernanda Coppel, 2016 Sports agent Liz Rico has money and an elite client roster but a woman in a man's industry has to fight to stay on top. She's worked twice as hard to get where she is and wants to take over the agency that she's helped build. Enter Freddie Luna, a high school basketball superstar with a troubled past. If Liz can keep this

talented yet volatile young star in line, she just might end up making not only his career, but her own as well. But at what price? -- Publisher website.

venus play suzan lori parks: Representing the Past Charlotte M. Canning, Thomas Postlewait, 2010-04-15 Representing the Past is required reading for any serious scholar of theatre and performance historiography: original in its conception, global in its reach, thought-provoking and transformative in its effects.---Gay Gibson Cima, author, Early American Women Critics: Performance, Religion, Race --

venus play suzan lori parks: The Whirligig Hamish Linklater, 2018-06-18 Just south of Williamstown, if you take a left at the Red Lion Inn, there's an off-season part of Berkshire County where no one locks their doors, just in case someone comes home who's forgotten their key. In this quiet corner of Western Massachusetts, a motley cast of strangers from a dying young woman's past find one another on a night when they need each other most. THE WHIRLIGIG is a sparkle-dark, rollicking, rural romance about Death, Time, Mistaken Identity, Chance, Sex, Chancy Sex, and mostly, mostly Love.

venus play suzan lori parks: Black Feminism in Contemporary Drama Lisa M. Anderson, 2008 In tracing black feminism in contemporary drama by black women playwrights, Lisa M. Anderson reviews the history of black feminism through analysis of plays by Pearl Cleage, Glenda Dickerson, Breena Clarke, Kia Corthron, Suzan-Lori Parks, Sharon Bridgforth, and Shirlene Holmes. Black Feminism in Contemporary Drama represents a cross section of women who have diverse writing and performance styles and generational differences that highlight the artistic and political breadth of black feminist theater. Anderson closely investigates each play's construction and the context of its production, including how the play critiques, shifts, or alters dominant culture stereotypes; how it positions goals of the community; and how it engages with the concept of art's function. She not only discusses what shapes the black feminism of these writers but also points out how the meaning of the term black feminism shifts among them.

venus play suzan lori parks: Black Neo-Victoriana , 2021-11-22 Black Neo-Victoriana is the first book-length study on contemporary re-imaginings of Blackness in the long nineteenth century. Contributions engage with novels, drama, film, television and material culture, while also covering cultural formations such as Black fandom, Black dandyism, or steamfunk.

venus play suzan lori parks: The Palgrave Handbook of Queer and Trans Feminisms in Contemporary Performance Tiina Rosenberg, Sandra D'Urso, Anna Renée Winget, 2021-09-21 The purpose of this Handbook is to provide students with an overview of key developments in queer and trans feminist theories and their significance to the field of contemporary performance studies. It presents new insights highlighting the ways in which rigid or punishing notions of gender, sexuality and race continue to flourish in systems of knowledge, faith and power which are relevant to a new generation of queer and trans feminist performers today. The guiding question for the Handbook is: How do queer and trans feminist theories enhance our understanding of developments in feminist performance today, and will this discussion give rise to new ways of theorizing contemporary performance? As such, the volume will survey a new generation of performers and theorists, as well as senior scholars, who engage and redefine the limits of performance. The chapters will demonstrate how intersectional, queer and trans feminist theoretical tools support new analyses of performance with a global focus. The primary audience will be students of theatre/ performance studies as well as queer /gender studies. The volume's contents suggest close links between the formation of queer feminist identities alongside recent key political developments with transnational resonances. Furthermore, the emergence of new queer and trans feminist epistemologies prompts a reorientation regarding performance and identities in a 21st-century context.

venus play suzan lori parks: Composing Venus Elaine Acworth, 1995-01 A female-centric narrative set in Charters Towers, involving a central matriarch, her four talented daughters, and the social constraints in the lives of ordinary women.

venus play suzan lori parks: Suzan-Lori Parks Kevin J. Wetmore Jr, Alycia Smith-Howard, 2007-11-15 The first major study of this unique voice in contemporary drama. Suzan-Lori Parks

confirmed herself as one of the most exciting and successful playwrights of her generation when winning the 2002 Pulitzer Prize, making her the only African American woman to win the award.

venus play suzan lori parks: African Queen Rachel Holmes, 2009-03-25 Saartjie Baartman was twenty-one years old when she was taken from her native South Africa and shipped to London. Within weeks, the striking African beauty was the talk of the social season of 1810-hailed as “the Hottentot Venus” for her exquisite physique and suggestive semi-nude dance. As her fame spread to Paris, Saartjie became a lightning rod for late Georgian and Napoleonic attitudes toward sex and race, exploitation and colonialism, prurience and science. In *African Queen*, Rachel Holmes recounts the luminous, heartbreaking story of one woman’s journey from slavery to stardom. Born into a herding tribe known as the Eastern Cape Khoisan, Saartjie was barely out of her teens when she was orphaned and widowed by colonial war and forced aboard a ship bound for England. A pair of clever, unscrupulous showmen dressed her up in a body stocking with a suggestive fringe and put her on the London stage as a “specimen” of African beauty and sexuality. The Hottentot Venus was an overnight sensation. But celebrity brought unexpected consequences. Abolitionists initiated a lawsuit to win Saartjie’s freedom, a case that electrified the English public. In Paris, a team of scientists subjected her to a humiliating public inspection as they probed the mystery of her sexual allure. Stared at, stripped, pinched, painted, worshipped, and ridiculed, Saartjie came to symbolize the erotic obsession at the heart of colonialism. But beneath the costumes and the glare of publicity, this young Khoisan woman was a person who had been torn from her own culture and sacrificed to the whims of fashionable Europe. Nearly two centuries after her death, Saartjie made headlines once again when Nelson Mandela launched a campaign to have her remains returned to the land of her birth. In this brilliant, vividly written book, Rachel Holmes traces the full arc of Saartjie’s extraordinary story—a story of race, eros, oppression, and fame that resonates powerfully today.

venus play suzan lori parks: *Stories I Ain't Told Nobody Yet* Jo Carson, 1993-01-01 Fifty-four monologues and dialogues, a remarkable distillation of rhythms and nuances from the region of the heart.

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