



Framing Silence: Revolutionary Novels by Haitian Women

Myriam J.A. Chancy

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Raped and colonized, coerced and silenced--this has been the position of Haitian women within their own society, as well as how they have been seen by foreign occupiers. Romanticized symbols of nationhood, they have served, however unwillingly, as a politicized site of contestation between opposing forces.

In this first book-length study in English devoted exclusively to Haitian women's literature, Myriam Chancy finds that Haitian women have their own history, traditions, and stories to tell, tales that they are unwilling to suppress or subordinate to narratives of national autonomy. Issues of race, class, color, caste, nationality, and sexuality are all central to their fiction--as is an urgent sense of the historical place of women between the two U.S. occupations of the country. Their novels interrogate women's social and political stance in Haiti from an explicitly female point of view, forcefully responding to overt sexual and political violence within the nation's ambivalent political climate. Through daring and sensitive readings, simultaneously historical, fictional and autobiographical, Chancy explores this literature, seeking to uncover answers to the current crisis facing these women today, both within their country and in exile. The writers surveyed include Anne-christine d'Adesky, Ghislaine Rey Charlier, Marie Chauvet, Jan J. Dominique, Nadine Magloire, and Edwidge Danticat, whose work has recently achieved such high acclaim.

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