



From Sugar to Revolution: Women's Visions of Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic

Myriam J.A. Chancy

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In this original and provocative study, Myriam Chancy reads the catastrophic history of the Caribbean in the narrative and visual fictions of a number of remarkable women artists, disclosing hitherto uncharted maps of time and voice and remembrance. A work of studied insight, engaged criticism, and graceful sentences, it will alter not only the frames in which Haiti, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic are represented, but the very conditions for a gendered and transnational inquiry into the Caribbean present.

— David Scott, Columbia University; Editor, *Small Axe*

Rich and suggestive, this broad-ranging and original study combines interpretive readings and personal conversations with individual artists. Chancy places women's bodies, voices, memories, and visions at the centre of a careful scrutiny of the way three global axes of power—sugar, sovereignty, and revolution—have defined and confined Caribbean history, with its traumatic events and lingering painful memories. Conjugating national and transnational approaches to the Creolophone, Anglophone, and Hispanophone islands, Chancy redefines our understanding of terror by opening up innovative cultural and scholarly avenues for hopeful new beginnings. This is a transformative intervention in the contemporary realities of the region.

— Françoise Lionnet, UCLA; Co-editor, *The Creolization of Theory*

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Sovereignty. Sugar. Revolution. These are the three axes this book uses to link the works of contemporary women artists from Haiti—a country excluded in contemporary Latin American and Caribbean literary studies—the Dominican Republic, and Cuba. In *From Sugar to Revolution*, Myriam Chancy aims to show that Haiti's exclusion is grounded in its historical role as a site of ontological defiance. Her premise is that writers Edwidge Danticat, Julia Alvarez, Zoé Valdés, Loida Maritza Pérez, Marilyn Bobes, Achy Obejas, Nancy Morejón, and visual artist María Magdalena Campos-Pons attempt to defy fears of "otherness" by assuming the role of "archaeologists of amnesia." They seek to elucidate women's variegated lives within the confining walls of their national identifications—identifications wholly defined as male. They reach beyond the confining limits of national borders to discuss gender, race, sexuality, and class in ways that render possible the linking of all three nations. Nations such as Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba are still locked in battles over self-determination, but, as Chancy demonstrates, women's gendered revisionings may open doors to less exclusionary imaginings of social and political realities for Caribbean people in general.

Myriam J.A. Chancy is the author of both non-fiction and fiction, including *Framing Silence: Revolutionary Novels by Haitian Women* (1997), *Searching for Safe Spaces: Afro-Caribbean Women Writers in Exile* (1997), which won a Choice OAB Award for 1998, and *Spirit of Haiti* (2003), shortlisted for Best First Book, Canada/Caribbean region, Commonwealth Prize 2004. *The Loneliness of Angels* (2010) was shortlisted in the fiction category of the OCM Bocas Prize in Caribbean Literature 2011 and won the 2011 Guyana Prize in Literature Caribbean Award, Best Fiction 2010. Chancy sits on the editorial advisory board of PMLA and is professor of English at the University of Cincinnati.

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