

ABSTRACT

Voices Inside: Haitian Women Writers (Yanick Lahens, Evelyne Trouillot and Kettly Mars) of
the Post-Duvalier era (1986-present)

Céleste Mary-Anne Hargreaves

The history of fiction in Haiti is one of historical paradox. It is consumed and sustained by ideas of displacement and exile, which have shaped the Haitian notion of inside and out.¹ Numerous analyses of writings of prominent male Haitian writers² have been conducted. Consequently, their works - with the exception of Edwidge Danticat - have often eclipsed those of Haitian female writers.

Several Caribbean women writers have revealed a preoccupation with dismantling male authoritarian discourse, producing more accurate views of the female psyche. This thesis examines how three select female writers of the post-Duvalier era within Haiti have given voice to Haitian female subjectivity, seeing that many Haitian women were previously silenced due to state sanctioned violence. In addition, unique insights are given into various themes that are not necessarily female-centered.

The aim of this study is to explore and interrogate the writings of Yanick Lahens, Evelyne Trouillot and Kettly Mars, who have emerged post 1986. To be examined will be the characteristics of their writing and the notion of creating and recreating new aesthetic forms. The focus has been placed on their ability to exercise their freedom to write the lives of Haitian

women in particular. This research proposes to analyse Evelyne Trouillot's idea that "Écrire en Haïti aujourd'hui est plus que jamais dire non à la laideur, à la médiocrité et à la paresse pour un peu plus de bonheur au bout du chemin."³ Throughout the thesis, careful study of select novels and short stories of Lahens, Trouillot and Mars will be conducted as they have become a means for the Haitian female writer to create greater visibility of the Haitian female condition.

It is therefore the intention of this thesis to provide insight into the emergence of writings by a crop of Haitian female writers and their role in the development of Haitian, as well as Caribbean literature.

Keywords: Yanick Lahens, Kettly Mars, Evelyne Trouillot, Haitian women writers, Haitian literature, post-Duvalier era, 20th century Haitian literature, exile and Haitian literature, violence and Haitian literature, eroticism and Haitian literature, resistance and Haitian literature.