

ABSTRACT

Nancy Morejón and Georgina Herrera:

Negotiating Gender, Race and Class

in a Revolutionary Context

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This study investigates the poetry of Afro-Cuban female writers Nancy Morejón and Georgina Herrera with a view to unearthing a clearer understanding of the politics which impact their work and their unique and similar modes of contentions within the context of the ongoing Cuban Revolution and their personal, historical and gender points of reference. Through the use of race, gender and class theorizing, and the investigation of the Cuban Revolutionary ideology, the study analyzes their treatment of gender, race and class, and their negotiation of standpoints within a socio-political environment where various freedoms are said to be curtailed.

In their presentation of race and African identity, Morejón and Herrera foreground the integral space of Africa, its deities and its accompanying praxis of struggle and triumph, to the development of black consciousness. However, while Herrera appears to encourage a return to Africa, a characterization of a physical space and/or practice, Morejón appears more concerned with the formation of a new identity, one negotiated within the Revolution.

In their efforts to subvert patriarchy, Morejón and Herrera emerge as non-confrontational as they seek to register the contributions of the woman to history and her contemporary Cuban society. However, Herrera reflects a general trend of unearthing real historical women who fought for the freedom of the oppressed. She also speaks from a personal space of family and immediate community. In contrast, Morejón engages a more metaphorical / figurative representation of the female figure. Her engagement of gender, even though not totally void of a personal point of reference, seems keener on establishing a national political stance. Morejón, unlike Herrera, further foregrounds a strong male Revolutionary presence in her poetry.

In the treatment of class, Morejón and Herrera speak out against the injustices and prejudices faced by the working class. And even though they locate this landscape of inequalities outside of Cuba or within pre-Revolutionary Cuba, there are evidences which suggest that economic disparities still exists within Revolutionary Cuban society.

Keywords: Lindy Anthony Jones; Nancy Morejón; Georgina Herrera; Afro-Cuban Poetry; Cuban Revolution; Writing strategies within Revolutionary context.