



Voicing Memory: History and Subjectivity in French Caribbean Literature (New World Studies)

Nick Nesbitt

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In *Voicing Memory* Nick Nesbitt argues that the aesthetic practices of twentieth-century French Caribbean writers reconstruct a historical awareness that had been lost amid the repressive violence of slavery, the plantation system, and colonial exploitation. Drawing on the work of Aimé Césaire, Edouard Glissant, Daniel Maximin, Maryse Condé, and Edwidge Danticat, he shows how these writers use the critical force of the aesthetic imagination to transform the parameters of Antillean experience.

The author takes the aesthetic practices of the black Atlantic?Antillean poetry, literature, and theater, but also Haitian vodou and visual arts, American jazz, and West African musical traditions?to constitute the models informing this Caribbean vernacular historiography. At the same time, Nesbitt shows how concepts from Césaire's "negritude" to Glissant's "relation" critically rework European theoretical influences to construct a black Atlantic historical self-consciousness. In so doing, Nesbitt points beyond the regionalism of Antillean exoticism to describe French Caribbean literature as a decisive intervention in the construction of a global modernity.

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