

ON GENDERED VIOLENCE: THE INDIGENOUS FEMININE ESTHETICS IN EDWIDGE DANTICAT'S *BREATH, EYES, MEMORY* (1994)

Chérif Saloum DIATTA

Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar

Cherifsaloum.diatta@ucad.edu.sn

Résumé

*L'agenda de la tradition littéraire des écrivaines caribéennes intègre deux tendances principales : les luttes nationalistes et l'émancipation des femmes. En particulier, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) d'Edwidge Danticat témoigne d'un engagement en faveur d'une écriture féminine rédemptrice visant à rétablir l'historicité des femmes, à promouvoir leur dignité et à affirmer leur individualité. Le roman offre une représentation significative de la violence que les femmes haïtiennes subissent de la part des traditions, des coutumes et des systèmes politiques. S'appuyant sur les théories de l'écriture féminine, cette étude analyse la manière dont Danticat inscrit la violence comme un espace de contestation des institutions sociales et politiques qui débilitent et oppriment les femmes caribéennes. En effet, l'écrivaine haïtienne aborde la lutte pour l'émancipation des femmes des Caraïbes en proposant un récit féminin qui soutient singulièrement la reconnexion avec les racines ancestrales. Je soutiens que l'esthétique littéraire de Danticat envisage l'humanisation des femmes caribéennes à travers des perspectives émancipatrices locales plutôt qu'à travers les perspectives du féminisme international. Cette étude met l'accent sur deux points principaux : la typologie de la violence à l'égard des femmes ; et, enfin, le récit féminin indigène et la résistance féminine.*

Mots clés : *Danticat, genre, violence, écriture féminine, émancipation*

Abstract

*The agenda of Caribbean women's literary tradition incorporates two main trends: nationalist struggle and women's emancipation. Particularly, Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) informs a commitment to feminine redemptive writing to reinstate women's historicity, promote women's dignity, and assert women's individuality. The*

novel provides a significant representation of the violence Haitian women experience from traditions, customs, and political systems. Based on feminine writing theories, this study analyzes the ways in which Danticat inscribes violence as a space for contestation over the social and political institutions that confine, debilitate, and oppress Caribbean women. She approaches the struggle for Caribbean women's emancipation, proposing a feminine narrative, which singularly upholds reconnection with ancestral roots. I argue that Danticat's literary esthetics envisions the humanization of Caribbean women through domestic emancipatory perspectives rather than through the lenses of international feminism. This study emphasizes two main points: the typology of violence against women; and, last but not least, the indigenous feminine narrative and female resistance.

Keywords: *Danticat, gender, violence, feminine writing, emancipation,*

Introduction

Published in 1994, Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, tells the story of twelve-year-old Sophie's experience as a Haitian migrant girl in New York, where she reunites with her mother, Martine. Both have had a conflicting relationship as her mother is determined to up-bring her according to Haitian customs. Danticat's novel provides a significant representation of the violence Caribbean women experience from traditions, customs, and political systems. Using Helene Cixous' notion of 'feminine writing', this article analyzes Danticat's inscription of violence as a space for contestation over the social and political institutions that confine, debilitate, and oppress Caribbean women. The analysis also looks at the ways in which Danticat parodies 'feminine writing', providing a tropicalized or indigenized form of feminine narrative that seeks Caribbean women's emancipation and welfare.

Theorizing feminine writing in "The Laugh of the Medusa," H. Cixous (1976, p. 875) states that a woman must "write herself" and "put herself into the text –as into the world and into history –by her own movement". Additionally, in "La-The (Feminine)", she describes how language can be used as a

medium to parody and challenge patriarchal writing and envision the liberation of women (H. Cixous, 2015, p. 466). For H. Cixous, feminine writing amounts to a literary style that portrays women's experience and aims at providing a feminist voice, reclaiming women's historicity and the female body. Analysing H. Cixous' theory of feminine writing, critics view that it is a new literary aesthetics, which positions itself against the dualistic discourse in patriarchal writing, while emphasizing the "utopian desire" to promote the feminine, "repressed by the masculine libidinal economy" (P. Borah, 2020, p. 815; K. Weil, 2006, p. 152; E. M. Sartori, 1999, p. 211). H. Cixous, just like her fellow French feminist theorists J. Kristeva and L. Irigaray, not only draws substance from psychoanalysis in her definition of feminine writing, but also inspired herself from the *avant-gardist* tradition developed by theorists like S. Mallarmé and J. Joyce. G. Spivak (1981, p. 166) views that these feminists' theories are in line with the *avant-garde* ideologies. According to J. Kristeva (1974), as G. Spivak (1981, p. 166) highlights it, "if women can accede to the avant-garde in general, they will fulfill the possibilities of their discourse". From a feminist perspective, feminine writing advocates the invention of a literary genre, which subverts masculine codes of representation and seeks to dismantle masculine power.

Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) informs an approach to feminine writing, since it unearths sufferings and pains women undergo, and underscores pathways towards ending women's victimization. However, the novel characterizes the struggle for women's emancipation, proposing a narrative that is characteristic of indigenous feminine aesthetics. This literary style singularly upholds reconnection with indigenous culture and ancestral roots and realities, as it yearns for women's freedom and self-fulfillment. It deploys a narrative that promotes women's social conditions, using symbols from traditions and folklore. I argue that

Danticat's novel envisions the humanization of Caribbean women through domestic emancipatory perspectives rather than through the lenses of international feminism. This study emphasizes three main points: first, the typology of violence against women; then, women's trauma and the malfunction of the female body; and, last but not least, the feminine redemptive narrative.

1. The Typology of Violence against Women

Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) offers a pathbreaking way of understanding violence against women, following feminine writing's perspective of unveiling atrocities women experience within patriarchal societies. It provides a nuanced depiction of women's victimization agents, pertaining to social institutions, supposedly controlled by men. The novels suggests that Caribbean women suffer from both men's and women's oppression. The inscription of women as agents of women's victimization alongside men, makes Danticat's feminine aesthetics a complex discourse, which sometimes seems to stand in opposite lines with feminine writing's representation of female victimhood and victimization. The analysis in this section emphasizes the different aspects of violence Caribbean women endure.

1.1 Political Violence and Rape

Haitian history has been marked by dictatorial regimes with unprecedented oppressive systems. The Duvalier regime, from François Duvalier to Jean Claude Duvalier, particularly caused a wide range of victims, which prompted a countless number of Haitians to migrate mainly to other Caribbean islands and the United States, especially to New York and Miami. E. Danticat's novels significantly and overtly evoke political violence Haitians faced both in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Her novel *The Farming of Bones* (1998), unveils the

dramatic murder of thousands of Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic under President Raphael Trujillo in 1937. In *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) just like in *The Dew Breaker* (2004), E. Danticat introduces the Tonton Macoutes, Duvalier's militia, who exert irrational violence on the president's opponents to secure his power.

Inscribing political violence, Danticat's feminine aesthetics is essentially interested in portraying the experience of Haitian women. *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) elucidates how through rape, Jean Claude Duvalier's political apparatus seeks to terrorize and control women. In *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, B. Hooks (2000, p. 27) similarly argues that rape represents "the most elemental form of terrorism distinctly suited for the female". Likewise, in *The Creation of Patriarchy*, G. Lerner (1986, p. 225) views that "we have long known that rape has been a way of terrorizing us and keeping us in subjugation". Rape as a means of terror pertains to Rape Culture, a conception that normalizes and validates women's sexual abuse. In the preamble of their edited book *Transforming a Rape Culture*, E. Buchwald, et al. (1993, p. vii) conceive of Rape Culture as

a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that range from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women *as the norm*. [authors' italics]

In Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) Martine's rape appears an eloquent instance of sexual victimization, which denotes Rape culture in Haitian dictatorial regimes, here perpetrated by the Tonton Macoutes. Martine's sexual assault results in pregnancy through which she conceives Sophie, the

protagonist. The novel reveals her rape, using a devious, subtle and metaphorical narrative style. In explaining Sophie the reasons why her father is absent, Martine says: “A man grabbed me from the side of the road, pulled me into a cane field, and put you in my body” (E. Danticat, 1994, p. 61). After analyzing the political situation in Haiti, Sophie concludes that her father must be a Tonton Macoute. In her analysis of *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), D. Smith (2009, p. 136) posits that “Sophie recognizes that her mother’s unpunished rape bears a similarity to the power of the Tonton Macoutes in the children’s stories: the Tonton Macoute was a bogeyman, a scarecrow with human flesh. He wore denim overall...”. Sophie’s deduction of the identity of her mother’s victimizer, connecting the occurrence with the political realities and kids’ tale in Haitian folklore, shows the recurrence of rape as a privileged terrorist practice against women in Haitian dictatorial powers. Rape as a means of terror becomes emphasized, as Tonton Macoutes sometimes enter houses, ask for food, and have forced sexual intercourse the woman of the house (D. Smith, 2009, p. 135).

The analysis of rape associated with political violence in Haiti, showcases Danticat’s commitment in the representation of the oppression Haitian women have endured during the presidency of the Duvaliers. However, her silencing of the contribution of female Tonton Macoutes hide the whole complex realities of political victimization of Haitian women. This might be motivated by her desire to emphasize sexual abuse against women, whose perpetrators might have only been male Tonton Macoutes. Danticat must have been aware that women, as Tonton Macoutes, have served as prison guards, brutalizing their fellow women. In the works of Haitian female writers like A. d’Adesky, we encounter a thorough treatment of women’s violence against other women on the political sphere. Her novel, *Under the Bone* (1994), depicts female Tonton Macoutes’ contribution to the mental and physical abuse of their fellow women during the Duvalier regime. While rape is essential in

examining political violence Caribbean women have suffered from, women's oppression through traditional institutions deserves scrutiny.

1.2 The Cult of Virginity: Women's Victimization through Traditional Institutions

The cult of virginity appears to be an attempt to keep girls in a state of purity for the intent to get a husband in traditional and contemporary societies. According to J. Valenti (2009, p. 109-110) in *The Purity Myth*, American society's obsession in chastity links morals to sexual behavior as a value rather than principles of honesty, kindness, and altruism. In Samoan society, the cult of virginity is conceived of as a highly important practice. The chastised woman therefore becomes invaluable. As J. Kirk and M. L. Miller (1986, p. 46) wrote, "Female virgins are highly valued, eagerly sought after, and zealously protected by male kin". In Haiti, the Cacos represent one of the communities, which uphold such practice of sexual purity, mainly carried out by a mother to her daughter as depicted in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Danticat's inscription of the cult of virginity in her novel not only sheds light on the mobilization of customs against women, but also highlight women's participation in victimizing other women.

Breath, Eyes, Memory (1994), represents the tradition of virginity preservation through three generations of Caco women. Granma Ife stands for the first generation who has undergone this tradition. She has in turn applied it on her daughters Tante Atie and Martine, the second generation. Martine has also perpetuated this custom, trying to ensure that her daughter Sophie keeps her chastity. Sophie represents the third generation of Caco women who endure the cult of virginity and who have mostly opposed to and suffered from it. Her resentment against Martine's attempts to control her virginity prompts Granma's and Tante Atie's interventions to convince her about her mother's responsibilities and good

intention. In a conversation with Sophie, Grandma confides that “from the time a girl begins to menstruate to the time you turn her over to her husband, the mother is responsible for her purity. If I give a soiled daughter to her husband, he can shame my family, speak evil of me, even bring her back to me” (E. Danticat, 1994, p. 156). As Tante Atie additionally explain to Sophie: “They train you to find a husband” (E. Danticat, 1994, p. 137). From Granma’s and Tante Atie’s statements bring to light the idea that is that, although the cult of virginity is perpetrated by women, it supports the patriarchal system. B. Hooks (2000, p. 3) likewise argues that “as contemporary feminism progressed, as women realized that males were not the only group in our society who supported sexist thinking and behavior – that females could be sexist as well, anti-male sentiment no longer shaped the movement’s consciousness”. It is true that a pure girl brings pride to the mother, but it is all for the benefit and honor of the husband. With the support of women, girls are maintained pure for the satisfaction of men’s desire. How do mothers then control their daughters’ virginity?

Breath, Eyes, Memory (1994) provides an elaboration of the ways in which girls’ chastity is maintained. First of all, the novel suggests that listening to peeing and walking with small steps are indications that a girl is not defiled. Other measures of prevent the loss of virginity without sexual acts include avoiding acrobatic splits and riding horses and bicycles. As Sophie says:

My mother always listened to the echo of my urine in the toilet, for if it was too loud it meant that I had been deflowered. I learned very early in life that virgins always took small steps when they walked. They never did acrobatic splits, never rode horses or bicycles. They always covered themselves well and, even if their lives depended on it, never parted with their panties. (E. Danticat, 1994, p. 154)

The above passage showcases Haitian society's obsession with virginity and chastity. These measures of ensuring girls' purity are part of mechanism of controlling the female body by the patriarchal order. A more severe measure of virginity control is testing. Defining testing C. Mardorossia (2005, p. 128) says that it "consists of probing the vagina to check that the hymen is still intact. It is performed by the mother to ensure her daughter's chastity is preserved before marriage". Testing therefore represents a major factor of women's oppression. According to D. Smith (2009, p. 137), Sophie's pain she endures during the tests is an acknowledgement of a "continuous cycle of sexual violence against Haitian women". In patriarchal societies, women who contribute to the perpetuation of women's sexual victimization and social subjugation are conceived of as state mothers in feminist theory. These women are essential in helping patriarchy exercise control over women in general. For G. Lerner (1986, p. 217), "The system of patriarchy can function only with the cooperation of women.

The state mother is the epitome of the woman, who in her motherly function, defends and legitimizes the patriarchy. For B. R. Gallimord (1994, p. 60) the state mothers constitute a category of anti-mothers upon whom the patriarchy order maintains itself. The state mother can be the biological mother, the grandmother, the aunt or even the elder sister. In *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, Granma Ife symbolizes the state mother as she is committed to carrying out the custom of preserving daughters' chastity for their husbands, not only applying it to her daughters, but also educating Sophie, her granddaughter, into accepting the tradition. Martine additionally appears a state mother type since she carries on with the cult of virginity, testing Sophie in New York. As a matter of fact, the state mother archetype is a trope in black feminine writing. Significant instances include Aunt Salina in B. Emecheta's *Kehinde* (1994), Ma Shingayi in T. Dangarembga's *Nervous*

Conditions (1988), and Nanny in Z. N. Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1998). The above state mother figures, among other things, support patriarchal institutions, such as polygamy.

The pervasive presence of the state mother character in Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) as well as in the texts of black female writers around the globe, expresses the universality of black women's status as victims of patriarchal systems supported by other women. How then would Danticat, as a Caribbean female author, envision the emancipation of Caribbean women in her fiction?

2. The Indigenous Feminine Narrative and Female Resistance

Feminine writing is not only interested in unveiling the suffering and pains, the ordeals and burdens, and various other types of evils women endure, but it also provides an esthetics, which seeks the liberation of women, giving a feminist voice to women and dismantling hegemonic patriarchal institutions. Some Caribbean women writers have espoused this trend of feminine writing, presenting licentious female characters, transgender figures, and lesbianism for the intent of reclaiming the female body from patriarchal confinement. Such a literary tradition is prevalent in the fiction of Antiguan Jamaica Kincaid and Jamaican Michelle Cliff, among others. However, Haitian writer Danticat seems to undertake a relatively different path, especially in her novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994). Here, she pledges for return to cultural roots, traditions, and folklore as a unique and authentic pathway towards the liberation of Caribbean women. This literary style, evokes the indigenous feminine esthetics, which Danticat artistically experiment to establish a feminine narrative that seeks to promote women in according to local cultural realities.

2.1 Doubling and Self-Mutilation

Breath, Eyes, Memory (1994) emphasizes female resistance, based on cultural reconnections in various ways. First, the novel inscribes doubling as a process of coping with women's suffering. This tradition consists in remembering sweat moments in past while experiencing pain. When being tested, Sophie resorts to doubling as a way to overcome the hurtful and humiliating experience. As she says, "In my mind, I tried to relive all the pleasant memories I remembered from my life. My special moments with Tante Atie and with Joseph and even with my mother" (E. Danticat, 1994, p. 84). Through this symbolic language, Sophie attempts to liberate her mind from the pain of her body. According to Smith, "to cope with the testing, Sophie learns to "double" by disconnecting her mind with her body and thinking of "pleasant thinks" (E. Danticat, 1994, p. 139) Sophie also evokes the symbol of the Marassas as part of the process of doubling in order to address the body pains. Both Sophie and Martine make reference to the Marassas as "a defense mechanism for self-preservation in relation to the trauma of testing." For Martine, evoking the Marassas mythical lovers would help her keep her daughter. As Martine tests Sophie for the first time, checking her virginity in the way her own mother did for her, she envisions that both of them will become "the same person, duplicated in two" (C. Mardorossian, 2005, p. 128).

Danticat's novel also inscribes self-mutilation as a means of women's liberation associated with cultural resistance. The painful loss of virginity, either voluntarily or coercively, leads to freedom from the confining traditional institutions. Feeling humiliated by her mother's testing, Sophie decides to do harm to herself in order to terminate it. Her act denotes a painful self-mutilation. As for Martine, her rape causes the loss of her virginity, which consequently helps to end the testing cult that her mother subjects her to. C. Mardorossian (2005, p. 128) argues that Martine "could not help but see her rape experience

as a nightmare that freed her from it”. If Martine’s loss of virginity is involuntary, which cannot be labeled as resistance, Sophie loses hers out of her own will. She resorts to tearing her hymen as a way to stop her mother’s testing despite the pain she has to undergo throughout the process. Describing the painful hymen tearing incident, Sophie says, “My flesh ripped apart as I pressed the pestle into it. I could see the blood slowly dripping onto the bed sheet. I took the pestle and the bloody sheet and stuffed them into a bag. It was gone, the veil that always held my mother’s finger back every time she tested me” (E. Danticat, p. 88). Sophie believes that, although her husband Joseph would not understand it, the tearing of her hymen is as a necessary liberation process. As a matter of fact, “This act frees her from the history of violence passed on by her mother by invoking the very cultural heritage from which the testing derives” (C. Mardorossian, 2005, p. 131). Pain and suffering become then an ineluctable pathway for Sophie to recover and control her body despite the ensuing effects on her sexual life.

2.2 Cultural Resistance

Cultural resistance entails facing, opposing or combatting domination or victimization through culture, which involves inherited forms of traditions. Culture represents “the sum total of what an individual acquires from his [or her] society – those beliefs, customs, artistic norms, food-habits and crafts which come to him not by his own creative efforts but as a legacy from the past” (T. Ingold, 1993, p.31). E. Danticat resorts to Haitian cultural elements to envisage the emancipation of women from patriarchy in her fiction. For G. Lerner (1986, p. 242), “Women’s culture is the ground upon which women stand in their resistance to patriarchal domination and their assertion of their own creativity in shaping society”. E. Danticat’s literary creation inscribes culture, promoting women historical symbols with intent to oppose the debilitating patriarchal norms and practices.

In *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), cultural resistance relates Sophie's struggle for liberation, since she appropriates folk tales as a ground of her rebellion. As an instance, the folktale of the bleeding woman who is transformed by Erzulie – the goddess of love, symbol of female courage, desirability and strength – into a butterfly, and thus stops bleeding, inspires her resistance (E. Danticat, 1994, p. 119-124). Sophie's rebellion is “grounded in the empowering tales told by Grandma Ife, the very same woman from whom testing originates in the narrative” (C. Mardorossian, 2005, p. 131). Moreover, it can be understood that the overarching presence images of goddesses, expresses a counter-discourse, which challenges patriarchal writing's representation of predominant male deities. According to G. Lerner (1986, p. 243), “we may be justified in regarding the extraordinary persistence of fertility and goddess cults as an expression of female resistance to the predominance of male god figures”. This suggests that, Danticat relies on folk traditions as a potential of women liberation rather than any rational category. Additionally, through cultural resistance, the Haitian writer produces a counter-hegemonic narrative which lauds women's cultural symbols and silence masculine cultural artifacts.

Besides the inscription of folktales, cultural resistance in E. Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), involves the rejection of the debilitating traditional institutions. This is seen, on the one hand, in Sophie's decision that she will not apply testing, the cult of virginity, on her daughter, Brigitte. Sophie's experience as a mother marks a symbol of rupture with the traditional practices that impede women's fulfillment. Indeed, her refusal to test her daughter showcases her demarcation from a long tradition undertaken through generations of Caco women. On the other hand, Sophie agrees to address the psychological trauma caused by the testing ritual and her mother's rape by returning to home and confronting the sources of her drama. This comes out of her understanding that the only

way to do away with that mental torment is to go back to Haiti and deal with the evil at the roots. It is only after beating the canes that Sophie becomes free (E. Danticat, 1994, p. 233). Such an exorcism, beyond its real dimension, remains a symbolic confrontation with traditional and political institutions that shut down and oppress women.

Another element pertaining to cultural resistance in E. Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) includes women's solidarity. This involves female characters' mutual support and experience sharing, an essential aspect of feminine writing. The sexual phobia group therapy provides with the space for such female solidarity. The group is composed of Buki (African/Ethiopian), Davina (Latin American/Chicana), Rena (black woman, Santeria priestess, initiator of the group) and Sophie (Caribbean/Haitian). The therapeutic activities they carry out range from talks, blowing balloons and writing a paper about their inner suffering and burning it. The members of the group provide counsels to one another. It is Rena, the therapist, who advises Sophie to confront her grandmother and go to the place where the rape of her mother has occurred as a way to exorcise her nightmares (E. Danticat, p. 210-211). The sexual phobia group experience informs women solidarity through network. That solidarity naturally comes up as the members share a common experience of victimization as women, that is to say, a collective experience of sexually abused women. O. Oyewumi (2003, p. 5) prefers to call this type of solidarity sisterhood, since it supersedes comradeship and friendship to denote kinship, love and loyalty. As women from the Third World, it is easier for them to come together in support for one another. Henceforth, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* underscores a universal appeal, as it claims for the mutual support of Third World women globally, who, according to some gender critics, share a double victimization from patriarchy and their fellow Western women.

Conclusion

Overall, the examination of violence against women in *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), has helped understand how Danticat shapes a feminist esthetics, which blatantly exposes hardships and ordeals Haitian women have faced under patriarchy. From political to traditional institutions, the Haitian female writer has not only provided a panoramic representation of violence against women, but she also unveils the contribution of women in the victimization of their fellow women. Inscribing dynamics of female agency and liberation, Danticat offers an indigenous literary model, which somewhat demarcates from Western feminist esthetics, envisioning the salvation of Caribbean women through a reconnection to local cultural symbols. Yet, the symbols she promotes in her narrative excludes male components, while upholding female heroic imageries. This showcases that Danticat's feminine literary style underscores a reaction against both patriarchal and western feminine models of literary representation. Henceforth, with *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994), we witness the emergence of an indigenous feminine literary form, which appeals to the realities and cultural environments of the author and Caribbean women in general. Danticat's narrative indeed embodies a tropicalized or postcolonial model of the feminine literary aesthetics.

Bibliography

Adamson G. (1994). De fonds rouge à Port-au-Prince : une représentation de l'haïtienne : discours masculin – discours féminin. *Nouvelles Ecritures féminines : la parole aux femmes*. Paris : Notre libraire, n. 17, p. 44-47.

Borah P. (2020). Politics of Language in Helene Cixous' 'La –The (Feminine)'. *Journal of Xi'an University of Architecture & Technology*, vol. 12, n. 5, p. 815-819.

Buchwald Emilie, Fletcher P., Roth M., eds. (1993). *Transforming a Rape Culture*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 424 p.

Celierier P. P. (1994). Mongo Beti : Regard sur la maternité. *Nouvelles Ecritures féminines : la parole aux femmes*. Paris : Notre libraire, n. 17, p. 39-43.

Charles C. (1995). Gender and Politics in Contemporary Haiti: The Duvalierist State, Translationalism, and the Emergence of a New Feminism (1980-1990). *Feminist Studies*, vol. 21, n.1, p. 135-164.

Cixous H. (1976). The Laugh of The Medusa. Trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen. *Signs*, vol. 1, n. 4., p. 875-893.

Cixous H. (2015). La-The(Feminine). *August Carvings: An Anthology*. Bibhash Choudhury (ed.). Guwahati: Papyrus books & beyond, p. 462-65.

d'Adesky A.-C. (1994). *Under the Bone*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 371 p.

Dangarembga T. (1989). *Nervous Conditions*. Seattle: Seal Press, 204.

Danticat E. (1994). *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. New York: Vintage Books, 256 p.

Emecheta B. (1994). *Kehinde*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 160 p.

Gallimord B. R. (1994). De l'aliénation à la réappropriation chez les romancières de l'Afrique noir francophone. *Nouvelles Ecritures féminines : la parole aux femmes*. Paris : Notre libraire, n. 17, p. 54-60.

Hooks B. (2015). *Ain't I a Woman?: Black Women and Feminism*, New York, Routeledge, 205 p.

Hooks B. (2000). *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. London: Pluto Press, 140 p.

Hurston Z. N. (1998). *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, New York: Perennial Classics, 227 p.

Kirk J., Miller M. L. (1986). *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications, 87 p.

Kristeva J. (1976). *La révolution du langage poétique : l'avant-garde à la fin du XIX siècle, Lautréamont et Mallarmé*, Paris, Édition du Seuil, 645 p.

Ingold T. (1993). *The Art of Translation in a Continuous World. Beyond the Boundaries: Understanding Translation, and Anthropological discourse*. Gisli Palsson (ed.). Providence: Berg, p. 210-230.

Lerner G. (1986). *The Creation of Patriarchy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 318 p.

Mardorossian C. (2005). *Reclaiming Difference: Caribbean Women Rewrite Postcolonialism*. Charlottesville and London, University of Virginia Press, 187 p.

Oyewumi O. (2003). Introduction: Feminism, Sisterhood and other Foreign Relations. *African Women and Feminism*. Oyeronke Oyewuni (ed.). Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 273 p.

Sartori E. M. (1999). *The Feminist Encyclopedia of French Literature*. Newyork: Greenwood Press, 636 p.

Smith D. (2009). A Violent Homeland: Recalling Haiti in Edwidge Danticat's Novels. *Narrating the Past: (Re)Constructing Memory, (Re)Negotiating History*. Nandita Batra and Vartan P. Messier (eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge Publishers, p. 133-140.

Spivak G. (1981). French Feminism in an International Frame. *Feminist Readings: French Texts/American Contexts*, n. 62, p. 154- 184.

Subramanian S. (2013). *Women Writing Violence: The Novel and Radical Feminist Imaginaries*, New Delhi: SAGE, 312 p.

Valenti J. (2009). *The Purity Myth; How America's Obsession with Virginity Is Hurting Young Women*. Berkeley, California: Seal Press, 263 p.

Weil K. (2006). French Feminism's Ecriture Feminine. *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Literary Theory*. Ellen Rooney (ed.). New York: CUP, p. 153-171.