



# **Jamaica's Difficult Subjects: Negotiating Sovereignty in Anglophone Caribbean Literature and Criticism**

*Sheri-Marie Harrison*

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Recognizing that in the contemporary postcolonial moment, national identity and cultural nationalism are no longer the primary modes of imagining sovereignty, Sheri-Marie Harrison argues that postcolonial critics must move beyond an identity-based orthodoxy as they examine problems of sovereignty. In *Jamaica's Difficult Subjects: Negotiating Sovereignty in Anglophone Caribbean Literature and Criticism*, Harrison describes what she calls “difficult subjects”—subjects that disrupt essentialized notions of identity as equivalent to sovereignty. She argues that these subjects function as a call for postcolonial critics to broaden their critical horizons beyond the usual questions of national identity and exclusion/inclusion.

Harrison turns to Jamaican novels, creative nonfiction, and films from the 1960s to the present and demonstrates how they complicate standard notions of the relationship between national identity and sovereignty. She constructs a lineage between the difficult subjects in classic Caribbean texts like *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys and *The Harder they Come* by Perry Henzell and contemporary writing by Marlon James and Patricia Powell. What results is a sweeping new history of Caribbean literature and criticism that reconfigures how we understand both past and present writing. *Jamaica's Difficult Subjects* rethinks how sovereignty is imagined, organized, and policed in the postcolonial Caribbean, opening new possibilities for reading multiple generations of Caribbean writing.

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