



The Things That Fly in the Night: Female Vampires in Literature of the Circum-Caribbean and African Diaspora (Critical Caribbean Studies)

Giselle Liza Anatol

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The Things That Fly in the Night explores images of vampirism in Caribbean and African diasporic folk traditions and in contemporary fiction. Giselle Liza Anatol focuses on the figure of the *soucouyant*, or Old Hag—an aged woman by day who sheds her skin during night’s darkest hours in order to fly about her community and suck the blood of her unwitting victims. In contrast to the glitz, glamour, and seductiveness of conventional depictions of the European vampire, the soucouyant triggers unease about old age and female power. Tracing relevant folklore through the English- and French-speaking Caribbean, the U.S. Deep South, and parts of West Africa, Anatol shows how tales of the nocturnal female bloodsuckers not only entertain and encourage obedience in pre-adolescent listeners, but also work to instill particular values about women’s “proper” place and behaviors in society at large.

Alongside traditional legends, Anatol considers the explosion of soucouyant and other vampire narratives among writers of Caribbean and African heritage who in the past twenty years have rejected the demonic image of the character and used her instead to urge for female mobility, racial and cultural empowerment, and anti colonial resistance. Texts include work by authors as diverse as Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison, U.S. National Book Award winner Edwidge Danticat, and science fiction/fantasy writers Octavia Butler and Nalo Hopkinson.

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