



Women's Work
Nationalism and Contemporary African
American Women's Novels
Courtney Thorsson

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“*Women's Work* is a substantive, deeply learned, and provocative contribution to the study of an important body of literature. Teasing out the strands in novels where black women's multifaceted creative work involves the theorizing of U.S. and diasporic nationhood, Thorsson provides a clearly written, intellectually rewarding, well-documented investigation of emphases of post-civil rights, post-Black Power feminist cultural concerns.”
—Michael Awkward, University of Michigan

In *Women's Work*, Courtney Thorsson reconsiders the gender, genre, and geography of African American nationalism as she explores the aesthetic history of African American writing by women. Building on and departing from the Black Arts Movement, the literary fiction of such writers as Toni Cade Bambara, Paule Marshall, Gloria Naylor, Ntozake Shange, and Toni Morrison employs a cultural nationalism—practiced by their characters as “women's work”—that defines a distinct contemporary literary movement, demanding attention to the continued relevance of nation in post-Black Arts writing. Identifying five forms of women's work as organizing, dancing, mapping, cooking, and inscribing, Thorsson shows how these writers reclaimed and revised cultural nationalism to hail African America.

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