



Critical Passions: Selected Essays (Post-Contemporary Interventions)

By Jean Franco

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Jean Franco's work as a pathbreaking theorist, cultural critic, and scholar has helped to define Latin American studies over the last three decades. In the process, Franco has played a crucial role in developing cultural studies in both the English- and Spanish-speaking worlds. *Critical Passions* is the first volume to gather a wide-ranging selection of Franco's influential essays.

A key participant in the major debates in Latin American studies—beginning with the “boom” period of the 1960s and continuing through debates on ideology and discourse, Marxism, mass culture, and postmodernism—Franco is recognized for her feminist critique of Latin American writing. While her principal books are all readily available, Franco's several dozen articles are dispersed in a variety of periodicals in Latin America, Europe, and the United States. Although many of these essays are considered pioneering and classic, they have never before been collected in a single work. In this volume, Mary Louise Pratt and Kathleen Newman have organized the essays into four interrelated sections: feminism and the critique of authoritarianism, mass and popular culture, Latin American literature from the “boom” onward, and the cultural history of Mexico. As a group, these writings demonstrate Franco's ability to reflect on and judge with equal seriousness all spheres of expression, whether subway graffiti, a fashion manual, or an avant-garde haiku. A bona fide fan of popular and mass media, Franco never allows her critiques to dissolve into the puritanical or reductive; instead, she finds ways to present and debate complex theoretical questions in direct and accessible language.

This volume will draw an extensive readership in Latin American, cultural, and women's studies.

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Editorial Review

Review

“A formidable compendium of Franco’s critical thought, attesting to the evolution of a brilliant avant-garde intellectual who has set the pace for serious inquiry in the Latin American field as we know it today. *Critical Passions* is not simply a tribute to Franco but an urgent recounting of the progression of a field of study that she has helped shape.”—Francine Masiello, author of *Between Civilization and Barbarism: Women, Nation, and Literary Culture in Modern Argentina*

“Pratt and Newman have done the critical readership an immense service by collecting these far-flung essays by one of our foremost critics. This learned feminist touches upon issues of history and identity, of cultural politics and the study of globality, from a political perspective that remains resolutely focused on social justice.”—Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, author of *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*

“The essays collected in this volume reflect the range, innovativeness, theoretical clarity, and analytical power that have made Jean Franco’s work a beacon of light in the study of Latin American culture.”—Susan Kirkpatrick, author of *Las Romanticas: Women Writers and Subjectivity in Spain*

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Jean Franco is Professor Emerita of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University. She is the winner of the 1996 PEN award for lifetime contribution to disseminating Latin American literature in English, and has been recognized by both the Chilean and Venezuelan governments with the Gabriela Mistral Medal and the Andres Bello Medal for advancing literary scholarship on Latin American literature in the United States. Her previous books include *Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico*, *César Vallejo: The Dialectics of Poetry and Silence*, and *A Literary History of Spain and Spanish*.

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