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Words of Witness: Black Women's Autobiography in the Post-*Brown* Era (Wisconsin Studies in Autobiography)

Angela A. Ards

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A literary and political genealogy of the last half-century, *Words of Witness* explores black feminist autobiographical narratives in the context of activism and history since the landmark 1954 segregation case, *Brown v. Board of Education.* Angela A. Ards examines how activist writers, especially five whose memoirs were published in the 1990s and 2000s, crafted these life stories to engage and shape progressive, post-*Brown* politics.

Exploring works by the critically acclaimed June Jordan and Edwidge Danticat, as well as by popular and emerging authors such as Melba Beals, Rosemary Bray, and Eisa Davis, Ards demonstrates how each text asserts countermemories to official—and often nostalgic—understandings of the civil rights and Black Power movements. She situates each writer as activist-citizen, adopting and remaking particular roles—warrior, “the least of these,” immigrant, hip-hop head—to crystallize a range of black feminist responses to urgent but unresolved political issues.

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