French Caribbean Women and the Problem of Empowerment:
A look at *Moi, Tituba, sorcière...Noire de Salem* and *Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle*

Michelle A. Lovasz

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
History: European Area Studies

Dr. Sue Farquhar, Chair
Dr. Laura Gillman
Dr. Médoune Guèye
Dr. Dean O’Donnell

April 23, 2002
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: Maryse Condé, Simone Schwarz-Bart, *Créolité*, Postcolonialism, Empowerment, Identity Politics

Copyright 2002, Michelle A. Lovasz
This thesis explores the problem of self-empowerment for the French Caribbean Black woman as presented in the novels *Moi, Tituba, sorcière...Noire de Salem* and *Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle*. The respective authors, Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart, use fiction to convey the plight of women in the French Caribbean. They successfully create characters who refuse marginalization imposed by their patriarchal and oppressive societies. Condé’s novel, set in the 17th century first in Barbados, and then in Puritan New England depicts the challenges Tituba overcomes in reaching liberation. Schwarz-Bart presents the story of Télumée, set in Guadeloupe at the beginning of the 20th century. My study focuses specifically on the characters of Tituba and Télumée to show ways that they thwart the dominant social structures and norms that seek to disempower them. It reveals ways that Condé and Schwarz-Bart make use of literature to reverse European perceptions of gender and race. Consequently, the literary fictions they create suggest possible ways of escaping marginalization and refusing racial and gendered subjugation.


- - - - - .Moi, Tituba sorcière...Noire de Salem. Saint-Amand: Mercure de France, 1996.


Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. “To Write My Self: The Autobiographies of Afro-American


Paul, Maritza.  “Pluie et vent sur Telumee Miracle and Moi, Tituba sorciere...noire de


