

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

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(ABSTRACT)

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.

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