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## Giving a Voice to Tituba: The Death of the Author?<sup>1</sup>

*It is not history for the sake of history. It is searching for one's self, searching for one's identity, searching for one's origin in order to better understand oneself.*

Maryse Condé, *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*

By ELISABETH MUDIMBÉ-BOYI

The story of the witches of Salem has been recounted in different ways by different authors: Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, Ann Petry's *Tituba of Salem Village*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, and a 1982 film called *Three Sovereigns for Sarah* starring Vanessa Redgrave. If Tituba is mentioned at all, there is little room for her in the narratives; and as she states in recounting her story in Maryse Condé's novel *Moi, Tituba, sorcière . . . Noire de Salem* (Eng. I, *Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*), she has been reduced to

. . . having played only a minor role in the whole affair and having had a fate that no one could remember. "Tituba, a slave originating from the West Indies and probably practicing 'hoodoo.'" A few lines in the many volumes written on the Salem witch trials. Why was I going to be ignored? This question too had crossed my mind. Is it because nobody cares about a Negress and her trials and tribulations? Is that why?

I can look for my story among those of the witches of Salem, but it isn't there. . . . Not a word about me.<sup>2</sup>

Tituba's question mark could be recast as an interrogation about existence, identity, and presence in History. Brought to Massachusetts not of her own free will but as a slave in a society of people who migrated from their native Europe in search of freedom, she lives at the margins. Her territory is on the borderland of the Massachusetts Puritan community as well as of literary and historical representation. By virtue of her race, her geographic origin, and her social status, Tituba embodies marginality and is perceived only as a voiceless "exotic other," an object to be talked about. She summarizes her situation with a taste of bitterness: "It was not so

much the conversation that amazed and revolted me as their way of going about it. You would think I wasn't standing there at the threshold of the room. They were talking about me and yet ignoring me. They were striking me off the map of human beings. I was a nonbeing. Invisible. More invisible than the unseen, who at least have powers that everyone fears" (24).

*Tituba* is a statement against effacement, exclusion, and reduction to invisibility. In Condé's book one finds interwoven recurrent motifs present in her other works, from *Héremakhonon* to *Ségou*, *Traversée de la mangrove*, and *Les derniers rois mages*: motifs such as exile and return, the quest for identity and for the self, the reconstruction of history, and gender relationships. Within Condé's oeuvre, *Tituba* takes on a political significance and resonates as a powerful counterhistory.

Michel Foucault classifies the use of language among the "discursive practices" that allow the exercise of power. In *Discourse on Language* he suggests that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures. In letting Tituba speak and tell her story in her own words, Condé gives her a voice, restores her history and her identity, and allows her to acquire language and thus to participate in society. The writer also creates a territory for her—the textual space—and incorporates her into the stream of a history from which she had been excluded. With different means, Condé's endeavor connects with Simone Schwarz-Bart's resurrection of the forgotten figures of black women's contribution to Caribbean history, as exemplified in her novel *Pluie et vent sur Téliumée Miracle*, or in Marie Chauvet's book *La danse sur le volcan*. Condé's *Tituba* emerges from the author's imagination and creativity and does not pretend to the status of a historical novel.<sup>3</sup> The narrative is nevertheless inscribed in the larger project of reconstructing Caribbean history, as exposed by Edouard Glissant in his masterful essay *Le discours antillais* (Eng. *Caribbean Discourse*) and as illustrated by many other Caribbean novels in which the search for and the reconstruction of history constitute a major focus.

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This brings us to the examination of several theoretical questions arising from Tituba's narrative as composed by Condé. What is the relationship between writer and character? How does the writer preserve the integrity and the authenticity of Tituba's discourse and voice in the process of transcribing it from oral into written form and translating it into French? In other words, how does the writer negotiate the preservation of her own function as "author" in the textualization of Tituba's story without undermining at the same time the power and the presence of Tituba's own voice, which is precisely the one Condé would like to unveil?

In actuality, *Tituba* unfolds a long monologic "conversation" in which the writer becomes the simple listener of a narrating subject telling her own life story. The book is thus a fictional "autobiography"<sup>4</sup> from which the writer has completely disappeared, leaving Tituba to take preeminence and become simultaneously both the narrator and the narrated. Tituba, in telling her story, re-creates the context of an oral performance, with herself as the performer and the writer as the audience. Condé's epigraph to the book contains, as a subtext, a tacit pact between the performer and the spectator: it signifies an act of trust, since the narrator told Condé "things she had confided to nobody else before." The author of the book<sup>5</sup> henceforth takes on different roles: as the repository of Tituba's life story, she becomes her interpreter as well as her mediator. As the interpreter of Tituba's text, Condé the writer also assumes the role of a translator, and in this context her position, as Philippe Lejeune puts it in *On Autobiography*, in the chapter apropos of "the autobiography of those who do not write": "The translator finds himself in a hierarchically dependent situation. . . . The position of the writer is in many aspects similar to that of the translator, with just one difference, but an enormous one: in the writer's case, *the original text does not exist*. The writer . . . draws the text from a 'before-text'" (PL, 264).

In assuming the functions of interpreter, mediator, and translator, Condé fulfills the tacit pact in transmitting what Tituba had entrusted to her, specifically her concern not only about her descent into oblivion but also about never being rehabilitated.

I felt that I would only be mentioned in passing in these Salem witchcraft trials about which so much would be written later, trials that would arouse the curiosity and pity of generations to come as the greatest testimony of a superstitious and barbaric age. . . . There would be no mention of my age or my personality. I would be ignored. . . . Petitions would be circulated, judgments made, rehabilitating the victims, restoring their honor, and returning their property to their descendants. I would never be included! Tituba would be condemned forever! There would never, ever, be a

careful, sensitive biography recreating my life and its suffering. (110)

I would like to focus, in the development of this essay, on the authorial position in relation to the voice of the character, with the assumption that author and character are positioned into two different cultural and linguistic codes: oral and Creole for Tituba, written and French for Condé.

As a slave, Tituba could certainly not read or write. Therefore, the narrative device of referring to some form of mediation such as a notebook discovered by the author, as in Myriam Warner-Vieyra's *Juletane*, or brought to her by an intermediary, as in Michèle Mailet's *Etoile noire*, has been skillfully replaced by "autobiographical conversations"<sup>6</sup> between the writer and her character. As Michael Awkward reminds us, in "talking and telling," Tituba addresses an audience constituted here solely by the writer. In transcribing her conversations with Tituba, the author of the book translates Tituba's story from an oral form into a written one.

An apparent ambiguity seems to accompany the writer's position here. On the one hand there is the desire to place Tituba in an environment familiar to her in re-creating the traditional context of the oral performance. On the other hand, since this is a one-way conversation, the usual interaction and communication between performer and audience are lacking, and the audience is quiet and just listening, thus re-creating the context of a Western performance. In actuality, the context created by Condé embodies a strategy of subversion by reversing the relation of power between writer and character and thus between French (the language of the writer) and Creole (the language of the character) and between the oral and the written. The writer is indeed in the passive situation of a listener, whereas Tituba is playing the active role of the speaker, in control of the narrative unfolded through the conversations. Condé, in fact, reproduces the social organization and power's conventional dynamics, in which the one who speaks exerts power over the one who remains silent and the possessor of the written belongs to the ruling class and exerts power over the one who does not write.<sup>7</sup> Condé subverts that dynamics in giving up her position of power as a member of the ruling class, only to become what Antonio Gramsci characterizes as a subaltern. Condé's subversive strategy could be represented by a double chiasma, showing clearly the shift of power and speech from Condé's side to Tituba's.

Lejeune's statement quoted above allows the decoding of the writer's subversive operation also at the level of language and the text. Indeed, the text constituting the narrative is Tituba's; thus it is a "before-text" and is transmitted by her in a language other than the (colonial) master's. Condé's strategy of subversion leads to the empowerment of

a voiceless Tituba and gives her the authorial position in the narrative. In giving a voice directly to Tituba, Condé implicitly renounces the status of the magisterial function, allowing thereby a voice to emerge from elsewhere than from an “authority” or from the social location of the writer and her *lieu d'élocution*. In withdrawing to the unauthorial position of an interpreter or mediator, Condé ensures the authenticity of the character's voice.

Seen from this perspective, Tituba's life story, even if it is a fictional one, assumes a value and a meaning comparable to Rigoberta Menchú's testimonial *I, Rigoberta Menchú*.<sup>8</sup> Tituba is certainly speaking of herself, but her narrative also tells the story of many other black women who, like her, have been relegated to the margins of history, if not erased from it, reduced to invisibility and silence.

If there are similarities between Tituba's and Rigoberta's cases, there are also differences: one is a fictional character, the other a real-life individual. Rigoberta taught herself Spanish, the language of the dominant class, and communicates with her interviewer Elisabeth Burgos-Debray directly in Spanish, even if her speech is sometimes deficient in grammar. As for Tituba, a slave and uneducated, she could not possibly speak French, the language of the educated class and the official language into which the writer will translate her account. Rigoberta, in telling her story, is from the beginning very well aware that her personal history represents, as she puts it, “everyone's life: the life of all the Guatemaltecs poor.” She is also aware that she is using the power of speech as a weapon in order to expose the situation of her people and to bring about changes in it. Tituba does not display Rigoberta's political awareness or will, yet her narrative takes on political significance. Although Tituba is speaking only of herself and recounting her individual life, her narrative also encompasses the story of many other black women who, like her, have been relegated to the margins of history, if not erased from it, reduced to invisibility and silence. Both Tituba and Rigoberta, not knowing how to write, have to entrust their story to the mediation of a “writer,” who then assumes the responsibility of conveying it.

*I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* is the account of a yearlong conversation between the writer and Tituba. The presence of the author of the book as an interlocutor is maintained not by a dialogic inclusive “you” within the narrative, but rather by the oral mode involved in the narration. What Roman Jakobson identifies as the “phatic function,” intended to keep the communication between performer and audience flowing, is represented here by the numerous rhetorical questions asked by Tituba. While acknowledging the writer's presence on the scene, the rhetorical questions serve to prevent her from

intruding into the narrative and usurping or covering Tituba's voice. The textual strategies used by Condé in shaping the narrative as an oral performance insert Tituba into the traditional cultural context of orality and, at the same time, incorporate the orality conveyed in Tituba's narrative into the context of a new culture: the written one.

Condé introduces Tituba's narrative with an epigraph, which Gérard Genette in *Seuils*<sup>9</sup> defines as being a quotation outside the text or “en exergue”: “Tituba and I lived for a year on the closest of terms. During our endless conversations she told me things she had confided to nobody else” (v). Genette's commentary on the epigraph enlightens and sets forth the relationship between the writer and her character, between Condé's position outside the text and Tituba's narrative within it. Among the four functions Genette assigns to the epigraph and to its relation to the text, there is the function of commentary on the title and the text. Another is the legitimation of the book author's own text by reference in the epigraph to a well-known figure or authority. For legitimation, Condé does not refer to a well-known author but rather to Tituba herself, thus granting her the status of an authority. With the epigraph, Condé excises herself from the text that follows, or, more precisely, places herself, to quote Genette, at the *bord d'œuvre*, at the “margin of the work” (GG, 134), effacing herself and leaving the entire textual space and a full voice to her character. In textualizing Tituba as an “I,” a subject, the writer withdraws her own authority from the narrative. At the same time, via the epigraph, Condé legitimates her own written work, the book, as a faithful interpretation, translation, and transcription of Tituba's oral text and of her voice.

What I am suggesting here is that the tacit pact alluded to earlier has bound writer and character in a collaborative endeavor embedded, on the one hand, in the reverberation between the oral and the written and, on the other, in the shifting of the subject pronouns. In this shifting, the epigraph presents the subject pronoun “I” as the writer/narrator and “she” as Tituba: “Tituba and I lived for a year on the closest of terms. During our endless conversations, she told me things she had confided to nobody before” (emphases added). The narrative itself is a first-person account, with Tituba as the subject recounting her life story from beginning—“I was born from this act of aggression” (3)—to end: “And that is the story of my life” (175; emphases added). In the writer's concluding historical note, which provides closure to the book, the “I” again represents the writer, who refers to Tituba in the third person: “I myself have given her an ending of my own choice” (183; emphasis added). This shifting interplay of subject pronouns indicates clearly the respective roles of the writer and of Tituba and the re-

sponsibilities of each in the construction of the narrative. What appears to be an ambiguity of the writer's position, as pointed out earlier, in fact reflects the cultural configuration of the Caribbean and its dominant trend: *métissage* and pluralism, at the racial, the cultural, and the linguistic levels.

At this point writer and character, the author of the book and the author of the life story recounted in that book, come together in the making of the narrative, thus achieving a merging of the oral and the written. This strategy blurs the polarization between written and oral and, in this way, puts an end to what Glissant calls "la déchirure et l'ambivalence," the rending and the ambivalence. Furthermore, through the writer's desire for creativity and the character's concern about self-representation, the esthetic and the political become connected within the same textual space, creating a territory for both the writer and Tituba. For both of them, generating a text becomes possible only through the exercise of memory: the author of the book reminding us of her conversations with her character; the character, in her turn, remembering her life and recounting it in order to fill the space of their conversations. *Tituba*, as suggested earlier, functions as a collaborative enterprise between writer and character in the fulfillment of common concerns: to give a voice to the voiceless black women, to rehabilitate Tituba, and to validate one's cultural heritage in the valorization of the orality which has become the vehicle of the text—Tituba's. If Condé is the "author" of the book that has been written, Tituba definitely emerges as the "author" of the text that allowed the birth of the book.

In the autobiographical narrative unfolded, Tituba's voice is the major and dominant one. Indeed,

the narrative *tells* the life story of "a common Negress," a black slave woman. The authenticity of her voice is preserved thanks to specific narrative strategies implemented by Condé: self-effacement and subversion, interplay with the subject pronouns, and the creation of an autobiographical narrative. Through the mediation of "autobiographical conversations" Tituba engages in an initiation process that relieves her of anxiety about being forgotten and about her survival through the written medium. She reaches a new awareness to other ways of surviving: spiritual motherhood, collective memory, and oral tradition. As she states in her epilogue: "I do not belong to the civilization of the Bible and Bigotry. My people will keep my memory in their hearts and have no need for the written word. It's in their heads. In their hearts and in their heads" (176). Indeed, despite her one-time companion Christopher's condescending statement that she is "nothing but a common Negress" who wants "to be treated like someone special" (155), Tituba will be recollected all over her native island, legendized and immortalized in the folklore of the land, thereby entering history and the collective memory. The following passage, situated in Tituba's afterlife, concludes her autobiographical account:

. . . And that is the story of my life. Such a bitter, bitter story.

My real story starts where this one leaves off and it has no end. Christopher was wrong or probably he wanted to hurt me—there *is* a song about Tituba! I hear it from one end of the island to the other, from North Point to Silver Sands, from Bridgetown to Bottom Bay. It runs along the ridge of the hills. It is poised on the tip of the heliconia. . . .

I hear it wherever I go. (175)

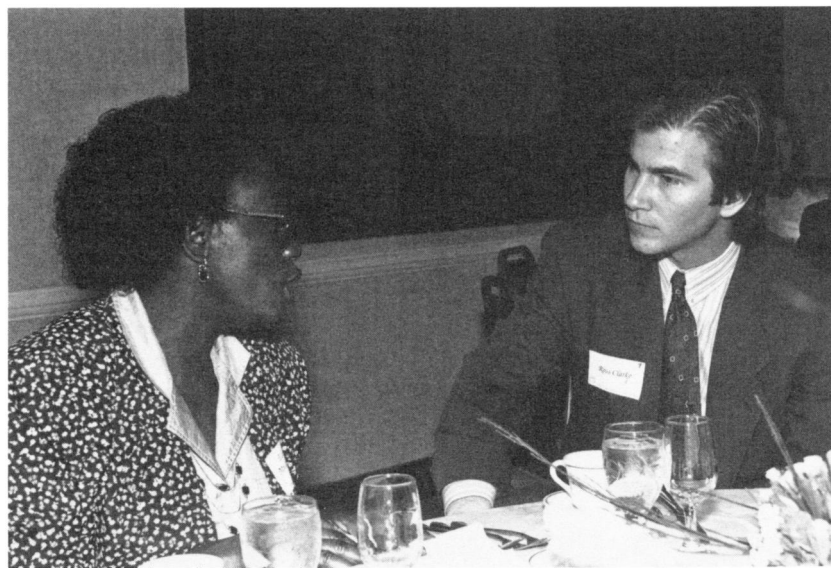


Photo: David Smead

ELISABETH MUDIMBÉ-BOYI, ROSS CLARKE

In the official accounts mentioning Tituba, she has been constructed and fixed in the negative figure of a witch. Her own account in *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* seems to suggest that her condemnation as a witch was, in actuality, the resounding projection of the fears and obsessions of a community: first, the Puritan community of Massachusetts, which condemned her; then the community of slave owners, who, because she became a revolutionary, put her to death for political reasons. The autobiographical form in which Tituba tells her story positions her as the narrating subject who proclaims her identity: “I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem.” Her life story as she recounts it brings up questions of identity, of origins, of race, of access to language, of the power of language.

For Tituba, telling her story means also remembering her genesis: where and how it started, where and how it will end. The recounting of her life becomes also a therapeutic means of healing her complex about exile, the anxiety about identity, linked at least partially to the absence of a national or ethnic genealogy because of the transplantation and the absence of a legitimate genealogy, since her coming into the world originated in an act of violence aboard the slave ship: “Abena, my mother, was raped by an English sailor on the deck of *Christ the King* one day in the year 16\*\* while the ship was sailing for Barbados. I was born from this act of aggression. From this act of hatred and contempt” (3). Although in the land of slavery, Tituba grows up as a happy child in the home of a stepfather, Yao, whose presence and affection compensate for her rejection on the part of her mother, in the mind of whom Tituba was the living memory of the violence endured on the slave ship. After her mother has been hanged and her stepfather sold, Tituba is adopted by an old woman, Mama Yaya, who introduces her to the magic realism of the Caribbean, perpetuating the African traditions, and believes in contact with the spirit world and the African art of healing with plants. While living in Massachusetts, and after returning to her homeland of Barbados, Tituba retains her healing powers. In endorsing the identity of “the black witch of Salem,” Tituba subverts and disrupts the meaning ascribed to it by hegemonic institutions: the Church and the slave masters who condemned her for “witchcraft.”

What is a witch? I noticed that when he said the word, it was marked with disapproval. Why should that be? Why? Isn't the ability to communicate with the invisible world, to keep constant links with the dead, to care for others and heal, a superior gift of nature that inspires respect, admiration, and gratitude? Consequently, shouldn't the witch (if that's what the person who has this gift is to be called) be cherished and revered rather than feared? (17)

These question marks translate Tituba's anxiety about the asymmetry and the disjunction between what she is and society's representation of her. In unfolding the narrative of her life, Tituba wants to restore the integrity of her persona. The strong declaration of the title, *I, Tituba*, echoes the character's will to speak in an autoreferential mode and to assert a self-ascribed identity, with herself as the narrating instance: the producer and the center of her narrative.

In Tituba's fictional autobiography as well as in real autobiographies, memory constitutes the matrix from which the narrative is extracted. *Tituba*, in reconstructing one individual's story, also allegorizes the collective history of the Caribbean. History here conflates into literature, and the text reveals itself as a *lieu de mémoire*. As Pierre Nora puts it so beautifully:

In fact, memory has never known more than two forms of legitimacy: historical and literary. These have run parallel to each other but until now always separately. At present the boundary between the two is blurring; following closely upon the successive deaths of memory-history and memory-fiction, a new kind of history has been born, which owes its prestige and legitimacy to the new relation it maintains to the past. History has become our replaceable imagination—hence the last stand of faltering fiction in the renaissance of the historical novel, the vogue for personalized documents, the literary revitalization of historical drama, the success of the oral historical tale. Our interest in these *lieux de mémoire* that anchor, condense, and express the exhausted capital of our collective memory derives from this new sensibility.<sup>10</sup>

In transcribing Tituba's voice, Condé, as the writer, has not only joined her in challenging Christopher's assertion about the worthlessness of “a common Negress” but has also empowered her and created a territory for her in history and literature, allowing her to survive as a black female literary character, if not a historical figure.

Roland Barthes's “Death of the Author” and Michel Foucault's “What Is an Author?” challenge the role of the author as the master of the meaning encoded in the text, and contemporary critical theory tends to emphasize the role of the reader as the instance of interpreting and decoding meaning. By declaring “the death of the author,” Barthes and Foucault also emphasize intertextuality. The disappearance of Condé from the narrative told by Tituba acknowledges and illuminates the inscription of orality into written form as well as the intertextuality between the two media. This could be deciphered in the relation between the epigraph *en exergue* and Tituba's text itself. In declaring the death of the author, Barthes and Foucault also challenge the authority of the book's author to ascribe a definitive meaning to the text. As for Condé, she asks Anne

Scarborough, her interviewer in the U.S. edition of *Tituba*, “not to take *Tituba* too seriously” (212), and she characterizes *Tituba* as a “mock-epic” heroine. For my part, as a reader or as a critic, I would like to believe that *Tituba*’s life is neither a trivial subject matter nor a burlesque story. Without forsaking the parodic dimension of *Tituba*, I contend that Condé’s strategies of subversion and self-effacement inform the semantics and the structure of the narrative, bestowing on *Tituba* a political significance and seriousness that, to quote Condé herself, “turns her into a female hero, an epic heroine” (201).

Despite her declaration of not being “interested in giving models to young people” (200), Condé has created in *Tituba* an exemplary character. Defying the official history, she has produced a counterhistory and substituted for the heroes of the Other’s history (the well-known “nos ancêtres les Gaulois”) a national hero who is a female. Condé has brought *Tituba*’s voice out of silence and has added her name to those of Caribbean historical figures: Tous-saint L’Ouvverture, Makandal, Delgrès. I do not know if *Tituba* would have considered herself a heroic figure, and it does not matter if Condé’s *Tituba* is not the historical *Tituba*; myths very often become more powerful than history. In fact, what I would like to ascertain is the role, the contribution, and the impact of the critics’ work in shaping the destiny of a literary work. If the discourse developed by critics—in forewords, afterwords, or essays<sup>11</sup>—seems sometimes to interfere with the voice of the narrating character, it nevertheless contributes to the diffusion and the recognition of the work, its presence in time and space as well as the continuation of the character’s presence. Seen from this perspective, *Tituba*’s narrative proclaims a victory over voicelessness and erasure, over effacement and exclusion. In asserting herself as “I, *Tituba*,” *Tituba* comes into existence and signals the end of marginalization, the end of exile from language, literature, and history.

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<sup>1</sup>My title refers to Roland Barthes’s article “The Death of the Author?,” in *Image / Music / Text*, Stephen Heath, ed., London, Fontana, 1977. I would like to thank Robin Simpson-Smith for her editorial assistance with this essay.

<sup>2</sup>Maryse Condé, *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*, Richard Philcox, tr., Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1992, pp. 149–50. Originally published as *Moi, Tituba, sorcière . . . Noire de Salem*, Paris, Mercure de France, 1986. All citations and page references are from the Philcox translation.

<sup>3</sup>For historical or legal accounts, see among other sources Winfield Nevins, *Witchcraft in Salem Village in 1692: Together with Some Accounts of Other Witchcraft Prosecution in New England and*

*Elsewhere*, Salem, Ma., North Shore, and Boston, Lee & Shepard, 1982; David Brown, *A Guide to the Salem Witchcraft Hysteria of 1692*, Washington Crossing, Pa., David Brown, 1984; Charles Upham, *Salem Witchcraft, with an Account of Salem Village and a History of Opinions on Witchcraft and Kindred Subjects*, New York, Ungar, 1959; Marc Mappen, *Witches and Historians: Interpretations of Salem*, Huntington, N.Y., Krieger, 1980.

<sup>4</sup>*Autobiography* is used here, as Philippe Lejeune defines it, “to designate broadly any text governed by an autobiographical pact, in which an author proposes to the reader a discourse on the self, but also a particular realization of that discourse, one in which the question ‘Who am I?’ is answered by a narrative that tells ‘how I became who I am.’” See Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, Katherine Leary, tr., Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1989, p. 124; subsequent references use the abbreviation PL. For recent work on women’s autobiographies, see particularly Sidonie Smith, *A Poetics of Women’s Autobiography: Marginality and the Fictions of Self-Representation*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987; Leah Hewitt, *Autobiographical Tightrope*, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1990; Liz Stanley, *The Autobiographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Autobiography*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992.

<sup>5</sup>In the context of the relation between writer’s and character’s authority, we make a distinction between the author of the book and the author of the narrative. According to Michel Foucault, an author is “a person to whom the production of a text, a book, or a work can legitimately be attributed” (“What Is an Author?,” reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Robert Con Davis and Ronald Schleifer, eds., New York, Longman, 1989, p. 271). Foucault’s definition fits the minimal definition of the French law of 11 March 1957, wherein article 8 states, “The quality of author belongs, save proof to the contrary, to the one or ones under whose name the work comes out” (Lejeune, p. 265, note 15). In actuality, both Foucault and Lejeune are less concerned with the legal definition than with the function of the author. As Lejeune affirms, “The author of a text is most often the one who wrote it, but the fact of writing is not sufficient to be declared an author” (ibid., p. 192).

<sup>6</sup>See Michael Awkward, *Inspiring Influences: Tradition, Revision, and Afro-American Women’s Novels*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 35. I have been borrowing from Awkward, particularly the chapter “‘The Inaudible Voice of It All’: Silence, Voice, and Action in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*,” pp. 15–56.

<sup>7</sup>Claude Lévi-Strauss provides a good example of the relationship between writing and power in the chapter “Leçon d’écriture” in *Tristes Tropiques*, Paris, Plon, 1955, pp. 347–77. See also Jacques Derrida’s critique in *Of Grammatology*.

<sup>8</sup>*I, Rigoberta Menchú, Woman of Guatemala*, Elisabeth Burgos-Debray, ed., Ann Wright, tr., London, Verso, 1984. Menchú, like *Tituba*, belongs to what Antonio Gramsci calls “subaltern social groups,” whose life and history are controlled and created by the dominant groups. See Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, Valentino Gerratana, ed., Turin, Einaudi, 1975, notebook 25 (1934), “Ai margini della storia.” Speaking for themselves and through their own voice thus becomes a political act and a means of self-representation. See Lejeune, “Autobiography of Those Who Do Not Write,” pp. 185–215.

<sup>9</sup>See Gérard Genette, *Seuils*, Paris, Seuil, 1987, p. 134: “Je définirai grossièrement l’épigraphe comme une citation placée en exergue. . . . ‘En exergue’ signifie littéralement hors d’œuvre, ce qui est un peu trop dire: l’exergue est ici plutôt en bord d’œuvre.” Subsequent references use the abbreviation GG.

<sup>10</sup>Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de mémoire*,” *Representations*, 26 (Spring 1989), p. 24.

<sup>11</sup>On the function of forewords and prefaces, see Genette, pp. 150–270.