3 Framing Violence

Resistance, Redemption, and Recuperative Strategies in *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*

One cannot help but notice the manifest violence in Caribbean women's writing and black women's writing in general that renders the cliché "violence begets violence" effective. Stuart Hall, among other theorists, historicizes this violence, locating it in the colossal disruptions created by colonization and slavery that have "distributed [black people] across the African diaspora" (235). Consequently, Hall establishes that "the displacements of slavery, colonization, and conquest . . . stand for the endless ways in which Caribbean people have been destined to 'migrate'" (243). This severance from one's origin registers unspeakable violence. Addressing the pervasive violence in women's narrative as representative of their lived experiences, M. Giulia Fabi writes: "The awareness of how human bodies can be systematically reduced to the total objectification of captive flesh, the practice of breaking the silence on female-specific experiences of sexual and racial abuse, the insistence that racial violence is always 'en-gendered': these issues characterize the narrative tradition of African American women and dominate [their] literary works" (229). Fabi's accurate assessment rings true for Guadeloupian-born writer and scholar Maryse Condé, whose body of work engages even as it fiercely interrogates the aforementioned themes.

An invaluable contributor to this narrative tradition, Condé joins the band of black female writers who break the silence often deemed too horrific to tell. Capturing the "initial" violence as intimated by Hall, Condé demonstrates how black women's lives are shrouded in violence that becomes encoded on their bodies, resulting in their silencing and their

denial of personhood and attendant citizenship. Tituba's opening statement captures the unspeakable violence, "the experience of dispersal and fragmentation, which is the history of all enforced diasporas" (Hall 235). The telling statement reads: "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" (*Tituba* 1). Achieving its intended objective, this abrupt opening paragraph captures the brutality of slavery and the inhumanity of the enslaver. In other words, brevity encapsulates the severity of the act of rape that has both literal and symbolic resonance. Abena's rape coincides with the rape of the mother, Africa. The denial of personhood—Abena's rape has rendered her a non-person, a non-citizen—which was initially caused by her separation from her mother (land), Africa, is complicated by her separation from the self, personified through the rape.[1] Along these lines, Abena's captivity is twofold, first, as "captive flesh," her body is restrained in the bowels of the ship, and second, her "body violation" further manifests in her being raped, resulting in "silencing" of the flesh. Abena's denial of personhood transfers onto her daughter, Tituba, who, the product and victim of rape herself, experiences dual victimization. Tituba also doubles as witness to her mother being hanged and as subject of lynching that bears resonance with her mother's lynching. Hence Tituba literally (somatically) relives the catastrophic events her mother experienced. On a grander scale, Tituba's narrative qualifies as a reenactment of the Middle Passage, as we are presented with images of ships that in Paul Gilroy's careful assessment "immediately focus attention on the middle passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to an African homeland, on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artefacts: tracts, books, gramophone records, and choirs" (4). This reenactment engenders resistance and repatriation of the severed subject. By the same token, it fosters "the circulation of ideas and activists," to echo Gilroy, promoting transnational alliances.

"This redemptive return to an African homeland" to which Gilroy alludes is crucial in the quest for (or redemption of) citizenship, as Hall reminds us: "Africa is the name of the missing term, the great aporia, which lies at the center of our cultural identity and gives it meaning which, until recently, it lacked" (235). Acutely aware of the need to accomplish a redemptive return to give meaning to one's cultural identity, Condé rescues

Tituba from obscurity, confessing in the epigraph: "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." Tituba and Condé's unbroken friendship alludes to unspoken kinship, reminiscent of Morrison's neighborhood. Furthermore, Tituba regains her stolen voice, and this accentuates her humanity, her citizen rights, and her coveted role in history. Tituba's repatriation parallels Baartman's reinstated citizenship, indicating female solidarity, which in turn engenders a transnational female diaspora. Condé's writing itself transcends borders and boundaries as Tituba navigates various geographic and social spaces. This unrestricted border crossing is rendered most palpable in Condé's recounting of an event that occurred in the seventeenth century. This conflation and intersecting of chronological time signal the need for adaptable identities and elastic borders, resulting in the practice of transnationalism.

In keeping with her demand for flexible, adaptable identity, the "peculiar" institution of slavery does not circumscribe Tituba's ability to love and nurture or effectively mother. Along these lines, Condé constructs Tituba, Abena, and her othermothers, Mama Yaya and Yao, outside the nation-state beyond patriarchal dictates.[2] As such, they are able to navigate geographic and spiritual boundaries and borders with relative ease; this ability to straddle both worlds allows them to practice transnational citizenship. Tituba's practice of transnationalism manifests in her finding the "missing term—Africa," as Hall argues above. Despite the fact that Tituba's "radicalism," which draws heavily on forms of resistance employed by slave women, is revealed through the embrace and practice of abortions and infanticide as means of resistance, she nevertheless re-visions motherhood and mothering (as viable options) beyond the dictates of enslavement and patriarchy.[3] The practice of abortions and infanticides challenges the nation's design for population increase in the form of chattel, which promotes exclusionary citizenship, as slaves do not qualify as citizens; instead, they are property. On the other hand, Tituba destabilizes this masculinist narrative. This re-visioning in turn delegitimizes the pathological discourse that condemns Tituba as a witch and further labels her as suffering from mental illness. Furthermore, demonization of Tituba as a witch is emblematic of western cultural imperialism, a staged antiwoman, antifeminist campaign, a clear condemnation of female power and an attempt to circumscribe women's roles in society, limiting them spatially, diasporically, and creatively.

Alternatively, the maroon woman—the maroons resisted the nation-state's definition of citizenship, residing in diasporic enclaves outside the boundaries and borders of the nation—is a combatant revolutionary figure that fiercely resists female subjugation and oppression. In line with this, by empowering Tituba with magical and spiritual powers, Condé is reconstituting the principles of (first-wave) feminism, advocating instead for a transnational feminist agenda that includes the "transgressive" black female subject, or the "antislavery rebel," to borrow Davis's coinage ("Reflections" 9).

As both the subject and narrator of unspeakable violence, Tituba's trauma takes on astronomical proportions, appearing mythical as a consequence of the ruthless brutality. Notwithstanding, Tituba's narrative does not fall into the category of "unclaimed experience," to borrow the title of Cathy Caruth's book; rather, it signals her-story (her body) reclaimed and recuperated.[4] Or to echo Gilroy, it is a call for a redemptive return home. To say the least, Tituba took a circuitous redemptive return to Barbados, leaving its warmth and freedom to follow her lover, John Indian, to New England where she experiences the brutal puritanical customs that mirror many aspects of slavery and enslavement. Herein, Tituba challenges the concept of fixed place and belonging as she resists fixity in favor of transnational citizenship.

In her characterization of trauma and traumatic experiences, Caruth ascertains that "the story of trauma, as the narrative of a belated experience, far from telling of an escape from reality—the escape from a death, or from its referential force—rather attests to its endless impact on a life" (7). Along these lines, the traumas Tituba experienced vicariously through Abena, compounded by her own personal traumatic experiences, have profoundly impacted her existence. As both witness and victim, or more poignantly as both "the wound and the voice," Tituba's narrative is one of extraordinary survival, a testimony to her resilience and indomitable spirit (Caruth 4). It is also a narrative of migration and repatriation. Thus by becoming the agent of her narrative, Tituba not only bears witness but she also refuses to allow the unforgotten wounds of slavery to remain obscure, to go unheard or unseen. As a consequence, Condé rescues this wounded, invisible subject, the only black female victim of the Salem witch trials, from oblivion.

Addressing the diasporic dialogue that Tituba's invisibility occasioned, Angela Davis is quick to point out that "Tituba's impassioned efforts to

revoke her own disappearance from history . . . is Tituba's revenge" (Foreword ix).[5] Davis concludes that by adopting the "retelling of history" as her tool of revenge, Tituba saves herself by not "taking on the historical characteristics of the colonizers and the slaveholders she detested" (ix). A cautionary message, not to mimic the enslavers, was echoed repeatedly by Mama Yaya to Tituba, who wanted to exact revenge on her master, Susanna Endicott. Mimicry in the given situation is reductive, entailing recolonization of the subject and therefore equated with perversion: "You will have perverted your heart into the bargain. You will have become like them, knowing only how to kill and destroy" (30).

Thus Tituba's conception coincides with and mirrors the violent, forced beginning of the diaspora, the New World. Rape of the female body strongly resonates with land occupation. One can safely argue that brutality finds its most efficacious moment when inflicted upon the black female body. Nevertheless, in framing violence Tituba/Condé "scripts" an alternative discourse, one that resists, redeems, and recuperates the black female subject from obscurity. In line with this, Tituba/Condé rejects culturally normalized and tenuous expectations of motherhood and mothering, female identity and sexuality. In Condé's revision of history, (slave) women who are routinely depicted as docile and lacking agency are granted authorial presence and agency. As both midwife and witch, Tituba is a combatant revolutionary figure. Condé concurs: "I wanted to turn Tituba into a sort of female hero, an epic heroine, like the legendary Nanny of the maroons" (201). Significantly, Tituba's magical powers are expressed via her independence of mind and body. Consequently, her body, as text, functions as a site of social dissent, for she challenges the circumscribed roles of black women. It is equally a locus of political and sexual dissent as she fiercely interrogates patriarchal control of black female sexuality. Furthermore, as transgressive female subject, Tituba's challenge to slavery manifests in several ways, the most prominent being the practice of abortions and infanticide.

Despite the numerous images of death, destruction, mutilation, and (body) violation, Tituba does not embody the iconic suffering woman or mother. Even as Tituba or Abena battles with racism and sexism, Condé shatters the "reified images or stereotypes" of women as "aggressive, matriarchal or castrating female" (Davis, Foreword 3) Davis refutes the "designation of the black woman as a matriarch," labeling it a "cruel misnomer because it implies stable kinship structures within which the

mother exercises decisive authority" (3). Revealing the deceptiveness of this alias, she conclusively ascertains that "it is cruel because it ignores the profound traumas the black woman must have experienced when she had to surrender her child-bearing authority to alien and predatory economic interests" (3).

Deborah Gray White reinforces this argument as she reminds us that slave women have had to destroy the myths and the stereotypes that starkly contradicted their realties, their lived experiences. Further assessing how they dealt with their imperiled state, she remarks, "They did not see aggression and independent behavior as unfeminine, but a means to 'protect their most fundamental claims to womanhood; . . . their female sexuality and physicality, and their roles as mothers and wives'" (8). This insightful assessment holds true for Abena, whose resistance to her master's sexual advances is premised on her defending her honor, her female sexuality and physicality, and her role as mother and wife to Yao.[6] Even in light of this fact, Abena's resistance is regarded as dishonorable, attesting to White's claim that "some were convinced that slave women were lewd and lascivious, that they invited sexual overtures from white men, and that any resistance they displayed was mere feigning" (30). By this account, Abena was likened to the Jezebel character. At the same time, her subversion of this hypersexualized role facilitates her self-reclamation and autonomy.

In her subversion of the Jezebel character, Condé skillfully creates Abena as an empowered subject who was purchased by Darnell not as a Mammy but as a companion to his wife, Jennifer. Owing to the fact that black women were not constructed within the framework of respectability, Abena, as companion, as inferior "other" to the white woman, by default assumed the role of Jezebel, Mammy's foil, her "other." This argument gets reinforced by the anger Darnell expressed when he realized that Abena was pregnant and subsequently by his unwarranted sexual advances. White offers a timely and appropriate reminder: "The image of Jezebel excused . . . the sexual exploitation of black women" (61). Apart from being lewd and lascivious, Jezebel is conceived as emasculating. This character trait palpably manifests in Abena slashing Darnell's flesh with a cutlass, a phallic symbol to say the least, in retaliation to his sexual advances (*Tituba* 8). At the same time, the cutting of his flesh emblematizes her performing proverbial rape on him rather than allowing him to possess her body. She attacks not only her current master and attempted

rapist but also the English sailor who raped and impregnated her. The implication here is that the men are cut from the same cloth: white patriarchy. Even if Darnell might have erroneously interpreted Abena's resistance to his sexual advances as feigning, her subsequent attack on him leaves no doubt. Furthermore, inhabiting the role of Jezebel reinforces Abena's resistance to the patriarchal institution, for she does not fit the profile of the idealized slave and woman, nor is she an ideal citizen.

Darnell's attempted rape of Abena that imitates "an animal-like act" exemplifies his endeavor not only to manipulate her body but also to "conquer the resistance" that she consequently unleashes (Davis, "Reflections" 13). Davis adds that one of the strategies of oppression employed by the white master against the slave woman was "to reestablish her femaleness by reducing her to the level of her biological being. Aspiring with his sexual assaults to establish her as a female *animal*, he would be striving to destroy her proclivities towards resistance" (13) We bear witness to Darnell's attempted dehumanization of Abena in the ensuing public scene that Tituba recounts: "When I turned back toward my mother, she was standing up against a calabash tree, breathing hard. Darnell stood less than three feet away. He had taken off his shirt, undone his trousers and I could see his very white underclothes. His left hand was groping for his penis" (*Tituba* 8). In self-defense Abena struck him twice with a cutlass. Not only does Tituba bear witness to this heroic act of resistance that reveals slave women's "reverence for heroism and their celebration of it as a feminine trait," but she is also an accomplice, an accessory to attempted murder,[7] providing her mother with the assault weapon (D. White 8). All the same, while it is safe to conclude that Darnell's objective was not to control Abena's reproductive ability for profit, his unmistakable goal was to reaffirm her propertied existence by controlling her sexuality.[8] Davis is quick to point out that the slave is "particularly vulnerable in her sexual existence" as female ("Reflections" 12). Further, relegating Abena to propertied possession complements the "animal-like act" that rape engenders.

Unequivocally, Abena's disaffection stems from the inhumane, oppressive conditions under which black women found themselves during slavery. She voices the unparalleled plight of black women as she laments about the equivalent life of servitude that awaits her daughter, Tituba, wishing instead that she was born a boy. Tituba articulates her mother's regret: "My mother sorely regretted that I was not a boy. It seemed to her that a woman's fate was even more painful than a man's. In order to free

themselves from their condition, didn't they have to submit to the will of those very men who kept them in bondage and to sleep with them?" (6). The lament underscores the contradictory lives of black women even as it exposes the double oppression, that of race and gender. D. White contextualizes this dichotomous relationship as the "nexus of America's sex and race mythology," which inextricably binds the slave woman making it "most difficult for her to escape the mythology" (28).[9] All the same, Abena refuses entrapment by sparing her body continued violation, rejecting unauthorized access to it.

Slave women's bodies, specifically their procreative capacity, were considered prime real estate capital and accordingly they were marketed for maximum profit. D. White reiterates that once it caught on that the "reproductive function of the female slave could yield a profit, the manipulation of procreative sexual relations became an integral part of the sexual exploitation of female slaves" (68). Seemingly the subject of uninterrupted public attention and debates,[10] this visibility simultaneously rendered black women invisible. Black female sexuality is constructed within the framework of bestiality, a fact underscored by Davis, who argues that being "pressed into the mold of beasts of burden in the area of production, the slaves were forcibly deprived of their humanity" ("Reflections" 6). We are offered a glimpse of the black woman's value in terms of her procreative ability when John Indian, Tituba's lover, instructs her shortly after she was raped by the Puritans to save herself for him and their unborn offspring (*Tituba* 92). John Indian's manipulative intent mirrors or, more pointedly, rivals the slave master's scheming tactics. However, this manipulation becomes muted as Tituba is the one who palpably and with marked precision manipulates their sexual relations, remaining in control, if not at all times then most of the time, of her sexuality and her sexual desires. Along these lines, Tituba's refusal to procreate, to assume the role of biological mother, registers her avoidance of sexual exploitation and female subjugation. In other words, she dexterously refuses to have motherhood structure her behavior (D. White 75).

In reconstituting Tituba's history, Condé informs us that her main objective was to unearth her from oblivion, to render her visible, "to offer her her revenge by inventing a life such as she might perhaps wished it to be told" (*Tituba* 199). This self-invention or self-reclamation fiercely interrogates even as it negates women's predestined role as commodity for male consumption and their bodies as procreative vessels. Thus by

having Tituba willfully and intentionally inhabit the role of "othermother" instead of biological mother, Condé proposes an alternative course to motherhood and mothering, one that exists beyond the dictates of enslavement and patriarchy. This alternative path not only disrupts but also challenges the maternal ideal of womanhood. As follows, in refuting the mere biological role of mothers, Tituba in turn resists the devaluation of the female body as laboring object and as reproductive vessel. She refuses to reproduce the nation. Correspondingly, she subverts the notion that the female body functions as a receptacle for male sexual gratification.

Alternatively, refuting the role of sexual "other," Tituba rejects culturally normalized and tenuous expectations of female sexuality. Therefore, not only does Tituba maintain autonomy over her decision not to become a mother, but she also exerts control of her sexuality whereby it cannot be directly claimed by the oppressor. Even so, Tituba subverts the prescribed role of the female as an object of desire, becoming the desirous subject as she "preys" on John Indian. It is rather telling that Howard Frank Mosher analyzes Tituba's sexual attraction to John Indian as her "shortcoming, [a] blind passionate sexual dependence." Noticeably his criticism of John Indian is somewhat muted as he describes him as "feckless," who in spite of his own "shortcomings" makes Tituba "a fully believable and very appealing character."[11] John Indian's fecklessness is apparently attributed to his "uncontrollable" masculine desires that not only compel him to join the Puritans, noticeably an all-male group, in accusing Tituba of being a practitioner of witchcraft and subsequently raping her, but he also ultimately deserts her for the widow of a Puritan minister. Since Mosher credits John Indian for making Tituba "a fully believable and very appealing character," it is safe to argue that John Indian is naturally appealing, a claim that the widowed Goodwife Sarah Porter will endorse. Whereas John Indian's maleness allows him access to the patriarchal world where he engages in black female subjugation, Mosher is unable to perceive Tituba as a sexually autonomous subject, as an agent outside the discourse of the nation. Rather, Mosher restrains Tituba's sex and sexuality within the discourse of the nation and within the framework of nationalism. Furthermore, Tituba is "languaged by sex," to echo Faith Smith (2). Similar to John Indian, who reads Tituba's body as a profitable commodity, as a site for reproducing the nation, Mosher renders her body docile. In other words, he is oblivious to the fact that she inhabits a transgressive body, one that acts out, retaliates, and migrates both physically and socially, as

it deviates from patriarchal norm, from prescribed notions of Victorian (white) womanhood.

Tituba's transgression most powerfully resonates in her practice of witchcraft. This practice becomes an empowering female pursuit that engenders diasporic and transnational affiliations. These affiliations palpably manifest in the scene where Judah White, a friend of Mama Yaya (unknown to Tituba) and a native Bostonian who never left Boston, unexpectedly approaches Tituba in the forest, cautioning her about the wrath of Peter Parris and the Puritans and subsequently reintroducing and reacclimatizing her to the properties of herbs.[12] This unmitigated kinship realizes a transnational feminist agenda. Thus Judah White, also a practitioner of witchcraft, belongs to the diaspora of empowered women who inhabit the coveted role as "citizens of the world." This female diaspora operates beyond the dictates of patriarchy. Subsequently, witchcraft becomes a counter discourse that challenges female oppressions.

As a transmigratory subject whose journeys take her from Barbados to Puritanical New England and back to Barbados, Tituba engenders female mobility. In so doing she engages in a politics of resistance, survival, and citizenship.[13] Moreover, as a witch, Tituba is the consummate figure of transgression. Rejecting Mosher's characterization, Tituba's relationship with John Indian is merely sexual and not one of sexual dependency. In this manner, Tituba defies "conventional notions of passive female sexuality" (hooks, *Black Looks* 48). In spite of Mosher's indictment, Tituba is very much aware and in control of her sexual identity, which she unabashedly assumes and skillfully employs as the situation demands. Even after having acquired ancestral status, Tituba fondly reminisces about her former sexually imbued life: "I have loved men too much and shall continue to do so. Sometimes I get the urge to slip into someone's bed to satisfy a bit of leftover desire" (178). This carefully crafted pronouncement unequivocally drives home the fact that Tituba's desire is not linked specifically or exclusively to John Indian, negating any assumption of blind sexual dependence.

Tituba's self-possession, particularly her celebration of sexual autonomy, contrasts and at the same time challenges slave women's dispossessed and disembodied status, their treatment as property. As the aggressive pursuer of John Indian, Tituba subverts the masculine gaze, transforming him into an object of her carnal desire. His objectification cum insignificance is made more palpable wherein Tituba aborts his

child, an act that demonstrates her refusal to procreate, namely, to reproduce the nation. She thereby relegates and reduces their sexual escapades to the mere recreational. As he repeatedly refers to their unborn children, Tituba warns: "John Indian, don't talk about our children, for I shall never bring children into this dark and gloomy world" (92). Although Tituba subsequently became pregnant for John Indian, she nevertheless made the conscious decision to discontinue her pregnancy, refusing to be coerced into premature and obligatory (institutionalized) motherhood as Abena was. This resolute decision or "gynecological revolt," to borrow Jennifer Morgan's fitting phrase, reveals Tituba exercising control of her body and her procreative ability (11).

Although Tituba momentarily relinquishes her freedom and follows John Indian into slavery in Puritanical New England, she nonetheless does not allow him to manipulate her (body), candidly confessing that the attraction was related to the sexual pleasures he provides. As I have argued earlier, Tituba realizes transnationalism through these noncoercive migrations. Even so, Tituba's decision to follow John Indian to Boston is an autonomous one, occasioned by her strong sexual interest in him. In the following passage, she offers a candid assessment of their relationship that is noticeably sexual:

> What was there about John Indian to make me sick with love for him? Not very tall, average height, five feet seven, not very big, not ugly, not handsome either. I must confess it was downright hypocritical of me to ask such a question, since I knew too well where his main asset lay and I dared not look below the jute cord that held up his short, tight-fitting *konoko* to the huge bump of his penis. (19)

Tituba later reinforces John Indian's objectification: "He'd never been very brave or very intelligent or honest, but loving, yes!" (109). Parodying the iconic Jezebel character, Tituba both challenges and subverts the black female stereotype. Her unrelenting pursuit, objectification, and manipulation of John Indian bear the imprint of emasculation. In the given situation, she assumes the male role as pursuer, relegating John Indian as the hunted, a non-person. Furthermore, she subverts the notion of the female (slave) body as a site of continued oppression, appropriating it as the locus of desire and pleasure. But more importantly, she exerts self-ownership, becoming the agent of her (body) discourse. This fervent desire for autonomy manifests in Tituba's decision to become pregnant for her maroon

lover, Christopher. This decision has symbolic resonance for the reason that there exists a subtle reference to infertility, another effective mode of resistance employed by slave women.[14] Notably, Tituba's sexual relationship with her Jewish owner and eventual lover, Benjamin d'Azevedo, is marked by a period of self-imposed sterility. The analogy Tituba draws between Christopher and d'Azevedo is telling: "Christopher's brutal embraces had conceived what the love of my Jew had been unable to do" (158). In the given situation, "induced infertility" is employed as a means to obstruct reproducing violence and oppression, for despite the humane relationship that d'Azevedo and Tituba shared, she nonetheless was his propertied possession. As his property, Tituba is problematically constructed or, more pointedly, reinstated within the nation-state.[15] In this way, d'Azevedo's refusal to grant Tituba her freedom symbolizes his denying her citizenship and prohibiting her pursuit of liberty.

Moreover, Tituba's calculated attempt at embracing biological motherhood is predicated on the possibility of giving birth in freedom in the maroon community, a viable diasporic community. Further, the combativeness that this pregnancy engendered, motivating Tituba to conclude that it was a girl, is characteristic of the resistance that maroons embody (158). Tituba's consequent questioning of the condemned life that awaits her daughter forebodes Christopher's betrayal. Thus his presence (and ultimately the presence of his unborn child) is short-lived as Tituba replaces him with a much younger lover, Iphigene.

Tituba's seamless transfer of desire from John Indian to d'Azevedo to Christopher to Iphigene finds expression in hooks's compelling assessment of Sula, Toni Morrison's radical black female subject. In "refusing standard sexist notions of the exchange of female bodies, Tituba, like Sula, engages in the exchange of male bodies as part of a defiant effort to displace their importance" (hooks, *Black Looks* 48). This displacement has special resonance for Christopher. Although he makes a futile attempt to assert his importance, his insignificance is discernible through his reverence to Tituba. A self-professed, powerful maroon leader, he sought Tituba's assistance in acquiring supernatural power for evil purposes.[16] By exposing Christopher's peripheral existence as an impostor in the maroon community, Condé debatably re-creates Tituba and Christopher in the likeness of the maroon duo Nanny and her brother, Cudjoe. This role-play mirrors the historical narrative as Condé engages transhistorical play in keeping with the transnational agenda. Christopher usurped the role of

Cudjoe, who was regarded as the leader of the maroons despite the fact that Nanny was the one who valiantly led the revolution.[17]

Apart from assuming Nanny's heroism, Tituba shares her combativeness and her gift as a spiritual healer. Additionally, Tituba's resemblance to Nanny is no mere coincidence, as Condé herself earlier acknowledges. Lucille Mathurin paints a sensual, maternal side of the mother of the Maroons, who had no children of her own (36). By the same token, Karla Gottlieb focuses on Nanny's nurturing qualities as "first mother" and how she is tied to legends of fertility and food (6). As nurturer, surrogate mother, and healer, Tituba breaks with the traditional patriarchal definition of womanhood and the attendant definition of citizenship. At the same time, her embrace and celebration of her sexuality challenges white male notions of black women's promiscuity.

Reappropriating the narrative of the "respectable" white woman, Hester, Tituba's prison mate, engages female resistance by indulging in carnal pleasure at the expense of the Puritans. This fact is often overlooked or dismissed by critics.[18] While I will return to Hester's "indulgence" and the common goal that she and Tituba share in challenging and dismantling existing patriarchal structures, it is fitting that I pause to analyze Robert H. McCormick Jr.'s analysis of a conversation that the two women share about feminism. Engrossed in a private moment, Hester reveals to Tituba her desire to write a book in which she will portray a model society governed by women who will pass on their names to their children. At this point, Tituba interjects, reminding Hester that men will have to be a part of the procreative process, to which Hester counters: "You're too fond of love, Tituba! I'll never make a feminist out of you!" (101). Whereas Hester's pronouncement to have children carry their mothers' names induces the dismantling of patriarchy, Tituba's declaration calls attention to the intricate and complex relationship between feminism and men.

Intimating that being in love or being involved in male-female relationships is not a pastime of "sound-thinking" feminists unearths the age-old stereotype that feminists and the feminist agenda are opposed to men. Olga Benoit recounts that her embrace of feminism elicited the following response: "Well, feminists are just women leading struggles against men" (86). Further directing our attention to the preconceived racialized assumption of feminism, Johnnetta Betsch Cole and Beverly Guy-Sheftall inform us that "speculation about sexual orientation is fueled by the homophobic assumption that any Black woman who is a feminist is also a

lesbian" (23). We witness a strategic erosion of the assumption that feminism is a euphemism for lesbianism in the character of Tituba. As Davis readily points out, Tituba's acceptance and embrace of her sexuality and her strong sexual attraction to men do not "dilute her solidarity with women, black as well as white" (Foreword x).

Even so, Davis reveals Tituba's ambivalence, ascertaining that she is "reluctant to call herself a feminist" because of her strong "defense of her sexuality" (Foreword x). Along these lines, Tituba's defense of her sexuality necessitates that she practice or perform fluid sexuality that exists beyond the boundaries and dictates of imposed patriarchal heterosexuality. As I have argued in chapter 2, compulsory heterosexuality is a determining criteria for citizenship. Tituba's questioning of a probable sexual attraction to Hester destabilizes the rigid, conventional definition and practice of compulsory heterosexuality:

> Can you feel pleasure from hugging a body similar to your own? For me, pleasure had always been in the shape of another body whose hollows fitted my curves and whose swellings nestled in the tender flatlands of my flesh. Was Hester showing me another kind of bodily pleasure? (122)

By suggesting that Hester, the self-professed feminist, introduced Tituba to same-sex relationships, Condé further interrogates patriarchal ideals of proper womanhood. This ideal is earlier interrogated by Hester's indulgence in an extramarital affair. Rendering the relationship insignificant, McCormick reduces the exchange between Tituba and Hester to a mere play of words or ideas. He establishes that "Hester is part of the 'joke' in that her exaggerated and self-destructive behavior is contrasted with Tituba's more real cowardice" (278). Both of these women are imagined as docile, rendered inactive and invisible. One is not sure whether the self-destructive behavior refers to the charge of adultery leveled against Hester or her committing suicide/infanticide. Furthermore, while the charge of self-destructive behavior was intended to reveal the "joke," the evident irony in the conversation between Tituba and Hester about feminism goes unnoticed. As Condé herself admonishes, "if one misses the parody in Tituba, one will not understand, for example, why she meets Hester Prynne in jail and why they discuss feminism in modern terms" (212). This symbolic female-to-female exchange is a subtle call for the revision of feminism to truthfully and adequately attend to and reflect the varied needs and concerns of women across economic, social, racial, geographic,

and political spectra. In other words, this is a call for a transnational feminist agenda. Furthermore, Condé's call to modernize or revolutionize the feminist discourse falls on (Mosher's) deaf ears. Mosher's incomprehension is best explained by Mary Friedman and Silvia Schultermandl, who articulate that "transnational feminism tilts common perceptions of identity, nationhood, and family: perceptions that in the past operated along essentialist criteria and thus failed to offer meaningful and satisfactory definitions of lives that are marked by increased global flow and the new challenges it poses for society. Transnational feminism operates within an 'antiracist and anti-imperialist' ideological framework" (9).

Reemphasizing the need for restructuring and reconfiguring feminism, Condé reiterates in an interview that Hester and Tituba "both talk about feminism in very modern language" (Pfaff 60). Appropriating a "modern language" within the extant feminist discourse is undeniably a concerted move to eliminate the biases and injustices within the movement. In calling attention to these biases, bell hooks reminds us that "the women's liberation movement has not only been structured on a narrow platform, it primarily called attention to issues relevant primarily to women (mostly white) with class privilege" (*Feminist Theory* xii). Therefore, one can reasonably conclude that even though Hester might be indirectly the "butt of the joke" in keeping with McCormick's assumption, the gist of the joke is evidently a jab at first-wave feminism, signaling Condé's departure or migration from essentialist, biased, blind-sighted notions of feminism.

Furthering this line of reasoning, having Hester and Tituba locked in a jail cell signals a needed "change in the direction of feminist thought," one that accommodates the "interlocking nature of gender, race and class" (hooks, *Feminist Theory* xii). As a result, we have a white woman and a black woman literally face-to-face, dialoguing on somewhat "equal" terms; identifying on common grounds (in a jail cell), in a common language, that of female oppression and its attendant resistance. Reemphasizing this female identity politics, Hester not only violently interrupts Tituba when she attempts to explain that her demonization results from white racist attitudes, but she also categorically denounces the white society to which Tituba claims she belongs: "It's not my society. Aren't I an outcast like yourself? Locked up between these walls?" (96). A few pages later, she directly indicts the patriarchy, unequivocally identifying both white and black men as the oppressors of women: "Don't talk to me about your

wretched husband! He's no better than mine. Shouldn't he be here to share your sorrow? Life is too kind to men, whatever their color" (100). In a contemplative moment, Tituba agrees that "the color of John Indian's skin had not caused him half the trouble mine had caused me" (101). Tituba's pronouncement reinforces the ease with which John Indian accesses the patriarchal order, pointing to his unequivocal citizenship status. Condé further validates this line of reasoning as she ascertains that "racism is very important in Tituba. She was forgotten by history because she was black. She was a black woman" (210). While Condé/Tituba is mindful of the female condition, she nevertheless cautions that despite the fact that "women share a common oppression and a common discrimination throughout the world . . . this should not obscure the oppositions created by social class, education, ideology, and environment" (209).

Hester's class privilege is simultaneously devalued and revalued. Within the walls of the prison cell, her social class and education undergo devaluation. Even so, her education is put to practical use as she imparts to Tituba literary and historical knowledge,[19] thereby providing her with a formal "feminist education," to quote hooks (*Feminist Theory* xii). This education, which bears some similarities to Tituba's experiences, becomes a tool of integration and inclusion, establishing its transformative and transnational emphasis. Ironically, the prison walls serve as a space of reflection and rumination for both women and as a mirror-image of their differences (and their similarities). Hester confronts and reflects upon her class privilege, resulting not only in Tituba's diminished skepticism and criticism of feminism but also in the validation and centering of her "modern" brand of feminism into the larger feminist discourse. In essence, the women's incarceration symbolizes, while calling attention to, the need for gender-inclusive politics. Davis's celebration of Tituba's "active solidarity with women, black as well as white" (Foreword x) is instructive. Thus Condé has enlisted Hester in interrogating and dismantling the class, race, and socioeconomic barriers inherent in first-wave feminism that "contributed to the oppression of white women as well" (Hammonds 174).

One would be remiss to dismiss the apparent paradox in Hester's station in life and her lived experiences. A daughter of a Puritan minister, she is forcibly betrothed at the age of sixteen to a man of the cloth "who had laid to rest three wives and five children" (*Tituba* 97). While he is away on

a religious mission, Hester commits the "unthinkable": adultery. In relating the sexual encounters with her secret lover to Tituba, Hester exacts simultaneous resistance and pleasure:

> There is something indecent about beauty in a man. Tituba, men shouldn't be beautiful! Two generations of visible saints stigmatizing carnal pleasure resulted in this man and the irresistible delights of the flesh. We started meeting under the pretext of discussing German pietism. Then we ended up in his bed making love and here I am. (98)

In the above pronouncement, Hester replicates Tituba's objectification of her lover, John Indian. This sexual objectification is anomalous for a woman of Hester's station, for Evelynn Hammonds reminds us: "White women were characterized as pure, passionless and de-sexed, while black women were the epitome of immorality, pathology, impurity, and sex itself" (173). Moreover, not only does Hester sully the image of the Puritans and their religious convictions, but she also contaminates the Cult of True Womanhood, of white respectability and chastity. The adulterous affair that culminated in pregnancy delivers the final rupture to the neat narrative of white respectability as Hester becomes an outcast of white femininity. We witness further disjunction in this narrative as Tituba exposes the Puritan women's sexual interest and fascination with John Indian: "Some of the ladies, however Puritan they might be, had not denied themselves the pleasure of flirting with [Indian]" (*Tituba* 101). This "contamination" of white femininity gains currency as Hester not only shares identifiable moments with black women, but she also partakes in forms of resistance engendered by slave women, that of abortion and/or infanticide. Along similar lines, Judah White practices witchcraft.

Resisting the puritanical beliefs or "fanaticism" (as she calls it) of her ancestors, Hester, sharing her secrets with Tituba, confesses to having killed four children that were conceived with her hated husband: "I would have found it impossible to love the offspring of a man I hated. The number of potions, concoctions, purges, and laxatives I took during my pregnancies helped me to arrive at this fortunate conclusion" (97). Hester's confession, particularly her underscoring of the "fortune" that resulted from her act, strongly echoes the act of will slave women enacted, taking their children's lives not only in order to save them but also registering their refusal to be complicit in the horrible institution of slavery. Yet again, this common practice which transcends borders and

boundaries engenders transnational coalitions that result in the formation of female diasporas. Drawing a parallel with slave women who practiced abortions and infanticide to save their children from a life of hell and servitude, Dorothy Roberts tells a compelling story about a slave named Jane "who was charged with knowingly, willfully, feloniously and of her malice aforethought preparing a certain deadly poison and giving it to Angeline to drink (*Killing* 48). McCormick has leveled similar charges against Hester. Nonetheless, his indictment of Hester as "self-destructive" is not only narrow-sighted but also partial to the point where it denies her agency or free will. Clearly, Hester's action is motivated by selflessness as she attempts to protect her unborn children from the Puritans and their teachings. This protective maternal instinct resonates powerfully as she decidedly and unapologetically informs Tituba of her impending plans for her unborn "illegitimate" daughter: "She must simply die with me. I have already prepared her for that when we talk to each other at night" (98). By the same token, one would be wrong to dismiss the defiance in Hester's pronouncement.

Further, the decisive, premeditated language that Hester uses to recount the private conversations she has with her unborn child and to articulate her calculated action powerfully resonates with engaging an act of will, infanticide (this act also doubles as an abortion). Along these lines, Hester's act is undeniably carried out in the name of courage and not cowardice. This line of reasoning is reinforced by Hester's apparent refusal to be exploited as a martyr by the Puritans. Alternatively, Hester's adulterous affair functions as a reprieve from and resistance to her routinized prescribed existence as the wife of a Puritan minister. While Hester, without inhibition, indulges in sexual pleasures, she informs Tituba that "of the two of us," referring to her lover imprisoned by his puritanical beliefs, he is "the one to be most pitied" (97). Hence, free from puritanical reign, Hester, not surprisingly, in a strategic and symbolic gesture, labels her act of "saving her children" as sanctioned by God: "He [referring to her scorned husband] revolted me and yet he gave me four children that the good Lord called to him, thank God" (97).

In like manner, resistance manifests in the battle cry engendered by Sophie Caco and Xuela Richardson.[20] For example, Sophie engages in conversation with her mother, Martine, who is contemplating aborting her unborn child: "Are you going to *take it out?*" (Danticat, *Breath* 191; emphasis added). Martine's decision is implied in her equally caustic

language: "It [the fetus] bites at the inside of my stomach like a leech" (191). Similarly, Kincaid's female protagonist, Xuela, who is forced to have sexual relations with her surrogate father, Monsieur LaBatte, by his wife, Madame LaBatte, to compensate for her inability to have children of her own, articulates the violence she experiences at the hand of her oppressors. Her resistance parallels the violent act: "[I]f there was child in me I could expel it through the sheer force of my will. I willed it out of me" (*Autobiography* 81). She later comes to the stark realization that Madame LaBatte's narrative of deliverance was fallacious: "it was not herself she wanted to save; it was me she wanted to consume" (*Autobiography* 94). In actuality, the (unwanted) pregnancy and attendant enforced motherhood signal her symbolic death. This revelation intensifies her resolve to resist as she (referring to Xuela, not the fetus) makes a concerted effort to survive her oppressive condition: "Exhausted from the agony of expelling from my body a child I could not love and so did not want, I dreamed of all the things that were mine" (*Autobiography* 89). Even when the act is not accompanied by words, resistance and revenge remain the motive: "Ma said nothing. No word of pity or of reproof, or of consolation, passed her lips, as she administered the potion. And Mary Gertrude Mathilda cried secretly and made a promise to herself" (Clarke 382).[21] Hence abortion becomes the language of female protest.

Hester and Tituba share a moment of female solidarity in that they both confess to having practiced abortion and/or infanticide. They also justify their acts as the only viable recourse. Consequently, Tituba is able to exercise freedom of choice by discontinuing her pregnancy. In the ensuing quote she recalls what prompted her decision: "It was shortly afterward [the execution by hanging of a witch] that I realized that I was pregnant and I decided to kill the child" (49). Later, at what one might call a confessional (here I am suggesting that Condé is parodying the religion of the Puritans), she confides in Hester: "I, too, killed my child" (98). Hester and Tituba's forthright pronouncements challenge and at the same time eliminate doubts about women's passive resistance. This removes the ambiguity that D. White and Dorothy Roberts have argued has prevented us from definitively determining whether slave women practiced selective abortion and infanticide (D. White 84; Dorothy Roberts, *Killing* 49). Tituba's pronouncement addresses this imprecision. In a similar vein, Tituba's choice of words as in "I, too, killed my child" with special emphasis on "killed," lends itself to a form of "doubling" in that the act committed

could have easily qualified as either abortion or infanticide. This "doubling" unites the "twin act" as modes of resistance that slave women effectively employed to thwart the efforts of enslavers to control female reproduction. In the same breath, abortion and infanticide are simultaneous acts of resistance and (maternal) love, as many slave women confessed to being intensely concerned for their children's welfare (D. White 88).

Chronicling the inherent contradiction of being a mother and a slave, Tituba ruminates: "There is no happiness in motherhood for a slave. It is little more than the expulsion of an innocent baby, who will have no chance to change its fate, into a world of slavery and abjection" (50). In essence, motherhood for slave women is synonymous with loss and deprivation. Motherhood therefore is a symbolic "miscarriage" of justice as the term *expulsion* alludes. Significantly, *expulsion* does not refer to the acts of abortion or infanticide. Instead, it captures the brutal separation of the child from its mother at birth, attesting to the brutality of slavery that not only claims innocent babies from birth but also prevents mothers from adequately mothering and nurturing their offspring. The inhumane act that the mother-child separation incurs justifiably lends itself to the resultant protests that slave mothers engendered in an effort to spare their offspring from the horrors of slavery. Tituba calls attention to the violent but necessary act: "That night, my baby was carried out of my womb in a flow of black blood. I saw him wave his arms like a tadpole in distress and I burst into tears. . . . I had trouble getting over the murder of [my] child. I knew that I had acted for the best. Yet the image of that little face whose actual features I would never know haunted me" (52). Nevertheless, while these acts of protest are carried out as a means of exerting control and autonomy, albeit minimal, over female reproductive rights, slave women are reminded never to lose sight of their human side, not to engage mindlessly in reproducing colonial or patriarchal violence. Tituba is repeatedly cautioned by her mothers, Abena and Mama Yaya, not to "become like them knowing only how to kill and destroy." They further instructed her to put her energy and gift of witchcraft to good use: "Don't let yourself be eaten up by revenge. Use your powers to serve your own people and heal them" (29, 30).

Concurring that "infanticide was the most extreme form of slave mother's resistance," Dorothy Roberts declares that "some enslaved women killed their newborns to keep them from living as chattel" (*Killing* 48). She later substantiates that although there is no concrete evidence to support

how often slave women practiced abortion or terminated pregnancies, what remains unquestionable is that slave mothers acted in desperation to protect, and not sacrifice, their children (*Killing* 49). Historicizing and authenticating infanticide and abortion as effective methods of female resistance, Tituba/Condé draws on documented annals of slave resistance, thereby locating Tituba's personal protest within a wider political framework of resistance:

> Throughout my childhood I had seen slaves kill their babies by sticking a long thorn into the still viscous-like egg of their heads, by cutting the umbilical cord with a poison blade, or else by abandoning them at night in a place frequented by angry spirits. Throughout my childhood I had heard slaves exchange formulas for potions, baths, and injections that sterilize the womb forever and turn it into a tomb lined with a scarlet shroud. (*Tituba* 50)

These shared, transatlantic methods of defiance demonstrate the effectiveness and potency of slave mothers' resistance as they address, if not erase, the ambiguous "record on self-imposed sterility and self-induced miscarriages" (D. White 85). Understandably concerned about the impending future of her unborn child as she identifies two untenable options for her life course: that of the life "of my brothers and sisters, the slaves, ruined by their conditions and their labors or a life like mine, which forced me to live in hiding as an outcast and a recluse on the edge of a secluded valley" (158), Tituba challenges the repressive system, stipulating that if "the world were going to receive my child, then it would have to change!" (159). This challenge resonates with Hester's resolute decision to spare her child the cruelty. The need for female alliance is rendered most potent as both women endure patriarchal oppression. Hence, refusing to "sustain slavery by producing human chattel," these acts of protest represent "one small step in bringing about slavery's demise" (Roberts, *Killing* 48). Additionally, as a midwife, Tituba played a pivotal role in female reproductive rights, for she wielded power both in the birthing of children and the terminating of pregnancies.

Barbara Bush ascertains that by relying on traditional midwifery and folkloric medicine, female slaves exerted more control over their bodies. She establishes that female agency and autonomy can be challenged by the "expropriation of the ancient art of midwifery by the new medical men of science and the development of what Foucault has termed 'Scientia

Sexualis' (the development of a 'scientific' explanation of sexuality), [resulting in the] reduc[tion] of control women had over their bodies" (134). However, Bush is quick to point out that this loss of control is more prevalent in middle- and upper-class women. Accordingly, Hester Prynne temporarily loses control of her body when she submits to the marriage to the minister and the subsequent unwanted pregnancies. However, she regains control through the engagement and embrace of folkloric medicine through her alliance with slave women.

Documenting the pivotal and omnipresent role of midwives, D. White articulates that "they were likely to attend all slave births and all slave deaths. Their knowledge delivered one into life, helped one survive it, and sometimes, hastened one to an early grave" (116). By designing motherhood to her own making, rejecting the nuclear family as the norm, and opting instead for the extended family, as she inhabits the role of "other" mother, Tituba was able to effect change, however small. While registering her resistance and despite grappling with the dehumanizing practices of enslavement, Tituba realizes the need to remain human, to remain maternal. As she experiences the joy of alternative mothering of Samantha, the daughter whom she delivered spiritually, Tituba proudly and self-assuredly verbalizes: "A child I didn't give birth to but whom I chose. What motherhood could be nobler!" (177). Furthermore, Tituba dismantles the framework of ideal motherhood and mothering. She intends to impart to Samantha this legacy of female resistance, admitting that "she had been singled out for a special destiny," as she reveals to "her the secrets . . . the hidden power of herbs" (177).

In rejecting the hypersexual and the hyposexual iconic images of black female subjects, Tituba rejects the attendant "tangle of pathology" that weighs on the definitions (Davis, "Reflections" 4).[22] Moreover, Tituba's rejecting John Indian's advice that she confess to the Puritans of wrongdoing signals her fervent desire to avoid engendering the "unspoken indictment" that lingers "beneath the notion of the black matriarch . . . of our female forebears as having actively assented to slavery" (4). Not only does Tituba refuse to assume the role of collaborator, relinquishing citizenship as defined by the nation-state, but she also adamantly maintains her innocence: "They want me to confess my faults. But I am not guilty" (*Tituba* 92). While Tituba refuses to become complicit with patriarchy, the same cannot be said for her and John Indian's owner, Susanna Endicott, whose mission arguably is to disarm and disempower Tituba by disavowing

her (magical) powers. Furthermore, Endicott attempts to confine Tituba "bodily" by perpetuating her displacement and her non-citizenship status. Capturing the contentious nature of female complicity, Fabi explains: "The controversial issue of female complicity with patriarchy has often been dealt with in terms of the racism of white against black women" (230). Fabi's theorization provides an accurate analysis of the existing relationship between Susanna Endicott and Tituba. Even so, this turbulent relationship extends beyond race to include a complex gender (power) struggle. In reproducing patriarchy, Susanna Endicott enforces tyrannical rule and order upon her propertied possessions, but especially Tituba.[23] Consequently, Endicott perceives Tituba as a greater threat than John Indian. Davis's claim of how risky it was "for the slaveholding class to openly acknowledge symbols of authority—female symbols no less than male" is pertinent ("Reflections" 4). Fittingly, positioning Endicott's complicity within a classed and racialized framework while framing Tituba's narrative in tandem with female solidarity, Condé exposes white racist patriarchal structures and practices and reinforces transnationalism. Repeatedly Tituba refuses to impeach her fellow (indicted) women, all of whom are white, of practicing witchcraft, even at her own expense, her loss of freedom, her relinquishing of citizenship. Along these lines, her denunciation and subsequent rejection of John Indian's advice to falsely accuse the other women reinforces her commitment to female identity politics.

Tituba, like Abena, is a victim of rape, although her rape comes at the hands of the Puritans. This uncanny mother-daughter "body violation" parallel is not anomalous. Rather it is a factor in slavery, demonstrative of the common bond of oppression that women experience in slavery.[24] Recounting her dehumanization at the hands of her enslavers—the Puritan minister, Samuel Parris, and three other religious men—Tituba candidly reveals that she had been reduced to "nothing more than a heap of suffering" (*Tituba* 91). This "nothingness" finds expression in the graphic and public violation of her body. She recalls the horrific experience while being pinned to the ground with a sharpened stick thrust into her vagina: "Go on, take it, it's John Indian's prick" (91). Symbolically, Tituba is raped by the Puritans, but they also simulate her being raped by John Indian. Besides, Tituba's assumed promiscuity excuses, or most poignantly justifies, the rape. Additionally, as a slave and a woman, as a non-person, she is vulnerable to sexual domination that has been defined by "its openly terroristic character" (Davis, "Reflections" 13). Rape, in Davis's summation,

is "the most elemental form of terrorism distinctively suited for the female" (13). This (female) gender-appropriated sexual domination is rendered potent in the ensuing scene.

After trying to solicit a confession from Tituba about her dealings in witchcraft, Samuel Parris summons John Indian. This summons finds a parallel moment in an earlier scene where Yao is forced not only to bear witness to Darnell's sexual advances to Abena but also to be present at her execution by hanging.[25] In the same way, having John Indian witness Tituba being raped reinforces his emasculation. It also symbolically manifests in his own sexual assault. Moreover, forcing John Indian to coerce Tituba to acknowledge guilt intimates that he performs a symbolic rape of sorts on her, on the black woman. In a similar vein, Darnell's attempted rape of Abena is "not exclusively an attack upon her. Indirectly, its target was also the slave community as a whole. In launching the sexual war on the woman, the master would not only assert his sovereignty over a critically important figure of the slave community, he would also be aiming a blow against the black man" (Davis, "Reflections" 13).[26] One can safely conclude that this "manifest inability" of John Indian "to rescue [Tituba] from sexual assaults of the master" places him in a vulnerable position where he experiences "deep-seated doubts about his ability to resist at all" (13). Notwithstanding, these doubts are further compromised by Samuel Parris requesting his complicity with white patriarchy through the coercion of Tituba.

John Indian is an eager accomplice. His act of coercion necessitates that he infantilize Tituba, "cradling [her] like an unruly baby," even as he attempts to persuade her to admit guilt so as to guarantee that she will survive and bear him children. John Indian employs manipulative tactics within which he paradoxically becomes ensnared, as he becomes the object of white patriarchal manipulation. This self-dehumanizing act in which he engages finds him relegated to non-citizen status. Just as he performs a symbolic rape of Tituba—as an enthusiastic co-conspirator of the Puritans, he denounces both Tituba and her craft and subsequently abandons her for Goodwife Sarah Porter. He is proverbially raped, emasculated by white patriarchy. Tituba appropriately intimates that John Indian's cohabitation with the wife of a Puritan minister, the very group that ridiculed and demonized her, is implicit of him signing a pact with "the devil," her tormentors (109). In his undertaking of the role of strange bedfellow, John Indian ascertains his sexual, political, and ideological

affiliation with white patriarchy. It is therefore not surprising that in a dream in which Tituba was assaulted by three men, John Indian figured prominently as one of the victimizers, along with Samuel Parris and Christopher.

Deservedly, the ostensible link between white patriarchy and white supremacy merits some attention. Minutes prior to her rape, Tituba chronicles her attackers' descent on her in the following manner: "Like four great birds of prey the men surged into my room. They had slipped on *black hoods, with holes for their eyes*, and the steam from their mouths came through *the cloth*. Quickly they encircled the bed" (90; emphasis added). The hoods with peepholes allude to the conical hats, masks, and robes that members of the Ku Klux Klan don to attack their unsuspecting victims. Further, the link between white patriarchy and supremacy is reinforced by the fact that Tituba is not the only target of Puritan oppression and prejudice. Benjamin Cohen d'Azevedo, a Jewish merchant, is also the intended recipient of Puritan bigotry and religious intolerance. His home is burnt to the ground, killing his nine children. Additionally, two ships belonging to him and his friends go up in flames. The following utterance by a group of Puritan men and women who stood witnessing the burning of d'Azevedo's home decisively legitimizes the connection between white patriarchy and white supremacy: "Did we leave England for this? To see Jews and niggers multiply in our midst?" (133). Driving home the point even further, Condé confesses that her intent was to "show how petty the Puritans really were, how their minds were narrow, full of prejudice. The Puritans were opposed not only to the blacks, but also the Jews" (201).

Moreover, the violent "openly terroristic" rape committed against Tituba sheds light on the Ku Klux Klan's record on terrorism and violence. In a skillful discursive strategy, Condé employs the theory of inversion whereby *white* is substituted for the word *black* as in *black hoods*. This is Condé's attempt at illustrating that patriarchy, whether white or black, is one and the same, governed by similar masculinist principles. This conflation of blackness and whiteness, or more fittingly, the assumption of whiteness, represents an identity deficit that is indicative of black inferiority and subjugation. This line of reasoning is bolstered by the symbolic inversion of Frantz Fanon's seminal text *Black Skin, White Masks*, as Condé engenders a double inversion.[27] Here the black masks that the Puritans wear establish a connection with John Indian's black skin, which is accentuated by his donning a proverbial white mask. In keeping with

Fanon's theorization, John Indian, because of his characteristic inferiority complex, has lost his cultural moorings as he appropriates and imitates the cultural and religious codes of the enslavers, the Puritans. Although invoking Paul Laurence Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask" as a means to mask his resistance—he informs Tituba that his masking is strategic, for it will ultimately ensure his freedom—his verbal declaration is at great odds with his daily performances. Tituba is quick to point out that his performances are modeled on dependency, inadequacy, and minstrelsy rather than on resistance: "You're like a puppet in [the Puritans'] hands. I'll pull this string and you pull that one" (74). John Indian's "puppeteering" is rendered most effective when in a defeatist, self-pitying manner he acquiesces: "We're niggers, Tituba. The whole world's working against us" (74).

As evidenced, John Indian embodies what Fanon refers to as a "dependency complex" (83). His complete identification with the colonial patriarchal culture further magnifies his dependency and lack of autonomy, which Mama Yaya reveals as well as challenges from the onset of the novel. Unequivocally voicing her disapproval of Tituba's relationship with John Indian, she says: "He's a shallow nigger, full of hot air and bravado" (15). Hence John Indian's "unconscious desire" for "hallucinatory whitening" paradoxically results in him engaging in self-negation and self-denigration (Fanon 100). Relinquishing the pastoral for the colonial, ancestral history for colonial history, John Indian resolutely informs Tituba: "I'm not a bush nigger, a maroon! I'll never live in that rabbit hutch of yours. I belong to Susanna Endicott, but she's a good mistress" (17–18). John Indian's renouncement is illustrative of Fanon's theory that "the colonized is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle" (18). Succumbing to the myth of black inferiority, John Indian is the consummate enslaved or colonized subject "in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality" (18).

Tituba, on the other hand, resists the oppressive colonial culture in favor of her African Caribbean cultural heritage, "'figuring' Africa as the mother" (Hall 235). Immersed in local cultural practices as a way to redefine and appropriate the existing restricted definition of citizenship, Tituba becomes the living embodiment of the localized folk figures, Ti-Noel, Nanny of the Maroons, and the witch-woman, locally identified as the

ol'higue or the soucouyant.[28] Accordingly, she appropriates the methods of resistance and subversion of colonial rule and structures as espoused by these cultural icons. Moreover, Tituba's continued reliance on the Queen Mother, Nanny of the Maroons, the force and source of her resistance and resilience, corroborates Fanon's theory whereby she qualifies as the "local cultural originality." Karla Gottlieb ascertains that Nanny "developed Guerrilla warfare and the tactics she used were later studied by military strategists in the Vietnam War and others. Second, because she and her people established the first independent black polity in the New World, she led the way for freedom struggles in Haiti, Brazil, the U.S., Guadeloupe, Surinam . . . anywhere where there were enslaved Africans" (1). These diasporic moorings engender agency and autonomy or, paraphrasing Hall, give our cultural identity meaning (235). Illuminating women's involvement, Davis reinforces the invaluable contribution of women to freedom struggles:

> [W]ithout consciously rebellious black women, the theme of resistance could not have become so thoroughly intertwined in the fabric of daily existence. The status of black women within the community of slaves was definitely a barometer indicating the overall potential for resistance. (15)

Along similar lines, Judah White recounts to Tituba women's worth and value to society and their invaluable contribution to the nation-state in fulfilling their duty as good citizens: "What would the world be like without [women]. Eh? What would it be like? Men hate us and yet without us their lives would be sad and narrow. Thanks to us they can change the present and sometimes read the future. Thanks to us they can hope. Tituba, we are the salt of the earth" (52). Further showing female solidarity that is characterized by a politics of inclusion, Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan ascertain that transnational feminism has a global, impartial agenda, whereby it "compare[s] multiple, overlapping, and discrete oppressions rather than construct a theory of hegemonic oppression under a unified category of gender" (17–18).

Resisting marginalization and obfuscation, relinquishing living "behind the shadowy realm of female passivity" (Davis, "Reflections" 14), resisting restricted state-sponsored citizenship, women are choosing instead to stand on the frontline as they not only resist patriarchal invasion but also stage their own preemptive strikes. In this regard, female agency facilitates the telling of women's stories (herstories) from their perspectives

as they break the silences once deemed too horrific to tell, giving meaning to our cultural identity that was once lacking. Along these lines, Condé recuperates the rebel woman, Tituba, from obscurity, restores her dignity, and reinstates her through repatriation to her motherland, Barbados, as a desirable citizen. Consequently, the black woman is resurrected in "her true historical contours" (15). Having experienced a rite of passage, Tituba has emerged free and liberated, a citizen of the world. As "the salt of the earth," women have withstood male oppression, emerging renewed, redeemed, and recuperated.