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# FEMINISM, RACE, AND DIFFERENCE IN THE WORKS OF MAYOTTE CAPÉCIA, MICHÈLE LACROSIL, AND JACQUELINE MANICOM

*By Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert*

Frantz Fanon's now famous critique of Mayotte Capécia's works as examples of the pernicious effect of colonial racial attitudes on the colonized woman's sense of self was the first entry in what has become an intense scrutiny of racial attitudes in the works of Francophone Caribbean women writers. This scrutiny has focused primarily on the triad composed by Capécia (Martinique, 1928–1953), Michèle Lacrosil (Guadeloupe, 1915–), and Jacqueline Manicom (Guadeloupe, 1938–1976), novelists whose mulatto protagonists appear to have internalized the colonizers' myth of black racial inferiority, with its resulting self-contempt, an internalization which leads to ambivalent, at times almost hostile, relations with black men, whom they reject in favor of ill-fated liaisons with whites.

The three novelists have published seven novels between them: Mayotte Capécia's *Je suis martiniquaise*[1] and *La Négresse blanche*[2]; Lacrosil's *Sapotille et le serin d'argile*,[3] *Cajou*,[4] and *Demain Jab-Herma*[5]; Manicom's *Mon Examen de blanc*[6] and *La Graine: journal d'une sage femme.*[7]

Critical explorations of racial attitudes in these texts have ranged from Merle Hodge's assessment of Lacrosil as a "complex-ridden" novelist whose characters' basic impulse is "the rejection of (their) own being, a flight from all that (they) attach to (their) racial origin,"[8] to Clarisse Zimra's sensitive exploration of the texts as a "literature of catharsis which seeks to exorcise the colored woman's predicament of being born colored and female in a social world defined by white males and a political system based on colonial and patriarchal imperialism."[9] Excellent though most of these studies have been, the focus on race has tended to obscure those aspects of the texts which place these three novelists at the forefront of the development of feminist literature in Guadeloupe and Martinique. This study seeks to broaden the scope of analysis of these texts by looking at them as works standing on the crossroads where issues of race, gender, class, and power converge. Taking as a point of departure their depiction of the Caribbean woman's racial dilemma, it seeks to explore the link between the quests for racial identity and women's autonomy, thus placing the texts within the context of these writers' attempts to explore women's options in Caribbean societies.

At the core of the quest for identity in these texts is the mulatto woman's inability to identify with a particular group and place. Hence the preoccupation with the colored woman's place in Caribbean societies, explored particularly through the characters' perceptions of their exclusion from both black and white social groups. The disintegrating sense of self of the protagonist of Lacrosil's *Cajou*, for example, evi-

*Callaloo* 15.1 (1992) 66–74

dences the disastrous impact of the self's inability to root itself in a particular group. Living with her white mother in a neighborhood removed from the black world of her father, Cajou feels cut off from a vital part of herself,

> coupée de ceux qui me ressemblaient et auraient pu me rassurer . . . je n'ai pas connu le sentiment de securité que peut éprouver une fille . . . solidement enracinée parmi les siens. (34, 41)
>
> [cut off from those who resembled me and could have reassured me . . . I have not known the feeling of security that a girl solidly rooted amidst her own people can feel.]

Cajou voices the historical plight of the Caribbean mulatto, adrift between a sea of black peasants and the longed-for shore of acceptance into the world of whites. In Capécia's *La Négresse blanche*, Isaure articulates a similar dilemma, underscoring the very social isolation which will prompt her to leave for France at the conclusion of the novel: "Serait-elle toujours seule, ni noire ni blanche, haïe pour les uns, méprisée pour les autres?" [Would she be always alone, neither black nor white, hated by one group, despised by the other?] (86).

The particular poignancy of the mulatto woman's position as depicted in these texts, however, derives as much from the characters' internalization of feelings of racial inadequacy characteristic of colonial societies, as from their being in flux between the peasant/working-class world of their parental background and the bourgeois, *beké* (white creole) world to which they aspire to belong. Cajou, a gifted chemist, shares with Madévie, the young physician working in a Point-à-Pitre hospital in *Mon Examen de blanc*, a concern about her acceptance as a professional woman by a white, and often male-dominated establishment. Whereas Cajou insists on refusing promotion because she feels that as a "fille de couleur" her leadership position would be a mockery, Madévie is capable of savoring the irony of her ground-breaking position. Referring to the white doctor with whom she works, she says: "De temps an temps, il me gratifie de mon titre de Docteur en médecine avec ironie. Je suis une femme-médecine et donc, dans son esprit, encore un peu plus 'tordue' que la moyenne des femmes. Je me demande s'il me considère comme un confrère" [From time to time, he favors me with my title of Doctor of Medicine with irony. I am a woman-doctor and thus, in his eyes, maybe a bit more loony than the average woman. I wonder if he thinks of me as a colleague] (16).

In their quest for autonomy as women—their feminine quest—the characters in these texts must contend not only with their internalized prejudices about race—with their potential for self-contempt—but with received notions of male dominance and their own middle-class aspirations. As mulatto women, disenfranchised by gender, when not by gender *and* race, they seek a measure of the power traditionally held by men in Caribbean societies. As enterprising or professional women precariously perched between the upper class world of the rich *bekés* and the hand-to-mouth world of the peasantry, they must assert their power in a world which frowns on female assertion. As women whose bodies have been the vehicles through which miscegenation was accomplished—now eager to move from sexual objects to bourgeois re-

spectability—they must seek to distance themselves from the stereotypes of black women's sensuality and regain control of their bodies.

These texts present male objectification of the colored woman's body as one of the principal obstacles to female autonomy. Isaure identifies this objectification when she assesses her relationship with Daniel, her *béké* lover: "il ne voyait en moi que la chair" [he saw nothing in me but my flesh] (*Négresse* 140). Cajou's first sexual encounter with Germain, her white colleague and lover, reveals the extremes that male coveting of the mulatto female body can lead to in these texts. The description she offers is closer to that of a rape:

> Germain m'oblige à le caresser. Je supplie. Il exige. Il emploie le mots le plus crus. La honte me brûle les oreilles . . . Germain froisse ma jupe; ses doigts me font mal . . . j'ouvre la bouche pour respirer; une mèche de ses cheveux glisse sur ma langue; je la mords pour étouffer un cri. . . . Je ne suis plus personne. (*Cajou* 182–83)
>
> [Germain forces me to caress him. I plead. He demands. He uses the crudest words. My ears burn from shame . . . Germain crumples my skirt; his fingers hurt me . . . I open my mouth to breathe; a lock of his hair slips onto my tongue; I bite it to muffle a scream. . . . I am no longer a person.]

*Sapotille* gives further evidence of women's objectification through the protagonist's descriptions of her husband's threats of physical violence and of the actual beatings she receives at his hand. A peculiarly telling scene finds her husband calling upon misogynist African traditions—in the person of his servant Mambo—to aid him in controlling his wife: "Prends garde, je te dis. Pour Mambo, une femme ne compte pas. Si je le lui ordonnais, il t'abattrait sans hésiter" [Watch out, I'm telling you. Women are not of any consequence to Mambo. If I ordered him to, he would deal with you without hesitation] (65). Sapotille's unwillingness to submit, her inability, as she puts it, to respect Benoît's efforts to "rétablir ces valeurs sûres: le courage, le prestige du mâle" [re-establish those tried-and-true values: the courage, the prestige of the male] (49), leads to repeated beatings at whose core is her resistance to be molded into the perfect model of bourgeois domesticity: "Benoît s'archarnait en vain à me coincer dans la moule de son idéal: il voulait d'une épouse soumise, aimante et terrifié, et je n'arrivais pas à réunir les trois conditions en même temps. La pire grief de Benoît, était que je ne le craignais pas assez!" [Benoît was obsessed with forcing me into his ideal mould: he wanted a submissive, loving, and terrified wife, and I couldn't manage to fulfill all three requirements at the same time. Benoît's main source of grief was the fact that I didn't fear him enough!] (235). Sapotille's departure for France at the end of the novel—where she plans to stay "jusqu'à que je suis guérie" [until I have healed]—symbolizes a repossession of her battered body, an effort to be "for herself" for the first time. Although her departure has been interpreted by critics most frequently as an escape which fails to solve her racial dilemma and precludes, perhaps permanently, her integration into Guadeloupan society, it can be seen, from the perspective of her repossession of her body as a triumph over Benoît's frequently-

stated claim to ownership of her body. Her revolutionary behavior is acknowledged by her friend and fellow traveler's manifestation of surprise at her divorce, since, after all, "*personne* ne divorce pour quelques coups" [*no one* gets divorced over a few blows].

Madévie, like Cajou and Sapotille, must confront the objectification of the female body (whether mulatto or not) as the context in which sexuality meets male violence. Her first sexual encounter with Xavier is inscribed in the same rage and latent violence of Cajou's relationship with Germain and Sapotille's relationship with Benoît:

> Il l'embrassait rageusement, si fort qu'elle avait l'impression d'avoir les gencives qui éclataient. Impérieux, il l'avait couchée par terre, l'écrasait, la perçait pour enfin la noyer, heureuse, haletante, dans le flot de ce liquide blanc qu'il sécrétait pour ses muqueuses de prune. "Si tu t'étais refusée, je crois que je t'aurais battue, tant j'avais envie de toi," lui avouait-il plus tard." (69)
>
> [He kissed her furiously, so hard that she thought her gums were going to explode. Imperiously, he had pushed her on the floor, crushing her, piercing her so as to finally drown her, happy, panting, in the flow of that white liquid that he secreted from his plum-like mucous membranes. "If you had refused, I think I would have beaten you up, I wanted you so badly," he confessed to her later.]

Madévie's former acceptance of their relationship responded to two related issues which surface throughout the text: the internalized notion that as a mulatto woman she must endure this sort of humiliation—after all, "une mulâtresse vierge ça n'existe pas!" [a mulatto virgin, there's no such thing] (40)—and the accepted belief that her worth as a woman is linked to her virginity, and that once that virginity is gone, she is lost: "Comme je n'étais plus vierge, je me croyais perdue sans lui. Dire que c'est en Guadeloupe même que l'on m'a appris à magnifier cette fameuse 'virginité'! J'enrage!" [Since I was no longer a virgin, I felt lost without him. Just think that it was in Guadeloupe itself that they had taught me to blow that famous 'virginity' out of proportion! It makes me furious!] (108). The stifling bourgeois myth of women as virginal and pure—and of women as innately nurturing and dependent—against which these characters judge themselves and find themselves wanting derives much of its psychological power from the underlying message that women who do not conform to appropriate female behavior risk violence at the hands of men.[10] The experiences depicted in these novels bring to the fore the role of violence (and of the ever-present threat of violence) in the protagonists' perceived submission and help elucidate some of the complexities of the feminist content of these texts.

Given that the objectification of the female body—whether through sexual domination or violence—has led to the fragmentation of the sense of self, the first step towards integration of the self is to be found in the characters' assumption of a voice through their autobiographical stance. In what seems a clear effort to present these heroines as authoritative subject, five out of seven of the works published by these writers (the exceptions being Capécia's *La Négresse blanche* and Lacrosil's *Demain Jab-Herma*, the latter a novel not revolving around a female heroine) assume an autobi-

ographical style. The presentation of these texts as diaries or chronicles "represents entrance into the world of others, and by means of that a passage of rebirth: the access through writing to the status of autonomous subjectivity."[11] The act of writing itself—not only that of the author herself but that writing of which she makes the protagonist the creator—is in and of itself a declaration of identity, and the novels thus become the chronicles of the success or failure of these protagonists' confrontations with the obstacles placed by their race and gender in their path to autonomy.

The novels are thus chronicles of the growing consciousness of their heroines, accounts of the increasing realization of the false notions that had placed obstacles to their racial and feminist awareness. Limited as some of the gains are in some cases, the novels trace the characters' growth into women with a highly developed sense of their opportunities and limitations. Sapotille's departure of France in quest of healing is a case in point. Isaure, having previously given voice to openly racist feelings towards blacks, acknowledges a growing understanding of the predicament of race in her society and speaks of an incipient identification and political solidarity with the black working-class from which she comes: "Certain mots comme révolution, libération, qui la laissaient autrefois indifférente, quand elle les entendait prononcer par les noirs, éveillaient chez elle des échos et la troublaient. Elle avait aussi du sang noir. Et quand on a du sang noir on est une noire. Elle ne pouvait plus se borner à servir les békés" [Certain words like revolution, liberation, which used to leave her indifferent when she heard them uttered by the blacks, awakened echoes in her, troubling her. She also had black blood. And when one has black blood, one is black. She could no longer bear to serve the bekés] (68–69). This transformation in what had been openly racist feelings is accompanied by an open assessment of her precarious situation in Martinican society, where too many factors conspire against her dream of bourgeois respectability. As she explains to her previously hostile but now penitent mother-in-law shortly before she leaves for France: "Une négresse blanche, si vous voulez, une négresse quand même. . . . Mes ancêtres étaient des esclaves. Et maintenant nous sommes des lépreux . . . Et puis j'ai tenu un bar, j'ai eu des amants, j'ai eu un enfant qui n'est pas de Pascal . . ." [A white negress, if you prefer, but a negress nonetheless. . . . My ancestors were slaves. And now we are like lepers . . . and besides, I have run a bar, I've had lovers, I've had a child who is not Pascal's] (185).

Likewise, in *Je suis martiniquaise,* Mayotte must confront the consequences of her choices after her lover leaves her with a child, sending a check as his farewell, ironically accompanied by a request that she speak to her son about him having been "une homme supérieur" [a superior man]. The check, which she rightly sees as a measure of his disdain, shatters the false dream of placid domesticity that she had accepted as the height of happiness and for which she had given up a life of work which she must now resume. The lover's departure, however, signals an openness to a reconciliation with her father, a reintegration into a life she left behind to pursue the elusive dream of a white man's love and bourgeois respectability. Her return to her village is presented as a period of penance or her "betrayal of her race" in having had a white man's child and allows Capécia to explore the changing attitudes towards race in Martinique after the war, attitudes characterized by a more militant celebration of blackness and a growing repudiation of all liaisons with whites, both of which deepen Mayotte's

alienation. Ultimately, the character's own development is limited, however, and she continues to state her desire to marry a white as she prepares to leave for France; but, in her distress and her penance, she has salvaged important aspects of her dignity and has achieved a reconciliation with her dead whom, in a glimpse of hope in the text, she carries within her as she sails away.

Madévie's exorcism of the ghosts of Xavier and her unborn child through political commitment to the people of Guadeloupe is the most unambiguous example of a transcendence of the traps of *lactification* to be found in these texts. Her growing understanding of the Guadeloupan people—of whom she had known precious little before her affair with the politically-committed and martyred Gilbert—parallels her awakening to a realization of the gender and race issues that had loomed so large in her relationship with Xavier. Madévie's ability to see her present self in opposition to her "double," the Madévie of Paris and Xavier, allows for an ironic presentation of her process of awakening to new realities and of her hard-won ability to stand on her own. Gilbert's death in many ways reinforces these new realities, removing him from the scene as a male "crutch" in her political and personal development.

It is in the context of a woman's quest for autonomy that economic independence becomes a predominant goal for the women in these texts. Despite the limitations of her racial awareness, Mayotte, the owner of a successful laundering business, articulates a desire for economic and personal independence which characterizes the protagonists of these works: "Moi, dont les ancêtres avaient été des esclaves, j'avais décidé d'être indépendante; et aujourd'hui encore, bien que je n'aie pas toujours pu en jouir comme j'aurais voulu, je pense qu'il n'y a rien de mieux au monde que l'indépendence" [I, whose ancestors were slaves, had determined to be independent; so that even now, although I have not been able to enjoy it as I would have wished, I still think that there's nothing better in this world than independence] (9).

Similarly, Cajou, a gifted chemist working in a laboratory in Paris, sees in her ability to pay her way the embodiment of her freedom. Offended by Germain's insistence on not allowing her to pay for her coffee on their first meeting—an insistence that goes as far as his putting her money back into her purse, a "violation" which prefigures his near rape of her later—she explains to a friend: "Il ne s'agissait pas d'un café: il s'agissait d'un principe. . . . Je n'entend pas me faire entretenir par ce Viking!" [It was not a matter of a cup of coffee: it was the principle. . . . I have no intentions of letting this Viking support me!] (130).

The issue of economic independence surfaces most clearly when seen as the means to these women's transition from the peasant world of their parents to the *beké* world of their aspirations. Thus Isaure, an illegitimate child and now herself the mother of an illegitimate child, had seen her economic success as a bar owner as the path to social mobility for herself and her son: "Autrefois elle se disait: je vais gagner beaucoup d'argent pour lui et, quand il sera homme, il sera consideré comme béké goyave, il habitera une belle maison sur le plateau Didier" [Early on she had told herself: I am going to earn a lot of money for him and, when he grows to be a man, he will be considered a well-off *beké*, and he will live in a beautiful house on the Didier plateau] (68). Her rejection of black men, albeit a consequence of her internalization of feelings of self-contempt, is also bound with her middle-class aspirations. She can only en-

vision sympathy for black men, for example, as part of a political awakening, since marriage to a black man will not result in an improvement in her class status.

Crucial aspects of the attempts by the characters in these texts to gain autonomy and control surface as a rejection of motherhood through abortion, miscarriage, and, in one case, suicide. These women's ambivalent positions towards motherhood are depicted in these texts as an important aspect of their struggle to regain control over their bodies. In their "refusal" to give birth to children conceived in what are depicted as oppressive circumstances, these characters reject the ideology of bourgeois motherhood described by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese: "The ideology of motherhood that would rapidly develop into a full blown ideology of bourgeois domesticity . . . subsumed all other female roles and attitudes, emerging as the telos of women's 'natural' and social destiny . . . Motherhood endowed female sexuality with a purpose that minimized, when it did not entirely obscure, the potential force of women's own sexual desires. In this respect, motherhood became the reigning sign of the submission of the female self to the male individual" (125).

Cajou's suicide can be interpreted as her means of denying Germain the child he so longs for but which can be perceived as having been forced upon her. Faced with her disinclination to marry him because of what she claims is her racial inferiority, he has opted to force her into marriage through pregnancy—"Pour mettre toutes les chances de mon côté"—he tells her—"je t'ai fait un enfant" [So as not to take any chances, I've made you pregnant] (*Cajou* 221). This subterfuge is on a par with what he sees as the best possible cure for the internalization of the myth of black inferiority which has resulted in her inability to value herself as her talents and beauty warrant: "La securité du mariage et les joies de la maternité te guériront" [The security of marriage and the joys of motherhood will heal you] (*Cajou* 217). A feminist reading of Germain—a character who has been praised by most critics for his enlightened views on race and his unqualified support of Cajou's career—reveals a false hero who offers Cajou submission to bourgeois/patriarchal notions of gender relations characterized by male dominance over the female body (witness the violence of his initial "taking" of Cajou) as an alternative to the trappings of colonial race relations. Cajou's only options as presented by Germain lay in the choice of which authority to submit to: either that of colonially-imposed racial identity or that of male-defined bourgeois motherhood. Seen from this perspective, Cajou's final question before plunging into the river and her death—and the last sentence of the book—reverts not to the issue of race but to her ambivalence towards an outwardly imposed motherhood: "Je voudrais briser le miroir, lancer mon corps comme un boulet et détruire . . . Qui? L'enfant de Germain?" [I would like to shatter the glass, throw my body like a cannonball, and destroy . . . Whom? Germain's child?] (*Cajou* 232).

Sapotille's reaction to her miscarriage—the result of a beating from her husband provoked by his sexual jealousy—links Benoît's violence against women to the oppression of black males, underscoring the connections between her society's inability to promote racial equality and the resulting problems in gender relationships. Barely able to contain her joy at the loss of the child, she explains: "Comment leur faire approuver ma joie? . . . Non, je ne voulais pas de petite fille qui lirait dans son livre d'histoire: 'Nos aïeux, les Gaulois portaient la braie et la saie,' et qui ouvrirait ensuite

les yeux sur un monde partagé, races, castes ennemies! . . . Je ne voulais pas non plus d'un petit garçon d'abord tendre, ensuite faraud, puis amer, et qui deviendrait un homme hargneux parce que chaque brimade lui aurait laissé ce besoin de tourmenter qui avait marqué Benoît. . . . L'enfant m'aurait attachée à Benoît et au pays; je désirais les quitter" [How could I make them share my joy. . . . No, I didn't want a little girl who would read in her history book: 'Our ancestors, the Gauls, wore breeches and sabers,' only to turn her eyes from the book to a divided world of racial enmities and feuding castes. . . . Neither did I want a little boy, tender at first, and then boastful, bitter, who would grow into a resentful man because each instance of harassment would leave in him that need to torment others which had left its imprint on Benoît. . . . The child would have attached me to Benoît and to the country; I wanted to leave them behind] (*Sapotille* 236–37). Sapotille's "rejection" of motherhood is ultimately a function of her desire for autonomy from the double constraints of race and gender. The loss of her child thus signals her freedom, to the degree that a successful pregnancy would have bound her to Martinique and Benoît.

Madévie, in *Mon Examen de blanc,* finds herself in a similar struggle between patriarchal/bourgeois expectations and potential motherhood. Her affair with Xavier, a white Parisian bourgeois, has led to a pregnancy which he insists must result in marriage to satisfy his Catholic dread of abortion and his patriarchal feelings of responsibility for the child's welfare. But the marriage he proposes (to be entered upon after having her sign post-dated divorce papers) constitutes both a racial humiliation and a patriarchal trap which Madévie escapes through a self-induced abortion. The terms in which the marriage is proposed show the inescapable connection between racist and sexist attitudes, both of which Madévie flees: " 'Accepteras-tu que ma mère te méprise? Te traite de singe évolué? Accepteras-tu que je te batte? Que je te trompe?' Je ne sais plus pourtant après laquelle de ces questions de maître à esclave, je me suis enfuie, je me suis échappée de sa chambre et je me suis précipitée, tremblante et humiliée, dans le couloir pour fouir la vision concentrationnaire qu'il m'offrait" ["Would you allow my mother to despise you? Would you allow her to treat you like an evolved monkey? Would you allow me to beat you? To cheat on you?" I don't know after which of these master-to-slave questions I fled, I escaped from his room and plunged, trembling and humiliated, into the hallway, fleeing the prison-like vision he offered me] (*Examen* 106–7).

Even those characters who embrace motherhood—Isaure in *La Négresse blanche* and Mayotte in *Je suis martiniquaise*—must confront motherhood within the constraints of racial and patriarchal societal notions. The mulatto mothers of out-of-wedlock children from white men, they both must face the humiliation of being spurned by their former lovers because of their race: Mayotte receives a check as farewell from the child's father, which in a gesture of affirmation of her dignity she refuses to cash; Isaure counts amongst the reasons for leaving Martinique her dread at having to live near her former lover now that he has returned to the island. Isaure, in turn, will use a non-existent pregnancy as her weapon to avenge herself on the *beké* mother and sister of her slain husband Pascal. Wounded by their rejection of her as a black, sexually experienced bar owner, and thus unworthy of their son and brother by race, class, and behavior, Isaure chooses what in the context of her society is the best possible revenge—the

announcement that there will be a future legitimate mulatto offspring to take its place in the midst of a *béké* family.[12]

In Caribbean societies, colonial, patriarchal, and class interest have conspired to keep colored women doubly confined by their gender and their race. As we read the chronicles of the heroines of these tales, voicing their own authority within these constraints, we begin to see the substance of their quest, not as simply that of women seeking identities, but as women attempting to strike a careful balance between autonomy and acceptance within their communities. The endings of these novels leave most of them—Madévie being the sole exception—poised on the brink of departure or suicide. But our interpretations of these departures—whether by boat or death—must be re-examined in the light of their gender predicament, adding this perception to our knowledge of their racial dilemma. In this way, we reach a fuller understanding of the nature of their quest.

**Notes**

1. Mayotte Capécia, *Je suis martiniquaise* (Paris: Corrêa, 1948). All page references to this and subsequent works will be to the editions credited in the notes and will appear in parentheses in the text.
2. Mayotte Capécia, *La Nègresse blanche* (Paris: Editions Corrêa, 1950).
3. Michèle Lacrosil, *Sapotille et le serin d'argile* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960).
4. Michèle Lacrosil, *Cajou* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961).
5. Michèle Lacrosil, *Demain Jab-Herma* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967).
6. Jacqueline Manicom, *Mon Examen de blanc* (Paris: Editions Sarrazin, 1972).
7. Jacqueline Manicom, *La Graine: journal d'une sage femme* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1974).
8. Merle Hodge, "Social Conscience or Exoticism? Two Novels from Guadeloupe," *Review/Revista Interamericana* 4 (1974): 400.
9. Clarisse Zimra, "Patterns of Liberation in Contemporary Women Writers," *L'Esprit Créateur* 17.2 (1977): 107. Zimra develops her analysis in three additional articles: "Mirror: A Sociological Study of Guadeloupe's Jacqueline Manicom," *Présence Francophone* No. 19 (1979): 143–56; "Negritude in the Feminine Mode: The Case of Martinique and Guadeloupe," *The Journal of Ethnic Studies* 12.1 (1984): 53–78; and "A Woman's Place: Cross Sexual Perceptions in Race Relations," *Folio* 11 (1978): 174–92. See also Betty Wilson's "Sexual, Racial, and National Politics: Jacqueline Manicom's *Mon examen de blanc*," *Journal of West Indian Literature* 1.2 (1987): 50–57; Maryse Condé's "La Littérature féminine de la Guadeloupe: recherche d'identité," *Présence Africaine* Nos. 99/100 (1976): 155–66; Robert P. Smith's "Michèle Lacrosil: Novelist with a Color Complex," *French Review* 47.14 (1974): 783–90; Jack Corzani's "L'Illustration des complexes raciaux: Mayotta Capécia," *La Litterature des Antilles et Guyane Francaise*, vol. 4 (Fort-de-France: Désormeaux, 1978), 199–210; and Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove P, 1967), 42–54.
10. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Feminism Without Illusions: A Critique of Individualism* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1991), 21.
11. Nancy Miller, *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988), 55.
12. The relationships of the protagonists of these texts with other women often unveil the false core of the myth of sisterhood. The feminist concept of sisterhood rests on the affirmation of the solidarity of all women. The depiction of relationships between women in these texts reinforces differences across class and race, the conflict between Isaure and her mother- and sister-in-law being perhaps the most unambiguous of the many examples offered in these texts.