

Not so much absence, not so much contract: women, men, and the production of familiarity in Jacmel, Haiti

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*This research is the result of extensive ethnographic research in the commune of Jacmel, in Haiti's Southeast Department. It seeks to understand how love relationships are constructed and experienced by women in their daily lives. Based on a dialog with the literature on the cultural specificities of Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean families, I observe that gender relations are ambivalent, crossed by moral expectations, frustrations and conflicts, but also marked by interdependence and solidarity. Throughout the text, I argue that women, as the main people responsible for preparing and distributing home-cooked meals, end up being central agents in the creation, maintenance and expansion of the processes of relationality between people. At the same time, I return to the popular idea that associates Haitian women with the figure of the *poto mitan*—a pillar that in Vodou temples represents the connection between heaven and earth—to construct a native theory of *matrifocality* according to which the prominence of these women is linked to the conception that they are the maintainers of life in its fullest sense.*

Keywords: familiarity, ethnography, commune of Jacmel

Introduction

Since 2008, when I started researching Haiti, I have been interested in addressing the dynamics involved in the process of producing familiarity among relatives, neighbors, and friends in the nation. Understanding that we are facing a continuous and variable process, my interests have been focused on understanding how bonds between those recognized as family members are undone and transformed over time (Dalmaso, 2019). The “Caribbean family” became the subject of several studies in the 1950s-60s, when research began focusing more on the issue of relations between genders. As noted by Richard Price (1971, p. 24), discussions about the existence of different marital arrangements, as well as the apparent “anomaly in domestic organization” filled the agenda of scientists who sought to understand the family organization of the Caribbean region. The anomie theory, often used in relation to Afro-Caribbean or popular classes in Brazil (Marcelin, 1996), perpetuates the idea of family in its nuclear form as sustained by a legal, monogamous marriage, and under the leadership of husbands. Additionally, this theory rejects all other familiar formats as illegitimate, disorganized, and unstable.

Many studies employ anomie theory in order to create typologies or models that describe different types of love partnerships and residency patterns. With regard to Haiti, the example of Simpson (1942), is the most paradigmatic after highlighting the existence of two great alternatives for amorous unions in Haiti, *mariaj* (marriage) and *plasaj* (consensual union), the author loses himself in an inventory of terminologies used to define women who are under the label of *plasaj*. Although he does not directly mention Simpson's work, Lowenthal (1987, p.8) draws attention to the excess of formalism that surrounded studies carried out in the Caribbean. These studies are characterized by “a proliferation of typologies and terminologies” that sought to account for loving partnerships, patterns residence, and empty “family systems” of substance.

On the other hand, at least two important ethnographic works written in the first half of the twentieth century – one by Melville Herskovits (1937), and the other by Remy Bastien (1985), were concerned with understanding the particularities of “black families” and pointed out the impossibility of taking as a normative standard the idea of the western nuclear family, composed of a couple and their children living in the same house. Organized around the principles of blood and affinity, the “Haitian family” has a wide range of relatives, its immediate nucleus being only part of a much larger group. Before being anomic, it had to be understood in its own terms, which meant taking into account the influence, or rather, the “survival” of African traits in its composition (Herskovits, 1971; 1937).

As Marcelin (2012, p. 257) points out, despite significant variations between urban and rural contexts, Haitians formulate the *fanmi* concept through the language of blood. Moreover, “the word [*fanmi*] in Haitian Creole ... designates both the analytical concepts kinship and family.” In the same way, among my interlocutor’s kinship by consanguinity is constructed as a biological fact and natural fact. In the native conception, all people are born related to a network they call family, and blood is seen as the central substance. Blood has an ability to act as a trigger, initiating relationships in an involuntary and automatic way. Simultaneously, there is a possibility that bonds based on blood remain only as a potential because they are not always cultivated in daily practice - it is necessary that relatives be formally recognized (Dalmaso 2019, p. 67). This substance “confers the relationships density [...] and it remains very important, especially in what it is capable of transmitting,” such as physical and moral similarities between people, lands, spiritual entities, and family histories.

However, as Marcelin (2012) draws attention to, it would be a great simplification of an extremely complex reality to assume that *fanmi* has the same meanings in all Haitian society. In this direction, even with all the centrality of blood, it is common for the word *fanmi* to be extended to account for relationships formed on other foundations. In the words of Marcelin (idem, p. 257):

With variations from rural to urban, between classes and between Haiti and the diaspora, *fanmi* is the primary reference that defines the person’s universe and identity. By extension, it also refers to various degrees of proximity and familiarity - in practice empowered to encompass particular forms of social relatedness, such as neighbor, acquaintance, friend, community, or even common humanity.

As I pointed out elsewhere (Dalmaso, 2019), in practice, the concept of *fanmi* is characterized by an open and flexible nature, making it possible to create relatedness (Carsten, 1997), based on other aspects that may go beyond blood. In my field of Social Anthropology, this is particularly evident from the daily use of the expression *moun mwen* (my people) and its variations (*moun pam*, *moun yo*, *moun nou*) in reference to those who can be trusted and counted on in the face of adversity. People who are familiar because they “lead a common life,” share experiences, suffering, and joy, insofar as individuals “live each other’s lives and who die each other’s deaths” (Sahlins, 2013, p. 489).

In Jacmel, capital of the Southeast Haitian Department and where the ethnographic material for this research was collected, food plays a central role in the creation and maintenance of relatedness between people who live in the same house. Likewise, food maintains sponsorship, friendship, and relationships of those that are part of the same neighborhood. As Carsten (1997, p.127) observes, “food becomes blood” causing those who live together to have “a substance in common.” Since women are the main ones in charge of preparing meals inside the homes, they prove to be fundamental agents in the production of familiarity among people (Dalmaso, 2014;

2019). A return to these questions frames the discussions that will be the subject of this article. As previously noted, literature on the forms and specificities of Afro-Caribbean or Afro-American families gave way to the so-called “gender studies” which in some cases means circumscribed research into the lives of women. As described in Braum, Dalmaso & Neiburg in Haiti:

The term gender evokes questions relating to violence and extreme poverty, exacerbated by natural catastrophes and by a supposed cultural acceptance of women’s inferiority to men, expressed in the large numbers of single mothers bringing up children and caring for the home alone. Female single parenting and matrifocality are identified as marked characteristics of Haitian families, especially in low-income urban environments (2014, p. 3).

Also according to the authors (2014, p. 5), Haitian women “take an active part in associations for various purposes alongside men, as well as setting up and promoting women-specific associations,” and “the pursuit of gender equality has been a longstanding aim of Haitian women’s movements.” The relations between genders are ambivalent, articulated not only from conflicts and inequalities, but also from interdependencies and solidarities (2014, p.13). I seek here to understand how conjugal and loving relationships are built and experienced in daily life according to the values, expectations and points of view of men and women with whom I lived closely during the periods of field research in Jacmel. Inversely, the speeches of Lowenthal (1987) and Schwartz (2008) use the notion of contract to describe these relations in Haiti, and Momsen (1993) supports the idea that in the Caribbean relationships between men and women are structured on the basis of “patriarchalism in absence.” Understandingly, my goal is to show a reality modulated by gradations that can either approach or depart from these formulations.

Finally, I seek to explore the associations made by my interlocutors between the images of the feminine and the figure of the *poto mitan*, a pillar that gives name to any central beam that supports a construction. Ironically, *poto mitan* happens to be the name of the pillar located right in the middle of the *vodu* temples and symbolizes the connection of heaven with earth. As explained previously, women are fundamental agents in the process of creating relatedness among people due to their position as the ones who prepare meals at home. Additionally, the female body itself is used as an allegory for the home and for food since they are responsible for the first food we receive - the blood that nourishes the baby through the umbilical cord - just like their belly is the first shelter of all human beings.

Absence

We were at her house, located on the outskirts of the city, when Louise, a young acquaintance told me that she lived with her father, mother, and brothers. A few minutes later, observing a small area of gardens in his backyard, I asked if it was her father who took care of the plantation. Laughing, Louise replied negatively: My father has lived in São Domingo since I was a baby (Dalmaso, fieldwork notes - March 2011).

Situations like the one highlighted above, in which people who are physically absent from their homes, are common in Jacmel and have accompanied me throughout all the field periods. Moreover, one of my very close neighbors claimed that her husband lived with her even though since their marriage they had never lived under one roof. This aspect is so evident that my interlocutors make jokes in which they question the fidelity of any information regarding people’s places of residence. It is a fleeting universe often rebellious to the crystallizations desired by demographic experts.

When discussing the relations between men and women in the Caribbean, Momsen (1993) identifies the coexistence of two paradoxical principles: on the one hand, patriarchal ideology and logic; on the other, a profound economic independence of women. Despite being patriarchal, the conjuncture of Caribbean societies in which we find a high rate of domestic groups headed by women, led the author to call the patriarchy found in the Caribbean “patriarchalism in absentia.” Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Bell, M’Zengou-Tayo, and Neptune-Anglade sought to address the absence of husbands or, on the contrary, their simultaneous engagement with various households and families, as well as the various forms of female resistance to these and other difficulties to which women are subjected (2001; 1998; 1986). Such studies yearned to highlight the different forms of exploitation that affect Haitian women who are responsible for the family, the home economy, the local economy, and culture, which are “the most defavorize, marginalized, within the klas defavorize, marginalized class” (Bell 2001, p. 18). The bibliographic production inserted in this context brings data that show the high levels of physical and sexual violence, the large number of single mothers, the lack of prenatal care, and the high rates of postpartum and child mortality among other problems that affect particularly the female population in Haiti:

“In addition to this discourse of violence and oppression, there are others who explore more closely the idea of matrifocality and the strength of the bonds between mothers and daughters in Haiti created by the network of matrilineal relatives (Brown, 1991; Kerns, 1997) is critical of the idea formulated since the beginning of anthropology (Kuper, 1988) and perpetuated by structural-functionalist theories that the nuclear family, composed of father, mother, and children, is universal and necessary to all human societies.”

Smith (1996) argues that Caribbean families should be thought of through the context of matrifocality. In matrifocal families, women in their roles as mothers would assume prominence in the domestic universe at the expense of the weak presence of men as fathers in the homes. Thus, according to Smith (1996, p. 6), Caribbean families are not “distorted forms of a basic nuclear family system, but a rich and viable system in its own terms.”

Narratives regarding survival, oppression, and violence mirror the voices of my interlocutors who on a daily basis experience everything that the above-mentioned feminist literature denounces. The lyrics of several songs composed by the women's associations that I met in Lepwa, a rural village located on the outskirts of the city of Jacmel, illustrate the struggle, injustice, and harsh conditions to which women are subjected to on a daily basis. The excerpt transcribed below reproduces one of those letters:

Men say they work harder than women / But they never say they are the source of life / Women are not a rag you wear to stay at home / Women are not a curtain that you wrap yourself around where passes / Women are not a broom that are supported in a corner / Women are the pillar of life.

During the various periods spent in the field I lived in two different houses. The first experience was a perfect example of what is typically portrayed by the literature cited above. My hostess' husband had many mistresses and spent many days without showing up which caused her enormous suffering. Every day she went to sleep without even knowing if he would be back that night or not. Yet the house was taken over by his presence, wedding pictures hung on the walls, his clothes strewn around the rooms, and his plate of food on the table. In the second house, Mesyè and madam Lundi lived in harmony with each other stating in words that they never had problems with each other and all-important family decisions were discussed together and with mutual respect. For several years, prior to the time we met, Lundi experienced times of physical

distance. Lundi spent many years as a merchant buying plastic bags in Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, and reselling them in street markets in Port-au-Prince. Meanwhile, Mesyè occupied a space in Belè, like the Jacmel market, where she sold jewelry, women's and men's underwear, and other accessories. This period is remembered by both as a time of longing, but also cooperation, understanding, and solidarity. When he returned to Jacmel, Lionel brought many things for Mesyè to sell as well as many gifts for her and her children: sandals, panties, and other items.

In this sense, ethnography revealed that the absence and presence of husbands/fathers are not completely separate dimensions in everyday life; nor are they characterized by a continuity. In other words, a present husband is not necessarily a physical presence or vice versa. Most importantly, what is seen as absence or presence ends up depending on subjectivity, a factor that is not always included in the analysis of the Haitian women's plight. Due to this reason, it is possible that men like Louise's father or Ivoise's husband in the above-mentioned examples (among many others that I could witness in the field), are considered to be residents of their homes in Haiti even though they live most of their lives elsewhere.

Contract

It was late afternoon when Gerard, one of my neighbors, told me about the countless possibilities he had of leaving Haiti and living in the USA. In fact, he is a man of many resources, both financial and cultural; he works as an agronomist holding an important position in the government of the Southeast Department. I asked: why didn't you go? Gerard explained to me that it could be very complicated to take his wife. Accustomed to the countryside and the plantation they cultivated; she had no desire to leave Haiti. After all, even if she was willing to leave, it could take a few years, complicating the dynamics of the couple's relationship. His main dilemma involved the difficulties of keeping the promises made in the marriage: would it be possible for both of them to remain faithful? Even if he sent money, giving material proof that he was not going to abandon him or his children, even considering that both he and she were people of the church, it would still be a great sacrifice for both of them, because the bodies need pleasure (Dalmaso, fieldwork notes - March 2011).

In contrast to the academic literature on women who denounce female conditions in the Caribbean and Haiti, some male researchers sought to portray more closely marital relationships in rural Haitian areas (Lowenthal, 1987; Schwartz, 2008). Although with different emphases, these two authors bring the idea that conjugal unions in Haiti would be permeated by the notion of “contract” through which men would exchange material resources (housing, agricultural production, and money) for sex and services – household tasks performed by women. They note that female sexuality is seen by both men and women as a capital that women exchange directly and explicitly for items that men can provide. Lowenthal, is keen to note that this idea is based:

“on a false image publicly held by people of both sexes that women do not want sex and that it is more a job than a pleasure. Due to this false image, the author maintains that sexual gratification is never considered a reward for women, and there must always be some related material benefit” (1987, pp. 74 and 75).

As noted by Richman (2003, p. 128), when analyzing a case of marital infidelity on the part of a wife whose husband had migrated to the USA, “all sexual exchanges between men and women, whether between friends or spouses, implies an exchange of goods.” Richman analyzes the difficult situation from the perspective of women whose husbands do not send enough money to support their children and demand “respect” – sexual fidelity on the wives' part. It is in this

context that female sexuality is considered by both men and women as a capital, "a resource that can be put to work to produce wealth" (2003, p.128).

Another fundamental trait, pointed out by both Lowenthal (1987) and Schwartz (2008), is the difference between men and women regarding their loyalty. Men, including married ones, are free to maintain more than one relationship; however, women must remain faithful. This logic, which guides the actions of my interlocutors (men), is supported by a very widespread idea that men need sex more than women. Many of my interlocutors find this point of view disagreeable even if they assume that men "because of their masculine nature" are more likely to be unfaithful. As pointed out by both Lowenthal and Schwartz, one of the criticisms of these interpretations involves the idea that conjugal unions lie on an ideal plane. This belief affirms that in everyday life cooperation between spouses does not work mainly because men and women disappoint one another's expectations. Often women are not as faithful as they are expected to be. Men that leave their families and may support them financially, but it can still leave their wives deeply hurt and disappointed. However, the contractual bias of conjugal unions is another issue that needs to be addressed. Such agreements make it appear that if the two involved parties are fulfilling their respective duties, there are no major problems. For example, such a belief endorses the sentiment that women's expectations of men correspond only to the material plane and not to the emotional plane. As if all the frustrations, fights, and disappointments of women were linked to a failure by men to offer support and resources. According to Schwartz, women do not have many options in the face of a husband who seeks to start a new romantic relationship but remain a provider, because if women decide to separate, they must return to their parents' home and thus, lose control over their own home.

Although assumed as a natural behavior of men, husbands' marital infidelities are a delicate subject in Jacmel. Many women feel frustrated by a breach of expectations regarding their partner's behavior. If these partners continue to provide for the home, especially if they continue to support their children, the end of the relationship does not make much sense. At the same time, this logic goes beyond the language of material resources. The idea that children can grow up with psychological problems because they have separated parents or that, following a certain Christian foundation, a couple must love one another till death do them part overcoming all possible problems are common convictions that guide daily actions. Close and prolonged interaction with my interlocutors in Jacmel ended up revealing the fragility of the contract theory. The authors themselves acknowledged the difficulties of sustaining daily routines due to the lack of cooperation between couples and continuous frustrations of expectations on both sides. In this sense, the interest in maintaining control of male resources is not the only concern of women who accept that their husbands are seeing other people. In addition to all the conformation translated into any contractual language, there are passions, complaints, sadness, hurt, and jealousy on both sides. After all, as Gerard taught me that afternoon on the balcony of my hosts' house, even though everything is going well and both parties are fulfilling the agreement, "our bodies need pleasure" (*kò nou beswen plezi*); in other words, the flesh is weak. However, to disagree with this contractual bias does not mean to affirm that such a dimension does not exist, or that male financial resources have little importance in romantic interactions.

On the contrary, money is a central element especially among the young and single population. As a friend once said to me, "in Haiti, men need to have money if they want to date" (*an Ayiti gason yo bezwen monè si yo vle renmen*). According to him, it doesn't have to be much, just a "little money" (*ti kòb*) to spend on things understood to be characteristic of the female universe: hair extensions, lip gloss, or body moisturizers. Still, in practice there are no clearly

defined limits on what or how much you can, or should, spend on a girlfriend. In some cases, buying medicine for one may be overkill, while in others, paying rent for a house is not seen as exorbitant. In any case, some of my interlocutors feel exploited and extorted by women who, in turn, tend to develop real expertise on how to negotiate and manage their relationships with men. In any case, money has been part of love relationships since its inception, and this is usually not seen as a problem. It is common to find young people who are financed by several boyfriends (*ti menaj*), with whom they have relationships that do not involve sex in the present but operate with the possibility that it will happen in the future. "Having many boyfriends" is an expression often used by young people in reference to themselves and manifests uncompromising relationships, experiences that may or may not result in more serious dating, almost always translated by the term *menaj* (boyfriend or girlfriend). When referring to women, it can indicate a non-affectionate relationship of extortion, in which the man is treated as a client (*klyan*). Understandingly, there are semantical differences regarding prostitution, with subjectivity playing a role in what an individual classifies as such. Especially from the perspective of the women with whom I lived, desire and love is just as important as financial stability, because without these ingredients one runs the risk of being seen as a prostitute.

Conclusion: The Native Theory of Matrilocality

In Haiti it is common to hear that women are the "pillar" (*poto mitan*) of the family and of life. "It is the woman who holds the house" explained to me by the people with whom I lived. The expression "women are the pillar" (*fanm se pote mitan*) has been repeatedly explored both nationally and internationally in campaigns that denounce the difficult living conditions of the female population in the country. These proposals seek to highlight society's lack of recognition of the efforts made by Haitians, whether in the field of economics, politics, or even literature.

Despite this idea echoing the voices of my interlocutors, as I have been suggesting and as was made clear in the excerpt of one of the so-called *mizik fanm* (women's songs) sung in Lepwa transcribed in the first topic of this text, it does not exhaust other possible associations elaborated at all times around the expression. For example, one of these concerns, is the connection between the image of women as *poto mitan* and the fact that all human beings are pregnant and are born from a female womb. More than being a kind of first home, women's bodies serve as a means by which everyone receives food – the first food of life, as already highlighted in the introduction. Following the native conception, the body of the woman, like the *poto mitan*, promotes, supports, and makes existence a viable and concrete possibility. The first time I heard these ideas being formulated was at a meeting of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Foundation, a civil organization better known as the "Lepwa women's group." At that time, the vice-president/spiritual counselor, made a brief speech regarding the fact that women are more than the just the pillar of the family, but that they are also the pillar and source of life. The spiritual advisor, who was also a midwife, explained that without women/mothers, no one would exist in the world. All inhabited a womb as their first homes, and all received their first source of nutrition from a woman's body. This entire process does not end when people are born; women are still responsible for preparing the meals consumed inside the physical home.

It is in this way that *poto mitan* is linked to the very ability to generate people and to provided continued nutrition through the food made by women/mothers which is consumed daily by individuals after their birth. From the perspective of the houses (Dalmaso, 2014), preparing meals for family members, especially for husbands and children, is a function that many women see as a pleasure and an obligation. In this sense, more than a simple domestic task, cooking is part of

the language of affection and sharing the food is part of building kinship between those who are living together.

Additionally, there exists a strong relationship between women and the practice of commercial activities in Haiti, whether in their own homes or in the “marketplaces” (Mintz, 1961, 1964; 1967; 1971). This strong involvement with commerce is widely portrayed Haitian naïve art and can be seen in sculptures made of wood, soapstone, or iron. In addition, he appears in several Lepwa *mizik fanm* such as in one of Fanm Malere's stanzas; “we are small businesses (*ti komès se nou mem*).” When examining the role of personal relationships and loyalty in Haitian economic exchanges (*pratik*), Mintz (1967 ; 1964), draws attention to the place occupied by women not only as buyers and/or sellers, but also as intermediaries in commercial practices that interconnect the various markets across the country. Also, according to Mintz, the bonds established through these relationships produce “networks of economic association” that “ensure and solidify the channels of trade” (1967, p.102). This aspect is notable in Jacmel. Most of my interlocutors are or have been at some point in their lives involved in the trade of some product. Some moved between different markets, doing what they called sara. Others, like one of my hostesses and their daughters, had a fixed place at the Jacmel or Lepwa market. Still, others remained in their homes where they sold bread, cookies, matches, clothes, or credits for cell phones; helping to compose the infinite list of what is marketed by them daily. However, none of these positions are fixed or exclusive; selling in some market does not mean that you cannot sell at home, or that these tasks remain unchanged over time.

The engagement in commercial activities and the construction of *pratik* relations require a great deal of communication skills, characteristics that are immediately associated with women who “really know” how to “do business” much better than anyone else in Haiti. In this sense, it is essential that they know how to negotiate the amount charged while also dealing with the demands of buyers, most of whom are other women. Moreover, they also must know how to “make the price” (*fè pri*), an expression widely used in reference to those who did not know how to bargain (such as foreigners). Considering these points regarding commerce, it is clear that women are endowed with an enormous expansive capacity; living up to their description as the *potan mitan* of life and family - the channel that establishes communication between heaven and earth. Thus, one of my main interlocutors from Lepwa affirmed that the woman is the family and house's *poto mitan* of life because without her presence this house cannot be sustained. In addition, she is pointing to a predisposition - associated with the female nature in Haiti - to create, maintain, and expand relationships, whether through the preparation of food, or in the production and maintenance of personal networks in stores. Due to this expansive nature attributed to women, as the main provider of substance in all human beings, they are, from the native point of view, the fundamental agents in the production of familiarity between people.

Finally, it should be noted that in the day-to-day life experienced in Jacmel, the centrality of women is mobilized through the figure of the *potan mitan* and not so much from the supposed absence of their husbands or their marginal role as parents within the houses. As I drew attention elsewhere (Dalmaso, 2019 p.77), although any supporting beam may be called *poto mitan*, the image, which explicitly occupies a central position in the vodu temples, represents the connection of heaven with the land, and around the *lwa* (spirits) dance, which provides the closest idea of the analogy with the feminine nature, made by my interlocutors. Lastly, it is this centrality, which affirms women's role as life maintainers in its fullest sense, and what Haitians refer to as the *poto mitan* in their daily interactions.

ENDNOTES

1. Master and PhD in Social Anthropology at the Museu Nacional / UFRJ. Member of NuCEC (Center for Research in Culture and Economics) <http://www.nucec.net/> based at UFRJ and collaborating professor in the Graduate Program in Social Anthropology at the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul.
2. As pointed out by Marcelin (1999, p. 45) for the Recôncavo Baiano region, in Brazil, “if blood is the necessary condition to identify those who are relatives (blood relatives), it is not, however, a sufficient condition”, a relative is only one who is “recognized as such”.
3. The ethnographic material on which this article is based is the result of a long field research in the Jacmel region, where I was for several periods between the years 2008 and 2016.
4. Some of these works question the dichotomy between the public and private domains that marked gender research at the time, trying to show how they mix and how women's tasks are not restricted to the domestic domain (Berleant-Schiller and Maurer, 1993). Others question the theory developed by Peter Wilson (1973) that Caribbean societies would organize themselves based on two dialectical principles, that of reputation linked to men and that of respectability to women (Besson, 1993). Still others focus on female migration and the problems that women face when separating from their support network usually made up of relatives (men and women) who stay in the country of origin (Olwig, 1993).
5. Mesye yo di yo travay passe fanm/Men janm yo di se yo ki sous lavi a/Fanm se pa yon rabann ki abiye san sòti/Fanm se pa yon rido w ap di tyoule bò w pase/Fanm se pa yon bale ki apiye nan yon kwen /Fanm se poto mitan lavi a.
6. Olivro de Beverly Bell *Walking on Fire: Haitian women's stories of survival and resistance* prefaciado por Edwige Dantecat é um ótimo exemplo de elaborações mais recentes de um rico movimento feminista haitiano.
7. Often traders are called madanm Sara, after a species of bird found in Haiti, but originally from Africa, known for flying in flocks and making a lot of noise when they are together, as traders do in markets or inside trucks. The term, which can also be used for men, draws attention to this communicative aspect that is part of commercial relations. Information extracted from the textbook *M'ap li ak kè kontan*, 5th year.

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