

THE URBANIZATION AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN WEST INDIAN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

This Thesis argues that there has been an evolving and cumulative growth of urbanization in the West Indies. This has escalated in the contemporary period.

The thesis presents a sociology of literature - a sometimes overt and sometimes implicit comparison of how this process of change has been viewed by various disciplines with the approaches of various writers who articulate the human response. The writers have been preoccupied with the complexity of this process over a wide span of time. Writers have been selected on the basis of how they evaluate the rural and urban experiences and the experiences of the various ethnic groups.

The demographic evidence of Chapter One suggests the retention of pluralistic features in West Indian societies in spite of radical changes in the social structure due to urbanization and anglicisation, and the emergence of a creole complex to which each group adjusts. The writers confirm how firmly linked to urbanization and modernization are changes in social mobility, race and class relationships, and the cultural orientation of individual and society. The quest for educational and social mobility almost invariably leads to physical urbanization and or the spread of modernization across country and town. Urbanization itself threatens cultural enclavism and demands racial co-existence and cultural change.

The writers argue that the changes have brought to the forefront the issue of Caribbean identity. It is felt that cultural unsettledness, especially among those groups which are supposed to provide leadership, is at the root of many Caribbean problems.