ADIEU FOULARDS, ADIEU MADRAS: THE PLACE OF THE EURO-CREOLE WOMAN WRITER WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE WORKS OF JEAN RHYS AND PHYLLIS SHAND ALLFREY.

PENABAI ESPINET

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to affirm the literary context of the works of the Caribbean Euro-Creole writers, Phyllis Shand Allfrey and Jean Rhys, both of Dominica. Their works were published during the period 1925-1985.

The scope encompasses literary history, critical analysis and biography, and the necessary background of West Indian social history and politics pertinent to the subject. The work is divided into nine chapters. The introductory chapter sets up the historical and cultural matrices, and provides an understandable context for these writers and their works. It therefore considers the early literary history of the region, mostly residing in diaries and travel books.

The thesis has the following objectives:

(i) to determine whether there exists common ground in these writers' perspectives or whether the differences are useful in determining context and place
(ii) to evaluate their literary products and claim their place in the context of Caribbean literature in English

(iii) to discover and explicate how, as women, they also functioned as writers

In order to do this I propose to examine their work, including autobiographical material, unfinished manuscripts and works not specifically of a literary nature.

In conclusion, I hope to have isolated and analysed a Caribbean Euro-Creole sensibility expressed in literary terms, and to have provided some insight into the place of such writers in the growing architecture of the West Indian literary canon. As the earliest group of female West Indian writers, their particular struggle to "break set" by writing in defiance of the ordinarily prescribed roles for women of European descent, and the consequent costs of this action, are deserving of acknowledgement and analysis in the context of a feminist approach to Caribbean literary studies. Beyond this, the study seeks to examine what made them write
instead of finding self-expression elsewhere: an important dimension to the question of women's creativity and the means of its realization in concrete terms.

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