

ABSTRACT

Images of Alienation in Sapotille et le Serin d'Argile,
Juletane, and Une Saison à Rihata

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This thesis examines a peculiar problem that faces coloured women in the French Caribbean. This is the problem of alienation and a lack of identity. Due to the historical background of the French West Indies, the West Indian woman finds herself in a society that is colonized by the "métropole", France, and also by the local patriarchal system. The laws of the "métropole" required that the French West Indian be assimilated, that is, become a French citizen by adopting French values and customs. The local patriarchy was dominated by male values and so the women often found themselves discriminated against by men. This thesis looks at how three female francophone Caribbean writers treat the problem of female alienation.

Three novels will be studied in this thesis - Sapotille et le Serin d'Argile, Juletane and Une Saison à Rihata. In these three texts, there are various images that are used by the authors to depict the mental and physical state of alienation in which the protagonists find themselves. This thesis will focus on these

images of alienation and will try to explain how they help to reinforce, in the reader's mind, the woman's state of alienation. These novels are typical of much French Caribbean female writing in that they paint a very pessimistic picture of the situation facing West Indian women because they do not openly advocate a solution to the problem. They prefer to bear witness to the process of psychological disintegration.