

This study discusses the development of the image of the female in West Indian drama as it reveals the dramatists' perception of the female from her historical origins to contemporary time. Eric Roach's Calabash of Blood traces the ancestral origins of the female/West Indian psyche. In his dramatization of the Great House mistress, the African, Mamba, and Lucy, the mulatto West Indian, the playwright explores the forces responsible for the conditioning of the female/West Indian psyche. Dennis Scott's Echo in the Bone dramatizes the development of the female from plantation to rural folk, as he traces the evolution of the image of the female to explore the possibility which exists for self-affirmation. Eric Roach's revolutionary focus in Belle Fanto is on the transcendent creation of the folk-heroine whose mature consciousness facilitates her process of self-exploration and self-emancipation.

The urban folk dramatists depict the plight of women who are trapped within the condition of extreme economic deprivation. The typical figures of the yard, the matriarch, the drunkard, the seduced virgin, and the prostitute dominate as they confront the harsh realities of the yard milieu, with no possibility of self-affirmation. Douglas Archibald's The Rose Slip reveals the inner resources of the matriarchal Flossie who refuses to succumb to the spiritual degradation of her environment. Errol John's Moon on a Rainbow Shawl dramatizes the possibilities of moral choice open to his female characters, for he depicts not only the negative aspects of the yard experience, but also the

compassion which arises out of mutual hardships. In Samuel Hillary's Departure in the Dark, the waste of human potential in the drama of Lil Martin's life of prostitution is the dramatist's focus.

Derek Walcott's Joker of Seville is the focal point which concludes this study, as the dramatist presents his visionary world view of the psychic/social forces which imprison the ^{male}/female. In his exploration of the detrimental effects of adhering to rigid codes of morality, he presents a liberating concept for the ^{male}/female, as his characters confront the dichotomy of flesh and spirit, the duality of human nature, to arrive at their individual capacity for freedom.

VIRGINIA LORIN SARKY
Thesis Supervisor: Patricia Isaacs

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