

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines primarily, the novelist's portrayal of male/female interaction; however, some attention is also given to the liaison between the "matriarch" and son. The authors selected for close study - Jean Rhys, V.S. Naipaul, John Hearne and George Lamming - each represent a major racial/cultural sector of West Indian community, and the patterns of interaction which they present are, where appropriate, read as microcosms of relations in the wider society.

The study examines, then, altering modes of family relations in the normless, multiracial society, and the manner in which stereotypes based on race, class, colour and caste, shape the individual's perception of self, and impact the love bond. The tensions inherent in the Western notion of romantic love and the severe distortions which occur when these ideals are transported to the West Indian context are also assessed.

None of the liaisons examined stands as an end in itself. Rhys and Lamming and, to a lesser extent, Naipaul all use the male/female interaction to symbolize cultural confrontation. By implication or direct statement, an association is set up between the inability to commit oneself to country and the inability to maintain a successful love relationship.