

ABSTRACT**Manhood Demystified: Love, Intimacy & Sexuality as Indices in the Literary
Constructions of Anglophone Caribbean Masculinities**

Tyrone Ali

This study traces the construction of diverse masculinities in the fictional representations of post-colonial Anglophone Caribbean literature focusing on Afro-, Indo-, and Eurocentric ethnicities and subjectivities. The colonial legacy of a compromised hegemonic masculinity that came to define the persona of the male European colonizer initially became a benchmark by which masculinity was measured during Empire. Such a legacy, however, has not been upheld through the subsequent years owing largely to a divorced and near impossible correlation between the pioneering European plantation-owner and the firstly transplanted, then creolized, inhabitant of the West Indies. Rather, a ‘dishonoured’ hegemonic masculinity has resulted due to the negativities associated with imperial dominance. Moreover, a series of counter-hegemonic ‘positive’ masculinities which slip into a warrior-type rebellion found at one end of the male gender identity spectrum, or a passivity traditionally associated with femininity stationed at the other end, accompanied by a highly complex gamut of intervening masculine identities along the continuum, have materialized.

The exploration of the constructions of masculinities in Caribbean literature is anchored in socio-economic, politico-historical and literary frameworks, underpinned by a focus on love, intimacy and sexuality. Theories of

biology, psychoanalysis, trauma, deconstruction, postcolonialism, feminism and masculinity studies inform this research. Further, an interdisciplinary approach to understanding men and masculinities, through the incorporation of aspects of anthropology, religion, the arts, and cultural studies is adopted.

Gender characterization in West Indian fiction has always been of consequence in understanding male and female personalities in the real world and, as such, this study invites critical appreciation of the Western imaginary of both renowned and lesser known writers, and stimulates analysis of perspectives of men and their multiple masculine identities.

The research explores the correlation between literary constructions and the narrative content, thematic concerns and stylistic devices of selected prose and poetry to demonstrate both the manifest and subtle issues that reflect the changing social milieu of male protagonists and their resultant identities that waver between traditional and alternative sexualities.

Keywords: Tyrone Ali, masculinities, male sexual identity, ethnicity, hegemony