

ABSTRACT

Religion has always been a crucial social and historical phenomenon in the life of man. It is no wonder then that it appears as a popular theme in the endeavours of the major Caribbean literary personalities, who are always determined that their fictional works should faithfully reflect Caribbean social and historical realisms. From the beginning, in the encounter between the Amerindians and Europeans there was a religious interplay between cultures, which some people have referred to as the warring of the cosmologies. Indeed, it is widely accepted that religion was one of the major instruments used to subjugate Amerindians and Africans.

This thesis looked at the issue of religion as a vehicle of bondage and liberation in the chosen works. The works chosen are George Lamming's Season of Adventure, In the Castle of My Skin and Natives of My Person, Earl Lovelace's The Wine of Astonishment, E.K. Brathwaite's The Arrivants Sylvia Wynter's Hills of Hebron and Erna Brodber's Myal. The religions involved were European Christianity, the West African religions, Amerindian religions and the Caribbean indigenous religions.

The investigation discovered that generally the writer's portrayed the indigenous Amerindian and Creole religions as vehicles of anti-colonial opposition and resistance, while the mainstream Christian faiths were portrayed as being part of the enslaving ideological cultural hegemony. However there were exceptions to that trend. By and large, the hybrid religions, and the art forms they give rise to, are portrayed as being significant in fostering the cohesion and commitment to

emancipation, among those who are dispossessed by European imperialism. This cohesion and commitment are shown in most cases to go beyond individual, to communal liberation, which bring to the fore the question of Caribbean cultural nationalism.

Keywords: Religion; Christian; indigenous; Amerindian; art-forms; hybrid; hegemony; bondage; liberation; imperialism; nationalism; identity; affective injuries; resistance; transcendence; patriarchal; diaspora.