

**QUEST FOR FREEDOM AND IDENTITY IN SELECTED MARYSE CONDÉ AND
SIMONE SCHWARZ BART'S NOVELS**

BY

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Mrs. Gracious O. OJIEBUN in the Department of European Studies, University of Ibadan under my supervision.

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Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the almighty GOD. Just when I thought that He has done so much for me, He did it again. To Him alone be all the praise.

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ABSTRACT

The quest for freedom and identity connotes a desire for rebirth and an assertion of a people's 'raison d'être,' as evident in various Caribbean literary texts. Existing studies on Caribbean literature have focused mainly on the Caribbean struggle for emancipation from mental slavery, with less attention paid to the issues relating to identity and the search for freedom. This study was, therefore, designed to examine the quest for freedom and identity in the novels of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart, with a view to determining the coping strategies through which the characters dealt with racial discrimination in the Caribbean society.

Bill Aschroft's Postcolonial Utopianism was adopted as framework. The interpretive design was used. Four Francophone Caribbean novels: *Traversée de la Mangrove* and *Une saison à Rihata* (Maryse Condé), *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* and *Ti jean l'horizon* (Simone Schwarz-Bart) were purposively selected for exploring the quest for freedom and identity. The texts were subjected to textual analysis.

Stereotypification orchestrates the quest for freedom and identity across the four selected novels. In *Une saison à Rihata*, anyone born by a black woman is stereotyped a worthless individual. Francis Sancher, in *Traversée de la mangrove*, is regarded as a deadly criminal in Rivière au Sel due to his black skin; Gabriel is considered an outcast by his family members for marrying a black woman. Emile Etienne laments the fact that his childhood is without joy because he is born by a black woman. Télumée, in *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*, is adjudged evil due to her dark skin, while Ti Jean and other characters in *Ti Jean l'horizon* are portrayed as lost due to their dark skin. As a result of the stereotypification, these characters in the selected novels suffered discrimination. Zek's father, in *Une saison à Rihata*, treats his wives and children as slaves. Télumée, in *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*, is discriminated against and made to remain a slave worker, but she expresses joy in her black skin in order to resist the racial stereotypification. Ti Jean, in *Ti Jean l'horizon* also embarks on several voyages to discover his Caribbeaness. Christophe and Madou, in *Une saison à Rihata*, make several travels to France and Africa respectively in their quest for socio-cultural freedom. Madou, in *Une saison à Rihata*, travels to Africa in his quest for political freedom and Marie Hélène, in *Une saison à Rihata*, returns to France in her bid to be free from racial discrimination she suffers in the hands of her mother-in-law and other women on the Island of Rihata. Francis Sancher, in *Traversée de la mangrove*, embarks on a journey to the Island of Rivière au Sel in his quest for freedom. In *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*, Télumée has to quit her marriage to Elie who beats and enslaves her.

The characters in the selected novels by Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart mediate their racial stereotypification through self-esteem, travels and divorce.

Keywords: Caribbean literature, Freedom and identity in novels, Maryse Condé, Simone Schwarz-Bart

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The quest for freedom has been an integral part of man in all societies. However, it is the phenomenon of colonisation and colonialism that publicized and politicized the concept of freedom in cultural and postcolonial studies, thereby identifying it as a motif of many postcolonial literatures. In most cultural representations, the quest for freedom is juxtaposed with that of identity in post/colonial discourse because indigenous identity is perceived equally as a victim of colonial enterprise. All postcolonial literatures such as the Caribbean, the African, the Indian among others, continue to prioritize issues related to freedom and identity.

The quest for freedom and identity by the Caribbean forms a major theme in Caribbean literature. Being descendants of slaves in search of freedom and a *raison d'être* of its existence, their quest for identity and freedom cannot be overemphasized. Writers like Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart have, through their literary works, put ample effort in the search for identity and freedom at all levels. Still, it appears that a lot is left undone in the quest for freedom of the Caribbean.

This chapter will offer the background to the study, establish the statement of the problem, outline the objectives and significance of the study, show the organisation of the study as well as highlight the scope and delimitation of the study.

The quest for freedom and identity by the Caribbean (West Indians or Antilleans) dates back to when Christopher Columbus, a famous explorer, discovered the Caribbean Island in the 15th century. The history of the Caribbean is divided into two parts; namely the pre-Columbian period (late 15th to early 16th centuries) and the Columbian period (1492 to 1493/1496). According to Sanusi (2013:28) from the account of Morecus Jean-Pierre (1992), “it is during the second travel of Christopher Columbus that the greater part of the

Lesser Antilles” was discovered by the Europeans. This implies that before the discovery of the Americas or the New World by Christopher Columbus in the year 1492, not much was known about the West Indies. It is however generally accepted that these Islands were populated by Indians called the Arawaks. The Arawaks, according to Mokwenye (2011), were a quiet and artistic people who were later overrun by the Caribbean Indians. These Caribbean Indians were a war-like and restless people who exterminated the male Arawaks and married their women. Hence, when the European colonists arrived on the Island, they met the Caribbean Indians whom they tried to force to work for them as slaves in their sugar cane plantations. Being a war-like and proud people, the Caribbean Indians resisted the Europeans sternly and refused to be enslaved. The Europeans felt humiliated by this resistance put up by the Caribbean Indians and therefore embarked on a war of annihilation against them. The Caribbean Indians were consequently massacred and wiped out. However, since the Europeans could not use the Caribbean as slaves, they turned their attention towards Africa to take advantage of an already existing slave market. This, therefore, marked the beginning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade which lasted for three centuries. This was the journey of some as slaves from Africa to the Caribbean Island.

The Columbian era, which dates back to the period between 1492 and 1493/1496, was noted for Spanish and Portuguese conquests followed by the discovery of the Americas (or New World). The inhabitants of the Island were dispersed. They were reduced to slaves against their wish. They were made to undergo forced labour which led to the death of many of them. They were subjected to poor condition of living. Due to the wickedness they suffered in the hands of their slave masters, the Caribbean slaves started nursing the idea of freedom from cultural enslavement. They wanted to have a freedom and an identity which is purely Caribbean. They wanted to practise their culture and tradition. Hence, when the negritude movement was introduced, they accepted it to a certain point but later fought to form the Antillanité movement which according to them was purely a Caribbean movement. They concluded that the negritude movement favored the Africans as it had given them a fate and a brotherhood. As a result, Edouard Glissant (Mokwenye, 2011:25) came out with the concept of Caribbeanness, which is purely a Caribbean concept meant to replace negritude as far as they were concerned.

The Antillianité movement was aimed at forming a Caribbean brotherhood irrespective of their geographical location of the people and its sole aim was to promote an identity for the Caribbeans in all its ramifications. It was also meant to harness all the resources at their disposal in order to enhance and promote their well-being thereby creating a better future for the unborn Caribbean generation. In explaining what Antillianité stands for, Edouard Glissant in Mokwenye (2011:25) puts it thus;

Quand je dis que je suis un écrivain antillais, j'entends par là qu'après le magnifique travail fait par des écrivains comme Césaire et Damas, il est temps que les Antillais assument leur « antillanité » si l'on peut ainsi exprimer, c'est-à-dire qu'ils recensent minutieusement toutes les valeurs de leurs pays qui sont richesses purement Antillaises (2011 :25)

When I say that I am an Antillean writer, by this I mean that after the magnificent works of authors like Césaire and Damas, it is time for the Antilleans to assume their “Antillianité.” If one can further explain it, that it is for them to retrospect deeply into all their country's values which constitute purely Antilleans riches
(Our translation)

In light of the above, Patrick Chamoiseau explains that:

La négritude avait constitué une sorte d'essence de l'être noir
et nié la différence culturelle entre les Noirs, soient-ils Africains, Américains, ou Antillais. Ils partageaient un fond commun de dérivement, déshumanisation. Une fois pourtant que la négritude avait poussée son cri, une fois qu'on acceptait cette situation de base, qu'on avait récupéré l'Afrique, il fallait immédiatement chercher une autre (1994:152)

Negritude constituted a kind of essence of the black man and denied the cultural difference between the Blacks whether Africans, Americans or Caribbeans. They shared a common depth of deliverance from dehumanization. Once, however, negritude had made its voice heard, once this basic situation was accepted, that Africa had been recovered, it became necessary to find something else.” (Our translation)

That 'something else' Patrick Chamoiseau referred to in the above discourse was the Antillianité that was found to replace the negritude movement. This Antillianité brought a change of attitude in the writings of some Caribbean creative critics including Maryse Condé, Simone Schwarz-Bart, who in their works portrayed theCaribbeans as a people who have been enslaved for too long in all aspects of their lives and sought their freedom by all means as depicted in their novels: *Traversée de la Mangrove* (Condé,1989); *Une saison à Rhata* (Condé,1981); *Pluie et vent sur Telumée miracle* (Schwarz-Bart,1972) and Ti Jean *L'horizon* (Schwarz-Bart, 1976). It is worthy of mention that these two female authors have one thing in common. They are both of Guadeloupian origin. They belong to the Department d'outre- mer de la France (Oversea Department of France), which explains why they seek a common goal- the quest for freedom and identity.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Postcolonial discourses have made several attempts at discussing the dynamics of freedom and identity in Francophone Caribbean novels because the elements of freedom and identity appear to be the underlying factors of postcolonial literatures. Though scholars and critics, such as Mokwenye and Sanusi, have read the works of Maryse Conde and Simone Schwarz-Bart, independently linking them with issues of identity and dislocation and presenting a minimalist reading of such works, the ideological synergy between freedom and identity has not been given much attention it deserves. This study attempts to demonstrate the interrelatedness between the quest for freedom and identity in the selected works of Maryse Conde and Simone Schwarz-Bart, unveiling the polyvalence of all postcolonial literatures and showing the artistic ideologies that make freedom and identity as motifs of both female authors.

The Caribbeans being mainly descendants of slavery are plagued with the issue of cultural disloc//ation, oppression, exploitation, poverty, etc. To this end, the works of Maryse Condé especially *Une saison à Rhata* and *Traversée de la mangrove* and Simone Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Telumée miracle* and Ti Jean *L'horizon* serve as initiator and facilitator of the freedom and identity quest of the Caribbean.

1.3 Research questions

The study is an attempt to answer the following questions through an in-depth and critical analysis of some selected francophone Caribbean novels of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart.

1. How is resistance to enslavement demonstrated by the two authors in the four selected novels?
2. How does the work of these authors help the Caribbeans in their quest for freedom from ancestral enslavement?
3. How does the background of these two authors influence characters in the selected texts in their quest for freedom and identity?
4. In what ways do the works of these authors serve as a guide to the Caribbeans in their quest for freedom and identity?
5. Of what benefit is this study of quest for freedom and identity to the contemporary Caribbean society and upcoming researchers?

1.4 Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is primarily to give more attention to the works of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart and their fight against the legacies of slavery, colonialism, exile and the lack of identity and freedom of the Caribbeans. It shows the aftermaths of slavery and colonization on the Caribbeans. This, to a large extent, brought about the Caribbean woman's obsession for white skin (inferiority complex). Similarly, the problem of race and class segregation is brought to limelight. The study further depicts Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart's commitment to the Caribbean's struggle for socio-cultural freedom and how their works have served as a resistance to enslavement and a fight for the Caribbean cultural identity. It seeks to show how the colonial encounter contributed to the mutual transformation of colonizer and colonized. Furthermore, it aims at producing a utopia manifesto and an allegiance against institutionalized suffering. It again seeks to create a national consciousness in the thought pattern of the Caribbeans. Finally, it serves to offer a more satisfactory reading of the colonial experience through the works of the selected author in order to create a postcolonial future.

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of this study hinges on the need to give more attention to the Caribbean's quest for identity and freedom through the works of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart. It also aimed at providing information to French students and literary critics on Caribbean's struggle for socio-cultural freedom and identity. It will further serve as a reference material for upcoming researchers on the Caribbean history and contemporary challenges.

1.6 Organisation of the study

The study has been divided into six chapters. Chapter one is the general introduction which highlights the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the objectives of the study and its significance as well as the organization, the scope and the delimitation of the study. Chapter two focuses on the review of related literature as it affects the selected novels, their authors' biographies, the Caribbean society, negritude movement, the Caribbean literature and Antillianite/creolité. Chapter three presents the methodology as well as the theoretical frame work of our research work. It explains why the postcolonialist theory is adopted in this study to discuss how the works of the selected writers oppose oppression and colonial domination. Chapter four focuses on oppression and suffering in the selected novels. Struggle for freedom and identity will be discussed as identified in the selected texts of Maryse Condé (*Une saison à Rihata*, 1981; *Traversée de la mangrove*, 1989) and Simone Schwarz- Bart (*Pluie et vent sur Telumée miracle*, 1972; *Ti Jean l'horizon*, 1979). Chapter five emphasises freedom and identity quest in selected novels. The three stages involved in the fight for freedom and identity will be examined in the selected novels namely; unconscious/ dream stage, conscious/reality stage and the fight to finish stage. Finally, chapter six, the conclusion, serves as a synergy of the entire work with emphasis on the contributions of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart literary works serving as a *porte parole* to the Caribbeans in their quest for freedom and identity and a reference material for upcoming researchers.

1.7 Scope and delimitation of the study

Due to time frame and research exigencies, the study focuses mainly on the Caribbean quest for freedom and identity especially in selected works of two Caribbean francophone female writers: Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart. It equally dwells primarily on the study of the four selected novels by the aforementioned authors with reference to other works of the authors as well as other francophone and non-francophone authors and literary critics. This study centers on Maryse Condé's *Une saison à Rihata* (1981), *Traversée de la mangrove* (1989) and Simone Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Telumée miracle* (1972) and *Ti Jean l'horizon* (1979).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Preamble

Identity and freedom quest constitute a major pre-occupation of the Caribbean literature. Caribbean literature according to Eweka (2013: 75) is a four footed literature encompassing identity, slavery, Antillianité and creolité. Raphaël Confiant, in Obszynski (2018:148) describes Caribbean literature as «une littérature enraciné dans le social, dans l'esclavage, la canne à sucre, etc. » (A literature rooted in the social, in slavery, sugar cane, etc). According to Mokwenye (1993), it is a literature in which the present and future generations seek to establish and consolidate their cultural identity in order to safeguard their future and cultural heritage. To this end, Glissant (1989) asserts that literature is capable of reforming. It cannot re-write history, but it can change the way in which it is being examined. Glissant further explains that the Caribbean faces the problem of a 'ruined history' which must be re-shaped and re-structured.

The link between the Caribbean's quest for freedom, identity and literature is such a great bond that cannot be separated. This is greatly depicted in the works of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz Bart as they tend to portray a people who are in search of their true identity, culture and history, through their works. A majority of the Caribbeans, being descendants of slave trade, can be described as prisoners of bitterness due to the lack of knowledge of their identity and true origin which has plunged them into several voyages for self-discovery and cultural collective quest for identity. The essence of the quest for identity, according to Ojebun (2019:89), is to end all forms of discrimination, exploitation and prejudice against the Caribbean. She adds that « Le préjugé est lié à la discrimination, à la colonisation, à l'exploitation par un groupe sur un autre groupe beaucoup plus fort... ». [The prejudice is linked to discrimination, colonisation, exploitation by a much stronger group].

The history of Francophone Caribbean literature, as it affects the Caribbean quest for freedom and identity is incomplete without accolades given to authors like Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz Bart because of their immense contribution to the growth and spread of Caribbean literature. Their works have helped a great deal to further situate the literature in both time and space. Ogunmola (2013) opines that Maryse Condé, though a female writer, was among those who welcomed the movement of antillanité; a movement that proposed a new definition of the Caribbeans. Mokwenye (2013) echoes the roles of Maryse Condé and her efforts towards bringing her fellow Caribbean people closer to Africa so that they can be reminded of their past and correct the erroneous belief that their ancestors were French. There is no doubt that Africa has been an important factor in the quest for identity and freedom of the Caribbeans.

Furthermore, to sensitize the Caribbeans over the need for a purely Caribbean identity, Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz Bart posit that authors of Caribbean literature should not write for the consumption of only the highly educated, rather creative works should be for all and sundry. Angrey (2000 :55) corroborates the above viewpoint of Maryse Condé thus:

Si la littérature dépeint la culture d'un peuple, si la littérature est la vie elle-même comme le maintiennent plusieurs écrivains et critiques, il n'ya pas moyen qu'un écrivain emploie une langue étrangère pour projeter l'image de sa société sans causer des blessures à ces langues (p.55)

If literature portrays a people 's culture, if literature is life itself as claimed by many writers and critics, there is no way a writer will use a foreign language to project the image of his society without causing some damages to it.
(Our translation)

The above discourse explains Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz Bart's support of Patrick Chamoiseau's view of creole as pointed out in Maryse Condé's interview with Françoise Pfaff (1993:165):

La créolité... a beaucoup de qualités; elle a permis à tous les écrivains antillais de représenter un peu leur rapport avec le

français. Le français n'est pas la seule langue dont nous disposons, il ya aussi le créole. (p.165)

Créolité ...has alot of qualities. It allows all Caribbean writers to somehow rethink their relationship with French; French is not the only language we have, we also have creole.

Nesbitt (2002: 391) takes a look at the critical thoughts of Maryse Condé via her literary works and notes that her works are of immense relevance in the field of Caribbean studies. Her novels recount the everyday life of the Caribbean in all its ramifications ranging from tribulations between mother and daughter as depicted in *Moi Tituba...sorciere noire de Salem*, to the anonymous violence of neo-colonial societies of systematic dependency as portrayed in *Une Saison à Rihata* in which every individual encounters constant daily reminder socially, economically, politically and otherwise. This same phenomenon is depicted in *Ti jean l'horizon*. According to Mokwenye (2011:144), Ti jean was being treated as a slave due to the past life of his ancestors. He is often reminded thus:

Les Soninkes disent que l'esclavage est une lèpre de sang et de celui d'entre eux qui est saisi par l'ennemi, ne fût-ce que pour une heure, il n'a plus droit de revenir dans la tribu...car il est déjà atteint de la souillure (p.144).

The Soninke people say that slavery is blood leprosy and anyone among them caught by the enemy even if it is for one hour, no longer has the right to return ...because he is already infected by the stain
(Translation by Mokwenye)

Unlike the slaves who were their ancestors, Ti jean refused to be subjected to animalistic treatment but rather sought to produce a new culture from the shattered remains he found. Ti jean craved for a better life for the Caribbeans and a restoration of a 'supposedly' accursed race.

The desire of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz Bart is to remedy the Caribbean people's lack of historical consciousness and pave way into the lives where the legacy of

slavery and colonization left several cracks in the wall. To this end, Kathleen (2009: 2) states that the works of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz Bart are aimed at generating and producing a new identity which the Caribbean seeks to reclaim. She observed that the female characters in the works of our selected authors exercise their ability with regard to self-definition as a means of survival and persistence in their conditions of oppression and marginalisation.

Since Condé and Schwarz Bart's object of concern remains resolutely all-embracing as far as the Caribbean quest for her freedom and identity is concerned, their aim is to reproduce a new study of the Caribbean experience, thereby creating a new awareness and autonomy which would give their fellow Caribbeans the semblance of life. So, to achieve this, they carve out precisely the unique, individual experiences typical of the Caribbean society through their forms of literary works.

2.1 Slavery and the Caribbean literature

Literature is a mirror of a society that creates life through reflection or refraction. Ayeleru (2012) agreeing with other schools of thought, views literature, whether written or oral as a mirror of the society. The life and times of a people are embedded in her literature. To this assertion, Eweka (2013) posits that slavery is one of the four feet of the Caribbean. Others are identity, antillianité and creolité. Slavery is therefore a major aspect of Caribbean literature. This is due to the fact that Caribbean literature is incomplete without reference to slavery. Udofia (2013) talked more about the implication of slavery on Caribbean Literature when she stated that Maryse Condé's works are of immense relevance in the field of Caribbean studies. Before the advent of the Blacks as slave workers in the West Indies, there already existed a slave system where the early Spaniards procured labour for their plantations. Convicts, aboriginal Indians, white slaves constituted the initial "labour" before the Blacks arrived in the West Indies. It is note-worthy that due to the devastating effects of slavery on the Caribbean, Mokwenye (2011) states that slavery was preoccupied with economic exploitation, physical oppression, humiliation of all kinds and at all levels. To this end, the average Caribbean lived with the mentality of racial prejudice backed up by the supposed superiority complex of the Whites' vis-a-vis the Blacks'. The brainwashing and indoctrination received by the Blacks during the period of slavery and colonisation left a lot

of damaging effect on their mentality. Although they have been liberated, the Blacks still carry the notion of slavery. This could be ascribed to the disastrous consequences of slavery, that even though the Caribbean man walked the street a free man, his mind is still being enslaved while his brain and thought pattern still suffered from the aftermaths of the inculcating inferiority complex. Fanon describes the state of the black man as that of a black skin with a white mask (*Peau noire, masques blancs* 1952). He antagonises the Blacks for their obsession for the white man's language, culture, manner of talking, etc. To Fanon, the need for a culture and a literature in the voice of the Blacks should be of paramount concern if the Caribbeans must rediscover themselves, their freedom and identity. This is so because the fundamental elements of slavery, colonisation and apartheid according to Achille Mbembe (2001) are self-discovery, autonomy and liberation from domination.

Slavery was a system of arduous labor that eroded the humanity of the Blacks. The slave code was crucial because it denied the slaves the essential exercise of freewill that determined their humanity since their movement was restricted. They could not marry or own property and were fundamentally considered as properties that their owners could do anything with, including inflicting arbitrary death. This brutality, together with racial prejudice suffered by the slaves, eroded their sense of their origin and history. It equally paved way for the problem of inferiority complex as traumatized slaves developed a savage mentality and a notion that adjudged them ahistorical and inferior to their slave masters. This further had an adverse effect on the psyche of the Caribbean even till the 21st century (Udofia, 2013).

Udofia (2013:56-62) also refers to the implication of slavery on Caribbean literature when she writes:

Bearing the burden of this debilitating history and environment, the criticism of Caribbean literature has often been jaundiced. Primarily, the criticism encapsulates an attitude which sees the visions expressed by the writers as "pessimistic" ... absurd, depressing and hopeless(pp. 56-62).

The impact of slavery and colonization on the Caribbeans cannot be overemphasized as it brought about the problem of inferiority complex and discrimination against their fellow Caribbeans as a state of absurdity and hopelessness.

On his part, Acholonu (1987: 78) remarks that the influence of colonization in the history of the West Indies has some debasing and destructive effects on the colonized as it created a negative impression on the Caribbean man who lives on a borrowed culture. Irrespective of the aforementioned claims, history has revealed that the Caribbean is not static but has evolved with time in the contemporary society. This is due to the advents of literary deconstructions of the works under review and other Caribbean discourse too numerous to mention. These authors have taken the roles of intellectuals, who remark according to Tijani Serpous (1996: 19) that « ma bouche sera la bouche des mahleurs qui n'ont point de bouche, ma voix, la liberté de celles qui s'affaissent au cachot du désespoir ». (My mouth will be the mouth of the downtrodden who do not have mouth, my voice the freedom of those wallowing in dungeon of hopelessness) (Our translation). Unlike other literature such as African and European, the evolution of Caribbean studies is a step in the right direction, indicating that the literature can survive posterity.

Udofia (2015: 56-62) opines that the literature of the Caribbean is basically an answer by literary critics to a reformation of the history of the Caribbean. Walcott (1970) also affirms that for a renaissance in the evolution of Caribbean literature, the West Indian must move towards redefining and reconstructing the present if they must overcome the dynamics of low self-esteem which is the heritage of slavery and colonisation. Furthermore, the idea of Caribbean loyalty, for him, can be tied, to at least, two influences: indigenous, and foreign. These two influences, according to Udofia (2013) are significant in the formation of an authentic Caribbean personality.

Brathwaite (1973) views the major preoccupation of Caribbean critics as the reformation of the colonized mentality through the creation of a conscious awareness in the Negroes via the introduction and acceptance of the Caribbean culture, traditions, norms and values. The Negro who rejects the memory of his root is doomed. Knowledge of the past helps understand the present and paves the way to projecting into the future. Brathwaite therefore recommends a review of the past history of the Caribbean.

Several Caribbean discourses conclude that the Island is without history due to the fact that not much has been done on the Island several decades after its discovery. According to Naipaul, “history is built on creation and achievement and nothing was created in the West Indies” (1969:39). Naipaul refers to the absence of visible public infrastructures like monuments and libraries that constitute tangible achievements beyond the remains of old plantation houses and memoirs of the slave experience.

For the European colonisers, the area was nothing more than a mine of economic potentials to be fully exploited, but not an area of permanent settlement. This explains the deep entrenchment of the plantation system, and consequently the proliferation of absentee landlords who became extremely wealthy even outside the West Indies. Thus, the problem with West Indian history is not to be found solely in its mode of discovery; the colonisers were also gripped by an insidious in-fighting motivated by their collective greed for profits. At first, Christopher Columbus had the impression that the Island creates a laudable business route for Spain. This is as a result of the presence of gold ornament he met in the Bahamas. He therefore concluded that there is a lot to benefit from the gold on the Island. The main objective of Christopher Columbus was for self-enrichment to the detriment of the inhabitants of the Island. When the gold supply suffered some setbacks, the attention of the colonial masters shifted to the cultivation of sugar which was experiencing economic boom at that time. From time immemorial, the presence of the Europeans on the Caribbean Island has been centered on self-gratification. Thus, they resorted to inhumane means of getting supply of labour for their plantation.

The West Indies may be referred to as an artificial society. This is because apart from the native Indian population that was eventually annihilated, the Caribbean was peopled either by those who drifted there or those who were transported there forcefully. As a result of this assembly of people of diverse backgrounds, religious beliefs and races as well as different motives of being in the Caribbean, it was problematic fashioning a common Caribbean ethos, considering the essential disparities generated by the institution of slavery. Columbus in 1493, during his second trip to the Caribbean, brought some food items to the West Indies which included Spanish domestic cereals, sugar cane, fruits and vegetables. It is therefore not out of place to tag the West Indies as “an imported people in a largely

imported environment.” Both the initial and latter imperialists in the Caribbean had the singular aim of exploiting the natural and agronomic resources of the area for the good and benefits of the individuals and their respective nations. The temptation of sugar, gold and slaves triggered imperialist ventures into Spain, France, Britain, Portugal and the Netherlands. All these imperialists fought and competed to gain a substantial share of the Caribbean material wealth. This naturally led to piracy, double-crossing, cruelty and lack of unity among the powers. Invariably, each group of Europeans maintained its own language, political allegiances and religion.

We have tried to examine the peculiarity of Caribbean history, slavery and colonization and its effects on Caribbean literature. This is so because Caribbean literature, to a large extent, is borne out of the desire of a people who seeks to assert the history and culture of their land. It resolves that, in opposition to beliefs that the Caribbeans are without history, can chart a new course through their literature and call for cultural rebirth.

2.2 Implication of slavery on Caribbean Literature

The psyche of the Caribbean person is dominated by the effects of slavery which his ancestors were subjected to for three centuries and which were passed on to them (Mokwenye, 2011:6). Thus, the literature treats poverty, oppression, force labour, man’s inhumanity towards man and inferiority complex amongst others. A brief review of the history of the Caribbeans gives helpful insight into the implications of slavery on Caribbean literature. Udofia (2013), cited by Mokwenye (2013), posits that the sudden “beginning” of Caribbean history, together with the violence of colonialism, was responsible for the conclusion of many scholars that the era is ahistorical and unlikely to proceed further than its violent beginnings.

The Caribbean society, according to the International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (1968), is made up of Islands extending from Margarita, Aruba, Trinidad and others Islands off the coast of Venezuela to the South, to Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica, the Republic of Haiti, the rest of the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico (the greater Antilles) in the North and the lesser Antilles about forty inhabited Islands including Trinidad and Tobago. The modern Caribbean society is largely a product of the European Colonial

policies. Initially cohabiting as colonies, and later as plantation settlements, activities of the inhabitants of the Islands were tailored towards satisfying the political and economic aims of their mother countries. The major sources of production were contract labour and slavery. And until about 1825, Africa was the major of labour.

However, three major Indian groups dominated the Island. The seaside of Western Cuba is inhabited by the pioneer fishermen-gatherers, the Arawakan-speaking horticulturists (the Island–Arawak) and the Arawakan-speaking cultivators and fishermen occupied the Lesser Antilles. These Islands, according to Mokwenye (2011), discovered by Christopher Columbus were colonized by different European powers. Great Britain took possession of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Virgin Island and Barbados. There were six important Islands: St Martin, Eustache and Saba, Aruba, Bonaire and Curacaos, etc. The Islands possessed by Spain included Cuba, Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic while France had Martinique, Guadeloupe and French Guyana. The French possession remains till date and is known as overseas Department of France (Departement d’Outre Mer de la France). It is worthy to note that Guadeloupe and Martinique constitute the two most important French possession in the Caribbean as it relates to literary works, hence the choice of our selected authors who are both of the Guadeloupian origin. The two Islands were discovered by Christopher Columbus at various times in the 15th century and both Islands became colonies of France in 1635.

The uniqueness of the Caribbean and her literature pave way for the various literary responses of individual writers of the region to their historical realities. Caribbean history and her literature have outstanding features. The literature evolved from the discovery of the Bahamas in 1492 by a Spanish explorer named Christopher Columbus. Christopher Columbus’ discovery created room for historians like Eric Williams (1970) and V. S. Naipaul (1969) to argue that the Caribbean region is literarily a geographical expression devoid of history. To Naipaul, the West Indies, due to the nature of its discovery and aftermaths of slavery and colonization, lack the sense of development and progression.

2.3 Caribbean literature: Negritude and other cultural concepts

Caribbean literature is characterized by three major movements: negritude, antillanité and creolité. The quest to produce a positive identity for Caribbean literature brought about the birth of the negritude movement in the 1920 and 30s. Negritude movement was created to seek the rejection of European colonization and the damaging image it created for the Blacks such that the Black man will embrace a positive black identity. Negritude movement sought to cater for all black people both in the diaspora and at home in Africa. Among the initiators of the movement were Aimé Césaire, an Antillean poet, Léon Damas, and Léopold Sedar Senghor, an African poet. These writers rejected the French colonial racism and sought to create, promote and celebrate an identity that is proudly black against all odds.

2.3.1 The concept of Negritude

Negritude, according to Mokwenye (1993), is coined out of the word ‘negro’ which means “black”. The word was first used by Aimé Césaire in 1956. The word negritude has however different meanings to different critics. To Aimé Césaire in Mokwoenye (2011:12), negritude is « La simple reconnaissance du fait d’être noir et l’acceptation de ce fait, de notre histoire et de notre culture [The simple recognition of the fact of being black and the acceptance of this fact of our history and of our culture]. On his part, Senghor, in Mokwenye (2011 :12-13), views negritude as «L’ensemble des valeurs culturelles du monde noir, le refus de s’assimiler, de se perdre dans L’Autre, c’est l’affirmation de Soi ». [The totality of the cultural values of the Black world, the refusal of the other, it is the affirmation of self.]

In some, negritude can be seen and considered as a movement with the primary aim of bringing together all French speaking black Caribbeans and Africans to chart a common course. This is evident in the poems of Senghor and also in Césaire’s *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* and Leon Damas’s *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre*.

Negritude movement according to Katheleen (2009) was borne out of the marginalization and suppression of the cultures and histories of the Blacks. Therefore, negritude sought to influence the Caribbean people to reject the culture of the coloniser and to embrace their own Caribbean culture. The negritude era saw Caribbean literature projecting Africa and defending her cultural values as her own. To this end, some Caribbeans considered themselves as Africans. Thus, some Caribbean women got married to

black Africans as depicted in the works of some Caribbean writers such as Maryse Condé, Simone Schwarz Barts, and Warner Vygra, among others. To the disillusionment of these authors, coming to Africa with the mindset of receiving a warm welcome home became only a mirage because they were discriminated upon and treated as strangers. These authors and so many other Caribbean writers became disappointed and concluded that, since Africa failed to embrace them, there was the need for them to seek their 'caribbeanness'. This brought about the movement of Antillanité, which they considered as purely an Antillean movement.

2.3.2 Concept of Antillanité/Caribbeanness

As a result of the disappointment with negritude, the Caribbeans led by Edouard Glissant came out with the concept of Antillanité. The concept was meant to replace negritude and give a sense of identity to the Caribbeans since negritude, to them, was solely for the Africans. The antillanité movement was meant to concern all Caribbeans irrespective of their geographical identity. Antillanité, according to Edouard Glissant, as cited by Mokwenye (2011), is a movement that emphasizes the need for the Caribbeans to harness all their cultural values which is purely Caribbean. To achieve this, the Caribbean people must recognise the need for a true creole mindset. Hence, authors like Patrick Chamoiseau, Jean Bernabé and Raphaël Confiant also came up with the movement of créolité, a concept that embraces a truly Caribbean identity in all its ramifications. The aim of créolité is to recreate an authentic identity for the Caribbeans.

Kapanga (2005), referred to the caribbeanness and creoleness of the Caribbean literature as Antillean literature that is the literature in French from Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, and Haiti. The new source of pride initiated a rich crop of literary writers on the Islands. Leading figures included Aimé Césaire, Léon-G. Damas, René Menil, Étienne Léro, Jacques Roumain, Stephen Alexis, Guy Tirolien, Joseph Zobel, and Carl Brouard, with their pre-occupation on the recurrent themes of suffering during slavery, colonisation, exploitation, and nostalgia for Africa. Poetry was the most dynamic literary field, and Aimé Césaire was the dominant voice. René Maran was a novelist who explored the 'past' of the Islands and their connections to Africa. In drama, were figures like Aimé Césaire through

La Tragedie du roi Christophe, *Une Saison au Congo*, and *Une Tempête*. The journal, *Presence Africaine*, as well as the two international congresses of black writers and artists (Paris, 1956; and Rome, 1959), stimulated the literary production of Caribbean writers. Negritude became an umbrella concept for all these writers, but it could not underwrite the complex diversity of Caribbean experiences. Different political choices, especially through departmentalization (for the French West Indies) and independence (for African colonies) ensured that Africa and the Caribbean would follow different postcolonial directions. Maryse Condé, through her personal experience and contact with Africa, illustrated the failure to reconnect with the motherland. During this period, many women writers of substance emerged. Leading figures include Simone Schwarz-Bart, Michele Lacrosil, Maryse Condé, Myriam. Warner-Vieyra, Gisele Pineau, Jacqueline Manicon, and Ina Cesaire. Schwarz-Bart's novel *The Bridge of Beyond (Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle*, 1972) is the prototype of the new wave of Francophone Caribbean writing by women. As developed in a seminar work entitled "In Praise of Creoleness" (Eloge de la Creolité) in 1989 by Jean Bernabe, Patrick Chamoiseau, and Raphael Confiant, the concept of Creoleness has exerted an important influence on recent Francophone writing from the Caribbean.

2.3.3 The concept of creolité

The creolité movement decrees that the foundation of the Caribbean must be laid on the Creole language and culture. It while why the Caribbean Islands are peculiar. They are equally diverse in terms of their racial dynamics, language, popular culture, multi-ethnic and historical trajectory. The concept of creolité also prioritizes the literature that foregrounds the emergence and establishment of a robust Creole identity in the Caribbean. Mokwenye (2009) opines that creolité constitutes the third literary period in the history of Caribbean literature. It aims at emphasizing the fact that there exists a typical creole culture among the Antillean; a culture that was born and nurtured in the plantation during the slavery era. Creolité emphasizes the need for the use of the creole language by the Caribbean's rather than French language therefore serving as the sole means of communication. Creole was a means to give a voice to a people whose voice has since been buried. Jean Bernabe *et al.*, (1989:5) states that "Every time a mother, thinking she is favoring the learning of French language, represses Creole in a child's throat, she is in fact bearing a blow to the latter's

imagination, repressing his creativity”. Every Caribbean was to encourage the use of creole as a major means of communication, thereby upholding the effectiveness of the creole language.

2.4 Biography and other works of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart

2.4.1 Maryse Condé:

Maryse Condé is a literary critic who writes firstly for herself and then for the support of humanity: “Je ne suis pas un écrivain y message. J’écris d’abord pour moi, pour m’aider y comprendre et supporter la vie” (Condé, 2009:1). [I am not a messenger writer. I write first for self, to help me comprehend and to earn a living]

Maryse Condé (Boucolon), born in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, on February 11, 1937, was educated at Lycée Fénélon, and at the Sorbonne, Paris, where she bagged a doctorate in Comparative Literature. After her doctoral education, she became an instructor at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, Conakry, Guinea. At various times, she worked and taught in Ghana (Ghana Institute of Language, Accra), Senegal (the Lycée Charles de Gaulle, Saint Louise) and Ivory Coast where she taught for a year in Bingerville. Condé then moved to London, where she took up a position as a program producer for the BBC and later to the Sorbonne as a course director.

She is the first Francophone Caribbean novelist whose works found a link between the English-speaking Caribbean and the colonial United States. Several of her plays have been performed in Paris and the West Indies, especially while she was pursuing her academic career at UC Berkeley, the University of Virginia, the University of Maryland, and Harvard. She arrived at Columbia in 1995.

In 1976, she published her first novel, *Hérémakhonon*. Her other famous novels include *Segou: Les murailles de terre* (1984), *Segou II: La terre en miettes* (1985), *Moi, Tituba, sorcière noire de Salem* (1986), *La vie scélérate* (1987). Her other novels include *Une saison à Rihata* (1981), *Traversée de la mangrove* (1989), *Les derniers rois mages* (1992), *La colonie du nouveau monde (The Colony of the New World)* (1993), *Désirada* (1998), *Land of Many Colors* (1999), *Nanna-ya* (1999), *Windward Heights* (1999),

Célanire Cou-Coupé: Roman Fantastique (2000) and *Histoire de la Femme Cannibale*(2003). Some of these works have been translated into different languages such as Japanese, Spanish, Portuguese, etc.

Maryse Condé wrote several plays. Among them are: *Dieu nous l'a donné* (1972), *Mort d'Olwemi D'Ajumako* (1973), *Pension les Alizes* (1988), *In the Time of Revolution* (1989) and *The Tropical Breeze Hotel*(1994). Maryse Condé is also a literary critic. Some of her critical works are *La Civilisation du Bossale* (1978), *Le profil d'une oeuvre* (1978) and *La Parole des femmes* (1979). She has also written short stories and children's literature: *The Children of Nya* (1989), *Victor et les barricades* (1989), *Le cœur à rire et à pleurer: contes vrais de mon enfance* (1999), *Tales from the Heart: True Tales from My Childhood* (2001), etc.

Maryse Condé - Guadeloupian novelist, playwright and critic-peopled her novels with characters drawn largely from her experiences in West Africa, Paris, and her native Guadeloupe. The thematic concerns of her novels focus on critical issues relating to personal human involvements in holy wars, national rivalries and migrations of peoples. In these novels, the protagonists are placed in situations where they are forced to decide between the existing social order and new cultural modes influenced by the West. Condé's characters serve as tools for her self-expression; she imbues them with their own unique voices that carry the weight of her own views on specific issues. These characters are often outcast, drifters, rebels and non-conformists rejected by society. Her novels also problematize the critical issues involved in cultural encounters, conflicts and the changes which instigate the new awareness her protagonists experience. According to Shelton (1993) in Condé's novels, essays, and interviews, one can retrace the evolution of her ideas on the question of identity both at the collective and personal level.

In *Héré-makhonon* (1976), Condé narrates the journey of Veronica, an Antillean student in search of her cultural roots in a newly independent West African country. While on her search, Veronica becomes involved with a powerful government official and a young school director who is opposed to the independence struggle in Africa. It was not until she eventually leaves the country that it dawns on her that there is a serious difference between her expectations about Africa and the realities she encountered. The setting of *Héré-*

makhonon was inspired by Condé's Guinean experiences in 1962. It was her experience in Guinea that constitutes the commencement of her deep political awareness, as well as her active involvement with Marxist militants. It was also the beginning of her awakening to her multicultural background. In her next two novels, *Segou: Les murailles de terre* (1984), and *Segou II: La terre en miettes* (1986), Condé brilliantly recreates the historical events that occurred in the West African kingdom of Segou (now Mali) between 1797 and 1860. These novels narrate the experiences and exploits of a royal family whose life was destroyed by slave trade, colonization, and the introduction of Islam and Christianity.

Moi, Tituba Sorcière (1986) (*I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem*) is also a historical novel, but unlike *Segou*, it is rooted in American history. The novel is specifically the story of a black slave woman from Barbados who was among those persecuted for witchcraft in the now famous witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts, during the late 1600s. Condé, through the novel's first-person narrative, explores American history to focus on the lives of slaves in Barbados and America as well as the persecution of women in puritan America. As a young girl, Tituba discovers her ability to achieve knowledge through herbal remedies. And she also has her personal spirits to call upon for guidance. Condé's imaginative subversion of historical records forms a critique of contemporary American society and its ingrained racism and sexism (Condé, 2009:3). In 1985, Condé was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to teach in the United States. In 1986, she also received the prestigious Le Grand Prix Littérature de la Femme for *Moi, Tituba, sorcière noire de Salem*. In addition, she was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1987-88 as well as a Puterbaugh Fellow in 1993. She is presently of the Department of French and Romance Philology at the of Columbia University in New York, where she doubles as the chair of the new Center for French and Francophone studies.

2.4.2 Simone Schwarz-Bart

Simone Schwarz-Bart was born in 1938 in Charente, to a mother/teacher and a military man of English origin (father) who left their father land for professional reasons. Her parents returned to Guadeloupe while Simone was just three years old. She attended a school at Pointe-à-Pitre, then in Paris and in Dakar. Her travelling around three continents actually influenced the creation of the heroic character in *Ti Jean L'horizon*. At age 18, in 1956, she met André Schwarz-Bart (born in 1928) in Paris, author of *Dernier des Justes*

(prix Goncourt 1959), a novel in which she followed up with the Genesis of what was of importance with regards to her writing career as a novelist. The presence and enthusiasm of Schwarz-Bart truly pushed Simone to writing. Her first literary piece, *Un plat de porc aux bananes vertes*, in 1967, is a work written in collaboration with her husband. She narrates the exile experience of Mariotte, an old Antillean pensioner in a Parisian hospice which draws her memories back to the child in the pages of a magazine. That novel announces the next stage of a romantic cycle of seven novels in the history of Guadeloupe, since the period of slavery to the contemporary age. The stories were not totally realistic but the duo did not abandon their love for writing novels. However, it marked the end to the couple co-authoring books. Nonetheless, they achieved quite a good mark as Caribbean writers. André Schwarz-Bart writes *La mulâtresse solitude* (1972), a novel is inspired by a well-known historic personality who participated in the revolt of the Black Guadeloupians in 1802. He traced everything back to the slavery that took place from 1760 to 1802. Simone Schwarz-Bart also wrote, simultaneously, *Pluie et vent sur Télumée Miracle* (1972) and *Ti Jean L'horizon* (1979). The two works talk about major characters which represent a community that must face the socio-historic changes taking place in the Caribbean society.

Simone Schwarz-Bart wrote novels, plays, articles and short stories. Her novels include: *Un plat de porc aux bananes vertes* (1967), *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* (1972) and *Ti Jean l'horizon* (1979). Her major play is *Ton beau capitaine* (1997) while she wrote the article « Hommage à la femme noire » (with André Schwarz-Bart) in 1989. She also wrote short stories including *Au fond des casseroles*, *Espoir et déchirements de l'âme créole*.

2.5 Critical works on Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart

A review of the works of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart, according to Mokwenye (2011), centers on the promotion of Africanness among Caribbeans. This he portrays in *Segou* (1984), where he views a people whose past was linked to Africa. In the same vein, in Maryse Condé's *Heremakhonon*, the focus is on a people who embarked on several journeys to Africa in search of self fulfillment. But, according to Mokwenye (2011), the journey ended in disillusion as their dream for liberation and independence was aborted.

Similarly, while analyzing Schwarz-Bart's *Ti Jean l'horizon*, Mokwenye (2011) captures the realities faced by today's Caribbeans who, according to him, still believe that they have a place in Africa. Schwartz –Bart tries to correct this erroneous belief through the life of Ti Jean who visited Africa like the other characters in Maryse Conde's novels with the mindset that Africa is his ancestral home. Rather than been accepted and welcomed, he was told that he is a slave and that welcoming a slave amounted to a taboo.

DaRocha (2015), in her critical works on Schwarz-Bart, sees Schwarz-Bart's work as a literature that aims at bringing out the pains and slavery of a miserable life in the sugar cane plantation. Her main focus is on the dejection and subjugation faced by the Caribbeans. On her part, Diliberto(2011) lays emphasis on the Caribbean woman's experience through her review of Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*. This, she did with the aim of giving the Caribbean woman the opportunity of telling her own version of the history of her people who are seen and considered ahistorical.

Williams (1986) is another researcher who views the work of Simone Schwarz-Bart from the perspective of seeking liberation for the Caribbean woman in a patriarchal society. Mokwenye (2009) equally reviews feminine condition in *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* as well as in Maryse Conde's *Une saison à Rihata*. He retorts that these authors through their works seek to pay homage to the Caribbean woman. His concern is mainly on the problem of inferiority complex which the Caribbean woman suffers with regards to the Whites.

Diliberto (2009) explores the issue of subjectivity in Maryse Conde's *Traversée de la Mangrove*. Her major focus is on the need for subjects to break out of their confines of small-minded prejudice, loneliness and resentment to a life of true happiness and freedom. For Diliberto, a life of happiness is dependent on the subject's attitudes towards subjectivity and marginalization. Katheleen (2009), in her review of some works of Maryse Conde and Simone Schwarz-Bart, focuses on reclaiming a voice for the Caribbean woman whom according to her, are agents of regeneration. She buttresses this assertion in her reading of Maryse Conde's *Moi Tituba, sorcière noire de Salem*, and Simone Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*. She pictures the woman in each of these novels as a rhizome growing stronger and regenerating even after been cut down. This implies that the sufferings

and agony faced by these women, rather than weaken them and cause them to resort to fate, make them to become more resolute in their desire to reclaim a feminine voice.

Manning (2004), in examining four of Maryse Conde's novels (namely *Traversée de la mangrove*, *Une saison à Rihata*, *Moi, Tituba sorcière noire de Salem* and *Desirada*) analyzes the concept of personal and collective cultural identity. She opines that a major feature in Maryse Conde's novels is the journeying of major characters in their quest for self-discovery. On his part, Pattieu (2016) asserts that the Caribbeans in order to restore their battered identity, the BUMIDOM was organized in 1963 through the help of Michael Debré with the objectives "d'encadrer et organiser les migrations venues des DOM [Département D'outre- Mer] d'échapper à une situation sociale très dégradée" (p.84) [organizing the migrants from the department d'Outre- Mer in order to escape from social degradation] (Our translation). But this escape, according to Pattieu (2018:83):

C'est une migration à caractère temporaire, coupée par des voyages familiaux dans le département d'origine, en un déracinement et, aucune solution n'intervenant le gouvernement est « rendu responsable d'une situation que les implantés dans DOM considèrent comme discriminatoire » (p.83).

It is a temporary movement, associated by journey of various families of the Department D'outre-Mer origin, desiring to deviate since there was no solution to their problem, with the government putting them in a situation considered discriminatory (our translation).

The basis of the migration was to seek aid from France to end all forms of discrimination and inequalities and to restore socio-economic and political ties. Like Pattieu, Maryse Condé at the end of her migration to France, was disillusioned as her aspirations and hopes were futile and she had to return to Guadeloupe to continue her quest. Ashcroft (2017) describes the movement between nations from postcolony to metropolis by capturing the essence of their movement in the term "transnation" thereby bringing about identitarian politics.

It is worthy of mention that much research into the works of Maryse Conde and Simone Schwarz-Bart have been done over the years and in recent times. This is to buttress

the fact that the works of these two Caribbean writers are a major tool in Francophone Caribbean literature especially as rewriting the history of the Caribbeans is concerned. However, the search for freedom and the quest for an identity of the Caribbeans left much to be achieved. Hence the present study.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The study of the search for freedom and the quest for identity in the Caribbean is most appropriately investigated using postcolonial theory as the framework.

In this chapter, attempts are made at discussing postcolonial theory as well as some of its basic concepts. Similarly, postcolonialism and literature will be considered as well as some literary concern of postcolonial studies.

3.1 An overview of postcolonial theory

The term postcolonial theory has been defined by different scholars. Lazare and Andries (2007) opine that for the past two decades, the field of postcolonialism has undergone an extensive criticism from various and several perspectives, including especially literary, political and religious studies. A radical viewpoint will see postcolonialism as a theoretical means of defiance by which all colonial exploitative and discriminative practices can be challenged and redressed. However, there are many scholars who consider postcolonial theory to be too ambiguous, ironic and compromised to be useful for the emancipation of the ex-colonies. For Tyson (2006), postcolonial theory has been involved in a rigorous conversation with postcolonial literature produced by a colonised society in response to colonial domination. And this is usually from the point of colonial contact to the postcolonial period.

Postcolonialism is a theory that aided the resistance of the colonised people against their oppressors. On his part, Kehinde (2010) argues that postcolonial African novelists deploy the narrative strategies of their novels to transgress colonial and postcolonial boundaries and for the subversion of hegemonic dynamics embedded in canonical literary

texts about African and Africans. Therefore, postcolonial theory could be said to denote a time of recuperation after the tragedy of colonisation as well as a signification of its ongoing cultural aftermaths. To buttress this assertion, Bill Aschcroft *et al* (1989) note that postcolonial criticism affects all cultures impacted by the imperial process. These colonized people could be said to be in a quest for cultural re-definition, re-discovery and re-birth in order to break loose from the legacies of colonialism.

Postcolonialism is a continuing trajectory of resistance and re-construction. It is a theory which involves discussions about previously mentioned experiences of various kinds such as slavery, displacement, emigration, resistance, representation, difference, racial and cultural discrimination and gender which together form the complex fabric of the field. The study of postcolonial theory will not be complete without epitomising the major works of the pioneering scholars including Memmi, Fanon, Césaire and their successors such as Said, Bhabha, Spivak and Chakrabarty.

Postcolonial theory, according to Kehinde (2010), is a critical or literary approach to the postcolonial literature of ex-colonies, especially in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. It can also be viewed as a literature written in or by citizens of colonized countries that takes colonies or their people as its subject matter. The theory is based around concepts of alterity and resistance. Mustag *et al.*, (2018) view postcolonialism as that field of literary study that deals with the social and cultural heritage of colonial and imperial powers which focuses on the impact of hegemonic control and exploitation of the people who were colonized.

Postcolonial theory became part of the critical methodologies in the 1970s, and many scholars have credited Edward Said's *Orientalism* as being the founding work of postcolonialism. A postcolonial study is an academic discipline that analyses, explains, and responds to the cultural legacy of slavery, colonialism and imperialism. Postcolonialism speaks about the human consequences of the control and economic exploitation of native people and their lands. Drawing deeply from postmodernism and its critical tools, postcolonial studies attempt the deconstruction of the politics of knowledge sustained by Eurocentrism through a rigorous engagement with the functional frameworks of political power that sustain colonialism and neocolonialism. Postcolonialism also instigates critical perspectives that speak to the re-invention of a culture by challenging denigrating narratives

expounded during the colonial era. As a critical discourse, it highlights the ideological foundations of colonialism and neo-colonialism, and their place in history, political science, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and human geography. It also critically articulates the consequences of colonization on the cultural dynamics of the colonies and its treatment of women, language, literature and humanity. As an epistemology, postcolonialism addresses the politics of knowledge production, especially as it pertains to the appropriation of postcolonial identity. This constitution of postcolonial identity derives first from the coloniser's determination of the production of cultural knowledge about the colonized native people; and second, on how that knowledge was applied to subjugate and exploit.

According to Lye Ghandi (1998), postcolonialism destabilises the theories and frameworks by which the colonialists “perceive”, “understand”, and “know” the world. In doing this, postcolonial theory clears some intellectual spaces for subaltern and colonized people to speak for themselves, in their own voices, and thus produce enabling cultural discourses that undermine the binary opposition between the colonizers and the colonized. Proponents of postcolonialism also interrogate the ways in which postcolonial writers reclaim and articulate cultural identities that had once been denigrated. They examine ways in which colonial literature had been used to justify colonialism through the perpetuation of images of the colonized as inferior.

Similarly, Abdul Jan Mohammed (2008), cited by Kehinde (2010), deploys the Manichean framework for understanding the colonizers' perception of the colonial world. In the Manichean allegory, the world is divided into mutually excluding opposites corresponding to black and white: while the orient is evil, lazy, dirty, feminine and deeply irrational, the West is essentially good, rational, ordered and rational. Contrary to the monolithic viewpoint embedded in the Manichean allegory, colonized people are highly diverse in their nature and in their traditions; and as beings in cultures, they are both ‘constructed’ and ‘changing’, so that while they may be the ‘other’ from the colonisers, they are also different from one another and from their own past. Totalizing concepts, like black consciousness, Indian soul, aboriginal culture, and so forth would therefore not do justice to the diversity embedded in the understanding of the colonial world and its cultures therefore,

for Mohammed these ‘totalisation’ and ‘essentialisation’ are often a form of mystification that unifies the colonisers and the colonized.

Homi Bhabha (1997), in Kehinde (2010), opines, on the complex issue of representation and meaning of culture and argues that culture constitutes a survival strategy which is simultaneously transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement, from the middle passage to indenture, the civilising mission, the fraught Third World migration to the West after the Second World War, to the traffic of economic and political refugees within and outside the Third World. Culture is also translational because such spatial histories of displacement now seconded by the territorial ambitions of global media technologies complicates the question of how culture signifies. For Bhabha, therefore, postcolonialism and postcolonial studies analyses and respond to the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism.

Bill Ashcroft’s postcolonial utopianism was adopted for this study to demonstrate how the Caribbeans develop aspiration for freedom in the future. The word utopia, according to Ashcroft (2018), is a term for an ideal, whether achievable or not. It is the embodiment of social aspirations to a perfect community. Baudemann(2018) also asserts that utopias are often set in the future, while utopianism cannot exist without the memory since the memory is not about recovering a past that was present but about the production of possibility. To Niezen(2016), utopianism is a literary form that describes the essential features of an ideal future society. It refers to the dreams and aspirations of a people for an ideal future. It is this ideal future that characters in Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart’s novels seek. To them, the dreams and aspiration of an ideal Caribbean society devoid of all forms of marginalization, oppression and segregation is possible.

3.2 Key concepts of postcolonial theory

A better comprehension of postcolonial studies requires the knowledge of its concepts. This is so because the concepts furnish the reader with the preoccupations of the theory. Some of the key concepts of postcolonial studies as postulated by Ashcroft *et al* (2007) are: Aboriginal /indigenous people, Abrogation, Agency, Borderlands,

Blackstudies/Black consciousness, Caribbean/West Indian, Colonialdesire, Creole, Creolization, Dislocation, Empire, Exile, Fanonism, Negritude, Other, Rhizome, Slave/Slavery, Subaltern, Subject/Subjectivity, Testimonio, etc.

An in-depth understanding of these concepts will broaden the reader's horizon of postcolonial theory and its applications.

3.3 Postcolonial theory and literature

Bill Ashcroft (2012:1) defines postcolonial theory as “that branch of contemporary theory that investigates and develops propositions about, the cultural and political impacts of European conquest upon colonized societies, and the nature of those societies’ responses.” Postcolonial literature often addresses the problems and consequences of the decolonization for a country, especially questions relating to the political and cultural independence. Postcolonial literature shares some significant concerns.

3.4. Literary concerns of postcolonial theory

One of the concerns of postcolonial literature is to develop a new language to seek a redress to the problems arising from the fractious relationships between local and global forces (Ashcroft *et al*, 2007). This is because the impact of colonization on the culture of the colonized people left a demoralizing consequence on the politics and cultural heritage of these people ranging from their language, dressing, religions, films, theatre to the writing of their history. Hence, postcolonial literature seeks a standard way of doing things thereby seeking a redefinition of the aftermaths of slavery and colonization.

Similarly, the literature is concerned with the effects of racial discrimination. Due to the outcome of slavery and exile in racially discriminated groups such as the Caribbeans who are mainly migrants with a majority of them being descendants of slavery, postcolonial study, according to Sawant (2015), aims at redefining, reformulating and reconstructing the colonized self. The impulse of this hinges on the fact that although the colonized people got their independence as officially declared, colonialism still rules their psychology. This is evident in their lifestyle and literature as the literature of the colonizer was used as a tool to manipulate and set the rules for the colonized.

Furthermore, postcolonial study is concerned with placing a ban on all forms of subjugation and marginalization through the literature of the colonized people. This act is buttressed in Edward Said's *Orientalism* where, according to Sawant (2015), Said depicts the imbalance between the West and East by applying concepts such as 'Orient' 'the other' and 'accident' to show a great level of marginalization and discrimination between two distinct cultures. Bertens (2007) advocates a ban on the attribution of inferiority to the East and superiority to the West in all its ramifications.

Moreover, a major concern of postcolonial literature is to end all forms of female domination and exploitation. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), an important figure in the field of postcolonial theory, reiterates this point in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* where she points out the fact that women are doubly exploited in a male dominated society. This goes to buttress the fact that postcolonial literature is concerned about the plight of women in a patriarchal society where women are seen as inferior to men.

The ultimate concern of postcolonial literature is to combat the effects of slavery and colonialism on the cultures of the colonized. It seeks a world of mutual respects for all, irrespective of tribe and race and to put an end to all forms of mimicry.

In conclusion, postcolonial literature refers to all literary works that have been published since the abolition of the colonial era. These works touch all countries that were under colonial rule in Africa, Europe, Asia and beyond. They are unique in the sense that it brought a dawn into the different literary genres that exists especially in Africa which has produced a huge amount of postcolonial literature and scholars. Postcolonial theory and literature pursue not merely the inclusion of the marginalized literature of colonial people into dominant canon and discourse, it also offers a fundamental critics of the ideology of colonial domination while seeking to undo the "'imaginative geography' of Orientalist thought that produced conceptual as well as economic divides between 'West and East', 'civilised and uncivilised', 'First and Third Worlds'" (Gbenoba and Okoregbe, 2014: 277).

3.5 Methodology

Textual analysis is adopted for this study as it will aid in applying postcolonial theory in selected Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart's novels as it affects the

Caribbean quest for freedom and identity. In order to attain an unbiased and in-depth analysis of the selected novels namely; *Une Saison à Rihata*, *Traversée de la mangrove* (Maryse Condé), *Pluie et vent sur Telumée Miracle*, *Ti Jean l'horison* (Simone Schwarz - Bart), the French “explication de texte” is adopted as methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

INDICES OF COLONIAL/POSTCOLONIAL OPPRESSION AND SLAVERY IN THE SELECTED NOVELS

4.0. INTRODUCTION

In a world where everything negative is associated with the Blacks and the Blacks have been relegated by colonial myths, the works of postcolonial critics like Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart are of paramount relevance in the re-birth and re-awakening of a people who have been brainwashed over time so that they denounce all forms of colonialism and its logics. Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz Bart, through their works have every right to imagine that a new Caribbean nation would be born free of the old demons of racism, colonial exploitation, oppression and slavery. The portrayal of oppression and subjectivity as depicted by Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz Bart via the selected texts could be summed up as an attempt to expose the ills of colonialism, reject colonial domination and oppression, promote resistances of colonized people against their oppressors, expose the oddities of colonialism and break hegemonic boundaries that create unequal relations of power, thereby creating the desire for the fight for freedom and a quest for identity.

4.1 Portrayal of oppression and subjectivity in the four selected novels

Oppression and subjectivity run through the pages of the four selected novels as the authors seek to expose the agony of the colonized Caribbeans.

In Simone Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*, we see a people whose life has over time been characterised by slavery and all forms of oppression. Schwarz-Bart speaks of a people who have, due to the legacy of slavery, concluded thus:

...mon cher, un blanc est blanc et rose, le bon Dieu est blanc et rose et où se trouve un blanc, c'est là que se tient la lumière ... le nègre est une réserve de péchés dans le monde, la créature même du diable. (p.215)

...my dear, a whiteman is simple and open, the Good Lord is white and simple and you find a White man, only where there is light...the blackman is a container full of the sins of the world, the creature of devil himself. (Our translation)

Psychologically, the Blacks see the White as god himself. "le bon Dieu est blanc" while the blacks are considered devils. In the light of the above, Schwarz-Bart's *Ti-Jean l'horizon* further reiterates the fact that even God does not like the Blacks:

Le bon Dieu ne nous aime pas car nous sommes des batards, tandis que les blancs sont ses véritables enfants...le nègre est à lui-même sa malédiction, un lunatique, ...un sauvage juste bon à faire des cabrioles et des grimaces (pp.49-50).

The good lord does not love us, the bastards, whereas the Whites are His true children... Negros are to themselves a bad omen, a lunatic... a wild one only useful at jumbling and pulling faces (Our translation)

In Maryse Condé's *Une saison à Rihata*, the Blacks are equally seen and considered as worthless. The one born by a Black is described and considered a bastard. This is visible in the discussion among the women in 'Rivière au sel':

-Qu'est-ce qu'elle croit?Non, qu'est-ce qu'elle croit ? Est-ce qu'elle oublie qu'elle sort du ventre d'une Nègresse noire comme toi et moi ? Est-ce qu'elle oublie qu'elle est bâtarde avec ça? (p.83)

What does she believe? No, what does she believe? Has she forgotten that she was born of the womb of a Negro like you and I? Has she forgotten that with that she is a bastard? (Our translation)

As far as these people are concerned, any one born of the Black is of no value. To them, nothing is good about being a Black. This mindset of the people is borne out of the aftermaths of colonialism. To them, the colour of one's skin determines one's status. They believe that one is poor either because he/she is born black, or miserable due to the skin colour, as black to them connotes sorrow. This conception, Maryse Condé seeks to address in *Traversée de la Mangrove* with the arrival of Francis Sancher on the Island. The inhabitants of Rivière au Sel react thus:

Je sais que sur le cœur des Nègres, la lumière de la bonté ne brille jamais. Tout de même ! Je me demande ce qu'on pouvait reprocher à Francis Sancher qui était bon comme le pain. (p.83)

I know that in the heart of the Blacks the light of kindness no longer shines. All the same! I ask myself why one is putting the blame on Francis who was as kind as bread.
(Our translation)

As part of the effects of colonialism, it is believed that the Blacks are evil and represent darkness; hence at the arrival of Francis Sancher on the Island with all his kind gestures to the people of the Island, they began to marvel at the possibility of having a kind hearted Black man. As far as they were concerned, the Black skinned man denotes evil. This brain washing is as a result of colonialism. To reverse this colonial conditioning of the mind according to Eke (2006) is one of the major preoccupations of postcolonial theory. In the same vein, due to the belief that the Whites are superior to the Blacks in all its ramifications, if the Blacks must survive, they must, of necessity, cultivate the lands of the Whites. Schwarz Bart's *Ti-Jean l'horizon* portrays a people whose survival depends on working for the Whites depicting the extent of slavery and oppression these people are subjected to.

La plupart travaillaient sur la terre des Blancs, savanne dominées par la flèche des cannes à sucre et coteaux gras plante en bananes ... la vie quotidienne ne différait guère de ce que les plus anciens avaient connu du temps de l'esclavage... (p.13)

Majority work on the lands of the Whites, Savanna dominated by sugar cane flowers and hills with

bananas...the daily lives is not in any way different from the past lives of their ancestors during the era of slavery
(Our translation)

The Blacks have been so taught to believe that their existence is solely dependent on the White. If they must continue to exist, they have no choice but to remain as slaveworkers in the industries of the Whites. Let's hear Télumée in Schwarz-Barts' *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*: «Si je ne voulais pas mourir de faim, avant la récolte, il me fallait rentrer dans les champs de cannes de l'Usine» (p.195). If I do not want to die of starvation, before harvest, it is necessary that I return to the sugar cane farm industry (Our translation)

In *Une Saison à Rihata*, Condé mirrors a people whose mentality has been battered by slavery and colonization. For instance, Zek's father had no regard for his wives and children; he treats them as though they were slaves. The after effects of slavery and colonialism is vivid in the culture of the people of Rihata as they have been made to believe that the wives and children are not in anyway different from some acquired slaves;

Son père avait été un homme inflexible, traitant ses épouses comme des enfants ou des esclaves. Il n'hésitait pas à les frapper et à les renvoyer chez elle. (p.20)

His father was a hard man, treating his wives as either children or slaves. He does not hesitate to flog them and send them back to their parents.
(Our translation)

The women, from the above discourse could be referred to as the subalterns; the voiceless and oppressed at the mercies of their husbands. Sokambi; Zek's mother also recounts her experience;

...ne jamais regarder son mari dans les yeux, lui parler en baissant la voix, toujours le servir et surtout ne jamais lui être infidèle (p.16).

...never looks at one's husband in the eyes, always serves him, never raises one's voice at him when talking and remain faithful to him all the time. (Our translation)

The aftermath of colonialism on the Caribbeans further brought about the preference for white skinned. Both Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart have through their works,

namely *Traversée de la mangrove*, *Une Saison à Rihata*, *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* and *Ti-Jean l'horizon*, given a remarkable example of the damages done by colonialism. This is visible as the characters in their texts consider black as evil, thus preferring to think, speak and act like the White: «... des hommes parlant les langues des Blancs, ayant manières des Blancs et n'était plus africain que de nom» (p.50) [...men speak the language of the Whites, behaving like the Whites and are only African by the name they bear.]

It is worthy of note that, the preference for the white was such that marrying a Negro was seen as a sacrilege. This is depicted in Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove*, where Gabriel a young man was sent out of his family and disowned by his parents for marrying a black woman. According to the text, he was 'chassé par sa famille parce qu'il s'était marié avec une négresse'. In the same vein, Francis Sanchers, had a similar problem due to his marriage with a black woman...

C'était un Béké de la Martinique qui a épousé une Nègresse.
A cause de cela, sa famille l'a renié et il est venu s'installer à
la Guadeloupe. (p.99)

He was a half caste who married a black woman. As a result,
he was ostracised by his family and he came to settle in
Guadeloupe. (Our translation)

As far as these people were concerned, being born by a black woman, spells misfortune. Emile Etienne, in *Traversée de la mangrove*, reiterates that his childhood days were without any joy because of his birth. "... sorti du ventre d'une malheureuse" (p. 238) [Out of the womb of a poor woman.] (Our translation)

Deprivation and exclusion are the basic features of colonialism. The Blacks were deprived of their freedom and made to believe that their place was worthless and that fortune lies with the Whites. Let's hear them in *Ti-Jean l'horizon*.

Ils disent que la vie est ailleurs, prétendant même que cette
poussière d'île a le don de rapetisser toute chose... (p.10)

They say that life is somewhere else, arguing that the dust on
this Island has the gift of reducing the value of everything.
(Our translation)

These people have been made to see their land as one that has nothing good to offer them. That is why they considered and described their land thus;

A vrai dire c'est une lèche de terre sans importance et son histoire a été une fois pour toute, insignifiante par les spécialistes. (p.9)

The fact is that, it is a cursed land without importance and its story has been without significance as stated by specialists (Our Translation).

4.2 Dynamics of Freedom and Identity quest in Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la Mangrove*

Freedom and identity quest is a major constituent of Caribbean literature. This is because, it takes a person with an identity to crave for freedom. Hence, Sanusi (2011) remarks that a lot of Caribbean writers with diverse talents and ideologies seek a better life for the Caribbeans through their works. Such authors include Maryse Condé, Simone Schwarz-Bart, Edouard Glissant, Patrick Chamoiseau, Raphaël Confiant, Gisele Pineau, Celine Agnant, and a host of others. Among these authors, Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart form the basis of our discourse. Efforts will be made at examining the thematic thrust of freedom and identity quest in Maryse Condé's *Une Saison à Rihata* and *Traversée de la Mangrove* side by side with Simone Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Têlumée miracle* and *Ti Jean L'horizon*.

Maryse Condé portrays a people whose identity is unknown, thus, they set out in search of their identity. This is evident with the arrival of Francis Sancher on the Island.

D'où sortait –il, cet homme-là ? Est-ce qu'on répond aux questions de quelqu'un qu'un ne connaît ni d'Eve ni d'Adam? (p.31)

Where did this man come from? Can someone respond to a question relating to one whom one knows nothing about? (Our translation)

There were several misconceptions of Francis' identity. Nobody, including Francis could tell his true identity. The people on the Island remarked thus :

En réalité, Francis Sancher aurait tué un homme dans son pays et aurait empêché son magot. Ce serait un trafiquant de drogue dure, un de ceux que la police postée à Marie Galente... Ce qu'était sûr, c'est que les revenus de Francis Sancher étaient d'origine louche. (p.59)

In reality, Francis Sancher must have killed a man in his country and got away with his wealth. He is likely to be a dealer of hard drug, one of those the police at Marie Galente may be after... What was actually true is that Francis Sancher's income was from obscure sources.

(Our translation)

It is this misconception about the Caribbean identity that Maryse Condé tries to erase in *Traversée de la mangrove*. She did this, through the voice of Moses; the mail man:

Sa famille vient d'ici et il cherche ses traces. C'étaient des békés qui ont fui après l'abolition. (p.61)

His family is from here and he is in search of his origin. They were half casts who escaped after the abolition.

(Our translation)

The inhabitants of 'Rivière au sel' are uncomfortable with the arrival of Francis Sancher whom they know nothing about and who also knew nothing about his identity. Francis felt he will be welcomed on the Island but the reception he got was quite bizarre. He therefore lamented.

Tu ne sais pas qui je suis, cela m'étonne ! Les gens de Rivière au sel racontent toutes qualités d'histoire sur mon compte. Ils me fuient comme la peste, personne ne me parle. (p.59)

You do not know who I am, this surprises me! People of Rivière au sel say all forms of stories about me. They avoid me like a pest, nobody talks to me

(Our translation)

Francis further observed that, in his freedom quest to the Island, everyone detests him;

Les gens de Rivière au Sel ne m'aiment pas. Les femmes récitent leurs prières à la Sainte Vierge quand elles croisent mon chemin. Les hommes se rappellent leurs rêves de la nuit

quand ils ont honte. Alors, ils me bravent des yeux pour cacher leur désir. (p.57)

The people of Riviere au sel do not like me. The women say their prayers to the virgin saint when they pass by me. Men remember their dreams of the night when they are ashamed. Therefore, they avoid my eyes in order to hide their desires. (Our translation)

The idea of searching for freedom and identity as exemplified in *Une Saison à Rihata* spans through various aspects of the characters in the novel. There is the search for personal identity as depicted by Christophe; a young boy who desires to find the root of his biological father. There is also the search for collective identity and freedom as mirrored by Madou who came to Rihata in his quest for political freedom for his people. Also, is Marie-Hélène; who, in her search for freedom from her life's bitter experiences, desires to find her root through her marriage and love life. Summarily, all these characters have a common goal which is the quest for their origin and identity no matter the hurdles. To this end, one could say that these characters, desire to break loose from the claws of colonial domination politically, culturally and otherwise in the bid to affirming a culture and politics that is purely Antillean. According to Irele (1997:10) as cited by Tunde Ayeleru (2011):

These themes range from revolt against colonial domination in its political, cultural and moral aspect, to a defense and a revaluation of Africa and its people and culture, and the cultivation of a mystique of black race. The central motivation of this literature can be seen as the quest for a westernised and alienated black elite for an identity and by consequence, their effort to affirm their racial belonging. (p.10)

Therefore, in order to revolt against political domination and fight for a defense and revaluation of the Caribbean people, their culture and identity Madou remarks thus;

Je suis dans le gouvernement, j'ai accepté d'y être parce que je l'ai compris on ne pourrait jamais rien changer que de l'intérieur. Tous ceux qui ont essayé d'agir contre Toumany de l'extérieur, ont été jetés en prison, exécutés où alors contraints de s'exiler. C'est que leurs méthodes n'étaient pas bonnes. Il faut tenter de transformer le régime de l'intérieur... (p.53)

I am in Government, I accepted to be there because I understood that one can never change anything except when one is in the government. All those who have attempted to go against Toumany without being in the government, were imprisoned, executed or forced to go on exile. The fact is that their approach was not good. It is necessary to change the government from within
(Our translation)

Much more than being in the government of Toumany, Madou's primary desire, from his speech as stated above, reveals his quest for political freedom. Consequently, he has to travel back home because, according to him, the fight for freedom can only be achievable if he fights from within.

Marie-Helen is another very captivating character in Maryse Conde's *Une saison a Rihata*. Maryse Condé presents her in the novel, according to Manning (2004), as being discontented, disgruntled and imprisoned in a cage of low self-esteem. This is borne out of the racial segregation she suffered at her arrival at Rihata with her husband. She is represented in the text as an unhappy and a pitiful woman. This is evident in her relationship with Zek. Her marriage with Zek is actually based on her desire for freedom and identity and to free herself from physical abuse and frustration "...plus ses frustrations, ses impatiences, ses humeurs, l'avaient travaillée au point que personne, Zek excepté, n'osait l'approcher..." (p.23). Therefore, her relationship with Zek was greatly linked to her freedom quest.

Elle n'avait que lui, il était à la fois sa victime et son bourreau. Il la sauvait, la guérissait pour l'exposer à des souffrances et des dangers plus grands. Comme s'il ne rechercherait pas son bonheur et ne pouvait pas l'aimer que partagée, angoissée, à la dérive (p. 34).

All she had was him, he was at the same time her victim and her executioner. He was saving her, healing her just to expose her to much suffering and danger. As if he did not actually want her happiness or couldn't but love her, separated from her, or angered and drifted away from her.
(Our translation)

Marie-Hélène therefore finds solace in Zek. In the struggle for freedom from a life of nepotism and solitude in France, she meets Zek whom she thinks was concerned about her quest for survival and freedom:

...de la prendre dans ses bras et de lui faire habilement l'amour. Ce plaisir qu'elle ne savait pas refuser lui était une torture. C'était son seul refuge contre la solitude extrême, la vieillesse toute proche, la folie peut-être (p.109).

... to hold her in his hands and make love with her nicely.
This pleasure that she could hardly refuse was like torture.
It was her only refuge against extreme solitude, approaching old age, mental issues perhaps.
(Our translation)

Berrian (1991: 9) notes that “Marie –Hélène did not have to marry Zek but she lacked the courage to be self- independent in Paris after her sister’s suicide”. It is worthy of mention that Marie- Hélène is the principal cause of the death of her sister due to her secret love affair with her sister’s husband. Her sister, upon discovering that Marie-Hélène was having an affair with her husband could not live with the shock, and resorted to committing suicide. Marie-Hélène therefore, could be seen and considered as one in desperate need for freedom at all costs. Her desire for freedom, led her into having affairs with two brothers: Zek and Madou. Marie-Hélène, one could say, believes strongly that marriage would open the door of her freedom and identity quest.

Another interesting character in search for freedom and identity in the text is Christophe, the nephew of Marie-Hélène. His mother, Delphine, committed suicide in Paris out of frustration upon knowing that Marie-Hélène her sister was having a sexual relationship with Olnel; her lover and father of Christophe. Christophe grew up not knowing anything about his root. The only person who could help him out in his identity quest is Marie-Hélène. But Marie-Hélène is skeptical about revealing the truth about his identity to him for fear that upon his discovery of his true identity, his love for her will turn into outright hatred:

Ah comment aurait-elle pu survivre à cette défaite? Elle avait préférée se coucher et mourir. Pouvait-on raconter cette histoire à Christophe? Ce serait peut-être porter un coup fatal

à l'équilibre, à la paix De son esprit? Il deviendrait amer. Il s'éloignerait d'elle. Il la haïrait peut-être. Cela, Marie-Hélène ne pourrait le supporter (p. 80-81).

Ah, how can she survive this defeat? She had preferred to sleep and die. Can one tell this story to Christophe? This could perhaps not augur well for him. He would become bitter. He would stay far from her. He would hate her perhaps. This, Marie-Hélène may not be able to bear.
(Our translation)

From the above quotation, Maryse Condé describes Christophe as a prisoner who is surrounded by walls, thereby making it difficult and nearly impossible for him to trace his identity and experience freedom. « Il se sentait comme un prisonnier entouré d'un mur » (p.17). In the same vein, Zek's mother describes Christophe as a bastard when she said “un bâtard traité comme un véritable héritier” (p.17) Christophe was conscious of the fact that the only way to become self-sufficient in the society is for him to first discover himself. But he laments the possibility of this desire :

Comment devenir un homme quand on ne connaît pas son passé? Quand on ne sait d'où l'on vient? ... Alors, comment aller plus loin? Il se prit la tête à deux mains. Qui pourrait le renseigner?(p.38-39)

How does one become a man without knowing his past? When one does not know where he is coming from? ... Then, how far can he go? He is neither here nor there. Who would give him the needed information?
(Our translation)

The knowledge of Christophe history, to a great extent, would have helped him in his quest. According to Max Jeane in Ojebun (2008 :24), «La connaissance du passé peut éclairer la lutte de l'avenir et aider à la compréhension et à la maîtrise de certaines situations au présent.»

Madou, Zek's brother is another character Maryse Condé portrays in the text as one seeking for liberation for his people. Madou came to Rihata with the mindset of bringing a renaissance to the people of Rihata due to the political oppression they were experiencing under the regime of Toumany who could best be described as a tyrant at that time. Madou's mission is described thus:

Madou bien que ...ne venait pas à Rihata pour s'occuper de riz ... Il semblait incarner la nouvelle race d'hommes qui prendrait le pouvoir des mains de Toumany et ramènerait le sourire pour toutes les lèvres. (p.41)

Madou such as...did not come to Rihata to cultivate rice...it was like the incarnation of a new race of men that will take power from the hands of Toumany and restore smile on the lips of the people.
(Our translation)

From the above citation, Madou's arrival in Rihata was not for pleasure, but to restore the fortune of the inhabitants of Rihata and to bring about political freedom to a marginalized people whose culture and identity have been subjugated and termed inferior.

There is however, no doubt that Maryse Condé's *Une saison à Rihata* portrays a set of people in quest for freedom and identity at various levels ranging from self-discovery and collective freedom to political liberation.

4.3 Postcoloniality in Simone Schwarz-Bart's *Ti Jean L'horizon*

Postcoloniality, in the words of Eke (2006), refers to the condition of existence and interaction that is made possible by the continuing and dominant effects of a colonial past that has been mapped into a neo-colonial present. These effects could be seen through the pleasures of subjectivity as a result of inferiority complex, shaped by personal journeys, attachments, memories and losses as portrayed in the four selected novels.

Ti Jean is the protagonist in the novel as a result of his love for his people whom he felt were being marginalised and subjugated due to slavery. He could be considered as the intellectual whom according to Tidjani-Serpos (1996: 8) "prête sa plume au non-dit" representing the voiceless people on the Island. He thereby embarks on a trip to the underworld all in a bid to find freedom for his oppressed people who know only but darkness, bitterness, poverty and enslavement. He remarks thus :

La vie quotidienne ne différait guère de ce que les plus anciens avaient connu du temps de l'esclavage. La forme et la disposition des cases remontaient à cette époque et leur pauvreté, allure de misère: simple boîte posées sur quatre

roches comme pour souligner la précarité de l'ampliation du nègre sur le sol du Guadeloupe. (p.13)

The daily life was hardly different from what the older people had known during the time of slavery. The forms and disposition of huts attest to the poverty and misery in this era: simple boxes on four stones like indicating the precariousness of the sad state of the Black in Guadeloupe. (Our translation)

In order to rewrite the history of the people on the Island of Font Zombi and to erase from their mentality the wrong notion of slavery and colonialism about Font Zombi as "...une lèche de terre sans importance et son histoire a été jugée une fois toute insignifiante pour les specialists" (p.9). [...an earthworm without importance and whose history has been judged once insignificant by the specialists], Ti Jean embarks on a freedom and identity quest.

It is evident that Ti Jean's quest for freedom and identity is borne out of his desire to reaffirm the fact that the battered identity of the Caribbeans can be rebirthed. He is optimistic that the inhabitants of the Island of Font Zombi whose identity has been dented due to the aftermaths of slavery and colonization could be redefined.

Moreso, the impulse of Ti Jean's quest is further strengthened when the inhabitants of Font Zombi consider him as the hero who would restore fortune to them. They said :

...mais celui qui ouvrit les plus grands yeux, ce fut notre héros, Ti Jean qui semblait enfin contempler le secret vainement cherche sous la terre au creux des troncs d'arbres et dans les livres ramène une ou deux saisons de l'école ...se décide à prendre le soleil? (p. 34)

...but he who opened the biggest of eyes, is our hero, Ti Jean who seems to finally contemplated vainly the secret, searched under the earth beneath the roots of trees and in the books brought one or two seasons of the school ...decided to take the sun? (Our translation)

"Prendre le soleil" in this context, is to restore the lost glory of the inhabitants of the Island who have been living in total darkness having sacrificed their comfort for the pleasure of their colonial master. Despite their sacrifices, all they get in return was oppression:

...nous avons construit leurs usines à sucre, nous avons cultivé leur terres et bâtir leurs maisons et ils nous ont frappées, assommés ... jusqu'à ce que nous ne sachions plus si nous appartenons au monde des hommes ou à celui des vents, du vide et du néant (p.51)

...we constructed their sugar factory, we tilled the earth for them and build their houses and they beat us back hard... until we don't even know any longer if we belong to the world of humans or of the wind, or of total emptiness.
(Our translation)

From the above, it is obvious that the state of the inhabitants of Font Zombi became so poor that they could no longer decipher where they belong to (lost identity). They have, according to Fanon (1952) had been brainwashed to believe that the Whites are superior to the Blacks. Ti Jean reiterates the fact that freedom and identity quest is essential and very possible for the Caribbean:

En vérité, nous avons voulu être des dieux et nous nous sommes conduits comme de vieilles femmes édentées, et maintenant cette Maudite vache règne sur le monde et nous sommes plus impuissants que jamais (p.115)

Truly, we wanted to be like gods and we conducted ourselves like toothless old women, and now this accursed queen of the world has made us powerless like never.
(Our translation)

From the words of Ti Jean, one can infer that the Caribbeans who have long been subjugated and marginalised by the Whites feel the desire for a renaissance. This is affirmed in Ti Jean's conversation with some of the elders of Fond-Zombi when he said:

... notre petit Fond-Zombi de trois pieds-six pouces, qui n'était même pas connu de toutes les bonnes gens de Guadeloupe? Vrai, tout cela est-il bien raisonnable? (p.117)

... our small Fond-Zombi of three legs-six pounds, which was not even known to all the good people of Guadeloupe? True, is all this reasonable?
(Our translation)

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the quest for freedom and the possibility of self-identification for the inhabitants of Font-Zombi being spearheaded by Ti Jean will help

to project into limelight the people whose race has suffered assaults and cultural prejudice from time immemorial. If the subalterns in Font-Zombi must be seen and heard, then their minds must be decolonised and their nativity be rejuvenated in order to achieve full emancipation and socio-political independence.

Furthermore, Ti Jean is resolute in his quest for freedom and identity. This is so because of his desire to free his fellow Caribbean brothers from the clutches of slavery, colonisation and racial discrimination in the hands of the white beast who, according to the inhabitants of Font-Zombi, describe the place of the Caribbeans thus: "...ton chemin est parmi ceux d' en- bas et il se nomme tristesse, obscurite, Malheur et sang" (p. 65). Following the humiliation and degradation of the Caribbean race, Ti Jean decides against all odds to seek an identity and status for his people. Hence, he says : "c'est pour éclairer leur âme, leur propre âme avant celle du monde, dit le proverbe, tandis qu'à vouloir ramener le soleil sur la terre" (p. 90). The "soleil" Ti Jean seeks for his people is figuratively speaking of freedom. As far as Ti Jean is concerned, the people of Font-Zombi are living in the dark and there is the need for light to be restored if they must break out of the appalling legacy bequeathed them by slavery and colonisation. To attain this victory, Ti Jean must stick out his neck; act bravely because, according to Fanon (1952:177) «... c'est seulement par le risque qu'on conserve la liberté ». It is with this mindset that he is able to forge ahead in the struggle for freedom even when he is confronted with the death of Awa, his lover. Also, when the elders felt the struggle was not worth the fight, Ti Jean reassures them thus;

...dites-lui que nous sommes peut-être la branche coupée de l'arbre, une branche emportée par le vent, oubliée; mais tout cela aurait bien fini par envoyer des racines un jour, et puis un troc et de nouvelles branches avec des feuilles, des fruits ... (p. 248)

...tell him that we are perhaps the branch cut off from the tree, a branch taken by the wind, forgotten, but all this would have been resolved by sending back the roots, and the stem and new branches with leaves and fruits... (Our translation)

Ti Jean's response to the elders is a proof that the lost identity of the inhabitants of Font-Zombi, which is likened to the branches of a plant that has been cut off, will someday

sprout again with beautiful leaves and fruits. Ti Jean's desires could be summed up in these words of Fanon (1952: 187):

Moi, l'homme de couleur, je ne veux qu'une chose ...que cesse à jamais l'asservissement de l'homme par l'homme. C'est-à-dire de moi par un autre. Qu'il me soit permis de découvrir et de vouloir l'homme, où qu'il se trouve.

I, a Negro, want but one thing... that a stop be put to the enslavement of man by man, that is, of me by another. That, it should be permitted of me to discover and want man, wherever he is found. (Our translation)

4.4 Postcolonial reflection on Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*

Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle (the Bridge of Beyond), is Schwarz-Bart Simone's first novel. It is a piece of writing where the author tries to portray a people with the destructive legacy that slavery has brought through several generations. It equally hinges on the tradition and belief system of a people whose life is characterised with pains and unhappiness. *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*, according to an online source, is a fictional autobiography written in the voice of its heroine, Télumée. She tells of the life in the Caribbeans at the turn of the last century. Télumée is a character drawn from Bart's memory of the Guadeloupien village where she grew up with her grandmother and sister. Approaching the end of her days, she tells the story of her life, a narrative nearing epic proportions. The endurance of the Guadeloupien woman without male support is one of the legacies of slavery that haunts the text on every page and a main trend of her genealogy.

Ma bouche sera la bouche des voix sans bouche, et ma voix la liberté de celle qui s'affaissent au cachot du désespoir. Et venant je me dirais à moi même: "Et surtout mon corps aussi bien que mon âme, Gardez-vous de vous croiser les bras en attitude stérile du spectateur, car la vie n'est pas un spectacle, car une mer de douleurs n'est pas un proscenium, car un homme qui crie n'est pas un ours qui danse... (p. 22)

My mouth shall be the mouth of those calamities that have no mouth, my voice the freedom of those who break down in the prison holes of despair. And on the way I would say to myself: and above all, my body as well as my soul, beware

of assuming the sterile attitude of a spectator, for life is not a spectacle, a sea of miseries is not a proscenium, a man screaming is not a dancing bear...

Translated by Annette Smith and Claytone Eshleman
(2001:17)

Téluée, sharing the same philosophy with Aimé Césaire, takes upon herself the role of a “porte-parole” (mouth piece) in renouncing the White’s domination of the Black. Her major preoccupation is to see free Caribbean individuals who are proud of their race, colour and culture. Téluée seeks a creolité for her people with the mindset that her people cannot be prisoners of slavery and borrowed culture forever. And as pointed out by Oguntola (2013: 43-44), the objectives of creolité as affirmed by Raphael Confiant are outlined in an interview granted to Henetha Vete Congolo and related as follows:

Il nous fallait sortir des enfermements identitaires qui ont marqué ce pays et les pays environnant pendant des siècles. Quels sont ces enfermements identitaires? D’abord, le monde des Blancs créoles qui s’est enfermé dans ce qu’on pourrait appeler sa blanchitude et qui pendant des siècles, a opprimé les autres groupes en imposant une idéologie Blanco-centrée. Ensuite, nous avons ce qu’on pourrait appeler la mulatritude. La classe mulâtre est arrivée au pouvoir et a imposé elle aussi sa vision des choses. Enfin, nous avons la négritude... il fallait absolument trouver un modus vivendi, c’est-à-dire, un plus petit dénominateur commun qui permet à toutes les ethnies vivant dans ce de se comprendre, de vivre ensemble, non pas de devenir frères, mais au moins de trouver un modus vivendi parce qu’on ne peut pas continuer éternellement à se faire la guerre entre Békés, Nègres, Mulâtres, Indiens...ce n’est pas possible. Donc, il fallait à un moment donné proposer une conception identitaire qui réconcilie tout le monde. (pp: 43-44)

We needed to come out of identityimprisonment that characterised these countries and other adjoining countries for many centuries. What is this identity imprisonment? First, the White creole’s world that locked itself up in its whiteness and oppressed other groups, which insist on her ‘mulattitude’. The mulatto class came into power and forced her policies on others. Lastly, there is Negritude. It was mandatory to put in place a modus vivendi that is a common factor which will enable all the ethnic groups to understand

themselves and live together even if they are not brothers. We can't continue fighting among Békés, Negros, Mulattoes and Indians. So, it was absolutely necessary to propose a new identity framework which will reconcile everybody. (Our translation)

Télumée, cautious of the above mentioned objectives of creolité, seeks a better life for her fellow Caribbeans. She depicts this in her fight for freedom. Being a young girl brought up by her grandmother "Reine sans nom", Télumée suffers due to her feminine nature and for being Black. This can be seen in the discussion between Télumée's grandmother and her friend when it is clearly stated that, to the Blacks that the quest for freedom is a task only God can accomplish for them. This is obvious in Man Cia's statement when she affirms:

C'est depuis longtemps que pour nous libérer bien habite le ciel, et que pour nous cravacher, il habite la maison des Blancs à Belles-Feuille. (1972: 61)

From time immemorial, God has been in heaven for our deliverance and for our torture, he dwells amongst the Whites in Belle-Feuille. (Our translation)

The people on the Island where Télumée and her grandmother live are subject to an untold hardship. Télumée, for instance, works as cook and general domestic help for the Desague family where she suffers all forms of abuse and degradation even to the extent of an attempted rape on her by Desargue. Télumée eventually goes and starts living with Elie. In the passage of time, Elie becomes an alcoholic and takes to battering of Télumée who is later forced to return to her grandmother. Amboise, a young man has always admired Télumée and as thing goes on, in the course of Télumée working in the dreaded sugar cane plantation for survival, a bond is formed between herself and Amboise. Amboise becomes a source of joy and hope for Télumée, but she loses Amboise to the cold hands of death when Amboise was burnt to death at the factory. Despite all the pains and struggles, Télumée never gives up in her quest for freedom. Rather, she keeps on reminding herself of her pride and dignity as a Negro: "Je suis née négresse à chance et je mourrai négresse à chance" (p. 49) [By destiny, I am born a Negro and will die a Negro].

Even until her death, she vows to remain a Negro and like her grandmother, she will not give up in her quest for freedom. She has a dream she desires to actualise. The dream of the grandmother was to wipe away fears, agony and sufferings from the face of her fellow Guadeloupian women: “J’en fais un rêve, Cia, un rêve que je t’ai amené là, pour la douceur de tes yeux même...” (p. 57). {I have a dream, Cia, a dream that I would take you there, and restore sweetness to your eyes}. The “there” Télumée’s grandmother was referring to, is a place of freedom from oppression, suffering, anguish, poverty and slavery which was prevalent on the Island.

As far as Télumée’s grandmother (Toussin) is concerned, being a slave is not forever. She is hopeful of a better tomorrow; hence she believes that the struggle for freedom is worth fighting for. She attests to this fact when she tells her friend “en vérité la ceindre n’est pas éternelle (p.61). Télumée discovers from the discussion between her grandmother and Monica that the issue of enslavement lives within them in Fond Zombie and most explicitly in the air they breathe:

Je sentais que l’esclavage n’était pas un pays étranger, une région lointaine d où venaient certaines personnes très anciennes comme il en existait encore deux ou trois, à fond zombie- Tout cela s’était déroule ici même, ... et peut être dans l’air que je respirais (p.62)

I felt that slavery was not a foreign country, a far away region where certain old persons emerge from, just like it used to exist two or three at Fond Zombi- all of these took place right here And perhaps in the air I breathe. (Our translation)

If slavery, pains and suffering were perceived everywhere on the Island, freedom is worth fighting for. As far as Télumée is concerned, her reason for existence was to bring freedom to her people. Her grandmother made this known to her right from her childhood days:

Le principal était après tous les avatars les pièges et les surprises oui c’était seulement de reprendre souffrir et de continuer son train, ce pourquoi le bon dieu vous avait mis sur la terre et elle continuait à faire ce pour quoi le bon Dieu l’avait créé vivre (pp. 66-67)

The aim was that after all the avatars, all the traps and surprises, it was of course only to repeat and continue the struggle in the same vein. This is the reason God has brought me to this land ... and will continue to chant this cause that God has created me to live for. (Our translation)

Despite the oppression of the Blacks by the Whites, Télumée never regrets being a black woman. Instead, she concludes that God made it so for a purpose and that she will always be proud of her race and color at all times:

L'héroïne dans le texte exprime que ce n'est pas sa faute d'être née une femme ni sa volonté d'avoir une couleur noire, car c'était la volonté du bon Dieu. Même si avec un visage laid, si on la donne l'opportunité de faire un choix à propos de son origine, elle préférerait une dureté de visage sans beauté ruisselante (p. 116)

God brought me into this land without seeking my permission to be a female or the colour of skin I would want to have. It was not my fault if He gave me a complexion as dark as blue and an ugly face. All the same, I am very happy and perhaps if given the opportunity to choose, now, I will choose the same face without beauty.
(Our translation)

In Télumée's quest for freedom, the way of succeeding is to always keep hopes alive, never allowing misfortunes to get the best part of her life (that is Télumée's grandmother's philosophy):

Nous les Lougandors, ne craignons pas davantage le Bonheur que les malheurs, ce qui signifie que tu as le devoir aujourd'hui sans appréhension ni retenue (p.137)

We the Lougandors, do not fear misfortune when compared to the benefits of fortune, which signifies the fact that today, you have an assignment without either fear or retreat.
(Our translation)

According to Télumée's grandmother, her preoccupation should be to fight for what rightly belongs to her without giving up. She urges Télumée to be resolute in her quest for freedom believing that someday, fortune will smile on her:

... ton affaire est de briller maintenant, alors brille et le jour où l'infortune te dira: me voilà, tu aurais au moins brillé. (p. 143)

... Your role is to shine while you can, for when misfortune comes calling you would be glad you did shine
(Our translation)

In Télumée's freedom quest, she was advised by her grandmother to make use of every opportunity that comes her way and never give up in the face of adversity. Hence, when her marriage to Elie turns sour, Télumée in the midst of her despair never lose hope:

Je gardais l'espoir, je me disais qu'on n'a jamais vu la terre rassasiée d'eau, qu'un jour viendrait où Elie aurait à nouveau soif de moi: il fallait seulement que j'attende, que je me tienne prête à reprendre ma vie à l'instant même où elle s'était arrêtée. (p.156)

I remained hopeful: I would say that none has ever seen the earth satiated with water. A day is coming where Elie will want me again: all I only need to do is to wait and be ready to restart my life from where it stopped
(Our translation)

However, looking at the trials of Télumée, her grandmother feels she has given up in her quest due to the fact that her marriage to Elie, which she had thought would pave the way for her liberation, collapses. Télumée reassures her that she has not given up in her quest: "La Reine, la Reine qui dit qu'il n'y a rien pour moi sur la terre qui dit pareille bêtise... » (p.167) {Queen, the queen, who says there is nothing for me on this land, who says such nonsense...} (Our translation)

Télumée, can be regarded as the one on whose shoulders lay the destiny of the Guadeloupians. People looked up to her as one who can restore their lost heritage:

... écoute, les gens t'épient ils comptent toujours sur quelqu'un pour savoir comment vivre... si tu es heureuse, tout le monde peut être heureuse et si tu sais souffrir, les autres sauront aussi... chaque jour tu dois te lever et dire à ton cœur: j'ai assez souffert et il faut maintenant que je vive, car la lumière du soleil ne doit pas se gaspiller, se perdre sans aucun œil pour l'apprécier. (p.175)

... Listen, the peoples' eyes are on you. They count always on someone in order to know how to live... Everyone will be happy if you are happy and if you suffer, others will too... you must rise up each day and say to your heart: I have suffered enough and it is necessary now that I live, for the light the sun gives must not be wasted or thrown away, without any appreciation
(Our translation)

Despite the trouble encompassing Télumée and her race, she is hopeful in all things. She does not disappoint the people of la Folie, who see a strong woman in her and bestow on her the title “Télumée miracle” due to her immense contribution to the land:

Dès l'arrivée de Télumée dans L'île, suite à ses activités, les habitants de cette île pensent à ce qu'ils vont faire pour la remercier de tous ses efforts pour leur libérer, mais ils n'ont rien trouvé. Maintenant, elle est devenue vieille pour avoir leur prix. (p.239)

Ever since the arrival of Telumee at Morne la Folie, following her activities, the inhabitants of the Island think of what to do to appreciate her for all her efforts at liberating them. But, they could not find anything. Now, she has become old for their prize. (Our translation)

Despite the humiliations, pains of slavery and pitiable state of the Blacks on the Island, Telumée concludes thus: “Je sais que le Nègre n'est pas une statue de sel qui dissolve les pluies” (p. 248) [I know that the Blacks are not a Pillar of salt that dissolves when it rains].

(Our translation)

Télumée's character, as portrayed by Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*, can best be described as one who is resolute in her quest for freedom and identity. Even when she was being battered by Elie whom she loved greatly, she never gave up in her quest and aspirations:

Je gardais l'espoir, je me disais qui on n'a jamais vu la terre rassasiée d'eau, qui un jour viendrait où Elie aurait à nouveau soif de moi; il fallait seulement que j'attende, que

je me tiens prête à reprendre ma vie à l'instant même où elle était arrêtée. (p.156)

I remain hopeful; I would say that none has ever seen the earth satiated with water. A day is coming where Elie will have a new desire for me: all I only need to do is to wait and be ready to restart my life from where it stopped.

(Our translation)

This action of Télumée shows how determined she is in her fight for freedom.

Summarily, the struggle for freedom and emancipation from mental slavery is by no means an easy one. This is depicted by characters in the four selected novels, who seek total independence for their Caribbean counterparts. Schwarz-Bart and Maryse Condé through their works desire a Caribbean society where citizens will not be judged and addressed by either the color of their skin or by their sex. They should be able to walk the streets of the Caribbean hills as free individuals without any atom of fear of intimidation and molestation. And humanity must learn to appreciate innate attribute of the human entity. The authors also acknowledge the fact that humans, whether male or female, black or white, are creatures of volition, thus are entitled to a life of freedom without barriers of color and class.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUBALTERNITY AND RESISTANCE IN THE SELECTED NOVELS

The life and times of the Caribbeans have been plagued with sufferings and oppression from time immemorial. This, according to Katherine (2009), is due to the fact that slavery has been the foundation for the economy of the Caribbeans since some European empires became aware of its existence and available resources. A majority of the Caribbeans, being descendants of slavery, have one thing in common: alienation from

pleasant situations and in union with unpleasant situations which birthed the struggle for freedom and identity. It is this situation that informs their subalternity and their quest for freedom and identity. Hence, they are in dire need for a renaissance and assertion of this identity.

Subaltern indicates a lower rank. Spivak (1993) widened the scope and attributed the concept to the literature of the oppressed and marginalized group, a people in opposition to all forms of domination. According to Ashcroft *et al* (2007), the subalterns are considered as ahistorical people who cannot speak. This goes further to buttress the argument that the marginalized groups and politically oppressed do not have a voice, hence they cannot speak out their resistance. The struggle of the subalterns therefore, is to give a voice to the oppressed and marginalized group. The works of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart vividly depict this act of the struggle for freedom.

The works of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart, especially *Traversée de la mangrove*, *Une Saison à Rihata*, *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* and *Ti Jean l'horizon*, form the major backdrop for this discourse. The theme of subalternity and resistance in Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart's selected texts brought a reawakening in the life of the Caribbean subjects. Their characters, at the end of the text, become resolute and desperate for a change in their status quo and seek a better life for themselves and generations yet unborn. They, like the subalterns, want to be seen and heard; they want to erode the colonialist ideology that has over time rendered them inferior and hence, a total resistance to every form of subjectivity.

In Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove*, Francis remarks thus; 'je suis venu ici pour mettre un point final, terminer oui, terminer une race maudite' (p.87). Francis is no more at ease with the present state of his fellow caribbeans and their tribe being seen and considered as a cursed and inferior race. He therefore seeks to end all forms of sufferings and oppressions on the Island. Télumée in Schwarz Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*, like other characters in the text, having gone through a lot of bitter experiences, has become resolute and seeks a way forward against all odds. She says: 'je gardais l'espoir, je me disais qu'on n'a jamais vu la terre rassasiée d'eau...' (p.156). Similarly, that is the case of Marie-Hélène, in Maryse Condé's *Une Saison à Rihata*, who travelled from Paris down to

Rihata with her husband in her quest for freedom and identity. The aftermath, according to her, was the conception and delivery of a male child-Elikia-a symbol of hope for a dying race (p.178). We equally see Ti Jean in Schwarz-Bart's *Ti Jean l'horizon*, who, at the end of all his journeys, in a bid to resist oppression in the Island conclude thus, "...on re-inventait la vie, fievreusement, a la lueur de torches simplement plantees dans la terre..." (p.286)

5.1 Breaking the yoke of subalternity in the four selected novels

The primary preoccupation of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart through the lenses of the four selected novels is to break the barriers of subjugation in all its ramifications and bring about a rebirth to a people whose literature is characterized with the legacies and aftermaths of colonialism. To understand the significance of the quest for freedom and identity that is purely Caribbean, history has it that the Caribbeans have been denied of social and cultural values, owing to the demoralising effects of slavery and colonisation. This has led them to embark on several voyages with the desire to break every yoke of subalternity. Consequently, in the cause of their quest, they came in contact with the negritude movement, which is, according to Césaire as cited by Ayeleru (2011: 167),

la simple reconnaissance du fait d'être noir et l'acceptation de ce fait, de notre destin de noir, de notre histoire et de notre culture. (P.167):

The simple recognition of the fact of being black and the acceptance of this fact, of our destiny as black people, of our history, and our culture. {Our translation}

According to Ayeleru (2011), 'la négritude' looks at the generality of Blacks, especially black culture. On this premise, certain Caribbeans felt they could identify with the Africans and be accepted as brothers. But, they were disappointed and dehumanised at the end of their journey to Africa. This is evident in Maryse Condé's *Hérémakhonon* and *Une Saison à Rihata* where Veronica and Marie-Hélène respectively travel to African search of their identity and a break out from subalternity. But upon arrival, they are not well-received. Rather, they are maltreated and described as "celle-qui-vient-d'ailleurs" (p.12). As a result of rejection they are faced with, they have to return to the Island in search of an 'antillais' identity in order for them to break out from oppression.

From the aforementioned, it is evident that the significance of the quest for freedom and identity by the Caribbeans, as seen in *Traversée de la mangrove*, *Une Saison à Rihata*, *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* and *Ti Jean l'horizon* cannot be overemphasized as these texts constitute an eye opener at various levels of the quest. The significance of breaking the yoke of subalternity in the selected texts hinge on the desire to rewrite the Caribbean history, correct erroneous belief of inferiority complex and denunciation of all forms of subjugation in the Caribbean society.

Maryse Condé, tells the life of her heroine; Marie-Hélène a young Caribbean woman who travels to Africa in company of her husband with the aim of settling down amongst her African brothers and sisters. But to her dismay, she is not accepted as one of their own. She is discouraged by the treatment meted on her. She therefore returns to France. Madou, her lover and brother in-law, expresses the significance of his own quest thus:

Je suis ici en réalité...il faut que notre pays sorte de son isolement, Il faut qu'il cesse d'être la honte de l'Afrique.
(p.53)

In reality, I am here... our country must be out of this isolation, it must stop bringing shame to Africa.
(Our translation)

From the above remark, Madou is conscious of the fact that the Caribbean society lies in ruins and will remain so, if nothing is done. Zek, on the other hand, explains the significance of his quest for freedom to Marie-Hélène, 'je n'ai pas cherché à réussir. J'ai cherché à vivre en paix comme un honnête citoyen'' (p.79). Zek's return to Rihata, was borne out of his desire for a peaceful co-existence with his fellow Caribbean brothers and sisters. His desire for peace is a very significant one as he is very conscious of the fact that his wife is being haunted by her past life due to her inordinate quest for freedom and identity. And, if she must experience peace again, there is the need for her to forget all the ordeals of her past life and forge ahead. To this end, she laments upon hearing that her husband is inviting Madou to their house for dinner. The following conversation ensues between them:

Bon, j'ai invité Madou à dîner avec nous demain soir...Elle le fixait, interdite, et il expliqua rapidement : chérie, chérie, j'ai pensé qu'il fallait cesser de vivre les yeux tournés vers le passé... (p.78)

Alright, I have invited Madou to dinner with us tomorrow evening...She looked at him keenly, unable to utter a word, and he quickly explains: sweetheart, sweetheart, I thought it would be better to let go of the past...
(Our translation)

The arrival of Madou in Rihata is to Zek an avenue for reconciliation while to Marie-Hélène an opportunity to meet her lover again. Marie-Hélène's life is characterised by so much complexity ranging from the guilt she feels because of her sister, Delphine's death to having an affair with Madou, her husband's brother and not being welcomed by Sokambi, her husband's mother. We can view Marie-Hélène as a person living a caged life and seeking freedom at all costs. Her relationship with Zek can be considered a means of escape from all the troubles surrounding her because she actually is never in love with Zek. The man she genuinely loves is Madou, Zek's younger brother (p. 99). Even after her marriage with Zek, she is still being haunted by her past (the death of her sister in form of nightmares) as represented in these words:

Après dix-sept ans, Marie-Hélène ne l'aimait-elle pas ne s'était-elle pas mise à l'aimer sans s'en apercevoir? A quoi bon se torturer? Elle n'appartenait plus à lui. Il s'entendit tout contre elle, enserrant l'obus de son ventre. Peut-être qu'un de ses cauchemars auxquelles elle était tellement sujette l'agiterait. Alors, il resserrait son étreinte et la calmerait comme un enfant ... mon amour. Nous cheminons ensemble depuis tant d'années et jamais nous ne nous sommes pas rencontrés. Tu es enfermée dans tes remords et tes rêves. (p. 153)

After seventeen years, Marie-Hélène does not still love him? Was she not supposed to love him as her husband? Of what use is it torturing herself? She belongs to no one else but him. He takes a stand against her, closing the front of her stomach. Perhaps, one of the nightmares that she was always subjected to would disturb her. So, he will tighten the embrace and calm her down like a child ... my love. We have been walking alone for many years and never did we meet each other. You are locked up in your remorse and dreams.

(Our translation)

The above lines capture the significance of Marie-Hélène's love for Zek and her desperate desire for comfort and freedom. To this end, she has to share the rest of her life with Zek. Her struggle for freedom and identity and a desire for liberation from all the troubles that characterize her life are responsible for her marriage to Zek.

... de la prendre dans ses bras et de lui faire habilement l'amour. Ce plaisir qu'elle ne savait pas refuser lui était une torture. C'était son seul refuge contre la solitude extrême. (p.109)

...to hold her in his arms and to make love to her as usual. The pleasure that she can hardly refuse him was an emotional torture. It was her only comfort against extreme solitude. (Our translation)

Another significance of the search for freedom is the discovery of Sia, the daughter of Marie-Hélène. In the cause of her quest for freedom, she also comes to discover that her mother is the main cause of all their troubles in Rihata, whereas the inhabitants of Rihata see Toumany as the major cause of their problems:

C'est tout naturellement d'instinct, qu'elle rendait Marie – Hélène responsable de leur condition présente. Alors que tous autour d'elle accusaient le régime politique de Toumany et sa dictature, elle n'accusait que sa mère. C'était à cause d'elle et d'elle seule que lui étaient refusées les joies, les richesses auxquelles sa jeunesse avait droit. (p. 81)

It is naturally instinctive that she accuses Marie-Hélène of their present predicament. While all around her accuses Toumany's political regime and its dictatorship, she could only accuse her mother. It was because of her and her alone that at a young age, her rights to joy and riches were denied. (Our translation)

In Sia's opinion, the adulterous lifestyle of Marie-Hélène is responsible for their miseries and pain. As far as Sia is concerned, if they must seek for freedom and break out of all forms of imprisonment, Marie-Hélène must be made to right the wrongs of her past life which has brought them to their present state of despondence.

Summarily, one can conclude that the quest for freedom and identity and its significance as depicted by some characters in Maryse Condé's *Une Saison à Rihata*, is a vivid representation of the life of the Caribbeans in all ramifications. We see a people who become conscious of their deplorable state and wish for a better life and future and desire to break every yoke of subalternity and oppression.

Traversée de la mangrove also explores identity and freedom quest through the lives of several characters in the text. Maryse Condé opens the text with the discovery of the corpse of a man named Francis Sancher whose identity constitutes a deep misery to the inhabitants of the Island of Rivière au sel. However, the death of Francis Sancher instigates a reawakening of the consciousness of freedom and identity in the inhabitants of the Island. This is seen in all their remarks during Francis Sancher's funeral ceremony. In Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*, a group of oppressed women representing the entire Caribbean people discover the need to undermine the consequences of colonialism in the quest for a life of freedom. Schwarz-Bart also depicts Ti-Jean's life and times through his numerous adventures. In the course of his journey for freedom and identity quest, Ti-Jean gets married to an African lady and gets involved in sorcery, which he says is borne out of solitary. "...il est bien connu que la solitude est la mère de la sorcellerie" (p.169). In sum, the search for freedom and identity quest are due to the burning desire to live a life of dignity and liberty like every other human. This, to Ti-Jean, is possible if the people can rise up to the challenge of putting a stop to all forms of domination and deprivation.

5.2. Rhizomatic interpretation of freedom and identity in Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la mangrove*

Rhizome, one of the key concepts of postcolonial studies, according to Ashcroft *et al* (2007), represents the root system that spreads with several roots. These roots are both interwoven and overlapping. This rhizomatic feature is seen in Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la Mangrove*. It is a set of people who are interwoven and linked together due to their life's experiences and having a collective desire to break out of every form of institutionalized oppression.

Traversée de la Mangrove, follows the people of a small, fictional town in Guadeloupe on a long night's journey through the funeral wake of one of their most notorious, and enigmatic, citizens – a man known as Francis Sancher. The novel sets forth a dizzying topography, of individuals and Islands, paths and blind alleys through the life of the deceased and the lives of those whom his influence forever changed. As is the case at all wakes the man at its center has no voice of his own. Rather, he is re-constructed and re-animated by the testimony of others. Through the optic of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's "rhizomatic" theory of literature in Wahl (2009), this researcher examines Condé's re-remembering of Sancher through the voices of those in his community because in the novel, subjectivity does not rely solely upon social class or racial identity but is constructed by each individual through a process of self-examination and envisioning the future.

Wahl (2009: 1) also writes that:

Traversée de la Mangrove, Maryse Condé's 1989 novel, is set during a single evening in a small, backwater community named Rivière au Sel on the Island of Guadeloupe. The mangrove of the book's title refers to a type of brackish wetland found along coasts in the tropics. The mangrove evokes the topography of the Caribbean, as well as Islands and continental coasts in tropical climates around the world. A coastal frontier in which salty and fresh waters mix, a mangrove is both a resilient, densely wooded boundary and an important habitat for diverse species of fish, birds and insects.

Rivière au Sel, a place described as "fermé, retiré" in a lost corner of Basse-Terre, exists, like a mangrove, on the periphery of the insular Guadeloupean world. Like plants and trees of the mangrove, individuals in Rivière au Sel are connected. However, these connections lie beneath the murky surface of superficial misunderstandings of their community. Individuals are not aware of their interconnectedness with one another; rather, they understand their society in hierarchical terms. In order to go beyond the illusions of order and hierarchy that keep individuals rooted in place, they must discover and understand truths and map their escape from alienation, loneliness and dissatisfaction. Crossing a mangrove involves many risks; as one character envisions (Maryse Condé, 1989:192), it is impossible: "On s'empale sur les racines des palétuviers. On s'enterre et on étouffe dans la

boue saumâtre” (p.192). [We impale the roots of the mangrove. We bury ourselves in an unpleasant mud]. (Our translation).

Therefore, a mangrove represents a flourishing ecosystem, a rhizomatic web of connections and a confusing obstacle abundant with hidden perils that threaten to swallow a traveller whole. Francis Sancher, the elusive, enigmatic stranger who mysteriously died in Rivière au Sel, was such a traveler. During his brief time there, he attempts to write an autobiography and family history, also named “*Traversée de la Mangrove*”. Instead, he died on a forgotten path. The novel, bearing the same name as the deceased’s project, is a collection of testimonies of community members who gather together at Sancher’s wake, memorializing him and reflecting on their own lives. The novel itself comprises of a rhizome composed of individual testimonies connected to one another through memories, however contradictory or imperfect, of Francis Sancher. The rhizomatic structure of the novel reflects the complexity and multiplicity of a Caribbean community.

The novel provides a map, in the Deleuzian sense, of the community and of Sancher. Mourners at the wake perform a collective act of mapping Sancher’s life in Rivière au Sel, and in so doing create maps of their community and their own strategies for self-liberation. In the light of Deleuze and Guattari’s comparison of writing with mapping, one can see that *Traversée de la Mangrove* does not follow a traditional, linear narrative of subjectivity. Instead, it provides a fragmented, manifold portrait of unique individuals comprising a singular, yet multiple, community. Through this mapping, the novel resists any teleological master narrative or essentialist discourse. As Condé has warned against mythologizing history, the novel provides a rhizomatic model for understanding.

Moreso, for Wahl (2009), the novel does not focus on a glorified vision of the past, as in a myth, nor does it provide a definite vision of the future, as in a manifesto. *Traversée de la Mangrove* is not a traditional murder mystery, a “whodunit” beginning with a body and ending with the guilty party exposed. Although the body puts the story in motion, there is no resolution; there is only the mysterious death of a man inscrutable while he was alive, and a polyphonous testimony to the impact of this man’s life on those at his wake. Each individual testimony is an end in itself, a subjective and indispensable component of the whole.

Traversée de la Mangrove represents subjectivity as an individual process of self-examination. The subject must crossover from the framework of small-minded prejudice, loneliness and resentment, by navigating the mangrove of interconnectedness of the community, to the light and open horizon of truth and the possibility for happiness. Deploying Alain Badou's understanding of subjectivity as a consequence of an "event", the novel signifies a map of coming-into-subjectivity, the event being Sancher's life in Rivière au Sel. Sancher is a catalyst who inspired self-reflection, what Badiou calls an endless "truth procedure", among various acquaintances. This subject is mixed, not defined exclusively by identity politics and labels. Sancher is characterized by many different labels, and resolutely refused to live up to any one of them. He is both singular and multiple. The individuals at his wake also defy labels, and many make decisions that shape their futures while reflecting upon their interactions with Sancher. As various individuals work to map Sancher's life, they expose the multiple nature of his subjectivity. However, they too are becoming subjects while creating these subjective maps. Sancher exposes realities that are otherwise beneath the surface of understanding in Rivière au Sel. During his time there, he offered truths; after his death, his acquaintances must work to decipher and understand them. Many individuals, after years of alienation and discontentment, must come to terms with their past, reflect on the present and make decisions to improve their lives. In this way, crossing a mangrove – traveling across a difficult, confusing border zone of identity – provides a powerful image for coming into subjectivity. In addition to mapping the emotional landscape of Rivière au Sel, *Traversée de la Mangrove* maps the topography of the community and Basse-Terre as well as the *topos* of Caribbean geographical features. The contours of the land, the swamps, rivers, paths, forests and volcano all carry a heritage of symbolism in the Caribbean.

Traditionally, in Caribbean folklore and literature alike, paths that lead toward the mountains are valorized as the means of masculine slave revolt and escape from slavery. Maryse Condé (2000), describes the inscription of ideology on Caribbean landscapes, particularly in the literature of Césaire and authors associated with Négritude.

5.2.1 Concepts of Agency in Maryse Condé's *Traversée de la Mangrove* and *Une saison à Rihata*.

Agency as a concept of postcolonial studies refers to the ability to act or perform an action. It hinges on the question whether the oppressed individual can freely and autonomously initiate actions, or the things they do are in some ways determined by the ways in which their identity has been constructed (Ashcroft *et al*, 2007). Agency aids the subjects of postcolonialism to fight for liberation and a quest for their identity. Sancher, a major character in *Traversée de la Mangrove*, being cautious of the concept of agency, launches out on a journey for freedom and a renaissance. Sancher seeks a redefinition of self as the people in the Island carry a wrong notion of the personality of Sancher. One of the greatest problems of those who came to know about Sancher is the fact that he is a man of no origin, decent or history; they all make efforts to decipher where this man comes from. But one thing is for sure, which is the fact that he can be compared to a dead man; not necessarily a dead man at the beginning but rather to them, a man without history is invariably considered dead. This is the case of the Carribeans who are found in the middle of rejection by their people as well as by Whites. Sancher therefore, is a man who is in quest of identity amongst his people. At the first instance, the people are unaware and unconscious of the reason why Sancher came to them; it is a case of wondering in darkness.

Il entra dans le tapage et a fumé des cigarettes et, avec autorité, frappa dans ses mains. En temps ordinaire, personne n'aurait prêté attention à ce jeunot... Noirs et pesants comme le deuil. Et c'est dans le silence qu'il annonça : Francis Sancher est mort!... (p. 17)

He takes his place on the row and smoked some cigarettes and, with authority, clapped his hands. Ordinarily, no one paid attention to this novice... Dark and burdensome like mourning. And it is in the silence that he announced: Francis Sancher is dead!
(Our translation)

As earlier said, the life of Sancher is a mystery to the people. Even the relationship between him and Moïse soon became a mystery to the people. Sancher himself is a mystery to himself. The most important thing for him was his quest for identity and recognition amongst his people who actually know him rarely at that point in time. At a time, Sancher and Moïse would have been thrown out by the people following the fact that they were

being regarded as foreign to the environment where they have found themselves most especially Sancher.

On commença par trouver drôle l'amitié entre Moïse et ce Francis Sancher qui sortait on ne sait d'où. Le premier soir où les deux hommes entrèrent prendre un coup de rhum chez Christian, les habitués eurent envie de les pousser dehors. (p. 35)

We started by seeing the funny intimacy between Moïse and this Francis Sancher who comes from God knows where. The first time they both entered to take some alcohol at Christian's place, the inhabitants almost pushed them out. (Our translation)

However, the first person in the novel to describe his encounter with, and eventual rejection by, Francis Sancher is Moïse, the postman, nicknamed "le Maringoin", a friendless, sexually frustrated loner and pariah of the community. His initial encounter with Sancher is tense after he reveals his other, perhaps "real" name, Francisco Alvarez-Sanchez. When Moïse asked Sancher/Sanchez where he is from, presumably to initiate conversation, he is immediately rebuffed: "Pose pas de questions! La vérité pourrait t'écorcher les oreilles" (p.33) [Stop asking questions ! The truth can damage your ears] (Our translation).

The truth is to be feared and denied, according to Sancher, who wished to make the truth of his life and his past as inaccessible as possible to this stranger. He issues a harsh warning to protect his privacy, and possibly to protect the curious Moïse from a danger beyond his understanding. However, Moïse is no stranger to the harsh realities of life. His existence in Rivière au Sel is full of rejection, frustrated desires, and reproach from his peers: "Il n'avait connu que cela, la méchanceté du cœur des hommes !" (p. 40). [The only thing he had known was this, the wickedness of man's heart!]

Moïse and Mira, as well as many others in Rivière au Sel, share the unfortunate experience of being outcast from their community. After years of rejection and loneliness, Moïse is accustomed to the abusive comments of his peers. He seems unfazed when Sancher, a physically intimidating man, "corpulent, massif, haut comme un mahogany", issues his warning. In fact, he even seeks a friendship, in part because he desperately desires

companionship. Although Moïse's attraction to this charismatic stranger is different from Mira's fascination and eventual devotion to Sancher place Moïse and Mira on the same plane: both are lonely outcasts who seek solace with Sancher. Nothing is known about Sancher and his mission has been unknown for long, even his pictures are nowhere to be found so that his lineage can be traced. It is totally unknown. He is compared to Pauvre Quentin: "Pauvre Quentin! Il n'aura aucun souvenir de son père. Même pas une photo. Nous, nous avons beaucoup de photos de famille jusqu'à notre aïeul Gabriel" (p.99). ["Poor Quentin! He will have no memory of his father. Not even a picture of him, unlike we who have many family pictures even up to those of our ancestor Gabriel..."] (Our translation)

The oppressed people in Schwarz Bart's *Ti Jean l' horizon* have become aware of the need for a change in their status-quo. They affirm thus "il faut savoir ce que l'on veut dans la vie" (p.206). [It is important to know what one wants in life]. The beginning of their freedom is to actually know what they wanted. Ti Jean had to enlighten the people of the Island as a majority of them were not aware of their reason for existence.

-Reine, fit rêveusement Ti Jean, depuis que j'erre à travers le vaste monde, la seule chose que je trouve vainement étonnante c'est moi-même: pourquoi un être tel que moi est-il venu au monde? Voilà ce que je ne comprends pas et qui m'étonne plus que tout le reste... (p.210)

- Queen, says Ti Jean, since I have been wandering around the world, the only thing that I really find vainly interesting is myself: why should someone like me come to this world? This is what I don't understand as well as what differentiates me from the others.
(Our translation)

The above mentality of the black was due to the brainwashing received from the white making them feel that the life of a black is worthless. For this reason, Ti Jean was ready to pursue his quest for freedom and to create a consciousness in the minds of the blacks that the whites are not in any way superior to the blacks. And one way he could do this is to make the people aware of the deceit of the White men. In page 93, we see how the vices of the White men are being exposed stylistically. At this point, the people of Fond-Zombi are beginning to recognise where they truly stand in this fight for freedom and

identity. Guadeloupe is referred to as animate objects that must stand up to its responsibility having known these misdeeds.

... de quoi nourrir la Guadeloupe tout entier et ses dépendances. La vie des planteurs semblant assurée et l'on ne s'en formalisa pas, sachant bien au fond de soi que si les jours du Nègre sont légers, incertains, à la merci du monde coup de vent, nul astre errant dans le ciel ne pourrait jamais empêcher le Blanc de poursuivre son existence.... (p. 93)

[...enough to feed the entire Guadeloupe and her inhabitants. The lives of the farmers seem certain and one does not need to forge it, knowing well that the days of the Negroes are full of risks, uncertain, at the mercy the world, no wandering star in the sky can stop the Whites from pursuing their goal]
(Our translation)

The people must therefore, be determined just like the Whites. Nothing shakes the Whites. Having gathered much knowledge about 'Les Blancs', the people of Fond-Zombi must act swiftly and be ready to take their destinies in their own hands if they must end all forms of discrimination against their race and tribe.

5.2.2 Stereotypification in the Caribbean experience

Stereotypification, according to Mustag(2010), is viewed as a negative image of a person in relation with a group or society. It is a derogatory remark of a person's identity or personality. Such views render the individual as worthless, poor, savage, barbarique and in the words of Fanon, "les damnés de la terre" (the wretched of the earth). Stereotypification in postcolonial discourse cuts across culture, gender, class, and other social categories of the colonized. James *et al*(2018) argues that postcolonial theory is not just the study of ancient colonies but, the study of stereotyped colonies. It is worthy of note that a people can either be stereotyped economically, socially, politically, culturally and otherwise.

Stereotypification is of major concern to the selected authors and their works. In Maryse Conde's *Une saison à Rihata*, the author pictures a people who are stereotyped politically. These people were conceived and described as a people who lack the sense of

governance. There is the misconception that they cannot participate in the politics of their land. Even if they desire to hold political offices, they do that at the expense of their life. They remarked thus: « Dans notre pays, on est aujourd'hui ministre, demain détenu, où exilé, si on ne devient pas cadavre avant l'heure » (p.35). (In our country, one is a minister today, detained or exiled tomorrow if one is not killed) (Our translation).

Economically, the people of Rihata have been brainwashed to the point where they have the mindset that nothing good can come out of their land. As a result, they feel ashamed of their land as they described it as "...les terres où ne fleurissent que l'amertume, la solitude et la mesquinerie (p.38) (...lands where only bitterness, solitude and wickedness thrive (our translation). Stereotypification makes a people to have a negative feeling for their lands, their race, culture etc. Madou, in Maryse Conde's *Une saison à Rihata*, finds himself in this situation and begins to wonder if it were not better travelling out of Rihata in his quest for freedom and identity. He laments thus: "Incertain quant à son avenir, il se demandait s'il ne ferait pas mieux d'aller chercher fortune ailleurs" (p.43) (Unsure of what the future holds, he wonders if it were not better travelling out of his country to seek a better life (our translation)

Socially, as a result of the aftermaths of stereotypification that existed on the Island over time, the inhabitants of the Island detest their fellow brothers and sisters due to either their skin colour or their hair texture. There is the premonition that anything black is evil and connotes ill fate. This is evident in Maryse Conde's *Traversée de la Mangrove*. Leocardie Timothy recounts her ordeal: « J'ai mis du temps à comprendre leur attitude. Nos peaux étaient de la même couleur. Nos cheveux du même grain...A leurs yeux, j'étais une tristesse! » (p.142) [I took out time to understand their attitude. Our skin colour is the same. Our hair of the same texture... In their eyes, I was a misfortune] (Our translation)

Stereotypification that existed on the Island overtime informed some of the problems that the people passed through. Painfully, some of these problems were actually caused by fellow Blacks as portrayed in the novel through the eyes of Leocardie Timothée. Thus, he writes:

J'ai mis du temps pour comprendre la raison de leur attitude.
Nos peaux étaient de la même couleur. Nos cheveux du

même grain... A leurs yeux, j'étais une traîtresse! Je souffrais de cet isolement, car j'aurais voulu qu'on m'aime, moi. Je ne savais que le Nègre n'aime pas jamais le Nègre. (p.142)

[It took me some time trying to understand the reason they act as such. We had the same skin. The colour of our hair is the same... To them, I was a traitor! I suffered from this isolation, for I really wanted to be loved, yes I did. I never knew that the Negro does not love his fellow Negro]
(Our translation)

The problem here is clearly stated. The Blacks don't love themselves. They think anything White is better. This is as a result of the problem of hybridity and culture crisis that characterized the Caribbean Island. This no doubt is an offshoot of stereotypification mapped by slavery and deprivation. as a result of stereotypification, there is the problem of inferiority complex where the inhabitants have preference for the things of the White; speak the White man's language while neglecting theirs "Des hommes parlent les langues des Blancs, ayant maniere des Blancs et n'étant plus Africain que de nom" (p.50)

The Blacks in *Traversée de la Mangrove* are seen as inferior and worthless. As a result, it is forbidden to marry a black woman. Anyone who does so is excommunicated. Gabriel is a clear example "...Gabriel c'était un béké de la Martinique, qui a épousé une Nègresse. A cause de cela sa famille l'a renié ... » (p.99) [Gabriel, an halfcast from Martinique was excommunicated due to his marriage to a black woman]

Besides, the people of Fond-Zombi in Schwarz Bart's *Ti Jean l'horizon* are first referred to as 'lost' judging from what was happening to them at that point in time. This is the outcome of the stereotypification the people suffered. The country where Fond-Zombi is found is also referred to as a lost country. Invariably, Fond-Zombi (a lost people) is found in a lost country.

Au cœur de ce pays perdu, il y a encore plus perdu c'est le hameau de Fond-Zombi. Si la Guadeloupe est à peine un point sur la carte, évoquer cette broutille de Fond-Zombi peut sembler une entreprise vaine, un pur gaspillage de salive
.... (p. 10)

[At the centre of this lost country is a small lost village called Fond-Zombi. If Guadeloupe is hardly a dot on the map, recalling this Fond-Zombi trifle would seem like a vain quest, and a real wastage of saliva....]
(Our translation)

The people of Fond-Zombi have the attitude of wanting to hide their shame mostly by believing that life beyond their river is better. They actually had a tough time believing in themselves. Instead of making an attempt towards the recognition of their state as well as searching for solutions, they put the blame afterwards on the mother earth: “Ils ont pris l’habitude de cacher le ciel de la paume de leurs maris. Ils disent que la vie est ailleurs.... il finirait par tomber dans le rhum et la négresse...” (p. 10). [They are used to covering the sky with their palms. They say life abroad is better...they will end up falling back to alcohol and black women...] (Our translation)

Stereotypification, as a misconstrued notion of a person’s identity, is vivid in Maryse Condé’s *Traversée de la Mangrove*. We see a man whose identity is not known. Yet, before his arrival on the Island, the people already considered him a criminal and a killer. “ ... Francis Sancher aurait tué un homme dans son pays ...Ce serait un trafiquant de drogue dure, un de ceux que la police postée à Marie-Galante, recherchait en vain(p.39). (Francis Sancher must have killed a man in his country...he may be a hard drug trafficker,one of those for which the police at Marie-Galante searches in vain (our translation). Similarly, the people in the Island have the mindset that a Black man can never be kind, so even when Francis tries to be nice to them, it was strange to them, for as far as they were concerned, only the Whites are kind. They remark thus:

Je sais que sur le coeur des Nègres la lumière de la bonté ne brille jamais. Tout de même ! Je me demande ce qu’on pouvait reprocher de Francis Sancher qui était bon comme le bon pain. (p.83)

I know that the light of kindness does not shine in the heart of the Blacks. All the same,I wonder what one thinks of Francis Sancher who is as kind as the good bread
(Our translation)

Summarily, stereotypification in the Caribbean experience as depicted in the four selected novels, reveal the extent to which the image and identity of the Caribbean have been battered. This further goes to buttress the reason behind their quest for freedom and identity. Hence, we could see Ti Jean who with same philosophy as Martin Luther King Jnr. has a dream that one day the oppressed Antillean will breathe the air of freedom: “Un jour des cris retentirent sur le pont, cris nègre et cris blancs, cris d’esclaves et cris de maitres, curieusement réunis dans une même bonhomie familière” (p. 254) [A day of yelling breaks out on the bridge, yelling of Negros, yelling of Whites, yelling of slaves and yelling of masters, curiously reunited in the same familiar bonhomie.] (Our translation). Our hero’s dreams and aspirations for his fellow Antillean, was to restructure the history of the Blacks. « il avait seulement rêvé d’une histoire de nègres, de révolte et de sang »(p.89).[he had only dreamt of the story of Negros,of revolt and of blood](Our translation).As far as Ti Jean was concerned, the need for a rebirth and reimaging in the history of the Black was his paramount concern.

5.2.3 Reimaging the Caribbeans in the four selected texts

Man as a social being has always crave for freedom and identity.The phenomenon, the Caribbeans are not left out of; hence the desire for reimaging.This craving for reimaging is visible in the selected texts namely;*Traversée de la mangrove*,*Une saison à Rihata*(Maryse Conde), *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* and *Ti Jean l’horizon*(Simone Schwarz-Bart).

Simone Schwarz-Bart’s *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* gives a glimpse of the Caribbeans harrowing life’s experience.\ Oppressed and helpless, they wandered around, on the Island of Font-Zombi with their soul fainting in them. In facing the harsh realities of life they resorted to leaving it to fate. This could be mirrored through the discussion between Télumée and Amboise:

- Bonjour, Télumée, que fais-tu de la vie ?
-Je n’en fais rien, je la regarde s’enfuir...(p.185)

[Good morning, Télumée, what are you doing about life?
Nothing, I am watching it pass by]

(Our translation)

Télumée got to a point in her life where she felt that fighting for a new frontier for her fellow Caribbeans requires determination and focus. If freedom must be attained, she must not give up. Rather, she must maintain her position as a Black:

...ma position de négresse que j'essaye de maintenir sur la terre. Ainsi, suis-je à mon rôle d'ancienne, faisant mon jardin, grillant mes cacahuètes, recevant les unes et les autres debout sur mes deux jambes(p.243).

...I am trying to maintain my position as a Negro in the land. Moreover, cultivating my garden, grinding my groundnuts which have been my ancient responsibility, receiving one another standing on my two legs
(Our translation)

If the miserable and deplorable state of the inhabitants of Font-Zombi must be restored, then in the words of Télumée: ‘...pour la première fois, le rêve coïncide avec la réalité. Ils ne tardèrent pas à se mettre en case transformant mon destin’ (p.45). [...for the first time, dream coincides with reality. It did not take long a time to be positioned transforming my destiny]

As far as Télumée was concerned, enough of the dreaming to a life of reality as according to the philosophy of Reine sans nom, dream without action will result in failure, “car qui songe sans se surveiller devient victim de son propre songe” (p.51). The women of Font-Zombi must awake to the task of fighting for their freedom. They must come to the realisation that the freedom quest is not beyond them. It dawned on these women after all that « si lourdes que soient tes seins tu seras toujours assez fortes pour les supporter » (p.67). [No matter the weight of a woman’s breast, she must be strong enough to carry them] (Our translation). They believe strongly that the only thing they needed to do was to be resolute and persistent in their pursuit of what slavery and colonization have made of them and to restore their lost identity. According to Reine sans nom, “La misère est une vague sans fin, mais le cheval ne doit pas te conduire, c’est toi qui dois conduire le cheval” (p.79). [Poverty is an endless darkness but be careful in order not to allow this road to control you, you should rather control the outcomes] (Our translation)

From the above, if they desire a reimagining, dreaming alone will not bring about the desired results; efforts must be made to end every form of marginalization on the Island.

As echoes of pains and slavery continue to thrive on the Island, reimagining becomes a major preoccupation. To this end, Télumée had to travel with Man Cia to La Folie following the death of her grandmother and her separation from her husband, who due to frustrations from life's travail took to battering her. Télumée resorts to the seeking of magical powers all in a bid to end suffering and restore fortune to the Island.

Nous promenions dans la forêt où Man Cia m'initiait aux secrets des plantes. Elle m'apprenait également le corps humain, ses nœuds et ses faiblesses, comment le frotter, chasser malaises et crispations démissières. Je suis délivrer bêtes et gens, lever les envoutements, renvoyer tous leurs maléfices à ceux-là même qui les avaient largués (p.190)

We were walking in the same forest where Man Cia initiated me to the secret of plants. She equally tutored me on the human body, its weaknesses and strengths, how to massage it and to stop the weaknesses and tensions. I learned how to deliver pregnant women and animals, sending the evil back to those it came from.

(Our translation)

Télumée, who initially had a misconception of marriage, had thought that finding freedom and identity lies in marriage just like her mother. But reality dawns on her mother when she laments:

...après toi, Regina, j'ai accepté l'homme Angebert sur mon plancher, mais c'était seulement du pain que je cherchais, et tu le vois, j'ai récolté viande sur viande, Télumée d'abord, puis celui-ci et le pain n'est pas toujours sur ma table. (pp.34-35)

... after you, Regina, I accepted Angebert into my bosom, however, I was only searching for daily bread, and you see, see what I have reaped, Télumée first, then this, and of course having daily bread is still a problem.

(Our translation)

To Télumée's mother, all her aspirations were dashed in the end. In the same vein, Télumée's marriage to Elie was as a result of her aspiration for freedom and identity, but all she got from Elie was total abandonment and continuous battering. She recounts her ordeal: «Cette nuit-là, Elie rentre encore plus tard qu'à l'ordinaire et me tirant du dit, il commença à me frapper avec acharnement sans émettre une seule parole» (p.148). [That night, Elie returned late again as usual, got back at me, he started to hit me ruthlessly without even uttering words]

According to Télumée, for the first time in her life, she came to the realisation that «Pour la première fois de ma vie je sentais que l'esclavage n'était pas un pays lointain d'où venaient certaines personnes ... » (p.62). [For the first time in my life, I realised that slavery was not only tied to a distant country where some people come from ...]. The above reality dawned on Télumée when she discovered that the one she had loved could turn out to treat her like his slave. She came to the conclusion that even amongst them on the Island; subtle form of slavery still exists. Télumée recounts her grandmother's ordeal and sordid experiences:

Ici comme partout ailleurs, rire et chanter, danser, rêver n'est pas exactement toute la réalité et pour un rayon de soleil sur une case, le reste du village demeure dans les ténèbres... le même poids de méchanceté accroche aux oreillettes de leur cœur. (p.18)

Here, like every other place, laughing and singing, dancing, dreaming is not exactly what the reality is and for a sun beam on my house, the other part of the village remains in darkness... the same height of wickedness stings through their ears to their heart(Our translation)

Summarily, Télumée through her efforts and activities in Morne La Folie, was able to create an awareness in the minds of the people and the need for them to wake up from their slumber, if they wanted light on the Island. She created a new perception of thinking in the minds of the people who in return conclude thus:

Après l'avenue de 'l'héroïne du texte au l'Ile, les peuple qui y' habitent font une enquête à fin de trouver une récompense, à la fin de leur recherche ils lui donnent un titre.(p.239)

... since the arrival of the heroine on the Island the inhabitants could hardly find a suitable name for her in order to reward her efforts. At the end of their search they gave her a title.
(Our translation)

Traversée de la mangrove, bearing the same name as the Sancher; the deceased's project, is a collection of testimonies of community members who gather together at Sancher's wake, eulogising him and reflecting on their own lives. Through the social wake of Sancher, the people realize that they have misconstrued the person of Sancher. All forms of derogatory names were given to Sancher during his lifetime with the people.

However mixed the subject of Sancher may seem in this story line, or however laudable the remembrance of his life might be for the different characters who by narration try to draw us closer and closer to the hidden and secretive life of Sancher, it all runs towards one end point which is the fact that Sancher was in search of something that had to do with his identity amongst his people who have invariably dented his image and personality.

Carmelien, Rosa's son, is at his own turn trying to bring us closely to the mystery behind the storyline. Here, we see the concluding force of belief as well as the use of vengeance to accomplish or break through the rough parts. Francis Sancher is dead, and his death is referred to as a king of revolution or vengeance against his quest of identity and recognition amongst his people. What caused his death is unknown, but one thing is almost true if not totally true; that is the fact that Francis Sancher chased this quest for reimagining to the finish stage (his death). Nothing better would have killed a man such as this in this kind of situation:

Ma vraie vie commence avec sa mort ... C'est à croire que les hommes gardent au creux de leur tête un fond de déraison. Ni l'instruction ni l'éducation n'en viennent à bout. Voilà un homme qui n'avait rien à craindre de rien et qui est mort, par peur de sa mort. (pp. 230-233)

My life truly starts with his death... It is believed that men at some point in time in their life, lack common sense. Not even formal and informal education can actually save him. Here comes a man who had nothing to fear, obviously nothing but now, he is dead...

(Our translation)

Here, we see how Sancher's death is being humoured. He is referred to as someone who is not afraid of dying but rather someone who is ready to die for his quest. Sancher is that kind of man. Nothing stopped Sancher from fighting his quest to the end, even unto his much untold death.

The fight for freedom reimagining is a journey that started with the negritude movement through antillianté to creolité. They could be likened to a tripod stand. These movements evolved as a result of three dominant features of the Antillean population; slavery characterized by economic exploitation, racial discrimination and mental enslavement. According to Mokwenye (2009), history has it that the slaves journeyed from Africa to the Caribbean Island following physical tortures. They were further subjected to hard labour, oppression and marginalisation. The aspect of brain washing of the slaves was not left out as this was to instill in them the mentality of inferiority complex and racial prejudice.

The evolution of Caribbean literature through the works of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Barts seek to set the records right and to correct the erroneous notion of the Caribbean identity with the aim of rewriting of her history. In order to achieve their aims, these female Caribbean writers through their works stir up a desire for change in the consciousness of the Caribbeans. According to Mokwenye (2009), in order to further awaken the Caribbean consciousness for the need to fight for freedom and identity, Glissant, whose works are geared towards fashioning the new Caribbean consciousness, calls on literary critics to explore the past not for the mere purpose of exalting the historical dimensions but with a view to using this historical dimension as a means of stimulating the collective consciousness which the Caribbeans lack. There is the need for a force to act on the repressed desires because according to Newton's law of motion, a body at rest will continue to remain at rest until an external force acts on it. On his part, Umina-Angrey (2008: 6) describes this repressed desire as «l'état d'âme de quel qu'un. L'homme s'adonne à certaines idées, à certaines images imprécises. Le résultat en est que l'homme finit par ne rien gagner de ses rêveries'. In order to bring these desires to fulfillment, every form of institutionalized slavery and oppression must be avoided. As this will fashion a new image and identity for the Caribbeans.

The drive for freedom and a quest for a Caibbean identity is made possible through the efforts of Victor Schoelcher and other Antillais writers who fought for the abolition of slavery in the Island. Mireille Rosello (1992: 12) opines that « des esclaves décident à donner leur vie pour faire changer le système qui les opprimait».

Maryse Condé, in *Une Saison à Rihata* and *Traversée de la mangrove*, pictures a set of people who were ready to give up their lives in order to restore freedom to a people who were marginalised in all spheres of life. Simone Schwarz-Bart, in the same vein portrays through *Ti Jean l'horizon* and *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* people who resisted a life of suffering and oppression to the point of death due to their determination and desire for a better life. Schwarz-Bart described their habitation thus: « Cette île à volcans à cyclones et moustiques, à mauvaise mentalité » (Schwarz-Bart, 1972 : 11). This description of the dwelling place of the Caribbeans as depicted by Schwarz-Bart in *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* according to Uminna (2008 :24), « nous enseigne que ces habitants doivent mener une lutte rude et ardue pour faire face aux éléments et à certains phénomènes naturels pour arriver à y vivre... »

Through the times and ordeals of certain characters in Schwarz-Bart's *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*, we viewed a group of persons who are desperate for a change of life and social status. Télumée, our heroine moved from L'Abondonée to Font-Zombi, thereafter to Morne La Folie and to Ramee. The essence of all her journeys is to seek freedom and identity. To further buttress the significance of her journeys, Uminna (2008) explains that:

Ce mouvement perpétuel des personnages s'explique pour le désir de vouloir vaincre leur environnement, d'explorer leur pays dans le but peut-être, de déposséder leur terres. Il se traduit aussi par ce besoin, toujours fort de fuir la misère. (p.28)

This consistent movement of characters explains the strong desire to survive in the environment, to explore their country with the mindset perhaps to dispose of their lands. This also leads to that strong need of running away from poverty (Our translation)

The desire to end sufferings and oppressions led Télumée and other characters in the text to embark on several journeys. She recounts that:

Elle a transporté son domicile à un autre endroit, où elle a rencontré beaucoup d'obstacles et de souffrances, mais malgré tous ces problèmes elle continue toujours de ne pas abandonner sa quête. (p.248)

She changed her abode to different locations but met great obstacles and sufferings. However, she remains resolute in her quest despite the challenges.
(Our translation)

The Caribbeans experience brought about extreme desperation for a change in their status quo. Thus the inhabitants of the Island in Schwarz-Bart *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* decide to take their destinies in their hands. Having realized that dreaming without waking up to face reality will result in perpetual failure. They decide that if they must be freed, they must be ready to pay the price even if it were at the expense of their lives. These Caribbeans grow so desperate for freedom and identity to the point where life became meaningless to them that they prefer death to life for in their philosophy, if in death lies freedom, they prefer death to living in bondage. Ti Paille laments: « ... aucune nation ne mérite la mort, mais je dis que le nègre mérite la mort pour vivre comme il vit... et n'est ce pas la mort que nous méritons, mes frères?» (p.54). [...no nation deserves death, but I say that the Negro deserves to die in order to live as he wants ...and don't we actually merit death, my brothers?] (Our translation)

Man Cia, a friend to Télumée's grandmother, admonishes Télumée on the need to remain resolute in her quest for freedom and identity. She said: « ... sois une vaillante petite nègresse, un vrai tambour à deux faces, laisse la vie frapper, cogner, mais conserve toujours intacte la face du dessous » (p.62). [...be a young and valiant black woman, a real drum with two faces, allow life to hit and knock you but stand firm in all these.] (Our translation)

Télumée's grandmother, Reine sans nom, also is described as a woman with two hearts due to her intense pursuit for the quest for freedom and identity. Let us hear the inhabitants of the Island:

Reine Sans Nom était une talentueuse, une vraie nègresse a deux cœurs, et elle avait décidé que la vie ne la ferait pas passer par quatre chemins. Selon elle, le dos de l'homme

était la chose la plus souple, la plus dure, la plus solide du monde ... que le dos de l'homme allait ainsi et il irait bien longtemps encore. (p. 66)

Reine Sans Nom was a truly black talented woman with a brave heart and had decided that life cannot push her through a cross road. According to her, the back of man was a thing most soft, most hard and the most solid in the world... that the back of man is however so and will remain so for a long time] (Our translation)

Reine Sans Nom further explains to Télumée, that the desire for reimagining is not a palatable one as there are bound to be obstacles:

... de la vie ils savent tout, peuvent te donner des locos de vagabondage, de vol, d'insultes, ... ne te mêle pas à eux, mon petit verre en cristal, dis leur bonjour, bonsoir, ... ainsi tu passeras ton chemin et resteras blanche comme un flocon de coton. (p.68)

...of life, they know all, can give you some challenging vagrancies, of rape, of insults..., do not conform to them my precious daughter, say hello and hi to them..., by so doing, you will walk the streets in peace and remain untouched and white like a cotton's flake (Our translation)

Reimagining is characterised by a flaming passion to attain freedom and bring about a renaissance. Télumée, having suffered the pains of oppression and subjugation seeks to end it against all odds. She says ' J'ai assez souffert et il faut maintenant que je vive, car la lumière du soleil ne doit pas se gaspiller, se perdre sans aucune œil pour l'apprécier' (p.175). [I have suffered enough; it is high time I lived well, for the sunlight must not be for nothing, working hard with nothing to gain] (Our translation)

For Télumée, the time to reclaim her freedom and identity is ripe and she will not allow this opportunity to be wasted. If she must end all forms of victimisation on the Island, then aspiration to chart a new course for her fellow Caribbean brothers and sisters must be dully upheld.

In the same vein, *Une Saison à Rihata* portrays the life of a woman in quest for independence, a personal dignity and self-affirmation. She developed an insatiable ambition

which resulted in the death of her sister, sexual relation with her brother in-law and the lack of care and attention for her children which in turn brought about her daughters hatred for her. Yet, due to the exigency of her quest for freedom and identity, she remained resolute holding unto her dreams and desires:

Malgré les incohérences et le désordre de sa vie privée, elle avait garde intactes les convictions de sa jeunesse quand avec Olnel, elle rêvait d'une Afrique libre et fière qui montrerait la voie aux Antilles... (p.54).

Despite the instabilities and disorderliness in her personal life, she kept the convictions of her youth even when she was with Olnel, she has always dreamt of a proud and free Africa that will pave the way to the Caribbean(Our translation)

The relentless quest of Marie Héléne for freedom and identity made her to pull out of her comfort zone and to embark on a journey with her husband to Africa with the aim of realising her dreams. Unfortunately, this dream was aborted because, getting to Africa, where she felt she would be welcomed, all she got was rejection coupled with the death of Madou, her lover:

Madou était mort. Alors cela signifiait que la vie ne changerait pas. Il aurait toujours le même ciel au-dessus de la tête, le même bureau à la banque, les mêmes compagnons au bar Nuit de Sine... (p.206).

Madou is dead. This therefore means that that life can never change. There will always be the same sky above their head, same office in the bank, same groups at the Nuit de Sine bar (Our translation)

Christophe is another character in the text with dreams and aspirations for freedom and identity. Christophe is being described by Zek's mother as "un batard traité comme un véritable héritier" (p.15). [a bastard been treated as a heir]. The dream of Christophe is to meet with his father through whom he could find freedom and identity. This will help him shape his battered identity and create a new image and personality for him.

Je rêve d'aller en Haiti ... Tout d'abord Madou ne comprit pas pourquoi. Puis ... haussa les épaules :

-A quoi bon ? Il n'a pas voulu de toi à ta naissance.
Pourquoi chercher à t'imposer à présent ?

-Je voudrais simplement lui poser quelques questions
puisque personne ne veut me répondre. (p.142)

I dream of going to Haiti... Firstly, Madou did not
understand why. Then ... shrugging his shoulders:

- Of what good? He never wanted you from your birth. Why
do you want to impose yourself on him now?

- I only wanted to ask him some questions since no one is
willing to answer me. (Our translation)

The desire of the inhabitants of Rihata was to gain freedom from oppression,
political tyranny and subjugation. Their dreams was « L'avenir radieux qui suivrait le
renversement de Toumany. Tous les enfants du pays bien vêtus, bien nourris, se rendant à la
queue leu leu à l'école. » (p.86). [A bright future that will follow the replacement of
Toumany. All the children of the country, well clothed, well fed, returning to school in great
joy] (Our translation)

Maryse Condé who felt Africa was an answer to her identity quest just like the little
Christophe. But to her dismay, concluded that in reality, her assumption was only a dream.
Let us hear her:

Nous autres qui sommes allés en Afrique, et qui y avons
vécu,

nous n'avons pas du tout trouvé ce qu'on nous avait
présenté; évidemment, nous sommes déçus, et nous le disons
quand nous écrivons; mais il ne faudra croire que cette
déception s'accompagne de haine ou de dépit, pas du tout,
c'est simplement un choc entre rêve et réalité. (p.10)

Those of us who went to Africa, and have stayed there did
not in any way find what we were told about, certainly, we
were disappointed and we say it in our writings; but do not
believe that this deception is accompanied with hatred, not at
all, it is simply a surprise between dream and reality.

(Our translation)

This fact is further buttressed in 'Une Saison à Rihata' where Marie Hélène, just like
Maryse Condé, travelled to Africa with her husband aspiring to find answers to all her quest

but in the long run, she was not welcomed, she was rather disappointed. Christophe in his quest, discovered like Marie H el ene that it was high time he faced the reality of life in his quest for freedom and identity. He recounts:

J'ai fini de poursuivre des chim eres et de r ever  
l'impossible
je comprends que le monde ne sera jamais beau, jamais
parfum e comme un jardin d'orange (p.156).

I succeeded in chasing shadows and dreaming of the
impossible, I understand that the world will never again be
beautiful, never again with beautiful fragrance as an orange
garden (Our translation)

Following the death of Madou, Christophe and other inhabitants of Rihata came to the realisation that their quest for freedom and identity was only a dream that cannot come to pass. Madou to them was considered as the messiah who would restore fortune to them, but with the news of his death, reality dawned on them. They thus lament: "Madou  tait mort. Alors cela signifiait que la vie ne changerait pas, il aurait toujours le m eme ciel au-dessus de la t ete, le m eme bureau   la banque ... (p.206). [Madou is dead. This therefore means that life will always remain the same, there will always remain the same sky above our head, the same office in the bank] (Our translation)

Moreover, Zek, Marie H el ene's husband realised that with the birth of their son, his quest for a son and a heir has come to a perfect conclusion. It would bring about a new dawn in his life and a redefinition of his personality. He will be recognised as one of the elders in the community as was his father and will finally be able to sit among the noble chiefs.

  pr esent qu'il avait un fils, il fallait que sa vie change, qu'
il devienne quelqu'un. Il se rappelait le sentiment de
bonheur et de fiert e qu'il  prouvait en regardant son p ere,
assis au premier rang des notables lors de toutes les
c er emonies... (p.189)

Now that he has a son, it is necessary that his life changes,
that he becomes someone to reckon with, he remembers the
feelings of fortune and pride when looking at his father,
sitting at the first row of the nobles during all ceremonies.

(Our translation)

To Zek's family, the arrival of a son signifies the birth of a future president who will end their quest for political freedom: "...premier fils, qui surement aurait un destin hors du commun. Un futur ministre? Un futur président, pourquoi pas?" (p.191) [...first son, who surely has a destiny outside the ordinary. A future minister? A future President, why not?]
(Our translation)

The unquenchable passion for freedom and identity quest of the Caribbeans cannot be overemphasized. Despite all the many troubles and pains they encountered in the course of their search for freedom, they remained focused, believing that someday fortune would smile on them. And indeed, with the birth of Elikia, Zeks son, they concluded that an end has come to their entire sad and despicable plight. Their battered image has been redesigned.

Une Saison à Rihata is one of Maryse Condé's novels with fundamental focus on the problems of gender, racial and geographical identities where characters like Marie-Hélène, Christophe and Madou continue their long process of questioning their identity. These characters seek the transformation and redemption of a battered race. There is also the need to end unnecessary domination and oppression of the female gender and provide another facet through which the womenfolk could be seen and heard. It was a major preoccupation of Marie-Hélène. To Madou, political oppression must be put to an end and freedom restored while Christophe seeks a better future for an accursed and a lost generation. As for Zek, he seeks a male child who would restore fortune to his battered tribe.

Marie Hélène desires to reclaim the lost feminine identity and be a voice to the oppressed Caribbean woman whose voice must not be heard and who must not look at the face of her husband when he is talking to her. This is depicted in Sokambi's speech:

...ne jamais regarder son mari dans les yeux, lui parler en baissant la voix, le servir, toujours le servir et surtout ne jamais lui être infidèle. (p.17)

[... never looking at her husband in the eyes, but talking to him in low tone, serving him, always serving him and remaining ever faithful to him.]
(Our translation)

Zek's father was of the notion that women are slaves and should be so treated. This is glaring in the treatment he meted on his wives. Zek laments;

...son père avait été un homme inflexible, traitant ses épouses comme des enfants ou des esclaves, il n'hésitait pas à les frapper et à les renvoyer chez elles. (p.20)

...his father has been a hard man, treating his wives like children or slaves, he did not hesitate to hit them or send them back to their (fathers) houses.(Our translation)

To Marie Hélène, the above assertion by Zek's father is a grave error that must be corrected if the Caribbean woman must gain her freedom. The need to fight relentlessly and denounce every form of subjugation must be made paramount. Marie Hélène, saddled with the responsibility of reclaiming the identity of the Caribbean woman, became preoccupied in her fight for freedom that she hardly had time for her own children. She had a burden for the Caribbean woman whose future seemed bleak due to diverse forms of relegation in a patriarchal society:

Marie Hélène aimait ses enfants, bien-sûr, mais elle n'avait pas de temps à leur consacrer. Si elle n'y prenait pas garde, elles l'obligeraient à se détourner du seul souci qui comptait à ses yeux la débandade de sa vie. (p.24)

Marie Hélène loves her children, certainly, but she never had the time to prove it to them. If she were not careful, they will be obliged to turn to the only worry that means much to them. The...of her life
(Our translation)

To Marie Hélène, the life of the Caribbean woman is synonymous to a life in shackles. Hence she described her life as one experiencing 'stampede'. To end this 'stampede', she had to return to the Island which, her husband could best describe as 'milieu d'une folie hostile' (p.25). Rihata is characterised with hostility that it became necessary for the inhabitants to rise up against all forms of man's inhumanity towards man and chart a course for freedom. Madou, realised that the people were under the rule of the dictatorian

leadership of Toumany, felt the need to end every form of tyranny. To achieve this, Madou told the people the need to be resolute in their fight for liberation. In Madou's words:

Il semblait incarner la nouvelle race d'hommes qui prendrait le pouvoir des mains de Toumany et ramènerait le sourire sur toutes les lèvres ... Tout le monde se mit à claquer des talons en s'exclamant: Prêt pour la révolution, camarade ministre. (p.41)

It seems the incarnation of the new race of men that will take Tounamy's power and restore smiles to all faces... Everybody started tapping their feet: ready for the revolution,
Minister's friend. (Our translation)

The state of reimagining in the Caribbeans experience represents a state of non-conformity of any form of oppression. It could be termed the 'enough is enough stage'. This is evident in the people's desire for their nation. They desire that «... 'notre pays sorte de son isolement, il faut qu'il cesse d'être la honte de l'Afrique» (p.57). This dream of a better life could only be attainable if the desire for reimagining is upheld. Madou recalled his childhood days with nostalgic feelings, and wished that such lost glory of Rihata could be restored. He laments: «Madou se rappelle avec nostalgie son enfance, l'animation joyeuse de son village, le marché, les jeux du soir et les récits» (p.57). [Madou remembers with nostalgia his childhood, the joyous animation of his village, the market, the evening games and the stories] (Our translation)

The joys of the childhood days of the people of Rihata according to Madou have been destroyed by slavery and colonisation that have plagued the Black race. The need for reimagining is a clarion call to end dependency on their colonial master as well as end every form of oppression on the Island and reclaiming their Carribean identity.

...il se faisait fort d'obtenir dans les domaines clés de la santé, de l'éducation et de l'agriculture, une assistance technique aussi peu coûteuse que possible et enfin permettrait de se débarrasser en partie de celle dont on dépendait. (p.58)

It was quite hard to obtain in the key domains of health, education and agriculture, a technical assistance less expensive and at the end allows one to shift attention from depending on one person.(Our translation)

The essence of this state as depicted by Maryse Condé's *Une saison à Rihata* is to birth a new dawn where «les Blancs seront forcés de partir et le pays se couvrira de fleurs » (p.126). The 'Blanc' that is being referred to in this context means everything that connotes oppression and enslavement as was the case with the Whites. The state of reimagining is equally aimed at purging the Island of "l'amertume, la solitude et la mesquinerie" (p.38)

The Research Gate Institute (2007), while referring to the work of Simone Schwarz-Barts in *Ti Jean L'horizon*, stated that the novel's protagonist Ti Jean, embarks on an epic journey, traversing real and imaginary spaces between the realms of reverie and experience Ti Jean witnesses past, present and alternate histories through the course of his travels. As he wanders, disoriented in space and in time, the ensuing sense of confusion calls into question the concept of identity. Through the negotiation of real and imaginary places and epochs, Schwarz-Bart rethinks of roots and rootedness in reality to identity, particularly in considering the diasporic people of Francophone Antilles, providing an alternative to Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome and Edouard Glissant's Relation models. Such motifs are apparent as Ti Jean travels through desperate places and epochs, simultaneously presenting the quest for the questioning of an "Antillean identity."

It has always been a question of identity and recognition, a fight for one's right and against oppression. From the work of the writers, we are able to carefully draw out a plan of reflection on the Caribbean experience in their struggle for freedom and reimagining. When people get very frustrated from being oppressed, there is every tendency that they will result to war, fighting and combat. These are the likely aftermaths of the fight against slavery and brain-washing. It gets to a point where people are no longer afraid to die as painted in Schwarz-Bart Ti-Jean l'horizon. The name 'Losiko-Siko' in the novel is used to refer to the aftermath of the people's actions towards such enslavement that is now clear in their eyes. It is painted in this case in form of a story: "Il ne restait plus sur la terre qu'une femme et son fils, un jeune enfant du nom de Losiko-Siko, ce qui signifie dans mon village: Celui-qui-dit-

oui-à-la-mort’’ (p.254). [Only a woman and her son are left in the land, a young child named Losiko-Siko, which signifies in myvillage: One-who-says-yes-to-death] (Our translation)

Ti Jean believes strongly that the fight will end well. This is one of the reasons why he does not give up in his quest for freedom: “Mais tout cela aurait bien fini par envoyer des racines un jour, et puis un tronc et de nouvelles branches avec des feuilles des fruits...” (p.248). [But all this would have ended well by simply sending roots one day, and then a stem as well as new branches with leaves of fruits...] (Our translation)

Though the situation at the beginning seemed hopeless, we are assured at the end that the people are now ready to courageously engage their future. Thus, he writes:

...que cette serait qu’un commencement; le commencement d’une chose qui, l’attendait là, parmi ces groupes de cases éboulées... sous lesquels on se racontait à voix basse et l’on rêvait, déjà, on réinventait la vue... (p.286)

...that this was just the beginning; the beginning of a thing that was waiting for him there amongst these groups of shattered huts.... under which told stories in low tones and we were dreaming, already, we were recreating a new shape...

(Our translation)

According to Gbenoba and Okoregbe (2014), in literary works, psychoanalytic critics believe that the unconscious mind of the author is revealed in his works. This assertion is vivid in *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle*. It is worthy of note that the repressed desires and actions of the major characters in our text are influenced by the pains of slavery. Gbenoba and Okoregbe (2014) opine that dreams represent a leaking of the unconscious mind into consciousness. The dream referred to in this context, does not necessarily mean the dreams that occur during a sleep, but that desire and aspiration; a driving force for a change. Télumée, in our text, came to the consciousness to break out of slavery and colonization to a state of cultural rebirth and freedom. She recounts her ordeal:

La future d’un pays dépend toujours de l’homme. si le cœur de l’homme est petit, pas grave. Mais si c’est grand, est une chose différente. Télumée exprime le taux de la souffrance dans son pays. Néanmoins, si elle unechoix d’être née une

autre fois, elle préférera son pays d'origine. Car, elle n'est pas venue au monde pour bouger toute la souffrance. Donc, elle choisit de rester dans son pays même avec tous les problèmes comme les gens du même âge qu'elle jusqu'à sa mort.(p.10)

The future of a country depends on the heart of man: it is small when the heart is small, and large when the heart is large. I have never suffered from the exiguity of my country, without even wanting to pretend that I have a big heart. If I'm given the power, it is in this same Guadeloupe, that I would choose to be reborn, to suffer and to die. Yet, hard to bear, my ancestors were slaves on these hills of volcanoes, cyclones and mosquitoes, of wrong mentality. But I did not come to this earth to lift high the misfortunes of the world. So, I prefer to dream, again and again, stand in front of my garden, just like my fellow aged counterparts until death takes me away like in my dream, with all joy in my heart...
(Our translation)

Télumée recounts that slavery and oppression characterize her race, hence their deplorable state. It is a known fact that they are descendants of slavery, starting from Minerve, her great grandmother through her grandmother Toussaine (Reine sans nom) to Victoire her mother and now to Télumée: "Elle avait eu pour mère la dénommée Minerve, femme chanceuse que l'abolition de l'esclavage avait libérée d'un maître réputé pour ses caprices cruels" (p.12). [She had for a mother, one so called Minerve, a lucky woman that the abolition of slavery had liberated from a reputable and cruel master.] (Our translation)

The above assertion points us to the fact that the descendants of Font –Zombi went through a lot of cruelty and total submission in the hands of their colonial masters. At this point in their lives, the only desire they could wish for was freedom. But, they could only dream of it because there was little or nothing they could do to attain freedom, being aware of the "code civil" guiding the Island. Rather they found solace in death as the gate way to freedom.

A la fin, elle chouchouta rêveusement, tant pour moi que pour elle je croyais que ma chance était morte, mais aujourd'hui je le vois bien: je suis negresse a chance et je mourrai a chance. Ainsi s'écoula ma première soirée à Font-

Zombi et cette nuit -là fut sans rêves, car en plein soleil j'avais rêvé. (p.49)

Finally, she comes out dreamily, more for me than for her...I believed my time was over, but today, it is quite clear to me: unfortunately, I was born and will die a Negro. And so it came to pass my first party out at Font-Zombi and that night was dreamless for, I had dreamed right under the sun.
(Our translation)

Télumée is, from the above lamentation, dreaming of freedom for her oppressed race. According to her, this is because slavery has taken the best of her fellow Negroes especially her grandmother who in the words of Télumée:

...n'était plus d'âge à se courber sur la terre des Blancs, amarrer les cannes, arracher les mauvaises herbes et sarcler, couper le vent, mariner son corps au soleil comme elle avait fait toute sa vie. (p.49)

...was not up to the age of venturing into the white man's land, moor the sugarcane, remove the weed, redirect the wind, pickle the cane like she has been doing all her life.
(Our translation)

As horrible as the state of Télumée's grandmother, she will not allow her desire for freedom to slip away. She holds tenaciously to her dream that someday, fortune will smile on them. She tells Cia, her friend: « ...j'en fais un rêve, Cia, un rêve que je t'ai amené là, pour la douceur de tes yeux même...et je te l'amène à respirer » (p.57). [I dream about it Cia, a dream that I took you there, for the softness of your eyes.... And I will take you there to breathe.] (Our translation)

Télumée's grandmother's dreams, as well as those of Télumée, are to bring liberation to their people. Reine sans nom, who through her counsels and guidance, acts as a medium between Télumée and her dreams for freedom and identity, admonishes her thus:

Télumée, mon petit verre en cristal', disait -elle pensivement, 'trois sentiers sont mauvaises pour l'homme; voir la beauté du monde et dire qu'il est laid, se lever de grand matin pour faire ce dont on est incapable, et donner libre cours à ses songes sans surveiller, car qui songe devient victime de son propre songe. (p.51)

Télumée, my lovely cristal glass', she said thoughtfully, man usually thrives on three deadly pathways; seeing the beauty of the world and saying it is ugly, waking up in the morning do start up what one cannot accomplish and giving a free course to its visions without keeping watch. For he who dreams becomes victim of his own dream.
(Our translation)

Télumée's grandmother seemed to be conscious of the fact that it is a good ambition to dream, but dreaming without acting on the dreams will result in failure. dream for freedom made her to pay the price for her freedom when she had to work extra hard to buy her freedom from her colonial master. According to her, for any dream to be actualised, it must coincide with reality in order to bring about a transformed destiny.

Reimagining the dented image and identity of the Caribbeans only became possible with accolades to Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Barts whose works brought about a reawakening to these colonized Caribbeans. Through the work of these authors, a new desire was birthed in the Caribbeans; the desire to rewrite their history, to restore the lost glory of the Island and to correct every misconception encompassing their culture and tradition.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In this study, attempt was made to examine the quest for freedom and identity in selected Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart's texts, namely; *Traversée de la mangrove*, *Une saison à Rihata*, *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* and *Ti-Jean l'horizon*. Identity could be viewed as what defines a person or group of persons. The Caribbeans being mainly descendants of slaves are faced with the problem of 'a ruined history to which we must give shape and restructure' Glissant (1989:224). In an attempt to give shape to, and restructure the history of the Caribbeans, the works of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz-Bart serve as a major tool for reclaiming the Caribbeans' identity and giving recovery to a seemingly lost generation.

This study has been able to picture the Caribbeans' identity and freedom quest through the works of the two selected female Caribbean writers. These women have through their personal experiences brought the pains and sufferings of the Caribbeans to limelight. The pains of dejection and rejection suffered by characters in their texts upon their arrival to Africa in their quest for freedom and identity was depicted through the lives of Marie Hélène in Maryse Condé *Une saison à Rihata* and that of Francis Sancher in *Traversée de la mangrove*. Similarly, in Schwarz-Bart *Pluie et vent sur Télumée miracle* and *Ti-Jean l'horizon*, we pictured characters who embark on a series of journeys all in their quest for a better life for their fellow Caribbeans thereby safeguarding the future of Caribbeans yet unborn. There was also an emphasis as regards Africa not being the answer to their quest for freedom and identity.

In this study, we explored the postcolonial theory and some basic concepts such as Agency, Hybridity, Stereotypification, etc to justify the aftermaths of colonialism as well as buttress the fact that the Caribbeans who were victims of colonial oppression be allowed to

speak and be heard. Postcolonial theory, in the course of this study, equally enabled us through the works of the selected authors to revisit the past of the Caribbeans, comprehend their present state and project into their future.

The study discovered that the desire for freedom and identity in our selected texts led the Caribbeanto a journey of self-discovery, with the realisation that the quest for freedom and identity was not an impossible task to embark upon as its aim was to restore dignity to a people who as a result of stereotypification considered themselves inferior to their fellow humans, either due to skin colour, the shape of their nose or the nature of their hair which in turn brought about hatred for their fellow blacks and preference for the white skinned. A people whose survival lie in the hands of their colonial master suddenly realised that they have been marginalised for too long and if they must end all forms of oppression and stigmatization, they must put an end to dreaming and face the reality of their lives by waking up to fight for their freedom and a purely Caribbean identity. To them, negritude was not an acceptable alternative. In their opinion, negritude met only the needs of the Africans. Hence, the desire for ‘Antillianité’ which further opens the door for ‘creolité’ and a reimaging of the Caribbeans.

Furthermore, the concept of hybridity was examined in the selected texts. It was diccovered that the Caribbeans are interwoven culturally, socially, politically and otherwise. This was vividly depicted in the four selected texts. We see a people of same race and tribe seeking a common goal. This goal is seen in their quest for freedom and identity. This is so because hybridity to a large extent affected the culture of this people who are mainly descendedants of slavery and under the control of their colonial masters. To safeguard the future of Caribbeans yet unborn, the need to break out of the perils of slavery, oppression and battered identity colonization was birthed. This explains why contemporary Caribbeans have through the works of some Caribbean authors such as the ones under review have become resolute have become resolute and ready to take their destiny in their own hands if they must gain their desired freedom and assert an identity that is purely Caribbean.

Summarily, the yoke of subalternity and resistance is broken as contempory Caribbeans could henceforth express themselves freely. To this end, the quest for freedom and identity is a laudable one as it paves the way for renaissance and a cultural rebirth

thereby restoring the lost glory of an accursed race. The novels of Maryse Condé and Simone Schwarz Bart seek a reformation and a regeneration of an authentic Caribbean society.

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