
Caribbean Theatre and the Crisis of Identity: A Comparative Analysis

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Citation

Shi Victor Vincent. Caribbean Theatre and the Crisis of Identity: A Comparative Analysis. *Language, Literature and Culture*. Vol. 1, No. 2, 2018, pp. 41-48.

Received: April 23, 2018; Accepted: June 11, 2018; Published: July 19, 2018

Abstract: This paper sets out to explore the theatre of the Caribbean- how the people's historicity informs on the present literary pedigree of the region and their intra/interpersonal multifaceted interactions. The entire literature of the Caribbean effortlessly finds itself intermeddling with an odd culture that lingers even after the awful reign of imperialism. The men and women, though distraught, are firmly gripped by divisive and intangible hands of color. The study surveys the Caribbean literary text plays – *Old Story Time and Smile Orange* by Trevor Rhone within the compages of comparative analysis. Comparative theory enables an examination of two or more texts with. The study identifies and concludes therefore that language, and colours remain determining factors for identity and stratification in the contemporary Caribbean environment and several communities in the world. It also reasoned that having colour to determining people's status and socio-economic participation in any given community irrespective of the inherent divergence in the world's human settlements, in an age of globalization, must be lawfully resisted. And the natives whose ideals have been battered by experience must have to go through a just and efficient reorientation to be readmitted into society based on equality.

Keywords: Caribbean, Identity, Language, Colour, Theater, Comparatists

1. Introduction

The collective history of the Caribbean islands has long fascinated and absorbed its most prominent writers. From earlier writers like George Lamming and his exploration of the colonial legacy in a Pseudo-imaginary village in Barbados to more contemporary efforts such as Caryl Philips' critique of historiography in *Cambridge*, authors have sought to engage with the history of their islands and the processes by which that history was created. The question why in an age when many authors turned away from the past to contemplate the present and its technological bridge to the future, why has Caribbean literature consistently been infused with issues of history?

The answer comes in examining both the legacy that history has left in the Caribbean as well as the ways in which that history was written. Most prominently, the Caribbean still in some ways live under the shadow of its past [6]. To begin with the true natures of the islands (if such word is appropriate); American Indians such as the Caribs or the Arawaks, were all but wiped out by the colonization of the 16th and 17th century. The oral culture did not make for easy

preservation and thus left barely a cultural mark for the new slave societies of black Africans (and south and East Asians) to cling to. Although slavery ended in theory in the late 1800s, the oppressive nature of colonialism led many to believe that liberation of slaves was an illusion. For the maintaining of a powerful white plutocracy ensured that most blacks, though free, would still be living in conditions of stark penury with very low wages and little hope for advancement. In most countries, independence began to come about in the late 1950s, as the foundation of the West Indian Federation (including nations such as Jamaica, Barbados, and St. Lucia) signaled a departure from the weight of British influence. But this organization dissolved in 1962, and while many countries (like Barbados or Jamaica) achieved independence status soon after, some (including St. Lucia, which did not gain full independent status until 1979) remained trapped under the colonial influence until quite recently. Thus, as these countries still experience the growing pains of their initial years of independence and strive to move out from the shadow of their only-recently departed colonial rulers, writers quite naturally take concern with the history that has brought them to this point.

The institution of slavery tragically produced another unique issue in the history of the Caribbean and its people. It cuts people off from their personal ancestry. Slaves were torn from ancestral homes in Africa and brought across the sea to North America (a voyage known as the Middle Passage). Once in the colonies, families were broken up and slaves were often renamed according to the master's whims, sometimes several different times if they changed owners. This coupled with the fact that the remaining family lived thousands of miles across the ocean and had become untraceable due to the name changes and family disintegration made the development of a personal lineage of family traditions as we know them, impossible. Owners discourage or prohibit slaves from marrying, yet encouraged lots of children to be born or taken from their parents and sold off or used in other areas [7]. So until slaves were truly granted freedom, rootlessness rather than lineage and tradition formed the predominant historical mindset/themes of the Caribbean people. One can see evidence of this dispossessed mentality in such works as Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, in which both the narrator and the protagonist Achilles must seek out their ancestry across the sea in Africa (and for the narrator examining his cultural influences) even in Greece, Italy, or America.

Writers like Caryl Philips have turned attention to the validity and accuracy of the written history of the Caribbean. In his novel *Cambridge*, Philips sets historical documents such as Victorian women's travelogues and even slave narratives in opposition to each other, noting how the subjective nature of these documents tainted their validity. Indeed, how could a history of the Caribbean be fairly written when the only ones who truly had access to writing and publishing material were the colonial white powers? Thus Philips has led the way into investigating not only the history of the Caribbean, but the texts that make up that history [6].

And for theatre in Jamaica, it is a long history, but on the evidence available, Jamaican theatre is young. From at least the eighteenth century until the 1930s, there has been evidence of mainly foreign, often visiting, theatre, "the amusement of the very thin upper crust". Amusements of the poor black – the bulk of the population" (V), African slaves and their descendents – are broadly described, but they do not field a convenient wealth of document of the chroniclers. The account given by Richardson Wright, Revels in Jamaica 1682-1838, has been supplemented by other historians of the theatre, such as Henry Fowler, Ivy Baxter, Errol Hill, who also examine developments after emancipation. This theater was specifically organized to entertain the few white colonialists' officers in an enclosed environment exclusively reserved for them and only the whites participated in the major roles except for other demeaning scenes which were Caribbean's. Their themes were also directly a satire of the blacks. Since the industry was foreign, they (Caribbean) had no room to actively participate in it so that the Caribbean ideals were simultaneously blotted off. In 1911, George Barnard Shaw, on visit to Jamaica remarked;

you want... a theatre, with all the ordinary traveling companies from England and America sternly kept out of it; for unless you do, your own acting and write your own plays, your theatre will be no use, it will in fact, vulgarize and degrade you... (v [6]).

Shaw's comment is a response to the arbitrary sites of a theater completely cut off from the larger population of Jamaica. It does reveal the derogatory contents of that theater. This time the Jamaicans had not taken up the challenge of writing their plays and doing their acting.

The trend of foreign theater however continued; plenty of touring companies doing Shakespeare and English trivia. The Christmas Morning concerts, for example was begun in early 20th century and gave the stage to some outstanding Jamaican performers, such as Ernest Cupidon, young Louis Bennett and many others. With the growth of Jamaican nationalism in the 1930s, there were more and more attempts to write Jamaican drama which engaged with Jamaican realities.

Trevor Rhone was born in the wake of the Jamaican theatre Revival in Kingston on March 24th, 1940, the year Little Theatre Movement (LTM) was founded. Rhone born into a large black family of twenty one children in all had grown through and within the era and was consequently trapped as he discovered a part of him in the theatre hence the decision to be an actor at the age of nine. The two plays were written and performed in the early 70s and published 1981. The above-mentioned issues concerning the Jamaican theater formed the trigger behind Rhone's engagement with an indigenous theater with inherent ideals.

Since the paper intends to examine Rhone *Old Story Time* and *Smile Orange*, it becomes quite imperative to give an overview of the concept of comparative theory and the arguments that have trailed it until the recently put definition that has a universal acceptance. Comparative literature is said to be an academic field dealing with the literature of two or more different linguistic, cultural or national groups. While most frequently practiced with works of different language, comparative literature may also be performed on works of the same language if the works originate from different nations or cultures among which that language is spoken. Also included in the range of inquiry are comparisons of different types of art; for example, a relationship of film to literature.

The interdisciplinary nature of the field means that comparatists typically exhibit some acquaintance with translation studies, sociology, critical theory, cultural studies, religious studies and history. This eclecticism has led critics (from within and without) to charge that comparative literature is insufficiently well defined or that comparatists have easily fallen into dilenttanism, because the scope of their work is, of necessity, broad. Some question whether this breadth affects the ability of critics to find employment in the highly specialized environment of academia and the career market at large, although such concerns do not seem to be borne out by placement. Data shows comparative literature graduates to be cited at similar or higher rates than their peers in English.

Comparative literature is an interdisciplinary field whose practitioners study across national borders, across time periods, across languages, across genres, across boundaries between literature and the arts, across disciplines. Defined most broadly, comparative literature is the study of “literature without borders”. Scholarship in comparative literature include, for example studying literacy and social status in the America, studying medical epic and romance, studying the links of literature to folklore and mythology, studying colonial and post colonial writings in different parts of the world, asking fundamental questions about definitions of literature itself. What scholars in comparative literature share is a desire to study literature beyond national boundaries and an interest in languages so that they can read foreign texts in their original form. Many comparatists also share the desire to integrate literacy, philosophical concepts, and social movement [1].

From the early part of the 20th century until WW II, the field was characterized by a notably empiricist and positionist approach, termed the “French School”, in which scholars examined works forensically, looking for evidence of “origins” and “influences” between works from different nations. Thus a scholar might attempt to trace how a particular literary idea or motif traveled between nations overtime. In French school of comparative literature, the study of influences and mentalities dominate. Today the French School practices the nation-state approach of the discipline although it also promotes the approach of a “European comparative literature”.

Like the French school, the German comparative Literature has its origins in the late 19th century. After World War II, the discipline developed to a large extent owing to one scholar in particular, Peter Szondi (1929-1971), a Hungarian who lectured at the Free University Berlin. Szondi’s work in *Allgemeine und vergleichende literaturwissenschaft* (German for “General Comparative Literary Studies”) included the genre of drama, lyric (in particular hermetic) poetry, and hermeneutics: “Szondi’s vision of *Allgemeine und literaturwissenschaft* became evident in both his policy of inviting international guest speakers to Berlin and his introduction to their talks. Szondi welcomed, among other Jacques Derrida, Pierre Bourdieu, Lucien Goldman from France, Paul de man from Zurich, Gershom Sholem from Jerusalem, Theodore W. Adams from Frankfurt, Han Robert James from the then Young University of Konstanz and from the US Rene Wellek (Harvard), Geoffrey Hartman and Peter Demetz (Yale), along with the liberal publicist Lionel Trilling. The names of these visiting scholars, who form a programmatic network and a methodological canon, epitomize Szondi’s conception of comparative literature.

Responding to the French school, postwar scholars collectively termed the “American School” sought to return the field to matters more directly concerned with literary criticism, de-emphasizing the detective work and detailed historical research that the French school had demanded. The American school was more closely aligned with the

original internationalist visions of Goethe and posttest reflecting the postwar desire for international co-operation, looking at examples of universal human “truths” based on literary archetypes that appeared throughout literatures from all times and places. The approach of American School would be familiar to current practitioners of cultural studies and in even claimed by some to be the forerunner of the cultural studies boom in universities during the 1970s and 1980s. The field today is highly diverse; for example, comparatists routinely study Chinese major world languages and regions as well as English and Continental European literatures.

Recently, there is a movement among comparatists in the US and elsewhere to re-focus the discipline away from the nation-based approach with which it has previously been associated towards a cross-cultural approach that pays no heed to national borders. Works of this nature include Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s *Death of Discipline*, David Damrosch’s *What is world Literature?* Steven Totosy de Zepetnek’s *Concept of Comparative Cultural Studies*, and Pascale Casanova’s *The World Republic of Letters*. Given developments in the studies of globalization and interculturalism; comparative literature, already representing a wider study than the single-language, nation-state approach, may well be suited to move away from the paradigm of nation-state. While in the West comparative literature is experiencing institutional constriction, there are signs that in many parts of the world the discipline is thriving, especially in Asia, Latin America and the Mediterranean [3].

In a nutshell, comparative works on texts - be they literary or otherwise will always seek to explore the similarities and distinctions embedded in any given work. These materials could be historical, cultural, thematic preoccupations, language paradigms, style, background and other relative variations. It could also be applied on two or more works by the same author hence the rationale for this analysis on Trevor Rhone’s *Old Story Time and Smile Orange*.

2. Synopsis

Smile Orange is set at the Macho Beach Hotel, somewhere on Jamaica’s North Coast where the Island’s tourist industry is located, *Smile Orange* follows the escapades of Ringo Smith, a self proclaimed playboy and hustler. While his substantive post at macho Beach is that of waiter, Ringo earns additional income by providing special service, of a sexual nature, for the female guests who, he states, do not only come to Jamaica for the beach and sunshine. Ringo has to juggle hustling and romancing the tourists with managing the interference of a rather loud and combative wife and her two brothers, as well as the new assistant manager, who is more taken with establishing his own importance than with managing the somewhat run-down and seedy hotel.

Trevor Rhone’s *Old Story Time* tells about a mother who was enslaved by her past. She grew up in a society, which was taught, “anything that was black wasn’t good” and also

that “black wasn’t good” and also that black signifies failure and hardship. While white signifies prosperity and advancement. This belief was passed down as a result of slavery and has followed her throughout her life. The story tells of a single mother by the name of Miss Aggy also called mama, who lived alone with her son Len and beside her lived her best friend Pa Ben. Mama would normally beat her son Len for associating with black persons in the community; especially girls of his age group. She would tell her son what it is she wanted for him and what is best for him, also that if he does as she said, then he would not have a problem. As the years go by, Len had left home to study overseas and his mother was getting really worried about him but after writing her she felt much better. In one of the letters that she received from him, he told her that he was married and sent a picture of his wife who was a black woman, and this got Mama very agitated. She also thought that Len’s wife Lois was turning her son against her. Pa Ben who was secretly keeping in contact with Len told mama that it was not what she thought. Len returned to find his bantering mother who is hoodwinked by George McFarlane and now persuades her son to give him a loan. The whole evil of George is exposed and Miss Aggy finds out that she was wrong all the while but with the religious touch, Rhone, gives the play a reconciliatory undertone, Mama finds out that her spirit was rather in bondage and they - Mrs. Len, Lois and Pa Ben circle her reciting the twenty third chapter of psalm for her deliverance. At the end they are one but McFarlane is left in his hell.

3. Analysis

Trevor Rhone’s *Old Story Time* and *Smile Orange* even though they have got different and peculiar characters, and setting (as in the locale); still share a few common features. Language and Colour are motifs and consequently paradigms foregrounded in both texts. In the Anglophone Caribbean context, Edward Kamau Braithwaite’s theory of nation language is especially worthy of mention here. Braithwaite traces the development of the Caribbean form of English, which he termed “nation language”, back to the actual beginnings of the colonial process in the West Indies, when the language of the colonizers (English, Spanish, French, or Dutch) was forced upon the colonized subjects. After the indigenous population was truncated, there was then a huge import of slaves from West Africa. These people were perceived as inferior and ‘non human’ as Braithwaite puts it. Even though African languages had to submerge, Braithwaite argues that they still influenced the language of the oppressor, and in that process were changing themselves. The complex processes of mutual influencing between the

language of the colonizer and that of the colonized finally led to the formation of what Braithwaite calls nation language and defines it thus

[it] is the language which is influenced very strongly by the African model, the African aspect of our New World/Caribbean heritage. English it may be in terms of some of its lexical features. But in its contours, its rhythm and timbre, its sounds explosions, it is not English, even though the words, as you hear the, might be English to a greater or lesser degree (281).

The entire dialogue of *Old Story Time* is largely written in a Caribbean dialect of English (Stone 41), or using Braithwaite’s terminology –in nation language. Johannes Barthel rightly notes the only characters that avoid using the dialect forms on a frequent basis are George, Lois, and Len. Len, however, does so only after his return from studying abroad. This attitude can be blamed on firstly their wish to distance themselves from the Afro-Caribbean culture and profoundly because that they perceive as inferior the dialect all through the play. The color motif seems to awfully pervade Rhone’s main characters in his plays- both *Old Story Time* and *Smile Orange* so that Loomba observes internalized racism can be seen as one of the effects of “the miserable schizophrenia of the colonized identity” (124). Loomba reiterates Fanon where he says that the reason for this schizophrenic state of mind of the colonized is that “[f]or the black subject... the white other serves to define everything that is desirable, everything that the self desires” (123-4) which leads to self-hatred of the black subject, who is designated as inferior and perceives himself as powerless in the colonial situation. This paper attempt to denounce the language and color motifs as parameters for identity and by extension social inclusion: particularly in the postcolonial Caribbean society and even in the world.

In the *Old Story Time*, Rhone employs the narrator (Pa Ben) who alongside plays an important role in the play. He is designated profoundly by the author to give the audience or the reader a coherent perspective of the play. He tells us the story, reveals through flash back certain aspects of the play that is not acted so that the readers or audience are made to see events in the play through Pa Ben and Rhone does that to help the audience appraise rightly what they read or watch.

The characters of Mama (Miss Aggy), Pa Ben, and Pearl in *Old Story Time* do parallel Ringo, Joe and Cyril in *Smile Orange* in their use of the Jamaican Creole. The language spoken in the two plays ranges between more or less Standard English which Braithwaite termed nation language. From the beginning Rhone introduces us to Pa Ben who tells the story with the theatrical performance.

Pa Ben: [over he song, sings] *Old Story Time, Old Story Time*
 [Speaks] Evening, one and all. Everybody hearty? What happen, you people mouth join church or what? You don’t have voice to answer me? Every body hearty? [the actors respond ‘yes, Pa Ben’] that’s better.
 [To the audience] make yourselves comfortable on them nice chairs. You people lucky, years ago when A was a boy and A use to go listen to story, it was never in no fancy place like this, with all them (8 [10])

Mama who is the next character (Miss Aggy) presented to us also employs the same language pattern-Creole. She calls out for her son whom her discipline and life principles seem to exert some influence on, the fact that this language pattern is chiefly associated with persons of low status, and colour is also evidenced in Mama's opening dialogue with Pa Ben thus:

Mama: Len! [Pause] Don't tell me him not here. Lennie! [Pause] watch me an' him today, Lennard! After I tell him to stay in the house an' study him book [she starts looking around the yard for him], him make me com back an' don't find him in the yard.
[She calls out once more] Lennard! [Pause] Lennard! Pa Ben, pa Ben! [She calls across the yard].

Pa Ben: Oi!

Mama: You see Lennard?

Pa Ben: A think him went to market wid you. (10 [10])

It is obvious from the onset of this dialogue that these characters' placement in this society can be determined by the language pattern they adopt. From Pa Ben's initial rendition, Rhone makes a very accessible point of where the blacks are in the social strata and civilization of the community. Rhone reveals from the statement of Pa Ben that previously there had been nothing like these chairs where the audience sits to watch and listen to plays and stories. The response of the audience also lends credence to the pre-existent affinity among the entire residents of the Caribbean in their common history, cultural antecedents and bequeathed legacy. In the dialogue above, you find these; Pa Ben and

Miss Aggy have a semblance as they did not differ in their articulation of the Creole. The dexterity with which Rhone makes these characters to flow in this speech form relates effortlessly their identity. Beyond the identity, it also distinguishes the mulatto white from the black Caribbean and also the educated from the non-educated (or illiterate).

Every other discussion made with Pa Ben, Pearl, Len and Miss Aggy; they are consistently done in the Jamaican Creole and it is important to stress that Rhone applies the same diction for certain characters in the text- *Smile Orange*. Ringo and Joe, also Cyril thus:

Ringo: Look at him, nuh. You know what him like to me!

Joe: No, what?

Ringo: Like a mulatto jackass looking over a white wash Fence [both laugh].

Joe: But Ringo, dem guest, is only old people.

Ringo: Is only old people, yes.

Joe: Look at that one, Him look like di same man to me. Where him going again? (103 [10]).

The above dialogue also suffices that in *Smile Orange* too Standard English is associated with higher, Creole with lower, social status. All through this text, one finds out that speakers of the Creole are the waiters, cooks, the Telephone operator, "the Afro chick" thereby affirming the point Rhone seem to convey that language determines and aptly reveals the status of individuals in his plays. They all are black residents of the environment.

Not unlike *The Old Story Time*, certain black characters that have gone through the educational training as seen in the assistant manager, O'Kefee of the Macho Beach Hotel and Lennard who has got a Ph.D from his studies abroad and his wife Lois. The Standard English is however associated with this section of black Caribbean to emphasize Rhone's position as to the necessity for literacy. Whereas Grace Owen's description of Miss Aggy as 'a woman of courage, relentless in her effort to assist the next generation, her son, to rise above poverty through education' (72). While this is summarily true, it remains problematic and questionable

since the "advancement" she wants her son to achieve cannot be possible with education alone. You can see that in her choice for who Len should marry when he is set. Barthel also agrees with Stone when she identifies that the "constant pressure that the endearing but obsessively feudal Miss Aggie[sic] put[s] on her young son to 'advance' himself towards whiteness" is the soft spot in the relationship of Tomlinson family. Rhone openly takes a stand with having the natives getting educated which serves as a catalyst for identity transformation altogether and not the misconceived whiteness. This is demonstrated in the disappointment she finds in position of Reverend Greaves as racist. Even though, the Creole was quite natural with the Caribbean, stringent drive for the education that is seemingly reserved for the mulattos or whites breaks one away from the cocooned worthlessness that is synonymous with lack of it. These blacks have got the prowess, given their education, to switch code with ease as situation demands. When Lois encounters George, it was standard thus:

Lois: Hi,

George: I am here to see,... Lois! [pause]

Lois: Mr McFarlane?

George: Surprise, surprise! [Long pause] Aren't you going to invite me in?

Lois: This is a lot of surprise. What are you doing here? (38 [10])

Here, when Lois meets George McFarlane, they converse in Standard English. That also takes place between Len and George, Len and Lois whereas when they (each of them) relate with someone without educational background they switch code to the Creole. Language therefore serves as an instrument, in Rhone's plays, to measure off discreetly the local from the integrated, the blacks from the white, the educated from uneducated.

Skin colour also suggests distinctions. The colours had their significance each. The white or brown was preached superior, excellent, advancement, treasure and something priceless worth striving for. Conversely, the black stood for poverty, dirt, contempt, worthlessness etc. Rhone, in both texts, brings the contentious subject of colour not only to reminisce and critique the racial dispositions of the Caribbean but to also reveal the inherited imperial fallacy about colour (the blacks' against black) and how colour can determine your place in society. For a long time this colour

concept stood out painfully as parameter for discrimination.

This attitude to colour is a major concern in *Old Story Time*. The play travels the journey of Jamaican community in the last four decades, from a time when colour discrimination was accepted by its victims into an era when a few blacks slipped through the net into further education and on to the period when those educated blacks, in the new political climate, begin to be appointed to positions of power. Just early in the play, Rhone makes the audience grapple with the pills of colour significance when he brings to us Miss Aggy looking out for her son, Len whom she had instructed to busy himself reading without a break. And if he will have to take some rest then not mixing up. She tries to pass down to her son what she had been taught and made to believe in the colonial days. She is good intentioned except for the colonial toxic she carries along in the nurturing of the little boy, Len. The conversation goes this way;

Len: A was studying all morning, mama. A just came out for a little breeze.
 Mama: Well then, feel the breeze (As she beats him) Don't A tell you.....Don't mix up Don't carouse. Who is di gal?
 Len: Is Miss Emeraldal daughter, Pearl, mama
 Mama: Peal? An' what you is to she?
 Len: She is mi friend, mama.
 Mama: Miss Emeraldal Frowsy -tail, jigger foot jeysey ears, board head gal is you friend? Where is yuh ambition? ... after A struggle out mi soul case to send you to big shot high school, you come home mix up with that little dry head gal? How much time A must tell you, don't mix up with the little dutty black gal them in the district? How much time a must tell you, black nuh good? She is no advancement, a ... Trust mama, mama knows best. Leave out the dutty black gal them, concentrate on yuh books, for life is hard when you black, but with a little education you still have a chance. A have a nice girl... Miss Margaret, Rev. Greaves daughter, a nice brown girl... is advancement.(14 [10])

The preceding dialogue between Miss Aggy and her son is a platform that unravels the wanton misconceptions even the blacks have of colour-that black is not good but white or brown is advancement. This opinion is what Miss Aggy harbours as she desires for relationship between her son and the Reverend's daughter, Margaret instead of any black girl. This also drives her into believing George McFarlane even when he was out to dupe her. She calls any relationship between black and black (especially Len's relationship) a 'mix-up'. The worth of Margaret from the above dialogue does not have anything to do with her education but colour and her long hair. Miss Aggy is obsessed with the colour subject; hate for anything black so that Pa Ben says to the audience "you don't even understand Miss Aggy. She

wouldn't even have a black chicken in her yard"(14). Her obsession with colour is also evidenced when Len sends a letter home with a copy of picture (of himself and his wife, Lois), she cries and tears off the picture of the black woman with a feeling of betrayal. She even alleges that Lois must have be-witched her son.

It is paramount to reiterate that Rhone's early portrayal of Miss Aggy in this dialogue is to artistically superimpose on the audience very firmly the crux of the play. There is a simmering similitude in *Smile Orange* which can be accessed in the dialogue between Ringo and Joe as they serve the tourist on the table and O'Keffe (assistant manager) and Ringo in the (manager) office thus;

Ringo: A guy in my station - Winnie di pooti him say him name - all him sing is Jamaica, Jamaica beautiful Jamaica. Di rum punch gone to him head. Him happy. Mek him sing. Him soon loose all him money, Hey, who's di chick sitting alone by di piano?
 Joe: Di black one?
 Ringo: no, man. Who's she anyway?
 Joe: Di new Social Director. Say she on managerial staff.
 Ringo: if is me she waiting on to serve her, she goin' starve to death. Is the other chick A talking about... (115 [10]).

Besides, the position of Rhone is made lucid as the audience finds blacks like Ringo who expresses contempt at his fellow black it is not just the other way but the blacks themselves set against each other because of the warped ideal and orientation. The reader or audience may be ill-informed and wanders in reasoning if the reader or audience stops at

O’Keffe: Why didn’t you serve Miss Thomas?
 Ringo: Which Miss Thomas, Sir? Who is she, Sir?
 O’Keffe: the new Social Director. Here we are. [Picking up a letter] The lady threatened to resign... she say she was deliberately ignored for over an hour...
 Ringo: Is my fault to come out when I know I wasn’t so well. I try mi best to look after di guests.
 O’Keffe: Look smith, I know what goes on, so don’t try an’ bullshit me! I know you waiters. You don’t like to serve black people (137 [10])

The incidence in the assistant manager’s office validates the supposition that certain blacks, especially of the low caste, out of wrong notion treat their other blacks within the upper crust with contempt. Rhone in all of these instances is seen to reprove these attitudes. In *Smile Orange*, the Assistant manager cautions Ringo and in *Old Story Time*, Rhone exposes the evil of George which concurrently condemns mama’s obsession with colour. In this case, not everything white must be good and not every black is bad as in the character of Lois. Rhone in condemning Mama’s obsession and misconception does allow the misgivings and soured relationship to be corrected finally by love, forgiveness and prayer but leaving McFarlane to his hell.

From the above dialogue, it is a not out of place to allege that colour is apparently a parameter for discrimination and largely determines stratification in some societies, interestingly it is not confined to just the white West but even much more is expressed in black continents. George in Jamaican economy did not get the job because he is very qualified and of proven character but largely because he is

Ringo: White people love to see black people bow down, you see!
 Joe: I will touch di ground if I can find a dollar bill down dere.
 Ringo: A will go further than dat. A will bury my head in di san.
 Joe: Dem must pay, yes. Look how long them carrying us down.
 Ringo: Exploit di exploiter- God laughs (Ringo laughs). (107 [10])

This explicitly reveals ruefully the reason for the demeaning attitudes of the black waiters and cooks. Ringo vows to go beyond what Joe suggests. If only that would fetch him money and for him, it is a revenge strategy against the relics of imperialistic colonialism. Miss Brandon cheap gossip on the phone with Maise does reveal the readiness of the black to indulge in prostitution or anything worse off once it can provide dollar in exchange an opportunity to emigrate (112).

Rhone’s depiction of Miss Brandon’s uncontrollable quest to get visa is turned down. This is to negate the stance opinioned by Miss Brandon that America was the heaven she anticipates. The one foot man finally left her (Gerald O’ Brown) for America. In this, Rhone clearly exalts Jamaica, the homeland of Miss Brandon who opted

this point: Why does Ringo behave this way? Perhaps, he does not want her to be (or feel a) master over him even though he serves all the white seated in the hotel. But this may be sheer conjecture; however another scene in O’Keffe office is a stand point.

white. O’Keffe’s marriage to the white or blonde woman (Mrs. O’Keffe) does influence his placement in the society and not just his apparent education.

Even though the two plays are authored by Trevor Rhone and have reasonably a semblance in a number of subtexts. It nonetheless does vary in their treatment of themes and point of view of narration (style). Whereas in the *Old Story Time* Rhone deals expansively with attitudes to colour which starts in the beginning enduring to the end of the play; *Smile Orange* borders on a range of issues – the tourist industry and her influence on the black community, the trickster attitude, the struggle for survival, and emigration.

The conversation between Ringo and Joe in *Smile Orange* reveals the extent to which they intend, especially the former, to carry on with servitude only if it can earn them money (dollars). Ringo precisely will do anything to have more dollar since he claims to have a family to carter for - he will bow for the white, grant sexual service to the tourist blonde/white woman for dollars, adopt deception if only it can fetch him dollars. Hear him say this;

irrationally for America using her body which she refers to a pearl (153).

On the other hand, Rhone seem to laud in *Old Story Time* that essence for traveling out to foreign countries as it is with Len was to pursue further education, it is achieved. He goes to earn a Ph.D and comes back, marries to a black girl, Lois, to Jamaica. There would obviously have been the possibility for Len to get married to a white girl in his studies abroad, even his mother will wish such happens but Rhone will not risk that. Hence, he establishes painstakingly that Jamaica (ie the island) is home and shifts away from the misconception that Miss Aggy holds in *Old Story Time* and Miss Brandon in *Smile Orange*.

4. Conclusion

Kimmel also noted that today young men in the Caribbean struggle with a masculine identity that is tenuous and fragile which explains why theirs is always based on something external to them. They are unable to create any real agency in their lives because they are often rendered silent in the discourse of late capitalist consumption. Bell Hooks refers to this atmosphere in the phrase “imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy” which she further buttressed as “useful because it does prioritise one system over another but rather offers us a way to think about the interlocking system that worked together to uphold and maintain cultures of dominion”. Ian Bennett agrees that theoretically the Bahamas’ system of rigid class segregation and white domination ended only in the 1960s but interestingly there is a resurgence of a local white elite, a resolidification of the distance between them and the black working and middle class, and the entrenchment of the black elite, who, since independence has sought to empower itself. Now, notwithstanding that the country is out colonial doldrums, there is still a disheartening division on who holds the political or economic power and on what criteria. So Hooks is correct to lament and decry that a mere “sense of shared identity is no longer a platform that can draw folks together in meaningful solidarity”. In summary, this attempt at analyzing comparatively Rhone’s *Old Story Time* and *Smile Orange* reproves all ailing ideals that a mass of natives (Caribbean in particular and others existent in all parts of the globe) have borne over time against their lives. Raphael Dalleo testifies to the fact that these islands are only most overt examples of how throughout the region, the future of autonomy and sovereignty that anticolonialist had hoped to establish was never fully realized as the postcolonial shades of division and domain remains consolidated. The study particularly has concisely unveiled how language and colour function to determine identity and social status in the texts and in the modern communities around the world. The differing cultural leanings of the white and the black in Jamaica, the encrypted position of the author in the plays as he makes things happen and at other time allows misfortune of certain events to impress on the audience his disposition which is not divorce from his personal background. The study’s position tries to reecho and affirm the Martin Luther’s entire conviction about the dream and a future of the United States where stratification will be based on the content of the heads of men and not on the colour of their skin.

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