BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS IN CARIBBEAN LITERATURE: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF SYLVIA WYNTER'S *THE HILLS OF HEBRON*, JOHN HEARNE'S *LAND OF THE LIVING*, AND ANDREW SALKEY'S *JOEY TYSON*

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUIDIES
FACULTY OF ARTS
AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA

JULY, 2012

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me and that it is a record of my own research. It has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

All quotations are indicated and the sources of information acknowledged by means references.

_____ _____

MOHAMMED LABO **DATE**

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "Black Consciousness in Caribbean Literature: A Critical Examination of Sylvia Wynter's *The Hills of Hebron*, John Hearne's *Land of the Living*,, and Andrew Salkey's *Joey Tyson"* by Mohammed Labo meets the regulations governing the award of master of Arts in Literature of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated:

To the glory of Allah

To the memory of my late mother Rahmatu Nambe Assenim

And

To my father Gado Ture Al-Qasim Labo

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like first, to thank Allah for His grace and mercy.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines "Black Consciousness" in Caribbean literature using a Marxist framework.. The thesis argues that religion as it was interpreted by the whites was anti-black. Christianity was prejudicially, maliciously and cunningly used by European capitalist imperialists to enslave, colonise, and exploit black people in the Caribbean. This situation alienated the Caribbean.

In an attempt to free themselves from their bondage, the black Caribbean set to reinterpret Christianity to fit their purpose. The thesis therefore argues that the miserable condition of the blacks in the Caribbean led them to turn to Africa, their original homeland, where they hoped to find salvation. Furthermore, the thesis postulates that the post-independence leaders of the region are as useless to the black masses as their predecessors (ex-colonial masters), for the new regimes are still serving imperialist purposes to the detriment of the masses. Thus, the people's protest against the new established order.

Over the years, Caribbean writers have, with varying degrees of success, defended the interests of the oppressed and dispossessed black masses, in a white-dominated environment. This study is directed to this commitment of Caribbean writers.

In specific terms, this study examines this consciousness in relation to Sylvia Wynter's *The Hills of Hebron*, John Hearne's *Land of the Living*, and Andrew Salkey's *Joey Tyson.*

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter One, the introduction, deals with the historical background of the Caribbean region; the statement of the research problem; the aim and objectives of the study; the significance of the study; the scope and delimitation of the study; the research methodology, literature review; and the theoretical framework. ChapterTwo gives Sylvia Wynter's background and discusses the themes of poverty and black spiritual awareness as they relate to Wynter's *The Hill of Hebron*. Chapter Three addresses black West Indians' search for roots, by examining their longing for Africa, the myth of Haile Selassie,and the Sons of Sheba, with reference to Hearne's *Land of the Living*, after giving the author's background. Chapter Four gives Andrew Salkey's background and treats the themes of neo-colonialism, oppression and protest with reference to Salkey's *Joey Tyson*. Chapter Five synthesises and draws conclusion.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Historic occurrences may very well provide appropriate material for imaginative treatment (Blamires1991: 11). Therefore, there is a relationship between history and literature. Ngugi (1972:XV)'s claim buttresses that**:**

> *Literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum, it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society.*

In other words, literature cannot be divorced from socio-political and economic factors, especially in the Caribbean where modern literature has grown against the background of European imperialism and its changing manifestations, namely slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Therefore, the understanding of the matter of a literary work necessitates the knowledge of the history of the geo-political entity that has produced it. As a result, it becomes imperative to navigate the history of the Caribbean.

The Caribbean also referred to as the West Indies, has received a series of expanding definitions, and it is desirable to look at each in turn.

Describing the West Indies Safra et al (1998: 592) distinguish three major physiographic divisions:

> a. *The Greater Antilles, comprising the islands of Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic), and Puerto Rico;*
> b. *The Lesser Antilles, including the Virgin Islands, Anguila, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, Montserrat, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados and Grenada;*
> c. *The isolated islands of the North American continental shelf, The Bahamas, including the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the South American shelf, including Trinidad and Tobago, Aruba, Curacao, and Bonaire.*

This classification shows that the West Indies is not physically a uniform block. Safra et al also observe that, "although physiographically not a part of the West Indies, Bermuda has common historical and cultural ties with the other islands and is often included in the West Indies." This observation implies that there is a challenge to physiographical or geographical definitions of the Caribbean. As A. J. Seymour in *Caribbean cultures* (1982:243) writes:

> *A wider definition exists on grounds which defy geography but which include political, social, economic, cultural, racial and religious characteristics of Third World countries viz. the countries in the Caribbean basin together with other countries, namely the Guyanas, Venezuela, Colombia, Panama, Guatemala and Mexico.*

Seymour further states that sometimes, an approach is made to definitions on grounds of an almost indefinable and vaguely spiritual essence, to include the countries in the area which have come under the military, economic, political, cultural and religious domination of the Euro-American peoples and which suffered from mechanisms of underdevelopment and domination. This includes the twentieth century domination of the multi-national corporations arising in the United State of America, Western European countries and Japan with their enormously powerful horizontal and vertical integration of companies.

The truth is that whatever the argument may be, the fact remains that all these countries that have been under debate in defining the Caribbean or West Indies share a lot in common, have had the same experiences (slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism) and are today facing almost the same problems and therefore, there is no real problem in identifying them each with the others.

"The recorded history of the West Indies begins with a definite event, the arrival of Columbus," in 1492 (Parry and Sherlock 1971:I). In fact, Christopher Columbus only revealed the American continent to Europe and established contact between the two continents. "He did this at a time when the people of Western Europe" animated with the zeal to explore, conquer

and exploit "had recently developed ships and navigating instruments good enough to maintain that contact in regular voyages." (Parry and Sherlock 1971:I).

The Caribbean, the first area of the American continent to have been "discovered" was a field of experiment for the European powers, first for Spain, and then for her rivals, all the powers scrambling to carve out territories for themselves.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, Spain already possessed a great colonial empire in the Americas. She was able to hold virtually undisputed sway in America throughout the sixteenth century, particularly in the West Indies. Only Portugal could rival her. However, in the following centuries, Spain had to give way before the rise of the Island empires of her competitors.

During the sixteenth century, France, England and Holland broke on the American scene. The French were able to outstrip the English everywhere. France established herself in the Lesser Antilles, which were highly fertile though barren of precious metals. Because there was no gold or silver to be mined in the Lesser Antilles, the Spaniards, who claimed ownership of them, were not unduly perturbed and offered no resistance to the new comers. From 1635 onwards, the French were able to take control of

the islands of Martinique, Guadeloupe, San Cristobal, Dominica, San Martin and Santa Cruz.

The islands under French domination were to produce what France needed. Furthermore, industrialisation in the colonies was against the law, likewise the cultivation of any crop that might compete with the one produced in France, the mother country.

Luis Angel Arguelles in *Caribbean cultures* (1982:33) states that the British colonial system in the Antilles which took place in Barbados, Nevis, Montserrat, was not essentially different from that of the French. As a result, these islands fulfilled the same functions in the economy of England.

The successive stages of British colonisation began with the occupation of San Cristobal in 1624. Barbados fell in 1625, then Nevis, the Leeward Islands, the Virgin Islands, and the Bahamas, between 1628 and 1646. In 1627, a company was formed in London to the incorporation of the Antilles. This offensive was intensified under the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, who ordered a descent on Santo Domingo in retaliation for Spain's ban on English trade with her colonies. In 1655, the British conquered Jamaica as a compensation for her failure of the attack on Santo Domingo. In 1797, the British seized Trinidad from Spain. Spain also lost Guianas in South America. Arguelles in *Caribbean cultures* (1982:33)

explains Spain's loss of territories for the benefit of her rivals by her "maritime impotence".

In the seventeenth century, Holland, another European imperialist power affirmed herself by occupying various islands of the Caribbean Archipelago, namely, Curacao (1633), Oruba, Bonaire, San Eustaquio, and San Martin (1641).

By the end of nineteenth century, the Caribbean region witnessed the arrival of another imperialist power, namely the United States of America. The U.S.A took advantage of the Monroe Doctrine to which it had adhered in 1823. In the words of Arguelles "the doctrine held that America was for Americans only, it opposed the idea of any foreign power gaining a foothold on the continent, and thus reserved for the United States the right to carry out the neo-colonisation of other territories in America" (*Caribbean cultures*1982:35). The evolvement of the U.S.A. in the Caribbean began with the occupation of Cuba and Puerto Rico during the Spanish-American War (1898), grew in scope during the early twentieth century. The United States bought the Danish Virgin Islands (1917) and occupied Haiti (1915-35) and the Dominican Republic (1916-22).

Until the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492, the Caribbean was peopled by Amerindians whom Safra et al (1998:593) classify into three different groups:

> *a- The most numerous of them were the Arawak, or Taino, who inhabited the Greater Antilles, the Bahamas, and the Leeward Islands. The Arawak practiced agriculture and were seafarers.*
> *b- The Carib also practiced agriculture and were seafarers, but unlike the Arawak, they were warlike.*
> *c- The Ciboney were fishermen and, when forced away from coastal regions became hunters and gatherers*

These aboriginal populations would not submit to the European imperialist exploitation. As Peter Martyr of Anghera in Sanders (1978) explains:

> *The inhabitants of these islands have been ever so used to live at liberty, in play and pastime, that they can hardly sway with the Yoke of Servitude, which they attempt to shake off by all means they may.*

As a result of their resistance to exploitation, the Amerindians were exterminated by the criminal Europeans who had left their homelands for lack of employment and religious, as well as political persecutions.

The pressing need for manpower led to the importation of slaves from Africa which was the object of disparaging myth and desperate malicious

comments and prejudices. As one of the greatest European philosophers, Hegel, as cited by Ojo (2000:7) argues:

> *Africa proper, as history goes back has remained for all purpose of connection with the rest of the world-shut up; it is the Gold-Land compressed within itself- the land of childhood, which lying beyond the days of self conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of the night. The Negro as already observed exhibits the natural man in his completely wild untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence or morality-all that we call feeling-if we would comprehend him, there is nothing harmonious with humanity to find in this type of character.*

Submitting to such erroneous an argument, which was hypocritically spread in Europe, Europeans could use Africans as articles of merchandise and with inhumanity.

Thus, with the collaboration of some African kings who had no humanitarian concern for their subjects or fellow Africans, and were ready to barter the latter for miserable items brought by the slave dealers, about thirty million valid Africans, men and women alike, were hunted, captured and taken to the Caribbean, in horrible conditions. Quoting Ingram , Du Bois (1972 : 64-65) emotionally captures that in these words :

> *The cruelty and inhumanity of the slave trade was a horrible fact. A committee of the House of Commons describes the 'middle passage' :" The Negroes were chained to each other hand and foot,*

> *and stowed so close that they were not allowed above a foot and a half for each in breath. Thus rammed together like herrings in a barrel, they contracted putrid and fatal disorder; so that they who came to inspect them in the morning had to pick dead slaves out of their rows, and to unchain their carcasses from the bodies of their wretched fellow-sufferers to whom they had been fastened."*

Once in the Caribbean, the unfortunate Africans who had been wrenched from their mother continent were denied any economic or political organisation or power of their own. They had to follow the minds of their owners who exploited them to the core. In fact, they were scattered from kin and kindred to avoid any possible communication among them. They were spread over "the broiling sun of the sugar, tobacco and cotton plantations" (Ngugi 1972:81), and mining centres. Safra et al (1998:593) highlight that sugar production came to dominate most island economies and both manufacturing techniques and slave labour were supplied by Dutch traders.

Conditions for the African slaves were extremely bad. As a result, despite the rigours and severity of slavery, despite the all-embracing nature of the exploitation by the master of his slave and the totality of his domination over him, the latter nonetheless, was never completely subdued. In one form or another, the slave expressed his resentment of his lot, sometimes in covert, indirect and relatively mild manner, at other times in

direct revolt against the object of his oppression. Thus, Patterson (1967:260) distinguishes two basic forms of resistance to slavery, one passive, the other violent:

> a- *Passive resistance may be further sub-divided into four types: refusal to work, general inefficiency and deliberate laziness or evasion; satire; running away; suicide.*
> *b-Violent resistance may also be divided into two sub-categories: individual violence, and collective violence.*

After many attempts at slave rebellion, a successful revolution was led by Toussaint-Louverture, an abolitionist who gained control of the colony of St. Domingue during the French Revolution (1789-99). His successors, Jean-Jeacques Dessalines and Henry Christophe, won independence from France after Napoleon had attempted to restore slavery in St. Dominigue and, to symbolise this break, took the Indian name Haiti.

Safra et al (1998:593) explain that the collapse of the slave society elsewhere in the West Indies was hastened by external as well as internal factors:

> *British abolitionists argued that, through the slave trade, Britain was enriching its rival, France, because of the re-export of slaves to French colonies. Humanitarian views of slavery and the slave trade gained influence, and rising costs of sugar production reinforced criticisms of planters.*

Finally, in 1803 Denmark abolished the slave trade, and Britain followed in 1807, France in 1810, Holland in 1818, Spain in 1820 and Sweden in 1824. Slavery itself was finally abolished in the British colonies in 1833, in the French colonies in 1848, and in the Dutch colonies in 1863. It was abolished in the Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico in 1873 and Cuba in 1880.

In 1838, Emancipation was proclaimed. After Emancipation, plantation changed considerably. Compensation was paid to the planters, but often the money was not used to modernise the economies but was withdrawn from the West Indies. The majority of plantations were viable, and sugar production could survive only if several plantations amalgamated to supply sugar to a central factory. Thus, the sugarcane "latifundia" was created in the West Indies in the second half of the nineteenth century. But most importantly, a black peasantry and middle class emerged, after Emancipation.

Some diversification of agriculture was achieved in several islands with small holders growing food crops and cash crops such as cacao, nutmeg, and bananas. The trend toward diversification was continued in the twentieth century by the development of the tourist trade and oil and bauxite

industries, but difficult economic conditions were made worse by the worldwide depression of the 1930s.

Describing the population that make up the modern West Indies, Safra et al (1998:592) say that:

> *The population of the West Indies is racially heterogeneous and largely descended from an early plantation society based on slave labour. Most of the population is either white, back, or mulatto. Most of the blacks are descended from African slaves, while many of the whites descended from Spanish, French, British, or Dutch colonists. The West Indies' Creole languages, evolved from pidgin variants of European languages, have become the common languages of many of the people. The French and English Creoles are a blend of these languages with African and West Indian languages. By contrast, the major Spanish-language communities-Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic-Speak pure Spanish. Papiamento, a Spanish-Dutch –Portuguese - English Creole, is widely spoken in Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. East Indians constitute a substantial minority in the region, especially in Trinidad and Tobago, where they make up 40 percent of the population. Chinese constitute a smaller minority, and whites account for some 70 percent of the population of Cuba and Puerto Rico.*

Safra et al further state that in spite of their diversity in ancestry and languages, the countries of the West Indies share a largely common culture, the result of their somewhat parallel experiences as plantation colonies. The

Caribbean take pride in their lively cultural scenes, with dances, parties, and festivals culminating in annual carnivals.

George Lamming in Salkey (ed) (1972:9) has a different point of view. He sees the Caribbean region as fragmented despite the common experiences of its peoples:

> *History has left a cocoon of confusion. First a population composed entirely of emigrants! That is: people, slaves or otherwise, who had no indigenous link, no ancestral claim on the soil which was to become their new home; a diversity of peoples organized by different European powers contending in a scramble for supremacy over them.*

According to Lamming, this human diversity encounters itself in a state of original isolations; isolated because of lack of a common idiom, and imprisonment by orders which were absolute. In addition to the lack of a common idiom, the arrangement whereby islands under the same European powers were breeding political institutions which represented different stages of development further isolates the people. Racial and class distinctions breed another friction of distance within the same island or territory.

Focalising his "camera" on Jamaica, Fax (1972:24) distinguishes three general racial classes, white, coloured, and black, which he describes as follows:

> *The white form the numerical minority. Then came the coloreds, and the blacks, the latter greatly outnumbering the first two. The coloreds were described as any mixture of European and nonwhite ancestry and that included mixtures of Europeans with Africans, Orientals, or Indians.*

It was to maintain their dominion over blacks that the colonialists had stratified the peoples of their colonies. Fax (1972:24-25) makes the point in these terms:

> *Since whites were the minority and blacks the overwhelming majority, the ruling British, to retain their ruling position created a buffer group as a cushion against the surging black mass. The coloreds formed that cushion.*

Social distinctions go hand in hand with racial classes. Hendrique (1957) distinguishes and describes three social classes in Jamaica which is almost the same elsewhere in the Caribbean region:

> *There is an upper class, a middle class and working class. These are to a large extent identifiable with colour but not universal. Thus, practically all whites are in the upper class, even if they are poor. Most black people are workers or peasants. The coloured of all shades are generally in the middle group.*

But there are exceptions in all classes due to the particular background and activity of an individual. However, the Negro must not expect to be a social success outside his own particular group (race), no matter his competence and performance.

Such snobbery cut deep into the consciousness of black Caribbean. And they rightly saw it as a divisive tactic used with deadly effectiveness to keep the non-white majority under white control.

In the 1930s, West Indian people began to reject traditional attitude and to develop new concepts of themselves and of their society. Thus, the emergence of the masses of the people as a dominant political force. This dynamism was created by the national movements and new cohesive forces in the segmented society of the islands (Parry and Sherlock1971:299).

However, West Indian nationalism was hampered after the Second World War by economic limitation of most of the individual territories. Consequently, the growth to full independence has been relatively slow (Safra et al1998:594). Haiti achieved its independence in 1804; Cuba after the Spanish-American War of 1898; the Dominican Republic in 1844; Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago in 1962; Barbados in 1966; the Bahamas in 1973; Grenada in 1974; the Dominica in 1978; Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, and the Grenadines in 1979; Antigua in 1980; and Saint Kitts and Nevis in 1983.

Although the Caribbean is today politically independent, the Caribbean countries are still under the spell of their former colonial masters and the world powers, through neo-colonialism.

1.2 STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

1. This study is in line with the thesis that the Caribbean is a land of poverty. As such, it pays attention to the artistic representation and account of poverty in the Caribbean society.
2. The study is also premised on the argument that imperialists maliciously used Christianity to enslave and impoverish blacks in the Caribbean. Consequently, the study explores the black Caribbean spiritual awareness and their reinterpretation of Christianity to fit their purpose which is liberation.
3. Furthermore, the study is carried out in light of the Marxist theory and therefore evaluates the black Caribbean political reaction to their miserable condition.
4. Finally, the study looks at the image of Africa in the black Caribbean struggle for decolonisation and liberation.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The aim and objectives of this research are to demonstrate that Sylvia Wynter's *The Hills of Hebron,* John Hearne's *Land of the Living* and Andrew Salkey's *Joey Tyson* are different reconstructions of black Caribbean consciousness. In doing this, the black Caribbean social condition

and experiences, as well as their spiritual and political awareness are examined.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The significance of this research is that it contributes in broadening the existing knowledge of Caribbean literature. In specific terms, the study contributes to the attempt by writers and critics to reconstruct, explain and interpret black consciousness in the Caribbean. In the context of discourse on liberation and identity, this preoccupation hinges on the premise that the West is essentially responsible for the predicaments of the black race.

In this way, despite the undeniable influence of the Western civilisation, black consciousness cannot be divorced from blackness, Africa and African aesthetics.

1.5 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

This dissertation examines the reconstruction of black consciousness in Caribbean literature. While the study is restricted to the West Indies, references are made to the other regions of the world which have in one way or the other contributed in shaping the Caribbean character.

The choice of the Caribbean for study is informed by the region's relationships with Africa and the little attention it is given in African studies.

In fact, black West Indians are essentially descended from Africans who had been taken to the Caribbean as slaves, and as a result, have been politically, emotionally and literarily involved with Africa.

In addition, prose-fiction has been chosen because of the profundity and logic with which West Indian novelists have artistically explored and investigated their region.

Sylvia Wynter, John Hearne and Andrew Salkey have been selected as a result of the relevance of their works to the theme of black consciousness and the little interest that critics have shown to their works.

Also, there are no critical works on the novels of the selected authors, emanating from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, probably, because of the dearth of materials and the bias that scholars sometimes show for some writers.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

Ndagi (1999:36) posits that the review of literature is the most important aspect of the research process and has the following advantages:

1. *It gives the researcher some information about the present state of knowledge in the areas he intends to study.*

2. *It gives the researcher some ideas of the type of design and statistical procedures that could be used in conducting his research.*
3. *It helps the researcher to detect any deficiencies in the existing research and thereby helps him to avoid the errors of previous researchers that studied the same or similar problems.*
4. *It gives the researcher an idea of the relationship of his research topic to the previously completed research.*
5. *It helps the researcher to select a research problem.*
6. *It helps the researcher to delimit the size and scope of his research problem.*

Literature review, therefore, makes the researcher familiar with the findings of previous studies which are necessary for the proposed study. Consequently, the present literature review covers previous researches, about black consciousness in the Caribbean region.

Ngugi(1972: xv) posits that:

> *Literature does not grow or develop in a vacuum, it is given impetus, shape, direction and even area of concern by social, political and economic forces in a particular society*

In other words, literature cannot be divorced from socio-political and economic factors, especially in the Caribbean where modern literature has grown against the background of European imperialism and its changing manifestations, namely slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. Akuso (2005:15-16) rightly posits that.

> *Caribbean literature has its origin in the history and experience of the Caribbean people and its content are derived from the cultural, economic, political, social and psychological complexities that pervade the Caribbean society. The Caribbean experience has thus produced a literature about a community whose development has been essentially defined by slavery, colonial experience and complex inter-ethnic and racial relations.*

Caribbean literature is therefore defined by diversity. It emerged within the context of multiculturalism and many languages. The languages of the Caribbean are French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch, which are the remnants of the colonising powers and their historical encounters with the region. Creoles and local patois developed from the mixture of European languages with Native American languages, especially Carib and Arawak; and the languages of Africans brought to the Caribbean by slaves. Asians, primary from India and China, who are essentially descended from indentured servants; and Middle Easterners as well also contribute to the region's cultural diversity and therefore literary production.

On the opinions of the native West Indian writers and artists themselves "there are certain themes (in the West Indian novel) which are specially Caribbean… slavery and the quest for personal identity" (Carter 1971:12). This is understandable in the sense that the history of the West Indies was a bitter story of displacement and slavery. Therefore, the topics

of Caribbean literature cannot but encompass these historical issues and such related themes as home and exile, colonialism, racism, decolonisation, multiculturalism and crisis of identity. But then, the Caribbean also offers, as Burnett (1986:xxiii-xxiv) observes:

> *A literature about the process of growth through, in spite of, a history of exploitation and prejudice, about the turning of negatives into positives and the creative synthesis of ancient traditions, and is therefore, relevant to all people engaged in the search for forms of creative cohabitation: the assertion of cultural self without the denial of that assertion to others, and the sharing of as much as can be shared.*

As such, Caribbean literature embraces the themes of survival and festive celebration of an inheritance of place, tongue and tradition, while lamenting for the lost; and championing faith and hope in disillusionment and disenchantment. It also addresses such questions as sexuality, family life, pain, joy and the issues of imagination and landscape.

According to the Microsoft Encarta Premium Suite (2004) ,the earliest form of Caribbean literature is Oral literature consisting of folktales, legends, myths, and songs. It flourishes today in popular music, such as the Cuban Calypso, the Puerto Rican Bomba and the Jamaican Reggae; in story telling customs derived from West Africa and India; and supernatural tales from African religions, including the Cuban Santeria, the Trinidadian

Shango, the Jamaican Cumina, and Dominican and Haitian Voodoo. Caribbean Oral literature also thrives in proverbs, riddles, and sayings that reinterpret African, European, and East Indian traditions. Prominent among these are Anancy (spider trickster) stories; animal dilemma tales, which teach moral lessons; stories of village life or evil women, tall tales; and rhetorical flourishes, such as boasting, toasts, and speeches.

Akuso (2005:20) traces the beginning of Written literature in the Caribbean back to the sixteen century. However, it was not until the mid twentieth century that it became well established. Thus, Gilkes (1975:x) states that there was an astonishing upsurge of writing in the Caribbean in the period between the 1950s and 1970s which witnessed the creation of a significant and rich body of literature from virtually nothing. Gilkes relates this fact to "the West Indian's sense of rootlessness and the consequent need to formulate a racial and cultural identity." Post-colonial West Indian societies were, in a sense, forced to come to terms with their own broken cultural ties with the past and their new racial and cultural links with the present. The "search for a cultural pedegree" had begun. In addition to the deleterious effects of colonisation on the indigenous cultures of the people, racial admixture which had, by the early twentieth century, become a diagnostic feature of West Indian society, contributed to the blurring of strict

racial pedigree. In fact, the various gradations of such things as skin colour and hair texture encouraged and hastened the general dilution and confusion of cultural and ethnic identity. This situation led to a continuing obsession with identity, with individual and personal status.

In this state of flux, the Negro "is constantly preoccupied with self-evaluation and with the ego-ideal" (Fanon 1970:149). Hence, the concept of "black consciousness".

Black consciousness in the Caribbean has been reconstructed with varying degree of success by different writers. So, critiques have interpreted and assessed the works of these writers. This study is in line with this critical enterprise.

Jean-Paul Sartre, in Senghor (ed) (1951) posits that black consciousness in the literature produced by black writers is rooted in the bitter experiences of slavery and colonisation which black people were subjected to by the whites. In specific terms, black people were deprived of the conditions for the fulfilment of their personalities and lives. Jamaican Marcus Mosiah Garvey, a pioneer black nationalist lucidly sums up the conditions of the blacks the world over, in the early decade of the twentieth century which witnessed the fermentation and synchronisation of black consciousness:

> *As far as the Negroes are concerned in America we have the problem of lynching, peonage and disfranchisement.*
> *In the West Indies, South and Central America we have the problem of peonage, serfdom, industrial and governmental inequality.*
> *In Africa we have, not only peonage and serfdom, but outright slavery, racial exploitation and alien political monopoly (Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, p. 38).*

It is this awareness that gave rise to pan-African ideas around which black consciousness articulated itself.

Tracing the roots and aims of pan-Africanism Mugabane (1987) says that:

> *Pan-African consciousness emerged when some-Blackfolks, because of common experiences (inherited shared), felt and articulated the dignity of their interests as between themselves and as against other men whose interests were different from theirs. Africans at home and abroad were victims of European developed system of racism, which ruthlessly exploited them as a group.*

Charles Angmor in Emenyonu (ed) (1987:14) rightly defines "Consciousness" as the awareness a person has of himself and his place in life around him, both objectively and subjectively. The Caribbean novelist George Lamming, as quoted by Akuso (2005:44) defines "Black" as "synonymous with originating in Africa". "Black consciousness" is therefore the mind of the black man and the interest in Africa and things African.
In the same vein, the Caribbean scholar C.R.L James in Ngugi (1972:82) posits that:

> *Before they (the Caribbean) could begin to see themselves as a free and independent people they had to clear from their minds the stigma that anything African was inherently inferior and degraded.*

In line with this, the Caribbean people became politically, emotionally, culturally and literarily involved with Africa. Caribbean writers set out to undo the lies and distortions about Africa. Thus, Mac Dermot (1909:45) gives a corrective view of the precolonial Africa:

> *It is the conventional idea that the black men brought to the West Indies as slaves came from a life wholly savage and barbarous; through which there ran not a single vein of coherent organisation; a life unredeemed by a single spark of nobility and unsutained by aught of organised government, law or order. The truth however, is that in some cases these men and women came from tribes which maintained a system and code of unwritten law that embodied for the tribe at least, more thoroughly and efficiently than Christianity has yet succeeded in doing for the whole race in West Indies, a great number of those moral obligations that are elemental and are vital to the well-being of a people.*

This concern with the African past was central to Negritudist writers whom, in the words of W.A. Jean Pierre in Chametzky and Kaplan (eds) , (1959:453) "sought an identification with the spirit of African civilization, with that Africa prior to its confrontation with Europe" . The concept of "Negritude" was firmly established between 1933 and 1935, and its

founding fathers are Aimé Césaire of Martinique and Leopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal. Senghor who is regarded as its champion and chief exponent, as quoted by Taiwo (1985:45), gives the circumstances in which the philosophy was launched, as well as the reasons and aims of the philosophy.

> *We were then plunged with some other Negro students in a sort of panic desperation. The horizon was plunged up, no reform in prospect and colonizers legitimated our political and economic dependence by the theory of clean sweep. They esteemed that we had neither invented, nor created, nor written, nor sculptured nor painted nor sung anything.*
> *To set our own and effective revolution, we had first to put off our borrowed dresses, those of assimilation and affirm our being, that is our negritude. Although defined as the 'mass of cultural values of black Africa' it could only offer us the start of the solution of our problem and not the entire solution itself. We could not come back to the situation of yesteryear, to the negritude of the sources. We were not living under the Askia of Songhai, not even under Chaka the Zulu. We were students of Paris and of the twentieth century of which one of the realities is the awakening of national consciousness and a century of which another fact, more realistic again is the interdependence of peoples and continents. To be truly ourselves, we ought to embody the negro-African culture in the realities of the twentieth century.For our negritude to be an effective instrument of liberation instead of a section of the museum, we had to shake off the dust and assert in the international movement of the contemporary world.*

Therefore, the backthought of Negritude was the liberation of the black race.

In fact, "Negritude had come into being…, in an historic attempt at cultural resistance and racial counter-definition" (Nasidi 2002:37). Sylvia Wynter as quoted by Nasidi (2002:37) explains that:

> *Negritude drew attention to that implicit cultural Blanchitude which had been central to the social machine of the world system. Blanchitude had been nothing else than the constant Norm of culture in relation to which all other cultures had been made subservient.*

In the specific case of Negritude as Nasidi (2002:37) comments, the culture of Blanchitude was the system of French colonialism, based upon the policy of assimilation, in which being human was equated with being French. At the core of the colonial situation was a racial ideology and practice based upon the assumed superiority of the whites, with their inventiveness and general prudence, and the inferiorisation of the blacks, based upon their assumed cultural and technological lack. In a perverse scheme of values, the native remained a native, at the nadir of the racial hierarchy; at the very top was the French man who was citizen. The native of course could become a citizen, or a Frenchman, but he had to pay the supreme price not only in terms of his language, but ultimately in terms of his whole cultural identity.

Therefore, it was Europe's denial of the being of the blacks that had informed the coming into being of Negritude.

The adherents and defenders of Negritude came "to consider all black writing as constituting one homogeneous and uniform literary bloc" (J.M. Dash in Jones 1978:77)

Thus, the Caribbean Negritudists such as Aimé Césaire, Leon-Gontra Damas and Jean Price-Mars who knew little about Africa romanticised Africa in their works. For them, since the colonial past was nothing but a catalogue of shame and injustices, the only alternative for the victims was a close identification with a monolithic pan-African ideal.

Negritude was therefore ideologically and racially based. As Jean Pierre in Chametzky and Kaplan (1959:453) explains:

> *It is racial because it is consciousness of being black, a consciousness brought about more particularly by experiences peculiar only to those of African descent*
> .

Negritude clearly responded to the desperate desire to be free of colonialism and also provided a much-needed feeling of solidarity among blacks the world over. The fact that Negritudists attacked the Western culture suggests that they (the Negritudists) understood, as Antonio Gramsci in Williams (1980) that domination is effective only to the extent that the values and

practice of the dominant classes permeate society such that they come to assume, for the dominated classes, a "natural" unquestioned status. In short, hegemony articulates a relationship between classes in which the "strong" or "dominant" by virtue of certain structural privileges, incorporate the weak or "subordinate".

Little wonder, Wole Soyinka agrees to the founding impulse and vision of Negritude, which he defines in his own terms as the "restitution and reengineering of a racial psyche, the establishment of distinct human entity and the glorification of its long- suppressed attitudes" (Cited by Nasidi 2002:38).

However, Soyinka condemns the approach used by the Negritudists. In Soyinka's view, African as it claimed to be, Negritude remained very much a product of "the intellectual conditioning of the mother culture" and was therefore subject to "a dialectical determinism which made its rhetoric obedient to laws formulated on the European historical experience".Thus, for Soyinka, the Negritudists' procedure is erroneous:

> *The fundamental error was one of procedure: Negritude stayed within a pre-set system of eurocentric intellectual analysis both of man and of society and tried to redefine the African and his society in those externalized terms (Soyinka 1976:136).*

Within the same canon, Nasidi (2002: 44) argues that although the desire to dismantle the European culture is a laudable desire, the Negritudists:

> *trap themselves by hypostasising the notion of the unconscious, thereby reclassifying as essentially African what was once spurned as barbaric and primitive.*

Sylvia Wynter as quoted by Nasidi (2002: 44) buttresses this point in the following terms:

> *…We do not posit the black oral tradition …. as the negation of what is, of the Western literate tradition of Western poetics. That is what was done in the primitivist movement of the twenties. [Wynter is referring to the Harlem Renaissance]. The other was still seen as existing only to the extent that it revitalized Western culture. The rationalism of the West was binarily opposed to Bergsonian intuition; and the non-Western peoples were fitted on the procrustean bed of negation. Hence Senghor's fatuous Reason is European; intuition is Negro.*

On his part, using the Hegelian concept to analyse Negritude Jean-Paul Sartre in Senghor (1951) concludes that Negritude is the antithesis, the weak beat of a dialectical progression , a moment of negativity in counter-responses to the thesis of white supremacy, and exists only to destroy itself, finally, once the goal of a society without races is achieved.

Similarly, the Caribbean writer and critic Edward Glissant views Negritude in historical terms. In an interview in Afrique Action (27 March 1961) he asserts that:

> *Negritude corresponded to a particular historical situation and to a period when, since the African states were not yet independent, cultural activity for black writers was simply a sort of cry, a stark demand for dignity as human beings and as creative artists. Now that African politics has entered upon a phase of constructive action, we must give a constructive character to our cultural struggle.*

In other words, Negritude had no "raison d'être" after African countries have gained independence, for the task of the post-colonial African writer was to affirm and try to redefine African personality and African characteristics in the context of contemporary life.

Furthermore, Negritudists did not consider the dynamism of society. As Dash in Jones (1978:77) observes:

> *What had not been taken into account was the possibility that in spite of the unjust nature of the colonial system, various communities might have evolved certain characteristics that had transformed them into distinct national communities.*

Consequently, the concept of an international neo-African culture could only serve in the long run to obscure this important diversity. Above all, the Caribbean writer moves within a

multicultural setting wherein many races, customs and ways of thought have been intermingled over the centuries.Thus, Glissant (1969:49) argues that , to cling to Negritude is to shirk the Caribbean challenge:

> *One cannot take root in poetic desires, even desires which proclaim one's roots, nor in a distant century, even if it is the mother country, Africa…. We must move from desire to reality.*

The reality which Glissant envisages is the creative activity of a country which has assumed its own identity, and he goes on to assert that until this is achieved in the French Caribbean, Césaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* (1939; *Return to my Native Land*, 1968), which prophesied and sought to inaugurate that reality, will continue to lack true recognition in "the pays natal*"(*"Native Land").

Glissant offers novels and theatre a new world-view, of which the Caribbean is the centre. Africa remains present in his system of thought, but not as a metaphor for black beauty or vanished dignity: Africa is an instructive actuality, a paradigm of social co-operation. He maintains that the impact of culture is passionate and dynamic and the Caribbean should be acquainted with, and cherish all the virtues and all the traditions-Negro, Indian, European- which have been handed down over the centuries to them.

Black consciousness in the Caribbean also took the form of nationalism. Carlisle (1975:7) traces black nationalism in the "New World" to the days of slavery. He says that prior to the nineteenth-century development of nationalism, forerunners and models of such alternatives could be found in the attempts of escaped slaves to seize land for themselves and in white-developed plans for resettlement in Africa. He further elaborates that rebellious escaped slaves, or maroons, had established independent black states ranging in size from small outlaw camps in the United States through internationally recognised nations in the West Indies and Latin America. The idea of newly created black states was advanced by several white Americans in the eighteenth century. Another more practical effort was that of a group of London philanthropists and abolitionists who planned and established Sierra Leone as a refuge for free blacks from Great Britain and North America. However, it was in the twentieth century that black nationalism was expressed with coherence and flamboyance.

For the sake of the Negroes in the United States of America, Booker T. Washington advocated for economic empowerment of black people while accommodating for and cooperating with the developing system of segregation against blacks (Washington in Franklin 1965). On his part, W.E.B. Du Bois accuses Washington of surrendering the Negroes' "civil and

political rights, even though this was to be exchanged for larger chances of economic development" (Franklin 1965:246). Du Bois was a "radical advocate of full equality and higher education to train black youth for the profession" (Carlisle 1975:112). Unlike Washington, Du Bois was a pan-Africanist who engaged in the defence of the Negroes the world over. As he writes in an article on pan-Africanism:

> *The problems of the American Negro must be thought of and settled only with continual reference to the problems of the West Indian Negroes, the problems of the French Negroes and the English Negroes, and above all the problems of the African Negroes. This is the thoughtback of the Pan-African movement, in all its various manifestations.* (Cited by *Fax 1972:144).*

In behalf of the black people, Marcus Mosiah Garvey was more radical and uncompromising. He did not see the solutions to the problems of the black people (living outside Africa) in economic terms as Washington advocated or in the equality of rights for the blacks as Du Bois advocated or else in the mere celebration of the African culture as the Negritudists advocated for and did. In the *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* compiled by his wife, Amy Jacques Garvey, Garvey argues that:

> *That we suffer so much today under whatsoever flag we live is proof positive that constitutions and laws, when framed by the early advocates of human liberty, never included and were never intended for us as people. It is only a question of*

> *sheer accident that we happen to be fellow citizens today with the descendents of those who, through their advocacy, laid the foundation for human rights.*
> *So this brings us to the point where, as a people, we can expect very little from the efforts of present day statesmen of other races, in that their plans, (as far as advantages to be derived therefore are concerned) are laid only in the interests of their own people and not in the interest of Negroes; ….. (Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, p. 36).*

In specific terms, Garvey argues that black people will never meet fulfilment under alien rule and in foreign land. Hence, his advocacy for the movement of black people outside Africa, back to Africa: *"Let Africa be our guiding Star- our star or destiny"(Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, p. 6*).In fact, for Garvey, in Africa, Africans would have a government of the Africans by the Africans and for the Africans. He further challenges Christianity and advocates that black people should believe in a "black god":

> *The God of Isaac and the God of Jacob let Him exist for the race that believe in the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, we Negroes believe in the God of Ethiopia, the everlasting God-God the Father God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, the One God of all ages. That is the God in whom we believe, but we shall worship Him through the spectacles of Ethiopia. (Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, p.34).*

According to Garvey, Christianity is the medium through which the West has oppressed the blacks. Neal in Barbour (ed) (1970:19) proceeds that:

> *In spite of its Eastern origins, Christianity is clearly the religion of the oppressors, its very symbology as projected in the West is anti-black.*

Hence, Garvey's rejection of Christianity which he denies the ability to liberate black people, and preaching for a "black god" whom he believes would stand for the cause of the black race.

Although Garvey's "back to Africa" propaganda did not come true, he created pride and left a strong legacy among black Americans and black Caribbean. Consequently, several new religious groups in the United States such as the Moorish Science Temple, the Father Divine Peace Mission Movement, and especially the Rastafari in the Caribbean (Jamaica) took off from Garveyism.

Central to the spiritual belief of the Rastafari who closely follow the teachings of Marcus Garvey is the blackness of God. A Rastafarian, Ras Carlisle A. Kelly as quoted by J.V. Owens in Brathwaite (ed) (1975) states that the Bible was originally written by and about black people, but stolen and corrupted by white men. According to Kelly, Jesus "was a locksman known today as a Rastaman". Kelly stresses the persecution that Jesus

underwent, until finally "the Pharises (white men) tried to arrest Jesus (Black man)." Kelly maintains that the scriptural prophecies about the Second Coming of Jesus have been fulfilled with the advent of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. The Rastafarians believe that Emperor Haile Selassie is that "Living God" who will save them from their bondage.

Sheila Kitzinger as quoted by Owens in Brathwaite (1975) discusses the political scope of the Rastafari cult. Kitzinger says that the cult is "potentially capable of great political forces." She admits that the "Rastafari faith is essentially quasi-political" or "politico-religious protest cult" but insists that it is "disfunctional in the sense that the adherents seek the destruction of the social system within which the cult operates." In specific terms, the Rastafarians refer to the West Indies and its establishment which is essentially a legacy left by white imperialism, as "Babylon" within which they the " Black Israelites" , as they refer to themselves, are imprisoned, and they believe that Babylon will ultimately fall and they will, in the end, go to their rightful homeland , Africa which they refer to as "Zion".

Garvey and the Rastafarians have forgotten the dual heritage of the black Caribbean (African and European). In the same vein, some critics have argued against the idea of returning to Africa. Femi Ojo-Ado in Jones (1978:55) argues that:

> *Africa is a source to be remembered not a place to be returned to for that would constitute an act of cowardice and useless day-dreaming.*

Similarly, Jamaican former President, D.Johson as quoted by Fax (1972:274) argues that the argument that Garvey advocated for the movement of his people "bag and baggage back to Africa" was a distortion of Garvey's intention. Johnson argues that Garvey only wanted his people to become "African-minded" and "back to Africa" means back to culture along radical lines,"a senseless mass exodus would be to nobody's advantage and Garvey knew that".

Another manifestation of black consciousness in the Caribbean is the Black Power movement. Although it stems from borrowed rhetoric of the black American revolution including Afros, sunglasses and dashikis, Black Power in the Caribbean has its own distinctive style, its own motives; and the genuine belief that a basic change of the system is necessary (New York Times, April, 1970). Yereth Knowles in Irving (ed) (1972) explains that, to the leaders in the West Indies, the Black Power movement belongs to the Caribbean, as many of the crucial leadership roles in the United States were played by West Indians including Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican; Stokely Carmicheal, a Trinidadian; and Rap Brown, a Jamaican. The movement is claimed to have a West Indian re-interpretation. Knowles posits that:

> *The enemy of Black Power today is not (directly) the outside colonial power. The enemy is the regime, those who hold power, political leaders who are themselves blacks… (Irving 1972: 40).*

The conflict is informed by the failure of the leaders to satisfy the dispossessed masses, politically and economically. Knowles further elaborates that the movement fights against the neo-colonialist system which has been operating in the region after independence by controlling the economic sectors.

From the ongoing discussion, it follows that black consciousness in the Caribbean is the awareness of the black Caribbean of their desperate condition which is essentially the result of their uprootedness from Africa, enslavement and colonisation, by the Western imperialist powers. It is at the same time and above all their reaction to their miserable situation. And since literature cannot be divorced from society, the Caribbean novelist feels committed to his people and environment. As Ramchand (1983:6) argues:

> *In an area of deprivation, longing and rootlessness where so many people are inarticulate, the novelist may find himself tempted to passionate documentary, or criticized for not adopting prescribed stances.*

Sylvia Wynter submits to Ramchand's argument in a 2000 "Small Axe" interview with David Scott, when she reminisces about growing up in

Jamaica in the 1940s, in the midst of the anticolonial struggle: "you cannot imagine today how total a system colonialism was… how could it ever have occurred to you then, before the struggle erupted, that you as a 'native' subject could take any action on your own?" Describing the impact of attending high school while "a wave of social protest movements*"* went on all around her; she exclaims: "it was as if you were suddenly in a different dimension… the whole sense of activity, of a self- initiated new beginning- I would say that movement determined everything I was going to be or have been." Wynter explicitly provides a generational context for her body of work when she returns to this point throughout the interview, repeatedly emphasising the lifelong impact of experiencing her own political awareness during the anticolonial struggle. Tellingly, she adds: " where I think there is a great distance between today's feminists and myself is that then we knew that it was as a population – men, women, and children-that we had thought we could not do anything.*"* Although Wynter is a feminist, she maintains that race is more important than gender. Thus, she replies "Exactly" to Scott as he summarises her engagement with "the question of gender" as " not so much a strategic question of the subordinate place of the concept of gender but that race has a fundamental priority because of the place of race in the

epistemic break that you point to… there is a fundamental epistemological priority of race vis-à-vis gender."

In his article, *"The Hills of Hebron:* Wynter's Disruption of the Narrative of the Nation" (2008), Shirley Toland-Dix comments that:

> *Wynter audaciously inserts herself into a discourse generated almost exclusively by Caribbean male authors and dares to envision the Caribbean nation. Not content to merely discuss what the West Indian novel should do from a detached and prescriptive space, Wynter creates a narrative of the nation, experimenting with the possibilities of the genre, experiencing frustration with the genre's limitations. Wynter approaches writing a novel from the perspective of a theoris,t introducing insights and concepts that she later develops in stunningly brilliant and erudite theoretical essays. Among the theoretical inquiries she incorporates into the novel: an interrogation of the role of the artist and the intellectual in emerging nations, her rejection of mono-conceptual frameworks, her engagement with the role of groups most marginalized or liminal within societies, and a suggestive investigation of gender dynamics within the black communiy.*

Toland- Dix further argues that *The Hills of Hebron* is experimental, complex, and paradoxical, both epic narrative of the nation and critique of the extant vision of the nation; that moving beyond a celebrating approach; Wynter is concerned with exploring how newly independent Jamaica could become a viable, cohesive, and progressive society; and that through her depiction of the Revivalist counter-community of Hebron, she examines the

challenges the new nation will face and queries how a society responsive to the needs of all of the citizenry can be created.

Ramchand (1983:41) comes to terms with Toland-dix's observation that Wynter rejects mono-conceptual frameworks when he writers that *The Hills of Hebron* "is an overloaded work by a West Indian intellectual anxious to touch upon as many themes as possible.*"* He further observes that the novel documents the wide range of religious cults and points out the author's connection between an element of West Indian life, and the African heritage. However, Ramchand points out that *The Hills of Hebron* "is clogged-up by the author's wish to handle too many West Indian issues in the one work, so that it contains a number of interesting episodes but suffers from Miss Wynter's impatient closings" (Ramchand 1983 :42).

Although both Toland-Dix and Ramchand have acknowledged Wynter's exploration of the theme of black consciousness in her novel, they have not made it their primary concern in their discourses. And this dissertation is an attempt to do so.

John Hearne as quoted by Sandra Pouchet Paquet in King (1979:70) readily acknowledges Roger Mais's influence: "Mais taught me how to write, how to see essentials; that much of writing is rejection." Hearne also acknowledges the power of Conrad, Faulkner and Hemingway. But Paquet

says that it is perhaps Hemingway who weighs most heavily on both Mais and Hearne.

Commenting on the works of Hearne, Paquet in King (1979:70) says that:

> *Hearne tells a good story in clean, uncluttered prose. His novels have a spirit of adventure… The common distinction applied to his fiction is its middleclass versus peasant focus. At the centre of his novels the middle class by birth, money, education, colour and aspiration. He writes about this class with a keen appreciation of its styles, values and vulnerability in a society that is poised to challenge its inherited scale of influence. Hearne rests his case on 'the good ones': those who qualify as sensitive to moral nuances, however private the moral code; those who have the courage of commitment to an ideal outside the self, whether this be embodied in an individual, a cause or a certain style of conduct; those who have a certain capacity for heroic gesture…*

However, George Lamming as cited by Ramchand (1983:6) accuses Hearne of being obsessed with "an agricultural middle class in Jamaica," and of having "a dread of being identified with the land at peasant level." Reacting to this charge, Ramchand says that:

> *Such a change does little justice to Hearne's probing of the painful gap between personal allegiances on political conflict, and his exploration of Love as a positive that comes to be celebrated in the Land of the Living (1961) where distressed Negro, displaced Jew, and disoriented female, are seen as equal subject for Love's*

> *reclaiming and responsible chasp (Ramchand 1983:6).*

In addition, Lamming's charge is not valid in the sense that, historically, a direct link has existed between the novel and the middle class. Literary historians such as E.M. Forster (1927), Sir Ifor Evans (1940), F.R.Leavi's (1948), Walter Allen (1954), Raymond Williams (1958), Ian Watt (1964), Philp Stevick (1967) and Robert Barnard (1984) argue that the novel is a genre whose emergence coincided with the rise of the middle class in Europe.

Ngugi (1972:89) points out that in *Land of the Living* "immediate social reality is minimized…" But, the fact that Hearne minimises immediate social reality is intentional for he (Hearne) argues that he is not primarily interested in social commentary. However, Paquet in King(1979:70) argues that "yet the social commentary is always there, often suggesting a neglected context for his (Hearne's) examination of various themes, and sometimes confusing the issue".

Ngugi further opines that in *Land of the Living*, Hearne has explored the meaning of the African image but the exploration is removed from the social realism of Orlando Patterson and Sylvia Wynter onto a mystical plane. He also points out similarities between *Land of the Living*, and V.S Naipaul's *Mimic Man*, Patterson's *An Absence of Ruins* and Roger Mais's

novels (*Brother Man* and *The Hills Were Joyful Together).* These similarities are the scene of abandonment, dereliction and chaos as well as a desire for the restoration of self.

King (1979:27) gives the historical contextual appraisal of Andrew Salkey's *Joey Tyson*. He opines that *Joey Tyson* and Noel William's *Ikael Torass* are based on the incident of the first major confrontation with the Black Power movement in 1968 in Jamaica, when the deportation of the radical Guyanese lecturer Dr. Walter Rodney, sparked off a massive student demonstration that was quickly taken over by the general public, and ended in violent clashes between the people and the police.

Judging from what has been said, it follows that there is a limited number of critical responses and reviews on the works of Sylvia Wynter, John Hearne and especially Andrew Salkey, and this study is primarily concerned with boosting the criticism of these works as they relate to black consciousness.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis is premised on Hartmann (1953:40)'s argument that:

> *The arts cannot cut themselves off from life. What they are in their essence they can only be in the framework of the historical reality which gave them birth, and not in some shadow realm outside it.*

In this respect, it goes without saying that it is improbable that any literary work which is concerned with the existence of a people struggling to rise from their miserable reality which is the result of their subjugation and exploitation by another people, would ignore "the principles of dialectical and historical materialism..." (Dietrich Sommer cited by Walter H. Bruford in Strelka 1973:6). This study is therefore essentially carried out in light of the Marxist theory.

In the words of Storey (1991: 97), "Marxism is a difficult and contentious body of work". However, he recognises that Marxism is more than this: "it is a body of revolutionary theory with the purpose of changing the world." Karl Marx (1983:158)'s testimony buttresses that:

> *The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.*

This makes Marxist analysis political in a quite special way, indeed more political than other methods and approaches (Storey 1991: 97).

Marxist criticism grounds its theory and practice on the economic and cultural theory of Karl Marx (1818-83) and his fellow-thinker Friedrich Engels (1820-98). Abrams (2005: 155) sums up the essential claims of this theory as follows:

1. *In the last analysis, the evolving history of humankind, of its social groupings and relations,*

of its institutions, and of its ways of thinking are largely determined by the changing mode of its "material production"- that is, of its overall economic organization for producing and distributing material goods.

2. *Changes in the fundamental mode of material production effect changes in the class structure of a society, establishing in each era dominant and subordinate classes that engage in a struggle for economic, political, and social advantage.*
3 *Human consciousness is constituted by an ideology that is, the beliefs, values and ways of thinking and feeling through which human beings perceive, and by recourse to which they explain, what they take to be reality. An ideology is, in complex ways, the product of the position and interests of a particular class. In any historical era, the dominant ideology embodies, and serves to legitimize and perpetuate, the interests of the dominant economic and social class.*

The concept of ideology is therefore crucial to Marxist criticism. Engels described ideology as "a false consciousness" (quoted by Abrams 2005:156). As such, it is a set of beliefs that is used to obscure the truth of the economic basis of society and the violent oppression that capitalism necessarily entails. "Ideology" is indeed crucial to Marxist criticism.

The concept of ideology can be traced to French philosophers of the late eighteenth century, who used it to designate the study of the way that all general concepts develop from particular sense-perceptions. In the present era, "ideology" is used in a variety of non-Marxist ways, ranging from a derogatory name for any set of political ideas that are held dogmatically and

applied rigorously, to a neutral name for ways of perceiving and thinking that are specific to an individual's race, sex, nationality, education, or ethnic group. In its distinctively Marxist use, as Abrams (2005:156) observes, "the reigning ideology in any era is conceived to be, ultimately, the product of its economic structure and the resulting class-relations and class-interests". Marx and Engels claim in *The German Ideology*, which they jointly wrote in 1845-46, that:

> *The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e., the class which is the ruling material force in society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force (Arthur 1974:64).*

In other words, the dominant class, because, it owns and controls the means of material production, is virtually guaranteed to have control over the means of intellectual production. However, this does not mean that the ideas of the ruling class are simply imposed on subordinate classes. A ruling class is "compelled... to represent its interest as the common interest of all the members of society… to give its ideas the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones". (Arthur 1974:65-6). For Marx, as well as for Engels, "ideology" is "false consciousness", a set of beliefs that obscure the truth of economic basis of society and the violent oppression that capitalism necessarily entails. Various people believe various things: for instance that the fact that some

people are rich and other people poor is "natural and inevitable," or that black people are inferior. The purpose of these beliefs, according to Marx, is to obscure the truth. People who believe these things are not going to challenge or even recognise the inequalities of wealth in society, and so are not going to want to change them. For Marx, the task is to disabuse people of their "false consciousness" so that they can see the injustices of society for what they are-both appalling and curable.

The model Marx developed to express these relations in society is that of "base" and "superstructure".The "base" of all societies, according to Marx, is economic: it is all about money and who owns the means to make money. Out of this base grows or is constructed a "superstructure" that is "determined" by this base. In other words, the shape the "superstructure" takes always depends upon the shape of the base. The "superstructure" consists of things like the forms of law and political representation of society: So, for example, an economic base that is all about private property and owning things is going to produce a superstructural set of laws that are primarily designed to protect property. But the superstructure also includes things like religion, ethics, art and culture. Roberts (2000:19) argues that this "is one reason why Marxist theory has been so influential in literary studies."

Over the years, Marx's philosophy and opinions have variously been interpreted and applied by various scholars. As Roberts (2000:21) states: "some early Marxist critics worked with the "base-superstructure" model in a way that more recent thinkers have often seen as rather unsophisticated…" These early Marxists are said to be "Vulgar Marxists". For them, the relationship between the base and the superstructure is very straightforward: an oppressive base produces oppressive culture, in which only a few individuals (people who deliberately struggle to produce art that resists the aesthetic consensus of age) are able to transcend. However, more recent Marxists have seen the relationship between culture and society in much more complex terms; and in particular, it has turned away from imagining that there is a simple causal relationship between base and superstructure. A key figure in this new development in Marxist theory is the French philosopher Louis Althusser (1918-90) who started writing in the early 1960s, when the excesses of Stalinist dictatorship in the nominally "communist" Soviet Union had done much to discredit Marxism as a political philosophy; what he did was "to re-read and revivify what Marx's actual writings were rather than what other people had made of Marx" (Roberts 2000:22).

In fact, Karl Marx's writings and theories have been debated and discussed by a large number of critics, and there are various, sometimes conflicting interpretations of what he is saying. In respect to that, Roberts (2000:16) distinguishes two major schools:

> a. *There are Marxists who are called 'Hegelian' after the nineteenth-century German philosopher Georg Hegel (1770-1831), and who believe that we need to understand the whole picture, the entire system as a totality;*
> b. *There are also Marxists sometimes called 'Althusserian' after the twentieth-century French thinker Louis Althusser (1918-90), who consider this sort of 'totalising' oppressive.*

The drift of Hegelianism is towards a totality, a transcendent "oneness". Hegel for instance, believed in the importance of understanding the whole enormous narrative of history, not as one period following another, but rather as a single, total thing, a "totality" expressing the working out of the dialectical spirit. He was more concerned with big structures than with individual particulars. He preferred, for instance, to think of "the state" rather than individual people, and in fact refused to believe that individuals actually existed by themselves: "Only in the state does man have a rational existence," he wrote in 1830, "man owes his entire existence to the state, and has his being within it alone. Whatever worth and spiritual reality he possesses are his solely by virtue of the state" (Hegel 1988:414).

Above all, Hegel believed in an absolute knowledge, which he envisaged as a complete spiritual comprehension in unity; a vision of totality in which all the various component parts express the essence of the whole. Roberts (2000) says that Hegel's philosophy sounds a little obscure and that people are still arguing exactly what Hegel meant, and that many Marxist traditions have seen Marx as adopting Hegelian philosophy and then clearing out all its mystical, spiritual and idealist elements, leaving a "materialist" philosophy of totality. Some people have seen it as a short step from this to a practical Marxism in which, like Stalinism that dominated the Soviet Union through the 1940s and 1950s, individuals are denied rights because they are considered unimportant compared to the "totality" of the state. In other words, it is a short step to oppressive totalitarianism. This, according to Althusser was not only a great wrong, it was a misreading of Marx.

In his book, *For Marx (1965)*, Althusser goes back to Marx and argues that, although "early" Marx was influenced by Hegel, "later" Marx moved beyond Hegel and abandoned all the dangerous "totalism" of that philosophy. Althusser argues that if one reads Marx with proper attention, he will see a "break" in his developing career, a break between the "early" Hegelian Marx and the "later scientific" one, a philosophy purged of the

dangerous Hegelianism of the earlier work. Accordingly, Althusser is uncomfortable with analysing society and culture in terms of "social orders" or "total systems" because such usages suggest that the world is a monolithic structure with a rigid pattern and a centre that absolutely determines all the aspects of that form. Instead, Althusser uses terms such as "social formation," stressing the ways in which society is a decentred structure- a more complex system with many elements in interrelations rather than a single rigid structure. Althusser radically revises the Vulgar Marxists' claim that everything that happens in the superstructure (from law and religion to art and culture) is rigidly defined by the base.

In fact, Marxists at the turn of the twentieth century saw that people behaved badly to other people, oppressing them in various ways and that even socialist economy which was seen as a better alternative to capitalism did not make people happy. In general, it was found that if money is removed as a reason for people to compete and hurt one another, then they instead compete and hurt one another for other reasons (for instance, status or sex). If the base was changed, many features of the superstructure refused to follow suit (Roberts 2000:25). Clearly, there is such a thing as "the economy" and there are such things as "attitude and structures of belief"", but if the relationship between the two is not so simple as one causing the

other, then what exactly is the relationship? Althusser (1972) argues that the relationship between base and superstructure is not simply one of cause (base) and effect (superstructure). These things are not parts of the Hegelian organic totality, but have what he calls "relative autonomy." In some ways the base does determine the superstructure, but in other ways the superstructure (what people think and believe) determines the base (the way the economy is structured), and in other ways the two are relatively free of each other. It is at this juncture that Althusser rejects the definition of ideology as "false consciousness" and redefines it as a "representation" of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence (Althusser 1972: 155). He never denies, however, that, as he puts it, "in the last instance" the root of society is economic, that if the chain of causation is followed far enough down it will be eventually found that the economic realities of life are the bed rock.

On his part, while maintaining the original Marxist distinction between the economic base and the cultural superstructure, Antonio Gramsci replaces the claim that culture is a disguised "reflection" of the material base with the concept that the relation between the two is one of "reciprocity," or interactive influence (Abrams 2005: 159). Unlike the classical Marxists' conception of ideology, Gramsci introduces the concept of "hegemony" and

argues that a social class achieves a predominant influence and power, not by direct and overt means, but by succeeding in making its ideological views so pervasive that the subordinate classes unwittingly accept and participate in their own oppression.

Classical Marxism has also been revisited by Fredrik Jameson. Elaborating on Althusser's ideas, Jameson (1981:23) says that his own enterprise, "the enterprise of constructing a properly Marxist hermeneutic must necessarily confront the powerful objections to traditional models of interpretation raised by the influential school of … Althusser's Marxism". Jameson does not think, for instance, that the "old-fashioned" straightforward causal model of base-superstructure can be entirely banished from Marx interpretation, and he gives an example of what he sees as an instance of precisely that in recent literary history:

> *There seems, for instance, to have been an unquestionable causal relationship between the admittedly extrinsic fact of the crisis in late nineteenth-century publishing, during which the dominant three-decker lending library novel was replaced by a chapter one-volume format, and the modification of the 'inner form' of the novel itself (Jameson 1981:25).*

He further agues that any analysis of how and why that change came about must take account of the economic changes in the "base" of the publishing industry: indeed he is saying that these economic changes

determined the shift in form of the novel, in a straightforward "base determines superstructure" model.

However, although Jameson thinks that there might be occasions when this model of causality applies, such "mechanical causality" is not the whole story, but is instead only "one of the various laws and subsystems" of our "social and cultural life" (Jameson 1981:26). Particularly, Jameson relates almost everything to a particular "total" system, the enfolding dynamic of class and social forces over time. He thus rejects the claim to *Political Unconsciousness*: "Always historicize!" (Jameson 1981).

Although Marx wrote little by way of literature or cultural criticism, his teachings have influenced or been applied to the production of literature, as well as its assessment. As Walter H. Bruford in Strelka (1973:6) puts it:

> *Ever since the early correspondence of Marx and Engels there has been much discussion of literature as part of the cultural superstructure erected, according to the materialist conception of history, on a particular economic and social basis and never free from its influence.*

Marxism is therefore an untranscendental literary theory. Within this canon, Bruford further posits that a Marxist critic:

> *has a sharp eye for any hint of hostility to the established powers of the time, using every text as sociopolitical document in the ideological conflicts of the present.*

The point is that, Marxists do not keep off the fact that literature is produced by the society which is in turn represented by the literature. As Roberts (2000:18) puts it:

> *All art grows out of economic realities: artists are real people who live out economic relations with other people…. Better art-makes people aware of the realities of society.*

This means that, rather than being concerned with imaginary abstracts like "truth", "beauty," and "spirit", Marxist literary criticism is always concerned with the actual world in which people live-class, money, and oppression among other things. As such, literature becomes a political tool. In a similar vein, Mao Tse-Tung as quoted by Omafume F. Onoge in Gugelberger (ed) (1985:50) maintains that:

> *In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is no such thing as art for art's stake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics.*

With this insight, it follows that Marxist aesthetics are the following:

1. *There is a definite connection between art and the material base, between art and the totality of the relations of production. With the change in production relations, art itself is transformed as part of the superstructure, although, like other ideologies, it can lag behind or anticipate social change.*

2. *There is a definite connection between art and social class. The only authentic, true, progressive art is the art of an ascending class. It expresses the consciousness of this class.*
3. *Consequently, the political and the aesthetic, the revolutionary content and the artistic quality tend to coincide.*
4. *The writer has an obligation to articulate and express the interests and needs of the ascending class. (In capitalism this would be the proletariat.)*
5. *A declining class or its representatives are unable to produce anything but "decadent" art.*
6. *Realism (in various senses) is considered as the art form which corresponds most adequately to the social relationship, and this is the "correct: art form (Marcuse 1979:1-2).*

In light of this theoretical framework, this study explores the miserable reality of the black Caribbean masses within the European capitalist, imperialist, colonialist, and neo-colonialist contexts; and the manner in which the latter have ideologically tried to change their lot.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is carried out by means of library tools, reference works, and the internet.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter has investigated the historical background of the Caribbean region. It has traced the why and how of black consciousness in a multiracial setting which has for centuries denied the blacks of the

conditions for their fulfilment and degraded their personalities. The chapter has also dealt with literature review and has shown that the literature of the Caribbean cannot be divorced from the history of the region. Finally, in addition to the presentation of the statement of research problem, the significance of the study, the scope and delimitation, and the aim and objectives of this research, the research methodology; the description of the theoretical framework (Marxism) within which the study is carried out has been considered.

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CHAPTER TWO

BLACK CONDITION AND AWARENESS IN SYLVIA WYNTER'S *THE HILLS OF HEBRON*

2.0 PREAMBLE

This chapter explores Sylvia Wynter's *The Hills of Herbron* (1962), investigating the themes of poverty and black spiritual awareness. The novel is set in colonial Jamaica at a time when the black Caribbean became conscious of their imprisonment by their white colonial masters. It explores how newly independent Jamaica could become a viable, cohesive and progressive society from the unpleasant legacy left by colonialism. It is argued that poverty has given the black West Indians an acute sense of alienation and despair; and that, it was in an attempt to get rid of their miserable reality that the miserable blacks set out to reinterpret Christianity (as it was interpreted by the dominant whites) which they viewed as an ally to colonialism. Thus, Wynter's *The Hills of Hebron* moves towards an epistemological priority of the black race.

2.1 AUTHOR'S BACKGROUND

Sylvia Wynter was born in Cuba on the 17th January, 1928 of Jamaican parents-Percival Wynter and Lola Maude Wynter. She is a

novelist, dramatist, critic and writer of essays (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2010).

At the age of two, Wynter returned to Jamaica with her parents and was educated at St. Andrew High School for Girls, in the midst of black liberation movements and struggles which contributed in moulding her character. In 1949, she was awarded the Jamaica Centenary Scholarship for Girls, which took her to King's College, London, to read for her B.A honours in modern languages (Spanish) from 1947 to 1949.

Sylvia Wynter was awarded the M.A. in December 1953 for her thesis, an edition of a comedia, *A lo quo oblige el honor*.

In 1958, Wynter met the Guyanese novelist Jan Carew, who became her second husband. With Carew, she wrote pieces for the BBC and completed Un*der the Sun*, a full-length stage play which was bought by the Royal Court Theatre in London.

In 1962, the year Jamaica got its independence, Wynter published her experimental and only novel, *The Hills of Hebron* in which she introduced insights and concepts which she later developed in her theoretical essays (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2010).

After separating from Carew in the early 1960s, Wynter returned to academic studies. In 1963, she was appointed assistant lecturer in Hispanic

literature at the Mona campus of the University of the West Indies. She remained there until 1974. During this time, the Jamaican Government asked her to write Ballad for a Rebellion and a biography of Sir Alexander Bustamante, the first prime minister of independent Jamaica.

Sylvia Wynter was invited by the Department of Literature at the University of California at San Diego to be a visiting professor for 1974-1975. She then became Chairperson of African and Afro-American Studies, and professor of Spanish in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Stanford University in 1977. She is now Professor Emeritus at Stanford University.

In the mid-to late 1960, Wynter began writing articles addressing her interest in Caribbean, Latin American, and Spanish history and literatures. In 1968 and 1969, she published *We Must Learn to Sit Down Together and Talk About a Little Culture: Reflections on West Indian Writing and Criticism.* Wynter has since written numerous articles in which she seeks to rethink the fullness of human ontologies, which, she argues, have been curtailed by what she described as an over representation of (Western bourgeois) Man as if he were the only available mode of complete humanness. Wynter suggests how multiple knowledge sources and texts might frame our world differently (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2010).

2.2 THE THEME OF POVERTY

Poverty has received a wide range of definitions. Traditionally, it has been viewed in economic or material terms. Many critics maintain that poverty is economic insufficiency. For instance, Seebohn Rowntree in Will and Vatter (eds) (1965:5) describes it as a *"*Way of Life*"* in which the people involved cannot afford spending money on what is not necessary for their survival or else "the extra expenditure involved is not met, and can only be met, by limiting the diet, or in other words, by sacrificing physical efficiency…". In a similar vein, quoting Thomas Carlyle, Robert Hunter in Will and Vatter (eds) (1965:127) writes that the essence of poverty is "to live miserable we know not why, to have the dread of hunger, to work sore and yet gain nothing".

But the condition of economic insufficiency is only one of the dimensions of poverty. As E.J. Hobsbawn in Sills (ed) (1968:398) explains and distinguishes three meanings of the phenomenon: social poverty, pauperism, and moral poverty. Hobsbawn elaborates that:

> *a. Social poverty implies not merely economic inequality (of poverty, income, living standard, etc.) but also social inequality, that is, a relation of inferiority, dependence, or exploitation…*
> *b. Pauperism describes a category of people unable to maintain themselves at all, or to maintain themselves at the level conventionally regarded as minimal, without outside assistance…*

> c. *Moral poverty defines the place of poverty in the value system of a society of its subgroups and institutions; that is, it defines whether poverty is morally acceptable and what status it confers or prevents the poor man from enjoying.*

Poverty is therefore a multidimensional phenomenon. It is in fact, a social, political, economic and emotional condition which denies some people the conditions for fulfilment.

Social scientists have maintained that the Caribbean is a land of poverty. Clive Thomas in *Transition* (1982:2) postulates that despite historically unprecedented rates of increase of per capital national product in Caribbean countries, poverty still persists. Therefore, Caribbean people live in misery.

From the realist point of view, literature "is vitally engaged with the living situations of men and women: it is concrete rather than abstract, displays life in all its rich variousness and rejects barren conceptual enquiry for the feel and taste of what is to be alive" (Eagleton 1983:196). In other words, literature is a representation of life as it appears, regardless of its ugliness and morality.

As a result, a large number of Caribbean writers especially novelists have taken it upon themselves to paint the "lack of material necessities and comforts, psychic travail, the multiproblem family and individual,

dysfunctional behavior*"*, which have become synonymous with their people (Will and Vatter 1965:2). Sylvia Wynter is one of these writers. Her only novel, *The Hills of Hebron* proves that.

Sylvia Wynter's *The Hill*s *of Hebron* which is the object of this chapter is the story of a poverty-stricken black community in colonial Jamaica. Wynter agrees that the Caribbean is a land of poverty, by describing Cockpit Centre, the environment in which her black characters live and operate, as an Egypt of stinking narrow streets, concrete sidewalls that burn one's feet and gutters gushing with dirty water:

> *At nights the street-lamps cast arcs of murky light on the shops, the houses, the churches, the shacks crowded together in grey slums the bunched figures sleeping on the pavement, on benches, in the park, but huddled together, secure in their acceptance of the ordinariness of hunger poverty and defeat (The Hills of Hebron, p.29).*

This is the picture of an urban slum with poor housing condition and crowdedness and gregariousness. Such an environment is the abode of the have-nots, eaten out by "the fear and dread of wants".

George Gallup in Will and Vatter (1965:45) presents two basically different views advanced by the American public to account for poverty:

> *One, that poverty is primarily due to circumstances beyond an individual's control; the other, that poverty is due to lack of individual effort.*

In other words, the second view holds that the poor deserve what they get because of their own individual differences, which in all likelihood, stems from the individual "innate" defects, and that it is the hardwork and fitness of the rich that account for their achievements. The first view, that poverty is due to circumstances beyond an individual's control seems to mean the same thing, in that, it suggests that nothing can be done about poverty and that the poor cannot but accept their situation.

Such views were not uncommon among imperialist white people who maintained that the misery of their colonial subjects (the blacks), was unchallengeable. Sylvia Wynter captures this misconception and prejudice through one of her white mouthpieces, Lady Harrington. Lady Harrington, talking to another white lady, Mrs. Brooke maintains that:

> *The natives were created poor and wretched and damned. God had, for his own purpose, decreed it that way. There was really little that anyone could do to lighten their lot (The Hills of Hebron, p.180).*

Thus, for these whites, to act for the emancipation and wellbeing of blacks becomes abominable, because to them, it is to challenge the will of God.

However, the contemporary reformers' socialist notion of poverty, as reported by Andrew Carnegie holds that poverty "is primarilly an

institutionally generated phenomenon calling for a social approach to its eradication" (Will and Vatter 1965:30).

In this respect, although, poverty can develop when a stratified social and economic system is breaking down or is being replaced by another, as in the case of the transition from feudalism to capitalism or during periods of rapid technological change, it is argued that in the Caribbean, poverty is essentially a consequence of the long historical period of white domination during which capitalism, as a mode of social production, had internationalised itself and created a world market. Clive Thomas in *Transition (1982:2-3)* highlights that in the Caribbean, the internationalisation of the capitalist mode of production has resulted in the development of two important sets of divergences in the system of reproduction of the material conditions of social life:

> *The first of these is the divergence between the pattern of resource use and the demand structure as it exists, and as it is likely to develop as commodity relations become more generalized and entrenched in the national economy. The reason for this is that European conquest and settlement of the territories resulted first in the overthrow of the communal and other pre-capitalist production relations which garnered domestic resources for the servicing of overseas market in Europe and elsewhere. The development of tropical agriculture, mineral production for export, tourism etc; all reflect this orientation.*

> *The consequence of this is that local demand was, and continues to be, by and large satisfied by imports. The export sector has become highly specialized in the production of one or two commodities and confines the sales of its output to one or two major capitalist markets.*
> *The second divergence is that as commodity relations have developed, ability to purchase in the market has become the principal determinant of consumption. The result has therefore, been that since colonialisation, the needs of the broad masses of the population have not influenced production in any significant way. Except for residual subsistence sector, commodities available from both local production and imports are allocated on the basis of purchasing power. In the context of widespread poverty and unemployment, most of the available commodities service the needs of the relatively better off classes and groups.*

Around this dynamic of reproduction of the material need of the society as a whole the basic needs of the masses who are either unemployed or underemployed are not met.

Work is an end and a means of self-realisation. So, the immediate consequence of unemployment is poverty. Robert E. Lane in Will and Vatter (1965:43) rightly submits to this when he says that "the only major cause of poverty to which no moral blame attaches is depression or unemployment". It is in light of this that Wynter's unemployed black characters can be better understood.

Understanding that until they work they will never find fulfilment, the unemployed gather in front of the "Labor Office" to demand that they be given jobs as a right by the labour officer:

> *Their faces were hostile…*
> *They had come to ask for jobs. The man had given them words. They wanted bread. Once again they were to be put off with promises.. What the hell they think it is at all, at all! Work we want, food (The Hills of Hebron, pp.289-291).*

Fed up with the empty promises of the labour officer and understanding the uselessness of his office, they decide to attack the office. In the course of this confusion, the coercive and intimidating force of the colonial power, the police, fires and kills some members of the crowd:

> *Lick him, tear him up! Tear up the paper. Mash up the place, break the place!... The officer slipped and fell on the steps… he screamed with all his strength:*
> *"Fire, for God's sake. What you waiting for-fire"!*
> *For a moment the policemen hesitated… There was no time for the policemen to take aim. They fired into the belly of the crowd. The guns barked again and again. The crowd was now an obstacle to be removed…*
> *Five bodies were lying on the ground… They were all dead… (The Hills of Hebron, pp. 291-292).*

Incidents of this type-clash between the poor masses and the police or established order-were very common in colonial Caribbean just as they are

today. The implication is that until poverty is eradicated there will be no peace in the society (neither for the masses nor for the leaders).

In a situation whereby the established order does not provide decent living conditions, chances are that the dispossessed and impoverished may submit to whatever means of survival that comes their way. In this case prostitution may be the way out for women. This immoral practice has been the means of survival for many black Caribbean women whom May May epitomises in *The Hills of Hebron.* It is thanks to prostitution that May May takes care of her little son Obadiah who is aware of his mother's business:

> *...men came to visit her one after the other and she pushed him out of the room and slapped him when he started to ask why; like that particular night when he had been alone in the room and a thunderstorm burst over the town and lightning flashed like arrows of light tearing open the black sky. He had crowled under the table to hide. After a while his mother came in, a man behind her. Fearful that she might turn him out, that he might be left alone to face up to the wrath of the heavens, Obadiah kept quiet and huddled further under the table. He heard the bed creak sharply and his mother cry out as if in terror. In a panic he scrambled out, rushed to the bed and thumped at the man with his fists, trying to pull him away from his mother... The man went away, leaving a shilling on the table. His mother took the money and went out to a shop that remained open late. She returned with rice and salted cod and cooked Obadiah's favorite meal (The Hills of Hebron, pp.158-159).*

The same situation (poverty and unemployment) accounts for rural exodus. Hence, the massive movement of young people from small cities or villages to big cities like Kingston to try their hands at odd jobs including prostitution. This is the example of Obadiah and his friend Hugh and some girls who happen to be Hugh's cousins:

> … *the two young men in their late adolescence ran away to Kingston. They were accompanied by two of Hugh's cousins, girls of fifteen and sixteen who had taken to casual prostitution* (*The Hills of Hebron, p.160).*

Describing the phenomenon of unemployment in the United States of America of the nineteen sixties, the US Department of Labour in Will and Vatter (1965:110) reports that "the most affected are the young; the poorly educated, the unskilled, older workers, and minority groups." When this is applied to the Caribbean, there will be no contention. The argument it that, if poor education or lack of education and lack of skill account for unemployment, it should also be borne in mind that the natives of the colonial Caribbean were not given chance to (good and sound) education.

It should also be remembered that in colonial Caribbean, power, privilege and means of production of wealth were in the hands of the minority whites. In this situation, it was rather the powerless and weak

majority (essentially the blacks) who suffered unemployment as well as underemployment.

The poor are normally contrasted with the rich. Marxists assume a causal relationship between the two set of people. As E.J. Hobsbawn in Sills (ed) (1968:398) rightly cites two German proverbs to make this point: "poverty is the rich man's cow" and "poverty is the hand and foot of wealth." This relationship is the essence of capitalism. Karl Marx in Will and Vatter (1965:35-36) buttresses this:

> *Within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labour are brought about at the cost of the individual labourer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrade him into the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange from him the intellectual potentialities of the labour-process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power; they distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labour-process to a despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working-time, and drag his wife and child beneath the wheels of the juggernaut of capital. But all methods for the production of surplus-value are at the same time method of accumulation; and every extention of accumulation becomes again a means for the development of those methods. It follows therefore that in proportion as capital accumulates the lot of*

> *the labourer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse.*

In other words, it is capitalism and by implication the exploitation of the poor by the rich which is the root of the misery of the poor who are the working class.

In the Caribbean, the exploitation of the black masses was carried out through slavery and colonial rule which uprooted the blacks from their African homes and exploited them in an alien land. Caribbean people have maintained this position while blaming the imperialist whites who are the brains or "devils" behind their misery. Wynter makes this point through her Marxist inclined character Bellow in *The Hills of Hebron* who calls the attention of his fellow black people who work for no gain:

> *Comrades, after three hundred years of imperialist rule, our island is still a pauper house. The time has come for us to understand the reasons for our misery and to claim our rightful heritage. We are poor but this island is not poor. And you know why we are poor?*
> *I will tell you why. Because here in this island, it is we who plant the seeds of wealth, but it is others thousands of miles away, who reap the harvest. The big white gods who rule us from their places up… (The Hills of Hebron, p.221).*

This is an act of awareness. Back West Indians have come to understand the roots of "their misery, the hopelessness of their poverty, the lack of any future for their children"(*The Hills of Hebron, p.226*): the white capitalist

imperialists who have oppressed and exploited them. It is this consciousness that had informed the serious political and cultural developments that characterised the West Indian region during the years between the two World Wars (1918-1939), that eventually led to the political independence of most colonies around the nineteen sixties and seventies. One of the most spectacular manifestations of this black consciousness lies at the spiritual level.

2.3 BLACK SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

As a result of the bitter experiences of slavery, colonialism and exploitation they were subjected to, by the white capitalist imperialists, black people have come to question the Western civilisation through which the white men have subjugated and oppressed them. The black Caribbean have argued like their American counterparts (black Americans) that, despite its Eastern origins and basic doctrine which is love and equality between men, Christianity is "the religion of the oppressors" and "its very symbology as projected in the West is anti-black" (Larry Neal in Barbour 1970:19). In this respect, they have seen the colonial Church as an ally of European capitalist imperialism. Sylvia Wynter captures this alliance between the Church and imperialism through a British lady, Cecilia Brooke whose

husband Reverend Brooke has been voted to christianise the natives in colonial Jamaica. Cecilia Brooke maintains that:

> *England… owed a great duty toward her subject races. As the mother country she could have no justification for empire except that all the heathen under her rule were led out of darkness into the light, were converted into true Christians (The Hills of Hebron, p. 133).*
> .

In fact, Christianity was the mask used by European imperialists to vindicate their conquests. Those imperialists argued that Christianity was the mark of civilisation and that Africa was inhabited by savages and barbarians; and that, it was their duty and responsibility to colonise, Christianise and civilise the "uncivilised" Africans. It was in this sense that Christian missionaries were sent to prepare the ground for the establishment of colonies. It is through O'Malley, an Irish doctor who enlightens Moses Barton, the black character who sees himself as the saviour of his race that Wynter displays the conspiracy between the Church and the colonialists:

> *… The Wisdom of these Christian merchants… These missionaries carried the cross before them, but behind them came ships and soldiers and guns (The Hills of Hebron, p.208).*
> *My God, look what they did to your people, Moses. Sent their missionaries to trade in Africa souls, to promise them the kingdom of heaven in exchange for a few stings of beads and a paper with a big red seal, your African chiefs signed away a continent for a Christian conscience, bartered their land, their souls for a slice of the kingdom of*

> *heaven. And when the kingdom of heaven didn't materialize, the missionaries, those traders in blood, conjured up a God in the image of an Englishman, a wise and holy father-figure who never existed. They sold this God to the natives as a new fetish. Take my word for it, Moses, Christianity was the greatest fraud ever perpetrated on any people (The Hills of Hebron, p p.147-8).*

Similarly, Basil Davidson captures this fraudulent use of Christianity in his commentary in the documentary film, *Africa:*

> *When the white man came,*
> *He had the Bible and we had the Land*
> *Then he said to close our eyes and let us pray*
> *Upon opening our eyes*
> *We had the Bible and he had the Land! (Cited by Ojo 2000:19).*

It should also be borne in mind that it was in the name of Western civilisation and Christianity that Africans were taken to America and the West Indies. As Marcus Garvey explains:

> *…John Hawkins (afterwards knighted) asked permission of Queen Elizabeth of England to take the blacks from Africa into her colonies of America and the West Indies and use them in their development. The Queen asked, "what consideration will you give them?" Hawkins said "they will be civilized and Christianized in the colonies, for in their own country they are savages and barbarians" (Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, p.35).*

In its capacity of an agent of the European capitalist imperialism, the colonial Church taught blacks submission to slavery and exploitation:

> *In your churches they will tell deceive you, will tell you it is wrong to strike, will tell you that God won't like it, that it's a sin (The Hills of Hebron, p.228).*

In the words of Marx, "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people" *(*Cited in Bottomore and Rubel *1963).* In other words, Marx argues that religion acts as an opute to dull the pain produced by oppression. It is both an expression of real suffering and a protest against suffering, but it does little to solve the problem because it helps to make life more bearable and therefore dilutes demands for change. As such, religion merely stupefies its adherents rather than bringing them true happiness and fulfilment. Similarly, Lenin argues that "religion is a kind of spiritual gin in which the slaves of capital drown their human shape and their claims to any decent life" (Cited in Lane 1970). The psychology of Wynter's black characters who have adhered to the colonial Church under the leadership of Reverend Brooke sustains these Marxist arguments:

> *They (the blacks) had been a flock without a shepherd, destitute and despised by everyone, even by themselves. They filled the church pews, Sunday after Sunday, dozed their way through or listened to his (the Reverend's) sermons uncomprehendingly, and sang the hymns with a*

> *passion that disturbed the parson. There was something atavistic about their singing, as though they were shouting to recall lost gods from the primeval forests of Africa. And at times their singing stirred up secret urges in the Reverend's own heart which had been slumbering through centuries of civilization (The Hills of Hebron, p. 132).*

So, these black Church goers unconsciously sing out their misery without any attempt to change their situation.

Still from the Marxist view point, religion is a means of social control:

> *Religion does not simply cushion the effects of oppression, it is also an instrument of that oppression. It acts as a mechanism of social control, maintaining the existing system of exploitation and reinforcing class relationships. Put simply, it keeps people in their place. By making unsatisfactory lives bearable, religion tends to discourage people from attempting to change their situation. By offering an illusion of hope in a hopeless situation, it prevents thoughts of overthrowing the system (Haralambos and Holborn 2008:400).*

During colonialism, education was in the hands of the Church. And the Church was under the control of the colonialist machinery. As such, the essence of the education it (the Church) gave the colonised was to fit the aim and objectives of the capitalist imperialists. In fact, this education was meant to control the character and spirit of the colonised so that the latter would not give way to revolutionary claims:

> *It was the duty of the Church to train an educated elite whose influence could be invaluable in maintaining law and order among the less fortunate (the blacks) (The Hills of Hebron, p.209).*

So, within the Marxist canon, it can be argued that, it was for the sake of European capitalist imperialism that missionary schools were established in the colonies. Thus, the Synod votes the necessary funds to Reverend Brooke to start a school for the education of the natives for the fear that "they would be seduced at any moment by impostors…" (*The Hills of Hebron, p.208)*. In his capacity of an agent of colonialism, the Reverend psychologically works the minds of the colonised blacks so as to divert their attention from their miserable reality and have them submit to the desires of the colonialists. In fact:

> *He (Reverend Brooke) saw himself as a teacher with children, and preached to them as such, and he could see through their small deceptions, their cunning ruses. They came to accept him as the earthly symbol of God, respected and even loved him (The Hills of Hebron, pp. 208-209).*

In this sense, the Church never said anything against the colonial excesses in order to alleviate the misery of the exploited blacks. It rather "legitimize colonial authority, spiritually …" (Ngugi 1972:120). It even preached that God would not be pleased if the exploited rose against their exploiters. So, it was a sin for the workers to go on strike to compel their

exploiters to better their miserable conditions. It was similar situations that led Marx (1983:115) to argue that religion was designed to distract people from the realities of their miserable lives, to stop the working classes from rising up against the injustices of the world indoctrinating them into obeying authority with God as the ultimate authority figure and by promising a better life after death, so that the worker would not rock the boat in this life. It is in this spirit that Bellow denounces the Church:

> *In your churches they will deceive you, will tell you it is wrong to strike, will tell you that God won't like it, that it's a sin (The Hills of Hebron, p.228).*

This is contradictory, in the sense that Jesus Christ, the only example a faithful Christian should pattern on, had always championed the cause of the enslaved Jewish (equivalent to the enslaved, colonised and exploited black race) against the exploiters of the latter, the Pharisees and the Roman colonialists (both equivalent to the European capitalist imperialists). The implication here is that the colonial Church was not Christian in essence, it was rather anti-Christ, for it preached and acted against the teachings of Christ.

It was the anti-Christ character of the white imperialist and the colonial Church that unleashed "malnutrition, disease, ignorance and

poverty*" (The Hills of Hebron, p.148)* on the black race that made Marxist inclined black people like Bellow reject the concept of God.

> *... for thousands of years you worshiped gods, all kinds of them-stone ones wooden ones brass ones, the sun thunder and lightning, the wind, the Christian God who enslaved you, His Son who brought death and set it up like a graven idol for you to worship. And you worshiped. And hungered. And died. Saw your daughter become whores, your sons sold into slavery, lose substance of their manhood. All that is finished and done! (The Hills of Hebron, p.228)*
>
> .

The "Bellows" do not only reject the concept of God they were presented with by the white capitalist imperialists, but they also condemn the African gods whom they (the Bellows) feel are useless, for they failed to protect them against "the imperialist god" that was behind their enslavement.

However, despite colonialist distortion of the pre-colonial African history and image, black Caribbean have argued that life in pre-colonial Africa was better than the Christian oriented life that has been imposed on them in the Caribbean:

> *It is the conventional idea that the black men brought to the West Indies as slaves came from a life wholly savage and barbarous; through which there ran not a single vein of coherent organization; a life unredeemed by a single spark of nobility and unsustained by aught or organized government, law or order. The truth however, is that in some cases these men and women came from tribes which maintained a system and code of*

> *unwritten law that embodied for the tribe at least, more thoroughly and efficiently than Christianity has yet succeeded in doing for the whole race in the West Indies, a great number of those moral obligations that are elemental and are vital to the wellbeing of a people (Redcam 1909:45).*

So, blaming Christianity (as it was interpreted by the white colonialists and applied on blacks) and holding it responsible for their miserable condition, black Caribbean set out to decolonise their minds by reinterpreting the symbology of this religion to fit their purpose. What the black Caribbean did is that they did not categorically reject Christianity or religion in general, as Vulgar Marxists do; they rather resorted to the functionalist perspective of religion. That is, they conceived religion in terms of "society's needs" and "the contribution religion makes to meeting those needs" *(Haralambos and Holborn 2008:396).*

In specific terms, in the imperialist symbology, while whiteness was said to be on the side of God, blackness was:

> *equated with everything evil, base, everything that was the negation of light, of beauty. Black was for the night and for darkness, the color of the devil and of despair (The Hills of Hebron, p.253).*

For their spiritual redemption, black Caribbean have challenged this dual symbolism by arguing that:

> *If the white man has the image of a white God, let him worship his God as he desires. If the yellow*

> *man's God is of his race let him worship his God as he sees fit.*
> *We Negroes, have found a new ideal, whilst our God has no color, yet it is human to see everything, through one's own spectacles, and since the white people have seem their God through white spectacles, we have only now started out (late though it be) to see our God through our own spectacles (Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, p.34).*

This implies that religion is one's opinion and belief in some ethical truth and therefore ideological. And since the ethical truth for the oppressors is not the truth through which black people will meet their fulfilment, it follows that the black race has to look for its ethical truth somewhere else. Hence, Moses Barton's claim to be the messenger of a black god who would be on the side of the black race forever so that:

> *…black men would be no longer strangers to their God. His image would now reflect theirs and they would see themselves without self-doubt, self-hatred, self-mokery (The Hill of Hebron, p.206).*

Conceptualising that God is black like themselves, black Caribbean have departed from what they had been taught by white missionaries, that their reward is in heaven, and this after death; and have advocated for a happy life on earth. Thus, Moses Barton:

> *the prophet no longer preached about a kingdom in heaven but of one of earth where they would all be landowners, eat suckling pigs roasted with yams (The Hills of Hebron, p.152).*

For the achievement of this heaven on earth, the blacks have argued that there is need to break up with alien rule or government. It is within this canon that Moses moves his followers, the "New Believers*"* to Hebron, their "Promised Land*"*, where they hope to be free of poverty and despair, free of the bitter burden of colonial domination, and free of a Christianity that revolves around a "white god".

2.4 CONCLUSION

In its depth and variety of representations, Wynter's *The Hills of Hebron* provides a deeper understanding of racial, economic and cultural conflicts within a multiracial society. "*The Hills of Hebron* is an overloaded work by a West Indian intellectual anxious to touch upon as many themes as possible" (Ramchand 1983:41). But, it is in its exploration of black social condition and religious awareness in a colonial setting surprised by change that the novel proves to be the work of a powerful intellect.

The conflict is geared by the desire of the black community to be free of the bitter burden of colonial domination, and to be free of a Christianity that revolves around a "white god". Wynter has therefore given race a fundamental epistemological priority in her novel.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE SEARCH FOR ROOTS

3.0 PREAMBLE

This chapter examines black West Indians' longing for Africa in John Edgar Colwell Hearne's *Land of the Living* (1961). It evaluates Hearne's handling of the social malaise of the blacks and how they have hoped to escape from their miserable reality. Like Wynter, Hearne fines that the character of black West Indians is a reaction to their bitter experiences of slavery, colonialism and exploitation; and their inability to feel at home in the Caribbean. Hearne's characters thus act and are located within the racial tension and conflict generated by European capitalism and the central role of the dominated blacks for their liberation. Through the characters of Marcus Heneky, and Sheba's Sons, Hearne explores the nature of the relationship between the dominant white race and the dominated black race in the Caribbean and the Rastafarian resolution of the conflict.

3.1 AUTHOR'S BACKGROUND

John Edgar Colwell Hearne was born on the 4th February, 1920, in Montreal (Canada) and died on the 12th December, 1994, in Stony Hill (Jamaica). He was a white Jamaican novelist, journalist, and teacher (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2010).

Hearne's first published work was the novel *Voices Under the Window*, issued in 1955. Set in Jamaica in the late 1940s or early 1950s, it uses the framing device of a progressive politician's injury and death in a riot to narrate the story of a man who, born into racial and economic privilege, decides to cast his lot with the underprivileged (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2010).

Hearne followed this with four novels written between 1956 and 1961. *The Faces of Love*, *Stranger at the Gate*, *The Autumn Equinox*, and *Land of the Living*, all set in the imaginary island of Cayuna which is a fictionalised Jamaica and which refers to issues relating to Jamaican life at the time such as the beginning of the bauxite industry and Rastafarian movement, or to events in nearby territories such as the Cuban Revolution. He also wrote a number of shot stories, one of which, "At the Stalling" set in Guyana as included in the *Independence Anthology of Jamaican Literature* (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2010).

Hearne then turned to the academy and journalism writing a regular column for the *Gleaner* newspaper, first under the pseudonym "Jay Monroe", and later under his own name and administering the creative Arts Centre (now the Sir Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts) at the University of the West Indies (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2010).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s he collaborated with planter and journalist Morris Cargill on a series of three thrillers *Fever Grass*, *The Candywine Development*, and *Checkerboard Caper*–involving an imaginary Jamaican secret service. These were written under the pseudonym "John Morris" (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2010).

In 1985 he published his last novel, *The Sure Salvation*, set on a slave ship crossing the Atlantic in the mid-nineteenth century. The voyage ends in the imaginary British South American colony of Abari, also mentioned in *The Checkerboard Caper*.

3.2 LONGING FOR AFRICA

The Caribbean society is a product of capitalist imperialism. The immediate consequence of this fact is a competition between the exploiters and the exploited, over wealth. It is within this dialectical materialism that John Hearne's *Land of The Living* should first be seen. As Hearne posits through his narrator, Doctor Mahler that, in the Caribbean:

> *There is no established trust fund from which all the heirs are allotted, impartially, their respective incomes. Every one is engaged in an immediate competition for a rightful inheritance… (Land of the Living, p. 89).*

The competition or rather conflict has essentially opposed the dominant imperialist whites, and the subjugated and exploited blacks.

Therefore, the conflict is also racial in nature. A black character in *Land of the Living* expresses the racial nature of the conflict in these terms:

> *...I know say how de white man want to eat up de children of Africa an' hold dem in bondage…(Land of the Living, p. 49).*

In specific terms, black Caribbean had been exploited to the core during slavery and colonialism by the whites. This situation gave black West Indians an acute sense of alienation and exile. This feeling made them search for their roots. Thus, the black Caribbean involvement with Africa, their ancestral homeland, a return to which they thought was necessary for their survival. This feeling led some West Indian writers such as Denis Williams and O.R. Dothorne who are respectively the authors of *Other Leopards* and *The Scholar Man*, to visit Africa or live in it for some time, and "set their novels in a physical Africa. The main theme in such novels is a search for roots…" (Ngugi 1972: 82). Therefore, the theme of the search for roots is a very important theme in West Indian literature.

V.S. Naipaul in Ngugi (1972:82-83) posits that "the West Indian embarrassment takes the form of derisive laughter". In reply, George Lamming writes that "it is precisely because Africa has not been forgotten" (Ngugi 1972:83). As a result, Ngugi argues that despite the years of lies and distortion about Africa, the African consciousness has still formed itself and

remained important in West Indian awareness, and some black West Indians have nursed the desire to come back to Africa, their original homeland, which they viewed as necessary for their survival (Ngugi 1972:83).

Since literature cannot be divorced from the history and lives of the people it is about, West Indian writers, especially novelists have captured the black Caribbean longing for Africa in their works. Thus, Africanus, a slave character in Orlando Patterson's *Die the Long Day* (1972:145) states that "to us who live death is the most important thing we have… death is a return to the homeland". So, the desire to return to Africa started during slavery. In fact, during slavery, a large number of the Africans who were taken to the Caribbean as slaves committed suicide as a result of "their intractability and stubborn refusal to accept their status as slaves…", and for their "belief in a return to Guinea after death", Guinea standing for the whole of Africa (Patterson1967:264-265). This belief can be understood within the African traditional belief system wherein there is a link between the living, the dead, and the unborn. Within this context, after death, the souls of the helpless slaves in an alien land (the Caribbean) would join the souls of their ancestors which are "peacefully resting" in Africa. So, initially, the return to Africa was spiritual.

But with the advent of pan-African leaders who wanted to improve the status of their fellow black men, especially Marcus Garvey who advocated for a physical return to Africa, many black Caribbean have ever since coupled the spiritual return to Africa with the desire for a physical return to their original homeland. It is within this context that this study intends to analyse Hearne's *Land of the Living*, by discussing the myth of Haile Selassie and the "Sons of Sheba".

The unchallengeable adherents of the "Back-to-Africa" movement are the " Sons of Sheba" popularly know as the "Rastafarians", in whose lives the Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie occupies a central, as well as a sacred position. Consequently, the following part of this chapter is going to fall into two sections, namely the myth of Haile Selassie and the Sons of Sheba.

3.2.1 THE MYTH OF HAILE SELASSIE

Haile Selassie I's direct male line originated from the Tigray people (http//royalark.net/Ethiopia /shoa3.htm), but he also had Oromo, Amhara, and Gurage roots (Mockler 2003:387). He was born on the 23rd July, 1892 in the village of Ejersa Goro, in the Harar province of Ethiopia. His mother was Woizero Yeshimebet Ali Abajifar, daughter of the renowned Oromo ruler of Wollo province Dejazmach Ali Abajifar. Haile Selassie's father was Ras Makonnen Woldemikael Gudessa, the governor of Harar. Ras Makonnen

served as a general in the first Italo- Ethiopian war, playing a key role at the Battle of Adwa whereby the Ethiopian army defeated the Italians in 1896 (de Moor and Wesseling 1989: 189). He inherited his imperial blood through his paternal grandmother, Princess Tenagnework Sahle Selassie, who was an aunt of Emperor Menelik II, and as such asserted direct descent from Makeda, the Queen of Sheba, and King Solomon of ancient Israel (Shinn and Ofcansky 2004:265). In fact, the old Ethiopian legend of the Kebra Negast tells the story of the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon's mighty Kingdom to learn the secrets of being a great leader. While in his kingdom the Queen of Sheba bore Solomon a son, to whom Solomon gave a jeweled ring to prove his descent from the seed of David. The Queen of Sheba returned to her land in, then southern Ethiopia, what is today Somalia, with her son to continue to rule the land (Gorham 1966:9). Between two hundred and three hundred kings are believed to have ruled between the time of Solomon and Haile Selassie, the last emperor of Ethiopia.

Haile Selassie was born Lij Tafari Makonnen. "Lij" is an Amharic word which translates literally to "child", and serves to indicate that a youth is of noble blood. He would later become Ras Tafari Makonnen; "Ras" translates literally to "head' (Murrell, Spencer and McFarlane 1998:172-173) and is the equivalent of "duke" (Selassie 1999:xiii), though it is often

rendered in translation as "prince". In 1928, he was elevated to Negus, "King".

Upon his ascension to Emperor in 1930, he took the name Haile Selassie, meaning "Power of the Trinity" (Murrell, Spencer and McFarlane 1998:159). Haile Selassie's full title in office was "His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassies I, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and Elect of God". This title reflects Ethiopian dynastic traditions, which hold that all monarchs must trace their lineage back to Menelik I, who in the Ethiopian tradition was the offspring of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (Ghai 2000:176).

When Ras Tafari Makonnen took the imperial throne in 1930 as Haile Selassie I, a new movement was born in Jamaica: "Rastafarianism". Rastafarianism was given impetus by Marcus Garvey. In fact, in the 1910s when the conditions of the blacks the world over were miserable, Garvey had argued with Biblical references that:

> *As by the action of the world, as by the conduct of all the races and nations it is apparent that not one of them has the sense of justice, the sense of love, the sense of equity, the sense of charity, that would make men happy, and make God satisfied. It is apparent that it is left to the Negro to play such a part in human affairs – for when we look to the Anglo-Saxon we see him full of greed, avarice, no mercy, no love, no charity. We go from the white man to the yellow man, and*

> *we see the same unenviable characteristics in the Japanese. Therefore we must believe that the Psalmist had great hopes of this race of ours when he prophesied "Princes shall come out of Egypt and Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God" (Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, pp. 60-61).*

Considering the Psalmist words, Garvey proceeded to tell his black followers:

> *Look to Africa for the crowning of a Black King; he shall be the Redeemer (Barrett 1997:81).*

And here was Selassie who would prove to be one of Ethiopia's most noble leaders. As Cardillo (1998: 1) argues:

> *He pushed education for his people. He made a valiant effort to drag Ethiopia out of its stagnant state of unpaved roads, minimal schools, very little education and no say in international affairs. He looked and carried himself like a king.*

The people of Jamaica in 1930 were in a hopeless situation. They had been exploited from the first days of slavery on the island. There were minimal opportunities for improvement. With such Biblical references and a contrast to the leading, predominantly white governments of the world, it is not hard to believe that a people of such strong faith would accept this new emperor as their living savior. The Rastafarians were born out of desperation. They had nothing and were going no-where. Haile Selassie was a symbol to them that the black man could be strong, contrary to what they

saw in their own country. Ethiopia was a black nation that had been independent for thousands of years, despite its African neighbours (with the exception of Liberia). It had been ruled by black emperors who ruled black subjects. Haile Selassie was also believed to be descended from the line of David by Solomon. In addition to this, his official titles "King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and Elect of God", were perceived by Rastafarians as the confirmation of the return of the Messiah in the prophetic Book of Revelation (5:5) in the New Testament which reads: "King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and Root of David" (Wikipedia 2011). Hence, the Rastafarians' belief that Haile Selassie is Jesus incarnate.

In his pamphlet titled *Revelation of Jah Throne*, the Rastafarian Ras Carlisle A. Kelly gives a comprehensive survey of the sacred position of Haile Selassie in Rastafarianism. Kelly claims that the original Bible was written by and about black people, but was stolen and corrupted by white men. He also distinguishes between the "white Jeezas" and the "Black Jesus" and proceeds that the Pharisees (white men) persecuted and tried to arrest Jesus (Black man), and then claims that Emperor Haile Selassie is the fulfilment of the Biblical prophecies about "Jesus Second Birth" (J.V. Owens in Braithwaite 1975:102 - 103).

This belief was strengthened by the Emperor's visit to Jamaica on the 21st April, 1966. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2011) gives an account of this visit. According to Wikipedia, approximately one hundred thousand Rastafarians from all over Jamaica descended on Palisadoes Airport in Kingston, having heard that the man whom they considered to be their Messiah was coming to visit them. Spliffs and chalices were openly smoked, causing "a haze of ganja smoke" to drift through the air. Haile Selassie arrived at the airport but was unable to come down the mobile steps of the airplane, as the crowd rushed the tarmac. He then returned into the plane, disappearing for several more minutes. Finally, Jamaican authorities were obliged to request Ras Mortimer Planno, a well-known Rasta leader, to climb the steps, enter the plane, and negotiate the Emperor's descent. Planno re-emerged and announced to the crowd: "the Emperor has instructed me to tell you to be calm. Step back and let the Emperor land". From then on, as a result of Planno's actions, the Jamaican authorities were asked to ensure that Rastafarian representatives were present at all state functions attended by his Majesty, and Rastafarian elders also ensured that they obtained a private audience with the Emperor, where he reportedly told them that they should not emigrate to Ethiopia until they had first liberated the people of Jamaica. This dictum came to be known as "liberation before repatriation".

Still from the Wikipedia's account, Haile Selassie defied expectations of the Jamaican authorities, and never rebuked the Rastafarians for their belief in him as the returned Jesus. Instead, he presented the movement's faithful elders with gold medallions - the only recipients of such an honour on this visit.

Haile Selassie's contact with Jamaicans was canonised in multiple ways. In October,1969, Michael Manley visited the Emperor in Ethiopia, and was presented with the "Rod of Correction" or "Rod of Joshua" as a gift by the Emperor, which is thought to have helped him to win the 1972 election in Jamaica. On her part, Rita Marley, Bob Marley's wife converted to Rastafari faith after seeing Haile Selassie on his Jamaican trip. She claimed in interviews and in her book *No Woman, No Cry*, that she saw a stigmata print on the palm of Haile Selassie's hand as he waved at the crowd which resembled the markings on Christ's hands from being nailed to the cross. This claim was used as evidence for her and other Rastafarians to suggest that Haile Selassie I was indeed their Messiah (wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2011). Rita Marley was also influential in the conversion of Bob Marley, who then became internationally recongnised through Reggae music which has been the means of propagation and popularisation of Rastafarianism. Thus, in his posthumously released song "Iron Lion Zion",

Bob Marley refers to Haile Selassie by some of his names "Iron" and "Lion":

> *I am on the rock and then I check a stock*
> *I have to run like a fugitive to save the life I live*
> *I'm gonna be Iron like a Lion in Zion (repeat)*
> *Iron Lion Zion*
> *I'm on the run but I ain't got no gun*
> *See they want to be the star*
> *So they fighting tribal war*
> *And they saying Iron like a Lion in Zion*
> *Iron like a Lion in Zion*
> *Iron Lion Zion*
> *I'm on the rock, (running and you running)*
> *I take a stock, (running like a fugitive)*
> *I had to run like a fugitive just to save the life I live*
> *I'm gonna be Iron like a Lion in Zion (repeat)*
> *Iron Lion Zion, Iron Lion Zion, Iron Lion Zion*
> *Iron like a Lion in Zion, Iron like a Lion in Zion*
> *Iron like a Lion in Zion (*Thirdfield.com 1997-2002)

In fact, since the Emperor's visit to Jamaica, Rastafarians have been praising him in their songs and poems, as well as essays. An example of this is Ras Dizzy's pamphlet entitled *Rastafarians Society Watchman*, which contains a myriad collection of poems and essays. In one of the poems, Dizzy accounts for his kneeling in adoration before the person of Selassie during the Emperor's visit to Jamaica:

> *He never run I away nor ask that I not call him master. Instead at the end of my prayer the Lion of Judah lifted his hands high and spoke in Arabic. His own interpreter then spoke back in English and said the King said peace, goodwill, and power*

> *to the Righteous. Now anyone tell that the King said he is no God they are a big liar* (Cited by *J.V. Owens in Braithwaite 1975:103).*

On the 12th September, 1974, Haile Selassie was deposed in a military coup. He died on the 27th August, 1975. Ever since, it was not until the 5th November, 2000 that he was given an Imperial funeral by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Although such prominent Rastafarian figures as Rita Marley and others participated in the grand funeral, most Rastafari reject the event and refuse to accept the fact. There remains some debate within the Rastafari movement as to whether Haile Selassie actually died in 1975 (wikipedia 2011).

In fact, with his death came various forms of rationalisation from many Rastafarians. The responses concerning Selassie's death range from "his death was a fabrication" to "his death was inconsequential because Haile Selassie was merely a 'personification' of God" (Cashmore1979: 59-60). As the *Magical Blend(June/July,1994, p.76)* states, "When Selassie died in 1975, his divinity did not die with him. According to current belief, the Ras Tafari lives on through individual Rastafarians".

Perhaps, no direct connection exists, but there does seem to be correlation between the respect accorded Rastafarians in Jamaican society and the amount of literature written to interpret and explain them. Some may

have hoped that if people just closed their eyes and ignored the Rasta's, they would go away. Others may have considered them unworthy of in-depth study and so turned to more erudite endeavour. Yet the Rastas have not gone away, but have become more vigorous and more worthy of attention every passing year (J.V. Owens in Braithwaite 1975: 86). Leonard E. Barrett, as quoted by Branch (2000:1) states that with its beginnings in the Jamaican slums, Rastafarianism has spread throughout the world and currently has a membership of over 700,000. The Rastafarian movement has official branches in England, Canada, the Caribbean islands and America, and members in most of the "civilised" countries.

Since literature cannot be divorced from society, West Indian writers such as Orlando Patterson and Roger Mais have considered the Rastas in their novels respectively *The Children of Sisyphus* and *Brother man*. John Hearne falls into the line of these writers with his novel *Land of the Living* in which the Rastas are termed "Sons of Sheba" or "Sheba's Sons".

3.2.2 THE SONS OF SHEBA

Most of John Hearne's black characters in *Land of the Living* are Rastafarians whom the author labels "Sheba's Sons" or "Sons of Sheba". As the narrator and a character discuss the numerical importance of these Sheba's Sons.

> *"I didn't know you had any of Sheba's Sons down here"*
> *... "How many of them in the district?"*
> *"Oh God, Teach,"... "Too damn many..." (Land of the Living, p.54).*

The label "Sheba's Sons" instead of the popular name "Rastafarians" is of great significance and therefore should not be overlooked. In fact, the Rastafarians' personified god, the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie asserted direct descent from the Queen of Sheba (Shinn and Ofcansky 2004:265); and it is also believed that Sheba was located in Ethiopian, the Kingdom of Selassie (Ullendorff 1968:75). On this plane, the artist's labeling the Rastafarians "Sheba's Sons" becomes de factor and understandable.

A very important theme in West Indian literature is the theme of "exile". As Ngugi (1972:89) posits:

> *Most characters in West Indian fiction, even in novels that do not specially explore the African symbol, feel themselves estranged from their roots. They are haunted by a sense of unsettledness similar, in a way, to that of the Jews.*

In fact, there is something about the Jewish experience-the Biblical experience-which appeals to the West Indian novelist. The Biblical man has been a slave and an exile from home. In his pastoral rootless wandering in search of home, he believes he lives closer to God and contends with the unpredictable caprice of natural forces. He has been persecuted, and because

of his suffering he has attained a wisdom which gives him strength to await his deliverance and his return from exile. He lives by hope, hope so close to certainty that it informs the basis of his passive resistance, his active rebellion against captivity. The fact that the Biblical experience has appealed to the West Indian novelist is not for granted. It fits within the argument that literature is a representation of society. West Indian people have compared themselves to the Biblical Jews. Rastafarians believe that they "$^{1}/_{4}$ were the reincarnations of the ancient tribes of Israel who had been enslaved and kept in exile by their white oppressors, the agents of Babylon" (Cashmore 1979:129).

By analogy, these Rastafarians term the Caribbean and its oppressive machinery whose operators are the white people and their black allies "Babylon". Thus Marcus Heneky, the spiritual leader of Hearne's Sons of Sheba declares:"Babylon an' its forces reign in these hills*" (Land of the Living, p.120).*

Considering the exploitation and oppression that black people have undergone in the Caribbean, Sheba's Sons argue that the region is a place where "de white man want to eat up de children of Africa an' hold dem in bondage …" (*Land of the Living, p.49).* With this in mind, the Caribbean has become "a territory the heart cannot occupy" (*Land of the Living, p.110).*

In fact, Rastafarians believe that "the Africans in Diaspora are its exiled children and that their true and real home, where they can find salvation and fulfilment is Africa, no matter how they seem to 'thrive' in captivity" (Ojo 2000:39). To the Rastafarians, the return to Africa is necessary, for they believe it is a divine decree. As Marcus Heneky, the spiritual leader of Hearne's Sons of Sheba claims:

> *The Lord say his people, his own black and scattered people, will have no countenance until they take up their own burden again, in their own home… (Land of the Living, p.204).*

This belief is in line with Marcus Garvey's teachings which had shaped the Rastafarians' minds. In his approach to the problem of the Negro, Garvey had argued that the future of the Negro "Outside of Africa, spells ruins and disaster" because even his dependence "on the ballot", as W.E.B. Du Bois had advocated, and "his industrial progress" as Booker T. Washington had advocated "will be hopeless" (*Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, p. 39).* Hearne captures this frame of argument through Heneky who maintains that his people are not after freedom in an alien land:

> *Not freedom to imitate the white man like we do now. I mean deliverance from the past. That is what destiny is. That is why my race can't find our destiny. Because our past lie abandoned in Africa (Land of the Living, p. 159).*

In other words, Africa is the only source of salvation for the black people in Diaspora, and the major task is to decolonise the minds of the blacks, "as they had done all their lives anyway-that their souls had filled again, but into the white man's shape". That is why Heneky thinks that "he must devote himself to redeeming the misshapen souls of Africa's captive children…" (*Land of the Living p.158*). Heneky's position fits within the context of Negritudist revolutionary thoughts which were meant to discredit Western civilisation, and embrace and romanticise African way of life. As C.L.R James as quoted by Ngugi (1972:82) states:

> *Before they (the black Caribbean) could begin to see themselves as a free and independent people they had to clear from their minds the stigma that anything African was inherently inferior and degraded.*

In the specific case of Rastafarians, it is not just a matter of cherishing things African only. They have developed a "hatred for the White race"; a belief in "the complete superiority of the Black race"; and a "revenge on the whites for their wickedness" on the day black people in Diaspora return to their rightful home (Barrett 1977: 85). Thus, a Son of Sheba threatens a university team, essentially composed of white people on excursion, saying:

> *"Dese t'ings… Why you come here fe steal black man's living?*

...An'I know say how de white man want to eat up de children of Africa an' hold dem in bondage..."
He began to shake, and his shining, angry gaze grew dull and blind; his voice took on a throbbing, exalted note. "Dis land an' de whole eart' belong to de white man, an' de black is his slave. You come here fe' mek more plot againt we black.
But our day come. Our God will come... Black an' shinin' an' terrible... Africa's children will turn and rule..." he was swaying, now, in a series of abrupt convulsions, his voice hoarse ...He seemed to claw dazedly for words in the air. "....Africa will rule an' de children of Africa will be as princes over on dat day... Blood will flow for de blood of we, an' de white man will be broken... It is written in the book dat each colour will have its day of glory an' dat de black shall be de last an' for evermore...
All nation shall bow down to Africa an' to de Emperor of Ethiopia an' to his people..."
...When de day of wrath come an' de righteous Jehovah overt' rows de enemies of peace den your blood will flow wid his. Him can't save you on dat day. For on dat day de white man will be broken and all dose who betray de children of Africa" (Land of the Living, pp.49 - 51).
"I shoulda bust your head de way I bus' dat",
He pounded the end of his stick on the ground...
"I gwine remember your face," he said.
"When de day come an' de righteous word is given, I gwine remember your face". For a moment he seemed to fasten on the premise of these words with the oblivious concentration of an earthquake survivor clutching to some worthless object he has salvaged. "De day", he continued, "when Israel's children of Africa return to their own land". His eyes were lusterless now, and his head wavered; he reached at the air before him with a vague searching gesture as if a flung line had fallen short of his fingers...

> *"Remember what I tell you," he repeated with that driven and bewildered urgency. "All of you trouble black people too much an' deny us our Kingdom… Wait! Wait!" (Land of the Living, pp. 55-56).*

The fact that Rastafarians do not expect anything good outside Africa where they feel estranged and exiled; and their belief in an ultimate return to Africa, have led them to "the negation, persecution, and humiliation of the government and legal bodies of Jamaica" (Barrett 1977:85), which is the cradle of Rastafarianism. It is within this canon that Heneky campaigns against politicians who come to seek people's votes. Heneky argues that, regardless of their origins, those politicians are all liars and will only serve the white imperialist purpose:

> *…The Lord say his people, his own black and scattered people, will have no countenance until they take up their own burden again, in their own home…*
> *Barnet, the black man come down, an' Porlock, the brown man, come down, an' they is both one an' the same thing… What do they offer, both? Work an' progress! But I say the work they offer is toil in captivity, an' the progress is the strengthening of Babylon's chains an' walls…Ask them for the money your sweat an' labour have earned, which could return we to Africa. No! Do not ask. Demand! (Land of the Living, pp.204 - 205)*

In the Rastafarian symbology, "the devil is actually the "god" of the White man" (Barrett 1977:108); and Emperor Haile Selassie is "the Supreme Being and only ruler of Black people", whom the Rastafarians believe have

"the complete superiority" over the white race (Barrett 1977:85). Thus, a Son of Sheba holds the following rhetoric:

> *All nations shall bow down to Africa an' to de Emperor of Ethiopia an' to his people… (Land of the Living, pp.50-51).*

The enemies of peace here is the "white god" along with the entire white race whom the Sons of Sheba believe will ultimately be overthrown, "de day" when they, "Israel's children of Africa", as they call themselves by analogy to the Biblical Israelites "return to deir own land" (*Land of the Living, p. 56).*

Another commonly held belief among the Rastafarians is their emphasis on smoking marijuana or ganga. John Hearne captures this through Doctor Mahler who is being interrogated by the police for dealing with Heneky:

> *Everybody knows that most of Sheba's Sons and the rest of them smoke ganga, the way you and I smoke tobacco (Land of the Living, p. 258).*

Among Rastafarians, "…ganga or marijuana is considered to be the "holy herb" mentioned in the Bible and its smoking is a holy sacrament to many" (*Magical Blend, June/July, 1994, p.76).* As Barrett (1977:254-255) explains: through the use of ganga, the Rastafarian reaches an altered state of consciousness. In this altered state, "the revelation that Haile Selassie is

God and that Ethiopia is the home of the Black" is realised. "The herb is the key to new understanding of the self, the universe, and God. It is the vehicle to cosmic consciousness". The Caribbean are fully aware of this implication behind the use of ganga by the Rastafarians. That is why Hearne's other characters, the members of the university team on excursion hint to the fact that the Son of Sheba threatening them and glorifying Haile Selassie, Africa and giving the upper hand to the black race, has taken ganga. As the narrator who is himself part of the team tells:

> *He (the Son of Sheba) was swaying, now in a series of abrupt convulsions, his voice hoarse. Beside me, Patrick Henry whistled in his teeth and said, "Ganga! And I nodded without taking my eyes from the somber, possessed figure before us (the Son of Sheba) (Land of the Living, p. 49).*

In many religions of the world, it is common with the believers to express their doctrines in painting. So, Rastafarians also express their ideological claims through painting. Hearne captures this state of affairs through his narrator Stefan Mahler who describes the abode of the Sons of Sheba which he has visited:

> *It was much like the living-room of any other small settler's house I had visited since coming to Cayuna: rigorously cluttered with furniture, gleaming as much with patient accumulation as with polish. But on the walls, in this case, instead of the customary Hanoverian images and meaningless landscapes from an unrelated climate,*

> *there was a large photograph of the Ethiopian Emperor, with two green, yellow and red flags above the flame, their sticks crossed, the cloth spread flat and a loudly coloured relief map of Africa on which Addis Ababa was symbolized by a huge, gilt Star of David. On the third wall, facing this was a framed text in twelve point Baskerville: For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.*
> *... On the wall above the sideboard was another photograph of the Ethiopian Emperor riding into his capital on a white horse (Land of the Living, pp. 106-107).*

These graffiti are highly symbolical and therefore require interpretation. To the Sons of Sheba, the Ethiopian Emperor is "God" in whose name the black race will defeat the white race, on whom vengeance will be reckoned for their wickedness onto the black race. The colours of the flag (green, yellow and red) signify three different things so dear to the Rastafarians. While the green represents the West Indies or "Babylon' as they call it, which they seek to destroy, because to them, it is a prison house in which they are held into hostage. Thus, the flame on which the flags are mounted represents the fall of Babylon. The yellow symbolises the wealth of Ethiopia (and Africa in general), the homeland of the Emperor and therefore, their holy land. The red stands for the blood of those who died for the cause of the black race. The gilt Star of David, with reference to the Biblical story that tells about the victory of David over Goalie, symbolises the victory of

the black race over the white race, which the Sons of Sheba anticipate. The photograph of the Emperor riding into his capital Addis Ababa symbolises the triumphant return of the black people in Diaspora to Africa which is the ultimate truth for the Rastafarians.

3. 3 CONCLUSION

In its depth and representation, Hearne's *Land of the Living* provides an understanding of the racial conflict within a multiracial and capitalist society. It demonstrates the work of a powerful intellect in its exploration of the search for roots in a society wherein the colour of a person's skin has determined his social position.

The conflict opposes the white race and the black race. It is informed by the whites' capitalist imperialism which has denied blacks the conditions for fulfilment. It is in this sense that Hearne's novel explores the Rastafarian resolution of the conflict. The resolution is the rejection and negation of the values and ethics of the whites, and the campaign for a return to African which, according to them, is the only home for the blacks.

However, Hearne seems to criticise this Rastafarian resolution, for, within this racial conflict, he creates black characters who are ready to collaborate with their white counterparts, and white characters who do not feel happy in the Caribbean. Thus, Hearne's work displays a world of

universal malaise which affects every race and therefore needs the collaboration of all the races in the interest of each.

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CHAPTER FOUR

ANDREW SALKEY'S EVALUATION OF THE POST –COLONIAL CARIBBEAN SOCIETY

4.0 PREAMBLE

This chapter explores Andrew Salkey's *Joey Tyson (1974)*, investigating the themes of neo-colonialism, oppression and protest, in post-colonial West Indies. The novel is set in post-colonial Jamaica which has turned out to be another nightmare for the poor black masses. The argument is that, the features of colonialism are still persisting, in that, although the new leaders are West Indians themselves, the latter have turned out to be useless and even harmful to their fellow black people, for these leaders care not about the interests of the people and serve their own purpose and that of the former colonial masters who now remote their ex-colonies from afar. It is also argued that the fulfilment of these unpatriotic goals is carried out along with oppression; and that, it is this state of affairs that has led the people to aspire and act for change.

4.1 AUTHOR'S BACKGROUND

Andrew Salkey whose full name is Felix Andrew Alexander Salkey was born on the 30th January, 1928, in Colon (Panama) and died on the 28th

April, 1995, in Amherst, Massachusetts, United States of America (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2010).

Salkey was a Caribbean author, anthologist, and editor whose work reflects a commitment to the Caribbean culture and the Jamaica culture in particular.

Raised in Jamaica, Salkey attended the University of London and became part of the London community of emerging West Indian writers. He became a freelance writer and journalist and contributed to the British Broadcasting Corporation as a radio interviewer, critic, and author of radio plays and features. From 1976 he was a professor of writing at Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2010).

His first novel, *A Quality of Violence* (1959), is set in a remote area of Jamaica about 1900, when a prolonged drought leads Christians to return toward the older, "darker" ways of Voodoo and Obeah. Like many of his other books, it is narrated in a distinctive Jamaican patois that is rich with folk-speech rhythms. After a second novel, *Escape to an Autumn Pavement* (1960), Salkey spent several years writing short stories for children. In his popular short-story collection *Anancy's Score* (1973) features the trickster Anancy, an engaging character in traditional Caribbean culture to whom Salkey returned in the Story collection *Anancy, Traveller* (1992). In addition

to his later novels and several volumes of poetry, Salkey edited anthologies of Jamaican and Caribbean short stories and folktales (wikipedia, the free encyclopedia 2010).

Despite his versatility and plurality, this chapter is concerned with his novel *Joey Tyson* (1974) only, which takes its source in the manifestations of the "Black Power" movement in the West Indies. In fact, as Rhonda Cobham in King (1979:27) observes, it is the first major confrontation which the movement produced in Jamaica in 1968 when the deportation of the radical Guyanese lecture, Dr. Walter Rodney, sparked off a massive student demonstration that was quickly taken over by the general public and ended in violent clashes between the people and the police, that constitutes the point of departure in this novel.

4.2 NEO-COLONIALISM

Clive Thomas in the Caribbean journal, *Transition* (1982) provides and explains the context in which neo-colonialism developed in twentieth century Caribbean:

> *For much of this century, not only did the colonial powers embrace the conception that development in the Caribbean was to be measured by the rate of increase per capita national product, but they also believed that even such a narrowly conceived notion of development was impossible in the context of the size and geographical environment*

> *of the region; and of the cultural and racial characteristics of the people who inhabited it. This was so, despite the attraction to the wealth of these countries, on which the first wave of conquest and colonisation was based. Racial theories, as well as geographically determinist views of development were used to explain why poverty and unemployment would endure and why capitalism would not, indeed could not develop in the Caribbean, as it did in Europe and North America (Transition, pp.4-5).*

As such, industrial development of any real magnitude was ruled out. This position conformed to the colonial view that in the long run, the production structures of these countries could not be transformed. Because, the aim of these polices of the colonial powers was to encourage the domestic reproduction of the classic colonial division of labour, according to which blacks are nothing more than labourers and to perpetuate the material basis for the continued colonial domination of these countries, they were in direct opposition to the interest of the broad mass of the peoples of the region who are essentially blacks.

Arising out of this, certain policies of economic management were introduced and promoted by the colonial state. Clive Thomas posits that among these policies were "population control", "infrastructural production", and "foreign capital inflows" (*Transition, p.5*). But, it seems, it

is foreign capital inflows that has profoundly served the colonial purpose. According to Clive Thomas:

> *Consistent with the colonial view of the "developmental capacity" of the region and its peoples, was the insistence that whatever development was possible depended on the continued inflow of foreign finance skills and technology, whether on a private, state or international agency basis, General efforts were made to encourage this through maintaining the effective unification of the various markets of the region with that of the respective metropolitan powers. Thus currency and banking arrangements in the English-speaking Caribbean meant the effective unification of individual capital markets of the region with that of the United Kingdom. This unification was exclusively of a vertical type, and not horizontal, i.e. of involving the progressive integration of the territories of the region into a single group (Transition, pp.5-6).*

Efforts to improve the lot of the peasantry were politically motivated by the need to contain the mass movement for independence which was being fuelled by the acute land shortage which the peasants faced and the consequent increase in destitution, unemployment and large scale migration to the cities. The resultant efforts were however far from adequate. Peasant discontent was intensified by the privileged status of plantation agriculture which the colonial authorities were determined to maintain. Migration to the cities not only resulted in the creation of massive, open unemployment, but turned the urban centres into seething cauldrons of discontent. Riots,

insurrections, and other such populist out-burst such as the "Black Power" movement (which will be discussed later) became more and more a part of the agitation for national independence. The colonial policy of national subjugation favoured almost exclusively the backward plantocracy and the colonial office officials who managed the colonial state machinery. The basis for an alliance of all the classes and strata around the agitation for national independence was strengthened by the direction which colonial economic policy had taken. On this matter, Clive Thomas concludes that:

> *In the last analysis this policy sought to perpetuate in the context of a rapidly changing imperialist world system, the relatively primitive conditions of the colonial form of exploitation (Transition, p.6).*

In this respect, at the time the colonial division of labour was being transformed as imperialism adjusted to the world wide successes of the anti-colonial and national liberation struggles, the ruling class response in the Caribbean region has to be placed in the larger context of the world wide transformation of imperialism from colonial forms of rule and economic relations to neo-colonial forms which are not dependent on direct colonial possessions. In like manner, the challenge to foreign ownership which emerged and was shrouded under the umbrella of nationalisation and indigenous socialism was part of the world wide struggles of the national bourgeoisies in the peripheral capitalist formations to assert their role in the

international structure of capital. Again, this was accommodated by imperialism, as it relinquished direct ownership of branch plants and replaced it by the indirect mechanism of control via technology, credit, marketing and management. Since literature is nothing but a representation of society, this situation is concerned about in Salkey's *Joey Tyson*. Thus, a university lecturer complains:

> *The present stranglehold of foreign control of the economy is clearly disastrous. Did you know, for instance that the mining industry, and here I mean bauxite and alumina, is one hundred per cent foreign owned; that our public utilities are seventy-five per cent foreign owned; that strategic manufactures rubber steel, fertilizers and things like that the same percentage; that financial institutions, sixty-four per cent; transportation, the same; communication and storage, fifty-eight per cent; tourism, fifty-seven; and as for sugar manufacturing, well up to 1966, the figure was seventy per cent?, …'take the way the land is carved up. We've got about two and three quarter million acres of land in all. About a million are beyond hope of cultivation. That leaves one- and-three quarter million acres, of which one million are owned by the bauxite companies. That's the state of affairs. And what about our so-called industrialization? Eighty-three factories are owned by foreign and locals. And that's that where our local, national hold on industrialization is concerned (Joey Tyson, pp. 39-40).*

This state of affairs is common to almost all the post-independence Caribbean countries. This has been made possible by the post-independence

leaders who care not about the common people. A female student makes the point thus:

> *They're selling out the island cheap, everyday without any of us knowing what's what. They get their fat cut and to hell with the rest of us and the resources of the country. They do it, all the time. The figures speak for themselves as clear as day. Eighty-three cents out of every dollar earned from the bauxite industry go to Canada, while seventeen cents to Jamaica, and thinking of tourism, now, and the whole Area, taking in Trinidad, Barbados, Jamaica and the smaller islands, ninety-three cents out of every dollar go to Canada while seventy cents go to the Caribbean. D' you see what that means? For Canada to get that sort of benefit in the two major industries we have got it mean a few palms were well greased early O'clock. Wholesale robbery with government consent (Joey Tyson, p.83).*

The argument that the post-colonial leaders serve foreign interests is seen in the attitude of the Prime Minister as he is informed about the attack on the foreign companies by the general public that demonstrates against the prevailing state of affairs:

> *The Prime Minister was a singularly unhappy man, as his permanent secretary brought him news of the fact that the windows and doors of an American life insurance company office had been smashed and the building looted by a roving group of demonstrators (Joey Tyson, p.50).*

The unhappiness of the Prime Minister is understandable within the capitalist economic base system which is all about private property and

owning things and as a result, the superstructure must make provisions to protect property which is more valuable than the man who labours for the production of the property. The unhappiness of the Prime Minister therefore comes as a result of his realisation of failure in the maintenance of the capitalist system, the product and agent of which he is.

In a *New Left Review (July – August, 1972)*, Alavi explains the relationship and corporation between the post-colonial leaders and the former colonial masters by means of the concept of "Relative Autonomy". The concept of relative autonomy was first proposed by Althusser and later subjected to intense investigation by Poulantzas. Poulantzas (1975: 255-256) argues that the capitalist state apparatus must be seen as a complex whole whose main defining characteristics are "unity proper" to institutionalised political power, as well as a "specific internal cohesion". Thus, he warns against a functionalist "parcellization" of the institutionalised power of the state, as well as a pluralist conception of power centres of a politico-economic kind. Additionally, Poulantzas warns against reducing the relative autonomy of the state to a direct relationship between the structures of the state and the relations of production. He speaks of "…the state's relation to the field of the class struggle, in particular its relative autonomy vis-à-vis the

classes and fractions of the power bloc, and by extension vis-à-vis its allies and supports", (Poulantzas 1975: 255-256).

But, as Thomas W. Gittens, observes: "the literature incorporating this concept of relative autonomy as produced by writers on post-colonial peripheral state is at best confusing and not often true to the above formulations" *(Transition, pp. 25-26).*

However, Alavi's incorporation of the concept fits into the plot of Andrew Salkey's novel *Joey Tyson.* Alavi, in attempting to analyse the distribution of power within the neo-colonialist state argues that it is neither subordinate to the interests of the indigenous bourgeoisie nor is it also subservient to the interests of the neo-colonial bourgeoisie. Thus, it is not the instrument of single class. His conclusion stemming from this is worth quoting at length:

> *It is relatively autonomous and it mediates between the competing interests of the three propertied class, namely, the metropolitan bourgeoisies, the indigenous bourgeoisie and the landed classes while at the same time acting on behalf of them all to preserve the social order in which their interests are imbedded, namely the institution of private property and the capitalist mode as the dominant mode of production* (*New Left Review, July-August, 1972, p. 62).*

In other words, the post-colonial state is relatively autonomous precisely because of the mediatory role it must play between the three fractions of

capital identified above. It is in line with this that, in Salkey's *Joey Tyson*, the government uses the state security apparatus against the demonstrators who constitute a threat and danger to the properties and companies which are essentially owned by the neo-colonialist powers:

> *Armed with pistols, rifles, tear gas canisters and bombs a detachment of police, standing three-deep, had confronted the marchers. They blocked the progress of the march, and waited Joey Tyson, the march, and waited (Joey Tyson, p.28).*

Therefore, it is the desire to serve the neo-colonialist forces and the local bourgeoisie that accounts for the oppression of the masses whose interests are not actually protected by the post-colonial state leaders.

4.3 OPPRESSION

There is minimal agreement among scholars on the general character and role of the state. The areas of agreement are, paradoxically enough, summarised by Engels (1977) whose work on the origin of the state must be seen as the classic of the classical Marxist statements. His characterisation is worth quoting at length:

> *Because the state arose from the need to hold antagonisms in check, but because it arose at the same time, in the midst of conflict of these classes, it is as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, whereby, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new*

> *means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class…*
> *By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power as ostensible mediator, acquires for the moment, a certain degree of independence… (Engels1977:587-588).*

Thus, Engels sees the state simultaneously as the product of class antagonisms and the means of class domination of one class by another. He also envisages situations in which competing class forces are so evenly balanced that no specific class interest dominates for long and so the state assumes an "independent" role now acting in the interests of either of the contending class forces.

Alavi, in *New Left Review (1972: 61)* argues that the imposition of colonial rule by the metropolitan bourgeoisie involved two specific but related acts. It firstly meant, the carrying out of the tasks of the bourgeois revolution in the colony; and secondly, the creation of a state apparatus to exercise dominion over all the indigenous social classes. Thus, the "superstructure" in the colony is therefore "over-developed" in relation to the "structure" in the colony, for its basis lies in the metropolitan structure itself from which it is later separated at the time of independence. Continuing his argument, he further posits that the colonial state is equipped with "a powerful bureaucratic-military apparatus and mechanisms of

government which enable it through its routine operations to subordinate the native social classes". Concluding this line of reasoning, Alavi argues that the post-colonial society inherited this over-developed state apparatus which allows those at the top of the hierarchy of the bureaucratic military apparatus of the state to "…maintain and even extend their dominant power in society*…" (New Left, Review,1972, p.61).*

Alavi's argument fits suit the situation that has prevailed in the post-colonial states of the Caribbean. In specific terms, the post-colonial leaders who are themselves blacks have done nothing better than the former colonial masters they once fought in the name of the interests of the people. Far from satisfying the dispossessed masses, both politically and economically, these new leaders have made use of government institutions, and state security apparatus to intimidate, coerce and bully the dispossessed. In such a situation, anybody who stands for the cause of the poor masses is seen as "a grave security risk" *(Joey Tyson, p.13)*, to get rid of, by all means. In this vein, institutions such as universities are compelled "to co-operate with the government, at any time in getting rid of any and all staff members of the university whom the government believed were spreading politically subversive ideas or indulging in politically subversive activities in the society" *(Joey Tyson, p. 36).*

In fact, history has recorded that, in 1968, the radical Guyanese lecturer, Dr. Walter Rodney, was deported by the Jamaican government for his friendly relationship with the dispossessed, whom he would enlighten on how they came to be miserable. As Zinul Bacchus in Rodney (2009:356) explains:

> *In his determination to struggle against exploitation and oppression Walter Rodney organized among Jamaica's poorest people. His work was having such a tremendous impact that…, he was banned from re-entering Jamaica while attending a writer's conference in Canada. At that time (1968-1969) liberation Movements were sweeping Africa, Asia and Latin America; the U.S.A. was experiencing opposition to the Vietnam war at home and abroad; and the Civil Rights movement was gaining ground also. Having 'lost' Cuba already, the U.S. Administration was not prepared to tolerate any form of liberation in the Caribbean region which it regarded as its backyard, especially at that time when the Cold War was at its peak. Every Caribbean government understood that and since Walter Rodney was viewed as a revolutionary in Washington, D.C., many other Caribbean governments banned him from their countries before he even expressed an interest in visiting.*

Salkey captures this historical event when his character, Dr. Paul Bogle Buxton, "the radical lecturer in African History" *(Joey Tyson, p. 13)* is excluded from Jamaica by means of state security apparatus on his return from a "Black Writers Conference" in Montreal, for the reason that he

educates poor people on the neo-colonialist system that has been eating them out:

> *Dr. Buxton's 'plane arrived at two-twenty. Acting Superintendent Charles Bigson and two junior officers of the Immigration Department boarded the plane, and informed Dr. Buxton that the government had issued an exclusion order, banning him from re-entering the country to continue his teaching at the university (Joey Tyson, p.13).*

The oppression in post-colonial Caribbean states has also expressed itself in the form of brutality and killings carried out by the military or the police on defenseless poor people. As Mr. Tyson in *Joey Tyson* observes:

> *Those devils only brutalize poor people, when they patrol in strength, you know, gun or no gun. They're a bunch of cowards, most of them. They only have brass face and gun play for poor defenseless people. This same West Kingston can bear plenty witness to that, plenty witness to Babylon brutality, from the time black man first turn policemen (Joey Tyson, p.80).*

The image of the brutality during a demonstration by the general public is artistically captured in these terms:

> *Everybody's movements were wild and uncertain. The gas was nauseous. The police moved about like aimless marauders, some striking out furiously with their batons, others punching and kicking the marchers who had been slow in backing away from the front gates of Jamaica House (Joey Tyson,p.32).*

The worst part of this violation of the fundamental human rights is that, in a bid to protect the neo-colonialist interests that favour exclusively the masters (neo-colonialists) and a handful of their local allies at the top of the government, the state security apparatus goes as far as killing those who are considered threats to the prevailing state of affairs. It is in this sense that the police falsely accuses Mr. Tyson of being "one of the looters", then hunts him and shoots him dead while he is trying to defend his son Joey who is being harassed by a police officer:

> *He's one of the looters. He's also one of those who stone the car and cause it to wreck. I want him. I come to get him. I know exactly where he is. Now, either he comes out of his hiding place or I will have to go and get him to come out'.*
> *'He's not one of the looters'; Joey said, raising his voice. 'I know who you mean. He did not stone your car, either, you are a liar';*
> *Who you think I mean, sonny boy? The constable walked up to him, followed closely by the sergeant. My father; Joey said, keeping his voice low, this time but firm and confident.*
> *'So, he's your father, eh? And I'm a liar? He raised his left hand to strike out at Joey.*
> *Mr. Tyson sprang from under the house, and leapt on the constable. He grabbed his throat. The constable fell. Mr. Tyson fell on top of him. The sergeant seized Mr. Tyson's legs. Mr. Tyson kicked him. The sergeant picked himself up and jumped on Mr. Tyson's back.*
> *The three men struggled violently on the ground, until they slammed into the stand-pipe basin. Mr. Tyson was sprawled across the sergeant, with his hands still grasping slumped forward and rolled*

> *over on his back. A long circle of blood had already soaked through the front of his shirt, and had spread down to his waist and along his trouser legs. He was also bleeding through his mouth. His eyes were glazed. They were staring up at Joey.*
> *Mr. Tyson died on the way to hospital… (Joey Tyson, p.104)*

Judging from what has been discussed, so far, it follows that independence in the Caribbean was a nightmare. Because, in the post-independence Caribbean states, independence came to mean a special privilege for a handful of people (the new leaders) to the detriment of the masses who had expected change after independence.

Authoritarian state form accompanied by state capitalism became the direct antithesis of development and freedom. In respect to this, it is impossible to improve on Rosa Luxemburg's formulation in Looker (ed) (1974:245) that:

> *Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party-however numerous they may be – is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently. Not because of any fanatical concept of 'justice' but because all that is instructive, wholesome and purifying in political freedom depends on this essential characteristic, and its effectiveness vanishes when 'freedom' becomes a specific privilege.*

4.4 PROTEST

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2011):

> *A protest expresses a strong reaction of events or situations. The term protest usually now implies a reaction against something, while previously it could also mean a reaction for something. Protesters may organize a protest as a way of publicly and forcefully making their opinions heard in an attempt to influence public opinion or government policy, or may undertake direct action in an attempt to directly enact desired changes themselves.*

In other words, protest refers to the expression of strong disagreement with or opposition to something that cannot be accepted or tolerated. As such, it can be described as a movement whose adherents strive to bring about change.

Protest in post-colonial Caribbean is informed by the character of the new Caribbean leaders, who are willing to sell and undermine the political and economic sovereignty of their countries by colluding with external forces to frustrate the people's hopes and aspirations.

A good example of protest movement in post-colonial Caribbean is the Black Power movement whose activities were governed by revolutionary claims. Black Power has been variously interpreted by its various adherents. Emphasising this, Trinidadian novelist V.S. Naipaul (1970:33) writes that:

> *Black Power rage, drama, and style, as revolutionary jargon, offers something to everybody: to the unemployed, the idealistic, the dropout, the communist, the politically frustrated, the anarchist, the angry student returning from humiliations abroad, the racialist, the old-fashioned black preacher who has for years said at street corners that after Israel it was to be the turn of Africa. Black Power means Cuba and China; it also means clearing the Chinese and Jews and the tourists out of Jamaica.*

It is therefore a complicated idea which was subjected to criticisms. Looking at these criticisms Bert J. Thomas writes that:

> *Caribbean Black Power of the 1960s was influenced by the civil rights movement in the U.S. Accepting that connection created peculiar problems. Newspapers, politicians and business elements were vociferous in their condemnation of advocates as agents of international communism and as fraudulent mimic men. Additionally, the establishment argued that if Black Power meant Caribbeanizing the institutions that support the state, the advocates had no case since locals had since replaced the expatriates in all key positions. And further, since political independence had been won, the society was well on its way to making the average citizen participate fully in the decision-making process (Journal of Black Studies, Vol.22 No. 3; 1992, p.392).*

This implies that the Black Power movement and the established order along with its leaders are enemies each to the other. The post-independence Caribbean establishment's argument that the Black Power movement had no case since political independence had been won; and that the society was on

the way of taking care of its average citizens is similar to what the communist Soviet Union had done in the early 1960s to discredit Marxism as a political philosophy. In both cases, individual people were denied freedom and happiness, on grounds that, these individuals do not actually exist by themselves. This form of dictatorship seems to back itself on Hegel's "totalizing system", according to which "Only in the state does man have a rational existence, man owes his entire existence to the state, and has his being within it alone. Whatever worth and spiritual reality he possesses are his solely by virtue of the state" (Hegel 1988:414).

It was the dictatorial use of Hegelian Marxists that gave rise to Althusserian Marxism, called Althusserian after the twentieth-century French thinker Louis Althusser (1918-90), who consider Hegel's "totalizing oppressive" (Roberts 2000:16).

Similarly, the argument of the Black Power movement in post-colonial Caribbean is directed to the new leaders. As Knowles in Irving (ed) (1972:40) posits:

> *The enemy of the Black Power today is not (directly) the outside colonial power. The enemy is the regime, those who hold power, political leaders who are themselves blacks…*

The conflict is informed by the failure of these leaders to satisfy the dispossessed masses, politically and economically. Thus, the masses'

disbelief in and rejection of these leaders. Salkey captures this awareness in his novel. That is why, when a police officer asks the crowd of people demonstrating against the government, "Who is the leader, here?" the demonstrators reply, "No leaders! We don't believe in them! We don't need them! And we're all leaders!" *(Joey Tyson, p.29).* To these masses, politics through which the leaders come to power is a cynical and deadly game. And the politicians are not trustworthy for any fulfilment; rather, people have to beware of them. As one character, Gran Pa Tyson explains to his grandson Tyson:

> *This life is nothing but one big masquerade, son-son, one big deception, a world-wide fraud, in which everybody takes in everybody else. Power is the play everybody busy with, all about the place. Two-party system politicians? They play the wickedest game of all. It is like this with the two sides: I dominate and rule the people for my own profit, now, and you dominate and rule them for yours, next time round. When a politician comes to you and say you mus' vote for him because of such and such you jus' say yes and don't you bother you' self to keep no promise to vote for him or his party either. All you do when election time come round like a blasted circus horse is jus' play a little deception game with you' self and vote all the same for somebody or other, not even hoping and looking for anything to come your way like benefit or fulfillment. Is a self baffling game, the whole thing, son-son. Is one big everlasting fraud till you dead (Joey Tyson, p.55).*

Since the dispossessed masses have understood that those who have power, that is the leaders, the government or the politicians operate for their selfish interests and not for the welfare of the common people, the latter have submitted to the revolutionary Marxist principle that they have to take their destiny into their own hands by challenging the established order. As Mr. Tyson puts it:

> *…we got to look after ourselves, people like us we're the ones feeling it, so we know. We must lead. We must follow ourselves. That is our challenge… (Joey Tyson, p.90).*
> *… We at the bottom, got to make the change* (*Joey Tyson, p.83)*

In their quest for change, the masses have not hidden their feelings. They have always expressed their disagreement with the government. Thus, the dispossessed black masses in Salkey's *Joey Tyson* join the university students and lecturers to protest against the ban of the radical university lecturer Dr. Buxton who identifies himself with "the poor and dispossessed whom he had always found time to ground with and protect ideologically with his occasional public chat sessions, and his many personal visits" *(Joey Tyson, p.45).* Thus, the protesters make the following claim:

> *Bring back Bredda Buxton!*
> *We want him back now!'*
> *Reinstate Buxton, quick!*
> *Buxton back or we'll attack!' (Joey Tyson, p.45).*

This claim symbolises the people's desire for change, for the better. This statement hinges on the premise that, although Dr. Buxton is educated, and as a result belongs to a higher class (probably the middle class), he still sympathises with the dispossessed and wishes them well.

The ban of Dr. Buxton only serves as a "Deus ex machine" to the conflict of interests that has been opposing the leaders and the dispossessed masses. Thus, the dispossessed use this occasion to expose the evil deeds of their leaders, lay their grievances and make their demands clear:

> *A Rastafarian brother…was reading from a single sheet foolscap pamphlet: …to reach the top, the oppressed have always been encumbered by the traitors of their own Black race, made up of those of little faith, who are generally susceptible to bribery for the selling out of the rights of their own Black people. His voice was clear and resonant.*
> *He pointed to the two small boys and said; me own sons know what is what. Them as feel it know it only too true.*
> *The marchers waved and shouted words of encouragement and militant solidarity back at him. He saluted and continued reading from the pamphlet.*
> *… a Rastafarian sister …had secured a niche between two parked cars for her wayside exhortation. She stood on the touching bumpers and preached from a crushed and half rolled exercise book which held a piece of paper closely resembling the one page pamphlet the brother had been reading out, lower down the street. Her four children, three boys and a girl, sat on the top of the two cars on either side of her. She intoned the*

> *words mesmesically: "I care you pickney. I clean you house. I wash you car. I cook you food. I deliver your mail, you Gleaner. I sell you star. I fix you car. I cut you lawn. I cut you cane. Then, how come my pickney a get it so hard f'go to school, f'wear clothes, f'find bus fare, f'get lunch money'? And I a work like bitch f'get two shilling. Man, stuff unoo guts wit' it? You mus' free up the people, some school, job and some good wages! Hear wha' appen, now, payaka, little pork men, we done beg! We done beg!*
>
> *The marchers rallied with a passionate medley of responses: Done beg, sister! Done beg, yes! And' we hearing you, sister! We hearing you, good! And tell Babylon it done, too! It done, now!'*
>
> *One marcher, a limping old man, waved his cucu-macca stick towards the sister, acknowledging as it were, his sympathetic approval of her reading, and spoke up as best he could against the subsiding impact of the responses: the payaka people them going find out soon that the pork barrel bottom can actually drop out like any barrel bottom self. Don't fret, Rasta sister, tiefing have a finish to it. Bound to. Then is nothing but sorrows going catch them like what we into now. Besides, pork can't last forever. Is a funny sort of meat that. It spoil easy'.*
>
> *'Corruption all" about the place! Another marcher shouted, as if to back up the old man's statement. The samfie government stink wit' it already, same time! (Joey Tyson, pp. 45-47).*

These voices also suggest that the exploitative machinery will come to its end and give way to the emancipation of the dispossessed. This fits into the classical Marxist belief that just like the bourgeoisie took power from the noble class, the present system of capitalism will fall and the proletariat will

take over. By analogy, the whites and their black allies will ultimately fall and the black masses will rise to top of the social ladder. Thus, change will be driven by the dispossessed themselves. This is what Dr. Buxton means when he says that:

> *Political agitation won't come from me, I don't think. The people themselves will do that. They will know how and when. They won't be told about that by someone like myself (Joey Tyson, p.15).*

Another thing which the post-colonial Black Power movement fights is the neo-colonialist system which has been operating in the region after independence, by controlling the economic sectors (Knowles in Irving 1972: 40). Thus, a university lecturer complains:

> *The present stranglehold of foreign control of the economy is clearly disastrous. Did you know, for instance that the mining industry, and here I mean Bauxite and alumina, is one hundred per cent foreign owned; that our public utilities are seventy-five per cent foreign owned; that strategic manufactures rubber steel, fertilizes and things like that the same percentage; that financial institutions, sixty-four per cent; transportation and storage, fifty eight per cent; tourism, fifty-seven; and as for sugar manufacturing, well up to 1966, the figure was seventy per cent (Joey Tyson, pp.39-40).*

Since the spirit of revolution seeks change, in some cases, revolutionaries may seek to achieve their aim by all means. In such a

situation protesters may target the properties of their oppressors. Thus, Salkey's protesters attack foreign properties:

> *The Prime Minister had heard from 'his eyes and ears' on the street that…four busses had been overturned and burnt; property worth at least a quarter of a million pounds had been damaged, looted and destroyed; and that banks, insurance companies and commercial stores were being attacked (Joey Tyson, p.49).*

The demonstrators' attacks on properties is understandable. In fact, in a situation whereby people are exploited and dispossessed, it is improbable that they have respect for the goods and wealth accumulated and owned by their oppressors or exploiters. As such, in an attempt to free themselves, or express their disapproval of their situation, chances are that they target the properties of their enemies, since these exploiters cherish their properties and do not have any respect for those who labour for their production.

4.5 CONCLUSION

Salkey's *Joey Tyson* provides a deep understanding of the conflict between the black masses and the established order in a post-colonial society. The conflict is informed by the existence of neo-colonialism which allows white capitalist imperialist powers to control the politically independent nations, from afar, through the post-colonial leaders who are themselves blacks and yet monsters who oppress their own people for their selfish interests.

This situation pushes Salkey's black general public to the wall. Thus, their protest against the prevailing state of affairs and struggle for change.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study is anchored on the argument that the Caribbean is a multi-racial society which came into being as a result of European capitalist imperialism which placed the white race at the top of the social ladder and the black race at the bottom. In this context, the study examines the historical forces and factors that have contributed to the development of black consciousness in the Caribbean and its literary expression by the writers of the region.

Black consciousness in the Caribbean is an act of awareness by black Caribbean, of the black Caribbean condition and status in the Caribbean, and of the Caribbean environment. It has been demonstrated that black consciousness was occasioned by and developed out of the deprivation of the blacks in a racist and capitalist context developed by the whites, and that this consciousness started during slavery when the blacks were exploited to the core. Ever since, black consciousness has been expressed in various forms by different writers. Sylvia Wynter, John Hearne and Andrew Salkey are examples of writers reconstructing black consciousness. In this regard, the novels that have been evaluated in this study, Wynter's *The Hills of Hebron*, Hearne's *Land of the Living* and Salkey's *Joey Tyson* have

attempted to reconstruct the phenomenon of black consciousness at different levels.

Thus, Wynter's black characters and Hearne's black characters embark on a spiritual revolution. They reject Christianity as it was interpreted and presented to them by the whites, on grounds that it is the religion of the oppressors and therefore anti-black; and embrace a "black god" whom they claim will defend the cause of the black race. However, while Wynter's black community intends to worship their black god in the Caribbean, Hearne's black characters believe that a return to Africa is necessary for the satisfaction of their god, and their own fulfilment. Black consciousness is therefore synonymous with blackness and Africa, and the rejection of European values.

Contrary to Wynter's black characters and Hearne's black characters, Salkey's black characters nurse the desire to take over the management of the their Caribbean environment from their black post-colonial oppressors and make it a living land for themselves.

The disenchantment of the black Caribbean masses in the post-colonial period which is informed by the failure of the new leaders to satisfy them seems to question the validity of black consciousness in the same proportion as the communist Soviet Union did to discredit Marxism.

However, both black consciousness and Marxism are untranscendental, because the world is still in a racial competition dominated by the whites, and ex-colonial masters are indirectly monitoring their former colonies (the so-called developing countries).

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