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**THE PORTRAYAL OF THE FATHER IN FIVE  
SELECTED WORKS OF MICHAEL ANTHONY**

**BY**

**ANTONY MUKASA MATE, B.Ed. (Arts)**

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Mate, Antony Mukasa  
*The portrayal of the  
father in five selected*



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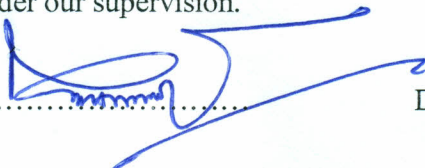
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**Antony Mukasa Mate C50/10287/2007****Supervisors:**

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision.

Signature..... 

Date..... 2/5/2013

**Dr. John Mugubi.****Literature Department**Signature..... 

Date..... 22.4.13

**Dr. Waveney Olemba****Literature Department**

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father and mother for the struggles they have endured for us.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the portrayal of the father figure in three novels and two selected short stories by Trinidadian writer, Michael Anthony: *The Year in San Fernando*; *Green Days by the River*; *The Games Were Coming*; "The Distant One" and "Drunkard of the River". The five works are purposively selected from Michael Anthony's corpus of writing because they aptly cover the subject of the present study. The study seeks to investigate how the presence or absence of the father impacts on other characters. This study employs Masculinity and Stylistics theories. Masculinity theory as advanced by Raewyn Connell has been used to show how the father has been constructed in the Caribbean family in Anthony's works while Stylistics theory is used to illuminate the various stylistic features that Michael Anthony engages to present the father figure in the selected works. Since the proposed study is qualitative in nature, it heavily relies on a close reading and analysis of Michael Anthony's selected works augmented by secondary sources such as journals, dissertations, internet sources and other relevant materials relating to our area of study. During our analysis of families where the father is completely absent, it emerges that Anthony depicts these families as dysfunctional because the father's role in the family is significant and cannot be substituted by the mother. It also emerges in Anthony's works that fathers who are present but cannot provide for their families show patterns of irresponsibility and inferiority complex as mothers are left to fend for these families. We recommend that further study of the phenomenon of the weak and absent father be carried out in novels by other Caribbean authors both male and female and in recent publications.

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## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

African Caribbean - A native or inhabitant of the Caribbean region who is of African ancestry. The group African Caribbean is composed of black people from a multitude of islands in the Caribbean.

Gender - The state of being man or woman typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. Our study looks at gender as a social construct whereby various identities and roles that men and women take in life are prescribed by the society.

Hegemony - A sociological term describing processes which keep dominant groups in power by ensuring that subordinate groups support or accept the way things are. In this study, masculinity is examined as a hegemonic ideology in so far as it defines itself as different and superior to femininity. The men who do not portray hegemony are categorised by patriarchal societies as subordinate masculinities. Thus, patriarchal societies strongly encourage men to embody this type of masculinity.

Masculinity - This is an ideology that orients men to an understanding of themselves as gendered subjects for whom society has devised specific roles and expectations. Men are not born with this awareness of

themselves but they learn it through the process of socialisation. Masculinity refers to every day practices of men; how men become conscious of themselves culturally. This study looks at masculinity as a social construct whereby all men are born into pre-existing social contexts which already have an established understanding of manliness.

Matrifocal - Matrifocal in our study is used to refer to families headed by the mother. The society ascribes to the patriarchal set up and leadership system but the matrifocal families arise from men not meeting their patriarchal responsibilities.

Patriarchy - It is a system of social structures that institutionalise male physical, social and economic power over women. The privileges that men accrue from patriarchy are referred to as Patriarchal Dividend. This study argues that not all men enjoy patriarchal dividend because it is not determined by gender alone but by social, historical, cultural and economic factors.

Vision - This is a writer's wish of how society ought to be. It encompasses those possibilities that the artist through conscious imagination and creativity offers to the society. A writer's vision can be understood by the way he/she explores issues through character portrayal.

## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The weak and absent father is a recurrent image in Caribbean literature. Many writers in the Caribbean portray the father as either absent or weak with the mother being the pivot of the family. Weak in this study means that the fathers are present in the family but lack any authority. They are “impotent” as authority figures. This study reiterates that the father in the Caribbean family is an effective tool for inquiring not only about the plight of the Caribbean family but also the racial, class and gender disparities and struggles in the West Indies. This is because most of the weak and absent fathers emanate from the low class African-Caribbean families.

A writer defines his society through the portrayal of experiences within it. He cannot divorce himself from society and its history. Ngugi wa Thiong’o concurs with this supposition when he argues that:

A writer responds with his total personality to a social environment which changes all the time. Being a kind of sensitive needle, he registers with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions in his changing society. For the writer himself lives in it, and is shaped by history.

(47)

Therefore, a brief analysis of Caribbean history is important because present phenomena that happen in a society cannot be separated from past events. It is worth

noting that it is impossible to talk about the Caribbean people without considering the multi-ethnic diversity, class stratification and a shared history.

Evelyne Hawthorne pinpoints the importance of context when discussing Caribbean literature (163). She argues that all literature is symptomatic of the cultural, social, and political circumstances. Anthony contextualises his works during the period when Trinidad was a British colony. Niven aptly observes that it was a period after the Industrial Revolution and societies were in a phase of rapid transition and development (qtd. in Dabydeen 55). During this period, the whites were dominant socially, economically and politically. Thus, non-whites experienced economic subjugation and did the lowliest jobs available (Walsh 264). This capitalistic exploitation by the whites on the non-whites has a bearing on the family, especially on the father. By virtue of being the head of the family, the father has a responsibility to provide basic needs to his progeny and spouse.

Focus on the role of the male in the Caribbean family has been given prominence by scholars such as Linden Lewis and Rhoda Reddock due to the interest of masculinity studies in the region. Linden Lewis gives a genesis of the emergence of masculinity studies in the Caribbean region ("Man Talk, Masculinity" 1). Lewis observes that interest in masculinity studies in the Caribbean is as a result of feminist activism, changing roles of women globally and the social, economic and technological shifts across the globe. Lewis adds that these shifts have changed the attitudes and beliefs of people. Rhoda Reddock concurs with Lewis when she observes that the feminist wave has influenced

the study of masculinity in the Caribbean (ii). She posits that the wave of feminism uplifted women socially and economically, positioning them to take over roles that are traditionally known to be for men. This trend is manifested in Caribbean fiction and plays where we see female characters in families running the entire households. The fathers are depicted as either weak or absent. Lewis describes the predicament faced by the males in the African-Caribbean low class:

To date, adjusting to the shifting terrain of gender relations in the Caribbean has been quite intriguing. For some men, the loss of job, the challenge of their position of authority, privilege and status, or the academic and intellectual observations of such occurrences has ushered in a new consciousness about the construction, existential reality and dislocation of masculinities. (*Interrogating Caribbean Masculinities* 256)

Lewis argues that the male response represents an irrational fear of redundancy and a feeling of inadequacy. This situation is evident not only in men's loss of status but also by the possibility of them relinquishing control over women. Although Lewis' study focused on the behaviour of the black male in the Caribbean society, we need to reemphasize that black Caribbean men especially from lower social classes are mostly prone to these change of roles since they are unable to sustain the family needs. These black men may be impotent as authority figures in the family.

Donald Peters adjudges that these Caribbean men are adamant to face the new realities of the shifting gender relations in the Caribbean society. Peters argues

that black Caribbean men have not changed their fundamental behaviour and cultural characteristics since emancipation. According to Peters, these men are so much embedded in traditional masculinity. He writes:

In the Caribbean a man's primary obligation to his family(ies), and his role as a family man and a father is that of providing. If providing for ones family represents the key characteristic that defines a Caribbean man, it is not difficult to understand why in the past two decades black males appear to be falling behind as a group. High unemployment, underemployment, migration and more women in the work force, have eroded the black male's foundation on which he staked his manhood. (3)

It is important to note that Michael Anthony's selected works for this study have a rural setting where this trend of the absent and weak father with a strong mother is evident. Edith Clarke undertook a study on the family life of the African Caribbean in the West Indies rural communities. Clarke's findings reveal how the West Indian mother played both roles of a father and a mother due to an absent father (ix). Clarke discovered that the West Indian "lower class" Negro family life was highly unstable due to the absent or weak father (vii). She discovered that marriage rates were low especially during the earlier phases of adult life. She noted that cases of illegitimate children were high and many households contained only female parents. Many male parents were absent

## 1.2 Profile of the Author and his Works

Michael Anthony was born in Mayaro, Trinidad, on February 10, 1932. He went to primary schools in his hometown and to Junior Technical School in San Fernando. Anthony worked as a smoulder in an iron foundry in Pointe a Pierre, Trinidad. He migrated to England in 1954 where he continued working in factories, on the railway and as a telegraphist while pursuing a writing career. In 1968, Anthony migrated to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil where he served in the diplomatic circles for two years. In 1970, he returned with his family to Trinidad where he still lives.

The novelist worked with the National Council of Trinidad and Tobago and also produced radio shows. Michael Anthony's publications include seven novels: *The Games Were Coming* (1963); *The Year in San Fernando* (1965); *Green Days by the River* (1967); *King of the Masquerade* (1974); *Streets of Conflict* (1976); *All That Glitters* (1981) and *In the Heat of the Day* (1996). His other works include short fiction such as *Sandra Street and Other Stories* (1973); *Cricket in the Road and Other Stories* (1973); *Folktales and Fantasies* (1976) and *The Chieftain Carnival and Other Stories* (1993). He has also written travelogues and history books on Trinidad.

## 1.3 Statement of the Problem

Diverse masculine identities exist in the Caribbean. This study seeks to interrogate the representation of the recurrent image of the weak and absent father in the works of one of the region's author's, Michael Anthony.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The study endeavours to:

1. Examine the status of the father in Michael Anthony's selected works.
2. Interrogate the role and significance of the father in the Caribbean society as presented in the selected works by Michael Anthony.
3. Critically analyse the circumstances that lead to weak and absent fathers in Michael Anthony's selected works.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. How has the father's position in the family been portrayed in the selected works by Michael Anthony?
2. What is the role and significance of the father in the Caribbean society as presented in selected works of Michael Anthony?
3. What are the circumstances that lead to weak and absent fathers in Michael Anthony's selected works?

#### **1.6 Research Assumptions**

1. That Anthony's novels present a clear indication of the father's position in the family.
2. That father figures have a significant role in determining the action and outcomes in Anthony's works.
- 3 There are certain circumstances that lead to weak and absent fathers in Michael Anthony's selected works.

### 1.7 Justification for the Study

An examination of critical works in Caribbean literature reveals that little has been written on the portrayal of the father figure in Caribbean literature. This is despite the common trend that appears in Caribbean literature where the father in the family is often portrayed as weak or absent. Seldom does the critical literature tell about his whereabouts or why, if present, he does not assume his responsibilities. Our study investigates this phenomenon with a particular emphasis on Michael Anthony's works. Therefore, findings from this study contribute greatly towards the understanding of the father figure in Caribbean society.

Moreover, Michael Anthony as a writer has not received the criticism and response that he deserves despite writing many works. This is because many critics have pointed out that he pays little attention to political issues that are a concern to many West Indian writers. For example, the Caribbean troubled past that has made its inhabitants grapple with the issue of identity is a major concern to many writers such as George Lamming, V.S. Naipaul and Derek Walcott but not Michael Anthony. Anthony's works deal with simple social relations. Edward Baugh (cited in Bruce King) observes that Anthony's works are hardly concerned with messages. Baugh posits that: "If one says [Anthony's] best work has the clarity and luminosity of a shallow stream, this is not to disparage it but only to define its limitations and nature of its appeal. Anthony attempts nothing grand, and is hardly concerned with 'messages' " (80). However, in this study, we have argued that Anthony's works are based on social relationships and particularly the family, which is the basic unit of the society. Hence, this study found it plausible to examine the father figure in the

Caribbean family. Furthermore, the study helps in appreciating the West Indian novel by focusing on a theme that has received negligible criticism; and on a writer who has not received much critical focus, despite writing many works.

Although the study focuses on a writer from the Anglophone West Indies, it is significant for the whole Caribbean region, because of the very similar social, geographical and historical realities that inform the literary output from this region. Bonny Thomas explains that this trend of the weak and absent father (among the African Caribbean) is also common in the French Caribbean. (“Identity at Crossroads” 5)

### 1.8 Scope and Delimitation

This study seeks to investigate the portrayal of the father in Caribbean literature. The study delimits itself to selected works of Michael Anthony, namely *The Year in San Fernando*; *Green Days by the River*; *The Games Were Coming* and two short stories: “The Distant One” and “Drunkard of the River” selected from *Cricket in the Road*. The selected texts for this study were sampled after a careful reading of the author’s works. The selection was based on their common characteristics in the portrayal of the father figure which was the subject of this study as outlined in our objectives.

Despite the fact that our study relies on close textual reading and analysis, we adopt a comparative approach for we compare the presentation of the father figure across the selected texts and offer our interpretations supported by secondary sources in underlining the depiction of the father in Michael Anthony’s selected texts. Moreover, we use a lot of cross-referencing from primary texts in the Caribbean and other regions

because of the similar social and historical experiences like colonialism and slavery that have produced marginalised societies.

### 1.9 Literature Review

The portrayal of the father figure has received little criticism in Caribbean literature despite the recurrent depiction of the weak and absent male figures in Caribbean novels and plays. Novels such as *In the Castle of My Skin* (1954), *Miguel Street* (1959), *The Year in San Fernando* and *Green Days by the River*; are a few examples that depict the presence of a weak or absent father in the family. Hence, this review of related literature attempts to highlight this lacuna.

David Dabydeen and Nana Wilson-Tagoe in *A Reader's Guide to West Indian and Black British Literature* focus on the portrayal of the women characters in Caribbean literature. In their analysis, they look at the transition of the West Indian woman as she has progressed through history. Dabydeen and Tagoe describe her as poor, abandoned and lovingly committed to her child (43). Their description further shows that the strength and meaning of life that she shows is derived from her community. The image we get from their analysis is of a strong woman in a matrifocal family. Her strength is attributed to the challenges she experiences. Even though Dabydeen and Tagoe mention that the woman is an abandoned mother, they do not state the whereabouts of the father or the reason for the abandonment. This is what our study sought to investigate.

Dabydeen and Tagoe also analyse the theme of childhood and focus on

Michael Anthony's novels, *The Year in San Fernando* and *Green Days by the River* (38). Dabydeen and Tagoe describe the works as mainly focused on a child's experience and growth, an argument that this study finds plausible. However, it was our contention that the novels go beyond the child character as their main focus. They also focus on the influence of the absent and weak father on the young boys' growth. A question we pondered on was: whether the presence of a father would have made young Francis suffer at the hands of the Chandles' family. Whereas Dabydeen and Tagoe limit their analysis to the child character, our study sought to go beyond the focus of the child and look at the influence of the father on his life.

John Mugubi in his book *The Child Character in Adult Literature: A Study of Six Selected Caribbean Novels* examines the child character in post emancipation and colonial West Indian fiction. In this study, Mugubi sought to determine the child's position in that society and his/her role as a literary agent. In analysing Michael Anthony's *The Year in San Fernando*, he examines how body and psychic immaturity make the child vulnerable. Despite the fact that Mugubi's study is insightful, it focuses on the portrayal of the child character in Caribbean fiction hence remaining mute on the question of the father figure. Therefore, the current study set out to illuminate the role and/or effect of the absent father on the child's life.

Paul Edwards and Kenneth Ramchand in an article entitled, "The Art of Memory: Michael Anthony's *The Year in San Fernando*" analyse Michael Anthony's *The Year in San Fernando* as a novel on childhood. They argue that the child character in the novel is not being used as a tool for social comment but as a satire against the exploiting middle

class and as an insight into the cultural and education system of the Caribbean (v). Edwards and Ramchand believe that the novel does not have a social drive; an assertion we disagreed with as we sought to demonstrate that the novel-*The Year in San Fernando* - carries the author's social vision.

Kenneth Ramchand in his introduction to the *The Games Were Coming* notes the rare relationship between the father and son. He describes the father-son relationship depicted in this novel as "one of the most moving presentations of the relationship between the father and son in West Indian fiction" (149). However, Ramchand describes the relationship as being rare and suggests that the father's involvement in Leon's race might be to strive to achieve what he never did in his lifetime. Ramchand mentions the predicament faced by the West Indian father, but does not elaborate. Our study attempts to give a deeper insight on this predicament.

Daryl Cumber Dance in a broad survey of the works of Michael Anthony in *Fifty Caribbean Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Source Book* notes that "in his fiction there is the presence of the strong enduring mother figure so familiar in West Indian fiction"(23). She goes ahead to identify some of the author's works where the image of the enduring mother is visible. The mention of the strong mother figure is evident. However, like Dabydeen's and Tagoe's study, she neither explains nor accounts for the whereabouts of the weak or absent father in the family.

Daryl Dance also observes that in Anthony's works, some of the major concerns in West Indian literature such as quest for identity, the problem of exile and a clash between tradition and modernity are not central issues. She notes that Anthony is

concerned with simple human relationships within the family set-up. This is what our study sought to investigate by interrogating the father's role in the family set-up.

In an analysis of Michael Anthony's works in *The Caribbean Novel in English: An Introduction*, Keith Booker and Dubravka Juraga posit that "his novels centre on autobiographical descriptions of childhood experience in colonial Trinidad" (15). They note that Anthony's works are rich in the evocation of the landscape and atmosphere of rural Trinidad that also maps out its parameters. We agree with the two authors about the vivid description of the landscape in the texts but dispute the postulation that Anthony's novels are mere autobiographies and geographical texts since as we have shown in this study; they give insight on the rising trend of matrifocal families in the Caribbean society. It was our contention that Michael Anthony's works, despite being fictional, depict a trend that is real in the Caribbean.

Edward Baugh notes that Anthony in his works attempts at nothing grand and is hardly concerned with messages (qtd in Bruce King 80). Baugh's observation is as a result of Anthony's failure to address themes of social and racial justice that are a concern of most Caribbean writers. This is an assertion that our study does not agree with. Baugh argues that most of Anthony's works are autobiographical and hence they concentrate on a careful recreation of the humble, ordinary life of the rural and semi-rural Trinidad of Anthony's youth. He further notes that the novels capture some of the realities and nuances of West Indian social relationships. However much that the present study agreed with some of Baugh's observations, we sought to go farther by turning our attention to social relations with a particular emphasis on the portrayal of the father.

Alistair Niven describes *The Year in San Fernando* as Michael Anthony's best-known novel (qtd in Dabydeen 55). He opines that Anthony's first three novels; *The Games Were Coming*, *The Year in San Fernando* and *Green Days by the River* are about years of growing up. Niven notes that to read them together enhances one's admiration for Anthony's sensitive handling of adolescence. This is because Anthony never repeats himself but manages to convey in each both the pains and the exhilaration of one's youthful days. Niven argues that in all the three novels, the relationship of the child to his parents is strained as is the contrast between the values of a rural community and those of the town. We concurred with this assertion although we went further to examine the parent-child relationship which Niven just mentions.

Anthony Luengo in his analysis of Anthony's collection of short stories *Cricket in the Road* posits that they deal calmly and lucidly with the experiences of early adolescence in "Sandra Street" (83). He argues that Anthony tries to recreate his own childhood and portrays inter-racial relationship which is the daily life of Trinidad. Luengo argues that Anthony is not so successful in his fictional reconstruction of the islands' confused past. He further notes that Anthony is only effective in his portrayal of racial interrelationships. It was our contention that Anthony deals with issues affecting the Caribbean family other than the question of race.

J.Silva da Simeoes in *The Luxury of National Despair: George Lamming's Fiction As Decolonizing Project* laments that this recurrent motif of the absent husband/father from the family, prevalent in Caribbean literature, has not been adequately addressed (117). Da Simeoes attests that this issue is central to Caribbean

modernity but does not explain further. Thus interrogating Anthony's works will help us understand the underlying problems and possible solutions facing Caribbean fatherhood.

Jenny Sharpe in "Mental Health Issues and Family Socialization in the Caribbean" avers that fathers in several African Caribbean families have poor emotional relationship with their children because they are mostly absent from the household (261-262). Sharpe notes that some of these fathers support the family financially but the latter's absence causes emotional anguish to their children. Our study will strive to interrogate Sharpe's supposition in Caribbean literature through Anthony's works.

Robert Coles and Charles Green in *The Myth of the Missing Black Father* investigate the reasons for the absence of the father among the African American community. The duo seek to debunk the idea that African American men are irresponsible. Cole and Charles adjudge that factors such as slavery and racism have contributed to this trend. Cole's and Charles' study is insightful because the African Caribbean and African American communities have some similarity in their history especially the issue of slavery. Moreover the trend of father absence runs through both communities.

John Blassingame in *The Slave Community: Plantation life in the Antebellum South* analyses the slave family in America during slavery. Blassingame highlights how slave families were separated by their masters for fear of revolts. Blassingame observes that in one of the estates called Hopeton, the white masters made sure that families lived separately (15). Blassingame's study is important because it queries the issue of slavery and the absent father. Like the African Americans, the African Caribbean also passed through slavery.

Erroll Miller in *The Marginalization of the Black Male* quips that all the African tribes that were brought to the Caribbean were patriarchal in tradition (1). Miller's insight brings to fore the issue of the rise of matrifocal families in the Caribbean that our study seeks to investigate.

The above literature review pinpoints the gap on the issue of the weak and absent father in Anthony's works that we will try to address.

### 1.10 Theoretical Framework

Our study employed two theories namely, Masculinity (Raewyn Connell's) and Stylistic theories. The two theories were employed simultaneously in the interpretation of issues that were of concern to this study.

Masculinity theory stems from a recent movement known as gender studies. Gender studies evolved out of feminism. It seeks to address the question of fair representation of all genders. With the emergence of this movement, there has been an interest in masculinity and theories that represent men in social studies. However in literature, it has not received much criticism because it is quite a new field of study with divergent views that are still being explored. Keith Griffith concurs with this supposition when he argues that "Gender criticism, perhaps because it is so new, remains a nebulous, difficult-to-define-approach to the study of literature" (23). Despite the fact that gender criticism mostly focuses on feminism criticism, literary texts still act as primary vehicles for communication of gender roles that distinguish the men from women, often known as

engendering of literature. Thus, it is important to focus on theories that deal with the male gender because gender studies seek to have a fair representation of both sexes.

Raewyn Connell posits that ignorance on issues about men is what led to research on men and masculinities (xii). Connell avers that women liberation movements of the 1970s made her have interest on masculinities because these movements were challenging patriarchy. Hence such movements meant changes in the lives of men. Connell looks at masculinity in terms of the relationship between men and women through the filter of power. Connell calls that power hegemonic masculinity. She demonstrates how men in the subordination of women use gender as a concept of power. Connell calls this power patriarchal dividend, whereby being a man is a "source of power and authority" (76). However, she argues that not all men shared this power equally and that not all men exploited women (81). According to Connell men who never oppressed women practise complicit masculinity. Such men connect with hegemonic masculinity but do not fully represent it and neither are they subordinate or marginalised. The idea that not all men share power equally is quite evident in the Caribbean. Matrifocal families are found mostly among the African Caribbean families. The mothers assert authority in the families.

Connell also looks at masculinity in terms of the relationship between men. She argues that while men oppressed women, some men dominate and subordinate other men. Consequently, she classifies masculinities into three different types: the hegemonic, complicit and subordinate category of masculinity. In her theorizing, the subordinate category belongs to the people who are marginalised in terms of race, class and

ethnicity such as the African Caribbean in the Caribbean or the blacks in Apartheid South Africa. She notes that the people or races exhibiting hegemonic masculinity dominated other masculinities and created cultural prescriptions of what it meant to be a real man. However, Connell argues that the minorities understand what being a man meant differently from members of the ruling class. Thus, masculinities are fluid and should not be considered as belonging in a fixed way to any one group of men. Connell reaffirms that patriarchal power is not monolithic, but is made up of many different social groups, ideologies and hierarchies (hegemonic and subordinate).

Connell asserts that masculinities are socially and historically constructed. The dominant groups that practise hegemonic masculinity ensure that subordinate masculinities acknowledge and accept their power. The power control can be through the control of structures such as the economy of a country by one particular race at the expense of the other. Hence, hegemonic masculinity is the socially dominant form of masculinity in a particular culture within a given historic period like Apartheid or colonialism. This is the approach our study employed to investigate the portrayal of the father in Anthony's works. It focused on the African Caribbean father from the low class because they are categorized as minority masculinities. They take a subordinate position in the Caribbean society in terms of race and class. This is because economically, they are the most deprived and cannot meet their parental responsibilities. These fathers do not enjoy patriarchal dividend because of poverty.

Further, Connell points out that masculine power is interrelated with existing

inequalities in a society such as racialism, class stratification and colonialism and other systems of oppression. It is important to note that the setting of Anthony's selected works for this study is in colonial Trinidad. During this period, the whites (who exhibited hegemonic masculinity) dominated the economy while the blacks were the most marginalised race (and exhibited subordinate masculinity). Our study investigated whether the above inequalities have contributed to the weakness or absence of the father in Anthony's selected texts.

Connell conceived of hegemonic masculinity as an integral part of her larger social theory of gender, which emphasised the socially constructed nature of masculinity and femininity. The constructivist approach maintains that the categories which we perceive, evaluate and think are socially constructed independent of the subject and that the construction of reality is based on guidelines set up by the culture of a particular society. The masculine and feminine domains are defined by specific attributes. This school of thought argues that although gender constructions are embedded in biological differences, they are not biologically determined. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity was instrumental in interrogating the role and position of the lower class African Caribbean father.

Stylistic theory is used to supplement hegemonic masculinity. It helps in the interpretation of the text as it harmonizes form and content which are inseparable. Style gives form to a literary text and further guides us to its significance. Stylistics as a method of analysis considers language as an important tool of communication in any work of art. Therefore, it enables us to investigate the linguistic and paralinguistic

affective devices used by Anthony to convey meaning.

Stylistics also helps us understand Anthony's social vision. David Lodge's definition of stylistics can enable us understand a writer's social vision. Lodge defines style as "the means by which the writer or, in linguistic jargon, 'encoder' ensures that his message is 'decoded' in such a way that the reader not only understands the information conveyed, but shares the writer's attitude towards it" (58). Stylistics enables us understand Anthony's point of view (vision) about the role of the father in the Caribbean family.

Stylistics is also beneficial to this study because it is text centered. In this research, much of the analysis is based on the intuition and personal judgment of the researcher with textual evidence reigning supreme over other external factors. Lodge posits that "only the work itself...presents all meaning in the most significant and assailable form" (55). Anthony's works as we had seen earlier have been dismissed by critics as not conveying any serious message and being simple-a notion that this study sought to allay. Mugubi warns about superficial criticism that only focuses on the external structure. He argues that:

Even when the structure of a literary text appears fundamentally logical, you should not expect that it would be very simple. You should know that a considerable amount of aesthetic pleasure comes from the judicious or astounding use of intellect. Quite simple thoughts may be embellished in the most astounding and imposing way. ("Stylistics and Literary Techniques" 28)

Ramchand also warns that we need to be careful when analyzing Anthony's texts because they appear simple with no identifiable themes but he practises an art of fiction of a very subtle kind (*The West Indian Novel and its Background* viii). Our analysis of Anthony's selected works is done with the above comments in mind.

### 1.11 Methodology

The study is qualitative in nature whereby our arguments are rationalised purely from textual evidence. Our principal point of reference is our selected texts. In literary criticism, the primary text reigns supreme as the focal point of analysis. The study undertakes a library research mainly due to its textual nature. Purposive sampling is adopted in this research because it allows us to select Anthony's works that aptly capture the subject of our study. A close reading of Michael Anthony's selected works is also done so as to give us a personal interpretation.

Secondly, secondary data from relevant journals, critical works on Michael Anthony, dissertations, and any relevant materials relating to our area of study are examined. The secondary sources are only relevant insofar as they provide insight into our area of study. Extensive internet research, especially for theoretical review is also conducted. General works on literary criticism and stylistics are used to analyse the writer's style. Due to the link between society and literature, we review documents which have information on the socio-cultural and economic aspects of the Caribbean society. This is vital in providing the context or background of the absent and/or weak fathers in

our selected stories.

The information gathered from the primary texts and secondary data is read, analysed and compiled and we draw conclusions from the findings on the basis of our objectives.

### **1.12. Organisation of the Study**

The thesis is structured into five chapters. Chapter One deals with the introduction to the study and it delineates the problem of the study, objectives of the study and captures the scope and delimitations of the study. It also presents the theoretical framework, justification of the study as well as the methodology of the study. In Chapter Two, the study delves into the first objective of the study where we discussed the father within the family. In Chapter Three, we discuss the effects of the absent and weak fathers in the family. In the fourth chapter, we focus on the author's social vision in the Caribbean family and society. Finally, Chapter Five recaps the major findings of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE FATHER WITHIN THE FAMILY

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a critical appraisal of the father in Michael Anthony's selected works. Michael Anthony's works tackle many issues: simple love relationships, loss of childhood innocence, rural versus urban life and racial inter-relationship in Trinidad. But one of the most profound aspects of the author's novels and short stories is the treatment of the male character. From the dysfunctional relationships of Shellie and his father in *Green Days by the River* to that of Sona and his absent father in "Drunkard of the River", Anthony focuses on a recurrent motif in Caribbean writing in which the trope of male absenteeism and irresponsibility is predominant. Through his disposition of the male characters, Anthony seems to suggest that there is a problem with the Caribbean men, especially from the marginalised African race (low socio-economic class).

Our analysis of the father in Anthony's work is pegged on Ramchand's assertion that "Anthony's greater reliance upon the selective processes of memory and imagination rather than upon a self-conscious theme or topic makes for the presence of unemphasised meanings in the sensuous body of his work" (*The West Indian Novel and its Background* 153). Ramchand's argument is important because the apparent criticism of Anthony makes his work call for a corrective lens. Critics might have overlooked major themes in Anthony's works because of his style of writing. Gerald Moore's analysis of Anthony reiterates our argument that "...the apparent "smallness" of his themes has

caused him to be attacked by many West Indian reviewers looking perhaps for riots, sultry affairs and deeds of violence..."(19). Ramchand and Moore represent an informed consensus on the need for more critical focus on Anthony's works.

Secondly, it is impossible to analyse the portrayal of the father in Anthony's works without looking at his relationship to the close family members, especially sons. Our argument is founded on the fact that in most of his works, Anthony uses young boy protagonists as tools for social commentary. We get most of the information through the open consciousness of the young narrators. The use of young characters as protagonists is also common in many Caribbean works. Mugubi explains that Caribbean authors use young characters as protagonists because that is the age of awareness and questioning. He states that "It is significant that the West Indies novelists center majorly on the adolescent. The self-evaluation of a child is more marked in adolescence. Adolescence is a time when the child is more self-conscious, preoccupied with appearance and position in the world" (*The Child Character in Adult Literature*109).

Third, like in most *Bildungsromane*, the protagonists in Anthony's works are forced to move from their small worlds to much wider environments. The change of environment challenges the young characters because of their age and difficult conditions they have to live in. Rose Lugano adjudges that the movement motif common in most *Bildungsromane* results in alienation of the protagonists (155). Most of Anthony's young protagonists are alienated in their new environments. *In the Year in San Fernando*, Francis experiences a lot of loneliness at the Chandles' homestead. In

fact he is hesitant to live Mayaro. It is as if Francis has a premonition of the suffering that awaits him: "Anyway, when Ma had spoken, she stood there waiting for me to answer. She looked impatient and surprised that I did not jump at the great news" (4). In *Green Days by the River*, Shellie has to move from home to go and work as a farmhand for Mr. Gindharee. Sona's movement in "Drunkard of the River" is not physical but emotional. Despite being at home, Sona is completely alienated from the family. Sona is in conflict with both the father and the mother because of the former's irresponsibility. Anthony uses the movement of his young protagonists to reveal the void left by their fathers. Both Francis and Shellie are forced to move and work because of the grinding poverty at home. Francis's father is dead while Shellie's father is sick. They both have to work to supplement the family income. Both boys are alienated from their close-knit families.

By focusing on the young protagonists in their new environments, especially with their interaction with adult males, Anthony hints on the issue of growing up with a father figure. So preeminently important is the father's role to a child that children with absent or weak fathers gain attachment to the close men in their lives. Francis gains an attachment to Mr. Chandles but the latter is hostile. Although the background of the young student that appears in Anthony's short story "Sandra Street" is not mentioned, his close attachment to his teacher (Mr. Blades) is evident. In *Green Days by the River*, Shellie seems to admire Mr Gindharee more than his father while in "Drunkard of the River", Sona has also drifted away from his father. Through the attachment of children to other men and antagonism with their fathers, Anthony seems

to suggest that there is a problem with the fathers. Our subtopic seeks to find out what causes that rift.

## **2.2 Behave like a Man: Fathers in *Green Days by the River* and “Drunkard of the River” as Antithesis of the “Ideal father”**

There are many beliefs of what a man is supposed to be in society. This prototype of the ideal man emanates from several sources: media, culture and religion. According to Sylvia Tamale these prototypes are inculcated in young people at a tender age because the above sources are the media of instruction (7). However, these prototypes can sometimes become bloated, twisted and distorted to suit a particular group of people (Stereotypes). Consequently, men like Mano and Shellie’s father in “Drunkard of the River” and *Green Days by the River* who do not measure up to the “ideal man” face a labyrinth of problems. Through an examination of the intricate interaction of culture and gender relations, we will show how these variables influence and condition the identity of the father in our selected works.

Human beings live in societies which encompass the cultural set up of a people. Therefore, they are shaped by that society’s culture. If that culture has gender stereotypes, they internalise them. Social pressure is imposed on boys and girls to conform to masculine and feminine expectations. Bernice Lofts defines socialisation as:

The process of learning those behaviours that are appropriate for members of a particular group distinguished from others on the basis of certain ascribed or achieved status. The behaviours we learn as appropriate

for women in a particular culture and at a particular time constitute the role identified with the sex. Because these behaviours are, in very large part, unrelated to the reliable biological distinction between the sexes, the word 'gender' is used to identify our learned definition of women. (6)

Loft's definition of socialisation implies that our societies are gendered. There are roles created by society for each gender. Moreover, because most societies are patriarchal, the dominant model of masculinity is hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity equates manliness with power and control. Connell explains that hegemonic masculinity is associated with toughness, competitiveness, determination, self-sufficiency, aggression, success and the subordination of women (94). Hegemonic masculinity is the cultural idealised form of masculine character. In *Green Days by the River*, Mr. Gindharee epitomizes hegemonic masculinity through his behaviour. The Indian walks with fierce dogs. Shellie's description of his first encounter with the Indian sums up the latter's character:

I HEARD THE DOGS barking and I knew that old man Gindharee was coming up the road. I went out into the roads and there he was, pulling his four dogs behind him, and trying to ward off the neighbor's dogs that rushed out after them. There was much barking and it seemed to make an awful racket in the place. Mr. Gindharee's dogs were very big Tobago dogs and I knew he had only to let one of them loose to have the others scurrying in again... I Had watched him every morning and he greeted me as he passed [sic]. He did not know me well as we had just

moved to Pierre Hill. But he had seen how I had admired his big Tobago dogs, and he seemed friendly towards me. (7)

In this quotation, Anthony capitalizes the words "I HEARD THE DOGS" to show that Mr. Gindharee's entrances elicited a lot of fear and commotion. The dogs symbolise Mr. Gindharee's perception of masculinity. Mr. Gindharee believes in aggression and physical toughness. The moment one heard the dogs, he could visualize the Indian. Mr. Gindharee seems to be aware that image counts a lot when one wants to exhibit his masculinity. Mr. Gindharee makes sure that he has larger dogs than those of other neighbours. He wants to dominate (hegemonic masculinity). Mr. Gindharee wants to command respect through fear and intimidation. The name the Indian has given his dogs supports our assertion. Shellie informs us that "...the brown dog was Lion, and the other two were Hitler and Tiger" (8). The names allude to a violent ruler and vicious animals. It is important to note that Shellie has adopted Mr. Gindharee's brand of masculinity. Shellie acknowledges that he admired Mr. Gindharee's Tobago dogs. Shellie's masculinity is being shaped by the socialisation with the Indian. The interaction between the young boy Shellie and the Indian bring to focus the importance of socialisation in the construction of masculinity.

Lewis observes that in the Caribbean, boys are socialised to believe that the transition from boyhood to manhood happens after a number of developments (4). First, is the ability to make income, which is the principal activity, and secondly, is assuming responsibility - by having a family. There is a link between the acts of breadwinning with the trait of masculinity. Fathers become "men" if they can

provide for their family. Christine Barrow also concurs with Lewis when he alleges that "Masculinity was structured and implemented at a young age in the Afro-Caribbean society. Once a young man developed from the orientation stage to the procreation stage, he took on the role of the breadwinner and head of the household" (341). Through such socialisation, a boy like Sona believes that his father is not performing his roles. That is why Sona castigates his mother for being sympathetic towards Mano:

He couldn't see why she bothered about his father at all. For his father was stupid and worthless and made their life miserable. If he could have had his way, Mano would have been out of the house a long time ago. Sometimes he had looked at her and thinking of his father, he had gnawed his teeth and said, "Beast!" several times to himself. (2)

Sona feels that his father does not warrant any sympathy because of abdicating his "responsibilities". In *Green Days by the River*, Shellie is puzzled when the father (who is the only one at home), cannot give him permission to leave the house. The father even fears to smoke in front of the mother whom he perceives as the dominant force:

Bring that pipe for me before you go. You'll find some tobacco by that jug.' I did not move. I did not want to give him the pipe. He never smoked when my mother was here but as soon as she went out he would say, 'Bring that pipe for me,' The ridiculous thing was, he kept on hiding his tobacco from Ma, and tobacco was the worst thing to hide. (11)

Young Shellie exposes his father's emasculated state. Shellie's father consciously feels that his position of power is precarious. That is why he cannot assert any authority even in the absence of the mother. Despite his tender age, the young boy Shellie is flabbergasted that his father can hide something from the mother. Anthony uses Shellie's amazement to show that role reversal in society has still not been fully accepted. Shellie seeks permission from the father because he does not expect the father to fear the mother. Children like Shellie and Sona have been socialised to think that the father should be the provider, protector and authority giver.

In "Drunkard of the River", Mano tries to reaffirm his masculinity through violence. He confronts and physically assaults Sona "So you is me father, eh? You is me father, now! He kicked the boy" (4). Mano's statement clearly shows that he feels as if he has lost his position in the family as the father. Mano accuses the son of taking over his role as a father. Sona is used as a scapegoat by Mano to reassert his masculinity through violence and aggression. The father's reaction towards the son exposes his hubris. Mano is a person who blames others for his own follies. Mano's inability to be a responsible father is the cause of his anguish. Mano and Shellie's father are in a situation similar to that of Nathaniel - a character in Naipaul's short story "The Maternal Instinct" in *Miguel Street*. Nathaniel would receive beatings from Laura but in an attempt to assert his masculinity, he would lie to his friends that he was the one beating Laura. Nathaniel is beaten until he gets a black eye. Nathaniel is an emasculated husband who cannot control the household. Laura eventually throws him out because of his irresponsibility: "I don't want you here. You is only another mouth to feed" (86).

Nathaniel is chased away because he cannot take care of the family. By drawing parallels between Nathaniel and the patriarchs in *Green Days by the River* and "Drunkard of the River", we conclude that male marginality is a result of economic powerlessness. Men are considered irresponsible and useless if they cannot provide for their families.

David Gilmore aptly describes the predicament of these emasculated men. He explains that in many human societies there exists a pressured form of manhood that requires men to perform and achieve in the social struggle for scarce resources (1).

Anthony's exposure of the fathers' weakness through the young boys (Sona and Shellie) is viewed as being intentional. Anthony uses the young boys to show how roles in society are gendered and the effect of role reversal especially on the father. The young boys' reaction is objective and does not have adult bias. Through interaction with the society, Shellie and Sona have observed how roles are demarcated in the family. Hence, the young boys sense that there might be something wrong with the way their fathers are behaving. Edwards and Ramchand posit that Anthony, in most of his novels, uses young narrators to explain events in the story, and does not impose adult ways of seeing life (xvi). The experiencing consciousness of the stories is that of the young narrators. Therefore, people and places can be seen objectively through the young narrators' observing eyes and subjectively in terms of their responses to them. We are therefore able to understand why young Shellie is dumbfounded by his father's behaviour. Shellie's young mind does not understand why his father, an adult, should hide tobacco from the mother.

Gender roles are internalized by young people, like Shellie and Sona at an early age. The home, which is the first learning centre for the children, distinguishes roles that should be partaken by boys and girls. Fathers will mostly delegate their errands to boys while mothers will do the same to girls. Some fathers will even condemn boys for sitting with their mothers. Okonkwo, in *Things Fall Apart* condemns Nwoye, his son, because he liked sitting with his mother. Okonkwo who emanated from a strong patriarchal society thought that the son would be more effeminate and less masculine. Okonkwo wishes that his daughter, Ezimna, was a boy. Ezimna was close to the father. Being female, she is categorized as weak and incapable of traits attributable to men like courage and strength. Therefore, gender roles are assigned to a particular sex at an early age. With such inculcated beliefs, values and attitudes at an early age, it becomes difficult to remove these gender stereotypes in children when they become adults. The children will adopt them as the agreeable norms of the society; that is why Shellie and Sona perceive their fathers as weaklings. Shellie and Sona have adopted these socially constructed ideas that restrict the crossing of boundaries or reversal of prescribed roles.

Strength and bravado are attributes associated with manliness. For instance, *In Green Days by the River*, Shellie wishes that his weak father was as strong as the Indian Mr. Gindharee: "From the time we came to Pierre Hill, Pa had worked for a week, then fell sick. Somehow, I wished he was as big and strong as Mr. Gindharee, instead of always being in bed" (8). This type of patriarchal socialisation that lays emphasis on strength and bravado exaggerates the sense of masculinity

(Machismo). This is a type of masculinity which dwells on the repudiation of all attributes that display any sign of "weakness". Machismo orientation stresses on qualities such as aggressiveness, toughness and physical strength. In "Drunkard of the River", Anthony projects this exaggerated sense of masculinity in the antagonistic relationship between father and son. When Sona goes to pick his father at Assins's drinking shop, Mano reacts violently:

Mano looked up "What you come for?" he drawled. "Who send you?"  
 "Ma send for you."

"You! You" mother send you for me! So you is me father now, eh-eh?"

In his drunken rage the old man staggered towards his son. Sona didn't walk back. He never did anything that would make him feel stupid in front of the crowd. But before he realized what was happening, his father lunged forward and struck him on his temple. "So you is me father, eh? You is me father, now!" He kicked the boy. (4)

Mano reacts violently towards the son because that is the only way he could assert his dominance towards Sona. Aggression becomes the only way to cover his weakness. Mano's inability to provide for the family compounded by his drunkenness makes him feel less of a man in front of the son. Mano is aware that his son does not accord him (Mano) the respect he deserves as a father. Mano behaves like Craig in Anthony's *Streets of Conflict*. When Malisa turns him down and refuses a relationship, Craig turns violent. Like Mano who uses Sona as a scapegoat, Craig blames his woes on

Mark. Craig violently confronts Mark in spite of the latter's efforts to act as a peacemaker. Sona resorts to the same violence meted on him to kill his father. The mother and son's reaction enable us to get the ideal image that society expects fathers to portray. The son innocently compares his father's condition with other men while the mother becomes nostalgic about the father's state before the sickness.

The sons' and mothers' reaction in "Drunkard of the River" and *Green Days by the River* heighten the father's feelings of inadequacy. Sona's aloofness and contempt for the father, coupled with the mother's sympathy is detrimental to the father's self esteem. The sympathy shown by the mothers intensifies the pain rather than reducing it because of the way men are socialised.

Victor Seidler explains that men are taught at early ages not to display emotions "young boys learn to disassociate themselves from their experience at an early age" (113). He further notes that boys learn at an early age strategies of denial because they are not supposed to acknowledge the hurts they feel. Seidler points out that if a young boy falls on the ground, he learns to minimise the experience by saying it was nothing. Society tends to condemn any man who sheds tears in public which is perceived as a sign of weakness. This is best seen in most of the rites of passage like circumcision, which is perceived as a transition from childhood to adulthood. Crying during such a rite is perceived as a sign of weakness. No wonder, Shellie's father is uncomfortable with the sympathy from the wife and son:

- He just shrugged and turned his face towards the wall and stood looking

at him. From as far back as I could remember he had been ill - not throughout, but from time to time - and it was as though he was an invalid. And yet sometimes he would recover from the asthma and would be like any other man, and my mother would say he was as strong as a bull. She was always overjoyed to see him up. But he was never up for long. (11)

Shellie's father's discomfort is evident by the way he behaves. He is ashamed of facing his wife and son. The father's behaviour implies that men find it difficult to seek support when they are ill. They would prefer not to talk about the illness. Seidler aptly describes the father's condition "when men get ill they ask some deeper questions. They feel angry at their bodies that have somehow let them down" (xiv). It is our contention that sickness is perceived as a weakness because men are socialized to bear pain. Moreover, sympathy from the wife and son worsens the situation. It is denting the father's ego and self esteem as "a man". These are consequences of skewed masculine socialisation.

The situation that Shellie's father finds himself in is analogous to that of Tomasso - the protagonist in Namba Roy's novel, *Black Albino*. Tomaso (chief of the community) has to maintain his honour by fighting a duel he wanted to avoid. Tomasso is forced to fight with the evil Lango so as to maintain his dignity as the strongest warrior in the tribe. Lango challenges the chief to a fight before the latter's men. Tomasso is hesitant to fight despite taunts from Lango. However, because of the fear of being called a coward, he accepts the challenge. Roy explains that any display of pain or

cowardice by the Maroon warriors was really despised.

We now look at what happens to fathers who cannot fit into the gendered society.

### 2.3 I Need my Space: Escapism and Disillusionment

Anthony's male characters that are unable to fit into the patriarchal order resort to patterns of isolation. Fathers in *Green Days by the River* and "Drunkard of the River" have isolated themselves from their families and society. Furthermore, they have resorted to consumption of alcohol as a form of escapism. Consequently, the mothers and sons have carried the full burden of sustaining their families.

Fathers are experiencing intra-masculine conflict. Intra- masculine conflict happens when what is expected of men by virtue of their gender, is not what is attained. The fathers have been bred and socialised in a patriarchal society that does not condone any male weaknesses. Thus, the same society that respects the father for being dominant now castigates him (labels the patriarch weak and less masculine). Therefore, men like Mano in "Drunkard of the River" become pariahs and overindulge in alcohol consumption spending the little money they earn:

Every Saturday night Mano went out to the village and drank himself helpless and lay on the floor of the shop, cursing and vomiting until the Chinaman was ready to close up. Then they rolled him outside and heaven knows maybe they even spat on him. (1)

Mano is frustrated with life and wants to drink himself to death. He does not seem to accept that he has failed as a father. Anthony's greatest strength is the ability to

penetrate into the consciousness of his characters and act as an omniscient narrator. Anthony opens up the characters' hearts and minds so that we are able to understand the decisions they make and what motivates them to behave in a certain way. For instance, the agony that Mano has brought to the family is exposed when we penetrate the mind of Sona's mother: "She hated him for the way he drank rum and squandered the little money he worked for" (53). Mano's overindulgence in alcohol is causing a lot of agony to the wife and son because the little money Mano earns is consumed at Assin's liquor shop. We are thus able to sympathise with Sona and understand his contempt for his father. Sona's outburst to his mother when she commands him to bring his father initially appears to be rude on Sona's part but the intrusion in the young boy's mind reveals the dilemma he faces. Sona does not understand why his mother seems concerned about Mano who has brought agony to the family.

Anthony constantly leads us to Sona's inner thoughts as he struggles to fight his contempt for the father and obedience to his mother. We are able to understand the dilemma Sona faces. Despite his young age, Sona is being forced to undertake a responsibility that does not belong to him. No wonder he utters the word "Beast" several times, revealing his bitterness. Mano's irresponsibility has created a wedge between him and the son. Furthermore, it has polarised the family since Sona's mother supports the father while Sona does not. The disconnection between Sona and Mano arises because Sona feels that Mano is mistreating the mother. Seidler posits that a son becomes disconnected with his father when the son sees the mother abused (121). The mother is drained physically and emotionally because she is the sole provider in the

house. Seidler opines that the son feels guilty of not having the ability to defend his mother. Consequently, this leads to an emotional distance between the son and father. Seidler's observation explains why Sona hates Mano with a passion.

Unlike Sona, the mother is optimistic that Mano will one day change to his old self when she says: "She knew when he arrived back staggering, how she would shake with rage and curse him, but even so, how inside, she would shake with joy of having him safe at home" (2). The image we get of Sona's mother is that of a strong woman who courageously resists life's trials. Further, she assumes the role of the pivot of the family because of an irresponsible husband. It is important to note that this motif of the long suffering mother is also reminiscent of many Caribbean works. The women experience a lot of pressure because of the irresponsible men who avoid their responsibilities.

In Beryl Gilroy's novel, *BOY-SANDWICH*, Pandeau Clark is portrayed as an irresponsible husband. Clark's wife, Auntie Dora is a hardworking woman who is committed to her family but is let down by her husband who does not support her. Clark is always absent from home and engages in extramarital affairs, leaving the wife lonely at home. Gilroy describes Auntie Dora's plight as: "She is a kind woman, quiet and deep as a gubby to strangers but lovin' and givin'to family, especially to her husband although as things prove, he didn't worth it [sic]" (6).

In Trevor Rhone's *Old Story Time*, Miss Aggy is a strong mother figure who single handedly raises her son, Len. Len ends up becoming a prominent person in the community because of his mother's strict discipline. The father is absent and his

whereabouts are not mentioned. Like Miss Aggy, Mama Joy in Velma Pollard's *Homestretch* raises her daughter, Brenda; single handedly when they are abandoned by the father, Ivan Smith. Ivan Smith seems to avoid responsibility because when he is reunited with the daughter, Ivan avoids her. Brenda ends up being mistreated by her step mother and sister because of Ivan's absence. The protagonist in Lamming's novel *In the Castle of My Skin* also has an absent father. In the same novel, Miss Foster had six children, three by a butcher, and two by a baker, and one, whose father had never been mentioned. Like the mothers in our selected works, these women experience a lot of duress because of absent men in their lives. Furthermore, all these families are riddled with poverty and emanate from an economically marginalised race and background (African Caribbean).

Work plays an important role in the construction of Masculinity in men's lives. Men who are jobless or do not have jobs that can sufficiently provide for their families feel inadequate. They are unable to affirm their male identities of being providers and breadwinners. Linden Lewis explains the importance of work in the construction of masculinity to men in the Caribbean:

Men perhaps more than women, have tended to define their gender identity in part, through Work. Work is integral to the idea of winning the bread which men are expected to undertake. In the context of the Caribbean however, this breadwinning role appears to be more ideologically affirmed than real. It therefore becomes problematic for some men, if they do not participate in this construction of their

masculinity. In the context of high unemployment levels in the Caribbean, the idea of measuring one's masculinity in terms of one's ability to work becomes unsettling to the performance of masculinity. What happens when the expectation of working and providing for one's family is not an option? Are men no longer men, or do they feel less than men on such occasions...? Such insecurities impinge not only on those immediately affected by it, but also those indirectly touched by the phenomenon - namely spouses and children. Some men fear that unemployment threatens their masculinity, while others often take these problems home where they play themselves in dysfunctional ways. (11)

Lewis highlights the predicament faced by Caribbean men like Mano and Shellie's father. Mano's frustration seems to have been caused by lack of upward mobility due to stagnation in income levels albeit with a rising cost of living. In a flashback, Sona's mother gives us a different perspective of Mano as a responsible father in his earlier days. Sona's mother remembers those days with nostalgia: "She remembered that in his young days there was nothing any living man could do that he could not. In her eyes he was still young, He did not grow old" (2). Sona's mother is caught up in a dilemma whether to despise the husband who has turned from bad to worse. She also has a feeling of optimism that Mano might change and become his former self.

Mano's situation represents what the subjugated non -whites in the Caribbean undergo. Despite working for many years, Mano cannot still provide for the family.

The wife reveals that Mano earned peanuts: "She hated him for the way he drunk and squandered the little money he worked for" (2). Mano's over indulgence in alcohol in his sunset years shows that the patriarch has given up hope of improving his life. Assing's drinking place becomes a place where Mano can drown his sorrows always coming home drunk and violent.

Like Mano, Shellie's father in *Green Days by the River* also faces a similar predicament. The family's poverty is compounded by the patriarch's illness. With no other source of income, Shellie and his mother are forced to work while the father remains at home. Shellie's father feels that he is no longer a source of power and authority in the house because of his economic powerlessness. No wonder the father lacks authority to give Shellie permission to leave the house. Shellie has to go and seek permission from the mother who works far away at Plaisance. An intrusion into the young boy's inner consciousness reveals the father's helplessness:

My mother had already gone down to Plaisance, by the sea, where she worked in one of the beach houses. It was hardly any good asking my father about going to Mr. Gindharee's little place because if he said yes and my mother said no, it was no. I went into the house and there he was, lying on the little bed. This low, little bed was in a corner of the sitting room, and here was where he slept. He was awake now and he was breathing rather hard with asthma. (9)

The father is described as lying in a low little bed in the sitting room. This description

creates the picture of a man who is weak and has thus taken a subservient position. The father has taken a subordinate position in the family because he can no longer work. Moreover, the family belongs to a less privileged race with no other assets that can generate income.

The fathers (Mano's and Shellie's father) situation is reminiscent of the disillusionment exhibited by characters like Bigger Thomas in Richard Wright's *Native Son* or Xuma in Peter Abrahams' *Mine Boy*. These characters have been condemned to a life of poverty because of their skin colour. Although the contexts are different, (Caribbean, United States and South Africa) racism and class differences are analogous. South Africa and the United States' societies resemble the Caribbean because they have a similar history of European colonisation and hegemony. Hence, the common racial prevalence criteria on who benefits economically and politically. The men who are economically empowered exhibit hegemonic masculinity. Subjugated men, like most of the non-whites, on the other hand exhibit subordinate masculinity. This is because they do not have access to power, privilege and valued resources. These disparities trickle down to the family leading to an increase of dysfunctional families among the non-whites. Men like Mano in "Drunkard of the River" are born in pre-existing systems that have already categorized them as subordinate masculinities.

People or races exhibiting hegemonic masculinity dominate other masculinities and create cultural prescriptions of what it means to be a man. One of the cultural prescriptions is that a man should be economically empowered to provide for the family. However, class and race differences place the non-white

patriarchs at a disadvantaged position - the fathers are categorized as subordinate masculinities and are stigmatized by the society. Connell and Messerschmidt explain the challenges faced by men that are perceived to be inferior in a stratified society. They opine that hegemonic masculinity has a strong influence in the lives of men; 'as it embodies the most honoured way of being a man (829). Furthermore, most societies require all other men to position themselves in relation to it. Connell and Messerschmidt supposition infers that men from subordinate groups (low class African Caribbeans) have to struggle politically and economically with their privileged counterparts- White Caribbeans (Hegemonic masculinity is perceived in terms of dominance; while dominance is exhibited in terms of economic empowerment). Hence, Shellie and Mano are forced to live as the "Other" on the margins of their own societies.

Bonny Thomas argues that "Caribbean women encourage irresponsibility among their men" (50). This is because they tolerate the men's irresponsible conduct despite the anguish that it brings to them. This study agrees with Thomas' supposition because Sona's mother does not want to admit that her husband has a problem. For instance, her reactions to the father's deviant behaviours are rather perplexing: "Yet with Sona's mother it was different. The man she had married and who had turned out badly was still the pillar of her life. Although he had piled up grief after grief, tear after tear, she felt lost and drifting without him" (55). However, the mothers in "Drunkard of the River" and *Green Days by the River* are bound to get tired of their men's irresponsibility. Shielding these men from their deviant behaviours is not a solution but rather a postponement of the problem. These mothers are bound to follow the example of

Laura in Naipaul's *Miguel Street*. Laura chases away Nathanel for being a burden in the house.

Mano and Shellie's father are escapists like Craig's uncle in *Streets of Conflict*. Through the delineation of Craig's uncle, Anthony avers that escapism is not the solution. Craig's uncle decides to leave Trinidad for Brazil after the collapse of his marriage. In a conversation with Marisa, Craig reveals his uncle's hasty retreat from Trinidad and subsequent isolation in Brazil thus:

As she turned back to him he pretended he was looking at the building around. She said: "Mac said you are staying with an uncle here?" "Yes, I have an uncle up at Alto da Boa Vista. I am staying there. He is a bit lonely, you know."

"He is from Trinidad?" She asked, puzzled.

"Yes, of course. My uncle had a little-well he had a little wife trouble, and he just rushed away and came to Brazil. Funny, eh? He just came here just like that. He just disappeared from Trinidad and we had a letter from him here in Brazil. (6)

Craig's tone reveals his disappointment with his uncle. Craig is ashamed that his uncle had to run to Brazil because of a marital problem. That is why he feels uncomfortable to discuss the issue with Marisa. Craig's use of the expressions "just rushed away" and "funny, eh" implies that his uncle is an escapist. According to Craig, his uncle's marital woes do not justify the latter's reason to a life of seclusion in a far country. Through

Craig, Anthony lashes out at patriarchs (Mano and Shellie's father) who are not brave enough to face challenges. Escapism does not solve their problems, rather it worsens. Despite escaping to Brazil, Craig's uncle experiences a lot of depression. Anthony depicts that isolation is not the solution, rather it exacerbates the situation. Craig's uncle tries to divert his depression towards farming but to no avail: "planting was his passion. Since he arrived in Rio it was the only thing he gave himself to completely. It was the only thing he did in his spare time to keep the depression off his mind" (35). Similarly, Mano's stay at Assin's liquor shop does not solve his problems but rather it antagonizes the patriarch's relationship with the family members. Mano and Craig's uncle epitomise people who think alcohol and migration are antidotes to marital problems. Through portrayal of such characters, Anthony challenges the Caribbean male to avoid escapist tendencies. Although these men (Mano and Shellie's father) are misbehaving, society is also to blame for their misery. Society has denied Shellie's father and Mano any personal space and labeled them pariahs. That is why the fathers (Shellie's father and Mano) have isolated themselves. Moreover, society is not tolerant and fails to understand the fathers' predicament. It judges them harshly and expects them to assert hegemonic masculinity. For instance in "Drunkard of the River", Anthony describes the punishment meted on Mano after he had overindulged in alcohol. The owner, together with other patrons, would roll him out and even spit on him. Fellow men instead of observing that their colleague has a problem have already condemned him. No wonder, Mano's behaviour becomes a routine that finally leads to his tragic death.

Like Mano, Popo in Naipaul's *Miguel Street* is also resented by his fellow men

and even named a 'Man - Woman 'by Hat - because of the inability to take care of his family. In Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Unoka (Okonkwo's father) also receives a similar backlash from the strong traditional androcentric society. The society believes that Unoka has failed in his role as a patriarch. Unoka is lazy, and cannot work and provide for his family. Thus, he is perceived as an embarrassment to his clan and family. Masculinity is a hegemonic ideology thus it is crucial for men to sustain their self image in front of others. The self image is exhibited in factors such as wealth and leadership of one's family. Okonkwo strives hard not to be like his father by working hard. This makes him gain fame and status in the society. Okonkwo's effort to maintain the ideals of the patriarchal society become his hubris. Okonkwo kills a European and hangs himself rather than succumb to foreign domination (Okonkwo believes that men in the clan have become cowards). Like Mano and Shellie's father, Okonkwo is a victim of patriarchal ideologies. These men are united by one fear - rejection. By not meeting the ideals of the andocentric society, men are bound to be cast at the bottom of the social ladder.

In a patriarchal society like the Caribbean, irresponsible fathers who are engaged in deviant behaviours do not like to be corrected by their wives or children. The men feel that their authority is being questioned by people subordinate to them. This is an aspect of male ego emanating from patriarchy. Sona's mother would not dare correct Mano because she fears him. Anthony explains that it would be "fire" and "brimstone" if she tried to pick the father (54). Sona receives the "fire" and "brimstone" when he goes to collect the father. Mano assaults him. Fellow men are in a better position to correct him instead of taking advantage of his situation. Chinaman is happy

that Mano is bringing him profits: "Again and again, the Chinaman spoke to him about his words. Not that he cared about Mano's behaviour. The rum Mano consumed made quite a difference to Assing's account" (57). The other customers are more interested in Mano leaving, to give them peace of mind, rather than assisting him.

Despite his illness, Shellie's father continues to smoke and drink. Neither the mother nor the son can stop the obstinate patriarch. The father feels that they do not have the authority to decide for him. Ironically, the mother blames the son for drinking with the father. She does not have the courage to castigate Mano for his errant behaviour. Lewis notes that men speak to each other in a language they understand (3). She further points out that men speak to each other in words, actions and behaviour. Therefore, fellow men are in a better condition to assist the fathers (who feel that they have lost their authority in the family) through counseling. Nonetheless, the men have to first transcend their victimhood and become agents of their own emancipation.

#### 2.4 The Missing Father: *The Year in San Fernando* and "The Distant One"

In *The Year in San Fernando* and "The Distant One", Anthony portrays the father as being completely absent from the family. Francis's father passes away after falling ill while the father in "The Distant One" has not been mentioned. Albert's mother is the nerve centre of the family. These two families are dysfunctional because the missing parent impairs the proper functioning of the families.

The absence of the father in the family creates a void that cannot be filled by the mother despite her efforts to do so. In *The Year in San Fernando*, after the demise

of the father, young Francis and the mother are forced to shoulder heavy responsibilities that take a toll on them. Anthony's intrusion into the young boy's mind reveals the boy's sympathy to the mother. Francis's motivation for deciding to go and work in San Fernando is his mother's poor remuneration:

While I sat there, my thoughts confused, Ma began praising Mr. Chandles again. No one would have believed there was so much good in a man, but Ma went on talking. Then she changed to the subject of our own father, and how he died out and left her with four starving children and how God alone knew how hard she was fighting to raise us. That was true. I knew that, for one thing. When Ma talked like that I knew how hard she was fighting. People could not help seeing how Ma slaved. They said she would run her blood into water. Hearing this so often I seriously feared it would happen. I always thought, if it could happen, would it happen one of those days? I looked at Ma now and she gazed back at me anxiously hungry for the word. (5)

Despite his young age, Francis is forced to relocate to San Fernando because of the family's destitution. He has gone to work for the Chandles so as to supplement his mother's meager pay. Young Francis is expected to step into the shoes of the dead father which is a formidable task. In a flashback, Francis's mother acknowledges the important role the father used to play in the family: "Then she changed to the subject of

our own father, and how he died and left her with four starving children and how God alone knew how hard she was fighting to raise us" (5). Francis' mother reveals that since the father's demise, the family had gone through a lot of problems. Her decision to send young Francis to San Fernando shows that the family is stretched beyond limits.

Anthony's intrusion into Francis' mind reveals the conflict that he (Francis) is undergoing. Like Sona, Francis is in a dilemma. Despite being very young, he is being requested to leave his family and go and work in a strange big city. Anthony explicates the mother's desperation through her perception of the Chandles: "She talked about Mr. Chandles position at the Great Asphalt Company in La Brea, and about the loads of money he was making every month" (2). Francis' mother seems to think that her family problems would be solved if they linked up with the Chandles - through Francis. However, Francis suffers at the Chandles homestead while the family condition does not improve. Through the mother's character, Anthony shows that poverty can make one act in a desperate manner.

The absence of the father also brings to the fore the importance of other men in children's lives. In *The Year in San Fernando*, Francis forms a close attachment to Mr. Chandles perhaps because Mr. Chandles is the boy's guardian as Francis sojourns in San Fernando hence, a representation of the missing father (father figure). The respect is aptly captured in the way Francis behaves in the presence of Mr. Chandles in the bus. As Francis and Mr. Chandles are travelling to San Fernando, the young boy is afraid to speak to Balgobin (the conductor who was Francis' old friend). Francis is struggling to

impress the proud Mr. Chandles:

I remember the journey to San Fernando mainly through Balgobin, who was conductor on the first stage - to Rio Claro. Balgobin was an old friend, and he spoke to me quite freely, and Mr. Chandles kept looking at him in a certain way, and I could not answer Balgobin properly and I wished he could hush up. (4)

Francis does not want to disappoint Mr. Chandles in any way because the latter seems to have filled the void left by his absent father. However, when they reach San Fernando, Mr. Chandles becomes very hostile to young Francis. His behaviour leaves young Francis bemused. The young boy wonders how Mr. Chandles can be hostile to him yet Mr Chandles is the guardian. Young Francis lacks a father figure because of his father's demise thus he will opt for any man close to him. Despite interacting with Francis many times, Mr. Chandles is a disappointment. In fact the latter's presence intimidates young Francis:

From where I was I could hear him brushing his teeth very forcibly, and I could hear the tap water running and being sucked down the drain. Then the water stopped running and being sucked down the drain. Then the water stopped running and I didn't hear him for a while. Then came his footsteps, and when the front door opened and shut again, my heart was pounding. The next moment the gate was slammed. I was wildly glad. (38)

Anthony's vivid description of the contact between Francis and Mr. Chandles succeeds in creating mental images of anguish and trauma that the young boy silently undergoes. Mr. Chandles is supposed to be the young boy's guardian because he is the one who has brought him to work in a new environment. Moreover, he should also be sympathetic to young Francis' background. Hence Mr. Chandles should provide Francis with the parental love that the latter lacks instead of being callous.

Mr. Chandles' failure as a foster father is revealed when Francis meets the former's younger brother, Edwin. Francis highlights the stark contrast between the two brothers when Francis immediately befriends Edwin, Mr. Chandles' younger brother, the first time they meet because of his friendly attitude. Edwin's positive attitude provides the young boy with an outlet from the pressure he is undergoing in the house - both from Mrs. Chandles and the son:

Holy Thursday was the first time I saw Edwin, Mrs Chandles' other son. He came to bring Easter gifts to Mrs Chandles and when I saw him open the gate I had no doubt at all who he was. He looked so much like Mr. Chandles inside, it partly terrified me. I watched him as he came closer towards where I was watering the plants and stood up.

"Hello," he said.

I said. "Hello."

" Mayaro feller, eh? "

he said, laughing.

“Yes,” I said.

“Nice, nice!” he said, still laughing.

It easy for him to smile [sic]. He stood there for a moment and I went on self consciously watering the plants. All the time I was thinking how big he was and how much like, yet how very different, from the Mr. Chandles inside. (44)

Anthony contrasts the character of Mr. Chandles and Edwin by juxtaposing the scenes of their interaction with Francis. Mr. Chandle’s interaction with Francis leaves the young boy traumatised. On the other hand, Edwin’s friendly attitude makes Francis breathe a sigh of relief from the pressure at the Chandles’ homestead. The author avoids authorial intrusion to decide who among the brothers is better by allowing Francis’ observing eyes to pass judgment. The boy’s open consciousness contrasts the character of the two brothers. Francis’ reaction to Edwin depicts the lack of love that the young boy is experiencing in the Chandles’ homestead.

Through the use of contrast using the young boy Francis, Anthony underlines the importance of a foster father in the life of a child, particularly a child who has lost a biological father. Edwin epitomises the surrogate father that Francis lacks. In contrast, Mr. Chandles represents men who fail in their role as foster fathers.

“The Distant One” also depicts an absent father. Anthony does not mention about the father or even hint about his whereabouts. Albert’s mother is the sole provider in the household. Like in *The Year in San Fernando*, the family undergoes a lot of suffering. The eldest son, Albert, has gone abroad and there is a lot of gloom in

the family because of his absence. There are high expectations from the family that he would return and assist the mother in providing for the family. Anxiety in the family is quite evident because the mother always went to the post office to check if Albert had communicated. Her disappointments would also be openly registered whenever she did not find Albert's letter:

The boy had gone away for a few years only. He had been determined to go and he had worked and saved his own money. She had hoped he made good there because she had counted on his coming back and helping her with the small ones. And naturally she was longing to see him again. In the first place it was no easy letting him go ... [sic]. As it turned out the lady in the Post Office looked out and signaled No." The mother turned back with pain and took the road up the hill. Seeing that she was broken spirited the lady in the Post Office called out, perhaps tomorrow. (124)

There is gloom and sadness in the home because of the departure of the eldest son. The younger brother nostalgically remembers the last time his eldest brother was at home. He is deeply affected by Albert's absence. The family appears to be undergoing a lot of strain since the mother expects Albert to come back home faster and assist them. Despite the author not mentioning the father, his absence is clearly felt in the family. The family misses a father figure who would provide the physical and emotional needs. The mother had expected young Albert to fill that void. That is why she was hesitant to let the young boy leave. Albert has just been abroad for a few years and yet his absence seems to have

destabilised the whole family.

It is quite evident from our analysis of the two families that when there is an absent or weak father, pressure piles on the eldest child to fill that void. The mothers look upon the eldest children to shoulder the absent fathers' responsibilities. This exerts immense pressure on the young children because they are not mature enough. Furthermore, most of them are financially constrained as they are still trying to establish their lives. Shellie in *Green Days by the River* and Francis in *The Year in San Fernando* are forced to work to help sustain the family. In "Drunkard of the River", the mother seems to apply pressure on Sona because of the family's financial situation and the father's irresponsibility. Sona is forced to bear the shame and humiliation that his father displays in Assing's shop. Young children just like Sona, are commodified as they are used as tools of getting money.

In the next chapter, we critically interrogate the physical and psychological impact of the absent and weak father on the family.

## CHAPTER THREE

### EFFECTS OF ABSENT AND WEAK FATHERS ON THE FAMILY

#### 3.1 Introduction

In our previous chapter, we examined the portrayal of the father in Anthony's works. Anthony portrays the fathers in "Drunkard of the River" and *Green Days by the River* as physically present but emotionally alienated from their family members while the fathers in "The Distant One" and *The Year in San Fernando* are physically and emotionally absent from their families. In this chapter, we investigate how Anthony's treatment of the father affects the family. We derive our arguments from Anthony's novel, *The Games Were Coming*, which portrays the father as a strong figure. It is our contention that the author portrays a strong father figure in *The Games Were Coming* in contrast to *Green Days by the River* and "Drunkard of the River" purposefully to underline his social vision. In this way, Anthony is able to show the different manifestations of masculinity (exhibited by the father) on the family.

#### 3.2 Skewed Fatherhood: *Green Days by the River* and "Drunkard of the River"

The presence of involved parents more so fathers is requisite to the physical, social, mental and psychological growth of children. Traditionally, fathers have been regarded as the heads of the family. In this way, they had clearly defined roles to perform in the family such as instilling good morals and behaviour in their children.

However, fathers in “Drunkard of the River” and *Green Days by the River* behave to the contrary. Both fathers are poor role models to their progeny. The kind of “manliness” these two men exude portends great danger to their scions. This is because children learn through imitation. Michael Lamb avers that when children are raised by both parents who are playing their roles, the children grow positively (47). Lamb notes that such children have strong social, psychological and mental development. Lamb cites a study done by Ryan et al which affirms the importance of both parents in the growth of a child. The study discovered that good fathering had significant associations with positive development, independent of the effect of good mothering. Ryan’s study shows that parenthood is interdependent. The child needs both the father and mother for holistic development (physically, mentally, socially and psychologically). Therefore, Anthony’s exposition of children in dysfunctional families enumerates the hurdles they face in their growth and development with absent or weak fathers.

When fathers abdicate their responsibilities, their scions will tend to drift from them. For instance, fathers in “Drunkard of the River” and *Green Days by the River* are physically present but have emotionally abandoned their children. They have isolated themselves from other family members as well. Hence there is minimal interaction on a regular basis. Such fathers do not play a significant role in the development of their children. For example, Mano’s heavy drinking habit in “Drunkard of the River” is detrimental to his family, and more so to the son. The title of the short story itself is a

reflection of the irresponsible father. Sona has the tortuous responsibility of going to pick his drunken father at Assing's drinking den every Saturday. The drunken father has difficulties in reaching home because of excessive alcohol consumption. Anthony aptly describes Mano's condition whenever he was drunk: "His body was loose and weak now; his bones seemed to be turning to water" (58). The image we get is of a helpless man who needs assistance. However, Sona's mother fears to pick Mano because of the latter's loutish character: "She couldn't go up to the river now. It would be fire and brimstone if she went. But Mano had to be brought home" (54). Nonetheless, the mother, who epitomizes the assiduous matriarch found in Caribbean literature, remains faithful to her husband despite the suffering she undergoes to make sure that Mano reaches home safely. Therefore, the onus to pick the drunken father is left to Sona. It is a task young Sona detests but performs for fear of antagonising the mother. This is intimated in the acrimonious exchange between mother and son when the former sends the Sona to pick Mano:

Mano: "You have to go for you father, you

know," [sic] she said 'Who?'

'You!'

'Not me!'

'Who you tellin' not me,' she shouted. She was furious now. 'Dammit, you have to go for you father!' (55)

By always getting drunk and being unable to walk home, Mano is exposing the son to a bad environment. A drinking place is a haven for all kinds of shameful behaviours that

do not require the presence of a young boy. Therefore, when a child is exposed to such an environment by an elderly person, he/she will frequent similar places in the absence of the guardian or parent. For example, Shellie and his friends, in *Green Days by the River*, despite being minors have the audacity to enter a bar and demand to be served:

He went up to the bar-counter now and raised his brows to the bar-man and the bar-man gave a slight nod. He had already spoken to the bar-man about the drinks. Lennard was taller than either Joe or me and he could have passed for eighteen without too much trouble. Joe and I were obviously underage. We had all drawn up to the bar, beside Lennard. The bar-man went on attending to a few people and when he was finished he came to Lennard and said, "What you having, Sport?"

He kept his voice low. (55)

Shellie has fully adopted his father's behaviour. Goodman avers that both strengths and blights in grown-ups are acquired in childhood more so through the child's role model (207). We concur with Goodman because children meticulously observe their parents' every action. After all the progenitors are the parents most trusted confidants. Thus, when Sona grows up, nobody can stop him from drinking because he has watched his own father abuse alcohol. To the young boy, alcohol consumption is a manifestation of manhood. After all, the closest male in Sona's life consumes alcohol in the company of other men. Therefore, Sona's future will be marked by a similar cycle of penury like his father's.

In many parts of the world, many men perceive drinking and smoking as a

masculine behaviour. David Crawford blames such warped masculinity on socialisation in many societies (7). For instance, Bogart, in Naipaul's *Miguel Street*, like Mano exhibits "manliness" because he can hold his liquor and smoke in the eyes of the men of Miguel Street. Like Sona, this manifestation of manliness is detrimental to the young fatherless narrator. Mano is used as a vehicle through which the author addresses and reproaches parents who expose their children to drinking places.

Sona becomes accustomed to the violence that often occurred at Assing's drinking place. The violence is instigated by his drunken father: "True enough there was trouble in Assing's shop. Mano's routine was well underway. He staggered about the bar dribbling and cursing" (57). Mano has a penchant of initiating fights all the time. The father strives to assert his "manliness" through violence, albeit with little success. Some men tend to use violence to gain respect among other men. Sona reveals that Mano would often get into fights with other patrons because he liked insulting everybody "... He insults everybody. Last week Bolai kick 'im." (56). Other than making enemies galore, Mano is putting the son in a very precarious situation. Sona has to witness the father creating anarchy which leads to beatings meted on Mano. The young boy has the insurmountable task of intruding in brawls between drunken adults. To add salt to the injury, the father assaults him. Thus, Sona's hatred for his father becomes pathological. The suffering of the mother coupled with the assault by the father sends the young boy in rage. Sona's pent-up anger later explodes. In describing the rage of the young boy, Anthony notes that the father's assaults (on Sona) brought out the lion in him. Sona turns against the father and commits patricide at the river. The son replicates

his father's violent nature. Anthony describes the poignant moment vividly albeit leaving out the exact murder scene and Sona's subsequent incarceration. The mood is tense and there is a lot of suspense:

The wilderness of the mangroves and river spread out before the boat. They were alone. Sona was alone with Mano, and the river and the mangroves and the night, and the swarms of alligators below. He looked at his father again. Pa so you kick me up then eh? he said. (59)

This is quite a contrived paragraph because Anthony leaves us in suspense. We are left to speculate on what happens to Sona's father. Sona arrives home alone. We are not told of the whereabouts of his father. The paragraph clearly outlines that all is not well. The scene attempts to underline Sona's vengeance against a father who has been a bitter thorn in his flesh. This is implicit in Anthony's organization of his work. The internal monologue shows Sona's state of mind amidst the tension. Sona is very bitter with his father for assaulting him. Sona's bitterness is captured in the expression he utters "Pa so you kick me up" (59). The expression sets the climax of the young boy's murder of the father. The mood is best captured by the author's intricate use of images such as "wilderness of the mangroves", and "swarms of alligators". The subtle pattern of imagery hints on the evil that lies ahead. Such a heinous act would have been avoided if the father and child had a healthy relationship.

The tension in the family is further heightened by the mother's anxiety over the whereabouts of her husband and the boy's state of panic thus:

"Where is Mano?" his

mother cried out. 'He out there sleeping. He drank.'

The monster,' his mother said, getting up and feeling for the matches. Sona quickly slipped outside. Fear dazed him now and he felt dizzy .He looked at the river and looked back at the house and there was only one word that kept hitting against his mind: Police! Police! He knew what would happen. He felt desperate.

'Mano!' he heard his mother call to the emptiness of the house, 'Mano!'

Panic-stricken, Sona fled into the mangroves and into the night. (59)

In this scene, Anthony uses dialogue and description to reveal the character of Sona and also set the mood of the conflict between father, son and mother. The dialogue between Sona and his mother when he comes back without his father raises tension and anxiety in the house. The nuances of this conversation show that Sona has committed a crime. The exposition clearly depicts the guilty conscience that is haunting the young boy. Sona is in a state of panic and shock. He approaches the home with great trepidation. On the other hand, the father's absence and the son's confused state of mind make the mother worried. Sona's mother senses that something is wrong but cannot figure out what it is. This creates a lot of suspense and heightens the tense mood. Implicitly, Anthony suggests that Sona has harmed the father but falls short of telling us how. The mention of the police and Sona's subsequent disappearance are what gives us a hint that the young boy has committed a crime. This brings to fore Ramchand's earlier

argument that Anthony practises an art of a very subtle and powerful kind.

The distance between the father and son has created a physical and emotional detachment. Concurring with Goodman's comment, Mugubi in opines that: "Children are generally vulnerable to their parents. They can be abused physically; they can be manipulated psychologically and emotionally and thus made or broken by their parental figures" (*The Child Character in Adult Literature* 65). Mugubi's observation explains the damage Mano inflicts on his son. The abuses meted on the son by the father have turned Sona into a heartless person. Mano sets a precedent of violence in his homestead that comes to haunt him later. Thus, he (Mano) is adjudged to have failed in his role as a father. The death of Mano is symbolic of the need of fathers in contemporary Caribbean societies to evaluate the way they relate to their scions. Parents can predispose their scions to criminal behaviours as evident in the way Mano treats his son. The crime would not have happened if the father had mended the destructive relationship with the son. An intrusion into Sona's consciousness at the beginning of the story reveals his acrimony towards his father. The bitterness and hatred insidiously grow within him: "If he could have had his way, Mano would have been out of the house a long time now. His bed would have been the dirty meat-table in front of Assing's shop" (55). Hence, Sona had already exterminated his father mentally long before the scene at the river. In this story, Anthony does not treat Mano's death as a resolution to the problems facing the father but rather as a warning. Mano's death will not solve the family's problems but only adds more agony for the already overburdened mother. The message implicit in the father's death is that parents should cultivate healthy

relationships with their children.

Anthony's treatment of Sona is overwhelmingly sympathetic. The author neither condemns nor supports his actions. The author seems to suggest that we should not prejudge Sona. Hence Sona should not receive blatant condemnation for his actions. This is aptly captured in Sona's reaction after the crime: "His bones, too, seemed to be turning liquid. Not from drunkenness, but from fear. The lion in him had changed into a lamb. As he spoke his voice trembled" (59). Implicit in this description is that Sona is remorseful for what he has done. Moreover, he seems to have lost control of his reasoning and emotion. These are signs of an abused child who is suffering from depression and anxiety. Mano's behaviour impels Sona to commit the crime. Sona is not a criminal but rather a tragic character, whose actions are caused by circumstances beyond his control in hostile environment created by the father. Dennis Balcom refers to a state of mind such as Sona's as a depressive disorder (4). According to Balcom the condition occurs when a person's actions are driven by strong emotions rather than reason. This explains why Sona panics when he kills the father, Mano who has disregarded the advices of the people at the drinking place not to assault Sona:

'So you is me father, eh? You is me father, now!' He cried, and threw a kick at the boy. Two or three people bore down on Mano and held him of the boy [sic]. Sona put his hands to his belly where his father had just kicked him. Tears came to his eyes. The drunkenness was gripping Mano more and more. He could hardly stand by himself now. He was struggling to set himself free. The men held on him. Sona kept out of the

way.

‘Shame? Mano drawled. ‘An he is my father now,’ e modder send him for me. Let me go, he cried, struggling more than ever. ‘I’ll kill im.’ So help me God, ill kill im! They hadn’t much to do to control Mano in this state.

(58)

Mano’s assault on Sona shatters the respect that the son had for the father. Mano preys on the son’s vulnerability. When children are unduly shamed and harshly punished when innocent, they react to authority with resistance. Mano’s mistreatment of Sona makes the young boy to feel rejected. .

It is our contention that Sona has imbibed the culture of the tough-guy machismo from the father. Such a dimension of masculinity believes that violence begets violence-problems are solved through aggression and fighting. David Milner states that: “Observation of aggressive models increases the probability that the observers will behave in an aggressive manner...” (37). Mano’s upbringing of the child Sona has been consistent with the former’s violent character. For instance Mano’s love for physical brawls.

We can draw parallels to Sona’s situation with that of Manny in Roger Mais’ novel, *The Hills Were Joyful Together*. Manny grows up as a violent youngster. He is always engaged in violence. The yard environment where they live is a contributing factor. Nevertheless, the absence of a strong father figure also shapes Manny’s character.

The father, Bedossa is a weak father, who cannot manage his family. Bedossa, like Mano, has a penchant for instigating violence. Bedossa is a poor role model. Hence, he cannot correct his son because Manny looks down upon him. When Charlotta, his wife, asks him to correct the son, Bedossa argues that Manny's fate is in the hands of the law and that he is bound to end up in prison. Like Sona (who kills his father), Manny ends up being violently wounded in a street fight while Bedossa is crushed by a train as he escapes from a brawl.

Like his father, Sona is also suffering from paranoia that is endemic in the household. This paranoia has created antagonism among the family members. Hence the family is balkanised. Both Mano and the wife display a belligerent attitude towards Sona yet it is the father who is misbehaving. Thus, Sona has been ostracized by the people closest to him and does not have any outlet to communicate his problems. Sona is alienated like his father. Consequently, Sona rebels against parental authority. The void left by a loveless childhood is exacerbated by an abusive father. Sona neither finds love at home nor outside the home. Home, should be one of the places where one finds solace. However, Sona's home becomes a repository for most of his problems. Thus, the young boy adopts a stoic character of keeping to himself. Anthony reveals that Sona's character was a farce: "Nobody could tell what went on below the calmness of his face. Nobody could guess that hate was blazing in his mind" (58). Indeed throughout the story, any dialogue between Sona and any of his parents is characterised by animosity. Through the antagonism between Sona and the parents and the subsequent murder of the father, Anthony cautions parents to have proper

communication with their children. Anthony deplors the behaviour of parents who prefer to distance themselves from their progeny. The author castigates parents who do not like listening to their children. Before Sona commits the crime, he tries to reason with the mother not to allow him to pick Mano. Sona is candid with the mother that Mano does not need any sympathy. However, young Sona's plea falls on deaf ears. The mother is adamant that Mano must be brought home. In a nutshell, Sona's action is as a result of an emotionally unfulfilled childhood. The parents (especially the father) fail to offer a good environment for their son's growth and development. Balcom aptly captures Sona's situation. He alleges that failure to have role models cause boys and girls to be withdrawn and lack social cohesion (3). Therefore, Sona might turn out to be a father who avoids responsibility.

Sona's situation is reminiscent with that of the girl in Braithwaite's short story "Minutes of Grace" in Andrew Salkley's *West Indian Short Stories* (1960). The girl, despite being a stranger at the bar, opens up her story to the protagonist, Richard Thwaite. She reveals to Thwaite that she had been abused and chased from home by her father. Moments later she commits suicide by running past a speeding vehicle. Thwaite is left with pangs of guilt because he feels he should have prevented that suicide. However, like Sona, the girl's pent up frustrations had reached soaring heights because of growing up in a dysfunctional family.

Like Mano, Shellie's father in *Green Days by the River* is an avid drinker of alcohol- a behaviour that his son imitates. In *Green Days by the River*, Shellie's father smokes before the son although in the mother's absence "The ridiculous thing

was that he kept hiding his tobacco from Ma. But little did he know that tobacco was the worst thing to hide since the place reeked of it" (11). Shellie's father is a very obstinate character. Despite suffering from asthma, he still insists on smoking. Paradoxically, it is young Shellie who reminds the father that the mother had outlawed the latter's smoking habit: "Ma say you mustn't smoke" (11). By refusing to bring the pipe, young Shellie behaves in a more responsible manner than the father. Moreover, Shellie's reasoning is more sensible than the father's. The father clearly understands that smoking is detrimental to his health yet he insists on sending the son for the pipe. The situation is very ironic. Shellie is not supposed to remind the father about the sanctions for smoking- reporting to the mother. It is supposed to be vice-versa. By virtue of his age and position in the family, the father is supposed to foster an ethic of care and good judgment in the home. Shellie's father does the contrary. He even has the temerity to send the son for alcohol in the presence of the mesmerized mother thus "Shell!" my father called. I went back. He said, "First things first. Bring that bottle." don't bring a bottle here," my mother said. "We'll have a hell of a row here this Christmas morning. You just wake up and you talking about taking rum!"(126). Such demeaning character traits (by the father) are a gross negation of good parenting. Moreover, it is hard to fathom how a sick father can drink alcohol with the son.

Ironically, the mother is left with the dual role of ensuring son and father maintains order. Allport notes that children imitate their parent's attitude because they identify with them as well as want to please them. Shellie imitates the father's smoking habit. The vice is further heightened by the young teenager's youthful curiosity.

Shellie explains: "Everything was so delightful, walking with my friends in the park, going down to the church. Smoking all the way feeling merry" (122). It is paradoxical that Shellie and his friends are heading to church in their current state. They are a blemish to the church.

Anthony uses this scene to reveal the loss of morals by Shellie. The young boy has become discourteous to the extent of disrespecting the church. However, we do not blame the children but rather the father. Like Mano, Shellie's father is a reflection of parents who are poor role models to their children. Shellie's father is an embodiment of poor parental role modeling. The situation is further exacerbated by the father's closeness to the son. Shellie's closeness to the father brings more harm than good. Note that initially, Shellie was warning his father against smoking. According to the young child, Shellie, his mother was against smoking. However, Shellie's father cannot leave the house. Therefore, he spends most of the time with Shellie when the mother goes to work at Plaisance hence having more influence on the son. The father introduces the son to alcohol. The father consumes alcohol with Shellie-an action that really angers the mother:

My mother, always having premonitions and dreams, had been very fearful. Pa tried to pretend he was not feeling too badly, and not having much pain, but she knew the truth. She was very sore with me for the very little things which might have helped Pa on the way to this. She was sore about my drinking with him on New Year's Day and for having brought him the water-nut, and for letting Joan make him stay up late.

My father said this was all nonsense, and he had been hell bent to enjoy Christmas anyway, for who knew who would see another one? (166)

It is important to note the father's negative impact on the son through Shellie's character progression. In the earlier scene, we note that Shellie is rational and well mannered. The young boy has relentlessly tried to dissuade the father from smoking. However, in this scene we encounter a different Shellie. The young boy has been influenced by the father to the extent of drinking alcohol. Shellie's change of character reaffirms Mugubi's argument that children can be manipulated by their parents positively or negatively (*The Child Character in Adult Literature* 65). Shellie's situation is analogous to that of Sona. Both boys strive to evade their fathers' irresponsible traits but are unable.

Therefore, it is evident that Anthony depicts the obstinate nature of Shellie's father. When the mother castigates the son for drinking with the father, the latter feels no remorse. Moreover, he justifies the drinking using sickness as an excuse. The father's argument that he was consuming alcohol because death was knocking on the door is warped. The father is just being an escapist. Having an illness whether terminal or not is not a necessary antidote for smoking or taking alcohol. To Shellie's father, sickness coupled with his inability to get a job has exacerbated his frustration. Nonetheless, the patriarch does not seem to understand that in the eventuality of his demise, he would leave behind his child. It is our contention that Shellie's closeness to the father brings more harm than good. By consuming alcohol with Shellie, the father is setting a bad precedent. We are therefore not surprised when Shellie gets drunk

and becomes unconscious:

All this while she was talking she was out in the kitchen. It was broad daylight and I had opened my eyes and I found I had been sleeping on the little bed. My father had again slept in the bedroom and now he was already up and changed and out in the sitting room. I wanted to ask him who had brought me home but I did not. I was feeling awful. I had a headache and it was as if there was a typhoon inside my guts. Since my mother had mentioned Freddie I guessed it was Freddie who had brought me home last night. I had been determined not to get drunk and that was what had happened! I half lay, half sat upon the little bed and I was feeling deep remorse. (138)

It is a pity that young Shellie has habitually taken to smoking and taking alcohol at his tender age. The young boy seems to be moving towards addiction. It is quite alarming when a young boy like Shellie becomes drunk and loses his state of mind. Shellie informs us that he had been determined not to get drunk. This implies that he has no control of how his body consumes alcohol. Consequently, Shellie wakes up with hangovers as a result of excessive alcohol consumption. The young child Shellie confesses that the alcohol had taken toll on his body. Shellie suffers from insomnia and loss of appetite:

I just was not feeling hungry any more. Maybe the trouble was I had not slept enough. I was feeling very vomity and without the vomit

even coming near. It was a long time since last I had felt this way. I drank up the coffee and left everything else and went and lay down.

(139)

The lethargic state of Shellie's body is a pointer to the adverse effects that alcohol can have on the body. Shellie's family is experiencing hardship because the father cannot work yet the young boy is adding more problems. The mother's little salary will not be able to support the family and take Shellie to a rehabilitation centre. Moreover, Shellie is supplementing the family's income by picking cocoa. Shellie even laments about the difficulty of getting a job. He is forced to work in a cocoa plantation: "I found no regular work, but at this busy Christmas time I was again picking cocoa on Gordon Grant's estate" (104). Therefore, consumption of alcohol may render Shellie jobless or deplete the little money he earns. Ironically, the father who has caused all that anguish "seems to be very concerned". The father is haunted by guilt yet Shellie has learnt that habit from him. He pretentiously asks Shellie if he was fine: "Want a little coffee?" my father said. "I looked up at him. I saw he was watching me closely" (138). Shellie's father has come face to face with the reality that his son has emulated his behaviour albeit with graver consequences. We can argue that the father's attitude is pretentious because consumption of alcohol between son and father had become habitual. Therefore Shellie's father should not be surprised by the son's state. Shellie describes drunkenness as being very normal "I had a drink with my father, and then I went back into the yard. And then feeling completely idle, I went out into the road" (127). Shellie's situation is

worsened by idleness. Shellie reveals that he is very idle. Shellie has dropped out of school because of the family's penury caused by the father's illness. However, instead of the father engaging the son with constructive activities, like Leon's father in *The Games Were Coming*, the father consumes alcohol with the son.

Shellie seems to have absolutely repudiated the mother's advice. He once again has the temerity to get drunk in front of his bemused mother. It is important to note that this is the second time Shellie has taken to drinking. Moreover, the mother's belated concern does not seem to puzzle Shellie. After all, Shellie is cognisant of the fact that the father approves his drinking behaviour:

After much staring about, my eyes found hers again. She was looking at me and she had a faint, disbelieving smile on her face.

"What's it now, Ma?"

She just shook her head. Then she said, "So you does go out now and drink and get drunk?"

Since you working in the cocoa you is a big man?"

"I wasn't really drunk? You know."

"Who wasn't drunk? You asking me or telling me!" "I only had about two or three little drinks..." (123)

The dialogue between son and mother reveals that the latter is amazed by the extent to which the son has turned to alcohol. Shellie's mother castigates him. However, we

believe it is an exercise in futility. The blatant condemnation does not seem to impact on the young boy because Shellie knows that he has the support of his father. It is also important to note that Shellie has adopted his father's stubbornness. Despite getting drunk, Shellie does not acknowledge his mistake. Previously, we had seen the father justifying why he consumed alcohol. The similar pattern of behaviour exhibited by the father and son bring to fore Peter Marris' assertion about the importance of object relations to identity:

The relationships that matter most are... to particular people whom we love - husband or wife, parents, children, dearest friend and sometimes to particular places. These specific relations, which we experience as unique and irreplaceable seem to embody most crucially the meaning of our lives. We grow up to look for such relationships. If we cannot find them, our lives seem empty... pleasure, ambition, ideals, career tend to lose their interest or their purpose without this context of unique personal bonds. (185)

The stubbornness exhibited by Shellie is clearly utilized by Anthony to indicate how adults influence the lives of their progeny. Shellie has modeled his behaviour from the father. Thus, as the "man" in the house, Shellie has the liberty to enjoy his drink and assert his masculinity. Shellie's mother seems to remind the young boy of his rightful position that he is simply a child to be taken care of.

Anthony portrays the impact of skewed masculine socialisation on young

children. By criticizing Shellie's drinking behaviour, the mother seems to suggest that one does not need to prove his masculinity by drinking. In contrast, the father sees no harm in his son taking alcohol. The dialogue reveals the differing perspectives of the two spouses on Shellie's consumption of alcohol:

You know you aint have no head for rum [sic]," she said.

"When you go out for God sake don't drink!"

I remained quiet.

My father said, "Let the boy strive. This is Christmas."

"Yes, but he can't drink at all, and when this sort of thing happen, well you don't know what could happen to him. I mean I really getting frightened for him. (137)

Shellie's mother foresees disaster looming large because of Shellie's consumption of alcohol. The image we get is of a mother who cares for the son's wellbeing. The mother envisages a better future for the son whereas the father seems to be short sighted. By encouraging the son to take alcohol while the family wallows in poverty, the father does not care about Shellie's life. Shellie already faces a bleak future having dropped out of school. Alcohol addiction would aggravate further Shellie's problems. Despite the mother's warning, Shellie sneaks out from the house and consumes alcohol again. Surprisingly, the young boy, Shellie, had just experienced serious withdrawal symptoms from earlier drinking. Thus, the mother's fears are turning into reality. Shellie is exuding signs of addiction:

After a while I got up and crept softly to the cupboard and poured myself a huge drink of rum. I was hoping to knock myself out so I could get to sleep and forget... And then I began to slide into dizziness and slowly it became as though my mind was being transported. A wave of carelessness and pleasure began to engulf me. I knew I was growing drunk from rum. I started remembering...It must have been shortly after this that the rum knocked me flat. (140-141)

Note that this is the third time that we are observing Shellie's obstinate nature - reflection of the father. It is rather sad that Shellie's father has contributed to his son's maladjusted behaviour. Like Sona, Shellie's life is in trouble. The different instances that Shellie consumes alcohol in spite of the mother's warning, affirm our earlier argument that fathers' have a stronger influence on their sons lives than mothers. Shellie's refusal to heed the mother's warning is a reminder to fathers to be very careful on how they behave before their children. Boys will normally want to identify with their fathers' than the mothers' behaviours. Fathers who avoid disciplining their children also end up tragically. They experience the wrath of their irresponsibility. Mano is killed by Sona, Bedossa is crushed by a train as he is pursued by an enemy. Shellie's father's health deteriorates because of abusing drugs and alcohol in spite of being asthmatic.

It is rather unfortunate that fathers like Mano and Shellie's father are encouraging their children to consume alcohol. Drug addiction and alcohol consumption are menaces that governments all over the world are struggling to fight

against. This is due to the effects that these substances have on the citizens: poverty, death, addiction, road carnage and broken marriages. Today, our country, Kenya is groping with a problem of illicit brews which have killed and blinded many people. Furthermore, it has led to breakages of homes. Most of the cases are rife in poor neighborhoods; most of the victims are men. Like Mano and Shellie's father, these men have resorted to the abuse of alcohol because they feel emasculated. Complaints and demonstrations have been witnessed especially by women lamenting that their men have lost their virility due to consumption of illicit brews.

In Kenya, just like in the Caribbean, work is an important element in the construction of masculinity. Most of the men are either unemployed or underemployed. According to Kenya's newspaper, *The Daily Nation* in the year 2012, the unemployed constituted 40 % of the population (2). Hence, the government is struggling to grapple with these challenges. There have been many suggestions from psychologists and sociologists on how to combat this menace. Parliament, at the behest of Naivasha legislator John Mututho in 2010, instituted a law that controls the hours that people can take alcohol (*Wednesday Daily Nation*, January 19, 2011, pg 20). The law is called The Alcoholic Drinks Control Act ( Mututho Law). The law also seeks to legalise traditional brews. The legislator's action was prompted by the alarming increase of deaths and blindness's caused by the illicit brews. Ironically, despite all these measures, some slum dwellers interviewed have vowed to continue taking those brews.

Nelly Gitau explains that the implementation of the alcohol law might be an

exercise in futility (*The STAR*). We agree with her assessment. This is because the Kenyan government is not addressing the underlying causes of this problem. The root causes are the socio-economic disparities that exist in our society. Kenya, like most Caribbean countries, has a population that is struggling economically. There are escalating rates of unemployment and poverty (consequences of urbanization). Men are mostly affected because they are unable to fulfill their traditional roles. Therefore, traditional patriarchy has been affected. This explains the high prevalence of illicit brew consumption among the men in the slum areas. The children in these families, just like Sona's and Shellie's families, are bound to contend and continue perpetuating the patterns of irresponsibility because the cycle of poverty will be transferred to them.

Apart from marriage breakages, society is also breeding dangerous criminals. For example like the young boy narrators in Anthony's works, Saddam Hussein and Adolf Hitler had absent fathers and lived in dysfunctional families. These two men committed heinous crimes that shocked the world. In *Saddam: The Secret Life*, writer Con Coughlin describes Saddam's earlier life:

The enduring controversy, however, concerns not so much the date of Saddam's birth as the whereabouts of his father, Hussein al-Majid, a poor landless peasant...most of the biographers and profiles previously published on his life have intimated that he was an illegitimate child. (3)

Saddam never knew his father hence lacked a consistent male role model against which he could develop his own masculinity. Saddam was also abused when he was

young by his stepfather. Like Sona, he learnt to reaffirm his masculinity through violence. Such people use violence to try to compensate for the rejection they received at an earlier age. Like Sona and Shellie, Saddam suffered from emotional, psychological and physical deficiency because of an absent father. Coughlin highlights "...the fact that Sadaam had to endure the absence of his natural father throughout most of his childhood was a cause of great distress...(5). Consequently, the former dictator committed atrocities that not only shocked but also destabilized the world. David Ferriby and Jim Mc Cabe highlight that Adolf Hitler was born in a dysfunctional family with a missing father amidst a lot of poverty (192). They muse that young Hitler grew up as a bitter and frustrated young man. Such incidents can be avoided if all parents take an active role in raising their children.

Lamb explains that: "the best adjusted adults were those who in childhood had warm relationships with effective mothers and fathers in the context of a happy marital relationship" (24). Children from dysfunctional families are deprived of either paternal or maternal love.

### **3.3 The Problem Child: Children Used as Pawns**

When there are problems in the family, some parents project their frustration and anger on their children. Moreover, these parents may burden their children with responsibilities that do not belong to the latter. In "Drunkard of the River" and *Green Days by the River*, parents blame the children for the family's dysfunction yet the problems emanate from the father. The children become scapegoats for their

progenitor's shortcomings.

In "Drunkard of the River" Sona has an onerous duty of picking his father at Assing's drinking place every Saturday. His mother insists that he must pick his drunken and rowdy father. Although we sympathise with the mother and understand her predicament, Sona should not be the one to pick his drunken father whenever he is drunk. Sona has assumed the role of the father. Sona's mother thus turns to the son to normalize things in the polarized household albeit with crudeness: "She was furious now. Dammit, you have to go for your father!"(55). Sona's mother is projecting her anger towards the son. The mother is bitter with the Mano because he wastes all his money at the drinking haven: "She hated him for the way he drunk rum and squandered the little money he worked for" (55). Hence Sona is being used as a scapegoat. We contend that Mano has become an opportunist. Mano knows very well that whenever he drinks excessive liquor, the son will come to pick him. Ironically, the father is vindictive to the son, who is coming to assist him.

Shellie's mother, like Sona's mother, seems to heap the blame on the son whenever Shellie drank alcohol with the father: "She was sore about my drinking with him on New Year's Day ..." (166). Shellie's mother should not blame the son if the father is drunk. In fact the father should be condemned. However the mother seldom blames the husband. On Christmas day, when Shellie's father offered the son a drink, the mother heaped the blame on the son. The children are used as scapegoats to cover the fathers' weaknesses. By heaping the blame on the children and not confronting the father's, the women seem to exacerbate their husbands' problems. Moreover, the mothers

seem to be sending wrong signals to their sons. Although the mothers (Sona and Shellie's mothers) sympathise with their husbands, they should desist from diverting their anger towards their children.

Margret Kabiru and Anne Njenga posit that "Children's personalities are shaped by the treatment they receive from their parents. When they feel loved, accepted, encouraged and respected, they develop self confidence, high self-esteem and are able to portray their true personalities"(6). Thus Sona and Shellie's parents are destroying their children's character.

Apart from the mother, Shellie's father also uses the son as a scapegoat. The father condemns Shellie's efforts of trying to supplement the family income. This comes despite the family wallowing in poverty. The father wants Shellie to do a white collar job yet Shellie has dropped out of school:

He said, "So you didn't try to get the job in Port-of-Spain again?"

"Pa, that is hopeless,"

"Well, what sort of ambition you have, to go and work

picking cocoa [sic]!" I said nothing.

"You used to say you want to be all sort of big thing-lawyer, doctor, big profession. That is how you'll be a lawyer?-working in the cocoa field?"

"I know, pa was all I could say. He ought to have realized that my having said I would be a lawyer, or a doctor, was just wishful thinking.

At least you have to have education and go to some college  
or something to be any of those things. (91)

The nuances of this conversation portray the character of Shellie's father. The father is delineated as irrational, egoistic and has double standards. Shellie's father is irrational because he condemns the young boy yet Shellie has been forced to work because of his inability to provide for the family. Lamentably, Shellie has to spend most of his time with the father.

The character of Shellie's father is reminiscent of that of Lucille in Janice Shinebourne's *The Last English Plantation*. Lucille wants to achieve status and upward mobility through her daughter June. Lucille therefore puts pressure on June to succeed in life. Shellie's situation is even worse because he has dropped out of school. After all, Shellie is playing the father's role. Through Shellie's consciousness, we are left to question the profundity of the father's wisdom. Shellie is more sagacious than the father. Unlike his father, Shellie, in spite of his young age, is aware that you need an education to become a doctor or lawyer. The dialogue between Shellie and his father reaffirms the father's hypocritical nature. Shellie's father does not condemn him when he comes home drunk yet he wants Shellie to be a doctor or lawyer. He pretends to envisage a better future for the son. The father should sympathize with the young boy Shellie and even give him hope. Shellie is working for Mr. Gindharee because of the former's family destitution. The penury emanates from the father's inability to sustain the family. Therefore, we can conclude that the father is a thankless

man. Although children are seen to be their parents hope for the future, the father should contribute towards that hope. The young boy Shellie is used as a vehicle through which Anthony castigates such parents.

Balcom avers that the failure to have role models causes boys and girls to be withdrawn and lack social cohesion (3). Human beings are social and society has written and unwritten rules. Hence, Shellie and Sona cannot adequately fit in the society because of their juvenile delinquency. The delinquency emanates from their fathers not instilling in them appropriate behaviour.

### 3.4 The Model Father: *The Games Were Coming*

There is a stark contrast between the father in *The Games Were Coming* and his counterparts in “Drunkard of the River” and *Green Days by the River*. Anthony depicts a strong bond between father and son in *The Games Were Coming*. The rapport is maintained because the father is not absent or weak. Leon’s father is an epitome of good fathering.

Ramchand describes the relationship between Leon and the father as unique in Caribbean literature “In one of the most moving presentation of the relationship between father and son in West Indian fiction, Anthony shows the old man ever present as discreet friend, coach, brother almost to the ardent Leon” (*The West Indian Novel and its Background* 49). Unlike the fathers in *Green Days by the River* and “Drunkard of the River”, the father has a very cordial relationship with the family. Every day after work, the father would make sure that he would join Leon for a training session. Anthony

describes the father's sentimental involvement in Leon's training session:

He walked away feeling quite light-hearted. Somehow it felt very special being here these days. It was not the first time he felt it, but it was more pronounced this afternoon. Perhaps it was just because the games were coming. He did not know. It was a sort of carefree excited feeling. Sometimes he was ashamed about it because this was something for the young people. But it was the way the park made you feel, he thought: it was not himself, it was just the way the park made you feel. (60)

Leon's father is interested in his son's activities. The father is able to balance discipline with fun. Cycling is a hobby that Leon loves. The father makes sure that the hobby instills discipline in him. He makes sure that Leon takes his hobby to a higher level since he competes in the prestigious Blue Riband event.

We argue that the father uses the cycling event as a teaching experience to the young boy about life and its challenges. Leon's father inculcates in his son a culture of self-sacrifice and dedication. The Southern Games coincide with the Carnival—a festival that is revered in the Caribbean. In *The Games Were Coming*, Anthony describes how the Carnival had a strong grip on the people: “For the ordinary people, Carnival meant two days of abandon and release” (95). Therefore as Leon prepares for the cycling contest, he undergoes what Ramchand calls “a regime of self denial” (145). The young boy has to make tough choices. Hence Leon is torn between going to the

Carnival and preparing for the race. Leon's girlfriend Sylvia wants to attend the Carnival and she heaps more pressure on Leon. Like most people in the town, Sylvia is an ardent fan of the festival. An intrusion into Sylvia's consciousness- reveals the growing Carnival fever and her desire to be at the festival:

She smiled as she thought of the things Carnival made people do... Even people like herself, people you could call cool and easy-going could be just as crazy about Carnival. Of course she never jumped-up in Carnival bands in the daylight, and that was only natural. Some people could do it and some people wouldn't and there were others who just couldn't help themselves. She was the reserved type and couldn't bring herself to serenade in the daylight. She was just made that way. Of course in the night it was a different matter. The night made shadows of everybody. You could jump in the band, then, and let yourself go and the night was like a blanket over you. And the next morning nobody could say he saw you in the band last night. You could take people to the court-house for that. She chuckled. This Trinidad! She thought. There was a lot of pretence around. And yet, what was there wrong with it? That was life. (98-99)

Sylvia's account of the Carnival best describes the torment that has engulfed young Leon's mind. Her reaction is a representation of any young person's youthful desires to go out and have fun. Thus as a young man, Leon craves for similar youthful exploits

that are found at the Carnival. Furthermore, Sylvia feels that the cycling competition has made Leon reject her. Sylvia's thoughts reveal her feelings towards Leon: "If Leon only knew! She thought. And then she wasn't sure he would have done anything about it, had he known. "Bicycle is his woman!" she said aloud" (119).

Nonetheless, Leon sticks to a rigorous training schedule: "he churned the pedals round till the sweat dripped from his forehead onto the track" (48). Leon's father assists him during this difficult period. He makes sure that his son is not affected by the atmosphere of the Carnival, which has engulfed the town. He guides Leon by putting more emphasis on the games rather than the Carnival. Leon's father leads by example by being beside Leon every day after work. This helps the young boy Leon not to be distracted by his peers or girlfriend. Leon's father takes full responsibility of servicing Leon's cycling bicycle. He oils, wipes, tests and tightens all the nuts. Furthermore, the father takes his son to the park for training:

They were both taking this very cheerfully and there was this understanding between them. After a while, the boy got up from the steps and went inside, and the father, after securing the old bike properly under the house, took a small oil-can down from a ledge and went to the blue Wasp. (14)

Through Leon's father, Anthony demonstrates that young people need a lot of guidance to wade off negative peer influences. For instance In *Green Days by the River*, Anthony pinpoints the influence of peers on young people. Shellie's drinking habits are

encouraged by his peers; Lennard and Freddie "... and Freddie bought wine and Lennard had fetched a flask of Vat 19 rum and we had drinks and Freddie gave us cigarettes" (121). Leon's father is wise enough to know the strength of peer pressure. That is why the father makes sure that he is physically present at the training ground. The author's intrusion into Leon's thoughts reveals the young boy's shift from the Carnival to cycling:

Cycling had lately become the most precious thing in the world. It had become everything to him. Sometimes he had thought about this and could not understand it. Before, he could never make himself think of sport in the Carnival season. Now his whole ambition lay on the cycle track. All he wanted to do was ride and be out in front at the bell, and at the end, to beat everybody. (8)

Leon's bemusement at his latest attitude to the Carnival attests to the paternal influence on the latter's life. Perhaps Leon's father is aware of the danger of young people going to the Carnival. In fact Leon's little brother, Dolphus has to sneak out of the house to attend the Carnival. This shows that the father does not approve of his children attending the Carnival at night. To Leon, Cycling becomes an antidote to the Carnival. Sylvia's earlier description of the atmosphere at the Carnival "the night made shadows of everybody" and "nobody could say he saw you" suggests that some people would use the festival for evil motives. No wonder Sylvia gets impregnated by her employer, Mohansingh, when she was in the Carnival mood. Through Sylvia's pregnancy,

Anthony seems to confirm that Leon's father's decision to involve the son in the race was timely. The pregnancy traumatises Sylvia. She is in a dilemma whether to procure an abortion or cheat Leon the child is his. As Sylvia slides into immorality, Leon trains hard because he does not want to disappoint his father. The father's presence enhances the son's self esteem:

He glanced at his father's face. They were two big powerful men and the boy was always proud to walk along with his father. The boy wondered if he had spoken harshly, when he had spoken a moment ago. "Listen I want you to give me a good work-out today, see?" "Sure" the father said.

(18)

Leon's father acts as a mentor and companion to the son. Grimm Wassil et al (qtd in Balcom) explain the importance of parents exposing their children to extra-curricular activities. Grimm Wassil et al allege that such activities, encourage independence, promote exploration and risk taking (qtd in Balcom 3). Therefore, instilling in children aggressive or assertive behaviour is not encouraged since aggression or assertion impacts negatively in behaviour development. For instance, Leon's father instills in the son the spirit of competition and hard work, which are positive virtues as opposed to aggression. Moreover, children will want to please their parents because they identify with them closely. Leon's father takes the Leon's hobby very seriously. Hence Leon will not want to disappoint him:

He put on his trouser clips, and the father went down stairs for the

blue Wasp. The father's heart was pounding a little as it did every evening at this time. Would Leon make the grade this year? He asked himself. That was a question nobody could answer. The Blue Riband Fifteen Mile was always a funny race. It was an "Open" race and all sort of cyclists took part in it. (16)

By involving himself in the son's hobby, Leon's father is exerting a sense of authority over his son in a positive way. It will thus be very difficult for Leon to disobey him. Leon's father does not need aggression, like Mano, to assert his authority over the son.

Sylvia's pregnancy and Leon's success reaffirm our earlier argument that parents do play an important role in the lives of their children. If Leon would have gone for the Carnival, it is very likely that he would be a father. Thus, Leon's father saves the son from shouldering a parental responsibility at an early age. Erick Erickson notes that: "Parenthood is, for most, the first and for many, the prime generative encounter" (130). Erickson pinpoints the importance of parents in nurturing their children. This is because parents are the first people to interact and socialising with their children. Therefore, they influence the personalities of their progeny. For instance, Leon is able to identify with the father as a role model. Boys watch their fathers keenly, noting every minor detail of the parent's behaviour. Margret Kabiru and Anne Njenga affirm that "Children observe their parents and often try to imitate them. Many fully identify with their parents and try to imitate their behavior, values, aspirations, beliefs, attitudes and ways of life"(4) The sons may imitate what their fathers do. If the fathers indulge in vices like drinking, smoking or abusing family members, the boys will

probably follow suit. If the father abuses or batters the wife, the boy is highly likely to be a wife batterer when he grows up.

Ramchand reaffirms our argument when he alleges that: "Leon's conscious withdrawal from the Carnival saves him from the colourless condition in which his father has lived" (154). Through this close association between father and son, Leon eventually wins the prestigious Fifteen Blue Riband race. It is worth noting that Ramchand's description of the father's life as "colourless" should not be misinterpreted to mean that Leon's father is a failure. It implies that Leon's father, like any parent, envisages a better life for his children than he leads. The father wants Leon to live a better life than his. He wants to instill a sense of ambition in the young man. Anthony describes the father as an old man. Thus, the father has to instill a sense of discipline and responsibility in Leon. As the eldest son, Leon would take care of the family in case of the father's absence.

Leon's father cannot be equated to fathers like Mano and Shellie's father. Unlike the latter's, Leon's father is not an absentee father. He is an involved father. In the novel, we do not come across any instance which shows that the family is suffering from lack of basic or emotional needs. Furthermore, he does not indulge in irresponsible traits like drug and substance abuse.

### 3.5 The Matrifocal Household: *The Year in San Fernando* and "The Distant One"

In *The Year in San Fernando* and "The Distant One", the father is physically absent

from the family. Francis' father in *The Year in San Fernando* has passed on while in "The Distant One", Albert's mother is the sole breadwinner. The father's whereabouts are not mentioned. Like Shellie and Sona's families, the families in *The Year in San Fernando* and "The Distant One" experience a lot of problems.

In the two families mothers and children strain a lot. Unlike Sona and Shellie's situation, Francis' and Albert's situation are worse. Sona's father was poorly remunerated and drank his money while Shellie's father would sometimes get well and work. These two families would at least get some support from their fathers. In Albert and Francis' case, mothers are the sole breadwinners despite doing menial jobs. Francis' mother washes clothes for people while Albert's mother is portrayed as housewife practicing small scale farming.

The strain on both families clearly comes out when the two boys are relied on to help support their families. Francis is sent by the mother to work for Mr. Chandles while Albert goes abroad to seek employment. Young Francis is physically and psychologically mistreated at the Chandles homestead. Mrs. Chandles overworks Francis at the house despite his tender age. Ironically, Mr. Chandles, who is supposed to protect Francis, inflicts more injury. He tortures the young boy psychologically by being indifferent to him. Whenever Mr. Chandles would come to the house, Francis would move out. The young boy withdraws because of the animosity in the Chandles' homestead. Mr. Chandles always had a bitter quarrel with the family over ownership of the house whenever he was at the house. Francis has to bear the brunt of the acrimony

between the family members. Despite his young age, he is sensitive about the tension in the house: "Upstairs the voices rattled on. They seemed to have forgotten that I was around. The things they were saying astonished me" (62).

Children feel very insecure and helpless when conflicts break out around them. For instance, after the quarrel, Mrs. Chandles vents her anger on innocent Francis:

For most of the morning the quarrel died and flared up and died and flared up again then, as fortune would have it, Mr. Chandles dressed and went out. As soon as he left and went indoors, Mrs. Chandles started glaring at me as if I was the cause of all the unrest, and I felt very uncomfortable in the house. She did not make meals that day. For lunch she ate bread and butter and cheese and she gave me no thought to my being hungry. I watched her eating, her toothless jaw opening and shutting like crabs-traps, and when she was satisfied, she hobbled to the room and shut the door. (63)

It is no surprise that Francis feels relieved when Mr. Chandles leaves the house. Mr. Chandles is the one who brought the young boy and yet he is the one causing Francis to have much discomfort. This reveals Mr. Chandles' callous and egocentric nature. The senior Chandles does not care about the welfare of the young boy yet Francis is under his care. Mr. Chandles breaks the trust that Francis had initially given him. He fails in his role as a surrogate father. Hence the emotional bond between him and Francis breaks. That is why Francis feels uncomfortable in the presence of Mr. Chandles and gets terrified

at his presence.

Like the son, Mrs. Chandles is also hostile to Francis. She lacks any sympathy. The young boy Francis is surprised at the old lady's egocentrism: "... I wondered to myself what sort of human being this old lady could be. She hadn't cooked. She couldn't expect that I had eaten. She had left me to starve and like Mr. Chandles, she did not care a damn" (63). Her maternal instincts are not sensible enough to know that young Francis has not eaten. Furthermore, she has the audacity to feed before the hungry boy without sharing the food. The hostility in the Chandles homestead lowers Francis' self esteem. Francis is living in an environment that does not accept him despite his tender age. The young boy has no one to talk to and share his distress. When stress becomes bottled up, it tends to explode like in Sona's case. Young Francis is unable to confide in his mother about his problems. This is because he fears to be reprimanded by Mrs. Chandles. Young Francis is in a dilemma. Francis is suffering but does not want to lose his job because of his family's penury. Such a condition makes Francis to live in fear and loss which affects his mental and physical stability. Seidler explains Francis' situation. He argues that when children feel disturbed and are helpless about their situation, they withdraw to themselves (113). This is a form of self defense. The children want to disassociate themselves from what is going on. Francis would withdraw in the bathroom downstairs or on the steps outside the house to avoid Mr. Chandles and Mrs. Chandles. In this regard, parents should be very careful about the people they entrust their children with. This is because their interaction will either have a positive or negative outcome on the children's lives. Many people are deceived by

people's appearances. There have been cases where parents have entrusted their children to strangers who have maimed, killed or raped them. Francis' mother judges Mr. Chandles to be a person of good character because of the image that he portrayed at the office. Anthony describes Mr. Chandles as having the image of an aristocrat who looked well groomed. Francis' mother is deceived by Mr. Chandle's image. She is fascinated by the latter's image and wealth. The mother therefore entrusts Francis to him. She assumes that Mr. Chandles is the right person to help them. Young Francis confirms the mother's misconception of judging people by appearance:

I stopped thinking of Edwin to listen again. Mrs. Chandles was talking of the money she had spent on their education. This was not new to me. She had always boasted about this- about the upper-class education she had given her children. Both boys had gone to the big college. I had seen the college myself, on the hill, and I had gazed upon it with awe. I had also seen Mr. Chandles' coat with the college things on. And now I thought of our own poverty and of my mother sending me here because she could hardly feed us all. Yet no such row could take place in Ma's house. And we weren't refined or anything. And we had not been to the big college. (62)

We contend that Anthony uses Francis as a tool to comment and satirize people who judge others by appearance. Francis's mother and the neighbours are drawn to Mr.

Chandles because he is wealthy, and exudes a certain allure of comfort. Contrary to those beliefs, Francis discovers that behind that image of richness and comfort is a sea of misery and frustration. The Chandles family is wealthy but lack human values like love hence there is no peace in the house. Young Francis wonders if that is the meaning of refinement.

The mistreatment that Francis undergoes at the Chandles has a significant influence on his current and future state. Francis starts regretting about the loss of the father. He feels that were it not for the father's demise, he would not be suffering. Francis also loses trust in people. This is because the first strangers he has interacted with, at a tender age, are hostile. Whenever Mr. Chandles entered the house, Francis would want to hide. When Mr. Chandles finds Francis resting under a tree, he castigates the young boy: "Listen," he wagged his finger close to me, "Your mother said you weren't lazy. If you think I brought you here to feed you and clothe you for you to idle under this house. I'll teach you! I'll pack you right back in the bush!"[sic] (44). After Mr. Chandles' departure, Francis remains behind and is extremely petrified. This encounter widens the wedge between Francis and Mr. Chandles (the person who is supposed to be Francis' guardian). Mr. Chandles' words are abusive and his tone shows arrogance. Mr. Chandles calls the young boy primitive. He threatens to return Francis back to the bush. Francis will forever remain traumatized by that encounter. No wonder, Francis would always try to avoid Mr. Chandles. When Mr. Chandles travels with Francis to San Fernando, he unconsciously acts as Francis' surrogate father:

I remember the journey to San Fernando mainly through Balgobin, who was a conductor on the first stage - to Rio Claro. Balgobin was an old friend, and he spoke to me quite freely, and Mr Chandles kept looking at him in a certain way, and I could not answer Balgobin properly and I wished he would hush up. Balgobin was excited about my going to San Fernando and he asked me all sorts of questions although he saw Mr Chandles with me. He asked me where I was going to stay and I tried to make him an eye to show I was going to stay with the person beside me, but he did not understand, and he said loudly, "What happen boy? You afraid to talk? (8)

Francis craves for a surrogate father because of his present condition. The father had just died and yet Francis has gone to work for strangers in a new town. Hence, after the demise of the father, Mr. Chandles is the closest male figure to young Francis. It is unfortunate that he fails in his role as a surrogate father. This is despite his knowledge of Francis's predicament. Furthermore, the neglect that Francis experiences at the Chandles' household will have a negative effect on his personality. Francis might end up being an adult that avoids socialising with other people because of fear of rejection. Francis will therefore become somebody withdrawn from the society due to lack of love and attention missed at a tender age. Griffin notes that children with absent fathers like Francis live their lives with fear and loss (qtd in Balcom 3). Such children are unable to make sound decisions. According to Griffin, a father who is involved

with the family gives the children confidence. Francis' need for a surrogate father is evident when he immediately befriends Edwin, Mr. Chandles' younger brother. Although Edwin and Francis are meeting for the first time, their interaction is cordial. Unlike Mr. Chandles, Edwin is friendly and recognizes Francis's presence in the house. Edwin's friendly attitude surprises Francis:

Holy Thursday was the first time I saw Edwin, Mrs. Chandles' other son. He came to bring Easter gifts to Mrs. Chandles and when I saw the man open the gate I had no doubt at all who he was. He looked so much like the Chandles inside, it partly terrified. I watched him as he came towards where I was, watering the plants and stood up. "Hello," he said. I said, "Hello." "Mayaro feller, eh?" He said laughing. It seemed easy for him to smile. He stood there a moment and I went on self-consciously watering the plants. All the time I was watching how big he was and how much like, yet how very different, from Mr. Chandles inside. (60)

Francis immediately develops a rapport with Edwin because of his friendly nature. Initially, Francis was terrified of Edwin. This unconscious reaction happens because the young boy is used to rejection from Mr. Chandles and the mother. Young Francis' defense mechanism of rejection is withdrawal. He wants to avoid Edwin because he has anticipated hostility. Edwin's different attitude leaves Francis thunderstruck. Francis' reaction brings to the fore Morris' assertion that the relationships that matter most to

children are of people close to them. Francis does not expect the Chandless to behave like that. Edwin's friendly attitude provides young Francis with an outlet from the pressure he has been experiencing. Despite being the first meeting they both laugh together. For the first time, Francis feels like a human being in the Chandless' family. Edwin briefly plays the role of the surrogate father that Francis has been missing. An emotional bond develops between Francis and Edwin because of this first encounter. Like Leon's father in *The Games Were Coming*, Edwin instills the lost self esteem in young Francis.

Like Francis, Albert in "The Distant One" is also experiencing a lot of pressure from the family. Albert has recently struggled to go abroad yet the mother wants him to play the role of the absent father. The mother wants Albert to help her take care of the family. The mother does not understand that going abroad is not an immediate path to richness. The motif of migration is common in Caribbean literature. There is always this fallacy, by West Indians of a better life in Europe. This fallacy is evident in Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*, Velma Pollard's *Homestretch* and Lamming's *The Emigrants*. These writers have portrayed characters leaving the Caribbean in search of greener pastures abroad. The characters in those novels have high expectations as they go to England or the "Mother Country". However, when these West Indians reach England, they find that life is very difficult. The "land of opportunities" has high rates of unemployment, racism and severe weather conditions. We are therefore not surprised when Albert is unable to reply to the last letter that the mother had sent. Like most West Indians, Albert is struggling in the new country. Albert's inability to reply to the letter disappoints the mother.

We can however, argue that the mother should not expect young Albert to fill the void left by the absent father. Young Albert cannot fulfill the physical, emotional and psychological needs of the family. Albert can only help to supplement the family's income. Moreover, the young Albert is not mature enough to grapple with the challenges of fatherhood.

Boys like Francis, Sona, Albert and Shellie might have a problem in socialisation. Balcom asserts that children from dysfunctional families are withdrawn in school and lack social cohesiveness (4). These children behave like that because their self esteem is low. The low self esteem emanates from home. Sona and Shellie's father cannot instill confidence in their sons because the latter also suffer from a low self esteem. On the other hand, Francis is in the company of callous people (The Chandles), who are out to belittle the young boy while young Albert will not have time to socialise with friends because of the family burden on his back. Thus, these boys will always feel inferior in the company of other people. Such children need a lot of counseling because most of the time they may be silent and withdrawn. In contrast, Leon will grow up with a high self esteem because the belief in the inner self has been instilled in him by the father. Leon's father exposes him to social avenues like the cycling competition. Such social avenues increase the young boy's social cohesiveness. The father is expanding Leon's horizon by linking him to the outside world through positive interactions. Hence, the absence of a father or presence of a weak father causes a lot of problems to the children. On the other hand, the presence of a strong father figure, like Leon's father, leads to positive child outcomes as evident in Leon winning the

prestigious Blue Riband race.

### 3.6 The Suffering Mother

In families where the father is weak or absent, the mother shoulders most of the responsibilities. She is both the breadwinner and custodian of the household. Many women in many Caribbean novels and texts face this predicament. These mothers suffer a lot, because they shoulder most of the responsibilities in the family.

Grimm Wassil et al note the complimentary role that fathers play in the family. They posit that “fathers serve as alternative parents: they can improve the quality of the mother’s parenting by reducing her stress and stepping in; to give the mother a break during a crisis” (qtd in Balcom 5). In Michael Anthony’s works: *The Year in San Fernando*, *Green Days by the River*, “Drunkard of the River” and “The Distant One”, fathers do not play that complementing role. This is because they are either absent or weak leading to a lot of strain on the mother. These families are in dire financial and emotional crises that mothers are expected to handle alone. For example, In *The Year in San Fernando*, Francis’ mother works like a donkey. She overworks so as to sustain the family after the father’s demise. Despite all the strain, Francis’ mother still receives a beggarly package. She is forced to send young Francis to San Fernando to work, so as to subsidise the family income. The mother is forced to separate from her child which is a painful experience. The family bond is broken when Francis relocates to San Fernando. This is quite evident when the mother visits him:

I had just returned from the market and was going home when I saw my

mother coming along the pavement. "Ma," I cried, running towards her. I forgot myself. I held on to her, almost delirious with joy. She squeezed me to her, her hands on my head. I said things and my words just seemed to spurt out and I did not quite know what I was saying. I held on to her in the road and would not let her go. The way she talked-her voice made me not want to look up her face[sic]. After a little time I looked up. She too, had been overcome. She had a big handkerchief mopping her eyes, and seeing me look up she hastily blew her nose and looked away. But her eyes filled up again. (80)

The re-union between Francis and the mother is quite emotional. The mother and son are deeply affected by the separation. The emotional reunion shows the breaking of family ties caused by the absence of a father.

Like Francis, Albert's mother in "The Distant One" is also in a similar situation. In spite of the communication through letters, Albert's absence is too painful for her to bear. An intrusion into the matriarch's mind reveals her agony: "She had hoped he made good there because she had counted on his coming back and helping her with the small ones. And naturally she was longing to see him again. In the first place, it was not easy to let him go" (124). The mother shoulders a heavy burden because she is the sole breadwinner. The mother had expected Albert to come back soon and help support the family. The strain on her is both physical and emotional: physical because she has to toil harder to sustain the family and emotional because she misses Albert, her eldest son, who is in a foreign country.

Young Shellie's mother, in *Green Days by the River*, is physically present but emotionally distant from Shellie. She spends most of her time away from home, working because of the father's illness. Young Shellie is forced to stay with his father. Therefore, there is less attachment between Shellie and the mother. The mother becomes less influential in molding and monitoring Shellie's character. Young Shellie divulges that he was more comfortable talking to the father than the mother. The bond between him and his father is strong. Shellie's closeness to the father is positive but unfortunately the father misuses that closeness. Shellie engages in drug abuse, a vice, he emulates from the father.

Moreover, Shellie's mother strains because she is forced to multi-task. She is toiling to sustain the family and domestic work in the home. This is a herculean task for one single individual. The mother has to shoulder the burden of the weak father. Like Shellie's mother, Charlotta in Roger Mais' novel, *The Hills Were Joyful Together* faces a similar predicament. Charlotta is forced to sustain the family as well as struggle to discipline her son, Manny. Her husband, Bedossa, behaves like Shellie's father. Bedossa has neglected the family and expects the mother to do everything. Charlotta strains so much because of all the responsibilities she bears. Her physical condition is similar to that of Sona's and Francis's mother. Mais describes Charlotta as emaciated and weary.

In *The Games Were Coming*, Leon's mother does not seem to be under any strain. She is portrayed as a dutiful wife, who is happy at taking care of the family. Leon's mother enjoys both the company of the husband and the children. She contrasts with the other mothers in our other selected works. The disparities between these mothers

appear because Leon's father plays his parental role. In the other families, the father is either present but not involved in running of the family or physically absent. Women living with weak or absent husbands look frail and weak because they are shouldering most of the responsibilities in the household.

In the view of the above, we can argue that Anthony uses the contrasting portrayal of the mother to highlight the important role the father plays in family. Anthony wants to show that parenting is a collective responsibility that involves both the mother and father. Anne Hopper concurs with Anthony when he muses that the quality of father's and mother's relationship with the child is correlated. Mothers cannot play the role of a father and vice versa. Therefore, children require both parents for their development (19). According to Hopper, children from divorced families experience a lot of psychological trauma.

Our next chapter will attempt to critically analyse Anthony's social vision for Caribbean fatherhood and family. We will interrogate some of Anthony's possible solutions to the problems that affect the Caribbean father (and to an extent, the Caribbean family); especially from the marginalised races.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### WEAK AND ABSENT FATHERS: WHY AND WHICH WAY FORWARD?

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to investigate various circumstances that lead to weak and absent fathers in the selected texts. It further looks at the possible solutions that Anthony offers to alleviate the problem as part of his social vision on the Caribbean family and society. We argue that Anthony uses the father as a vehicle to address issues affecting the Caribbean family and society. Moreover, fatherhood cannot be addressed in isolation but in tandem with other issues affecting the society like socialisation of genders, parenthood, and social and economic disparities in the Caribbean society.

The author's vision encompasses the possibilities that the artist, through his consciousness, imagination and creativity, offers to society. Thus, a writer is able to perceive and articulate issues in the society which are either being ignored or are not perceived as forthcoming. Anthony's portrayal of the weak and absent father also recurs in other works by Caribbean writers. Therefore, writers do not articulate issues from a vacuum but mold works of art from their perception of reality. Hence, by interrogating Anthony's vision on fatherhood, we will address a pertinent issue that is affecting the Caribbean family and society. In the process of our examination, we explore how issues like race and economic status inform the situation in which fathers find themselves in.

A society should ignore writers at its own peril. This is because a writer is like a prophet. He/she tries to construct the future based on the past and present realities of society. The writer is able to see what others cannot see. Therefore, the writer helps the society to think and plan ahead. Chinua Achebe in *A Man of the People* for instance had a premonition of a coup d'état in Nigeria before it actually took place. His premonition is presented fictitiously in the novel. Our study looks at Anthony's vision on Caribbean fatherhood as positively inclined because the author envisages a better Caribbean society.

Anthony communicates his ideas in a language that is simple but the reader has to go deeper into the work to be able to understand some of the major concerns that he communicates. Anthony's works appear simple in structure and do not dwell on the common themes in the Caribbean. This has made some critics like Baugh (qtd in Bruce King 80) criticise Anthony's works as hardly concerned with messages. We argue that Anthony's works appear simple when you examine them but the main ideas are embellished in a way that the reader has to probe the implied meaning rather than just focusing on the simple plot. Anthony uses implied judgment where the narrator gives the scenario while the reader makes the judgment. The reader has to use his intellect to probe what the simple plot and language implies. A writer's use of language reveals his/her tone or attitude towards a subject matter. The simple language depicts the age of innocence that the young boys are undergoing. It helps us get their perspective of the challenges they are facing because of a weak or absent father. A writer expresses his content through a style that best

suits the communication of his/her message.

#### **4.2 Envisioning a Reduction in Economic Disparities Among the races: Fatherhood and Poverty**

In the penultimate chapter, we noted that in the Caribbean, work plays an integral role in the construction of masculinity. Men are perceived or feel inadequate when they are not participating in the bread winning role. Anthony's portrayal of the weak and absent fathers, mostly emanating from the African Caribbean families, is intentional. Anthony wants to show the effect of the economic disparities among the races and its effect on the family.

Hegemonic masculinity as the ideal form in many societies is ideology pegged on dominance and control. Fathers, due to their gender status as men, are expected to exercise that dominance in the family. Connell calls such power that men enjoy as patriarchal dividend since being a man is a source of power and authority. Connell further asserts that not all men share power equally. Anthony concurs with Connell through the portrayal of characters like Mano in "Drunkard of the River" and Shellie's father in *Green Days by the River*. Both men are no longer sources of authority in their families despite their gender identity. Anthony, through this portrayal, debunks the myth that fathers enjoy authority in the family because of their gender alone.

Society has constructed gender barriers that stratify men and women. Intersection and crossing of the prescribed boundaries of gender roles is not easily

accepted. However, Anthony through the depiction of emasculated fathers like Mano and Shellie's father covertly asserts that crossing of these boundaries is sometimes inevitable. The fathers feel emasculated because society has categorized males and females on the basis of gender and attendant roles. Consequently, individuals feel that they have to be at one end of the linear spectrum fulfilling specific expectations. Shellie and Sona's fathers are not walking in tandem with their side of the spectrum as males. This is because they have failed in their roles as breadwinners. Anthony urges us not to perceive fathers as failures. He highlights that there are certain social, political and economic factors which make such fathers not fulfill the archetypal male roles. For instance, Mano is an old person, who has worked for many years but still gets a meager pay. An examination into the wife's consciousness reveals the father's woes: "In her eyes, he was still young. He did not grow old. It was she who had aged. He had only turned out badly. She hated him for the way he drank rum and squandered on the little money he worked for" (55). Mano struggles to play his role as a father; which is to adequately provide for his family. In spite of the father's efforts, the family still lives in poverty. We are therefore not surprised when Mano recedes to his abuse of alcohol. Characters like Mano are used as vehicles through which Anthony critiques the economic disparities that characterise the Caribbean Society.

Poor economic fortunes have made most fathers in marginalised races neglect their families. That is why this trend of weak and absent fathers is predominant among the African Caribbean race compared to other races in the

Caribbean. However, not all African Caribbean men fall in this poverty bracket. The well endowed constitute a small minority in contrast to the majority who are struggling economically. Lewis (2003) concurs with us about the marginalisation of the African Caribbean men in contrast to other races. She posits: “talk about the changing status of men in the Caribbean, for most part, does not refer to all races of men in the region but principally to men of African descent...” (9). Most of these Caribbean men avoid family responsibilities because they feel they have lost their position as fathers in the homestead. Poverty has made these men feel they are unable to assert their masculinity.

Like in many parts of the world, fathers in the Caribbean are socialised in strong patriarchal systems. Patriarchy is an ideology pegged on dominance. Hence, fathers like Mano’s and Shellie’s by virtue of not providing for their families, feel they cannot exercise their authority. Michael Foucault asserts that as sexual objects, humans are the objects of power (qtd in Marshall 22). Mano’s and Shellie’s father unconsciously feel they have lost that power. Masculinity is pegged on dominance over femininity. That is why the fathers unconsciously feel subordinate to their wives. Men feel they are asserting their masculinity as fathers, when they can provide for the family. This view of masculinity as a dominant ideology is also echoed by Wesley Imms: “Sociological theories represent masculinity as an investment in male- dominated historical and cultural social power structures” (1). Men grow up socialised in this belief system that masculinity is hegemonic over femininity. That is why young Shellie, in *Green Days by the*

*River*, perceives his father as a weakling in comparison to Mr. Gindharee. The father is weak and does not work while Mr. Gindharee is physically strong and hardworking. This also explains Mano's propensity for violence against his son, Sona. Mano is trying to assert his masculinity through violence, because he has failed to assert it as the head of the home. Mano does not want to appear weak or feminine.

Keith Nurse (qtd. in Reddock ) observes that historically, subordinate masculinities have been constructed and represented as effeminate and infantile to distinguish them from hegemonic forms (5). Mano's and Shellie's father are subordinate masculinities while the dominant whites, are hegemonic masculinities. Mano's and Shellie's father (subordinate masculinities) are marginalised socially and economically because of their race. We can further argue that Mano and Shellie's father are victims of gender-role expectation that has "straight-jacketed" them into adapting behaviours of the collective. Judith Lorber explains how societal expectations supersede an individual's actions and decisions when it comes to gender-role expectation:

My concept of gender differs from previous conceptualization in that I do not locate it in individual or in interpersonal relations, although the construction and maintenance of gender are manifest in personal identities and in social interactions. Rather I see gender as an institution that establishes patterns of expectation for individuals, orders the social processes of everyday life, and is built into the

major social organizations of society, such as the economy, ideology, the family and politics. (28-29)

Lorber's supposition explains the situation Mano and Shellie's father find themselves in. These fathers are expected to act and live like other men yet there are social and economic disparities in the society. Issues of class or race make masculinity multi-dimensional and not static. For instance in *The Year in San Fernando*, Mr. Chandles, a man of a higher social and economic class is an envy of members in the community. When Mr. Chandles begins a relationship with Marva- a girl from a lower social and economic class, the latter's mother (Mrs. Samuel) is quite elated:

We had heard only very little about Mr. Chandles. The little we had heard were whispers and we didn't gather much, but we saw him sometimes leaning over the banister of the forestry Office, and indeed he was as aristocratic as they said he was. He looked tidy and elegant and he always wore a jacket and tie, unusual under the blazing sun. These things confirmed that he was well off, and his manner and bearing, and the condescending look he gave everything about him, made us feel that he had gained high honours in life. Mrs. Samuels of the Forestry Office must have been sure of this. She seemed to consider his week-ends under her roof very

flattering to her. She seemed to have no hesitation in approving the friendship between Mr. Chandles and her precious Marva. (1)

Mrs. Samuels envisages a better future for her daughter with the rich Mr. Chandles. The former does not even take her time to study the character of Mr. Chandles. According to Mrs. Samuels, Mr. Chandles' status and class make the latter an ideal man for her daughter. Later in the novel we find out that Mr. Chandles is an immoral man. Mr. Chandles has an affair with another lady called Julia without Marva's knowledge yet the former is engaged to Marva. Mrs. Samuels epitomises many people who are drawn to materialism instead of character in family relationships. The young boy narrator, Francis observes that Mrs. Samuel's attitude had changed because of her daughter's relationship to Mr. Chandles: "And so Mr. Chandles seemed to have suddenly changed all her grace and simplicity and now we felt she was really complicated" (2). By showing the attitude of the villagers towards Mr. Chandles, Anthony implicitly suggests that men who were economically deprived had difficulty in asserting their authority or presence. Mr. Chandles exudes hegemonic masculinity because of his economic and social position in society.

Anthony covertly castigates the political system, which controls the economic resources of the country. The system has caused wide economic disparities. Anthony bemoans the inequalities that characterize the Caribbean society. He depicts African Caribbean families, in *The Year in San Fernando*, *Green Days by the River* and

“Drunkard of the River” experiencing destitution. On the other hand, white families, like the Chandles, in *The Year in San Fernando*, live in material affluence. Such disparities have caused fathers like Mano to turn to acts of irresponsibility. These disparities have caused inept parenting because of disengaged parents, who shy away from responsibilities.

Parental involvement in their children’s lives is one of the most important contributors to children’s healthy psychological development. We had noted in the previous chapter the effect of dysfunctional families on the children. Poverty causes poor parenting because stressful social and economic conditions create anger, hostility and frustration in parents. The anger and frustration is channeled to the children like Sona who is assaulted by Mano. Mano receives a beggarly pay that is supposed to cater for the needs of the family. If the authorities would strive to equitably distribute resources and strengthen social institutions among the races, such economic disparities would not exist. If men from all races would be paid better wages, it would prevent fathers, from abandoning their families. This is because ability to sustain their families would enhance their self esteem as the head of their homes.

Anthony castigates the social and political dynamics of the Caribbean society. The society’s political and social systems have a strong impact on the smallest unit of society, the family. If the systems are messed up, problems start in the family and ultimately spill to the society. In the family the father becomes the first casualty as the head of the home. In “Drunkard of the River”, Mano’s poor

economic fortunes lead to the neglect and suffering of the family. Consequently, Sona murders the father for neglecting the family and turning to alcohol. Sona will turn out to be the guest of the state at the prison despite his tender age. The family loses a father and son while the state breeds a criminal and loses a human resource person. In situations where the political and social fabric of the society is in a mess, the children are most vulnerable. Therefore, it is incumbent on the Caribbean authorities to institute programmes and policies that are aimed at reducing poverty among the marginalized races. The government should create more job opportunities both in the formal and non formal sector. This will cater for both skilled and unskilled labourers thereby absorbing the marginalized masses who constitute the majority in the Caribbean. Secondly, the authorities should create welfare societies to support families that either have an absent parent (Francis or Albert) or a parent who is ill- like Shellie's father in *Green Days by the River*. In a dialogue with the son, Shellie's father reveals that his sickness has caused his son to drop out of school and become a cocoa labourer: "If it wasn't for this sickness, by Christ, you wouldn't be in that damn cocoa" (92). Shellie has to work to help support the family.

#### **4.3 Education as a Tool for the Emancipation of the Marginalised Father**

The economic powerlessness of the African Caribbean fathers is further precipitated by their lack of formal education. Colonial education in the Caribbean,

like in many parts of the developing world, was seen as a means of social advancement. For upward mobility, one had to advance in this type of education. It was and is still the key to betterment for the races. Miller notes that since emancipation in the Caribbean, the major channel of upward mobility for the African Caribbean has been education (5). Obtaining of elementary education amongst the blacks was an important channel of upward social mobility.

In *The Year in San Fernando*, Francis' mother warns him to take education seriously. In the latter's moments of torment at the Chandles' home, he remembers the importance of education as his only tool of upward mobility:

My heart was burning for home. For a moment I felt like crying out, but at the moment of greatest pain my mother's voice came back to me. It was as if she was here and talking. She had said, Stay and take in education, boy, Take it in. That's the main thing. [sic] (67)

To young Francis, his sufferings are temporal and education becomes his only channel for a brighter future. However, this is an illusion because education in the Caribbean especially to the marginalized was sub-standard. Ramchand disparages this type of education offered to the marginalised "As the centuries wore on however, the deprived masses were to see a more bookish education as a means of social advancement" (*The West Indian Novel and its Background* 21). When Francis arrives in San Fernando, Mr. Chandles shows Francis the school the former is going to attend. Young Francis, despite coming from the rural area and

being of a relatively young age can clearly see that the school is in a sorry state. There is a cloud of darkness yet young Francis' keen observation reveals the poor planning of the school buildings:

The yard of the school was a little drop below the level of the street. The school stood a little way/back and the yard was very wide and seemed to sweep away in the half-light. The school itself covered a lot of the place and stood on tall pillars and I could see the side of the ground part was boarded round as if they kept classes underneath, too. We walked slowly and I was looking at the school and Mr. Chandles said, "Coffee R.C.,"

I had already glimpsed that. The sign had stood out in the brightness of the street-lamp. I wondered what Coffee Street R.C was doing on Romaine Street. And then I remembered that Coffee Street was that great road passing at the top. (11/12)

Mr. Chandles underestimates the intelligence of the young boy. When they arrive in San Fernando, he warns Francis to "open his eyes" and remember they are not in the latter's rural village of Mayaro (10). Implicit in Mr. Chandles' statement is the backwardness of Francis in terms of civilization compared to the former's affluent background (racism). Ironically, young Francis notices that the school is in a desolate state before Mr. Chandles informs him that it will be his school. Mr. Chandles does not comment about the state of the school. It is revealed to the

reader through the open consciousness of Francis. Anthony uses Francis' observation to depict a candid view of the type of education system given to the poor. This is because the comment emanates from a young boy who has just come from the countryside. It is devoid of any bias. Anthony uses irony to criticise the school. Francis remarks that he remembers that the school is named Coffee Street after a great road that passes at the top. Thus the name of the school is ironical. According to Francis, the school does not deserve that name because it belittles its namesake. There is nothing great about the school. Thus, we can argue that through young Francis' remarks, Anthony satirizes the authorities who purport to provide "quality" education to the marginalised groups. Francis's comment echoes Ramchand's (*West Indian Novel 21*) earlier comment on the West Indian education system.

In *Green Days by the River*, Shellie has to stop going to school in order to look for work so as to supplement the family income. Shellie explains his predicament to Mr. Gindharee: "I mightn't be going back to school...I stay at home two months already. In any case I have to start looking for work now" (62). Shellie's ill father condemns the young boy for lacking of ambition. The father does not want the son to work in the cocoa plantation. Shellie's lack of hope for upward mobility is revealed in a stream of consciousness that reveals his predicament: "He ought to have realized that my having said I would be a lawyer, or a doctor, was just wishful thinking. At least you had to have education and go to some college or something to be any of those things" (91). Lack of education is bound to cause

Shellie to live in destitution as an adult. It is highly likely that Shellie, as a father, will turn out like Mano or his father. He will adopt patterns of irresponsibility because of his inability to provide for the family.

Like Shellie, Francis in *The Year in San Fernando*, and Sona in "Drunkard of the River" will experience the same fate. After murdering his father, Sona will definitely not go back to school. On the other hand, Francis is mistreated by the Chandles, thus cannot concentrate on his education. Furthermore, he schools in a substandard school. Writers like Lamming and Naipaul, in their fiction, depict the effect of this type of education on the marginalized races. In *In the Castle of My Skin*, while illustrating the school system, Lamming clearly demonstrates that this elementary education was not for the benefit of the black children. Lamming shows that it was not for the purpose of the advancement of the black students. Rather it was used as a means of social control by the colonial master. The school children are taught everything about England, their "mother country". Their country Barbados is referred to as little England. In *Miguel Street*, Naipaul also critiques the Caribbean education system through the character, Elias. In the short story "His Chosen Calling", Elias fails exams all the time he attempts despite putting in all efforts. He fails three exams in three different countries: British Guiana, Trinidad and Barbados. He quits school and decides to pull a handcart to earn a living (30).

Like Elias, Francis, Sona and Shellie, are bound to suffer a similar fate. The cycle of poverty in the families of these characters (Sona, Shellie and Francis)

will continue. This is because they have missed out on a good education, which is the tool of social advancement in the society. Consequently, they may become weak and absent fathers in future because it becomes a vicious cycle. The colonial education could never offer a poor child a chance of upward mobility. The African Caribbean and East Indian's chances of success were limited in their countries. Thus, most of them were forced to seek opportunities abroad. Most of the Caribbean writers such as Michael Anthony, George Lamming, V.S. Naipaul, Sam Selvon, Beryl Gilroy, Jamaica Kincaid and Roger Mais nurtured their writing talent abroad. They were forced to move abroad to seek for greener pastures. Like the characters in their stories, the writers would have ended up living a life of poverty if they had stayed back in their native countries. Velma Pollard's protagonist, Brenda in *Homestretch*, has to move abroad to gain education and become somebody in society. Miss Aggy's son, Len, in Trevor Rhone's play *Old Story Time*, gets education abroad and is able to become a prominent person in the society. Selvon clearly depicts this migration and search for a better life in *The Lonely Londoners*. In Velma Pollard's *Homestretch* and Trevor Rhone's *Old Story Time*, the young people who remain behind degenerate in poverty. In Lamming's, *In the Castle of My Skin*, the protagonist, Boy G. prepares to move to another Trinidad so as to avoid the village destitution. Trumper, who briefly leaves the country comes back enlightened, well off and prepared for change. Like Boy G, Tyrone in Beryl Gilroy's novel, *Boy-Sandwich*, also migrates to Britain to avoid poverty at home. In Anthony's short story "The Distant One" the eldest son,

Albert, migrates abroad to avoid the cycle of poverty at home. However, we need to state that life abroad was difficult. Migration becomes the only avenue for upward mobility for the African Caribbean and the poor East Indians. In the home country, there is disillusionment caused by poverty.

This brings to fore the role of education and its impact on the upward mobility in the Caribbean. Education has an effect on the family unit. We argue that the weak and absent fathers in the Caribbean emanate mostly from families that either do not access education or access substandard education. Thus they are riddled in poverty. Anthony critiques the West Indian education system, which affords upward mobility for a minority group to the disadvantage of the majority. This trickles down to the family. The family unit is broken because of poverty; that causes the fathers to become weak or absent. The colonial education system, which is the only tool for social advancement is rigid, difficult, discriminative and expensive. It is our contention that characters like Mano in "Drunkard of the River" and Shellie's father might have been limited by this type of education in attaining upward mobility economically. That is why they are frustrated. This might also explain why Shellie's father puts pressure on the young boy to abandon his manual jobs and pursue a white collar job.

Anthony's vision is that of a society that strives to maintain equity and reduce the disparity among the races. With poverty levels scaling downwards among the marginalised races, there will be reduction in the cases of the weak and

absent fathers. Most of the marginalised men will be able to have means of earning a livelihood that can sustain their families. This might prevent men from resorting to deviant behaviours or abandoning their families.

#### **4.4 Anthony's Vision on Parental Role Modeling**

Anthony also critiques the role modeling of children by their fathers. Characters like Mano in "Drunkard of the River" and Shellie's father in *Green Days by the River*, are poor role models to their sons. They are setting a bad example by engaging in alcohol and drug abuse that their sons imitate. Through Leon's father in *The Games Were Coming*, Anthony demonstrates how an ideal father should behave in the family. He should act as a role model to his children. Leon's father strives to instill a character of optimism in his son. He spares his time after work to nurture the former's talent. Leon's father knows the challenges faced by the African Caribbean and does not want Leon to suffer. This is clearly demonstrated when Anthony intrudes into his mental thoughts. We are able to understand his motivation for ensuring that Leon succeeds in the cycling race. Leon's father does not want Leon to end up like him but to live a better life. Leon's father, unlike Mano and Shellie's father, is an optimist. He believes that despite the challenges faced by African Caribbean men, they can still turn things around by exploiting their God given talents.

Children model their behaviour by watching their parents' lives. Therefore, if parents do not behave responsibly, they will certainly be imitated by their

progeny. Characters are designed to represent the authorial perspective or ideology. Thus, the portrayal of the fathers' character traits represents Anthony's world view and narrative perspective on the role of the father in the Caribbean family and society. Simon Gikandi observes that all characters in any novel function consciously or otherwise as instruments of authorial perspective, and hence, operate within a specific reality (14). Therefore, Anthony uses the father characters as archetypes. Leon's father represents fathers who are more involved in the welfare of their families. On the other hand, Mano and Shellie's father represent fathers who are negative role models that are alienated from their families. The result of the contrasting relationship pinpoints Anthony's message on the importance of father involvement in their progeny's welfare. Children living in families where fathers are not involved in their well being end up in deviant behaviours like Sona and Shellie. In contrast, children that have fathers who support them end up with positive traits like Leon.

Anthony uses the child narrators to espouse the importance of fathers on the wellbeing of their progeny. The child characters act as omniscient narrators who are the investigators of causes and consequences of father absence or presence. In *Green Days by the River*, young Shellie is the central character in the novel. We understand other characters by intruding into Shellie's inner consciousness and dialogue with the other characters. Shellie is the central consciousness of the novel. Thus he is the natural choice through which Anthony communicates his view on the importance of parents as role models to their children. Shellie is the one who

reveals to us that he would drink and smoke with the father. Like Shellie, Sona is also used by the author in "Drunkard of the River" to expose the father's weakness. In a stream of consciousness, Sona reveals his contempt for his father because of the father's irresponsibility. Mano is a poor role model to his son because he spends all his money drinking at the Chinaman's shop.

In "Drunkard of the River", Anthony also uses the juxtaposing of the mother's and son's consciousness to show their different perceptions to the father's behaviour. Sona's mother is optimistic that the husband will reform while the son wishes his father was dead because of bringing misery to the family. Sona wonders why his mother has to sympathise with his irresponsible father. Sona perceives his father as a negative role model while the mother disagrees. Anthony gives his narrative what Gikandi calls "a balance of paradigms" (137). Mano is interrogated through Sona and the mother's contrasting subjective mind. Both characters despite their divergent views on the father are instruments through which Anthony shows the repercussions of an irresponsible father to the family. Mano's deviant behaviours have alienated him from his wife and son.

Anthony likes using implied judgment so that he does not impose his view on the reader. Gikandi explains that the implied author neutralizes the reader's temptation to take sides (74). At the end of the story, the reader is left to make a decision whether to condemn Sona for harming his father or condemn Mano for bringing tragedy upon himself. This is part of the story that is the climax or the intensification of a conflict that had began earlier. The reader is thus drawn into the

story to make his own conclusion. We can argue that it makes the reader derive pleasure in reading the book because he becomes an active participant in decision making. It is the turning point, a moment of great tension that fixes the action. The resolution or denouncement in "Drunkard of the River" (Sona murdering his father) is meant to warn parents that they can create violent young people because of poor role modeling.

Anthony covertly communicates his ideas through his child characters. They are the implied authors because they narrate the story instead of the author. However, they espouse the author's view. Anthony communicates in an implicit way because he does not want to appear to be imposing his ideas on his young characters. He does not force his characters to echo his thoughts, thus we may speak of the development of credible characters. The reader is able to visualize this struggle through the eyes of the young boys with less authorial intrusion. The reportage from the young boys is more objective. This is because they are in an age of innocence which every reader can identify. Anthony attempts as much as possible to avoid giving interpretive comment. Anthony is less didactic and gives the reader room to make his own conclusions. Gikandi asserts that the omniscient narrative role is the ultimate ideological authority in the narrative (144). This is because in his/her position as an observer, the omniscient narrator is able to judge the other characters, activities against communal norms. Anthony's young characters, through their struggles, illuminate the impact of the weak and absent father in the family.

A writer's theme or the main idea reflects and defines the society which he lives in. Anthony's focus on young boys as protagonists living in families where the father is either absent or weak is also deliberate. Anthony propagates that in a dysfunctional family the boy child bears the heaviest brunt of suffering. In *The Year in San Fernando*, through Francis' inner consciousness, we learn of Mr. Chandles' callous nature. Mr. Chandles epitomises surrogate fathers who are poor role models. Young Francis after the demise of his father looks upon Mr. Chandles for guidance and support. However, Mr. Chandles mistreats the young boy. This is despite the former being the only guardian in San Fernando who understands Francis' condition. Therefore, Anthony espouses the need for guardians taking care of children that do not belong to them to extend parental love the latter lacked. People with such children in their custody should be accommodative. They should try to treat these children as their real parents. It might be impossible for these guardians to play the role of biological parents but they should try. Moreover, sons that do not have fathers require the men closer to them in their lives to be their role models. Mr. Chandles fails in his role as a role model to the young boy Francis. Mr. Chandles demonstrates immorality before the young boy Francis when he has an affair with Julia yet he is engaged to Marva.

In *The Year in San Fernando*, the demise of Francis' father and the family destitution force him to go and work in San Fernando as a child labourer. Through Francis' suffering at the hands of the Chandles' family, Anthony implores that the

absence of a father can force children to engage in child labour. Like Francis, young Shellie has also been forced to engage in child labour as Mr. Gindharee's farmhand. By exposing the suffering of his young protagonists, Anthony warns parents about the danger of entrusting their children to strangers especially as workers. Child labour is taken as advantage by opportunistic people like the Chandlers' to exploit young children.

#### **4.5 Deconstructing Traditional Gender Roles**

The myth of patriarchy assumes that all men enjoy patriarchal privileges as fathers in the family. Anthony through the portrayal of characters like Shellie's father in *Green Days by the River* and Mano in "Drunkard of the River" debunks this myth. Anthony shows that not all men enjoy hegemonic masculinity.

Boordieu (qtd. In Lewis) posits that one of the challenges that Caribbean men must face is that patriarchy can no longer impose itself with the transparency of something that is taken for granted (88). According to Boordieu, all men do not exercise hegemonic masculinity. Thus traditional gender roles of men as the breadwinners and the women as the homemakers need to be re-examined. We concur with Boordieu by asserting that men must accept the changing social environment. Women are moving outside the home to work while some men are staying at home taking care of the children. Hence the assumption in patriarchal circles that all men are the dominant "other" needs to be re-examined and repackaged. Anthony demonstrates this trend in *Green Days by the River*. Shellie's father

stays at home to look after the young boy while the mother goes to work. According to Anthony, men (especially the marginalised) must face the challenge of coming to terms with a changing social environment. The father cannot solely be relied on to provide for the family. The discarding of traditional gender roles is inevitable. For instance in Shellie's father's case, sickness cannot make him work. Therefore, he has to stay at home which is traditionally a gender role designated for women. On the other hand, the mother has to go to work and act as a breadwinner- a traditional role designated for men. Francis's mother has to go out and work because she is the sole breadwinner. Albert's mother in "The Distant One" cannot rely on the son to provide for the family because Albert is overseas. Albert's mother has to move out of the house and work as she is the sole provider.

Lewis (2003) supports the notion of discarding the traditional gender roles. She notes that: "the reality is that the old order has essentially run its course" (10). According to Lewis, men must come to reality that women can no longer stay at home as traditional homemakers. For example, in "Drunkard of the River", it is inevitable that Sona's mother will have to move out of the house and work. Mano who was the sole breadwinner has been killed by the son. The mother has to take over the mantle of being the head of the household. This trend also recurs in *The Year in San Fernando*. Francis' mother has to work because she is the sole breadwinner after the father's demise.

In Anthony's depiction of mothers who are straining in our selected works, he espouses the need for traditional gender roles to be discarded. The idea that

women are the homemakers while men are breadwinners cannot work in families suffering from marginalisation and abject poverty. Furthermore, more women are getting formal employment and discarding the traditional tag as homemakers. Hence the idea that women must stay at home is a myth that should be debunked. By depicting young Shellie's surprise of the reversed roles in their household, Anthony questions the cultural configuration of masculinity in the Caribbean. We had observed in Chapter Two about the transition of boys from childhood to adulthood in the Caribbean. It happens when they move out of their homes, start working and take care of their own families (Lewis 4). However, high unemployment levels cannot make them conform to these cultural configurations in the Caribbean (Lewis 10). These expectations are imparted in the boys through socialisation. Through young Shellie, Anthony critiques the socialisation of young men in the Caribbean.

Anthony also derides the pegging of masculinity on the ability to work which is detrimental in making unemployed or underemployed men feel inadequate. Young Shellie believes Mr. Gindharee is better than his father because the former is a hard worker while the latter is confined to a sick bed. "In Drunkard of the River" Sona holds his father in contempt for not being able to provide for the family. To Anthony, men do not become lesser men if they do not work. Anthony proposes a paradigm shift in the thinking of the society. Men should adjust how they understand themselves as men. When they cannot work their masculinity does not change. It should be instilled in them that sometimes

they are disempowered because of factors beyond their control. Lewis divulges that unemployment rates are still very high in the present Caribbean societies especially among the youths: "Youth unemployment rates in the later 1990s or around 2000 were more than 20 per cent in most countries..." (11). Thus, the notion of work being an integral part in the construction of masculinity should be deconstructed. This can be done through education by the government, church or Non-Governmental Organisations.

Unemployment levels might be reasons beyond the poor people's control. Thus, masculinity should not be pegged on one's ability to work. This will prevent young men like Sona, Francis and Shellie from becoming weak and absent fathers. They should be made to understand that they are not less men because they are economically handicapped. Their economic powerlessness is caused by external factors beyond their control like a history of slavery and racial inequality, indentureship and colonialism. These factors have been haunting marginalised people in the Caribbean and the rest of colonial and post-colonial societies in the world for many centuries. We support Lewis' assertion that "A lot of work has to be done in the Caribbean about assessing the social and psychological impact of unemployment on all men of all cases" (11).

Although our study gives focus on the father, Anthony is not perpetuating male hegemony and female submission; rather he is advancing the idea of gender complementation. Men and women need each other because gender roles are

complimentary. The void left by the absent father cannot be filled by the mother. If the mother is absent the father cannot also fill that void. For example the absence of Shellie's mother causes the young boy to engage in deviant behaviours despite the presence of the father. Hence Anthony espouses a positive social vision of gender. Lewis concurs with Anthony when she alleges that:

Men must face the challenge of coming to terms with a changing social environment in which they must embrace a more comprehensive understanding of the notion of gender equality as a fundamental and important part of genuine democracy. (10)

In this chapter, we argue that our selected texts have clearly depicted the importance of the father in the Caribbean family and society. We have also been able to see that the portrayal of the weak and absent father by Michael Anthony is evident. The author uses this portrayal to communicate issues that lead to this condition: poverty, education, inequality, and work. Anthony envisages a society devoid of racial and class inequalities because the effects spill over to the family. Such an egalitarian society will create stability in the family because the parents are empowered.

Furthermore, Anthony indicates on (re)socialisation of men to cope with the changing roles of men and women in the society. Men can no longer be the sole breadwinners in the home. They need to re-evaluate patriarchy and traditional gender roles and embrace gender complementation. Our study also

revealed that Anthony is a writer that deals with serious issues that affect the Caribbean.

Finally, we will explore the key features of the study that emerged in Chapter Two, Three and Four in the next chapter. The chapter also serves as the conclusion and gives suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.1 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study set out to examine the portrayal of the father figure in Anthony's selected works as well as his social vision. The study focused on the analysis of the selected works: *The Year in San Fernando*; *Green Days by the River*; *The Games Were Coming*; "The Distant One" and "Drunkard of the River".

One of our objectives was to show the status of the father in Anthony's selected works. From our analysis, it is clear that fathers in some of the African Caribbean families are either weak or are physically absent while other families had fathers who are present and responsible. The study revealed that the portrayal of the weak and absent father in the family by Anthony is carefully and artistically expressed. The family with a strong father figure is more stable in contrast with families with weak or absent fathers who experience a lot of suffering.

Anthony also interrogates the challenges faced by marginalized people in a stratified society. The fathers' traditional role as the breadwinners is deeply affected by poverty. The fathers' inability to play their traditional roles has forced them to turn to patterns of irresponsibility (Mano and Shellie's father). In some families the father is completely absent leaving the burden of responsibility on the mother. Therefore, these families have become dysfunctional. It was worth noting that the father's role in the family was significant and could not be handled by the mother.

Anthony's portrayal of the father was analysed in line with various issues and thematic concerns that affect the Caribbean society: work, race, gender and class.

This was because we were examining the role and significance of the father in the Caribbean family and society. These issues are portrayed as affecting the role of the father in the family. The importance of work in the construction of masculinity in men's lives is clearly evident. Anthony depicts the fathers who cannot provide for the family exhibiting patterns of irresponsibility and inferiority complex. The weak fathers display what Connell (2005) calls "subordinate masculinity" (Mano and Shellie's father) unlike their counterparts who adequately provide for their families, who in turn exhibit hegemonic masculinity like Mr. Gindharee and Leon's father. Our theory of Masculinity came in handy as it enabled us understand the behaviour of the fathers. We were able to understand that not all men enjoy patriarchal privileges.

In Chapter Three, we examined the influence of the weak and absent father on the family. Children appear to be the most vulnerable (Sona, Francis and Shellie). They suffer from poverty and psychological disorders compared to their more financially advantaged peers (Leon). The absent and weak fathers also heap stressful social and economic conditions on the mothers. The mothers have to toil hard for the family. Furthermore, they are psychologically tortured by their husbands' departure or inability to support them. Anthony also propagates the need for parents to be positive role models to their children.

Chapter Four tackled Anthony's view on probable solutions that can emancipate the marginalized fathers from their conditions. Anthony views the

problem as not only affecting the African Caribbean family but the whole Caribbean society. Therefore, the author advocates for solutions to be worked out by the whole society. This would reduce problems like high crime rate whose perpetrators are mostly children from marginalised families. Lewis notes that violence in a community erupts because of deprivation of rights (12). Thus, Anthony's handling of these challenges that the Caribbean society grapples with affirms that the author deals with important issues that affect the Caribbean.

Chapter Five was a summary of our findings in the previous chapters.

## **5.2 CONCLUSION**

The study reveals that Anthony is a writer who addresses pertinent issues affecting not only the Caribbean society but the whole world. Weak and absent fathers are also found among the African Americans. Furthermore his works despite being written during the colonial period are still relevant to the modern society. Dysfunctional families are still common in our contemporary society. Hence the basic family unit in many parts of the world is experiencing many challenges. Anthony's works also show the author's quest and commitment to address social injustices in the society like race, gender marginalisation and class division. According to Anthony; this disparities spill down to the family, causing division.

Moreover, Anthony has clearly shown the important role a father plays in the family through his child narrators. According to the writer the role of the father goes beyond breadwinning. The father provides psychological, social and emotional support to the family. Hence families that have weak and absent fathers suffer physically, socially and psychologically. Anthony also reveals the importance of role modeling to children (by their parents) especially between sons and fathers. Positive role modeling lead to positive outcomes (Leon and father in *The Games Were Coming*) while negative role modeling lead to negative outcomes (Shellie, Sona and their fathers).

Anthony also communicates on the shifting gender roles in the family and society. In his works there were various masculinities at play namely hegemonic, subordinate and complicit. According to the writer traditional masculinity needs to be re (evaluated) by men. For instance, the idea of fatherhood being pegged on breadwinning. Mothers in the writer's work leave the household to seek employment without lamenting while some fathers are left at home (Shellie's father). Hence the writer emphasizes the need for both parents to support each other physically, socially and mentally for more stable families.

### **5.3 Recommendations for Further Research**

This study limits itself to the portrayal of the father in selected works of Michael Anthony. We therefore recommend that further research on the father

figure be done in other texts from the Caribbean. A comparative analysis on the portrayal of the father by female writers and male writers in the Caribbean can also be conducted. We also recommend that masculinity theory be applied in the study of other genres of literature. We further recommend a comparative study of the father in the African Caribbean family with the father in Africa or African American family.

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