

ABSTRACT

In the second half of the twentieth century, a sufficiently large and inter-related body of work by St. Lucian playwrights had come into existence to justify one speaking of a playwriting tradition. This thesis attempts first of all to describe the socio-cultural context out of which the plays arose and which they sought to reflect. Secondly, it outlines a pattern of major thematic concerns in the writing over the forty-five year period. The pattern indicates a growing, sequential focus on race, religion and class as one moves from the Walcott to post-Walcott generation of playwrights. Needless to say, there is overlap and interpenetration of themes, but a general pattern is nonetheless discernible. The pattern is analysed within a broad theoretical framework of post-colonialism; i.e. the writers' engagements with issues of race, religion and class are seen as responses to the multi-dimensional presence of colonialism and neo-colonialism in St. Lucia and the wider Caribbean. Finally, the thesis examines the plays in relation to their actual and potential contribution to a Caribbean form of theatre. Particular attention is paid to the influence of the folk culture on the forms of playwriting. No attempt at definite conclusions is made in matters of either theme or form. Much of the material is new in the sense of never having been subjected to academic analysis. The intention has been more to demonstrate that there is a developing tradition of playwriting in St. Lucia and that it is one which would richly reward further study.

Keywords: Post-colonial theatre, Caribbean drama, St. Lucian playwriting, Race, Religion, Class, Theatrical form