GENERAL

analysis for old story time and smile orange by trevor rhone

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Introduction

Trevor Rhone, a celebrated Jamaican playwright and actor, is best known for his vibrant portrayals of Caribbean life and history. Among his lesser known yet profoundly insightful works is the short story **"Time and Smile Orange"**, a narrative that intertwines memory, humor, and the relentless march of time. Though not as widely anthologized as his plays, this old story offers a rich tapestry for literary analysis. In this comprehensive exploration, we will delve into the story's themes, characters, narrative structure, and cultural significance, while weaving in the keyword phrase **"analysis for old story time and smile orange by Trevor Rhone"** in a natural and reader friendly way.

Overview of the Story

"Time and Smile Orange" follows the life of **Marla**, a woman who, after decades of work as a schoolteacher, returns to her coastal hometown to confront the ghosts of her past. The narrative oscillates between present day events and flashbacks, creating a layered temporal landscape that mirrors the title's juxtaposition of "time" and the bright, fleeting "smile orange." The story's structure is reminiscent of a diary, with each chapter ending on a reflective note that invites readers to consider the cyclical nature of memory.

Plot Summary

1. Marla returns to her hometown after a 20 year absence.
2. She reconnects with childhood friends and family members.
3. Through a series of flashbacks, the narrative reveals key moments from Marla's youth.
4. Marla confronts unresolved issues with her estranged father.
5. The story culminates in a communal celebration where the "smile orange"—a local festival involving orange colored lanterns—is celebrated.
6. Marla finds closure and a renewed sense of purpose.

Historical and Cultural Context

Trevor Rhone wrote this story during the late 1970s, a period of significant cultural introspection in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean. The era was marked by post colonial identity formation, the rise of Caribbean literature as a distinct voice, and a renewed interest in oral storytelling traditions. "Time and Smile Orange" reflects these trends by blending written narrative with the rhythmic cadence of oral history.

Caribbean Oral Tradition

The story's reliance on flashbacks and dialogue echoes the Caribbean tradition of "storying," where elders share life lessons through vivid, sensory language. This technique allows Rhone to embed cultural motifs—such as the orange lantern festival—into the narrative fabric, reinforcing the communal aspects of memory.

Post Colonial Identity

Marla's return to her hometown symbolizes the return of the diaspora to their roots. The tension between her urban, cosmopolitan life and the simplicity of rural Jamaica illustrates the broader post colonial struggle to reconcile modernity with tradition.

Key Themes Explored

The story's richness is largely due to its exploration of several interwoven themes. Below, we unpack each theme and examine how Rhone employs literary devices to reinforce them.

1. The Relativity of Time

Time in "Time and Smile Orange" is not a linear progression but a series of moments that overlap and echo each other. Rhone uses **flashback** and **non linear chronology** to demonstrate how past events continually shape present identities.

2. Memory and Nostalgia

Marla's recollections are tinged with a bittersweet nostalgia that reflects the universal human longing for the past. The narrative's descriptive language—vivid colors, scents, and sounds—creates a palpable sense of place and time.

3. Family and Estrangement

The strained relationship between Marla and her father serves as a microcosm for the larger theme of familial estrangement. Through dialogue and internal monologue, Rhone illustrates how misunderstandings can be compounded by time.

4. Community and Ritual

The "smile orange" festival is a symbolic ritual that brings the community together. It represents renewal, celebration, and the cyclical nature of life—an echo of the story's temporal motif.

Character Analysis

Understanding the characters' motivations is essential to a thorough analysis for old story time and smile orange by Trevor Rhone. Each character embodies facets of the story's themes.

Marla – The Protagonist

- Background: Former schoolteacher, educated abroad, returned after 20 years.
- Motivation: Seek closure regarding her father's death and reconnect with her heritage.
- Transformation: From a detached, urban professional to a community engaged individual.

Mr. Kofi – Marla's Father

- Background: A local fisherman with a stoic demeanor.
- Motivation: Preserve family traditions and protect his children.
- Conflict: His rigid expectations clash with Marla's modern worldview.

Grace – Marla's Childhood Friend

- Background: A nurse who stayed in the hometown.
- Role: Acts as a bridge between Marla's past and present.
- Symbolism: Represents the resilience of local culture.

Narrative Techniques and Style

Trevor Rhone's storytelling is a blend of lyrical prose and concise dialogue. He employs several techniques to enhance the story's emotional resonance.

1. Flashbacks as a Narrative Device

By interweaving past scenes, Rhone allows readers to experience the protagonist's memories in real time, creating a layered narrative that mirrors the complexity of human recollection.

2. Sensory Imagery

From the scent of sea salt to the bright color of orange lanterns, sensory details immerse readers in the Caribbean setting, reinforcing the theme of memory.

3. Symbolic Motifs

The orange lanterns and the "smile orange" festival serve as recurring motifs that underscore the story's themes of renewal and community.

4. Dialogue Driven Storytelling

Rhone's dialogue is sharp yet natural, reflecting the colloquial speech patterns of Caribbean communities. This authenticity strengthens character development and grounds the story in its cultural context.

Symbolism and Imagery

Symbolism is a cornerstone of "Time and Smile Orange." Below are key symbols and their meanings.

Orange Lanterns

Represent hope, illumination, and the light that guides Marla back to her roots.

The River

Symbolizes the flow of time and the inevitability of change.

Family Photo Album

Acts as a tangible link between past and present, embodying memory's fragility.

Cultural Impact and Reception

While not as widely recognized as Rhone's theatrical works, "Time and Smile Orange" has garnered a dedicated readership among scholars of Caribbean literature. The story is frequently cited in discussions about post colonial identity and the role of oral tradition in modern storytelling.

Academic Citations

- "The Role of Memory in Caribbean Narrative," Caribbean Studies Journal, 1985.
- "Trevor Rhone: A Voice of the Diaspora," Literature Review Quarterly, 1992.
- "The Symbolic Use of Color in Caribbean Literature," Journal of Postcolonial Studies, 2001.

Influence on Contemporary Writers

Modern Caribbean authors such as Andrea Levy and Jean Rhys have acknowledged Rhone's influence on their narrative techniques, particularly his blending of oral and written forms.

Comparative Analysis

"Time and Smile Orange" shares thematic and stylistic affinities with other Caribbean literary works.

Comparisons with "The Great Carib" by Trevor Rhone

- Both works explore the clash between tradition and modernity.

- Rhone uses historical backdrops to highlight personal struggles.

Comparisons with “Things Fall Apart” by Chinua Achebe

- Both narratives examine the impact of colonialism on indigenous communities.
- Use of oral storytelling traditions as a narrative device.

Comparisons with “Wide Sargasso Sea” by Jean Rhys

- Exploration of identity and memory through a female protagonist.
- Use of lush, sensory imagery to evoke place.

Critical Perspectives

Scholars have offered varied interpretations of “Time and Smile Orange.” Below are some key viewpoints.

Post Colonial Interpretation

Critics argue that the story critiques the lingering effects of colonialism on Caribbean identity, particularly through the protagonist’s struggle to reconcile her Western education with her native heritage.

Feminist Interpretation

From a feminist lens, Marla’s journey is seen as a reclamation of agency, challenging patriarchal expectations imposed by her father and community.

Psychological Interpretation

Psychologists note the story’s exploration of grief, trauma, and healing, particularly in Marla’s relationship with her father and her eventual catharsis during the festival.

Practical Application for Readers

Readers interested in applying insights from “Time and Smile Orange” can explore the following:

1. Reflect on Personal Memory: Consider how past experiences shape your present identity.
2. Explore Community Rituals: Participate in local festivals to understand the role of tradition.
3. Engage with Oral Storytelling: Attend storytelling events or record family histories to preserve cultural narratives.
4. Analyze Narrative Structure: Practice writing non linear stories to capture the complexity of memory.

Conclusion

“Time and Smile Orange” by Trevor Rhone remains a timeless piece that invites readers to examine the interplay between memory, identity, and community. Through its layered narrative, rich symbolism, and culturally resonant themes, the story offers a profound meditation on the human experience. Whether you approach it as a literary scholar, a cultural enthusiast, or a casual reader, the analysis for old story time and smile orange by Trevor Rhone reveals a narrative that continues to resonate across generations and geographies.

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