



3. Countering Stereotypes in Jamaican Cinema as Discourse for the Anthropocene

Joshua Paul¹, Tomlin Paul²

Abstract

Jamaican cinema, as limited as it is, highlights the Anthropocene in a manner that emphasizes the limitations of a Third World society. Brian Clive Smith, political scientist, in his book *Understanding Third World Politics: Theories of Political Change and Development* (1996) identifies Third World countries as “a group of countries which have colonial histories and which are in the process of developing economically and socially from a status characterized by low incomes, dependence on agriculture, weakness in trading relations, social deprivation for large segments of society, and restricted political and civil liberties” (Smith, B.C. 1996, pg1) The examination of a nation that falls under this classification through the use of Anthropogenic theories becomes more important as not only is it necessary to look at the political and social underdevelopment, but also how this underdevelopment ties in with the natural ecology of the country. When identifying Anthropocene as a phenomenal discourse on a country such as Jamaica, critical emphasis should be placed on lack of socio-economic resources, excess urbanization, and rapid degradation of the ecological system through over-compensation for human survival.

Utilizing film director Perry Henzell’s 1972 film *The Harder They Come* as the main referential film for this analysis, we look at the subliminal portrayal of the Anthropocene Epoch and whether this is a relevant tenet within Caribbean cinema. The film focuses on the protagonist Ivanhoe "Ivan" Martin, played by notable reggae singer Jimmy Cliff, who migrates to the crowded inner city in search of life as an artist but instead falls into crime and gangsterism. The narrative is symbolic of Jamaica’s struggle as a post-colonial country, still reeling from European colonization and enslavement which from a socio-ecological framework, marked the beginning of the Anthropocene.

Keywords: Cinema, Anthropocene, Jamaica, Post-colonial

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¹ *Corresponding Author*; Lecturer at the University of Technology, Jamaica Film & Digital Media Production, 20 Armon Jones Crescent, Kingston 6, Jamaica W.I.; e-mail: joshuajpaul1@gmail.com.

² Chair, Educational Development and Quality Center, University of Global Health Equity, Rwanda; Former Dean of Medical Sciences at the University of the West Indies; e-mail: tpjosh@yahoo.com.



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