

How peoples
reactions to poverty
are treated in pieces
of silver and red ball
ess...



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In both stories poverty and the reactions to this are a big issue. In both stories it is not mention that the families are poor outright, but we realise this slowly through descriptions and the story line. In " Pieces of silver" they describe the boys with " naked feet", implying that their families do not have enough money to worry about such comforts as shoes. In " Red Ball" the writer is always making reference to Bolan's shape and weight " Thinny Boney" and " long thin legs". We immediately assume that he is under fed, which proves to be the point later on in the story.

In both stories we see that being poor is not only a big inconvenience comfort wise but also socially. The boys not rich enough to pay Mr. Megahey are scorned at by the rest of the school " cruel laughter" in " Pieces Of Silver". We see that the boys had been brought up to look down upon people poorer than them disdainfully. Bolan has the same sort of situation in " The Red Ball". He thinks that if the other boys realised he was too poor to pay for his food, then they will respect him less. This is the main reason that leads him to steals his family's savings, buying himself a " shiny red cork ball" and black pudding for all his friends. Also Bolan's father pretends to his friends back in Tunapuna that he is doing well in business " making tree dollars a day".

Likewise both boys come from very poor families. And understandably the fathers of these families are very attached to their money. Clement is reluctant to ask his father for money because he knows that " in parting with money, his father is a far harder nut to crack". Bolan is whipped by his father for having stolen the savings, not, we assume, as he says because he does not like thieves, but because he was hoping to spend it on cigarettes and

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rum. Similarly both fathers resented the rich people. Clement's dad criticizes the retiring headmaster "gi to that Megahey what's got his bread so well buttered". Bolan's father calls his work at the American airbases, "white people work" which shows that he has a very segregated view of society, the rich and the poor, the white and the black.

Bolan and clement both give their money out to their friends. But whereas Clement is doing it, we assume out of pure generosity and pity for his classmates, Bolan is doing it more to gain respect and in some way buy his friends. They both use their money irrationally not realising how important it is for their families to have those few extra pennies.

We see that in both descriptions there is a big leap between rich and poor. The description of Mr. Megahey's house in "Pieces Of Silver" is very rich and big "the open veranda" compared to the small crumbling house of the Dovecots "poor wretched coop". In the "Red Ball" the segregation of poor and rich is even more apparent as there are big fences that separate the two sides "tall iron rails".

In "The Red Ball" the mother accepts that they are poor and tries to look on the bright side, whereas the father gets very depressed, drinks to forget his worries and realises they're even worse because he has spent all his money on alcohol.

Evelina we learn had had to drop out of school, we assume, to help support her family as they could not afford her education "I was took from school". We sense that she regrets being taken from school, but tries to not show it

so as not to add more misery to her family than what they are already having to deal with.