CARIB FLUTE: THE "COLOURED" WRITERS

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The term "coloured" is the most difficult one to define in the Caribbean situation as intermingling of races has been its salient feature from the very beginning. The earliest European visitors were pirates and freebooters who clashed with the Indians and sometimes cohabited with them. The native Indian population of Arawaks and Caribs were soon marginalized by the Europeans who established a plantocracy. The planters gave asylum to the remaining number of Indians for they were helpful in providing game and fish for the white "massas." With the arrival of the Negro slaves, these Indians were given the job of keeping law and order among them by tracking down slaves when they ran away. Cohabitation with Negro slaves produced a new generation with mixed ancestry just as cohabitation with the Europeans in the earlier phase had produced a small population of half-castes. The white planters themselves hailed from different parts of Europe and marriages were contracted among them without considering differences of language and nationality. Cohabitation of white planters with the Negro slaves produced a new
generation of "coloured" or mulatto offspring. With the emancipation of slaves, labourers were brought into the Caribbean from Portugal, Malta, China and India to meet the labour shortage; of these, the maximum number were from India and China.

The term "coloured" was first used to signify the resentment that the blacks had towards the mulattoes who enjoyed certain privileges of education and status that the pure Negroes did not enjoy. But the situation was far from uniform. In the aftermath of colonization, a light complexion came to be identified with racial superiority. Some of the luckier mulattoes were given property and education by their white fathers but this was not the case for everyone. Kenneth Ramchand comments:

In the first place, there is more than an element of nonsense in speaking about a coloured class. In complexion they ranged from near-white to black; some were wealthy and owned property, some were well-educated, and many were as poor and illiterate as Negroes. Upto the 1830s they were subject to disability laws. Few of them achieved social prominence in the eighteenth century and when they began to gain strength, most of their energies were taken up in the fight to obtain full civil rights for their class. (39)
The Eurafricans were partly responsible for the resentment that the blacks had towards them. The coloured people were humble and ingratiating to the whites but supercilious and contemptuous of the blacks. Even after the removal of civil disabilities, the man of mixed blood was faced with the problem of social adjustment. They irritated the whites by trying to identify with them whereas the blacks jeered at them for trying to be "buckra." When the mulattoes started treading the path to whiteness, the blacks started looking to Africa as home. The novels of the black writers tend to present the 'brown' man with ridicule and irony and the white writers too portray them as unstable and unreliable. Panty, in the novel *God the Stonebreaker* by Alvin Bennett is an example. In his attempts to rise in the world Panty behaves with cringing deference to the white people but looks upon his own grandmother as the stumbling block on his road to success. But there were many writers who were interested in the psychological problems fostered by mixed ancestry. The intermingling of blood strains between the master and the slave, created problems of identification. The Carib flute symbolizes this
dilemma. The Caribs, who were the cannibalistic aborigines of the Caribbean, had the habit of hollowing out the bone of the enemy to form a flute after eating the flesh. The flute thus becomes the home of the ghosts as well as the bridge between victor and victim. Wilson Harris describes it thus: "...the flute became the home or curiously mutual fortress of spirit between enemy and other, an organ of self-knowledge suffused with enemy bias so close to native greed for victory" (*The Guyana Quartet*, 1985, p. 10). This aspect of dual loyalties becomes the focus of interest for many writers, who refuse to identify with either the black or the white strain of their ancestry. It is such writers that I have in mind while discussing the "coloured" quest for identity. Among these the two prominent names are those of Edgar Mittelholzer and Wilson Harris. Both of them are from Guyana which shares with the Islands a common history of colonization, slavery and indentureship. There are differences, however, in the landscape, for Guyana is part of the South American continent and its rivers and forests loom larger than those found on the Islands. Yet the experiences of the fictional characters seem to have a great deal in common
with those of the Islands. Both these novelists also take into account the native Indian heritage which tends to get neglected by writers of Caribbean fiction. Kenneth Ramchand's comments about this situation in The West Indian Novel and its Background are relevant: "With the European discoveries, the natural and original inhabitants of the West Indies were virtually eliminated, the small communities which survive in Dominica and Guyana today are regarded as marginal to the society. This would seem to account for the fact that the aboriginal Indian seldom appears and is not a centre of social or political interest, either in verse, in drama or in fiction by writers from the West Indies" (164). Wilson Harris is an exception to this. His novels discover relevance in the Indians and they come alive in them. Edgar Mittelholzer too portrays them in his historical novel, Children of Kaywana which is the first novel of the Kaywana Trilogy. His presentation of them is rather exotic. Both these novelists view the emergence of selfhood from a historical perspective that accepts all the different racial strains within the Caribbean psyche.
Edgar Mittelholzer was born in New Amsterdam in British Guyana in 1909. His autobiography, *A Swarthy Boy* (1963) details the difficulties that he had encountered due to a swarthy complexion, especially because his father was a confirmed Negrophobe. His father's disappointment in his first born's complexion heightened within him the awareness of the polyglot colonial society with its hierarchy based on colour. It also developed in him a strong sense of racial and psychological taint that resulted from the admixture as the major cause of the schism within; his lack of restraint and irrational behaviour being the result of the opposing pulls of mixed ancestry. Living as harrowed a life as many of his characters, he committed suicide in 1965 in England. In the meanwhile, however, his output of fiction was significant. He explores the themes of religion, sex and history from a psychological standpoint. In his quest for a permanent home, he went to different places like Barbados and Canada before settling down in England. His first novel *Corentyne Thunder* (1941) presents the character of Ramgollal the cow minder of East Indian origin but he explores the psychic split through the character of Geoffrey Weldon.
A Morning at the Office (1950) and Shadows Move Among Them (1952) came next with new fictional techniques. For example A Morning at the Office satirizes the colour hierarchy through the device of "telescopic objectivity." This technique focuses attention on inanimate objects which tell the tale of persons and events associated with them. Mittelholzer had more than twenty novels to his credit at the time of his death but his magnum opus is the trilogy of three novels that capture the past of Guyana in all its exotic splendour. The novels are Children of Kaywana (1952), The Harrowing of Hubertus (1955), and Kaywana Blood (1958). The novels cover approximately three hundred and thirty seven years of Guyanese history through the fortunes of a pioneering family. Michael Gilkes's The West Indian Novel provides the following information about the trilogy:

The Kaywana trilogy is generally accepted as Mittelholzer's most outstanding work. It is certainly the finest example of his ability to organise a wealth of detail (the time span of the novels is approximately 337 years) in the telling of a story of epic proportions. To Mittelholzer who identified with a Swiss/German ancestor and felt a sense of 'genetic damage', the sexual and racial conflict and the resultant mixing of 'bloods' involved in the
violent slave past of Guyana in which his ancestry actually took root, must have seemed a natural choice for what was to be his magnum opus. His love of story telling, his sense of the mystery and excitement of the past, his ability to evoke the atmosphere and 'feel' of a place, his delight in vigorous often violently sensational action, his prodigious ability for inventing, amassing and organizing detail all came together to equip him for the formidable task he set himself: the imaginative reconstruction of the social and political history of Guyana, from the early seventeenth to the middle of the twentieth century and within this framework, the epic saga of the growth and development of the van Groenwegel family tree. Mittelholzer's diligent research and scrupulous honesty are apparent in the use he makes of the slim documentation available and in the chronological accuracy of historical, factual events in the novels. Like The Life and Death of Sylvia (1953) the main theme of the Kaywana trilogy involves a working out of the author's theories of 'strength' and 'weakness.' Within the maze like winding corridors of 'Huis Kaywana' runs the thread of 'blood,' the 'strength' or 'weakness' of which finally determines the character and actions of every member of this extraordinary family and it is this with its complex irony (a complexity which has generally gone unacknowledged or unnoticed by Mittelholzer's critics) that one can trace through these three novels. (1981,57)

Of the three novels, the second one namely The Harrowing of Hubertus is a digressive work where the central focus is the character of the protagonist Hubertus. This provides us with ample opportunity to study the quest for identity with reference to the six
situations. But the historical perspective has to be elucidated with reference to all the three novels of the trilogy.

Wilson Harris, born in Guyana in 1921, is of mixed European, African and Amerindian ancestry. He started his literary career while working as a surveyor in the interior of Guyana by writing poems and short stories. These were published in a Georgetown magazine. Before he migrated to England in the late fifties he had already published two collections of poems. His first novel, Palace of the Peacock was published in 1960. Since then he has achieved recognition as a novelist, poet and critic with nineteen novels, two volumes of novellas, four volumes of essays and numerous articles of literary criticism to his credit. He continues to write and is now regarded as the leading novelist of the Caribbean. As a writer, he rejects the realistic mode of writing as he thinks that it sacrifices the deeper unconscious reality by its emphasis on the concreteness of external reality. His novels are rich in psychological content as his major theme is the growth of consciousness of his subject. The history and
landscape of his native Guyana provide him with sources for his imaginative vision. His fiction explores the lost, hidden, unconscious and unacknowledged elements that shaped the West Indian psyche. These have to be retrieved and understood before the individual can attain selfhood and the society be liberated from the errors of the past. Though the focus is on Guyana, Harris's vision transcends the narrow limitations of space and time to become universal. Hena Maes-Jelinek has made a pertinent comment in The Naked Design.

... The Guyana of Harris's novels is obviously a microcosm standing for the world at large. His main subject is the growth in consciousness of his characters, their understanding of the past and of the diversified configuration of the Guyanese community; such understanding, however, does not only lead them to a sense of their own distinctiveness as a nation but makes them aware of what they share with the rest of mankind. (8)

The four novels of The Guyana Quartet are Palace of the Peacock (1960), The Far Journey of Oudin (1961), The Whole Armour (1962) and The Secret Ladder (1963). Together they offer a wide picture of Guyana and its people and bring to focus major historical facts from the period of colonization to later independence.
Of these, *Palace of the Peacock* offers plenty of scope to study the quest for identity but a short survey of the other novels of the quartet is necessary to study the search for roots. Both the Quartet and the Trilogy seem to be telling the same tale of Guyana but the difference in technique and the shift in focus make a contrastive analysis worthwhile.

Mittelholzer follows a linear pattern of narration starting from the beginning, his obvious strength being his factual accuracy and wealth of detail. Harris follows a cyclical pattern where the past mingles with the present and the characters merge into one another at a level deeper than the conscious. He thus achieves a timeless quality within the fictional framework. Mittelholzer's probe into the psyche is at a conscious level whereas Harris builds upon the mythical framework that has its origin in the unconscious. The four novels of *The Guyana Quartet* are set in different landscapes of Guyana and different communities are involved in their actions. In each novel the landscape comes alive with a spirit born of the trials of the past. These trials include exile (first for the
Europeans and then for the marginalized groups of Amerindians and runaway slaves) dismemberment of peoples (particularly African) and exploitation of man by man (which involves all the races brought into the Caribbean to bring prosperity to the colonizers). The very rivers in Guyana recreate the music of the past as the name Guyana is derived from the Amerindian root word which means "land of waters." Thus we move with the early explorers on a dangerous river running through jungles and rapids, to the coastal plains where the East Indian coolies grow rice, moving on to the mouth of the dark Pomeroon river and the strip of land between bush and sea, to go back into the forests of the Canje region where Fenwick meets the descendants of runaway slaves. Mittelholzer also makes use of landscape to inform and control his characters' behaviours so that the natural environment and human thought and action become inseparably welded together. But this geographical panorama is unfolded to better advantage in his other novels, Corentyne Thunder being an example. In the Triloyy the landscape looms as the living background for action as the van Groenwegels move from one region of Guyana to the other in pursuit of wealth and power. The
two novelists also differ widely in their characterization. Harris's characters are always in a state of flux as he objects to fiction that upholds the perpetuation of given, unquestioned conceptions of the individual or society. The Naked Design sheds light on this:

... Those of his characters who at the outset strive to maintain their position or to confirm to a static order not only lack the open-mindedness required for a constant development but are also obstacles to other people's fulfilment. Donne is an obvious example but Magda in The Whole Armour is a more difficult one to understand. By ordinary standards, she is a magnificently powerful character. But her very strength and self-assurance make her utterly blind to the potential for spiritual discovery and renewal that her less assertive son responds to. By the same standards, Fenwick must appear irresolute and weak. Yet he is the one who with full maturity recognizes his (or man's) limitations and throws light on the whole Quartet by his unremitting analysis and revision of conflicting convictions. Moral strength in Harris's characters demands a good deal of humility and the courage to face the often terrifying ordeal incurred by the breakdown of a familiar view of reality. However varied their experience, all Harris's main characters face this test through which alone the hidden face of truth can be revealed. (11-12)

About Mittelholzer Michael Gilkes has the following comments to make "Mittelholzer apparently believed that strength of will was a pre-requisite for
happiness and that his 'Germanic' European blood represented this "strength" while his "West Indian" blood harbored a "weakness." This attitude undoubtedly led to a psychological disunity which became in turn not only the chief cause of his unhappiness as a man but also the main theme of his work as a novelist" (41). However, the evidence from the Trilogy shows him to be sympathetic to the West Indian side of his ancestry. In fact the characters with obvious strength of will cause unhappiness to those around them and the ironies and paradoxes of Fate get the better of them in the end.

Children of Kaywana starts the saga of racial intermixture beginning with Kaywana which means "old water." She is half aboriginal Indian and half English sailor. She has unalloyed pride in her English blood which sets her apart from the other Indians and liberates her from the naivete and taboos of Indian society. It is her admiration of strength that brings her close to August Vyfuis, a Dutch sailor. Unfortunately August dies heroically in a Spanish raid leaving Kaywana with a son. She is then attracted towards Adriansen van Groenwegel, a Dutch sailor and
merchant who combines strength with cunning. Adriansen's use of flattery and guile do not appeal to Kaywana. When there is a threat of Indian revolt, Kaywana wants Adriansen to get the help of the soldiers to put it down but Adriansen prefers to act with diplomacy. Kaywana's enemy Wakkatai, the witch doctor, is the leader of the rebellion and Kaywana and most of her children get killed though they fight bravely to the last. She thus goes down as the first heroine of the van Groenwegels. Two of her sons, Willem and Aert survive the fight largely on account of Adriansen's cunning but the impression that is left behind in the children's minds is of bravery and strength. August, her son by August Vyfuis also survives. In the next generation Willem inherits the mantle of strength but he marries a German girl called Griselde hailing from an artistic family. Of his sons Reinald is the artistic one while Laurens inherits the courage and strength that helps to save the family during a raid by Major Scott and his marauding band of Caribs. Willem pins his hopes on Laurens to achieve his ambition of making the van Groenwegels the most powerful family in Guyana. Brute strength and determination was the credo that he tried
to instil in his sons. Laurens however invites his father's ire by marrying a mulatto slave girl who is the daughter of his uncle August and a coloured slave. He thus brings the strain of Negro blood into the van Groenwegel family. Reinald marries a white girl and their son Ignatius becomes an artist. But the daughter of Laurens and Katrina, Hendrickje, becomes the fierce embodiment of van Groenwegel pride in spite of her slave blood. To keep her family name she marries her own cousin, the weak and artistic Ignatius. She institutes the family motto "The van Groenwegels never run," underlining the importance of courage and determination. In her ambition to make the family the most powerful one in the colony, she oversteps all boundaries of kindness and scruples reducing her husband to a mere cipher whose only function is to provide her with sons. Ironically however she manages to have only two sons who grow up in fear and hatred of the mother. Her callous behaviour and her constant harping on the legends of the van Groenwegels affect their lives and they become warped in thinking. Her excesses drive her husband to suicide; her elder son Cornelis becomes a homosexual and the younger son Adrian becomes insane later on. But her
courage and efficiency make her out as a legendary figure. When the French invade the colony Hendrickje gets an opportunity to demonstrate the family motto. But her son Cornelis runs away with his male friend. Her son Adrian stays back and fights though the slaves desert the cruel mistress in her hour of need. Adrian's emotions are highly unstable where his mother is concerned. He hates her as a child but develops a physical desire for her when he grows older. Hendrickje finds nothing strange in this but she does not indulge in physical intimacy with her son. Her chats with Adrian help to soften her attitude towards the slaves. After a while Adrian's attitude changes again to hatred. Hendrickje who had until then refrained from sexual excesses now indulges herself with a slave named Bangara. When Rosaria, a half-caste slave arrives on the plantation with her nephew Jabez's son, she starts scheming. Jabez had been castrated by a jealous rival for Rosaria's affections and he had sought asylum with his aunt to escape the embarrassment. Under Hendrickje's influence Rosaria seduces Adrian who is made to believe that Hendrickje is dead against his relationship with a half-caste. In order to hurt
Hendrickje's sense of family pride, Adrian fathers a brood of children who are of mixed blood. Jabez in the meanwhile had committed suicide after sending his son Hubertus back to his father, Aert van Groenwegel. Soon Adrian goes mad with hate for his mother and Rosaria leads her own voluptuous existence. Hendrickje establishes absolute control over Adrian's children. Under her tutelage they grow up wild and tough because their worst vices are encouraged by their grandmother who does not want them to grow up as dreamers like her own husband. Many sensational events follow with Rosaria engaging in rivalries with Hendrickje and trying to murder her. Hendrickje's training helps Adrian's children to shoot down Rosaria while she is at her lover's house. They have absolutely no qualms of conscience about it. Only two of the children, Jacques and Juliana, show any difference from the rest. When the slave rebellion of 1763 breaks out, Hendrickje insists on following the Groenwegel motto of fighting to the last. Though they are successful at first they are not able to hold out till the end. Jacques who had been captured by the slaves, manages to escape only to die
fighting, at the door of his house in Canje. Hendrickje and all her grandsons are wiped out except Jacques's wife Faustina and her three infants.

The Harrowing of Hubertus, the second novel of the Trilogy, concentrates on the character of Hubertus, the protagonist. Hubertus, the son of Jabez and Rosaria is brought up by his grandparents. Aert, Hendrickje's brother had two daughters, Flora and Mathilde and a son Jabez. One of his daughters, Flora, married into a family called Teuffer and prospered till that family was wiped out by the slave rebellion. The other one, Mathilde, was left in the lurch by a Dutch sea captain, whose illegitimate daughter Faustina was brought up along with Hubertus. Faustina later on married Hubertus's half-brother Jacques. The Harrowing of Hubertus delineates the history of Guyana by focussing on the fortunes of Hubertus and his children but it is different from the other two novels of the Trilogy being a more personal novel than a mere record of historical events. As a character Hubertus is aware of the split within himself. In a letter written to a friend the author Mittelholzer described the novel as a
quiet book devoted to the study of Hubertus van Groenwegel whom he described as "a projection of a facet of my own personality." Hubertus is aware that he is not an integrated being suffering as he does from division of consciousness: "There were times when Hubertus believed that he possessed another self over which he had no control. It caused him to do and say things he would normally have hesitated to do and say. It sprang surprises on him. Yet he knew that he approved of this self, he did not regret its presence" (1954, 17).

The author makes use of this division as a metaphor for the dilemma of the coloured man whose inheritance involves rival streams of colonizer/aborigine and master/slave. Hubertus is quarter Indian, one sixteenth Negro and the rest white. Within the white strain he has ancestors of English, Dutch, German and Spanish nationalities. This mixed inheritance makes his search for selfhood a harrowing experience.

Palace of the Peacock recreates the European pursuit of gold and Indians in the sixteenth century through a crew of conquistadores who are timeless. They
are a group of people that belong to every race leaving us in doubt as to the age in which the action takes place. The only thing we know about them is that they have joined the violent taskmaster Donne in the pursuit of his rebellious Amerindian labourers. Their racial and social backgrounds are revealed in little bits and pieces as the journey proceeds but it is a description that transcends the narrow confines of realistic portrayal. When Donne and his crew arrive at the Mission Mariella in their guise of modern day conquistadors, the Amerindians flee. The abandoned settlement exerts a strange power over the racially mixed crew who are all escapees from modern day civilization seeking refuge in the bush for personal failures. In the hallucinatory landscape of the rainforest, they begin to unearth "the grave of memory" reflecting on the frustration and lack of fulfilment in their lives. But they are a "dead" crew and have to "die" a second time before they can attain fulfilment.

Childhood: The motif of childhood is used in an imaginative manner by Harris to shed light on adulthood. The narrator "I" is both the brother and the
alter-ego of Donne, the leader of the crew. In contrast to Donne, the narrator is a visionary, a dreamer and in his reminiscences he describes how he first separated from Donne in childhood:

His name was Donne and it had always possessed a cruel glory for me. His wild exploits had governed my imagination from childhood. In the end he had been expelled from school.

He left me a year later to join a team of ranchers near the Brazil frontier and border country. I learnt then to fend for myself and he soon turned into a ghost, a million dreaming miles away from the sea-coast where we had lived. (1985, 20)

Here the allegory of ambivalence pinpoints how Donne separates from his visionary self as he grows hard and cruel. The theme of childhood is brought in again during a discourse between Donne and the narrator, as the narrator tries to explain his dream to Donne who advocates toughness:

"It is an old dream," I plucked up the courage to express my own thoughts.

"What is?"
"It started when we were at school, I imagine. Then you went away suddenly. It stopped then. I had a curious sense of hard won freedom when you had gone. Then to my astonishment, long after, it came again. But this time with a new striking menace that flung you from your horse. You fell and died instantly, and yet you were the one who saw, and I was the one who was blind. Did I ever write and tell you" - I shrank from Donne's supercilious smile and hastened to justify myself - "that I am actually going blind in one eye?" I was gratified by his sudden startled expression.

"Blind?" he cried.

"My left eye has an incurable infection" I declared, "My right eye - which is actually sound goes blind in my dream," I felt foolishly distressed. "Nothing kills your sight," I added with musing envy. "And your vision becomes," I hastened to complete my story, "your vision becomes the only remaining window in the world for me." (22)

Here the visionary self goes blind and the only vision left to him is that of the cruel taskmaster. Donne advocates toughness saying that one has to be a devil to survive. As the last landlord he has to play all the roles - of doctor, gaoler, judge and hangman. One has to rule over the land to rule the world and Donne reminds the narrator that he had looked after him as if he were a son.
In Mittelholzer's novel, Hubertus recollects childhood experiences at crucial junctures and these memories help to shed light on his duality. He had grown up in the care of his grandparents without experiencing his mother's affection. His companion in childhood was Faustina, the illegitimate daughter of his Aunt Mathilde. Faustina too had been neglected by her mother who had grown bitter and resentful after her lover had jilted her. This had drawn Hubertus and Faustina together in a bond of affection almost like a brother and sister. Ironically however they developed a physical intimacy in later life that was illicit. Though both of them belonged to the powerful van Groenwegel family, their attitudes towards the family were different. Hubertus was suspicious of some of his relatives and ashamed of their excesses though he was proud of the name. His suspicions were rooted in the stories he had heard in childhood: "Years and years ago, as a boy he had heard vague rumours about his own mother - that she was a profligate who had abandoned him as an infant so that his father had to send him to Essequibo to be cared for by his grandfather. She and his father had lived with the van Groenwegels on the upper Canje;
he knew that for certain; his grandfather had told him so. His father had died when he was an infant; the rumour was that he had committed suicide. He had never been able to get a clear picture of what had happened. His grandfather and grandmother had always avoided discussing the affair but the impression had been left on Hubertus that very dark deeds had been committed on the upper Canje when he was an infant and a boy. Hubertus had grown up with the conviction that his relatives on the Canje were people to be regarded with suspicion and uncertainty" (11). Faustina in contrast was proud of being a van Groenwegel in spite of her illegitimacy. She married Jacques, Hendrickje's grandson, who wooed her through letters. After his death, she came to Demerary to stay with Hubertus. From Jacques, Faustina had come to know the whole bitter story of Hubertus's parents. She told everything to him confirming his worst fears. Hubertus blamed his heridity for his lack of restraint. Even before Faustina had told him, some intuition had informed him that his mother was a pit of Evil. He was now sure that all his temptations for the sins of the flesh were because of his mother's tainted blood.
The childhood experiences of Hubertus's children and the children of Faustina presage the events to come. Of Hubertus's four daughters, Luise was the one closest to him. She developed a strange attraction for Edward, the son of Faustina, who was ten years younger than her. In Hubertus's case he was caught between his wife Rosalind and Faustina, for both of whom he had great love and affection. The story repeats itself in the next generation with Luise, Edward and Edward's step-sister Clara Clackson. An incident is described where Faustina watches the children at play and the focus of attention becomes Edward:

As she watched, Clara, Cranley's girl, came into view round the water tank carrying an Indian basket filled with what looked like palm seeds and stones. She made straight for Edward, and seating herself beside him began to select items from her collection which she handed to him one by one, a concentrated smile on her face. He touched them, examined them and put them down in a pile before him, then without warning uttered a crowing sound, rose and gave her a push. She laughed and he laughed. (75)

Edward was a strangely precocious boy given to observing things. He was rather quiet and not given to romping and had a streak of cruelty in him. By the time
he was eight, he was aware of the eighteen-year-old Luise's love for him. Rosalind, Luise's mother, had not noticed anything till she saw the following scene that disturbed her:

Luise stood watching Edward, who ignoring her, edged his way slowly round the rounded tank, evidently still observing the movements of ants. Without warning, he stopped, looked up at Luise, then straightened up. He was a full head shorter than Luise. Rosalind saw him smile, and then silently he put his hand up and patted Luise's cheek. He did it as he might have done to some pet animal. Luise brushed his hand off, then almost in the same motion caught his wrist and pressed his hand against her breast. Rosalind was sure the girl trembled as she stood there half-lean against the water tank. Suddenly she released Edward's hand and turned and ran off. (125)

Lusie waited ten more years before the two announced their decision to marry. Neither Faustina nor Rosalind approved of it; only Hubertus could understand Luise's reasons.

Struggle for Survival: In Palace of the Peacock, the struggle for survival is equated with the pursuit of fulfilment. At the beginning, one gets the impression that the narrative starts at a critical juncture in the life of the main character. His physical destruction
presages his birth into another state. The narrator's dream immediately follows the death of Donne, who has been killed by the vengeful Mariella. The dream is a reconstruction of the significant events in Donne's life. Mariella is a part of themselves and the duality of the hero manifests itself in Donne's ill-treatment of her and the narrator's attempts to appease her. She now becomes an assassin and an enigma becoming identified with spiritual fulfilment. The title of the book, "The Mission of Mariella" suggests this.

The multiracial crew set off in search for the missing labourers. The description of the crew offers different layers of meaning and significance:

The crew swarmed like upright spiders, half-naked, scrambling under the burden of cargo they were carrying ashore. First I picked and counted the da Silva twins of Sorrow Hill, thin, long-legged, fair skinned, of Portuguese extraction. Then I spotted old Schomburgh, also of Sorrow Hill, agile and swift as a monkey for all his seasoned years. Donne prized Schomburgh as a bowman, the best in all the world his epitaph boasted and read. There was Vigilance, black haired, Indian, sparkling and shrewd of eye, reading the river's mysterious book. Vigilance had recommended Caroll, his cousin, a thick-set young Negro boy gifted with his paddle as if it were a violin and a sword together in paradise. My eye fell on Cameron, brick-red face, slow
feet, faster than a snake in the forest with his hands; and Jennings, the mechanic, young, solemn-featured, carved out of still wood it seemed, sweating still the dew of his tears, cursing and reproving his whirling engine and toy in the unearthly terrifying grip in the water. Lastly I counted Wishrop, assistant bowman and captain's understudy. Wishrop resembled Donne, especially when they stood side by side at the captain's paddle. I felt my heart come into my mouth with a sense of recognition and fear. Apart from this fleeting wishful resemblance it suddenly seemed to me I had never known Donne in the past - his face was a dead blank. I saw him now for the first faceless time as the captain and unnatural soul of heaven's dream; he was myself standing outside of me while I stood inside of him. (25-26)

Obviously, this poetic description establishes the real nature of their quest as something more significant than missing labourers. The names like Vigilance and Wishrop convey multiple layers of meaning and the statement that follows about the names matching those of a dead crew inscribed on Sorrow Hill underline the nature of the quest, as spiritual fulfilment.

The river presents obstacles to the crew. In a particular section they are forced to lift the boat out of the water and haul it along the bank till the obstruction is cleared. The whirlpool offers a vision of a wild inverse stream that makes the narrator relive
Donne's first innocent voyage in pursuit of Mariella. It took the crew three days to take to the river again. Though the rapids looked less dangerous now, they could still be treacherous. It is Vigilance who warns the others when he sees the pale smooth patch that looks like the moon's reflection. It hides dangerous rocks but they are able to steer away from them because of Vigilance's warning.

When the crew reaches the Mission of Mariella, the news spreads among the people who remember the dead crew who had earlier visited Mariella before they were drowned in the rapids. The unexpected image of Donne makes them flee. Their action may be justified as superstitious fear for Mariella had killed Donne because of his cruelty. The abandoned settlement exerts a strange influence upon the crew. On the first night that he spends on the soil of Mariella the narrator feels separated from the rest of the crew. In his isolation he feels the desire to abandon the world. In the morning however he experiences a sense of inner refreshment. Donne and one of the da Silva twins go to explore the land while the others engage in
conversation. Donne and his companion return with an old Arawak woman who had been coerced into agreeing to accompany them. Donne thinks that she will be helpful in providing information about the missing labourers.

This triggers off a discussion between Donne and his visionary self. Donne admits to ill-treatment of his folk but he excuses himself by blaming their irresponsible behaviour. He is bitter about the rights of the Indians to the land for, he feels that he too has earned his right. When he claims that he belongs there like Schomburgh or Cameron or anybody, the narrator sees the irony of belonging: nobody belonged as yet. Unless somebody demonstrates the unity of being, there will be no sense of belonging. But as the narrator struggles with his expression, Donne's attention is diverted to Schomburgh who acts as the interpreter between Donne and the Arawak woman. They realize that they have to follow the dangerous river for seven days before they can reach the hiding place. Both Schomburgh and Jennings advise Donne against undertaking the journey on account of all the pitfalls ahead; only Cameron and one of the da Silva twins support him. As they argue, Carroll begins to laugh. His laughter has all the effect of music:
...It was like a bell and it startled away for one instant every imagined revolution of misery and fear and guile. It was an ingenuous sound like the homely crackle of gossipping parrots or of inspired branches in the leaves, or the shining ecstasy and abandonment of the laughing wood when the hunter loses and finds his game in the foot mark he has himself left and made. (54-55)

Carroll's music is primitive and peculiar, confesses Harris himself in "A Note on the Genesis of The Guyana Quartet." It is not pure or sophisticated but it implies a paradise where the infernal deeds of the crew are engrained. In Wishrop's case his enemies are reborn again and again and move before him. These different characters also present different facets of Donne's personality and the warring elements within him. Donne's desire to escape the inequities is seen through Carroll's song, Wishrop's dance and Vigilance's gift of vision. Each member of the crew becomes the focus of attention in turn.

Book III entitled "The Second Death" portrays their progress up the river and the disintegration of their ambition and lust. The moments of tension alternate with spells of calm that help them to reconnotre. The new member of the crew, the Arawak woman is described thus:
... She belonged to a race that neither forgave nor forgot. That was legend. In reality the legend and consciousness of race had come to mean for her—patience, the unfathomable patience of a god in whom all is charged into wisdom when the grandiloquence of history and civilization was past. It was the subtlest labour and sweat of all time in the still music of the senses and of design. (61)

The river gets identified with the Arawak woman when the waves and ruffles of water are correlated to her heaving bosom and the embroideries on her handkerchief. As they watch in fascination the awesome spectacle of a voiceless soundless motion, they are caught in the dangerous War Office Rapids. There follows a tough struggle where each one blames the other for having had an evil intercourse with fate. They think that their plight is due to the arrest of the Arawak by Donne for they had aided and abetted it. It is then that the first catastrophe occurs in the death of Carroll, the youngest member of the crew. Carroll slips and falls into the water and disappears completely. Though the others are stricken by the sense of wasted youth they realize the permanence of art as "Carroll's voice and head" turned to "stone and song."
The death of Carroll triggers off Schomburgh's who is both his father and his uncle. Schomburgh had committed incest without knowing that the lady was his half-sister. Vigilance, Carroll's step-brother, had introduced him to Schomburgh and the old man had stared at him as "at a ghost whom he dreaded and loved." Schomburgh dies peacefully in his sleep the same night as Carroll.

With the death of the interpreter, the next day's journey through the rapids becomes even more dangerous. Jennings expresses misgivings and Donne tells him to remain behind if he wants to. This sets an argument into motion between Jennings and Cameron and Donne has to interfere to stop them. The journey starts once more; this time catastrophe comes in the form of a rock on which the boat strikes. Wishrop falls into the maelstrom and dissolves into nothingness picked clean by the perai. Only Vigilance can see his skeleton crawling up the rock-face to the sky dancing and gambolling a little.

As they proceed, Donne perceives a herd of tapir with one of the animals wounded. This makes him feel that they are close to the missing Indians. But
when he voices this, the Arawak woman smiles and Vigilance winces. Yet Donne is adamant about catching up with them and repairing their fortunes. He thinks that the Indians will lead them home safely and they will be able to cultivate their fields and be with their wives. But the crew however feels dejected and downcast. "They had forgotten the miraculous escape they had had and recalls only fear and anxiety and horror and peril. This was hard hearted nature they contemplated, without thinking they may have already suffered it and endorsed it and re-lived it" (84).

A flock of parrots pointed out by the Arawak woman starts off an argument between Cameron and one of the da Silva twins. In a flash of intuition, da Silva identifies the parrot with the silver ring as his lady's. He is laughed at by the rest of the crew especially Cameron. Cameron throws a stone at the parrot flock and wounds the bird with the silver ring. Da Silva starts to whimper and Cameron asks him to stop. This makes him mad and before the crew realizes what is happening, da Silva kills Cameron. This murder is committed out of despair for da Silva believes that Cameron has destroyed his chance of a reunion with his woman.
On the fourth day they wake up in a cave where they had found refuge on the previous night. They leave the body of Cameron there and proceed. By this time the crew has dwindled to Donne, Jennings, the twins and Vigilance. The deaths of the others are redemptive and the crew realizes this as they see their own deaths in the deaths of their companions:

... So Donne had died in the death of Wishrop, Jennings's primitive abstraction and slackening of will was a reflection of the death of Cameron. Schomburgh had died with Carroll. And da Silva saw with dread his own soying fool's life on the threshold of the ultimate stab of discredit like one who had adventured and lived on scraps of vulgar intention and detection and rumour that passed for the arrest of spiritual myth and the rediscovery of a new life in the folk. (96)

In terms of Guyanese experience, the regression into the grave and womb of history is absolutely necessary for the emergence of a true rebirth in terms of identity. The death of Carroll redeems them from sin and creates a new relationship with water. When Cameron dies Jennings loses an adversary within himself. Wishrop's dance expresses the harmony of death. He is also identified with the Anancy spider, a symbol of the survival of the exploited. The living quality of the
spider is transferred to Vigilance when he sees Wishrop's spidery skeleton climbing up. Significantly, the narrator, Donne's visionary self, now melts into the character of Vigilance who becomes the connecting link between death and life.

Book IV is entitled "Paling of Ancestors" and proceeds to the fifth day. In the dawn Donne misses three more people — one of the da Silva twins, Vigilance and the Arawak woman. They disappear without a trace but Donne decides to go ahead rather than remain behind. As Jennings' wrist in swollen, it is Donne who starts the engine with the help of da Silva. All of a sudden they reach a thunderous waterfall, the biggest they have encountered so far. Steps and balconies are seen to be cut on the rock-face making a hazardous ladder right to the top. Donne realizes that his destruction is at hand. They discard the boat and start climbing up with hands and feet.

The climb becomes synonymous with the breakdown of Donne's arrogance as a ruler and boss. His first experience is the memory of the house he has left behind on the savannah. As he slips on the misty steps, a
noose round his neck sustains him from falling. He understands Hell in an intuitive flash. Hell is "the dreaming return to a ruling function of nothingness and a false sense of home." Through this metaphor, Harris highlights the emotional dependence of the 'coloured' man on the artifacts of western civilization. As Donne ascends the steps, he encounters different faces at the windows which highlight different aspects of Guyanese history. The first one is that of a carpenter whom Donne has to recognize as a spiritual forebear within himself:

A rectangular face it was, chiselled and cut from the cedar of Lebanon. He was startled and frightened by the fleshless wood, the lips a breath apart full of grains from the skeleton of a leaf on the ground branching delicately and sensitively upward into the hair on his head that parted itself in the middle and fell on both sides of his face into a harvest. His fingers were of the same wood, the nails made of bark and ivory. Every movement and glance and expression was a chiselling touch, the divine alienation and translation of flesh and blood into everything and anything on earth. The chisel was old as life, old as a finger nail. The saw was the teeth of bone. Donne felt himself sliced with the skeleton-saw by the craftsman of God in the windowpane of his eye. The swallow flew in and out like a picture on the wall framed by the carpenter to breathe perfection. (102)
The carpenter is a spiritual redeemer but not Christ. Donne hammers on the window to attract his attention but he looks through and past him. The room transcends all concepts of time. The next image is that of the wounded animal which appears as a picture on the wall of the carpenter's room. It seems to fill the room with its presence. The image recalls the wounded tapir they had spotted earlier. The image sets off in motion a sort of cosmic dance in which all elements and experience are controlled by the carpenter's creative touch. Time and space coalesce into one another and the room becomes "...a dancing hieroglyph in the illumination of endless pursuit, the subtle running depths of the sea, the depths of the green sky and the depths of the forest" (104-105). After this, they see a comet trailing into a flock of birds standing before the huntsman of death who stands in the waterfall rewinding his horn. Then the sky becomes an endless stream of running prey fleeing the hunter. The walls of the carpenter's room are besieged by the stampede of ghostly men and women, reminding one of the stampede on the Day of Judgement. Thereafter the tumult subsides and the carpenter closes his window on Donne, Jennings and da Silva.
As they proceed on the journey, Jennings slips and falls into the depths. Donne and da Silva identify themselves with the wounded animal they had seen earlier, shaking and scanning the cliffs in fear and ecstasy. The stars in the sky shine as they crawl up the fantastic ladder. At one of the windows they encounter the image of the woman and child with its paradox on "richness" and "threadbareness." The arrogance of Donne is annihilated by the spectacle that may be identified as Madonna and Child. Donne realizes that he is blind but this blindness makes him aware of his nothingness. All his life he had loved only himself but now he focusses upon a far greater love and self-protection that has created the universe.

When they reach the top, they are exhausted but find nothing there. So they fall not having been able to lay hands on anything. In the dawn of the sixth day, da Silva wakes up inside the house hearing Donne hammering on the door. He opens the door to Donne who is blind and mad but who knows that da Silva and he are dead. In their death they have come home "...to the compassion of the nameless unflinching folk."
On the seventh day, the creation of the windows of the universe is completed. The narrator merges into Donne and sees Vigilance standing at the top of the sky, a position he has acquired through the pursuit of love. At the different windows of the palace, the different members of the crew can be identified. Carroll's music merges with the cry of the peacock. Schomburgh is free of all threats of hoax. Wishrop waltzes like the grace and outspread fan of desire. The narrator also sees Jennings, Cameron and the missing da Silva twin. They are all free from the chains of illusion. Having realized the ambivalences of predator/prey and ruler/ruled within themselves, they have at last slipped out of these limitations into a better understanding of themselves.

The struggle for survival in The Harrowing of Hubertus is presented in a realistic but prosaic manner. It does not have the grandiloquence of poetry. The novels of the Trilogy outline the difficulties that the pioneers had to face in an alien land. These include difficulties with weather and transport, lack of medical and educational facilities and threats from hostile
slaves, Indians and rival European powers. The planters often found themselves in the grip of circumstances out of their control. In the beginning of the novel, we see the letter written by Faustina to Hubertus explaining her situation of poverty and destitution. Her husband had died in the Berbice Insurrection and his entire family had been wiped out. So she wanted Hubertus to offer refuge to herself and her three sons. It also blamed the planters for cowardice for, she felt that they could have done better had they put up a fight instead of crowding on board the ships. This cowardice is ironic when one considers the deeds of cruelty that they had earlier inflicted on the slaves. The planters used to put them in stocks, cut off their ears, pour boiling tar over them etc. Lashes and whips were used to control them. During the rebellion, the slaves paid them back with interest making them submit to every sort of torture before killing them.

Faustina arrived in Demerary in 1764 and Hubertus received her warmly. He had already added two rooms to his house to accommodate her and her children
as he had received advance information. Faustina's description sheds light on the difficulties that the planters had to face:

She felt in no way self-conscious as she stood there in her stained, frayed, weather-worn dress. The events of the past year had cured her of feminine vanity. She knew that Jacqueline and Mary and the younger girls were staring curiously at her and the three infants, but the fact did not discomfit her, either. After months and months of life in a hut at St. Andries, and with disease and death around one continuously, who could feel sensitive about the clothes one wore! After the many grim sights of suffering she had endured, after the many hungry days and the battle for food for the children as well as for herself, how could she be concerned about the trifling circumstance of her being bare-footed, or about her bleached and tangled hair and the vague, unpleasant odour that surrounded her person.

Faustina's arrival set off in motion a number of events that affected Hubertus and his family.

Unlike other planters Hubertus was humane in his treatment of slaves. Yet he believed that harshness was necessary to control them. He thought of the Negroes and the Indians as heathens ordained by God to serve the white people. He used to keep a group of Indians on his plantation to keep a check on the
Negroes. His Indian blood helped him in securing their services. They also provided him with fish and game for his tables. But he had to provide them with rum to keep them happy. Though it was against his principles to encourage intoxication among them, he had to compromise on his ideals. In the beginning each compromise he affected harrowed him. Later on in life he started cohabiting with Negro slaves though he had restrained himself in the early years of marriage.

As a planter Hubertus was reasonably rich and he had few problems of a financial kind. His problems were always of a spiritual kind. So Rosalind was surprised when her brother told her that Hubertus indulged in illicit trading with the Islands for greater profit. As they were a Dutch colony, they were supposed to export everything they produced to Holland. Hubertus excused himself by saying that God would understand when a person acted out of corruption and when he acted out of urgent necessity. Rosalind was baffled by this inconsistency.

Hubertus was shrewd in matters of cultivation. There came a time when his land started yielding less and less and he decided that it was time to move on. In
the meanwhile Guyana was in the grip of uncertain politics with power changing hands from the Dutch to the English and then to the French and back again to the Dutch. But Hubertus was not ruffled by these events. Though he was Dutch he did not hesitate to take the oath of allegiance to the English when they came to power. In fact he felt that they were better than the privateers who would have looted the planters without any consideration. At the same time his van Groenwegel blood made it difficult for him to accept English domination. As he tells his brother-in-law Wilfred:

"We Dutch have flourished on this wild coast since early last century. One cannot forget the past hundred and seventy years in a few weeks. And remember the name I bear. Aert Adriansen van Groenwegel came to Essequibo in 1616... My Dutch fellow colonists have every right to ostracize me, Wilfred. I, of them all should have refused to take the oath you English framed - yet I took it. And I took it because my personal principles dictated that I should. From youth I have believed that one should be loyal to no one group - not to a nation. That is why I found it no problem to marry your sister. That is why I took such pains to learn your language, and saw to it that my children learnt it, too. I wish it were in my power to learn all languages on the earth. I believe in the brotherhood of man on earth - not in the brotherhood of separate nations." (226)
When the French came to power they started development work and asked the planters to apply for lots near the new town. Edward, Hubertus's son-in-law suggested that they should apply and Hubertus agreed. He also announced that they were leaving Plantation Good Heart for a new one on the coast that he had purchased for a quarter of the market price. He built a new house there, designed by Edward and called it "Huis Kaywana" after his ancestress. Soon the new plantation flourished under his supervision.

Slave insurrections were often instigated by rival colonial powers. The novel describes one such incident provoked by the Spanish. One day Luise and Edward were taking a walk in their grounds when Edward mentioned seeing a white man on the premises. Luise, later mentioned the fact to her father who seemed to take it very seriously. His overseer had already reported that someone was plotting mischief among the slaves. Hubertus started getting his muskets ready shocking his wife. Hubertus explained that he would not hesitate to kill the Negroes like wild pigs if they threatened him or his family. He thus demonstrated the
toughness of the van Groenwegels in spite of all the principles he preached about human brotherhood. At the same time he tried his best to diffuse the issue by talking to the slaves first. Most of the slaves listened with downcast eyes as he reminded them about their duties but one of the slaves had the courage to voice his protest. He accused Hubertus of not giving them enough of rations. Hubertus understood immediately that some white man was behind it. Though he questioned the slave and threatened him with punishment, the man wouldn't divulge any information. In the end Hubertus surprised everyone by not punishing the man. At the same time he started getting his ammunition ready. Three days later a messenger came with the information that the slaves had rebelled all over the colony. Hubertus decided to send his family away to Borsselen while he joined the Burgher Militia to resist the attack, but Luise chose this opportunity to remind her father of the van Groenwegel motto: "The van Groenwegels never run." In the end, the shoot-out took place in their yard with Luise helping her father to load the muskets. Clad only in a petticoat she stood by
her father and fought and the incident brought the father and daughter close to each other. Hubertus's comment to her underlines his divided loyalties:

"You're mad, my girl, Luise. ... Running out there half-dressed without a thought to modesty. With two muskets. Almost laughable. But how can you help it? It's the blood in you. There is madness in the van Groenwegels, I'm convinced of it as I was never before. Yet it's a madness I admire and revel in." (154)

He was both proud and ashamed of being a van Groenwegel.

The planters of eighteenth century found it difficult to provide good education to their children. There were no schools of any kind and the great majority of the coloured people and Negroes were illiterate. The rich could afford tutors and that was how Hubertus's children were taught. He himself had studied in the same way but had decided against going to Europe to study surveying. One or two families used to join together to avail of the services of the tutors. Another difficulty was the lack of medical facilities. Large numbers of people died due to various illnesses. One particular infection called 'sickness' for want of a
specific name claimed a large number of people. In fact, most of the people who survived the Berbice Insurrection died of sickness immediately after. All the soldiers who were sent to crush the rebels died of it. Among the casualties was Hubertus's aunt Flora and her sons.

One particular incident of sickness greatly influenced the events to come. Woglinde, the flirtatious wife of Clackson came to Hubertus's house in great agitation saying that her husband was ill. As she had tried to ensnare him earlier, Hubertus refused to go with her thinking that she was lying. His wife Rosalind decided to help her and went with her to her house; she returned the next day with Woglinde's little daughter Clara offering to take care of her till her father was better. Thereafter Rosalind made frequent trips to Rylands till Cranley Clackson recovered. Woglinde, however fell a prey to it. On the day of her death, she sent Clackson to bring Hubertus, for, she wanted to see him for the last time. Rosalind was at that time with her. Cranley came back with Hubertus but Woglinde had died before he arrived. The incident made him feel depressed.
In comparison to Harris, Mittelholzer's view of the struggle to survive is limited in scope. He presents the struggle from the point of view of the planters. Though mention is made about their excesses and cruelties to their slaves, the attitude that emerges is definitely in favour of the planters. This fails to provide a comprehensive picture of the colonizer and the colonized. In Wilson Harris's novel, the struggle is of a spiritual kind and at the end of it, the colonizer loses his arrogance and realizes the presence of the colonized within himself. The flight of the Amerindians and the pursuit of them by Donne's crew ends in the latter's recognition of the basic truths of existence.

Man-Woman Relationships: Man-woman relationships in the novel, *Palace of the Peacock* are metaphors for the strange alliances and rivalries of Guyanese history. Mariella, Donne's woman, is both his benefactress and his murderess. She is also identified with the Muse. All the women characters who appear are facets of the same primordial woman just as all the members of the crew are facets of Donne's personality. Donne's initial quest of Mariella, that happens in the past, is "his
first innocent voyage." Once he possesses her, he treats her cruelly, forcing her to be vengeful. Donne's brother, his visionary self, tries to appease her and in his vision he sees Donne falling from his horse and dying because of her arrow in the dark. Here Mariella becomes Guyana, who is first wooed by the European powers and then abused by them. The settlement of the Arawak Indians is described as the "Mission of Mariella" but when the crew reaches there, the Amerindians flee. This may be attributed to their treatment of Mariella. If Mariella is looked upon as the 'Muse,' the visionary narrator's attempts to appease her become the author's attempts to woo the Muse. Incidentally the word "musing" is frequently used by the visionary narrator. The next woman who appears is the old Arawak woman who is forced by Donne to show them the way. The visionary narrator is shocked by a sense of recognition when he sees her. Though she is old and wrinkled she suddenly assumes new vitality once she is on the river. She is identified with the river: "Tiny embroideries resembling the handwork on the Arawak woman's kerchief and the wrinkles on her brow turned to incredible and fast soundless breakers of foam. Her crumpled bosom and
river grew agitated with desire, bottling and shaking every fear and inhibition and outcry. The ruffles in the water were her dress rolling and rising to embrace the crew" (62). The river claims Carroll and the next minute the woman looks as old as ever, contrasting with her youth and desirability a minute ago.

Carroll's death becomes the cause of Schomburgh's to whom he is joined in a strange relationship. Carroll was Schomburgh's son and nephew. In his youth he had fallen in love with a girl from a distant mission. Schomburgh remembers the incident thus: "What a chase it was. He cornered her and poured upon her his first and last outburst of frenzied self-forgetting eloquence until he felt the answers of her lips. She smelt like leaves growing on top the rocks in the sun in the river, a dry and yet soft bursting smell, the dryness of the hot scampering sun on the fresh inwardness of a strong resilient plant" (66). But all of a sudden she left him and he went in pursuit of her. When he reached there, he found out that she was the daughter of his father by another mistress. Later on, she became the wife of Vigilance's father who
was a widower. Carroll was only five years old then and Vigilance was thirteen. Though Vigilance's father offered to give his name to her son, she did not want the hoax of sin upon her son. So the boy continued under the name Carroll that had no connexion with anyone. The confusion of identity in Carroll's case is thus depicted: "Carroll was one burning memory and substance for his mother and another dimmer incestuous substance and myth for his uncertain and unknown father folk. He had become a relative ghost for all as all ultimately became a ghost for everyone" (68). Carroll's case is symbolic of the many coloured offspring born through slave concubinage whose fatherhood was uncertain. As such, no one could detect or check incestuous relationships.

Later on Carroll fell in love with Vigilance's sister Tiny who became pregnant by him. She was only fifteen and Carroll was seventeen at the time. When she lost her baby Carroll went to his mother and told her about it saying that he wanted to marry her. His mother asked him to make his fortune first before settling down. His stepfather was sure to object if he wanted to
marry her immediately. Though Carroll objected at first he agreed in the end. He also felt bitter because his mother was carrying his father's child that child would live but his own had died. Vigilance who was witness to everything accompanied Carroll when he set out. It was he who introduced him to Schomburgh and Schomburgh had stared "at the ultimate ghost he both dreaded and loved" (67). After Schomburgh's death the unnatural relationship does not matter at all.

Wishrop's tale is one of unfaithfulness and violence. His boon companions had been thieves and the women were whores. Though Wishrop did not feel superior to them he was basically honest. But as everyone else was cheating he too did. This, however made him hate himself. When he fell in love with a woman, he decided to marry her but the catechist who performed the ceremony sniggered behind his book. Wishrop marked this and never forgave him. One day he came upon his wife in bed with another man. He killed both of them. He then shot dead, all the thieves who were his boon companions and the catechist. Lastly he shot himself. But his life was saved by an old Arawak woman who saw him
crawling like a spider into the river. Ironically however, Wishrop in return shot the poor Arawak woman, "his muse and benefactress." The author's comment about him is significant: "His faith and optimism endeared him to the crew and they fed upon his brief confessions and raving as the way of a vicarious fury and freedom and wishful action they had known, not believing a word in the improbable tale he told of a harmless lover and lunatic: nevertheless they pledged themselves anew to the sense of their indestructibility" (58). Wishrop's resemblance to Donne has to be studied with reference to Mariella's killing of Donne. These two murders complement one another shedding light on the violent nature of sexual passion. Another member of the crew, one of the da Silva twins, also commits murder: he kills Cameron for wounding a parrot in the flock. He identifies the bird with the silver ring as the bird belonging to the girl at the mission whom he had courted on his previous visit and abandoned in a pregnant state. He declares that he is going to marry her this time but when Cameron pelts the bird and wounds her, he is overcome with rage:
Da Silva muttered wildly - "I tell you when you pelt she, you pelt me. Is one flesh, me flesh, you flesh, she come to save me, to save all of we. You, murderer! what else is you but a plain, vile murderer? She aint no witch..." His face was mad. (90)

The bird also becomes the albatross - the symbol of good fortune. Cameron dies at the hands of da Silva who later on looks foolish: "He looked around foolishly, telling himself Cameron had attacked him in some idle and faithless fashion. It all seemed blind and empty now like the air and stream that jostled them" (91).

In the later stages of the journey, the Arawak woman disappears to reappear again as the Madonna in one of the windows of the palace. In this spectacle there is more grandeur than anything known before: "It was richer than all the images of seduction combined in the treasuries of the east..." (107). She thus becomes the symbol of spiritual fulfilment.

A.J. Seymour quotes Mittelholzer in his work, Edgar Mittelholzer: The Man and His Work: "Sex and religion are my themes as a writer. I hold very strong views on these two subjects and in everything I write
you will note that I shall touch on them" (1968, 4).

The Harrowing of Hubertus is no exception. The Trilogy records relationships both normal and abnormal; they range from homosexuality to incest. Excesses and perversions are also brought in to highlight the psychic imbalance of the van Groenwegels. For example the thread of homosexuality starts with Cornelis and is carried on by Raphael the son of his nephew Jacques. In the next generation Graham, the son of Storm van Groenwegel turns homosexual. Incest too, starts in the first novel, where Adrian develops a strange fascination for his mother. Mary, the daughter of Dirk van Groenwegel develops the same feeling for her father in the last novel. The van Groenwegels are either creatively gifted and effeminate or physically courageous and given to excesses in sex. There are, however, exceptions to the rule. The Harrowing of Hubertus depicts the protagonist's relationships with three different women. Through these relationships the author highlights the clash between "low urges" and "high principles." As a young man, Hubertus had sown his wild oats before marrying Rosalind Maybury, an English girl. He admired her for her restraint and
after his marriage, he tried his best to be faithful to her. Though other planters used to cohabit with the slaves, he resisted the temptation. It was then that Woglinde Clackson arrived in the neighbourhood in the form of a temptress. Years ago, before her marriage, she and Hubertus had been lovers but her family had gone away and she had married another man. When Cranley Clackson bought the estate close to Hubertus's own, she wanted to go back to the old days without regarding the fact that both Hubertus and she were married. She was a flirtatious woman and she shocked everyone by openly admitting her infidelities. Hubertus was repulsed by her advances but she would not give in. Looking on Hubertus as a challenge, she started seducing him but Hubertus was able to restrain himself. Unfortunately for her, she died without accomplishing her aim. After her death, Rosalind brought her daughter to stay with them as her father could not care for her. Though the child was a delightful little girl Hubertus was filled with foreboding. Years later, his fears were justified when Clara became a threat to the happiness of his daughter Luise and her husband Edward.
Hubertus's relationship with Faustina is one that undergoes change from brotherly affection to sensuous love. Though Rosalind did her best to welcome Faustina and make her feel at home, there was a barrier between them. It was the barrier of emotional understanding. With Hubertus she had no such problem as the two of them were very close to one another. Even earlier, she had wanted to marry him but he had been against marrying into the family. Close proximity with him reawakened the old passion. In the meanwhile Cranley Clackson became interested in Faustina and Faustina felt instinctively that Rosalind wanted to get rid of her by marrying her off to Cranley. When she mentioned this to Hubertus Hubertus too agreed that Rosalind was feeling left out because of the close bond between them. When Faustina announced that she was going to say 'yes' to Cranley's proposal Hubertus was upset though he realized the inevitability of her decision. The same evening he shocked everyone by the harsh treatment he meted out to the slaves. As a person Hubertus was always harrowed by questions. The memory of his mother was ever a torment and he was able to resist Woylinde because he imagined that his mother must
have been like her. With Faustina's arrival the entanglement became more. Seeing his strange moodiness Faustina came to a decision. One evening she met Hubertus as he was coming home from Borsselen and told him that she wanted to have one experience of physical intimacy with Hubertus before she married Cranley. She wanted desperately to be with him:

"I think I could be happy with Cranley, Hubertus, but only if I could go to him taking with me the memory of you. Have me — just once. No I won't mind going to him after. But — but — to go to him without ever having known you — without ever having, no, no! I couldn't face it, my love. I would grow old feeling that God had cheated me of the best and most treasured thing I needed." (94)

Hubertus did not need much persuasion and they made love in the open air in the pouring rain. Faustina felt no remorse at what she had done. She told Cranley about it before she married him. Hubertus too told Rosalind but Rosalind was deeply hurt though she did not show any trace of hatred.

Hubertus hated himself for what he had done. He resigned from the Burgher Militia. When Faustina and her kids moved into Cranley's place after her marriage,
a great change seemed to come over him. But the families continued to see each other. Rosalind had forgiven her husband but she thought that he should make it up to her for her great sacrifice. When Faustina gave birth to a son, she pretended that the child was premature to prevent Hubertus from knowing that it was his son! Rosalind knew about it but she too wanted to spare Hubertus. The boy was named Graeme after one of Cranley's relatives. After some time Hubertus came to know the truth and this knowledge made him even more harrowed.

Hubertus's sense of guilt and his harrowing thoughts did not prevent him from continuing his relationship with Faustina. As the years passed by, Rosalind became bitter. Hubertus's daughter Luise came to know about the affair through Faustina's son Edward. She was thunderstruck by this as she had always had great respect for her father. Yet she did not like Edward describing him as a hypocrite. She started watching her father and soon she realized that her mother was too frigid for a man like her father. Later on, after his marriage to Luise, Edward too came to feel
that Rosalind was partly responsible for the affair. As he told Luise: "Cousin Rosalind sulks like a bear all the time and hardly speaks to him, so how can he be blamed for seeking Mother as a companion. It is only since I came to live here that I've discovered how Cousin Rosalind really treats him" (229).

Edward's decision to marry Luise had been precipitated by his discovery of Faustina and Hubertus making love in a spot that he had intended to be a rendezvous for Luise and himself. The sight angered him very much and it was in this furious mood that he went back to see Luise and tell her about it. Earlier they had thought of waiting till their marriage before indulging in sex. They now decided to go ahead and soon Faustina and Hubertus were forced to talk to the two children. Faustina tried to dissuade Luise from marrying Edward saying that he was only eighteen but Luise was adamant. Hubertus however allowed Edward to decide for himself offering him a home with the family after the marriage. His own experiences with love had made him understand that it was always best to allow love to flower and bear fruit. In the years that
followed Edward got really close to him but the affair with Faustina came to an end. After the move into a new house, Hubertus hardly saw Faustina.

Even after Faustina and Hubertus ceased to meet, Rosalind found it difficult to feel the same way for Hubertus. Her trust in him had collapsed. Though Hubertus and she enjoyed playing with Luise's children, Rosalind often felt left out when she saw the great bond of affection between Hubertus, Luise and Edward. Hubertus tried to warn Edward against Clara but Edward fell a victim to her charms. He could now understand why Hubertus had told him that it was not easy to tell where the flesh ended and the spirit began. Unlike Hubertus, he kept it a secret from Luise but he was devastated when he came to know that he was the father of Clara's child. He then revealed everything to his wife. Unlike her mother, Luise understood his difficulty. She decided to take her husband away from temptation. When she told her father that they were leaving Plantation Kaywana, he was unhappy but he knew that her decision was the right one. He also felt that he was being punished for his own indiscretions. As an
old man, Hubertus felt lonely and desolate; Rosalind had become cynical and sarcastic. When Rosalind and Faustina died he turned to Sarah, a Negro slave and had a mulatto bastard by her. In the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, the flesh had won. Hubertus had no regrets. He was only concerned about the future of his daughter by Sarah. Before he died, he told Edward and Luise to take care of her.

The picture that emerges from Hubertus's relationships is that of a warm, sensuous person whose weaknesses make him compassionate and understanding. In contrast, Rosalind Maybury though pious and with high principles and sense of integrity, emerges as cold and puritanical. Rosalind, whose actions are governed by Christian ethics forgives her husband when he tells her of his intimacy with Faustina. Yet she feels that he should make it up to her for the great sacrifice. When this does not happen, she becomes aggrieved and cynical. In the ultimate analysis one feels that Mittelholzer is deliberately portraying Rosalind in this fashion to fit his idea of sex and human relationships. Moreover the conventional framework of the story makes it difficult to compare it with the man-woman relationships in Palace of the Peacock.
Religion: Religion is also used by Mittelholzer to focus on Hubertus's duality. Much of his dilemma is caused by the double standards adopted by the plantocracy. Though most of the colonials were staunch Christians, they showed no Christian charity or decency to their slaves, whom they treated as animals. The last novel of the trilogy, *Kaywana Blood*, elucidates how the Christian missionaries played the key role in alleviating the miseries of the slaves and in bringing about emancipation. Early in the novel, we see Hubertus leading the prayers, the prayers being sacrosanct in his household. He believed in loyalty to all Christian men; ironically however, the Indians and slaves were heathens who were ordained by God to serve the white people. Yet he treated the slaves with kindness. The irony is intensified when we consider that he had both Indian and Negro blood in his veins.

Hubertus's schizoid tendencies are evident from the very beginning. Though attracted towards Woglinde, he restrained himself with the thought that his mother must have been like her. With Faustina he had always been close and their physical intimacy gave him great
pleasure though he knew that it was illicit. Conventional religion could provide him with no answers to the numerous questions that were forming in his head. He read Spinoza's *Ethics* and St. Augustine trying to achieve psychic wholeness. But they were unable to help him. As he told Rosalind, "I do not subscribe to the view held by St. Augustine... that the fleshly in us can only be related to evil. This is foolish! Absurd! It is contrary to all one's instincts. A man who can hold such a view has never experienced any joy in his relations with woman. If the flesh is abused the result is evil, but if the flesh is respected and treated with reverence and restraint only good can come from such an attitude" (118). He also believed that people were born with tendencies for good and evil - it was blood that decided the allegiance. Rosalind in contrast could never tolerate laxity of morals. Hubertus's unfaithfulness destroyed her own faith in him which had earlier been greater than her faith in God.

As time passed, Hubertus's harrowing questions led him to form his own concept of God and sin. When his daughter Jacqueline was found to be having an affair
with the overseer, he told Rosalind that being a sinner he had no right to despise her. Yet he took her to task and reprimanded her severely telling her to do as her mother would have done in her circumstances - put the man out of her mind and restrain herself. When another daughter, Mary, announced her decision to marry a middle-aged widower, Hubertus left the decision to her. At the same time he expressed his opinion about it saying that God smiled only on marriages of love. Rosalind took this opportunity to ask him if God smiled upon love outside of sanctified wedlock. Hubertus had his own answer: "God does not possess the narrow limited outlook of his puny creatures who call themselves men. God, it is my conviction smiles upon love, sacred or profane. The only measure he applies in judging such love is the measure of sincerity. So long as love is deep and sincere, whether the predicants or the law officials approve of it or not, such love is a joy in God's sight" (172). As far as he was concerned his love for Faustina was as deep and sincere as his love for Rosalind. When he saw Luise's deep devotion to Edward, he had no difficulty in sanctioning the marriage despite the fact that she was ten years older than Edward. When
he became closer to Edward he spoke about his love for Faustina which was considered adulterous by other people. To him it was beautiful and magical. But he wanted Edward to resist the same temptation with Clara because his relationship with Faustina had lost him the very precious jewel of Rosalind's love. On another occasion Edward asked him if he believed in God. The answer depicts Hubertus's departure from the orthodox creed: "I used to think of God as an austere Spirit whose one purpose was to punish mankind when the flesh triumphed, and scatter rewards when the spirit showed its superiority... well, now I am doubtful what my conception is, because I have changed in my attitude towards the flesh. Now I ask myself at what point does the flesh end and the spirit begin..." (270). He further clarified that he preferred to believe in himself as he felt that God did not care one jot whether human beings praised Him or not. He continued to hold this belief till death.

Religion in *Palace of the Peacock* may be understood with reference to the author's "A Note on the Genesis of the *Guyana Quartet*:"
... Carroll's music in the last stages of *Palace of the Peacock* slices through every character mask, "mixing blind joy and sadness and the sense of being lost with the nearness of being found" (p.114) to intimate distances that cannot be measured in the body of the crew, distances that breed a gateway or intangible architecture when El Dorado or the city of gold, secretes a resemblance to the city of God. In such resemblances lie profoundest self-judgements converting music into terrifying vision.

Donne, the master of the El Doradonne, crew, hangs upon a scaffolding to which he is secured by "the unflinching clarity with which he looked into himself and saw that all his life he had loved no one but himself. He focused his blind eye..." (p.107) to surrender to the folk constellated in the stars he had exploited and the woman Mariella of the moon and the sun, the rapids and the forests, he had abused. (8)

This quotation reveals how Harris makes use of Amerindian, Negro and Christian myths within the novel to present a comprehensive picture. Harris talks about the Caribbone-flute in the same note. Harris looks upon the flute as an organ of self knowledge suffused with enemy bias because it partakes of both 'self' and 'other,' so does its music. It is a music that befits the mixed ancestry of the Guyanese, part colonizer, part native.
Harris also makes use of the African spider god Anancy. This god is usually associated with cunning and indestructibility. In the slave era, it symbolized the cunning of the exploited and their tenacious will to survive. In the novel, the character of Wishrop is associated with it. Wishrop kills his enemies and dies but is saved by the Arawak woman, whom he kills. When he dies during the journey, Vigilance perceives him climbing upward like a spider. His every movement is a dance bringing to mind the dance of the Africans duplicating the movement of the spider as they crawl beneath the rod.

The last part of the story depicts Donne's encounter with different beliefs of redemption at the different windows of the palace. The carpenter is a creator and redeemer who is ageless and timeless. When Donne slips and is sustained by the noose round his neck, he becomes the hanging god. He encounters the mother and child which is the Virgin and Son of Christian religion. The spectacle is rich in its paradoxes. The flowing garment of the lady is rich yet
threadbare and yet it flows from out of her and joins the hay in the manger. Ultimately he realizes that it is her own hair:

He stared and saw her astonishing face. Not a grain of her dress but shone with her hair clothing her threadbare limbs in the melting plaits of herself. Her ancient dress was her hair after all, falling to the ground and glistening and waving until it grew so frail and loose and endless, the straw in the cradle entered and joined it and the whole room was enveloped in it as a melting essence yields itself and spreads itself from the topmost pinnacle and star into the roots of self and space. (107)

The vision helps Donne to overcome his arrogance and perceive the void within himself. His "blindness" that had prevented him seeing, now makes him realize his nothingness. He is now ready to be companion of the nameless unflinching folk.

Harris also correlates the seven-day pattern of the world's creation with the seven-day period of Donne's quest. The days are described as first day, second day etc., till the seventh day on which the visionary narrator reaches the palace and perceives his companions who have already reached there. The music of Carroll now mingles with the cry of the peacock. The
city of gold becomes the city of God. Donne's ultimate realization is thus portrayed: "This was the inner music and voice of the peacock I suddenly encountered and echoed and sang as I had never heard myself sing before. I felt the faces before me begin to fade and part company from me and from themselves as if our need of one another was now fulfilled, and our distance from each other was the distance of a sacrament, the sacrament and embrace we knew in one muse and one undying soul. Each of us now held at last in his arms, what he had been forever seeking and what he had eternally possessed" (116-117).

Politics: The political angle is explored by Harris at the level of colonial relations. In retrospect, the colonial empowerment with the exploitation and enslavement of the natives in the beginning and the dismemberment of the Africans in the next stage are facts of history that cannot be changed. The independent Guyanese have to accept it as their heritage. Harris tries to outline such an acceptance through the character of Donne. Donne's pursuit of the Amerindian labourers is justified by himself as part of
the mechanism of survival. When the Indians speak about their rights where the land is concerned, he thinks that he has as much right as they. His abuse of Mariella is his abuse of the land and the people. At the end of the journey Donne realizes that he is the ruler of nothing. This realization is the political vision that the novel has to present, not only in terms of Guyana but the entire world where exploitation of man by man continues.

Mittelholzer's vision is confined to the historical perspective of politics in Guyana. Political events influence the life of the characters and their way of looking at things. Faustina's arrival at Demerary is the result of the Berbice Insurrection of 1764. Another rebellion instigated by Spaniards helps to identify Luise as one of the tougher van Groenwegels. The incident also forges a bond with her father. Later Luise's marriage to Edward has to be postponed because war breaks out in North America. Hubertus seems to have dual strains of toughness and mercy, religion and sensuousness in his character. The other van Groenwegels were either tough and cruel or artistic and effeminate. But plantation culture demanded toughness
on the part of the slave owners. Hubertus was no exception; even his kindness to slaves had the hint of superciliousness about it.

Guyana saw a great deal of political change in the late eighteenth century. Hubertus's reaction to these changes have been recorded by Mittelholzer to shed light on his duality. His reaction to the change of colonial proprietorship is characteristic. In his old age, Hubertus saw the French, originally allies of the Dutch turning enemy and the English becoming friends. The Guyanese people were faced with the dilemma of accepting either the Batavian Republic or the King of England as colonial master. The Prince of Orange had given authority to the King of England. Hubertus was informed of these changes by his overseer Overgaar. Though old, his political acumen continued to be sharp. In 1802, when the planter class disapproved of the new governor's 'coloured' wife, Hubertus was worried: he was thinking of his own daughter by Sarah and her fate in the days to come.

Search for Roots: Both the Trilogy and the Quartet are written from historical perspectives. So the search for roots is a motif that has to be studied in relation to
the other novels of the Trilogy and the Quartet to get the complete picture. Mittelholzer elucidates historical events while portraying the psychological duality of mixed inheritance. The linear pattern of the narrative makes it easy to study the van Groenwegels in terms of their particular era. Harris's Quartet delineates significant aspects of the Guyanese past, each novel unravelling one facet of experience. Together, the four novels cover the entire Guyanese experience. Harris also differs from Mittelholzer in perspective, emphasis and style.

The first novel of the Trilogy, *Children of Kaywana* depicts the pioneering Europeans and the establishment of the plantocracy. The mixing of blood strains also starts there. But as time passed, prejudices about mixed blood became hard and rigid. Adriansen van Groenwegel had children by his half-caste Indian woman Kaywana to whom he was not even married and was still able to become the governor of Essequibo. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the attitude had changed drastically and one of the governors was looked upon with disfavour because his wife was thought to be
of mixed blood. Another irony involves Hendrickje, the
daughter of a coloured slave, who is therefore
considered an "octoroon". She is depicted as the cruel
mistress of her slaves who does not hesitate to bury a
slave alive when he has outlived his usefulness. At the
same time she is the epitome of van Groenwegel pride.
Her husband who is pure white is depicted as kind and
considerate though weak and irresolute. Hubertus, who
was quarter Indian, blamed his half-caste mother
(Rosaria was half-Carib half Spanish) for his tendencies
towards Evil. Yet his own father was no puritan. It
was his pursuit of Rosaria that ended in his castration.
Another reason that Hubertus attributed to the
perversions among the van Groenwegels was in-breeding.
Hendrickje and Aert were children of Laurens and the
coloured daughter of August, Laurens's uncle.
Hendrickje married her own cousin Ignatius, to keep the
van Groenwegel name after marriage. Hendrickje's
grandson Jacques married her brother Aert's
granddaughter Faustina. In the next generation
Faustina's son Edward married Hubertus's daughter Luise
and the two were related in more ways than one, Hubertus
being Jacques's half-brother and Faustina's cousin.
Hendrickje's son Cornelis was a homosexual and Adrian became mad later in life. One of Faustina's sons, Raphael became a homosexual. The last novel, Kaywana Blood describes how Storm, Edward's twin brother, fathers a son by a slave who is passed off as the overseer's. Storm's son Graham becomes a homosexual. Of Edward's sons, Pelham died in a fire while he was involved in an illicit affair with Graham's wife. Pelham's son Francis developed strange ideas of sex early in life and became a source of embarrassment to the family. Pelham's daughter Harriet was no better, she became a bawdy-house keeper. Mary, daughter of Dirk van Groenwegel also had strange sexual instincts that made her love her own father on the one hand and enjoy coarse brutal sex with a sea-captain on the other. After her indulgence, she was so overcome with self-loathing that she committed suicide.

In the saga of van Groenwegels we find certain characters who are given more importance by the author. Mittelholzer explores the theme of psychic imbalance through these characters. In the first novel, Laurens the son of Willem van Groenwegel is one such character.
He is the tougher of the two sons just as his father had been the tougher one when compared to his brother. Though Willem did not approve of Laurens marrying a coloured slave, he was fond of Hendrickje because of her toughness. He had no interest in Ignatius, the son of Reinald and his German wife. Laurens's toughness did not make him cruel. Though he was fond of his daughter Hendrickje he was shocked by her treatment of her husband and sons. His letters to her revealed how his attitude to her had changed on account of her cruelty.

Jacques has many points in common with his cousin and half-brother Hubertus; like Hubertus he too felt the dual pulls within the psyche. He often questioned his grandmother's code of toughness and courage. His father had gone mad and was of no use to him and his mother liked to live a life of voluptuousness. So his grandmother was all in all for Jacques and his brothers and sisters. On one occasion he set his mother free when his grandmother put her in stocks for plotting against her. Later he joined the others when they set out to kill her at Hendrickje's instigation. Though his mother deserved it, Jacques
felt agitated and guilty about the matricide. Another instance of his duality is his relationship with Amelia George, another white girl. Jacques was very much in love with his wife Faustina but this did not prevent him from getting involved with Amelia. During the Berbice Insurrection, the two of them were captured by the slaves. Amelia was made the mistress of the slave rebel leader and Jacques was forced to become his secretary. The proud van Groenwegel was forced to suffer every sort of indignity at the hands of the slaves, his pain intensified by the cruelties that they were perpetrating on Amelia. With stoicism he managed to survive and was offered a way of escape by some of his own slaves. He did not leave immediately but waited till he could save Amelia from their clutches. It was through Amelia that he sent his last letter to Faustina. After his escape he went home to Canje determined to fight the rebels but he was surprised to see his tough brothers give up the struggle. Hendrickje who was disgusted by this, applauded Jacques saying that for all his softness, he was the tough one. But it was of no use, all the brothers and their grand mother died at the hands of the slaves.
In the last novel *Kaywana Blood* a canister of old letters play a crucial role in determining the character of the protagonist, Dirk van Groenwegel. Though the historical novel covers the entire nineteenth century and extends up to the middle of the twentieth century, importance is given to the period in which Dirk lives. Dirk, the son of Storm van Groenwegel, Edward's twin brother, lives through the period that sees the emancipation of slaves and the importation of coolie labour. Through Dirk, the duality of blood strains is elucidated with Dirk's negrophobia undergoing several changes before he ultimately realizes the folly of white superiority.

Storm van Groenwegel, son of Faustina and Jacques had married Elizabeth, daughter of Hubertus's brother-in-law Wilfred Maybury. Wilfred had a passion for collecting records. When one of his friends, a naturalist, found a canister of old letters from the place where Hendrickje's house had once stood, he gave it to Wilfred.

This contained letters written to Hendrickje by Laurens. Wilfred decided to keep these letters of historic importance. Storm's sons, Graham and Dirk,

came into contact with these letters in childhood. In Graham's case the letters did not have much effect, for he was basically a soft person, afraid of the dark and excessively fond of his Negro nurse Nibia. Dirk, however was so influenced by the letters that he became a reincarnation of Hendrickje. Even as a baby, Dirk had an aura of toughness about him and his uncle Edward depicted him with racoon eyes in a family portrait. His own mother had an instinctive antagonism towards him. Dirk grew up with a fanatic sense of pride in the van Groenwegel family. One of Hendrickje's dreams was to have many sons and spread out throughout Guyana to become the most powerful family in the region. Dirk now developed a similar ambition. Early in life he started scheming to keep the family pure of slave blood little realizing that it was already tainted. He forced his brother Graham to change his name when he married a coloured woman. Towards the end of his life he came across another set of letters written by Hendrickje's father to his sister Susannah in Surinam. They revealed that Hendrickje's mother was a coloured woman. By this time, the number of respectable male van Groenwegels were very few. Dirk died realizing the folly of racial superiority.
As an individual Dirk was given to egotism and worship of power. But he had a great loyalty to van Groenwegel blood. When he realized that Jacob, Nibia's son, was his half-brother, he did his best for him by teaching him to read and write. His father had passed Jacob off as the son of Frick, the overseer. From childhood Jacob became his closest friend and ally in spite of his Negro blood. In the meanwhile Hubertus's daughter by his slave Sarah was brought into the neighbourhood by Edward and Luise who had got her adopted by a coloured midwife. As Edward had promised Hubertus to take care of her, Rose, Hubertus's daughter was educated along with Dirk and Graham. When Dirk came to know that Rose had van Groenwegel blood in her he started scheming. He suggested to Jacob that he should cultivate Rose and marry her when he grew up to come up in the world. His efforts in this direction did not work. Jacob married Milicent, the daughter of the coloured carpenter to whom Jacob was apprenticed. When Rose grew up into a beautiful woman, Dirk himself fell in love with her. Rose too returned his affections but Dirk did not marry her. He wanted to keep the van Groenwegel blood pure of Negro taint, even if it meant breaking Rose's heart.
Even as a child, Dirk had a cruel streak within him. Once he used a pet puppy to catch an alligator rationalizing the incident as the ruthlessness necessary to achieve one's object. On another occasion he went to see Jacob's grand father, an old man who had witnessed the Berbice Insurrection. The man told him the story of the rebellion but Dirk was angry when he described the insults heaped on his own grand father Jacques by the slave leader Cuffy. When the old man went inside to shelter from a sudden downpour, Dirk tried to assert his authority as 'massa' by ordering him to come out. Jacob only laughed at him. The incident finally ended with Dirk and Jacob playing a game of make-believe.

In contrast to Dirk, Graham grew up into a kind and humane person. When he was put in charge of Plantation Kaywana by his uncle, he did his best for the slaves there. This made him unpopular with the other planters. Under the influence of Clara Hartfield and the missionaries, he converted a disused barn into a chapel and held services there for the slaves. As a planter too he was efficient but his 'soft' streak had not so beneficial side effects also. He had an illicit
affair with Clara Hartfield, his own father's step sister, older than his own mother. The affair came to an end when Clara's son returned from England. It was Clara who encouraged him to get engaged to another girl but the girl ran away with another man. Dirk in the meanwhile had selected Cornelia Reuff as the tough mother of the coming generation of van Groenwegels. When Graham went home to attend Dirk's wedding, he met Rose after a long interval and fell in love with her. The fact that she was coloured did not matter to Graham but it did to Dirk who tried his best to prevent the match. When every thing failed, he told Graham that Rose had been his mistress. This shocked and depressed Graham but his friend Clara Hartfield exposed Dirk's lie. Rose herself was so angry with Dirk that she accepted Graham's proposal though earlier she had no such intention. Dirk then insisted that Graham should change his name from van Groenwegel. Graham was ready to do that and he and Rose became Mr and Mrs Greenfield.

The white colonial Guyanese society had become snobbish by then though the early pioneers were not so rigid. Very few people called on the Greenfields
because they were coloured. In the end it was Dirk who suggested that his uncle Edward should visit Graham and Rose. Edward, Luise and their son Pelham and family visited Graham but Willem, the elder son and his wife preferred to keep away. Clara Hartfield had always been friendly to Rose and Graham. Rose's marriage however proved a failure eventhough she had two children by Graham. When Graham realized that she still loved Dirk, he turned away from her and became a homosexual. Dirk was agonized to hear this.

Dirk's character is depicted as a mixture of opposites. Dirk's refusal to marry Rose did not lessen his affection for her. When he saw her in agony, he drifted into an adulterous relationship with her eventhough he had declared earlier that he would never touch a coloured or a black woman. When she was on the verge of dying after losing Dirk's baby, Dirk instilled in her the will to continue living. Though Dirk's judgements about the future economy of Guyana were proved true, his judgements about people were often proved wrong. For example, his favourite nephew, Pelham's son Francis, turned out to be the most
notorious of the van Groenwegels. He had judged Jacob, as a lazy unambitious fellow when he married Milicent but Jacob proved to be a very shrewd businessman. His valuable advice helped Dirk in the days to come. Jacob's marriage was successful and he was able to send his sons abroad for higher studies. Two of his sons returned home with white wives. Only one of his daughters proved a disappointment. Jasmine, his youngest, got involved with Dirk's youngest son Adrian who was several years younger than her and committed suicide after becoming pregnant. Her death prompted Adrian to commit suicide too. Though Dirk had objected to Graham marrying Rose, thinking of social ostracism, Graham's children were able to get a decent education abroad. Graham's son was knighted by the King of England many years later. Dirk was sad to think that if he had not insisted on the change of name, honour would have come to the name of van Groenwegel. Rose's own life had ended in tragic circumstances. She had died along with Pelham with whom she was having an illicit affair, in a fire that broke out in the building where they were staying. Yet another instance was Dirk's judgement of Graham as weak on account of his interest
in religion. One day, seeing a Bible in Huis Kaywana, beneath the portrait of Hubertus, Dirk commented that Hubertus's ghost must be laughing at Graham. Graham informed him with relish that the Bible in fact belonged to Hubertus who was a deeply religious person. Dirk's sons Peter and Hendrik had only girl children. The number of van Groenwegels had dwindled by the time Dirk died. Those who did survive did not bear the name. They were known by other names like Greenfield, Clackson, Hartfield, Frick, Vangreen and even Boodoo. The last two names were taken by the children of Francis's coloured son Jason who did not even know how to spell his own name and had made it Vangreen on his shop sign. But being a miser, he made a lot of money and attained fame as Miser Van. He also fathered illegitimate children by women of different nationalities like Portugese, Chinese and East Indian. Dirk died with regrets: "I have spoiled many lives by the words I have uttered. Between myself and that canister I wonder which has brought more unhappiness to the van Groenwegels this past half century" (1978, 477).
Mittelholzer's chief concern is the psychological and cultural ambivalence that is the heritage of mixed ancestry. He also evolves a new attitude to people of the 'coloured' class, an attitude that is at variance with the stereotypes common in Caribbean fiction. In *Kaywana Blood* the coloured couple Jacob and Milicent are decent folk who are horrified by the coarse behaviour of their white daughter-in-law from England who had been a barmaid before her marriage. If Rose, the coloured offspring of Hubertus and Sarah, is promiscuous, so is Clara Hartfield, whose heridity is free of Negro strain. In the case of Francis, his coloured wife's parents are as much against the marriage as the van Groenwegels themselves. They accept Francis only because their daughter is pregnant. The girl's father, a Negro, is much more decent in behaviour than Francis. The novel also depicts the attitude of the Negroes to the Portugese labourers who are called "Pottageese" by them. Though pure white, the blacks looked down upon them as dirty and uncouth. To sum up, Michael Gilkes's comments on the Triology seem relevant:
The novels' historical framework serves mainly as a vehicle for the author's real concern with what is in effect a personal and psychological malaise and Mittelholzer projects on to the events of the Guyanese past with its burden of violence and sexual guilt, his own sense of an inner conflict of allegiances. Part African slave, part white slave owner, Mittelholzer deliberately fragments his personality as it were, allowing these two conflicting elements of his psyche to act out their opposition to each other in terms of strength versus weakness or in Hubertus's case spirit versus flesh.

In the Quartet, the protagonists range from the most ignorant to the intellectual representative of the technological civilization. The scenes of action also change to different locales within Guyana and there is variety in race and experience as well. This diversification helps to provide a comprehensive picture of a complicated inheritance. The second novel, entitled *The Far Journey of Oudin* is a tale of treachery, cunning and exploitation which are the legacies of indentureship. The protagonist, Oudin, is a man entirely without roots, for, no one knows who he is or where he is from. It is the crafty money-lender Ram who gives him a name Oudin and an identity as an East Indian Mussulman. This suits Ram's purpose, for, his intention is to use Oudin to cheat another East Indian,
Mohammed by stealing his unbranded cattle. Oudin is thus "indentured" by Ram symbolizing the East Indians who were indentured to replace the Negro slaves. The novel also elucidates the futility of hankering after a distant land to which one has become a stranger. This peculiar dilemma of the East Indians is elucidated through the character of Hassan, who is not even sure of the rituals of his own religion. The story also involves a plot to steal Oudin's child from Beti, his wife, and how she manages to escape from Ram by swallowing the contract and later vomiting the scraps into the river.

The story mirrors both Oudin and his double. If Oudin is the slave of Ram, his double had been the half-brother of Mohammed, who had been murdered by him and his brothers to steal his inheritance. This use of double identity helps to weave a pattern going backwards and forwards in history. Oudin appears out of nowhere and Ram employs him to work for Mohammed with the ulterior motive of cheating him. His eager willingness to fall in with his plans surprises Ram himself:
Oudin consented to stake his life on the initial mission and to capture Mohammed's unbranded cattle if it meant chasing them down into the sea. Ram could hardly believe his ears. He despised Oudin and yet he admired him all at once. He had never expected such capitulation and consent. Oudin was a dream, a fantasy, and an obedient servant who had come to him at last across an incredible divide of time and reality. (1985, 140-141)

The East Indians are by nature clannish and inclined to give importance to family loyalties. This code gets broken when they plot murder. Mohammed's father had migrated to the Caribbean along with his own father and had worked on land all his life. Mohammed and his brothers were shocked when their father disinherited them in favour of their half-brother. So they plotted and murdered him. Therefore they were pursued by the curse that fell upon them. Hassan was the first one to die. Before he died of stroke, he told his brothers to cremate him. Hassan had a hankering for India but he knew little about India or its religious diversities. He was a Muslim but he had heard that cremation was an East Indian custom. So his body was burnt. The next person to die was Rajah, the cousin of Mohammed who had also been party to the conspiracy. He was struck down by lightning and his daughter Beti who
had been orphaned, was taken custody of by Mohammed. The next person to die was another brother of Mohammed, Kaiser. He died when the building he was in caught fire. His death thus became the replica of his brother's. Mohammed alone remained. When Oudin appears in the guise of a coolie, both Muhra, Mohammed's wife and Beti, Rajah's daughter, are struck by his similarity to the dead half-brother: "Mohammed brought Oudin in and Beti's heart rose into her mouth. She felt sick with horror imagining his shout of address as the echo of some-almost forgotten-urgent call. The event and call had occurred a long time ago and their echo struck a faint response within her" (147). Muhra actually reminded Mohammed of the murder and how it brought but ill-luck to them. Mohammed himself was affected by their uneasiness though Ram had told him that the man was called Oudin.

Oudin managed to steal Mohammed's unbranded cattle as Mohammed had grown careless but the next mission was more serious. Oudin had to abduct Beti for the old man Ram as he wanted to beget a child to carry on his name. Earlier he had approached her father when
he was alive and had been turned down. Beti and Oudin run away together and Beti becomes Oudin's wife through the law of nature. They are pursued by the agents of Ram and the agents of Mohammed. The journey that Oudin takes with Beti becomes the metaphor for a journey from the past into the present and future:

He felt in a stumbling intuition of self, that the pattern of a lifetime of migrating from province to province, was now being set and the coming journey was a crucial rehearsal, a rehearsal that would be repeated once again over thirteen dreaming years of his marriage to Beti. He foresaw in the fire and smoke of fantasy, the running abduction and the dim uncomprehending married years that would follow ushering in on the midnight morning that he died, the far journey outward, into the land that was nowhere. This dark intuitive thought sun was both an opportunity and a stumbling block. (206)

Oudin, a slave of Ram, labourer of Mohammed, becomes Beti's husband and the father of her one living child as well as the other still to be born by the time he dies. Oudin himself is aware of his dual identity. But when he marries the daughter of one of his murderers, the idea seems to mock him. During their flight together they come across different characters, each a ghost from the past history of Guyana. One of
them is a fisherman whose basket reminds him of his identity as the disinherited heir. Another is a woodman who claims that Oudin had earlier cheated him, and imprisons the two of them. Their fugitive existence is precarious as they are being chased by both Ram and Mohammed. Ram feels that Oudin, his slave has cheated him whereas Mohammed is on the warpath for Oudin's violation of his family tradition. Mohammed finally tracks down the two of them but he perishes before he can harm Oudin. Ram realizes his folly. His next attempt is to inveigle the still unborn child from Oudin. By this time thirteen years have passed. Ram knows that he is impotent and wishes to claim Oudin's child as his own. He makes Oudim sign a contract but Oudin dies suddenly. Beti snatches the paper on which Oudin has signed and swallows it before Ram appears on the scene. She later vomits the scraps into the river thwarting Ram's schemes.

The immediate historicity of the novel has to do with the East Indian impact on Guyanese history. The East Indians had come as indentured labourers but they had settled in Guyana due to their association with the
land. The hard toil that they put into the soil helped them to grow roots in Guyana. The name Beti, which means daughter is significant as it is associated with the land of Guyana. Mohammed and his brothers are passed over by their father because they neglect the land in favour of new fangled ideas like buses and lorries. They plot murder to get the money but the money brings no succour to any of them. Oudin claims Beti though Ram had tried to cheat Mohammed both of his cattle and his niece. It is only after Mohammed's death that Ram realizes his impotence. Oudin's marriage to Beti becomes the symbol of the East Indian acceptance of the land of Guyana as home. All outside attempts by Ram or Mohammed to claim the descendants of Oudin are thwarted by Beti herself. The process of identification thus becomes complete.

_The Whole Armour_, which is the third novel of the Quartet makes use of a pre-Columbian myth to show the relevance of the past in the shaping of the present and the future. The prominent motif is the jaguar or tiger of South America whose flayed hide becomes 'the whole armour' for Cristo's son, who is his resurrection.
The myth runs parallel to Biblical archetypes that Harris blends to give a complete picture. To quote from Gregory Shaw's article, "Time of the Tiger" published in Wilson Harris; The Uncompromising Imagination edited by Hena - Maes Jelinek:

The notion of a psychic wound, some deep malaise which has its roots in the misty origins and arrivals, conquests and diasporas, inform the quest for healing, unity and authentic community which is the inner dynamic of The Whole Armour and The Guyana Quartet of which it is part. Both the part and the larger whole are constructed as a series or cycles of explorations of buried layers of consciousness, buried layers of time and a mysterious hinterland of experience. In challenging the cultural and historical myopia and amnesia which root our existence in the shallow soil of a sterile economic enterprise, the Quartet explores not only the mythic hinterland of the Columbian Americas but also the primitive and ancient hinterland of the old world. In the process Harris resurrects a whole array of fabulous and mythic beasts, chief of them being the ancient and mysterious tiger which achieves its fantastic epiphany in The Whole Armour. (1991, 106)

Amerindian folklore presents the tiger as one of the chief presences of the forest invoking fear and anxiety. In Christian myths it partakes of demoniac energy like the Blakean concept of experience. It is also the representation of the dark shadow of self that
lurks beyond the frontier of consciousness. At the end of the novel, Sharon partakes of the totality of the heartland through the body of the resurrected Cristo: "Her fingers travelled across the map of Cristo's skin, stroking the veins in every ancestor's body, it sought to establish the encounter with the lost soul of all generations, the tiger roaming through the trackless paths, rapping at every jungle door, calling to the sweet meat belonging to the dead sleeping flesh of the night, passing by every pool part of meditation." (1985, 308)

The names of the characters, Cristo, Magda, Abram, are Christian but they partake of other symbolic associations as well. Magda, the mother of Cristo is the toughest whore in the Pomeroon. Abram is her friend who lives a lonely existence in Jigsaw Island, whom she seeks when she needs somebody to keep Cristo out of the eyes of the authorities. Magda is also associated with the dual aspects of the earth: it is the mother who succours her children as well as the devouring monster who eats them up. She is the man-devouring she-jaguar under whose tutelage her son Cristo becomes a trickster.
When Cristo is accused of murdering the fiancee of the belle of Pomeroon, the much sought after "white" Sharon, Magda goes to Abram. She asks him to hide Cristo till he escapes out of the country. She also declares that Cristo is Abram's son though both of them know it to be untrue. For one thing, Abram is too white and Cristo too dark in complexion but as a patriarch he is dutybound to acknowledge and help his son. Cristo is innocent of the crime he is accused of, but he is forced to go into exile. When Abram dies of natural causes, Cristo returns to his mother who refuses to believe that he has not killed Abram. But she decides to change the event into the faked death of Cristo himself so that he can escape the police. So she accompanies Cristo to Jigsaw Island where they encounter the presence of the tiger. Abram's body had been taken away by the tiger. Cristo points out the nail marks of the tiger but Magda refuses to believe in his innocence. Cristo thus becomes identified with the tiger. Magda forces Cristo to put his clothes on the half-eaten body of Abram to give credence to the story that Cristo has been devoured by the tiger. A wake is celebrated by Magda to honour the memory of her dead son. Both Sharon and her father
Peet are invited to the wake. Peet, or earth, is the spokesman of the Pomeroon. A few years before the main action of the novel, when his daughter Sharon was just eight, Peet had led an expedition upriver in pursuit of the tiger that had carried off a neighbour's child. Peet failed in his attempt, his impotence reinforced by the death of his wife and the stillbirth of his son. The claw marks on him become a psychic wound "that a whore had scratched on him." On the night of the wake, Peet confronts Magda, the whore in her upper chamber offering her money. His overtures are repelled by Magda who becomes a tigress tearing his coat into rags and throwing away his money. The manhood of Pomeroon admits defeat in front of the tiger and returns trying to fix his superstitious dread on Mathias, Sharon's new fiancee. The two of them start quarrelling over a tiger story and as the argument develops Peet gets identified with Abram and Mathias with Cristo duplicating Cristo's earlier argument with Abram. The quarrel ends with Mathias dying of a knife wound and Peet lying unconscious with his arm over Mathias. As far as Peet is concerned, he has killed his illusory Tiger. Mathias absolves Peet of the crime of killing him just before he breathes his last.
In the meanwhile Sharon meets Magda in her chamber where she has been summoned for a private conversation. A contrast is offered between the two women: one, the toughest whore in the Pomeroon and the other the fair Virgin coveted by all the young men of the district. Magda reveals the truth about Cristo to Sharon giving her Cristo's letter saying that Cristo wants to tell her about his situation. When Sharon suggests that she should show the letter to Mathias to prove Cristo's innocence, Magda becomes annoyed. She thinks that Sharon wants to hand Cristo over to the police and exposes Peet's earlier overtures to her to prove that her father is no better than Cristo. Thus Sharoon too is trapped by "the tiger."

Sharon joins Cristo in a fugitive existence. Her relationship with Cristo makes her realize her identity. She envisages the day when Cristo's adventure would become legend; how Cristo had killed Arbam's tiger and the lovely striped feminine skin of the devil was the coat that he wore wherever he went. In a dream like sequence, Cristo tells her of how he had been taken by a group of Caribs to be one of themselves. They had
painted stripes all over their bodies whereas Cristo was wearing his tiger skin. He joined them in their running but he got scratched all over by sharp blades of grass. It was then that he realized that he was a black man from Africa but the running continued through the history of the runaway slaves. Within himself he had all the different strands of history. "Vanquished as well as slave, rapist, Carib, monster anything you want to think" (345). The medicine-men declared that Cristo had killed the jaguar and attained the greatest victory. Telling Sharon to wrap his yet unborn son in the tiger skin Cristo hands himself over to the authorities. Peet however escapes the murder charge. People refer to Sharon as the white witch drawing her men to the gallows. Cristo dies at the gallows twelve months later leaving his child who becomes his resurrection. Before that Magda makes one last attempt to save Cristo from the gallows by applying to Peet but sees him dead when she opens the door. She then realizes that Cristo would be free in death "in an armour superior to the elements of self-division and coercion" (332).
In the Quetzalcoatl myth of South America, the god dies voluntarily by fire to atone for the sin of the flesh. His spirit rises and becomes the planet Venus. Quetzalcoatl is also the god of the dual phenomena—the plumed serpent. Cristo gets identified with the myth by his voluntary surrender to the authorities for a crime he did not commit. In the legends, the hero undertakes a heroic quest into the underworld and slays the mythic beast to cure the malaise of the land. Cristo's encounter with the tiger and his victory over it raises him to the level of the legendary hero. Blake and Eliot use the symbol of the tiger to denote "the terrible beauty" of crucifixion. By slaying the tiger, Cristo becomes identified with it completing the symbol through his death at the gallows. The society of the Pomeroon is a veritable wasteland where a tiger has to appear to bring about sacrifice and resurrection. Harris builds a bridge between Quetzalcoatl and Christ to show the strange linkage of a dual inheritance.

The Secret Ladder is set in the twentieth century but resonates with the history of conquistadorial incursion. This last novel of the
Quartet seems to have much in common with the first. The setting is the Canje River and a mixed team of surveyors encounter here the descendants of the Bush Negroes who had once fled slavery to settle in the wilderness. They are a group of people leading a marginalized existence and their leader is an old man who has ironically enough a Greek name, Poseidon. Fenwick, the leader of the team, evolves, like Donne in the first novel, from indifference to understanding. All the events happen within a seven day period just like *Palace of the Peacock*. In fact, Fenwick's dinghy is named "Palace of the Peacock" after the city of God, "The city of God set somewhere in the heart of Brazil and Guyana" (1985, 367).

Fenwick and his crew arrive on the Canje on a routine job of surveying. They use ladder like gauges to measure the variations in the levels of water. To Fenwick the rivers of Guyana are rungs in a ladder. "On which one sets one's musing foot again and again, to climb into both the past and the future of the continent of mystery" (367). At first Fenwick is the technocrat, keeping his distance from the other members of the crew.
His cook, Jordan, is his chief adviser and he advises Fenwick to keep discipline through firmness. The crew consists of Wang, the Amerindian, Chiung the Chinese, Perez the Portugese, Bryant the African, Stoll the mulatto and van Brock whose grand mother claims Dutch ancestry. Fenwick himself has African, Amerindian and European ancestors. The intricate network of relations between the crew members is reminiscent of Palace of the Peacock. Fenwick's impersonal attitude changes after meeting Poseidon. Poseidon's way of speaking is significantly ironic: the shapes and movements of his lips as he speaks do not correspond to the words he utters. He looks curiously like a movie star whose words have been dubbed into another language. Harris deliberately leaves out the actual words but the message itself is clear: he does not want to be uprooted from the place where his ancestors had found refuge after fleeing slavery. Fenwick is now faced with a problem which has historical, sociological and psychological implications. Gauging the river, the men are suspected of preparing for the construction of a dam that will flood the whole basin and rob the bush Negroes of the meagre land that they had made their own. For the
technocrats in Georgetown, this relatively infertile area will not be a great loss once it is flooded. Yet the land symbolizes the hard-won freedom which the rebellious Africans had gained in the face of slavery and repeated attacks by the armed forces. In the struggle between roots and science, the gauges become symbols of tyranny for Poseidon who burns them as the idols of "the Other." The novel also raises questions about progress. The dams and reservoirs would regulate the rivers and prevent the brackish waters from going too far inland during droughts. But their advantage would imply the loss of a valuable component of Guyanese civilization by destroying the homes of the Bush Negroes. Fenwick becomes aware of these larger implications after meeting Poseidon. Though he becomes more humane and understanding, he continues to do his work. But his kindness makes him less authoritative. Quarrels develop among the members of the crew. Bryant, who looks upon Poseidon as a grand father tells Fenwick that Perez has decided to bring his wife Catalena to stay with Poseidon. Poseidon's is the only house with a spare room. This news surprises Fenwick. Both Jordan and Weng warn Fenwick when he goes with Bryant to set
the gauge. On the way they encounter Poseidon and Bryant is so startled that he falls into the water. Though Fenwick tries to plead with Poseidon, he refuses to listen. The gauges continue to be destroyed. On one occasion Chiung, who is put in charge of the gauge is assaulted by two people who think that he is Fenwick. Fenwick had earlier lent him his coat and helmet. Trouble also comes in the form of Catalena. When Jordan and Fenwick arrive at Poseidon's place, after a hazardous journey they find Catalena hysterical; she mistakes them to be the men who have come to claim her as her husband had gambled her away at the poker table. Fenwick is shocked at her story and decides to fire her husband Perez. This invites criticism. Stoll the mulatto is prejudiced against Fenwick because Fenwick has not taken him in as an official apprentice. Weng quarrels with Chiung when Chiung is unable to recollect who has hit him on the head and nearly killed him. Bryant is sympathetic towards Poseidon but is attracted towards Catalena as well. After the attack on Chiung Fenwick tries to get to the bottom of it by questioning the others. Van Brock who is in a feverish state tells him a tale from his childhood. His grandmother had lost
the gold ring that was the only memory she had of her husband, a Dutch planter. She feared that it had fallen into the chamberpot that her grandson had emptied early in the morning in the quagmire. Beset by sorrow and anxiety the old lady started raving even though her grandson promised to buy her another. She would not listen to his words of consolation as the ring symbolized her claim to respectability. In the end, van Brock got fed up and started to abuse her. She gave up protesting and died. The boy then got into the filth and restored the ring to her finger like a high priest at the wedding of memory. He now recalls the story to Fenwick. Soon after this Bryant and Catalena arrive with the news that Poseidon is dead.

Bryant feels responsible for bringing about the death of the man whom he had revered as a grand father. Early in the morning Bryant had met Catalena close to Poseidon's place. Perez had beaten her up the previous night holding her responsible for the loss of his job. He had declared that he would take her back only if she could plead with Fenwick on his behalf. In the morning Catalena had sought the help of Poseidon who refused to
help her. When Bryant arrived in search of Poseidon the two of them formed a partnership and set off in search of Poseidon. They met him in a clearing of the forest sitting amidst his men. Poseidon was extremely angry with Catalena for following him and bringing one of the surveyor's men with her. He started advancing on her in rage while she turned and ran. Bryant also started running to stop Poseidon from beating Catalena with the stick he carried in his hand. Poseidon tripped and fell over the trough placed before one of the horses. He hurt himself splattering Catalena's dress with his blood. The god died at the feet of Andromeda with whom Catalena is identified (The boat which brings her to Canje is named "Andromeda"). Bryant is filled with sorrow and remorse for bringing about the death of the man whom he had loved. After his death, his followers surrender their precious possession, the land for which they had fought and attacked the survey team. On the morning of the seventh day, Fenwick dreams a strange dream of a new beginning starting from the end.

The myth of Perseus and Andromeda is made use of in the tragedy of Poseidon to give universality to a problem that pertains to a small group of people in the
interior of Guyana. The seven day pattern of Genesis is made use of to focus on Biblical parallels. The books are entitled, "The Day Readers," "The Night Readers" and "The Reading." These titles speak about the apprehension of history in all its complexity. The crew is disrupted by internal quarrels which eventually produce positive effects; they force the men to face the brutality and ruthlessness within themselves and also to discover the possibility of a true bond of community. Harris suggests that no solution of ethnic oppression is possible in the Caribbean unless each group recognizes the needs of the others. It is not a uniformity introduced through force that would solve the issue but an understanding of the paradoxes of history, that would ultimately lead to harmony of cultures.

In comparison to Harris, Mittelholzer provides historical events and surface realities. Harris uncovers deeper layers of experience by cutting across time barriers. Moreover, Harris's technique helps him encompass all the racial strains within the Guyanese psyche whereas Mittelholzer's treatment tends to marginalize certain communities and their contribution
to Guyanese history. The conventional framework of the historical novel that Mittelholzer follows, makes it difficult to incorporate East Indian and Chinese communities into the saga of van Groenwegels. Though an attempt has been made in the last novel, Kaywana Blood, these characters do not play vital roles in the action. The Amerindian component that is presented in the first novel, Children of Kaywana tends to be exotic rather than realistic.

Wilson Harris's fiction is relatively free from such lapses but it should be borne in mind that Mittelholzer preceded Harris by less than a decade—and these years were crucial in the development of Caribbean fiction, which is essentially a twentieth century phenomenon.