CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

For several decades in the postcolonial Caribbean, the process of creolization plays a very significant role in the heart of historical, social, psychological, cultural and literary discussions. This study focuses on the interaction of different ethnic, multinational and multi-racial identifications in the postcolonial Caribbean. An extremely heterogeneous population of multi-social, multi-racial and multi-ethnic people populates the Caribbean which provides a silent example of contemporary postcolonial society. In such postcolonial settings exist a high degree of ethnic, cultural and social heterogeneity and in which a majority of the world’s population lives today. ‘Creole identities’ and the ‘process of creolization’ often play an important role in the process of interaction and exchange and, hence, identity formation. The process of creolization is closely connected with ‘re-configurations,’ ‘re-constructions’ and ‘transformations’ of society in both historical as well as contemporary social contexts.

Factors such ‘trans-cultural/cross-cultural contact,’ ‘psychological aspect,’ ‘globalization,’ ‘hybridization’ and ‘acculturation’ are entailed in the process of creolization. Selvon’s peasant novels—*A Brighter Sun, Turn Again Tiger* and *Those Who Eat the Cascadura*—are stories of the East Indian experience in the Caribbean which has been one of an acculturation process, where the indentured labourers who came to work on the West Indian sugar plantations, and Africans, who came as slaves, have become one ‘creole melting pot.’ However, the process of creolization has become familiar in the works of Naipaul and Selvon, the most significant Caribbean East Indian Writers. Selvon’s immigrant novels—*The Lonely Londoners, Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating*—provide a glimpse of the immigrant society’s social identity in London. These novels depict a strong sense of social and cultural identity. Moreover, the characters became aware of themselves as ‘West Indian’ or ‘black/creole.’

Samuel Selvon is one of the most popular and internationally acclaimed contemporary Caribbean writers. He is placed apart by the sheer range and variety of his published works, which include ten novels and a collection of short stories (*Ways of Sunlight*), a great number of short stories, poems and essays to newspapers and
magazines and several plays for radio and television. He is also renowned because he became one of the founding fathers of the Caribbean literacy renaissance of the 1950s. Many writers and critics acclaimed his qualities of warmth and generosity and the depth of his vision as a natural philosopher. In the words of Kenneth Ramchand, Selvon is “a believer fighting off unbelief” (in “Play it Again Sam: Remembering Sam Selvon” http://caribbean-beat.com) and is strongly attached to his native land, Trinidad, even though he spent many years in places like London and Canada. Selvon himself confessed: “this island is my shadow and I carry it with me wherever I go” (World Literature in English, 427). The critical assessment of Selvon’s work has centered around the ‘Tiger’ and ‘Moses’ books.

Selvon’s first popular novel, A Brighter Sun, as well as, his classical novels The Lonely Londoners and Moses Ascending, and to a lesser extent Turn Again Tiger, Those Who Eat the Cascadura and Moses Migrating, have evoked the most academic interest. In the postcolonial Caribbean, Selvon is one of the important writers who have attempted to examine creolization process from both cultural and linguistic perspectives. Writers such as V.S. Naipaul, George Lamming, Earl Lovelace and Edward Brathwaite have shown the condition of the creolized people. Also, they made attempts to reproduce the creole language in their texts.

The Caribbean society is considered a ‘salad bowl’ and a ‘melting pot’ of different cultures and people. Racism is closely tied to creolization. Selvon concludes that the process of creolization is the only way to get rid of racism in multi-ethnic, multi-racial and multi-cultural societies. When races are stereotyped and assimilated with the dominate race, racism can be experienced. However, creolization enables multiple races to live in harmony. Selvon himself acknowledges: “I was creolized from an early age, which is a good thing, in my opinion, as a mixing of traditions makes for a more harmonious world” (Nasta, 1988: 70-71).

Selvon shows the compelling issues of West Indian literature: ‘identity,’ ‘self-awareness,’ ‘creolization,’ ‘racism’ and ‘wholeness’ in colonial and ethnically plural societies that still bear the psychic scars of slavery and the equally dehumanizing system of indentured labour in his peasant novels– A Brighter Sun, Turn Again Tiger and Those Who Eat the Cascadura. In the peasant novels the protagonist, Tiger’s journey, can be seen as one moving towards creolization. Selvon does not neglect the Indo-Caribbean elements in the novels with his “implicit argument that space has to

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be found for these within an expanded concept of creolization” (*Something Rich and Strange*, 13).

At the beginning of *A Brighter Sun*, Tiger is an Indian youngster. He developed into a mature young West Indian man who assumes political responsibility at the end of *Turn Again Tiger*. Through Tiger’s character, Selvon attempts to find a place for himself in a racially divided, multi-ethical and multi-cultural society. Tiger clearly loses his links with his Indian heritage, custom and culture. Thus Selvon tended to simplify the approach to the process of creolization, providing an optimistic view. In this context, Simon Gikandi concludes that:

> [a] few Caribbean writers have posited creolization as a metocode for West Indian society as much as Selvon… Instead of seeking the sources of his writing in the rich Indian heritage that East Indians in Trinidad have sustained in the plantation, Selvon has relegated such tradition to background and local colour moving beyond them to assert the liberating potential of Creolization. (*Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature*, 11).

It can be clearly pointed out that the process of creolization for Selvon is not only an assimilation process but it also incorporates different cultures. Even Selvon’s depiction of creolization is much more ambivalent. For instance, when Tiger’s family visited Barataria, it appeared as a clash between cultures. Tiger’s opened-minded creoleness became problematic when his father expresses misgiving about his neighbours and friends, Joe and Rita:

> ‘Is only nigger friend you makeam since you come?’ his bap asked ‘plenty Indian liveam dis side. Is true them is good neighbor, but you must look for Indian friend, like you and you wife. Indian must keep together’ . . .

What you bap say is right thing, though, his uncle said. ‘Nigger people all right, but you must let creole keep they distance. You too young to know these things, but I older than you. Allyuh better make Indian friend’. (*A Brighter Sun*, 47-48)

Nonetheless, Tiger sets his life course firmly towards the process of creolization. At the end of the novel *A Brighter Sun*, Tiger gazes up at the sky and mutters: “Now is a
good time to plant corn” (*A Brighter Sun*, 215). To conclude, Martin Zehnder says: “there is still scope for further critical assessment of Selvon’s perspectives on ethnicity, Creolization and the relationship between the Indian cultural heritage and what it means to be West Indian” (*Something Rich and Strange*, 16).

Postcolonialism as a postmodern approach seeks to illustrate the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Homi K Bhabha, a contemporary postcolonial critic, employs some postcolonial notions like ‘hybridity,’ ‘unhomeliness,’ ‘creolization,’ ‘mimicry,’ and ‘ambivalence’ to depicts this relationship between the colonizer and colonized. Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture*, concentrates on the interaction of cultures and looks at the ways that two cultures merge with each other. In this study, an attempt has been made to identify the problems like ‘stereotyping,’ ‘mimicry,’ ‘hybridity’ and ‘creolization’ in Selvon’s peasant novels: *A Brighter Sun*, *Turn Again Tiger* and *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* and his immigrant novels: *The Lonely Londoners*, *Moses Ascending*, and *Moses Migrating*. The characters in these novels are away from their ‘homes’ and have to accept the rules and customs of the dominant ‘white’ culture in which they find themselves ‘unhomed’. As Bhabha opines, the immigrant characters are ‘psychological refugees’ who do not know to which culture they belong, to their West Indian culture or to the British culture. They do not know which culture should be of value to them as a result of which their characters and personalities become ambivalent. Their identities are floating, hovering between the dominant culture and their own cultures.

‘Postcolonialism’ is the contemporary term for the critical analysis of the history, culture, literature and modes of discourse and it is specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France, and other European imperial powers. Postcolonial studies have focused specially on the ‘Third World’ countries such as Africa, Asia, the Caribbean Islands, and South America. Therefore, postcolonial criticism sheds light to understand socially, culturally, politically and psychologically the operations of the colonialist and the anti-colonialist ideologies. The postcolonial theory is also a form of resistance, both culturally and psychologically. In this context Tyson in his *Critical Theory Today, A User-Friendly Guide* urges:

It [postcolonialism] analyses the ideological forces that pressed the colonized to internalize the colonizers’ values, on the one hand, and
promoted the resistance of colonized peoples against their oppressors, on
the other hand. (Critical Theory Today, A User-Friendly Guide, 418)

Postcolonial studies were principally inaugurated by Fanon’s two highly influential
texts, Black Skin, White Masks (1952) and The Wretched of the Earth (1961), and
Said’s Orientalism (1978). The main thinkers of postcolonial studies include Frantz
Fanon, Homi K. Bhabha, Edward Said, Robert Young, Ania Loomba, Stuart Hall,
Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and others.

Ashcroft defines creolization as “the process of intermixing and cultural
change that produces a creole society” (Ashcroft, 51: 2000). Creolization is mostly
used to refer to the “post-colonial societies whose present ethnically or racially mixed
populations are a product of European colonization” (Ashcroft, 51: 2000). Creolization is actually defined based on the response each individual has towards the
creole society they are living in. These responses can be religious, educational, and
psychological, as Brathwaite in his classic work The Development of Creole Society
in Jamaica, 1770–1820 explains:

Creolization is a cultural process –“material, psychological and spiritual
– based upon the response” each person has to their new environment
and to each other. Whereas the quality of this response and the
interaction they have are to a large extent dependent and are defined by
the dominant culture, they produce a totally “new construct”. (The
Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770–1820, 11)

In the interaction the individuals have with the dominant culture and the other
cultures, living in the ‘creole’ society, “they might tend to accept the norms of the
society and absorb it through which their culture might undergo a drastic change or
they might look at the new culture with which they can cooperate to enrich their own
culture as a reciprocal activity” (The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica,
1770–1820, 13).

In the clashes between the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized, both
cultures are affected, through which the identity of both sides is formed and changed.
The concept of creolization is illustrated in Selvon’s novels, in which we see the
different cultured people like ‘Indian,’ ‘African,’ ‘Asian,’ and ‘European’ leaving
their own countries and migrating to the colonial and creole society of Trinidad. They
change their identities and customs to fit the norms and rules of the dominant ‘white’
culture. Selvon’s peasant novels: *A Brighter Sun*, *Turn Again Tiger* and *Those Who
Eat the Cascadura* explain how each generation treats its encounter with the cultural
process of creolization. As each generation passes, they lose the cultural, educational,
religious beliefs inherent in their own customs and traditions.

Selvon grew up in a hybrid and creole situation and hence, is concerned in his
early fiction with the East Indian assimilation and the process of creolization. John
Thieme says: “in Selvon’s fiction the process of acculturation has gone further and the
authorial voice demonstrates none of the obsessive intensity of feeling which
characterizes Naipaul’s response to the values of his ancestral culture” (“The World
Turned Upside Down: Carnival Patterns” in *The Lonely Londoners*, 192). Selvon’s
peasant novels, which have Trinidadian settings, make an attempt to explore a
distinctively ‘East Indian’ and ‘creole’ identity, but once the location of his novels
moves to England in the immigrant novels, the search identity in entwined with racial
and cultural aspects.

Selvon’s classical novel, *The Lonely Londoners*, shows the hopeful aftermath
of the war. The black immigrants from the Caribbean Islands flocked to the ‘Mother
Country’ in waves, looking for a prosperous future, and finding instead a cool
reception, bone-chilling weather, and bleak prospects. Yet, friendship flourishes
among these lonely Londoners and they learn to survive, and even to love their
‘Mother Country,’ London. The novel depicts the lives of black immigrants in the
1950s and it is rich in characters such as Galahad, who never feels the cold even in
winter, Big City, who dreams of fame and fortune, Harris, who likes to play ladeda,
Moses, who hates his own soft heart, and Captain, who has a way with women.

The idealized image of ‘better future’ with which the West Indians arrive in
London is destroyed when they are faced with racism, cold weather and poor living
standards among other hardships. Yet, in order to survive, the immigrants nurture
optimism with hope. As John McLeod explains: “the initial idealism of many
newcomers [immigrant] was not vanquished by life in London but rearticulated in the
face of such experiences as a means of subaltern resistance” (McLeod, *Postcolonial
London: Rewriting the Metropolis*, 29-30). This is evident in *The Lonely Londoners*
through Galahad’s character. Selvon shows that, “using the names of the places like
they mean big romance, as if to say ‘I was in Oxford Street’ have more prestige than
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if he just say ‘I was up the road’” (*The Lonely Londoners*, 68). He holds this sentiment despite his initial experience of London: “he realise that here he is, in London, and he ain’t have money or work or place to sleep or any friend or anything” (*The Lonely Londoners*, 23). Thus, West Indies is referred to as the true ‘home’ suggesting that in London, the character does not feel fully welcome or comfortable.

*The Lonely Londoners*, Selvon’s third novel, is considered as his most outstanding work. This novel depicts the experiences of West Indian black immigrants in London. Selvon portrays how London, which is the ‘promised land’ for the black immigrants, is difficult to adjust. The novel describes how the ‘Whites’ of London look down upon the ‘Blacks’. The novel is all about the immigrants adjusting themselves to the white dominant society. Racism plays a very significant role here. The black man starts mimicking the white man, and loses his identity which served as a form of resistance. Selvon’s immigrant novels—*The Lonely Londoners Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating*—depict exile, racial and ethnicity problems. Hence, Selvon clearly succeeds in highlighting the problems of racism, acculturation, and the assimilation process in a multi-cultural society. At last, Selvon comes to the conclusion that the dynamic response to racism is ‘creolization’. The main character of these novels, Moses, tries to live in harmony, which is possible in a multi-racial society by opting to ‘creolize’ and by incorporating the best of all cultures.

Exile, migration and multiculturalism are very important themes in Selvon’s immigrant novels. Migration is quite common in recent times. The migration process has to be painful that migrants had to leave their home country and all the attachments and relationships to the mother country. They were uprooted from their traditional and familiar environment and were forced to forge new relationships. In *The Lonely Londoners*, readers see palpably the pain of separation in immigrants endure and their sense of ‘loneliness’ in the bustling, alien city, London. The immigrants’ poor self-image and feelings of ‘inferiority’ are exacerbated by the subtle discrimination that they encounter in London. Racism, needless to say, dehumanizes the victim and debases them. At the end of *The Lonely Londoners*, Moses, in a brooding, wistful passage, could only see, “a great aimlessness, a great restless, swaying moment that leaving you standing in the same spot” (*The Lonely Londoners*, 125). Foster, too, notices a similar hopelessness in *An Island Is a World*.
It is alienation, identity, and discrimination that bring Selvon’s immigrants together into a noticeably cohesive group. Selvon’s Moses is in some respects a contrasting figure with some sort of ‘schizoid’ [multiple] personality. On the one hand, Moses is father, mother, mentor, and mediator to the helpless, the raffish and the hustlers. He is “a man for all seasons and reasons” (Moses Ascending, 51). He has been a ‘liaison officer,’ an instructor, a master of ceremonies, a father confessor, a refuge for those in needs. On the other hand, Moses himself needs the emotional security of ‘the boys’ for survival. Since London can be powerfully lonely, “when you [Galahad] are on your own, he had to seek out, the boys and coast a old talk to pass the time away” (The Lonely Londoners, 31). Selvon assures the readers that the older Moses, now a London landlord of sorts, is no longer “an immigrant… hustling and looking for a job” (The Lonely Londoners, 9), and he has assimilated a great deal of English culture. However, Moses knows that like other West Indians he is “not English, nor treated as such, nor recognized as such” (The Lonely Londoners, 101). This is not to say that he has tried to anglicize himself nor does Selvon suggest that he ought to.

Moses Ascending is the second book of the trilogy which begins with The Lonely Londoners and concludes with Moses Migrating. In all the three novels the main protagonist is Moses Aleotta, a helpful and kind Trinidadian. In The Lonely Londoners, Moses’ personal experience as a black/creole immigrant in London, coupled with his active involvement in the lives of numerous immigrants, makes him feel that “he had a lot of things to say” (The Lonely Londoners, 13). The novel ends with Moses wanting to draw apart from his old friends and “just sit down and watch other people fight to live” (The Lonely Londoners, 125). At last Moses realizes, “how after all these years I [Moses] aren’t get no place at all, I still the same way, neither forward nor backward” (The Lonely Londoners, 113). He wants to write a book, that “everybody would buy” (The Lonely Londoners, 126).

In Moses Ascending, Moses had distanced himself from his fellow black immigrants. He built up friendship with white people. Further, he becomes a ‘landlord,’ and also he thinks of writing a book of his memories. Moses is unable to establish himself as a ‘writer’ or a ‘landlord’ (in Moses Ascending), and he decides to return to Trinidad, his ‘home land,’ in Moses Migrating. In the final novel, Moses Migrating, Moses decides to depict Britannia at the Carnival in Trinidad. Moses
shows his loyalty and belongingness to the ‘Mother Country,’ London. Bob and Jeanine, the white characters, came to Trinidad with Moses to participate in the Carnival. At last, the Carnival allows Moses to fulfill his desire for recognition in his native land and he wins the first prize for appearing in ‘the Most Original Individual Costume’ at the Carnival festival.

Unlike Naipaul, who could not make much out of Trinidad, Selvon celebrates the ‘things’ of the island which is of paramount importance to him. Selvon left his island for London in 1950 for some serious reasons, and for him, the departure from Trinidad to London became ‘a kind of adventure’:

I was finding myself in a situation where life was beginning to become very complacent and easy-going; this general impression of beach parties and boozing-up parties and driving a car around and swimming in the blue Caribbean water, and things like that, is a part of the life in Trinidad. And I felt myself getting into it … I just said to myself one day, in all seriousness, may be I’m too young to fall into a pattern like that. Is this what I want, my life to be like? (Peter, Nazareth. “Interview with Samuel Selvon” in Critical Perspective on Sam Selvon, 82)

Selvon, self-educated, and determined to become ‘creolized,’ even in modern Trinidad, took pride in his background, and felt the need as an artist to translate this vision into fiction, leading to the publication of his first famous novel, A Brighter Sun. The West Indian novelist does not look out across the sea to another source. Selvon looked in and down at what had traditionally been ignored. For the first time, the West Indian peasant becomes other than a cheap source of labour. He becomes, through the novelist’s eye, a living existence, living in silence and joy and fear, involved in riot and carnival. It is the West Indian novel that has restored the West Indian peasant to this true and original status of personality. For the first time in writing related to the West Indies, the Black characters are not restricted to being ‘peripheral,’ or background figures. To this may be attributed, atleast in part, the realistic exuberance with which the West Indian writers of 1930s have expressed the life and surroundings of the West Indian peasant. The challenge of articulating the hitherto obscure person impacted the characterization in West Indian novels, in other ways.
Samuel Selvon does not come from a rural background although he is a careful painter of the East Indian ‘peasant’ community in his peasant novels. Selvon and Vic Reid are important peasant novelists for understanding the literary and social situation in the West Indies. Both Selvon and Reid are rooted to their soil. Both of them have used a language which resembled and approximated to the peasant tongue. Selvon has brilliantly captured the life of the East-Indian peasant and his world in *A Brighter Sun* and *Turn Again Tiger*. A peasant, Tiger, is the protagonist of these novels.

After his departure from Britain in 1978, Selvon realized that he needed to shift focus:

> We have now to start thinking in terms of world literature, of contributing universally rather than contributing merely with protestation novels, with days of slavery, with hardships of the black man, and so on. We have had a great deal of that. We want to rise above that. (*Critical perspective on Samuel Selvon*, 87)

Selvon has strongly felt the need to reach out to the world audience and created an important character, ‘Tiger,’ in Trinidadian literary history and the minds of many readers– a ‘Tiger’ who is firmly rooted to the soil, to the mango tree and the kiskidee (West Indian native tree with small leaves) whose voice, rising from the language of the island, triumphed in stretching that language across the mouth of the world. Naipaul, Selvon, Walcott, Lamming, Brathwaite, and a dozen other contemporaries in the islands, have promoted in West Indian literature intellectualism and professionalism. But Selvon refused to give up the folk or peasant foundation that he focussed upon in *A Brighter Sun*, which he liked most.

Selvon’s fellow Trinidadian, the critic and editor of Ariel, Victor Ramaraj, described him as “the language philosopher, touched by the sad lot of humans but not overwhelmed by it.” Ramaraj’s words capture an essential quality of both the man and the work that distinguishes him from among the remarkable gifted band of Caribbean writers who set sail for London, fame, and variable fortune in the 1950s.

Selvon had developed sentimental attachment with the island, which to Naipaul is ‘nowhere’. “This island is my shadow”, Selvon said, “and I carry it with me wherever I go” (*World Literature in English*, 427). He is proud to be ‘creolized’. 
Selvon’s first novel and its sequel, *Turn Again Tiger* (1958), are in the tradition of the novel that explores, simultaneously, the protagonist’s stumbling process of self, and life-education, and the development of his society. These processes converge significantly in racial terms. In Selvon’s work, while racial divisions are not overlooked, the author’s instinctive concern is with unity.

As Tiger’s language, although flawed and sometimes a humorous product of self-education, enables him to express his developing thought, so he becomes capable of observing and criticizing racial division and prejudice. The eye-opening confrontation in *A Brighter Sun* involves three doctors, Indian, Negro, and White, of whom only the last behaves decently. This makes Tiger the spokesman of an open commitment, a rare quality in Selvon’s understated fiction.

For Selvon, the Trinidadian identity should eschew pre-occupation with narrowly racial self-definition. Mostly of Indian origin himself, although his maternal grandfather was set, he grew up devoid of close involvement in Indian ritual or knowledge of it. He could not speak in Hindi. He came from a creolized, westernized polyglot culture, which he would humorously define as ‘East Indian Trinidadian West Indian’. But in its very fluidity he found hope of breaking from the chains of both the past and the present. But to his surprise, in revisiting Trinidad periodically, he found racial antipathy hardening within Indian and African power groups, while the ‘brighter sun’ has not risen.

Exclusive ethnic identification is treated ironically or with ridicule in Selvon’s work. In his Moses trilogy, set mostly in London, Black Power activism is portrayed as opportunistic and self-seeking, while the carnivalesque comedy of Moses’ enactment of Britannia ridicules the colonial mentality and renders colonial history a huge farce. Neither was Selvon forgiving of English racism or the victimizing London police, which are roughly exposed in *Moses Ascending*. However, his constant concern, typical of the non-ideological writer, is with individuals and their personal dilemmas.

*The Lonely Londoners* is a finely balanced narrative of the humour and pathos of expatriation, imbued with ‘between the two worlds’ feeling. The characteristic of the emigrant’s experience, and its threading of a melancholy, sometimes somber vision through the comedy, overshadowed in third novel. *An Island is a World* (1955)
is autobiographical and untypical in its focus upon middle-class characters for their contrary views on Trinidadian society, politics, and purpose of living.

Selvon’s writing has always appealed through its use of Caribbean linguistic structures and devices to score comic points related to particular character, or particular features of race, colour or class discrimination. For this reason, Selvon’s subjects remained thoroughly Caribbean, whether he is writing about the Caribbean itself, or about immigrants. Through their language, Selvon’s books have contributed greatly to the development of West Indian national consciousness. Selvon is interested in and tries to define the national character and West Indian identity. His writing tends to revolve around the theme of social relationships based on class or race. Edith Efron observes about *A Brighter Sun*:

Despite the essential gravity of his subject, Mr. Selvon has written a colourful, poetic, often amusing saga of rural life in Trinidad. The charm of the book is also, perhaps, its principal weakness: a light and lyrical exoticism is often substituted for a make probing penetration of the character’s lives. Acute problems are introduced– drunkenness, cruelty, abandonment, fights, prostitution, harsh racial conflict– but they are rather quickly abandoned, they are oddly non-corrosive, viewed as they are by ‘child like primitive eyes’. (*Critical Perspective on Samuel Selvon*, 107)

Whitney Balliett comments about Selvon’s classic third novel, *The Lonely Londoners*:

*[The Lonely Londoners]* is a nearly perfect work of its kind. Mr. Selvon deserves double prize, for he has mastered, in addition to an unpretentious and poignant picture of a handful of West Indian Negroes adrift in modern London, one of the most difficult and delightful of literary forms – the pure dialect novel. He sets down with unfailing sureness the alternately ambling and somersaulting way in which the West Indian Negro approaches English. (*Critical Perspective on Samuel Selvon*, 114)
Naipaul has also remarks on Selvon’s writings:

“One of Mr. Selvon’s assets is his comic, humane vision”… Mr. Selvon is a natural writer, at times careless, at times awkward, but never dull. In lyrical mood, he is unique. He is also a fine weaver of the tall story…. Mr. Selvon’s gifts may not be important but they are precious. (Critical Perspective on Samuel Selvon, 123)

Rye Vervaet comments on Selvon’s deep concern for his native country and its people:

Samuel Selvon cares about all kinds of things and people: the English, the children, the old, the educated, the uneducated— even a mango tree. He isn’t mad at any one and he finds both humour and pathos in the human condition. He also believes a little obeah. (Critical Perspective on Samuel Selvon, 120)

Selvon has a remarkable talent. He is known for his sensitivity and gaiety which enables him to directly touch the heart of his characters. Selvon’s contribution is substantial in matters such as the tradition of the West Indian novel through the use of modified dialect, heightened sense of comedy, and also through highlighting social problems. The Lonely Londoners is a pioneering work as it moves towards bridging the difficult gap of perspective between the teller and the tale itself. It is the full-length novel and is an innovative departure away from the more standard modes of portraying unlettered characters in traditional fiction. In style and content, it has represented a major step forward in the process of decolonization.

Selvon’s sojourn in London from 1950 to 1978 acted as a ‘creative catalyst’ in the development of his art, enabling links to be drawn between the two preoccupations of his fiction– Trinidad and London. Through the encounter with London, it became possible to move, on the one hand, towards a more success and on the other, to define and establish a Caribbean consciousness within a British content. Selvon confesses: “only in London did my life find its purpose” (World Literature in English). The tensions and conflicts implicit in the idea of creolization are a frequent theme in Selvon’s art.

Selvon is known for his limpid lyricism, whereas Lamming is known for rich poetic loquacity, and Naipaul for the deceptive simplicity of his ironic comedies, the
Maugham–like narrative efficiency of John Hearne and the over-wrought eroticism of Edgar Mittelholzer. Yet in their different ways they are so good that the West Indian scene and the dialects are becoming attractively familiar to the outside English reader.

Selvon’s collection of stories, *Ways of Sunlight*, shows him at his best. He is a master of short-story. His talent is not ideally suited to the novel, but given an incident, a scene or just a character, he can turn the very slightness of his material into an asset, suggesting significance in the unobtrusive manner of the best short-story writers. His stories which are told in dialect have an irresistible charm, owing as much to the author’s technical subtlety as to the unfamiliar delights of the language. His short story *My Girl and the City*, is overtly poetic, finally revealing Selvon’s imaginative power which, though not apparent in the others, operated in concealment to make them successful. In his short stories, Selvon displays almost magical descriptive powers and his superb ear for native speech. His evocative portrayal of love between man and women, his intuitive understanding of small boys need for adventure and his first hand knowledge of the pain of a young man feels when he seeks education and freedom against his family tradition have universal application.

In *A Brighter Sun*, what Selvon achieved is a poetic, amusing and frequently touching portrait of a community, living against a background of dramatic events, but for whom the real drama is the struggle for education, for a living, and most important of all, for some clue to the meaning of their existence.

To sum up, Samuel Selvon’s fiction unfolds the diversity of cultures and he does not compel people to assimilate blindly, but at the same time, he considers all the fellow citizens as equal. Selvon portrays all the characters in a humanistic way. Migration is still an ‘on-going phenomenon,’ even now people are becoming intolerant of racism in the postcolonial society. Therefore Selvon’s works are relevant in this regard and in the present context. Being discriminated as ‘black’ or ‘coloreds,’ the West Indians suffered from a cultural complex of ‘inferiority’ when ‘Black/colored’ people came into contact with western culture and system of beliefs and values. In the white dominated society, white man is considered as ‘superior’. As a result, ‘Black/colored’ people feel alienation and despair, which are seen in Selvon’s ‘peasant’ and ‘immigrant novels,’ and which reflects his own experience of ‘cultural dislocation’ and ‘social marginalization’.
The process of creolization in the Caribbean context entails an intermingling of different cultures and linguistic elements which constituted the ‘New World’ experience. In Selvon’s novels, different ethnic groups are depicted like Indian, Black, European and Chinese. Selvon, like the other writer, V.S. Naipaul, opted for a mixed and impure ‘creole’ identity. He considered the process of creolization as the only viable answer to cultural problems and divisions in the Caribbean society. Hence, today, the process of creolization ‘unites’ the different cultures and enriches the concept of ‘national identity’ in multi-ethnic and multi-cultural postcolonial Caribbean society.

The researchers who have taken the time to critically examine the fiction of Selvon have sought to highlight his creativity in his use of language to create unforgettable characters, plots, and style. Hence, my research focuses on his use of language, dialect, humor, immigrant experience and the postcolonial reading of his novels. However, my study is different and it is an attempt to examine the fiction of Samuel Selvon from the perspective of Creole identity (both in language and culture) in the Caribbean context within the postcolonial framework.
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