CHAPTER III
Creole Identity in Selvon’s Peasant Novels

This section is an attempt at studying creole identity in Samuel Selvon’s peasant novels. His peasant novels: *A Brighter Sun, Turn Again Tiger*, and *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* will be analyzed under the light of postcolonial theories and processes identified by various scholars. The peasants novels written in the post-emancipation period of the 1950s, read like the novels written by Naipaul, Reid, Lamming and Wilson Harris. They can be read as Selvon’s response to the problem of ‘Creole’ and the history of the postcolonial Caribbean. It has been explained that the racial composition of Trinidad or Caribbean is reflective of the process of colonization and the characters depicted in the novels exhibit ‘creolized’ and ‘hybridized’ identities. The racial complexity of Trinidad creates a muddle even in identifying to which race is a descendant of another belongs and what to call whom. In this sense, throughout this study, the word ‘creole’ will be used to describe the East Indian settlers in Trinidad, and the word ‘hybrid’ is being used to describe those inhabitants who share both the racial and the cultural values of the ‘white’ masters in Trinidad.

This chapter critically evaluates the three novels– *The Brighter Sun, Turn Again Tiger*, and *Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, which are classified as ‘peasant’ novels. These novels set the platform for examination through Creole identity and the process of creolization through the postcolonial contexts. Postcolonial theory is an ongoing process in political, historical, social, cultural and psychological concept examined in the literary text. Selvon depicts the struggles of Indo-Trinidadian peasants in his peasant novels “socially, sympathetically and authentically” (Salick, 2). Therefore, characters such as Tiger, Urmilla, Baboolal, Balgobin and Romesh from the peasant novels who struggle against the constraints of history and ethnicity, demand to be placed within the context of the invaluable contribution the Indo-Trinidadian peasantry has made, and continues to make creolized experience in a multicultural Caribbean society. As Simon Gikandi says at the end of *A Brighter Sun*: “Tiger’s new knowledge displaces him by drawing him deeper into the colonial epistemology and so exacerbates his crisis of selfhood” (*Writing in Limbo: Modernism in Caribbean Literature*, 123). Tiger’s character in the two novels– *A
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_Brighter Sun_ and _Turn Again Tiger_– is carefully developed from the historical and colonial context.

A writer’s vision is the hope that Selvon envisages for his society interpreting life, people and transition from the ‘old world’ to the ‘new world’ and towards the process of creolization within the framework of the novel. Selvon’s peasant novels, _Brighter Sun_ and _Turn Again Tiger_ trace the individual growth at various levels—physical, mental, intellectual, moral, and psychological levels—and the growth of society in social, religious, political, economic, cultural spheres. The growth of individuals towards Creole identity in a society is partly due to their interaction with other civilized, sophisticated, other races and ethnic groups. Tiger from Trinidad representing the West Indian society shows awareness and growth in _A Brighter Sun_ and _Turn Again Tiger_. In _A Brighter Sun_, Tiger symbolizes every man in society who undergoes change and development. He grows from a state of innocence, naiveté and irresponsibility to one of experience, awareness and acceptance of responsibility.

_A Brighter Sun_, Selvon’s first novel, has its origin in a short story titled “The Baby”, which appeared in the Barbados based journal _BIM_. The novel, _A Brighter Sun_ was begun before Selvon left for England in 1950. But the misconception concerning _A Brighter Sun_, namely, that the novel was partially complete when Selvon left Trinidad, ought to be corrected, if only in the interests of literary history (Salick, 16). The editor of _BIM_, in his preface to “The Baby,” writes that it is an excerpt from a novel “Soul and Soil”; and George Lamming emphatically states that when he met Selvon aboard the ship in March 1950 “Selvon had already written a large part of his first novel, _A Brighter Sun_” (The Pleasures of Exile, 212).

The first landmark in this graph of growth and the process of creolization is Tiger’s marriage at the Sugar Estates of Chaguanas. At the beginning of the novel, he appears to be naïve, diffident and doing things which are not of his concern. Suddenly, after his marriage, Tiger transforms from a boy to a man, and his carefree life alters from the routine of “days in the fields, evenings playing with other children, roti and aloo in the night” (_A Brighter Sun_, 6) to a life burdened by responsibilities with a wife to support, a house and garden to maintain. He has to grow into a man through his own efforts without the guiding voices of his past society and without any parental direction. Thus, Selvon presents Tiger’s movement, from uncertainties and doubtful future on his arrival at Barataria, to a more mature shift towards creolization.
It is significant that Selvon sets *A Brighter Sun* in Barataria, which has an incoherent community, and also a multi-racial and multi-ethnic society. The chequered setting helps the reader to understand the process of assimilation of cultures and races triggered by the process of creolization. Though he is mainly preoccupied with Tiger’s growth, Selvon also attempts to trace this growth through Tiger’s interaction with other people and other races. Tiger and Urmilla, who were innocent and naive in the past, are greatly influenced by the East Indian Community in the Sugar Estates of Chaguanas. As such, in a masterly depiction, Selvon traces the growth of the Creole identity through Tiger’s individual, psychological, familial and material growth.

Samuel Selvon is greatly influenced by Edgar Mittelholzer. Selvon’s *A Brighter Sun* and Edgar Mittelholzer’s *Corentyne Thunder* share the theme of the Indo-Caribbean peasants’ life. Like Mittelholzer, Selvon romanticizes his hero, but he does not idealize him to the point where the hero becomes unrecognizable. The strength of Selvon’s characterization of Tiger “lies in his verisimilitude (realism)” (Salick, 17). V.S. Naipaul, reviewing *An Island Is a World*, Selvon’s second novel, acknowledges and applauds Selvon’s realistic depiction in his plots and characterization. Naipaul declares: “If a stranger read *A Brighter Sun* and went to Trinidad expecting to meet people like Tiger and Urmilla and Rita, he would not be disappointed” (*The Novels of Samuel Selvon*, 17). Selvon and Mittelholzer view the Creole identity in their peasant novels in a realistic way.

The peasant novels *A Brighter Sun* and *Turn Again Tiger* deal with the concept of Indo-Trinidadian peasantry which focuses a great deal on indentured labourers. The individual and communal life of the Indo-Trinidadian peasantry is highlighted in these peasant novels, the main focus being Indian Hindus, who works on the large sugarcane plantations and private gardens and producing a wide range of vegetables. Peasant novels play a vital role in the West Indian genre. Selvon’s *A Brighter Sun*, *Turn Again Tiger* and Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* deal with the social, cultural, racial and personal conflict caused by the process of creolization in the postcolonial Caribbean society. In *The West Indian Novel and Its Background*, Kenneth Ramchand explains the importance of peasant novels in the West Indian literature and society. According to him: “it is the West Indian novel that has restored the West Indian peasant to its true and original status of personality” (*The Pleasures of Exile*, 38-9). The novels were influenced by the World War II period which had, in
turn, influenced the Caribbean postcolonial society to transit from the ‘Old World’ to the ‘New World’. Due to colonization, World War II, slavery and the trauma of holocaust made people to migrate towards the Caribbean region. In this way, the Caribbean society turned into multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual arenas, which led towards creolization. The peasant novels in the Caribbean literature provide a vivid picture of creolization process in the society. On Selvon’s depiction of creolization process in his peasant novels, Roydon Salick notes:

In the peasant novels there are unlimited future possibilities for the Indo-Trinidadian through creolization and education… for Selvon Creolization remained a personal and national ideal, ethnicity became increasingly important. Creolization was to Selvon an acquired and requisite stratiform opulence of multicultural experience. Thus we see Tiger struggling to understand just how complicated, frustrating and rewarding a process can be. (*The Novels of Samuel Selvon*, 8-9)

Selvon underpins an optimistic view of the process of Creolization through the characters of Tiger, Urmilla and Boysie. Tiger, the main young protagonist who settles in Barataria with his wife, Urmilla, experienced creolization in the ‘new society,’ Barataria. *A Brighter Sun* deals with Tiger’s quest for knowledge, manhood, self-awareness and also his adaption to the multi-racial and multi-ethnic society which is a crucial part of the novel.

The very title of the novel, *A Brighter Sun*, represents the brighter side of life in the ‘New World’ in which Tiger’s psychological transition from the ‘old world’ into an alienated ‘new space’ exemplifies the process of creolization. Discussing the title ‘A Brighter Sun,’ Salick declares that Tiger is “a brighter sun of his home land” (16). Regarding Tiger’s literary and psychological journey in the ‘new world,’ Salick opines: “Tiger’s journey of literary journeys of epics heroes such as Ulysses in the *Divine Comedy* and the solitary in William Wordsworth’s *The Excursion* who reiterate that they have followed the sun and will continue to do so” (Salick, 16).

Creolization is the continuous social and psychological process in the society in which Tiger attempts continuously to identify himself as ‘Creole’. His attempts are compared to ‘the Brighter Sun’ and the ‘brighter side of life’. ‘A Brighter Sun’ remains an appropriate title, locating the narrative in the sun-drenched Caribbean,
especially in Trinidad. The title suggests the brighter side of creolization process in the Caribbean society. It highlights the importance of the sun as a controlling symbol of life in the Caribbean setting and in the novel, “underscoring the sense of growing optimism and confidence that impels the narrative” (Salick, 16). At the end of the novel, Tiger, chastened and humbled by experience, looks forward, as does the country he is made to represent, to a brighter sun, shedding its lambent light of independence, racial harmony in the creole society and increasing knowledge. Selvon concludes his novel in the hope of success, while Tiger awaits for the ‘Brighter Sun’ in his future. Selvon masterly writes:

Plenty things happened, but nothing new. The story he [Tiger] has written about the highway he had posted to the Trinidad Guardian short story contest, he hadn’t got a reply yet. Not that he expected any success; he just posted in because he felt all his labour would have been in vain if someone else didn’t see it. Only for Boysie things would be new going to a big country, where the houses so high you can’t see the tops, and they have trains that does run under the ground… “Now is a good time to plant corn”, he muttered, gazing up at the sky. (A Brighter Sun, 214-15)

The journey motif plays a very important role in the Caribbean novels. A Brighter Sun records Tiger’s journey, psychological and literary, from darkness to light, and the journey of the Caribbean society’s transition from the ‘Old World’ towards the ‘New World’ with its promise of racial harmony and creolization in the community.

Selvon’s A Brighter Sun, the first major novel of Trinidad development, the author makes a new departure in form as well as subject. Selvon’s opening panorama of postcolonial Trinidad in 1939, using a calypso perspective, gives equal status to national and to incidental private life. The outbreak of World War II, a man riding the streets of Port-of-Spain on a bicycle with a bottle of rum on his head, and heavy September rains:

On New Year’s Day, 1939, while Trinidadians who had money or hopes of winning money… A man went about the streets of the city riding a bicycle and balancing a bottle of rum his head… In September much
rain fell... War was declared and measures necessary for the presentation of internal order. (*A Brighter Sun*, 4)

Creolization is assimilation and mixing of different races, cultures and societies. In the novel *A Brighter Sun*, the Jewish society mingled with the Caribbean society: “A number of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Persecution in Europe landed on the island... In many a German training ship with a crew of 270 paid a visit” (*A Brighter Sun*, 3). The first chapter of the novel begins at the onset of World War II and traces its consequent effects. The World War II forces people to move from one place to another and it is depicted in the novel.

Tiger’s marriage represents the transition of culture, society and race. Tiger and Urmilla represented East Indian community. Tiger’s wedding process represents the process of creolization in the postcolonial society. The wedding shows the respective culture and customs of the East Indian community. Creolization process acknowledges that the Caribbean people forged ‘new cultural forms’ and were subjected to ‘assimilation of different cultures’. It is the process of intermixing and cultural changes that produces a creole society. The marriage has been arranged by two families, and Tiger views the ceremony with incomprehension. The formation of creolization is identified through the mingling of two races in the wedding ceremony. Selvon describes the wedding:

> The whole village turned up for it, Negro and Indian alike, for when Indian people got married it was a big thing, plenty food and drink, plenty ceremony. (*A Brighter Sun*, 4)

Tiger didn’t know anything about the wedding until his father told him. He didn’t even know the girl. But he complied with his parents’ wishes. He was just sixteen years old and was not in the habit of attending Indian ceremonies in the village. The wedding was in keeping with the Indian tradition system. The author explains: “after the ceremony friends and relatives would bring gifts until he began to eat... bamboo and coconut branches had been erected five goats and six sheep had been slaughtered” (*A Brighter Sun*, 5). This shows that Indian customs and tradition are mingled with the Caribbean society of ‘New World’.

Selvon suggests that Tiger had a creolized upbringing. Through Tiger, the process of creolization could be understood at a young age. The process of
creolization in the novel is a happy one. For Selvon, it starts at a young age as a “member of an urban middle-class Presbyterian family” (Salick, 18). Tiger is a recognizable Hindu peasant from the Indian area of Trinidad with very traditional and orthodox parents and relatives. In this context, Salick acknowledges:

Selvon would have us believe that Tiger has had a creolized upbringing; but there is nothing to prove this, and much to contradict it. This artistic anomaly springs from Selvon’s pressing need to make art conform to autobiography. (Salick, 18)

_A Brighter Sun_ is an autobiographical novel, miming Selvon’s own process of creolization in Trinidad’s multi-racial society. Selvon looks at the process of creolization through his novel _A Brighter Sun_. In other words, he, “present[s] a cogent illustration of his central theme of creolization, has given Tiger a character at odds with his evidently orthodox upbringing” (Salick, 18). Positively affirming that in Tiger’s parent’s house, he would not have eaten, as did Selvon in his parent’s house in his essay “Three into one Can’t go: East Indian, Trinidadian, West Indian”, Selvon says “creole food, sauce and black pudding on Saturday night, stew beef or chicken and calaloo for Sunday lunch” (Dabydeen, _India in the Caribbean_, 14). Tiger and his family ate meat at all a particular favorite of Indio-Trinidadians, regardless of religious affiliation. In the Caribbean, the creolization process occurs not only in society but also in food and religious practice. Selvon grew up in Trinidad’s multiracial society and considers himself a creolized West Indian. He comments on his own life and ancestry along with his standpoint in relation to creolization:

My father was from India and my mother was herself half-Scottish by her father. They lived on a cocoa plantation where her father was an overseer. My father was a dry goods merchant. 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. Also my education helped; at school, the only thing I really liked was literature; it was a medium in which I could express myself. This is maybe why I developed as a writer. But my readings in English literature brought me very much under the influence of the British tradition (Nasta, 1988: 70-71).
Tiger’s narrative begins at the beginning with his birth, childhood, and upbringing in Chaguanas which is “a sugar-cane district halfway down the western coast of the island” (A Brighter Sun, 4). In the postcolonial context, the Caribbean has always been a space of translation as a two-way process, through its difference and cultures. As the word ‘creole’ implies, here translation involves displacement, the carrying over and transformation of the dominant cultures into new identities that take material elements from the cultures of their new location. Both sides of the assimilation and exchanged cultures get creolized, transformed and transitioned, as a result. Robert Young explains:

Caribbean creolization comes close to a foundational idea of postcolonialism. That the one-way process by which translation is customarily conceived can be rethought in terms of cultural interaction and as a space of re-empowerment (Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction, 142).

‘Creolization’ mostly arises through migration and diaspora, when the new middle classes and their cultural and social practices become a mixture. It even involves different meanings, not only a cross time but also in cross cultural contexts. In A Brighter Sun, Selvon shows the process of creolization by cultural interaction through the wedding of two different cultures. Selvon explains: “it was Tiger’s wedding. The whole village turned up for it, Negro and Indian alike… He was not in the habit of attending Indian ceremonies in the village. But he knew a little about weddings” (A Brighter Sun, 5). The process of creolization can be explained with the concepts of acculturation; and inter-culturation is moulded into a ‘new’ sphere carrying both the cultures of ‘traditional’ and ‘new’. In this novel, the African and Asian cultures and people are assimilated in the form of Tiger’s wedding.

In the multi-racial and multi-ethnic Caribbean society, creole represents the African slaves. The African slaves were identified as creoles that they are in liminal state of mind, whether they belong to the ‘old world’ or the ‘new world’. The ‘old world’ represents their past (Africa) and the ‘new world’ stands for the present [Caribbean society]. They are caught ‘in-between’ the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ in this situation and they would like to identify themselves as ‘Creoles’. Joe’s and Tiger’s families came from different places and settled in Barataria in search of fortune. Barataria is like a ‘salad bowl’ and the Caribbean society is considered as ‘societies in
society’. Joe Martin comes from a different society [African] and Tiger comes from a different society [Indian]. But both the families are settled in Barataria and live together as good neighbours.

The Indian-dominated southern city of San Fernando and the cosmopolitan capital, Port of Spain, are widely referred to as “the heartland” (Salick, 17), and was, as Selvon must have known, and as Naipaul asserts in a quasi-autobiographical work, “the heart of the sugar area and the Indian area of Trinidad” (Finding the Centre: Two Narratives, 34). Tiger, therefore, begins his journey from the cane dominated Indian area of Chaguanas and travels north to Barataria, a village situated about four miles East of Port of Spain and “almost as cosmopolitan as the city” (A Brighter Sun, 9). Shortly afterwards, Tiger takes his girl bride, Urmilla, to live in Barataria, a new suburb of Port of Spain. The new place, Barataria, is a multi-racial society. Tiger’s neighbours are the Africans namely- Joe Martin and Rita, who came to live in Port of Spain and the shop keeper Tall Boy, who “settled down in Barataria” (A Brighter Sun, 18). Otto is a Chinese, who came to live in Barataria, looking to the ‘brighter sun’ of the future. The whole society is ‘multi-racial’ and ‘multi-ethnic’ peopled by Indians, Africans and Chinese who create a ‘creole society’ and a ‘creole community’. Tiger is identified as an Indo-Trinidadian peasant, who feels joy on working in the land.

Creolization, cosmopolitanism and globalization lie at the center of discussion of postcolonial Caribbean society. Barataria is situated about four miles off the capital, Port of Spain, and there is settlement in Barataria. Like Tiger and Urmilla, others came to settle in “the city [which is] being overcrowded with service men and jobseekers” (A Brighter Sun, 7). The place Barataria has become a microcosm of the postcolonial Caribbean society where there is a multi-cultural and multi-racial society and “most of them were East Indians” (A Brighter Sun, 9), who came to settle in Barataria. There are also “middle class of families of various nationalities. First man to put up a shop was a Chinese” (A Brighter Sun, 9). The Barataria society is considered a cosmopolitan and Selvon says: “the village was almost as cosmopolitan as the city. Indians and Negroes were in the majority” (A Brighter Sun, 9).

The seeds of the colour-based segregation were planted during slavery when the light-skinned enslaved captives were preferred as domestic servants while the Africans with darker complexions were put into manual field labour. When enslaved Africans were put on the auction block, those of ‘mixed’ ancestry and light-skinned
tones generated the highest bids. Through their contact with white planters, the light-skinned and coloured population were exposed to and, as consequences cultivated what was considered proper speech, dress and decorum. In other words, they were hybridized. The enslaved Africans or creoles who were light-skinned were also the chosen population for sexual unions with masters. The children of these unions were more likely to be allowed to purchase their freedom and land, and have opportunities to obtain an education and better jobs (Brereton, 1979: 152-153). The whole of Barataria society exhibits this hierarchy. In this context, Selvon explains:

Indians and Negroes were in the majority. In the back streets the Indian lived simply, observing their customs and tending their fields. The Negroes were never farmers, and most of them did odd jobs in the village or the city. (A Brighter Sun, 10)

The Caribbean psyche of the broken history is depicted in the novel though “Joe Martin lived under the bulky, grotesque and he never knew his mother and they never knew his father” (A Brighter Sun, 22). In the creole society, the black or the slave was considered an inferior “little black nigger!” (A Brighter Sun, 25)

At the centre of Selvon’s A Brighter Sun is the experience of Indo-Trinidadian and creolization. Creolization is the transformation of traditional cultural patterns (Indian, African and European) as they made historical contact with each other. Selvon’s works explore contradiction in the creolization and hybridization process and point to historical possibilities beyond, Indian, African, European, or Trinidadian. Tiger is a recognizable Indo-Trinidadian peasant, who finds joy in working on the land. Tiger’s emotions are mixed, nebulous and confused with:

sorrow both in his lack and acquisition of knowledge; confusion, regret, and finally acquiescence in his arranged marriage, and inner turmoil in his struggle out of a prescriptive Indian tradition toward acceptance and active participation in a creolized society. (Salick, 17)

Tiger’s neighbours, friends and mentors are the creole couple Joe and Rita. They came from Port of Spain for work in the American naval base. When Urmilla was pregnant, Rita attends to her needs. The creole couple helped Tiger’s family in all the aspects, especially when Urmilla was delivering her girl child, Chandra. Tiger is caught ‘in-between’ dual identity and struggles in a liminal situation, he can represent
himself neither as a Negro nor an Indian. Tiger had negative stereotypical notions like ‘Black/African’ people and ‘Indian’ people. His ‘in-between’ state confuses him regarding his identity. His two identities—being Indian and being Trinidadian—seem to be at odds with each other. As a true creolized citizen of Trinidad, Tiger feels that he has to fight for the rights of the people of the whole country. He tells Joe:

I never grow up as Indian [...] we does live good? Ain’t coolie does live good with nigger? Is only wite man who want to keep we down, and even so it have some good one among them. You know something Joe, they have good and bad [...] “I mean it look to me as if everybody is the same, it have so many different kinds of people in Trinidad boy!” You think I should try to wear dhoti? Or I should dress as everybody else, and not worry about Indian so much, but think of all of we as a whole, living in one country, fighting for we rights? (A Brighter Sun, 195)

Tiger stands for the process of creolization and he is always on the side of equality. He wants every race—Indian, Chinese, English or Creole—to enjoy the same status and rights. His thinking is that of a cosmopolitan:

Why I should look only for Indian friend? What wrong with Joe and Rita? Is true I used to play with Indian Friend in the estate, but than ain’t no reason why I must shut my heart to other people. Ain’t man is a man, don’t mind if he skin not white, on if he hair curl? (A Brighter Sun, 48)

The major themes of A Brighter Sun are quest for knowledge, quest for manhood, self awareness and the process of creolization. This novel provides an understanding of the colonial history and the multi-ethnic society. Tiger is Selvon’s creolized man, who struggles to express the terms with himself regarding the concept of cosmopolitanism and to fight against the barriers of racial prejudice and violence in the society. The novel provides vivid pictures of the 1940s and of Trinidad against this backdrop.

In this novel, multi-racial and multi-ethnic issues showed as a wandering cosmopolitan. The novel roves around and weaves with the narrative beauty. In A Brighter Sun, Selvon makes the Asian and the African meet on a platform of friendship, especially through characters such as Tiger, Joe, and Rita. Selvon emphasizes the globalization of culture. The novel gives a very strong and important
message on how the borders demarcating the nations have begun to demarcate the people as well. Selvon, through Tiger’s character, elaborates on the fact that these lines should hold no meaning and one should search for a land without borders, where there is no discrimination, no hatred, and in which there is place only for peace and harmony. The same notion of cosmopolitanism is propagated in Sanskrit: “SARVEJANAH SUKHION BHAVANTU”\textsuperscript{1} And “VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM”\textsuperscript{2}.

Tiger’s growth to manhood and his creolization are intended to suggest that the Caribbean society is in transition with its citizen severing their connections with their ‘past’ and accepting ‘new’ values and relationships in a ‘new’ environment. The Tigers and the Martins forge a new relationship in Barataria which overarches their racial considerations. Tiger questions his father’s advice to import from the circumscribed Indian world and strongly feels that a man’s worth is in his humanity, not in the colour of his skin or the texture of his hair. Hence, Tiger is opposed to stereotyping like ‘black/white’ or ‘African/Asian’. He wonders:

Why I should only look for Indian friend? What wrong with Joe and Rita?... Ain’t a man is a man, don’t mind if he skin not white, or if he hair curl? (A Brighter Sun, 48)

This liberation from the shackles of tradition and racialism, holds out new hope for the West Indian, and suggests the possibility of the emergence of a ‘new creolized society,’ in which there are no inhibitions, and no barriers based on race and colour. Tiger also establishes some kind of spiritual attachment with the land which he cultivates and earns his living.

\textsuperscript{1} “SARVA SUKHINO BHAVANTU, SARVA JANAH SUKHINO BHAVANTU, LOKAH SAMASTA SUKHINO BHAVANTU” (Sanskrit) poetically translated: May all beings be fulfilled, may all beings be healed and whole, may all beings have their needs met, may all beings be protected from harm, may all beings be at peace, may all beings be free. From the Brhadaaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.14 (also called the Metta Prayer)

\textsuperscript{2} “VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM” (Sanskrit: from "VASUDHA", the earth; "IVA" = is as a; and "KUTUMBAKAM", family) is a Sanskrit phrase that means that the whole world is one single family. The concept originates in the Maha Upanishad (Chapter 6, Verse 72).
Tiger becomes a responsible husband and a farmer, but is upset when his wife delivers a female child contrary to his expectation. Tiger felt that, “it better be boy chile…He [God] better put a boy…I don’t want no girl chile” (A Brighter Sun, 40). He is later reconciled and accepts his wife and the child after a spell of separation. He says: “I not alone. I have a wife and a chile. Don’t mind it not boy chile. I is a man” (44). He thought, “this must be growing up. I must be really coming now” (A Brighter Sun, 49).

Living in Barataria, Tiger becomes more conscious of the outer world and his social extension. Selvon effectively contrasts Tiger’s desired self-expansion to the complacency and unambitious life of his associates and friends in Barataria. Barataria is a microcosm of the Caribbean postcolonial society which represents multi-racial and multi-ethnic Caribbean society. Selvon shows the settlement of different races and cultured people in Barataria. There are Chinese, Jews, Indians, and Africans and Selvon describes their respective activities in the society, such as Indians are labourers and Chinese are business people. Selvon explains:

Majority of Chinese in Trinidad are shopkeepers or launderers. Either one is prosperous business for them. They began to trickle into island in the latter half of the nineteenth century. They scattered all over the colony, in the villages and in the towns, in remote country districts and seaside resorts. (A Brighter Sun, 50)

There is Tall Boy, the Chinese shop-keeper, whose world is limited to keeping his business thriving and his wife bearing children every year. He “moved to Barataria with a pregnant wife and four little boys” (52). Another character is Sookdeo, an old Indian, whose sole ambition in life is to have enough money to buy a steady supply of rum. “[Sookdeo] had come from India to work as an indentured labourer on the white man’s plantations” (A Brighter Sun, 65). He is the first generation indentured labourer who witnessed “Barataria … cultivating cane, spreading down to the swamp” (A Brighter Sun, 65). Boysie is a carefree individual whose only concern is to save enough money to migrate to England or America. Boysie, a handsome Indian, is strong and straight and also popular. He is always dreaming of city life in America and England:
He had his own plot of land and worked hard. Learning all the latest American songs. His mind was always in the city; he didn’t like the slow Indian ways of life he saw around him in the village and lately he had been thinking seriously of going away to America or England and turn over a new leaf. (A Brighter Sun, 78)

Chinese are identified as businessmen, shopkeepers or launderers. Either one is prosperous business for them, or with typical oriental attitude they stick to selling goods or washing clothes in preference to anything else. Selvon explores the history of the Chinese in the Caribbean island in the latter half of the nineteenth century:

Chinese began to trickle into the island in the latter half of the nineteenth century. More who prospered sent for their families and encouraged other to come. They scattered all over the colony in the villages and in the town and in remote country districts and seaside resorts (A Brighter Sun, 50).

This is how the settlement began from Asia in the nineteenth century. Referring to the question of individual identity among different people, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak explains in her essay “Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcolonality and Value”: “Names like ‘Asian’ or ‘African’ (or indeed ‘American’ or ‘British’) have histories that are not anchored in identities but rather secure them…we might be immediate needs for identitarian collectivities” (Mongia, Padmini, Contemporary Postcolonial Theory, 198).

In the Caribbean, the cultural identity is not ‘African’ or ‘Slaves’ or ‘Indian’ or ‘indentured labourers’ although it would be recognized as a geographical description by most people. In the Caribbean context, all different cultural identities like ‘Indian’ ‘African’ and ‘Asian’ are represented as creole. They creolize themselves because they are in no position to identify whether they belong to the ‘old world’ or the ‘new world’. So, they are creolized in the multi-cultural society. Usually, more than others, the Africans identified themselves as creolized because they do not like to be identified as slaves.

The results of hybridization and creolization in praxis may be best observed in the conditions of the different racial and cultural groups within Trinidad. For instance, Indian indentured labourers were kept apart geographically and culturally from the
rest of the confined labour force. This separation produced an atmosphere that perpetuated the negative stereotypes initiated by the white planters. The planter elite rationalized the division of labour by claiming that Africans were poor workers, lazy, irresponsible and light-hearted while East Indians were characterized as hard-working, subservient, obedient and manageable. Later, some East Indians also adopted this view of the enslaved Africans, thereby perpetuating and institutionalizing a clichéd image of the oppressed, although they were a group in a similar situation. East Indians were also stereotyped as tight-fisted, prone to domestic violence, and heathens for not adopting Western ways. Therefore, it might be deduced that, the planter elite, as a means of effectively controlling the labour force, created the division of labour among races (Brereton, 1979: 146-49).

In the novel, the social hierarchy in colonial Trinidad consisted of whites as the plantation owners; Africans and coloured in skilled manual occupations; and East Indians in the agricultural fields. This meant that the subordinate groups could not fully develop their own shared ethnic and cultural standards. Instead, images and stereotypes were superimposed by more powerful “outside” groups. Yet, despite the isolation among the various ethnic groups during the nineteenth century, syncretism and acts of cultural borrowing helped shape the formation of typical Trinidadian culture.

The discourse of stereotypes is one of the most significant concepts in the postcolonial studies. In the process of identity creation, the colonizers consider themselves as superior and the native people as inferior, thereby giving them the identity that they are just “indolent, thoughtless, sexually immoral, unreliable and demented” (Bressler. Literary Criticism, 140: 2007). On the contrary, “the colonizer’s [culture], is civilized, sophisticated, or as postcolonial critics put it, metropolitan” (Tyson, 419: 2006). Therefore, native people are defined as savage, backward and undeveloped. As the colonizer’s technology is highly developed, their culture is highly developed too providing the excuse for ignoring the customs and codes of behaviour of the indigenous inhabitants of the colonized.

Although Africans and East Indians were both labelled as inferior, their subordinate status differed in form. Given that the white people were looked upon as inferior, East Indians were thought to possess their own civilization, as evidenced by their text-based religions and corresponding languages. The Indian population in
Trinidad retained a dominantly Eastern identity. However, their identity seems to have undergone serious changes stemming from the process of colonization. Selvon confesses in an interview:

In fact, the thing with me is that I am so much Westernized, so much Creolized, that it’s the only element that I think I am really strongest in. In some of my books, I’ve had to avoid going into too much description of Indian ritual and custom purely because I don’t know them myself. (Jussawalla, 1992: 112)

Hence, it might be clearly stated that Indian language and cultural identity are largely creolized by the Western values.

On the other hand, Africans were dispossessed of their language, culture, religions and customs. The African population in Trinidad was utterly hybridized and viewed as not possessing to any identity. Starting from the time of slavery, Africans were encouraged or even forced to accept the culture of another people. As racial opposites of ‘white masters,’ they represent the mimic part of the society, as they have willingly or unwillingly suffered the loss of their ancestral culture.

Selvon suggests creolization as a solution to the problem of racism. His novels focus on the creolization process, assimilation of races and cultures, and also the pervasive nature of stereotypes and racism in society. Creolization results in the losing of one’s identity in the process. Tiger and Boysie do not like to be identified as an Indians because they want to be cosmopolitan. Boysie wondered: “[…] why everyone can’t live good together?” (A Brighter Sun, 79). The process of creolization can be seen in religious aspects also. For Tiger, God only means Jesus or ‘Jus’ as he calls him Sookdeo is shocked that Tiger does not know about Bhagwan or Kali. Tiger says:

We must pray to this god and ask him to help, but plenty time we pray, and nothing happen. Plenty people turn into Christian though […] “I never grow up in too much Indian custom. All different kinds of people in Trinidad, you have to mix up with all of them”. (A Brighter Sun, 117)

He has rejected his ethnic Indian community. In his search for an alternative community, Tiger considers not only Port of Spain, where he could see
“representatives of all the races under the sun”, *(A Brighter Sun, 117)* but also the world beyond Trinidad.

*A Brighter Sun* reflects the social, racial and creolization conditions of the time. Tiger’s character moves from ‘Indian’ to ‘citizen’ or ‘creole’ identity. Selvon looks the process of Creolization by thinking that, changing the society through Creolization. Selvon feels that one should accept the process of creolization and through Tiger he resolves the problem of racism. Tiger says, “you don’t start over things in life, he (Tiger) said wisely, “you just have to go on from where you stop. It is not as if you born all over again. Is the same life?” *(A Brighter Sun, 209)*

Racism plays a very important role in the novel, *A Brighter Sun*. The community of Barataria has people from a number of other countries namely, Indian, Creole (Negro), Chinese, British and American. Racism is not just a means of stereotyping other races by Europeans, but basically by any race about the other. The following passage from the novel shows the racial differences in the community in Barataria:

In Trinidad there is a short-cut to identity. All Americans for instance, are known as Joes. East Indians are hailed as “Ram” or “Sing” or some other common name until an association is formed and introduction made… In the same way, all Chinese are “Chins”. *(A Brighter Sun, 50)*

This attitude is still held by many Indo-Trinidadians in all ways of life. It is much articulated in Tiger and Urmila’s relative, Jaggernaut.

The process of creolization for Selvon is not only a process of assimilation but also incorporates different cultures. Even Selvon’s depiction of creolization is much more ambivalent. For instance, when Tiger’s family visited to Barataria appeared as clash between cultures. Tiger’s open 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
Tiger faces his life towards the process of creolization even after his father’s misgiving on his neighbours.

Tiger is discriminated against by a white woman in the shop. Racial discrimination and prejudices come through conversations with the people. The Negro girl behind the counter in the garment shop, who is incidentally, Spanish from her father’s side, asks Tiger, “wait nar. Yuh is ah Russian? Yuh can’t see I am busy doing something” (A Brighter Sun, 91). The feeling that the whites are supreme is reflected in the relationship between Urmilla and Rita. Similarly, the creole girl attends first to the white woman as she is more important than the native ‘coolie’ Tiger. Regarding this racial discrimination, Boysie, Tiger’s friend tells him:

Listen, is one ting yuh have to lean quick, and dat is dat wite people is gold in this country, boy. Was de same thing even I was to work in de grocery. was always wite people first. Black people like we don’t stand ah chance”. “But man, I ain’t black, I is a Indian”. “Don’t mind! As long as yuh ain’t white, dey does call you black, wedder yuh coolie or nigger or Chinee. (A Brighter Sun, 94-95)

The creolization society approaches racial stereotyping and also the possibilities of racial harmony. Between the two extremes, Tiger must build his road of racial tolerance and understanding with the help of his Afro-Trinidadian neighbors, Joe and Rita. Their background and upbringing are quite different from Tiger’s and Urmilla’s and they initially approach the Baboolals through racial stereotyping. Rita’s racial remarks are not offensive contextually to Urmilla because Urmilla recognizes them as candid superficial comments. The relationship between the Martins and the Baboolas, begun, sustained, and cemented by the two women: “becomes an emblem of great resonance, an emblem of the real possibilities of racial harmony if individuals were to shed their fears and prejudices and allow themselves the urgent privilege of knowing respecting, and accepting each other” (Salick, 19). There is racial harmony and good relationship between Tiger’s family and that of Joe Martin in the creole society. Tiger’s journey from Chaguanas to Barataria is a move away from toiling in the large cane-fields of plantation owners to growing vegetables on small privately
leased lots. Salick remarks: “The move reflects Tiger’s need to mature as well as independence, as he makes clear to Urmilla” (Salick, 19). It is also an attempt to escape from the experience of indenture labour, the most ubiquitous existential symbol of the racial history of the Caribbean. Brought as indentured labourers to work in the cane-fields abandoned by the slaves, the Indians, industrious and tradition bound, find themselves caught in a web of historical circumstances which create mixing of cultures and races. A racial tension as deep and widespread as cane arose in time between colonized ethnic groups. To the older generations of Indians, cane meant “survival and hope” (Salick, 20). For the younger Indian, represented by Tiger, cane is at best an ambivalent symbol, and an ever-present reminder of pain and humiliation (Salick, 20). Thus, towards the end of *A Brighter Sun*, Tiger tells his wife of his resolves never to go back to the cane fields (*A Brighter Sun*, 209).

As Tiger strives to widen his horizon and acquire more knowledge, life becomes more complicated and confusing. Overwhelmed by his ignorance and his increasing responsibilities as a man, Tiger becomes nostalgic for the easy, uncomplicated, routine life of the cane fields of Chaguanas. In this context, Salick remarks:

> These frequent excursions into the sheltered of his past, however, offer no solace, for a return will mean accepting defeat, wallowing in perpetual ignorance, and accepting the limitation of the plantation society – a situation which is the basis of all the confusion and embarrassment he is undergoing. (*The Novels of Sam Selvon*, 20)

Tiger’s pre-occupation with his problems alienates him from those close to him – his wife and child. As he grows, Tiger sees illiteracy as yet another hurdle that must be cleared in his path of progress. He envies Sookdeo and little Henry who could read and write. At the end of these questionings and confusion, Tiger, however, finds temporary solace in the land and his crops: “…and when the seeds burst and the shoots peeped at the sun, he felt that at least he could make things grow, if even he didn’t have any knowledge” (*A Brighter Sun*, 82).

The novel leads, “racially intransigent” (Salick, 19) of older generation of Indo-Trinidadians which moves towards creolization in the society. The anti-Indian attitude, on the other hand, is represented to some extent by Joe and Rita, by the
prostitute who demanded too much money (*A Brighter Sun*, 204), by the old “negro” woman with a basket of fish in the taxi (*A Brighter Sun*, 87). And the most obviously by the store clerk, to whom Tiger is expecting to be attended first because he was there first, is a “racial country bookie” (*A Brighter Sun*, 93), and worse, “a stupid coolie” (*A Brighter Sun*, 93). The process of creolization is not free from racist attitude. Salick explains:

The racist clerk, whose servility and prejudices speak volumes for the efficacy of colonial brainwashing, then proceeds gleefully to tell her colleague the joke about the Indian man and the ham. Although her inside joke is funny, she nevertheless depreciates an entire ethnic group’ (*The Novels of Sam Selvon*, 19).

The episode of the doctor is the climax of the novel. Selvon captures the prevailing racism in this episode. One stormy night, when Urmilla is unwell, Tiger goes in search of a doctor. He first approaches an Indian doctor who refused to come to home and treat her by advising Tiger to treat her with ‘pot soda’. Therefore, Tiger goes to a creole doctor who sends Tiger off. When he learns that he is not a regular patient. When he has given up all hope, a British doctor treats Urmilla and saves her life. Tiger shows frustration on the attitude of Indian and creole doctors:

“you call yourself a doctor!” … but I shame of all Trinidad doctor… First, I went to a coolie doctor… He out the light in my face. Then I come by you. You don’t want me to tell you what you do!... a wite doctor from England, who don’t belong to his country. Is he who came to see my wife all you ain’t shame. (*A Brighter Sun*, 187-88)

Here, the creole doctor refused to treat Urmilla because Tiger is an Indian. The Indian doctor is ashamed of his own identity; he is only after money and believes that white patients whom he treats will give him respectability. The following day, Tiger shows his anger on both the doctors for not treating his wife and he tells the people assembled there:

[…] you don’t see how is a shame? You mean, you don’t how wite man must always laugh at me coloured people, because we so stupid? You don’t see why it is that black people can’t get on this country at all. (*A Brighter Sun*, 188-89)
Childhood and school education play a very important role in the novels Lamming and Selvon. School is the basic institution in which younger minds are educated about society. Through education, racial politics was exploited to breed racism in the younger minds. The racism ingrained in the school education by calling their names and identifying people these names. In *A Brighter Sun*, Henry, Rita’s sister’s son, the bully of the school, waylays Tall Boy’s son, Ling, and mocks him. There is a full fledged name calling session in the school that does not exclude any race:

[…] When it was recess- a mid-morning break of ten or fifteen minutes-they gathered around the Chinese [Children] and sang:

“Chinese, Chinese, never die,
Flat nose and Chinky eye!”

But Ling was no coward […] He put his hands to his ears to shout out their voice and he sang:

“Nigger is ah nation,
By full of bodderation,
Meet them by de station,
By stink with perspiration!”

Then he turned to the Indians, “Everybody know ally does use ah bottle water in de W.C.Ha ha!”

“Chinese does eat an dog!”

“Nigger does smell of perspiration!”

“Coolie people does eat with dey hands!”

[…] Whitey cockroach!”

[…] “Black tar – baby!” (*A Brighter Sun*, 55-56)

This is how the stereotype has been created in the Caribbean society. Selvon offers solutions to get rid of the stereotyped notion of race through the process of creolization and acculturation. When people are creolized, they do not shed notions of stereotypes like ‘Chinese,’ ‘Indian,’ or ‘Negro’. That is the reason Tiger looks
favourably on creolization in the Barataria community. When his father does not approve Tiger’s neighbours, the creole/nigger couple, Rita and Joe, Tiger’s Father says:

Is only nigger friend you makeam since you come?” “Plenty Indian liveam dis side. Is true them in good neighbor, but you must look for Indian friend, like you and you wife. Indian must keep together. (A Brighter Sun, 47)

Tiger feels very sad on the above words said by his father, and then he explains: “these people good to us; we is friends. I does get little things from she, and sometimes she does borrow little things from me. They is not bad people” (A Brighter Sun, 47).

The coming of the Americans and the building of the new road mark a climax in Tiger’s growth in self-awareness. Having learnt to read and having grown tired of the land and the routine of daily life, Tiger is poised for the progress and change which the Americans and the road symbolize. The coming of the Americans during the World War II coincides with Tiger’s most agonizing period and brings the struggle raging in the outside world close to being an image of Tiger’s own fractious state. The road becomes for Tiger a symbol of all his aspirations for knowledge, for the outside world, and a link with all the things the stale life in the village has denied him. The road would bring change and involve him in a mighty action. Tiger becomes entranced and enthusiastic which carrying the tripod for the surveyors, and the author wryly comments:

The job of going ahead and feeling out he land gave him a feeling of importance. He knew he was doing something bigger than just manual labour. (A Brighter Sun, 157)

It is ironical to see Tiger ascending the ladder of growth, emulating Americans and trying to improve his language to impress and entertaining his bosses and realizing the fact that everything had been going wrong, though he was making plenty of money. Contrastingly, Selvon presents in this section of the novel, the agricultural work in which Tiger is involved and his close affinity with nature. At the time of war, another significant event in the novel, Tiger becomes aware of the fact that in planning to
work for the Americans, there lies the danger of once again selling his harvest to an ‘unknown power’.

Unconsciously, Tiger has begun to react against the forces that are uprooting him from the soil of his being. In a passage full of the crushing violence of war, Selvon shows Tiger reacting by paradoxically joining the destroying agencies in a fury of mutilation and self-mutilation. The completion of the road work coincides with birth of Tiger’s still-born male child.

Selvon uses the road as an ambivalent symbol in the postcolonial context. The road that opens up to the rural folk and the promise of the city, can also bring about the end of a way of being. In this respect, *A Brighter Sun* is believed to contain a message about the emergence of a new society in the West Indies. Just as the new West Indian must seek change without rooting out the qualities associated with his awareness of the earth’s natural cycles, so the new society must learn to absorb the benefits of urbanization and westernization without succumbing to the headlong pace of that ‘unknown power’. Finishing with the building of the road, Tiger begins to build his new house on the foundations of the old:

He build slowly, on the same site as the hut. He dug four holes, with the hut in the centre and he filled them up with concrete for the posts. That alone took him two months working by himself in silence. Everything was past gone, there was only the house to build now. To watch it grow, like a plant, brick by brick. (*A Brighter Sun*, 201)

In his searching exploration of the developing personality of his peasant character, Selvon manages to convey a parable about the future of a society.

In Tiger, the peasant is restored to his original status of a personality. At the end of the novel, Selvon brings together the war, the road, and the land, to summarize the living experience of the chastened Tiger. Tiger finds himself gazing wistfully still at the stream of traffic on the highway he had helped to built: “Sunlight glared on the asphalt of the highway, waves of heat rose and shimmered, and he walked on the grass at the side for the road was too hot”. (*A Brighter Sun*, 214)

At the end of *A Brighter Sun*, Tiger struggles to articulate his hard-won and still developing sense of what is important, both for himself and his society. When Joe suggests that he return to India, Tiger responds, asking, “What I would go back there
for Joe? I born in this country, Trinidad is may land” (*A Brighter Sun*, 195). He goes on to develop the idea of creolization, of Trinidad as a ‘melting pot’ of all cultures. He confesses:

> It look to me as if everybody is the same. It have so many different kinds of people in Trinidad, boy! You think I should start to wear dhoti? Or I should dress as everybody else, and don't worry about Indian so much, but think of all of we as a whole, living in one country, fighting for we rights? (*A Brighter Sun*, 195)

Joe responds with another rhetorical question, suggesting that Tiger's dilemma is contrived: “Ain't yuh is ah Trinidadian? Ain't yuh is ah Trinidadian? Ain't yuh creolize?” (*A Brighter Sun*, 195). Finally, readers should not be mislead by the talk about rights to be fought for, was adopted from the American civil rights struggle. Selvon makes it clear that he has his own Trinidadian understanding of this struggle. Thus, Tiger, thinking of national unity and the obstacles of communalism, race and creolization, acknowledges: “Is always wite man for wite man, coolie for coolie, nigger for nigger” (*A Brighter Sun*, 196). By referring to the races, Selvon suggests that the problems of Trinidad, the Caribbean, and perhaps much of the Third World, are exclusively due to white colonialism, slavery, World War II, indentured labour, migration and so on. It is the faith in one’s real roots in a particular place that gives *A Brighter Sun* a sense of life as a fiction and a promise more tangible than the historical abstractions and areas of darkness currently being offered to West Indian Society. The racial ethnics and social difference in a hierarchical, racially structured, plural society ensure the creolization process in the cosmopolitan society. The racial and creole composition of the terminus a quo, Chaguanas, and the racial composition of the terminus acceptable, Bartaria, suggests then, “Selvon’s need to establish, if not vindicate, the creolization of his hero” (Salick, 18).

At the end of the novel, Tiger builds a house of his own. He has learnt to write, and sends a short story to the *Trinidad Guardian*. “Now is a good time to plant corn” (*A Brighter Sun*, 215), he muttered, gazing, up at the sky. Yet for all his peasant nostalgia, Tiger, like the Trinidad society he inhabits, it’s now urbanized. The sequel, *Turn Again Tiger* (1958), reverses Tiger’s story. Tiger goes back to work under his father in the country. But, the emancipated Tiger cannot endure the indignity of plantation life. Sugar is still run by the postcolonial system, and the manager is a
white man called Robinson, a Crusoe to Tiger’s Friday. Tiger becomes his houseboy, and expresses his pent up humiliation and desire by making violent love with Robinson’s wife. He works out the natural cycle of the year, and then is ready to return to Barataria with his pregnant wife Urmilla.

**Creole Identity in *Turn Again Tiger***

Selvon’s *Turn Again Tiger* a sequel to *A Brighter Sun*, like Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargassio Sea* follows the same themes like creolization, assimilation, racism and stereotype. The characterization and thematic waves carry the same essence in an extended version. *A Brighter Sun* opens up the avenues for the readers to obtain a deeper glimpse into the psychological consciousness growth of Tiger, the main male protagonist. The novel revolves around Tiger’s human urge and quest for his selfhood, especially his manhood, anchored in the undeniable process of creolization, which Tiger-Urmila couple undergoes in a multi-racial Barataria. All the chief characters such as Tiger, Urmilla, and Tiger’s father Babolal remain the same. Sookedo, Tiger’s friend in *A Brighter Sun*, resembles Soylo in the sequel novel *Turn Again Tiger*. Tiger feels: “it was his [Tiger] old friend Sookedo had come back to life” (*Turn Again Tiger*, 24). In the same way Tall Boy, a Chinese businessman resembles Otta, who “hold out to Tall boy in Barataria and bought a share in a Chinese restaurant in Port of Spain” (*Turn Again Tiger*, 27). The themes like creolization, racism and colonialism of the earlier *A Brighter Sun* are extended in this novel also. Sandra Pought Poquet explains:

*Turn Again Tiger* a sequel to *A Brighter Sun* explores the growing consciousness of Tiger. The novel concerns Tiger’s quest for manhood and with the process of creolization which Tiger and Urmilla, undergo in multi-racial Bartaria away from the influence of their parents. ("Introduction" in *Turn Again Tiger*, vii)

*Turn Again Tiger* represents Selvon’s preoccupation with an expansion of the vision of his first novel. In *Turn Again Tiger*, Selvon subtly questions the kind of vision he presents in *A Brighter Sun*, re-examines his definition of the Caribbean, and his place in the society. Selvon seems to doubt the adequacy of the achievements of the Caribbean in his new society– building a home, acquiring education, and a greater sense of awareness, and becoming an integral part of the new society.
In *Turn Again Tiger*, Selvon refocuses his examination of Tiger’s quest for manhood and growth within the shifting spectrum of creolization. It is through the exploration of Tiger’s return to the canefields of the past, that Selvon undertakes this redefinition of the creole. *Turn Again Tiger* emphasizes on Tiger’s need to reconcile himself with his peasant roots in the cane community as a vital and necessary grounding. The process of creolization is not to lead to a crisis of Tiger’s return to sugarcane estate, this time in Five Rivers, where Babolal, Tiger’s illiterate father, needs Tiger’s help in order to manage an experimental cane project. Tiger’s indecision about his future, coupled with Babolal’s needs, forces Tiger’s return to the cane fields.

The process of creolization is greatly increased in *A Brighter Sun* through Tiger’s and Urmilla’s characters by a newly acquired knowledge and social consciousness part in the postcolonial situation of such a multi-racial society. The more important in the process of creolization is that “a man is a man” (*A Brighter Sun*, 48). In the creole society, every human being of different race, society and culture has equal status and respect. The creole couple, Joe and Rita, prove themselves to be the best of neighbours to the inexperienced Tiger and Urmilla. Tiger wonders:

> Why I should only look for Indian friend? What wrong with Joe and Rita? Is true I use to play with Indian friend in the estate, but that aren’t no reason why I must shut my heart to other people. Aren’t a man is a man don’t mind if he skin white, or if he hair curl? (*A Brighter Sun*, 48)

The term ‘creolization’ differs from V.S. Naipaul’s concept to Selvon’s concept. Naipaul’s novels *A House for Mr. Biswas* and *The Mimic Men* show creolization as an inevitable process that “further spiritual and psychical exile of the Indian in the Caribbean, in Selvon, creolization has positive value and the greater possibilities for personal fulfillment and advancement that are a part of the creolization community” (“Introduction”: *A Brighter Sun*, xiii). Tiger’s creolization and the process of self education have increased the distance between him and his own roots in Chaguanas. The process of creolization has removed Tiger from the traditions of his Indian peasant community, and he finds more difficulty in identifying his future directions. He grows in the middle of a multi-racial society and in the midst of lure of emigration. He even prospects for further education for his better life and
also aspires to be a politician so as to work not just for Indians but for the whole [Creole] community. Selvon continues his examination of Tiger’s quest for manhood and creolization process within the shifting spectrum of creolization society in the novel *Turn Again Tiger*.

Structurally and thematically, *Turn Again Tiger* frames Tiger’s experience in rural Five Rivers from the multi-racial suburban Barataria. In the first chapter, Tiger and Urmilla bid goodbye to friends and show that they have achieved independence in Barataria, and enjoyed the support to their community. In the latter part of *Turn Again Tiger*, both Urmilla and Tiger return on different occasion to Barataria to visit Rita and Joe, who are their surrogate parents, to discuss their problems in Five Rivers. The couple stays in Five Rivers confirms rather than diminishes their attraction to Barataria. At the end of the novel, their return to Barataria becomes certain. Tiger looks forward to assuming new responsibilities as a community leader in the village and Urmilla is just as eager to resume the pattern of her life accordingly.

‘Cane’ plays a very important and dominant role in the postcolonial Caribbean Island. It evokes the image of being sandwiched between different worlds. The fragility of the cane can be associated to the fragility of postcolonial subjects in the Caribbean space, as the ‘cane’ is weak at the same level when it comes to climatic and geographical locations. On the other hand, the cane is epistemic in the postcolonial resistance where people like Tiger standing firm against the broken pieces of their historical process as they are trapped in the quagmire of creolization to redefine themselves. In this context, Selvon says:

Standing on the hill gave him a feeling of power. “He hated the cane”.
Cane had been the destiny of his father and his father’s father. Cane had brought them all from the banks of the Ganges as indentured labourers to toil in the burning sun. (*Turn Again Tiger*, 1)

The meaning of ‘cane’ in personal and historical terms is fashioned most intensely in Selvon’s characterization and development of Tiger; for he is after all the one with whose fortunes the novel is chiefly concerned. Tiger’s arrival in Five Rivers marks his return to a past that he unsurprisingly rejects, yet, finds himself tied to memory and by his father’s need and dependence. Tiger stands on a hill that overlooks the valley of cane, that is, Five Rivers. The hill or valley motif resounds with the distance and has
evolved between Tiger and his roots. Tiger’s descent into that valley and into the canefields of his past involves a psychic journey into unexplored areas of self-identity and personal history. It echoes Wilson Harris’s explorations of this theme in the *Guiana Quartet* and Derek Walcott’s *Dream on Monkey Mountain* (1967).

Tiger’s experience in this representative estate village is measured chronologically by the actual cane growing season. The cane is newly planted when the novel opens and it ends with the cane harvests, and the promise of a new cycle of growth and fruition. It is against the rhythm of this cycle of growth and harvest as a prelude to new beginnings that Selvon explores the meanings of cane as a controlling value – cultural, social, economic and psychological – in the lives of the Five Rivers community. Selvon pursues these themes at various levels and in relation to a number of characters in the novel. Chief among them is Tiger, but there are also Urmilla, Babolal, Soylo, Otto, and even More Lazy. The individual experiences of these characters complement each other, overlap, and together bear witness to the vicissitudes of cane as a way of life.

The thematic contrasts between Barataria and Five Rivers are realized in more than the supporting personal relationships and the different racial and social compositions of the two communities. For Tiger and Urmilla, their sojourn in Five Rivers is a step back into that past, that is, both their personal history and the Caribbean national history. Their engagement with that past, as it survives in Five Rivers, is the core of the novel. In *Turn Again Tiger*, Five Rivers and its ‘cane’ speak of the economic and political history and Tiger’s struggle to free himself from the psychological and political bondage from the ‘cane’.

There is no school, no running water, no electricity, no public transport, no real representation at Government level in Five Rivers, and the people’s voicelessness is due to their illiteracy. Cane structures the communities’ economic and socio-cultural base. Its influence is pervasive. Five Rivers, unlike Caribbean society, is a ‘new place’ a ‘New World’ and Tiger will “have to organize in this place” (*Turn Again Tiger*, 40). Organizing in a proper order and mixing up with all cultures provide them with creole identity. In this context, Ramroop, a toothless dark Indian says, “why we can’t start up a school right here in Five Rivers […] we must organize in this place, we not living like other people. We living too catch– as catch– can” (*Turn Again Tiger*, 39-40).
The problem of colonialism is shown in Tiger’s vein. He says: “sometime in the future you will be in another country in another form, sweetening an Englishman’s cup of tea is London perhaps” (Turn Again Tiger, 1). ‘Cane’ is the dominating image of colonialism and an inescapable reality in the novel. For the people of Five Rivers, ‘cane’ defines their relationship to Five Rivers and the quality of life there. The poverty of the cane workers is reflected in the under-development of their village. Cane represents the image of poverty and of the poor living of indentured labourers or workers. It reflects the underdeveloped condition of the village where there is “no school, no running water, no electricity, no public transport and no government” (Turn Again Tiger, 39) and also highlights the poor economic condition of the villagers, the workers and the socio-cultural status of the indentured labourers of the island. Tiger feels that, “Cane swept through the valley, displacing vegetable crops and a grape fruit field which was doing well” (Turn Again Tiger, 23).

The novel depicts Tiger’s outrage regarding colonialism and the system of indentured labour. He extends his argument when he says that “that’s the hell of a thing a man build a house to live in and leave the house and gone somewhere else to live?” (Turn Again Tiger, 40). He shows his frustration against the white people’s attitude towards other colored people, and also on plantation system maintained by the white overseer. Tiger urges:

… working for the bosses, day after day. The white man was making all the money, and they had all the work to do. Tale after tale, but only variations on a theme. The white overseer screwed the young Indian girls in the cane, and nobody could do anything about it. They were short paid last week, but no one said anything. Everybody grumbled, but they still worked because not to work to starve […] he [Tiger’s father] grew up like the rebelliousness with cane. (Turn Again Tiger, 47)

Turn Again Tiger is also about the process of creolization like A Brighter Sun, but it deals more with the concept of colonization and the theme of White superiority due to which Tiger suffers a lot from the beginning till the end of the novel. Tiger was not happy to live in Five Rivers, and more so under the White supervisor. He always wants to be in Barataria where he finds his own home and freedom. For Tiger, Barataria represents the process of creolization, whereas Five Rivers represents colonialism, indentured labour and White supervisor. So, Tiger always feels happy to
be in Barataria with his good neighbours, Joe and Rita. He says: “I didn’t belong to
Five Rivers. Just let the crop season come and go and back to Barataria to Joe Martin
and Tall Boy and Deen all his true friends there” (*Turn Again Tiger*, 121).

Selvon fashions Five Rivers as a symbol of the traditional sugar estate village
structure, which includes the white supervisor and his white wife, the Chinese
shopkeeper, the Indian Foreman, besides Indian labour and poverty. Otto, the Chinese
shopkeeper, is a necessary part of the economic structure of the village. He shares a
common social status with the cane workers reflecting a brief period of Chinese
indentureship in the island’s history. Otto is identified as a creolizing influence along
with Berta, his creole-Chinese, common-law wife. In Babolal, Selvon evokes the
stereotype of the foreman, anxious to prove himself but becomes nervous imagining
that his people would let him down before the White man.

Tiger’s stay in Five Rivers initiates a period of voluntary indentureship to
cane, which he bitterly resents, and from which he is to be released only when the
cane harvest is complete. Only then will the rhythms of life be fully understood. It is a
step backward which Tiger hopes will eventually lead to two steps forward; a step
which awakens memories of a way of life that Tiger thought he had left behind. These
memories are all of defeated manhood, humiliations endured, exploitation suffered,
his people victimized and abused because of their indentureship to the cane industry
and the hierarchy of the village.

The past endures as a living reality in Five Rivers, and Tiger feels deeply
threatened by its re-emergence. He resolves to establish his independence of both
these childhood memories and his father’s “groveling respect for the white man”
(*Turn Again Tiger*, 49). He tries to blast his threatened ego with self-assurances about
his difference from others who work in cane.

‘Sexuality’ is one of the most powerful weapons to dominate, subjugate and
control the colonized, particularly, the black female ‘self’. The black woman became
a mere object existing for the satisfaction of the white male sexual gratifications.
Critically assessed, the female bodies were nothing but things whereby the power
structures were reinforced. That is, the woman is deemed to be ‘doubly colonized’ –
firstly, colonialism by an external force [sexually/physically] and secondly, by the
system of patriarchy [status/mentally]. It became imperative to silence the women’s
presence during the process of colonization as they were the invisible insignificant objects in the colonial conquest. The black colonized female body was silenced and made to be silent through the sexual power of the white male bodies.

Tiger finds that he is unable to maintain the distance he had gained in the years in Barataria. While Tiger maintains a certain indifference to the white supervisor, his white wife is quite another matter. In the sexually provocative scene by the river, Robinson’s wife reveals to Tiger that he is still tied to the fears and inhibitions of a debilitating respect for a value system that makes the white woman different from any other. Apart from any symbolic or metaphoric value, Doreen is also a threat to the place Urmilla occupies as the only woman in Tiger’s life. That’s the reason for Tiger’s fight:

[… ] it was her whiteness and her nakedness, her golden hair […] it had nothing to do with colour or the generation of servility which was behind him. He had fled because she was a woman, a naked woman and because he was a man. (Turn Again Tiger, 52)

However, as Selvon describes the scene, Tiger’s sensitivity to the statue of her whiteness in the cane community makes an impossible distinction. Doreen remains an image of that wider psychic threat to his manhood, and therefore to his relationship with Urmilla, which has its source in the image of the seductive, desirable, yet untouchable, white woman. The shame Tiger experiences due to his childish flight from Doreen’s nakedness takes on a self-destructive bent. Mr. Robinson’s character is suggestive of an affinity with Robinson Crusoe, the literary archetype of the colonizer, the plantation owner, and slave trader. His wife, Doreen, is the closest the villagers get to the mystique of the white woman as an object of the black man’s fear, hatred, passion and sexual impulses.

Tiger’s inner turmoil manifests itself through his actions and social relationships. He becomes restless, alienates himself from his family, drinks too much, and humiliates himself by undertaking demeaning jobs as a yard boy for the white woman, and literally placing himself at Doreen’s beck and call. Doreen becomes the symbol of his humiliation and the degradation of his people. Tiger goes on to question the usefulness of education when it cannot help him resolve the personal, daily problems he encounters in life. This disillusionment with education
makes Tiger burn all his books and give away his radio to Otto. Tiger symbolically strips himself of the trappings of civilization which are the symbols of his advancement, and this becomes an external manifestation of the crises going on inside him. Tiger goes a further to shame himself by abandoning the ethics of civilized behaviour. He deliberately challenges Singh to a fight and everybody, including Soylo, perceives this negative change in Tiger. Tiger is an ambitious man in his life but, colonialism and indentured labour made him live in Five Rivers to work under the white supervisor, Mr. Robinson. His frustration intermixed when he works under white supervisor. Therefor:

[Tiger] brought out all the books he had, and he sat on the steps with them and crumpled all the pages. He threw them in a heap on the ground in front of the house and set fire to the paper… He says no more books … they only make me miserable. Plato, Aristotle, Shakespeare, the lot. All them fellars dead and gone, and they ain’t help me to solve nothing.

(*Turn Again Tiger*, 111-12)

He lost his hope in education and sets his books on fire the books which he loved a lot. Ironically, he was spending more time in reading books in Barataria. In this context, books represent growth and the process of creolization, whereas cutlass represents indentured labour. He is always longing for creolization which makes for the assimilation of all cultures and races. Tiger says, “I have life … when the crop season finish, back to Barataria for me, where I have my own house and garden” (*Turn Again Tiger*, 114).

The Tiger-Doreen sexual encounter becomes significant when it finally occurs on Doreen’s initiative. It is meant as an act of violence on Tiger’s part. It is violent sex, devoid of tenderness, except for the urgency for self-restoration and freedom. With this sexual act, Tiger has symbolically vanquished the mystique of the white woman, exorcised his inner turmoil, and the degradation of his past. Tiger’s bathing in the river is both a ritual cleansing of his body, and an exorcism of the power of the white woman and his people. It is in part a reversal of the white overseer/ Indian girl relationship that haunts Tiger’s memories of Chaguans. The humiliation Tiger feels because of his previous inability to deal with Doreen’s sexuality purges itself in Tiger’s determination to kill her. Here, Selvon carefully excludes any suggestion of tenderness or romantic involvement that might balance their encounter as the working
out of a deep psychic hurt. In the violence and exhaustion of their mutual passion, Tiger succeeds in killing that part of himself which remained vulnerable to the mystique of the white woman, and with it one of the legacies of a colonial past that the hierarchical structure of the sugarcane estate sustains. Having emerged victorious in his crisis, Tiger achieves tranquility and returns to his hitherto neglected responsibilities to his family and village. In the scene, Doreen leaves after the sexual encounter and Tiger holds his ground unlike the first encounter. With his characteristic sureness of touch, Selvon makes this symbolic moment the most natural sequences in terms of character and situation. After this crisis, Tiger is now truly mature and confident enough to assume the leadership role awaiting him in Barataria.

It is significant that Tiger abandons the book-keeping job preferring to participate fully in the cane harvesting at the end of the novel. He is now reconciled with his past. At the end of *Turn Again Tiger*, Tiger finds that it has been worthwhile taking a step backward, for now he has made two strides forward. At the end of the novel, Tiger significantly declares, “It is almost as if I didn’t take no step backward, and it was forward all the time” (*Turn Again Tiger*, 181).

It is in *Turn Again Tiger* that Selvon expands the vision of growth for the Caribbean man by taking him back to the past of the sugarcane estate with its traumas, complexities and psychological scars. The journey of Tiger in sugarcane field helps reconcile himself with his peasant roots by boldly confronting those destructive forces from which he continually but unsuccessfully attempts to flee. It is when this confrontation has been made that the Caribbean man, like Tiger, will be truly liberated psychologically from the negative aspects of his history. And it is when this psychic wholeness has been attained, that the Caribbean man will be ripe enough to rise above his crippling position as a victim of history, and become a maker of history, as is symbolized by Tiger’s elevation to a prospective leader in the new Barataria community. He is now truly a man not only physically and mentally, but more importantly, psychologically, for it is his psyche, which has suffered from the indignities and complexities arising from indentureship to cane.

In this novel, Selvon’s preoccupation with taking the Caribbean back to past history of indentureship to cane, is serious and is conceived in symbolic terms. Though the story progresses with a definite sense of time and space. Tiger’s experience in Fire Rivers is explored through appropriate suggestive images and
symbols. The relationship forged and characters portrayed are more complex and functional in depicting Selvon’s concerns in the novel. Although Selvon is primarily concerned with Tiger’s growth, he carefully plots the growth of each character showing how their lives intertwine with Tiger’s. The characters are part of the community of Five Rivers, each filling his own vacuum, but this does not diminish their individuality or importance.

Selvon initially casts each character in the stereotypical mould, but deviates from this when convenient. In fact, it is his ability to develop the character as an individual maturing from certain expectations, to a new and unpredictable person, that marks Selvon’s achievement in the characterization process in *Turn Again Tiger*. There is Urmilla, who grows from the frightened, docile, Indian wife and mother, to a mature self-assertive woman who assumes a leadership role in her community. Another character is More Lazy who rises about the stereotype of the indolent day-dreamer, to a man struggling like others, to work legitimately and earn a decent living. Otto grows from the stereotype of the sleepy, indolent, insensitive shopkeeper, to a hard-working man who asserts his manhood. Soylö transforms from the stereotype of the requested old Indian, deceitful of human relationship, to a warm-hearted person who has come to value Tiger’s friendship. Selvon takes us into the past of each character, and shows us how this has influenced his outlook.

Selvon’s artistic achievement in symbolically dramatizing Tiger’s confrontation with his past is a mark of artistic maturity. Urmilla is fertile like the Earth. She represents the image of a fertility goddess as she “was bearing a child perhaps the greatest thing of all” (*Turn Again Tiger*, 181). Her fecundity seems to be an all-embracing symbol which marks both the cycle of growth and harvest, and the growth of the various characters in the novel. It also marks the hope of the ‘New World’ man and his society, now that he has reconciled himself to the past.

*Those Who Eat the Cascadura* (1990) is a peasant novel in which Selvon depicts the picture of postcolonial Trinidad and Tobago. This novel much more resembles the earlier peasant novels *A Brighter Sun* and *Turn Again Tiger*. In these ‘cane’ novels, the characters Tiger, Babolal and Romesh are inconceivable without their participation in the cane experience. But in *Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, the setting is more decorative than functional. The action of the novel takes place in a cocoa estate. Selvon, no doubt, wanted to depict the cane experience but subsequently
replaced the background of cane-fields with a large thriving cocoa estate. Cocoa cultivation is another sector of agricultural form in which Indo-Trinidadian peasants played a key role. The novel speaks about the native Caribbeans, Indian labourers or migrants, African slaves and white colonizers who live in the island. The process of colonialism is responsible for the migration of Indians who worked on the colonizers’ plantations. Women from three different communities and cultures are presented in the novel. *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* is a peasant novel set on the cocoa estate of Sans Souci, near Port-of-Spain, which is owned by a white immigrant, Roger Franklin. The setting of the novel is closely indicative of a creolized space. It has an English owner, an Indian overseer and workers, along with West Indian characters. Here, the plantation and colonialism exhibit a divided community; the white master, the Indians and the Blacks. The relationship between the English owner and multi-racial workers is a harmonious one. The triumph of multi-racial relations is reflected in the Sarojini and Garry Johnson relationship. Belonging to different races does not affect them. The success of the relationship reflects the success of creolization. Here, Sarojini, the gorgeous Indian woman, is the moral centre of the novel. Her actions and thoughts are supposed to be endorsements of creolization. Local myth and exile are also dealt within the novel. Readers can see the same trends in another novel, *The Plains of Caroni*.

*The Plains of Caroni* (1970) is Selvon’s only novel to have been written wholly in Trinidad. This novel deals with the peasant opposition to mechanization. When the new cane harvester arrives, Romesh, fresh from the university, is the only one to welcome it. His companions and family oppose it. His uncle Balgobin, a champion cane-cutter, damages the engine beyond repair with his ‘poya’. Unions and parties side with the people and the press plays the old story of men against machine for all it is worth. The company’s efforts to modernize are checked for a while. As important to Romesh as his social concern, however, is his discovery about himself. Seeta, his overly possessive, ambitions mother involves him with Petra, whose white skin she sees as a token of success. When the police question to Romesh, Seeta discloses that he is Balgobin’s son, not his nephew, a pre-arranged marriage having prevented Balgobin from marrying her. Nearly mobbed as a ‘White Indian,’ Romesh makes a narrow escape, thanks to Petra who seems willing to take his destiny into her hands, and they immigrate to London.
The novel *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* carries traces of both indigenous and uprooted mythologies, beliefs, customs and their remaking and re-evaluation by postcolonialism. The socio-cultural standing of the inhabitants of the Cocoa estate is reflective of their creolized and hybridized identities, and the effects or colonialism on the social make-up of Trinidad. There are a series of instances suggesting what colonialism did to the island, Trinidad. This cocoa estate is owned by a white émigré, Roger Franklin, who had settled in Trinidad for a number of years. The estate is made up of a large number of Indian workers, with Prekas as the overseer. Apart from the Indians, there are two natives of Trinidad- Eloisa the maid, and Manko the foreman. Eloisa has been in the estate and has a motherly affection for both the estate and for Roger. Manko is renowned as an obeah man in the estate and the village.

Samuel Selvon’s short story “Johnson and the Cascadura,” which later became the novel *Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, is associated with superstition. The first version, entitled “Johnson and the Cascadura”, appeared in the *Trinidad Guardian Weekly*. The second version, also called “Johnson and the Cascadura”, appeared in 1957, and was part of Samuel Selvon’s only collection of short stories, *Ways of Sunlight*. In the short story, the love story between the Englishman, Johnson, and a young Indian girl, Urmilla, is framed by this context of superstition which has come about due to an early mention of the supernatural power of food. Johnson does indeed return to Trinidad after he falls ill with a rare blood disease, and Urmilla, who strongly believes in the mysterious power of the legend and of the dish, capable making wanderers return to the island, carefully prepares the Cascadura [fish] for him. In this incident, food is used to validate the indigenous culture and the particularly superstitious nature of the village in which the story is set and to frame the narrative in a supernatural context.

For the first time in his career, Selvon “combines realism and romance … to create a context for the most passionately fulfilling relationship in all his fiction” (Salick, 8). The setting is real but the substance is very romantic. From Sarojini’s beauty to Garry Johnson’s passionate love making in the bushes, to Prekash’s jealousy, and to Johnson saving Sarojini in the storm, the story is it all. Romance, as Salick says in his chapter on the novel, “is what *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* essentially is” (Salick, 65).
Though the novel deals with the theme of romance, liberation, colonialism and plantation, the presence of many races does offer opportunities for examining racial relations and creolization in the community of Sans Souci. The very title of the novel is an example of ‘double creolization’. Initially, one would think that the use of a Trinidadian myth to bring back an English man is in itself a remarkable instance of bringing together elements from across the world. But the actual origins of the myth are the product of colonization and creolization. The myth was first popularised in Alistair Macmillain’s popular poem:

Those who eat the cascadura will, as the legend says,
Wheresoever they may wander, end in Trinidad their days.
And this lovely fragrant island, with its forest hills sublime,
Well might be the smiling Eden pictured in the Book divine.
Cocoa woods with scarlet glory of the stately Immortelles,
Waterfalls and fertile valleys, precipices, fairy dells,
Rills and rivers, green savannahs, fruits and flowers and odours rich,
Waving sugar cane plantations and the wondrous lake of pitch.
(Macmillain, Alistair)

The title of the novel points us to an indigenous myth and denotes a range of superimposed racial relations. The title is based on a native Trinidadian legend according to which anyone eating the Cascadura fish “will end their days in the island no matter where they wander” (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 11) and they are bound to die in Trinidad. The Cascadura is actually a small horny-scaled fish which is plentiful in the rainy season in Trinidad. Selvon notes that:

The cascadura is still alive hours after it is caught. It looks lifeless, and only moves if it is disturbed by touch. The flesh has a coarse texture and the taste of a sardine. In pre-war days it was only eaten by poor people in the country villages. But now it appears on the stalls of the city market and fetches a handsome pride. (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 158)
Later in the novel, it is also disclosed that the superstitions surrounding the fish also are a construct of the process of colonization. Manko states that the superstition surrounding on cascadura was taught at schools to the native population. He defines the issue as “some stupidness about the cascadura. You don’t remember when you was in school it had some stupid poetry we used to learn” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 163). The verses concerning the cascadura reads: “Those who eat the cascadura will, the native legend says, wheresoever they may wander end in Trinidad their days” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 163). Upon the performance on obeah [black magic] and superstition Manko comments:

> It was some stupid Englishman what say that. White man don’t know nothing about obeah. Even the people in Trinidad don’t believe that foolishness. (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 164)

The reality of postcolonialism is reflected in the literature of the region. For writers, the most obvious means of revealing this postcolonial quality is through the use of literary techniques which usually involve “writing back against dominant discourses” (Innes, C.L, 37) and also encouraging the “creation of an indigenous culture” (Innes, C.L, 37). When discursively examined, the words do carry the traits of the colonizer as the native legend is recalled. It is disclosed by Manko that the verses repeated by Sarojini were taught to the population in Western schools. The legend is also defined as a ‘native legend,’ a definition which cannot be recounted by a member of the indigenous population. Thus, it is obvious that culture in Trinidad, including legends and myths, is created by Western hands.

In the novel, there is a scarcity in the number of people of African descent in the plantation and only two ‘Blacks’ are introduced in the novel: Eloisa, Franklin’s black cook, and Manko, his “old handy man” and the others are Indians (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 42). There is a further point of reference for understanding the dimension of colonization, which points to the fact that the indigenous Carib population had been destroyed. Selvon, expressing a historical truth, states through the words of Roger that “there aren’t many Caribs left in the entire Caribbean” and the population is constituted of “Indians who came [to Trinidad] originally after slavery was abolished” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 42).
The love story, with its ‘white’ hero and ‘coloured’ heroine surpasses race and status. After seeing Garry Johnson for the first time, Sarojini begins to harbour hopes regarding him, even wanting to wear her mother’s gold-blue saree which she has in mind to get marry him. But, at one point, she is jolted back into reality and she thinks, “A poor village girl, barefoot in the sun, could’t even speak proper English, never used a knife and fork, running without reason like a panicked chicken” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 61). Initially, the distance seems too much to surmount. But, such doubts are put to rest the very next moment and the novel progresses.

The novel begins depicting Roger Franklin as a good master. This ensures that no one is dissatisfied in his estate. There is a curious relationship between the white master and the coloured servant which is depicted in the novel. Franklin is shown to be a kind and generous master generally concerned about his servants:

He [Roger] had a good relationship with his men. They treated him with respect, and in spite of independence and the cry to fling the white man out of the country, Sans Souci was divorced from the unrest and strikes that were the birth-pangs of a people moving away from subjugation, and he intended to hold out as long as possible. (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 27)

He is well aware of the existing racial complexities in the community and tries to manage them, while at the same time never letting his control as the master:

[…] Roger [desired] his superiority to be maintained, still hated Prekash’s servile attitude: he was always trying to make him feel at ease, to soothe the transition from colony to independent country, but it was a slow job. (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 28)

Eloisa, Franklin’s black cook treats the estate as a home. She serves as a maid and cook at Franklin residence with an immensely happy. During the earlier part of novel, Eloisa’s character is portrayed in a realistic manner:

Although Eloisa had grown up on the Sans Souci estate, she never liked to wander beyond the immediate confines of the compound… Her whole life centered around looking after the house for Mr. Roger, as she called him. Beyond the house and the yard, the world held evil spirits, dissension, confusion, and ever conceivable badness her imagination
could conjure up… Her slavery had become a way of life: … (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 13)

The other inhabitants of the cocoa plantation are Indians. Although, the Indians and the blacks share common characteristics, they are not fully developed as individuals. Instead, they are generally stereotyped as blacks as Selvon indicates in the novel. This is best observed in Sarojini’s behaviour towards Manko: “‘I [Sarojini] not black Manko!’ Sarojini said sharply. ‘I is Indian!’ ‘You still black’” (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 23). The response of the black obeah-man [black magician] corresponds to the fact that colonial discourse always identified any ‘Other’ as ‘black,’ regardless of their racial belonging. Furthermore, a more crucial statement comes through the end of the conversation:

All that don’t make no difference. Black and white will mix until black is white.’ The last three words, he spoke in Trinidad acceptance of them, meaning everything would equate. (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 23)

Obviously, the process of ‘decolonization’ and ‘creolization’ is at work. After colonial rule there is hope for the different races to join under an overarching identity that embraces the whole population of the island. This came to fruition later under the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Africans in Sans Souci are not considered as ‘black’. For instance, while blowing the conch shell, Manko gains white qualities, albeit for a few transient moments as “the black of his [Manko] skin, suffused with pressure and blood, appeared a lighter colour for a few moments” (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 11). The depiction also suggests that Manko is close to acquiring whiteness, and he has internalized white qualities which could turn him to a white person at any instance and also he is creolized. Eloisa is hybridized and also creolized to the point that she believes in Christianity, as she expresses during the storm, and begs for mercy of the Lord. Furthermore, she considers that the place “beyond the house and the yard, the world held evil spirits, dissension, confusion, and every conceivable badness her imagination could conjure up” (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 12). The issue of believing in Christianity is reflective of the fact that the creolized blacks adapted themselves to the machinery of the white culture to the degree of assimilation, losing their identities is the process becoming thereby copies of the white colonizers.
The people of Indian ancestry co-inhabiting with Sans Souci display a broad range of characteristics, as a result of partially preserving their identity, and thus they respond differently to the colonial impulses. The Indian population in Sans Souci maintains a series of linguistic and cultural markers as emblems of their identities. These markers include the words derived from Indian names and Indian clothing such as ‘sarīs’ and ‘dhotis’. The supernatural beings in which they believe include ‘soucouyants’ [a great ball of fire], ‘lagahoos’ [things that can assume any shape], and La diablesse [the devil woman] which are reflective of a Creole English which serves as a mediator between Indian and British cultures. However, it must be noted that the above mentioned supernatural beings, although presented by Manko, receive the largest recognition among Indian people. Hence, in a sense, the non-white culture has a unified sense in developing a common difference compared to the white culture, which is achieved through a sharing of common myths. Likewise, the Creole language exhibits words and grammatical patterns which are carried into Standard English. The newly formed language is a hybrid, belonging neither to English nor to Hindi, as far as linguistics are concerned.

The representatives of the Indian community are embodied both as male and female characters. The eminent male characters are Prekash and Ramdeen. The former is the young overseer of Sans Souci, the latter is Sarojini’s father. It is also disclosed that Ramdeen’s wife Kayshee, had a relationship with Roger and thus, there is a strong possibility that Sarojini might be the offspring of these two [bi-racial sexual affair]. Moreover, a deaf and dumb child named Dummy shall also be counted among the male characters. The major female characters who appear in the forefront are Sarojini and Kamalla. Kamalla is depicted as a light-hearted, lusty sensualist, who subordinates her identity as a person to the service of Franklin’s deviant sexual tastes. Sarojini appears as a rather naïve girl who is also sexually under the control of Garry Johnson.

Prekash is Sans Souci’s overseer and nurtures an obsession for the beautiful Indian woman, Sarojini. Prekash’s flattery and petty-mindedness are emphasized to the point of caricature; he is depicted as an insecure person, and he is contemptuous of blacks. Although he is critical of the white dominance, he acknowledges that “all the things he was learning taught him to behave as the white man, to think like him, to talk like him, to live like him” (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 29). Selvon explores
the mistrust and prejudice between races and the organization of racial hierarchy in Trinidad in the character of Prekash. Prekash is not fully creolized as Selvon himself was, and continually seeks better prospects even if they necessitate overthrowing the white master.

Ramdeen is a drunkard who does not want to get involved in the torrents of life in Sans Souci. At the end of the novel, it is depicted that life becomes bitter for him after his wife dies giving birth to Sarojini. He is merely interested in leading his life in the wilderness and finding the money to obtain rum. Although playing only a minor role, Dummy is an important character in view of his displaying the impact of the postcolonial processes on the society in Trinidad. Dummy is portrayed as a physically challenged child who “can’t talk, can’t hear, and can’t even walk true true backwards like a douen” (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 162). The douens [supernatural element], in Manko’s words are:

children who never been christened, and because of that, they have long hair covering their faces, and their feet turn backward, so when you think from the footprint that they going one way, they really going the opposite. Well, I was really frighten, but they hold my hand and make me start to play with them. They was really trying to lead me far into the forest, so lucky thing my father come to look for me. When the douens see him coming they run away. My father say that douens is children who dead before they could christen. (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 90)

In view of this, it might be inferred that religion as an indispensable part of colonialism has a great influence on the lives of the colonials. It makes them look upon the un-christened people as mere zombies. As a friend of the douens and not even as successful and complete as they are, Dummy’s condition might well be taken to mean that colonialism deprived the indigenous people of their very personal feelings such as hearing, talking or moving properly. As a consequence of the process of postcolonial stereotyping, the productive capacities of the indigenous are silenced by the colonizer through the inevitable process of westernization of local and national voices, where the subaltern’s voice is silenced as it mingles and reproduces the voice of the West.
Sarojini has a defiant sense of ‘Indianness,’ as well as a strong contempt for ‘blacks’. Sarojini finds a companion for herself and reaches personal integrity through union with the visiting Englishman, Garry Johnson. In the meantime, Garry Johnson’s perception of Sarojini is noticeably confusing. He confesses his love for Sarojini, but he is not at all certain of his intention towards her. Sarojini appears as a sort of West Indian fairy with whom Johnson can couple in the bush, while at the same time free himself of all the responsibilities such a relationship would normally entail. Sarojini’s symbolic raping of Johnson is a superfluous reversal of sex roles; but this vicious sexual union brings her neither insight nor any sort of self-awareness. Nor, significantly enough, does it change her dependence on the white male. At the end of the novel, Selvon shows Sarojini as pathetic, living in hope of Johnson’s unlikely return from England. This ending is appropriate: her integrity has always given way to her fantasy of permanent union with a white male. (Barratt, 1993: 281-290)

As a result of her dependence on Garry, Sarojini loses her sanity but is surely reminded of the factual world. She believes in Manko’s obeah on the one hand and on the other accuses him of not using his powers. She blames the superstitious beliefs which she rejects as black values, while she also holds those views until the last moment. She declares:

Is all your fault, Manko! All this business! You and your obeah! You and your donkey-eye and your cascadoo! If you is this great obeahman you suppose to be, you should work some obeah and make people wishes come true, instead of dealing with the devil! (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 181)

However, she is instantly answered by Eloisa, and reminded that the affair with Garry has come to an end:

Now girl, I just give Manko a piece of my mind. Now for your share. What happen done and finish with Mr. Johnson is a big white man what living in England, and he was only here on holiday, and the two of you like one another, and now he gone back to England. Crick crack, monkey break my back, wire bend and the story end. (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 182)
Sarojini has no choice but to accept the situation she is in although she believed and chanted in an instance of psychosis that “them who eat the cascadura got to go dead in Trinidad!” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 164). At the end of the novel, the issue is not resolved because the legend is left open-ended.

Another female character in the novel is Kamalla who is the village whore. However, she does not want to remain as “the courtesan of Sans Souci” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 123). While she has a sexual encounter with Roger Franklin, she is envious of the life of the white people and also Sarojini, who, she thinks, is the new favourite of Roger. Her envy can be observed in her conversation with Sarojini after the hurricane:

> Last night I sleep on the floor in the school, like everybody else. And you allowed to traipse about in the big house like a lady! Is not you should be there, Sarojini. After all I do for Mr. Franklin! (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 168)

In this view, she even pretends to be ‘white’ which is best expressed in her attempt at making a cross while leaving the house after her quarrel with Roger Franklin, although she is an Indian, practicing Indian religions and customs. She also takes active part in Indian chanting and is one of the best native dancers. Hence, it might be assumed that she desires to evolve into a white person leaving behind her hybrid self.

Roger Franklin, the owner of Sans Souci, and Garry Johnson, a friend of Roger Franklin are the two white masters of the plantation from England. Johnson has been visiting Trinidad with an intention of collecting data for his book on the customs and beliefs in Trinidad. Roger Franklin appears as a ‘perfect’ white man, in other words the colonizer, who is depicted as unaffected by the environment around him. Yet, it is later disclosed that even such a faultless white man has a relationship with an Indian woman which he keeps a secret. Detailed information concerning the inner world of Roger is not given. However, one can assume that, he supports the idea that not only the colonized but also the colonizer changes and adapts to the new environment in which he lives and that makes for the ‘assimilation process’. It is a given fact that on the arrival of the colonizer “even the poorest colonizer thought himself to be-and actually was- superior to the colonized” (Memmi, 2003: 8). This
idea gives an exceptional social place to the colonizer which depends clearly on that of the colonized. Memmi states:

if his living standards are high, it is because those of the colonized are low; if he can benefit from plentiful and undemanding labor and servants, it is because the colonized can be exploited at will and are not protected by the laws of the colony; if he can easily obtain administrative positions, it is because they are reserved for him and the colonized are excluded from them; the more freely he breathes, the more the colonized are choked (2003: 52).

However, through colonial interactions, the colonizer became an organic part of the colony losing much of his superiority. In Those Who Eat the Cascadura, Roger Franklin becomes affected by the colonial life through his sexual interactions with Indian women in Sans Souci. While he is depicted as an invader or colonizer at first, he has become, in time, the native.

Garry is in search of an exotic life and his adventures can be taken as symbolic of the process of colonization. Garry is preparing a book concerning the traditions and beliefs of the people overseas and he is collecting data on these. The exotic quality he seeks is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “of or pertaining to, or characteristic of a foreigner, or what is foreign; hence outlandish, barbarous, strange, uncouth” (1991: 549). The exotic becomes a site for projection of perceived Western lack; the experiences that cannot be achieved in the ‘civilized’ world may freely be experienced in the exotic world. In Those Who Eat the Cascadura, Garry wants to remain as an observer, but actively takes part in the lives of the colonized through his affair with Sarojini. He would some day return back to whiteness and the idea came to him as he saw himself “indulging in this confidence with the natives… and with the thought, he realized he had used the word ‘natives’ for the first time” (Those Who Eat the Cascadura, 105). Whateovern he has experienced, he wants to take back home only good memories but not the reality of living in Trinidad. His ideas are expressed in his reflections on Sarojini:

He did not truly want to formulate impressions like these, there would be time enough when he returned. He wanted to remember her as a wild flower in the open, dancing the cocoa, laughing on the beach at
Balandra, lying under the trees with the wind in the leaves and sunlight broken by green foliage. (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 172)

In *Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, Selvon highlights some issues. Regarding the first one Selvon says:

> Like all the Indians of the island, those in Sans Souci were lured by Western influences and Manko injected mystery and spiced rituals with a little excitement lest he became expendable. (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 107)

The Western culture gave and did not give things to the island as can be observed from the sarcastic comments of Kamalla on Sarojini’s clothing. Kamalla thinks that Sarojini is “too cheap to buy she own clothes” as she was “obsessed with humiliating Sarojini.” She comments that “every day she was coming by me to borrow this, and borrow that, as if the white man don’t give she nothing!” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 115) Here the clothes, when taken symbolically to project the culture, create the idea that the relationship with a colonizing force does not provide one with benefits unless the colonized is subservient.

The second issue is the racial prejudices of the inhabitants concerning the ‘Other’. The races other than their own are described as entirely unrelated to their own concept of their ‘self-identity’ and inevitably, superstitious comments are made on the qualities of the ‘Other’. Although linguistically constructed, the decisions about racial grouping might result in the denial of human status to the ‘Other,’ and use of ‘others’ as slave labour (Mills, 1997: 108). The reality of the linguistic construct is observed in Manko’s words which point to a reversal of the process of colonialism and creolization:

> Manko laughed, a rare sound for him. ‘You frighten, eh? I was always longing to get a white man in my power, to get some samples of blood. I hear it’s blue.’ ‘Mine is red, same as yours.’ ‘If you was dying and I was the onlyest man with blood to give you a transfusion?’ (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 103)

The process of making ‘Other’ and its appreciation by the Indian population of Trinidad may be further exemplified with the words of Prekash that “these people from England have some funny ideas when they come here. They think we live like
cannibals in Africa” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 67). The words clearly point to the fact that colonial discourse defines the ‘Other’ as inferior. The colonial discourse is used by the colonized as a means of challenging the practice; yet, it is observed that the colonized, as a shadow of the colonizer, ‘mimics’ even the most derogatory language he uses. The status of the colonized can be explained as ‘mimicry’ of the process of ‘Othering’ where Prekash, as a fully mimic character, is ‘Othering’ the black.

While re-shaping and re-defining the culture of the colonized land, the colonizer also causes some segments of the indigenous data to disappear. As if Garry consciously admitting to the process, Garry points to this loss as he says that he has not “heard one calypso” since he “came to Trinidad.” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 142) Another illustration of the loss of culture surfaces in Prekash’s complaints about Sarojini to her father Ramdeen. It is apparent that Indian customs do not accept a girl “fling[s] herself like that at a white man” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 97). Prekash voices his uneasiness concerning Sarojini’s deeds and justifies his point with reference to Hindu religion. He says that all the black people in the village would “be saying that those coolies only go to the temple to pretend” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 97). But, through Ramdeen’s words it can be understand that Sarojini has lost her ‘Indianness’ and that “she doesn’t even do puja in the temple no more” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 97). Selvon shows the assimilation process of all cultures which leads all the characters to the process of creolization [culturally, psychologically and religiously]. Acknowledging this matter, Prekash’s protest increasingly goes on and he says “East is East, and West is West, and Never the Twain Shall Meet!” (*Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, 98) However, the readers can only take his point sarcastically having recognized the encounters of the colonizers with the colonials.

Selvon’s peasant novels *A Brighter Sun, Turn Again Tiger* and *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* explore the ‘New World’ experience of Trinidad’s Indian Community in a state of transition. The transition in both psychological and cultural, and also social and historical as the community grow away from their beginnings on the sugar plantation and brace itself to confronting an inevitable process of creolization and urbanization. Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953) is also concerned with the change as the feudal structure of the plantation gives way to the pressures of
organized labour and the first stirrings of freedom movement, leading to ‘displacement,’ ‘dispossession’ and ‘alienation’.

V.S. Naipaul and Samuel Selvon have assessed the costs and gains of the ‘creolization’ of the East Indian. Naipaul’s *A House for Mr. Biswas* and Selvon’s *A Brighter Sun, Turn Again Tiger* and *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* explore the concept of ‘creolization’ of the East Indian and on the nature and quality of his adjustment in the colonial society. Indian characters move from enclosed peasant worlds into the wider colonial world, and the movement is in both the novels as an exploration and a growth in awareness and sensibility, though for Naipaul more than for Selvon the possibilities of wholeness, fulfillment and achievement are lessened by the very circumstances of the colonial experience. The concern with transition and social evolution is not only just a concern with progress and growth, but it is also an attempt to capture the very meaning and significance of a West Indian World and the process of creolization.

Many Caribbean writers including Selvon have commented on the ambivalent position of settlers in settler colonies. Selvon’s novels are concerned with settlers displaced their own point of origin and may have difficulties in establishing their identity in the ‘New place,’ the ‘New World,’ and the ‘New society’. In his Tiger novels, the characters retain their sense of difference from the ‘native’ population. The settlers are simultaneously both the colonized and the colonizers. The settlers seek to appropriate icons of the ‘native’ to their own self-representation, this can, is itself, be a form of oppression where such icons have sacred or social significance alienated by their new usages. The settlers become themselves as indigenous in the literary sense, that is, born within the ‘new space’. They begin to forge a distinctive and unique culture that is neither that of the metropolitan culture from which they stem, nor that of the ‘native’ cultures they have displaced in their early colonizing phase.
Works Cited


Internet Resources


