CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION
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Postcolonialism is an important concept in the field of literary criticism today. Postcolonialism is essentially the study of the effects of colonization on colonized nations. The branch of study dealing with Postcolonialism is postcolonial studies. Post-colonial studies can be defined as the critical analysis of the “history, culture, literature and modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France, and other European imperial powers”.

There are multifarious implications attached to the term post-colonialism. In fact, the meaning varies depending on the use or non-use of a hyphen. As Innes C.L puts it in *The Cambridge Introduction to Postcolonial Literatures in English*, (2007) the hyphenated word, Post-colonialism, refers ‘specifically to the period after a country, state or people cease to be governed by a colonial power such as Britain or France, and take administrative power into their own hands’. India, in that sense, became ‘post-colonial’ after August 15, 1947.

This is a simplistic definition that does not take into account cultural factors. Therefore, the non-hyphenated Postcolonial studies, that is spread over fields like literature, cultural studies and anthropology, refers to ‘the consequences
of colonialism from the time the area was first colonised. This approach examines the interactions between the cultures of the colonizer and the colonized.

One objection towards a generalized use of the term Postcolonialism is that it does not recognize the obvious differences between colonies. Some critics like John McLeod call for a distinction between predominantly European colonies such as Australia and Canada, and settler colonies such as Jamaica and Kenya, where historically a small group of Europeans dominated a majority of Africans, and where people of native descent took over after the establishment of political independence. Similarly, there are differences between nations that were historically settler colonies and colonies that had central control in the mother country and were governed through the agency of civil servants to ensure law and order. Postcolonialism seeks to question and rephrase existing Euro-centric notions about culture. It should also seek to question and modify its own boundaries and not be confined to a limited definition. As Stuart Hall remarks:

Those deploying the concept must attend ... carefully to its discriminations and specificities and/or establish more clearly at what level of abstraction the term is operating and how this avoids a spurious “universalisation” [...] not all societies are “postcolonial” in the same way. But this does not mean they are not “post-colonial” in any way.
Slemon, 1995: speaks of the heterogeneous meanings attached to the term Postcolonialism:

It has been used as a way of ordering a critique of totalizing forms of Western historicism; as a portmanteau term for a retooled notion of ‘class’, as a subset of both postmodernism and post-structuralism (and conversely, as the condition from which those two structures of cultural logic and cultural critique themselves are seen to emerge); as the name for a condition of nativist longing in post-independent national groupings; as a cultural marker of non-residency for a Third World intellectual cadre; as the inevitable underside of a fractured and ambivalent discourse of colonialist power; as an oppositional form of ‘reading practice’; and-and this was my first encounter with then term—as the name for a category of ‘literary’ activity which sprang from a new and welcome political energy ‘going on within what used to be called ‘Commonwealth’ literary studies.’

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According to Ashcroft, 2004; Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies, Postcolonialism now includes:

[…] the study and analysis of European territorial Conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empire, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects, and most importantly perhaps, the differing responses to such incursions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre and post-independence nations and communities.  

Postcolonialism is inclusive of and aids in the fields of Commonwealth Literary Studies, Black Studies and Third World Studies. Postcolonialism literary criticism is a term inclusive of literatures written by writers from colonizer countries as well as those from the colonies. As Abrams says, postcolonial studies sometimes encompass:

“aspects of British literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, viewed through a perspective that reveals the extent to which the social and economic life represented in the literature was tacitly underwritten by colonial exploitation”.
Any work that deals with the postcolonial subject is a topic fit enough for postcolonial literary studies. For instance, William Shakespeare’s play, *The Tempest* is now often studied in a postcolonial angle, with focus being on Caliban, the colonized subject. Four prominent names emerge among the pioneers of postcolonial theory. They are, Fanon, 1968: (1925-1961), Edward Said (1935-2003), Homi Bhabha (b.1949) and Gayatri Chakravarthy Spivak (b. 1942). Born in the French former slave colony of Martinique and of African descent, Fanon’s teacher was the great Martiniquan poet and politician Aime Cesaire (1913-2008). He also had Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist, as a teacher, while studying medicine and medicine and psychiatry in France.

*Black Skin, White Masks*, published in 1952 was a psychological study of racism and its effects. This work discussed the ‘colonial gaze’ – “of being seen, defined and stereotyped by the Europeans whose culture is deemed to be superior and to have greater authority than the cultures of Africa and the Caribbean”. European or ‘white’ culture was deemed to be the norm against which other cultures were dismissed as abnormal and exotic. Fanon writes:

*There is a fact: White men consider themselves superior to black men. There is another fact: Black men want to prove to white men at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect.*

*How do we extricate ourselves?*
This work is a psychological study of the effects of colonialism on the colonized people and methods to deal with them. Fanon argues that the colonized people internalize the racial stereotypes about themselves. They also try to prove themselves worthy: but only on the terms set by the ‘white’ man. Another famous work of his is *The Wretched of the Earth* (French, 1961 and English, 1965), a collection of essays. Here, he speaks of the Europeans who demark everything civilized and good to be in European culture compared to the barbarous and uncivilized colonized culture. The impression given is that the natives cannot do without the colonizers, who usher in “[…] civilization and progress, and thus history […]” to the colonized nations. Fanon suggested violence as a means of uprooting the colonial governments and regaining dignity yet again.

Fanon mentions certain ‘stages’ by which native intellectuals respond and resist to colonization. In the first stage, the natives internalize European views of themselves and their culture. In this stage, they also mimic the white man. In the second stage, they realize that they are discriminated against despite their equal intelligence and often, equal education. They then protest against this, in the terms of Euro-centric values like equality and justice. The third stage is when the natives seek to validate their own culture and civilization by reviving a forgotten history and celebrating past glory. However, Fanon also says that writers must have an engagement with the present and make active efforts at intellectual liberation, and not just gaze at the past.
Fanon’s work has been influential for all subsequent postcolonial studies. However, Fanon writes from a specific position, in a French-ruled multiracial Caribbean colony where the language is entirely French, or French patois, and as one of the few ‘black’ intellectuals studying in France. This sometimes sets imitations on the scope of his work.

Another angle to colonisation was presented by Edward Said, the Palestinian-American scholar who looked at portrayals of Asia by the colonizers. In his most influential work Orientalism (1978), Said deals with the ways in which “knowledge is governed and owned by Europeans to reinforce power, and to exclude or dismiss the knowledge which the natives might claim to have”. He says that this new form of epistemological imperialism imposed its power by disseminating in the colonies a Euro-centric discourse that upheld the pre-eminence of everything ‘Occidental’ or Western against the exoticism and inferiority of the ‘Oriental’, or the Eastern colonies.

Drawing on Foucault’s systems of discourses controlled by those in power that define the ‘truths’ by which people live and judge others, Said refers to anthropology, history, linguistic, literary criticism and European literary texts as a network of discourses that posit the ‘Oriental’ as people to be governed, and not as equals capable of self-government. References to the glorious Oriental culture are
made only in the past. i.e. only ruined monuments and dead languages are truly
great in the Orient. Current languages and cultures are supposed to be inferior to
that of European language and culture.

Orientalism is an idea, according to Edward Said. He says:

Without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot
possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by
which European culture was able to manage-and even
produce-the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily,
ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the
post-Enlightenment period [...] European culture gained in
strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient
as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.¹²

_In Culture and Imperialism_ (1993), Said looked at the presence of
the empire in works of literature and spoke about postcolonial writers. Critics of
Said Edward argue that his discussion of Orientalism does not examine particular
texts within their economic and social spheres, and vaguely moves across time and
space.
Postcolonial studies is concerned with the rewriting of history. A related historical movement is subaltern history or Subaltern studies. ‘Subaltern’ refers to “those who are not part of the ruling group” and ‘Subaltern history’ is “the history of those groups-those who are subordinated by the dominant class; which is usually the author and subject of history”.

History, as readers know it, generally deals with the exploits of kings, emperors and prime ministers. Subaltern studies prefers to deal with those exploited by the ruling class mentioned above, i.e. the working class, members of lower caste, and even women. An exponent of Subaltern studies has been Gayatri Chakravorthy Spivak. Born in India, Spivak gained her doctorate in Cornell University and translated Jacques Derrida’s (1930-2004) important work *De La Grammatologie*, thus becoming a prominent academic in the United States of America. Spivak brings together all the theories that aid in understanding Subaltern theory: Marxism, deconstructionist and Feminist Theory and applies it to Bengali, American, British, and French texts. Her significant essays include ‘Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism’ (1985) and ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ (1988).

The name of Homi Bhabha occurs frequently in discussions of postcolonial literary theory and cultural studies, Bhabha came up with the concepts of mimicry and hybridity, drawing on psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud and Lacan.
In opposition to Fanon’s views that mimicry of the white man is undesirable, Bhabha argues that ‘mimicry’ of the colonizer by the colonised subject is actually a subversion of colonial values, as it refuses to acknowledge one of the primary tools for colonisation, i.e. difference. Bhabha, like other postcolonial writers sees the ‘hybridity of the postcolonial cultures as a vantage situation from which writers can express Western as well as native points of view. But Fanon also insists that the recovery of the past is not enough, but cultural nationalism is necessary if one is to restore confidence and create identity.

There are certain recurrent issues that come up for discussion in postcolonial studies. The rejection of the master narrative of Western imperialism where the colonial ‘other’ is relegated and its replacement by a counter-narrative where the colonial cultures fight their way back is an important issue. This is true of all postcolonial literature.

Under the term Post colonialism, regions like Australia, the Caribbean, East African nations like Kenya, Tanzania, India, Pakistan, Ireland, West African nations like Ghana, Nigeria are included. The Caribbean, or the West Indies, is an important area of postcolonial studies. The two names for the region, the Caribbean, and West Indies, are in themselves indications of its colonial legacy; one, given by the colonizer, indicating his notions of the ‘Orient’, and the other, named after an indigenous tribe.
The novelists that are important to this study are those who became known for producing West Indian literature. West Indian literature is defined by literary critics as the literature of the former and current island dependencies of Britain in the Caribbean. As a defined body of work, this literature dates from 1950. Prior to the 1950s, literary critics generally spoke in terms of a small number of works of local literature emanating from Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, or any one island. The British encouraged this cultural isolation of the individual islands by treating each colony independently and discouraging close ties among the colonies. In the 1930s some West Indians began to explore their own culture but with no critique of the British. In fact, their goal was to educate their fellow middle-class islanders who were not aware of the plight of the majority lower-class islanders who were not aware of the plight of the majority lower-class population who inhabited their own islands. C.L.R. James of Trinidad, for example, wrote about the urban poor in the 1930s.

Early works, from 1949 to the mid-1950s, were often anti-British, reflecting anti-colonial feelings and despair at the slow process of independence. It was the generation who migrated to Britain after World War II in large numbers that launched a serious investigation into life in the West Indies. Writers of this period were critical of the British who had ruled them for so many years and encouraged them to believe that they too were British. They came from different
islands but confronted the same problems. Most importantly, they believed they had to establish a new identity in order to move forward from colonial domination to independence. Vic Reid of Jamaica wrote the first of the novels described as West Indian literature, George Lamming of Barbados and V.S. Naipaul, Samuel Selvon of Trinidad were the most famous of the group. Although their early novels differ in style and attitude, they generally take an anti-colonial stance, focusing particularly on the racial and class divisions the British left in their wake. They all seek to identify a history of the majority islanders distinct from that of Britain and to encourage West Indians to view themselves from the perspective of their own accomplishments.

In the late 1950s and the early 1960s, with anti-colonial attitudes still apparent in many novels, the focus shifted to the political development of the islands. In this period novels reflected a growing sense of nationalism, the hopes for regional cooperation, and interest in local culture. By the 1980s the problems of individual islands, many of which developed differently after independence, would take center stage. West Indians would become less apparent as the larger perspective became Caribbean. Caribbean implied a relationship among islands regardless of their imperial and linguistic experience.

The culture of Trinidad and Tobago is a reflection of a creative and vibrant, ethnically mixed and cosmopolitan society (Government of Trinidad and Tobago,
All the different cultures that exist on the island as a legacy of her colonial history keep the cultural area facts of ethnicity and express their ethnic origins either through steelband music, the beat of the tassa drums, the calypsos and chutney songs, the romantic swaying of paranderos at parang time. Such lingo tells the tale of a people instituted through four centuries of colonialism, independence and republic rule.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago state on their official web site that the contribution of the East Indians to national cultural survival is not disregardable. The lighting up for Diwali, the rhythmic swaying of the Holi Dancers at Phagwah, East Indian planting and harvesting songs, all bear open testimony to the rich cultural diversity of a people in a land where as the motto of the government clearly states every creed and race find an equal place, in a land where a blend of Spanish, French, English, African, East Indian, Chinese, Portuguese, Syrian and other minority groups tell the story of togetherness as a people.

A quick glance at the history of the Caribbean would be useful for the study of its literature. The colonial history of the Caribbean starts with Christopher Columbus. Columbus discovered it as a part of the New World in 1492. He called it ‘West Indies’, believing that he had reached the Indies (China, India, Indonesia, Japan, etc). ‘Arawaks’ and ‘Caribs’ were the two tribes residing on the
island. The ‘Arawaks’ were described as a gentle people by Columbus. The ‘Caribs’ were supposedly a cruel race and from ‘Carib’ comes ‘cannibal’. ‘Carib’ is also the origin for ‘Caribbean’.

The Spanish and the Portuguese followed suit, in search of gold. The native population came close to extinction due to genocide, disease, slavery and mass suicide. Slaves from West Africa were brought in to supplant the dwindling native population. The seventeenth century was an important period for the Caribbean as England, France and Netherlands joined the struggle for supremacy, thus starting the process of making the society a Creole society, consisting of various languages and cultures.

The beginning of Sugar plantations was another landmark in Caribbean history, with large number of slaves being imported from Africa. The sugar plantations yielded huge profits through ‘white gold’ (sugar) and ‘black gold’ (slaves)\(^\text{14}\). Therefore it is not surprising that it was only after Caribbean sugar lost its economic importance that anti-slavery movements gained momentum. When slavery was abolished in 1834 in British West Indies with complete emancipation in 1834, cheap indentured labour was imported from China and India, making the society even more Creole.
The most important black rebellion happened in Morant Bay in Jamaica in 1865. This led to unions, paving the way for independence struggles, which would materialize after the World War II. Colonies like Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, Tobago and St. Lucia came together in 1958, under the auspices of the British government to form a West Indies Federation, but it disintegrated when Jamaica and Trinidad and Tabago left it and became independent in 1962. Other colonies like Greneda, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis followed suit. Guyana, though a part of the South American mainland, is historically and culturally a part of the Caribbean.

Jamaica was where the Rastafarian movement originated in the 1930s which believes Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia is the Messiah. The movement rejects western values and calls for black unity and has spread through the Caribbean, even to the diaspora, and through reggae music. Joseph Belgrave describes the carnival:

The men of different bands from Belmont, Caribbean, Tie-Pins and also from other districts, work beautifully decorated costumes made of velvet, whilst some of them wore tweed or flamed trousers, silk shirts and silk-handkerchiefs with pieces of ribbon attached to their trousers and shirts. They marched to the tune of the ‘Calenda’ (a local chant sung in patois), accompanied by the bamboo and bottle with a spoon.15
Caribbean literature is one of the many new English literatures that had its beginnings under colonization and was truly born after the World War II, mainly resulting from the social, political and cultural changes that started in the 1930s and were rampant during the war and the end of the Empire. Similar to other emerging literatures, the development of Caribbean literature was going hand in hand with the national movements; its themes and subject matters were the problems of colonization and independence.

As Bruce King says in the Introduction to *West Indian Literature*, Caribbean literature shares the following characteristics with the developing literatures:

[…] the creation of myths of the past; the use of local scenery; the study of local, especially peasant lives; an emphasis on the community, nation, or race; the treatment of individuals as representative or typical; and the modification of standard English as a literary language by the use of local forms and rhythms of speech.\(^{16}\)

West Indies is set apart by its varied multiracial composition and the lack of visible, evolving continuity between the inhabitants and the culture of their origin.
West Indian Literature often deals with ‘[…] such contrasts as the poor and middle class; history and the present; the desire for and suspicion of education; dispossession and freedom; racial difference and creolisation; metropolitan and regional culture; local pride and embarrassment’.17

Caribbean literature is definitely linked to colonialism and Postcolonialism. As Donnell and Welsh say in The Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature, “the genesis of a Caribbean aesthetic has been traced by many scholars of the tradition to a desire to decolonize and indigenize imaginatively and to claim a voice for a history, a geography and a people which had been dominated by British Victorians-both literally and literally”.18 This is because identity formation is probably more conscious in West Indies than most other postcolonial societies. With the native indigenous population almost extinct, there was no pre colonial culture to turn to the search for a common culture was not an easy one. As Donnell and Welsh say:

The search for a Caribbean aesthetic has been renegotiated and refined in the decades since Independence. In a plural culture there can be no single notion of ‘Carribeaness’, rather there is a growing acceptance of a syncretic (centreless) model of cultural definition which is inclusive and accepts diversity and hybridity as the foundation for both Caribbean aesthetics and cultural identities.19
Although Donnell and Welsh are wary of using critical theory to evaluate Caribbean literature as it would go against the purpose of the literature by encouraging euro-centric domination, they accept that “Post-colonial theory with its foregrounding of cultural difference as a key determinant within evaluation has been enabling to both the analysis and the promotion of Caribbean literature”.

The Caribbean being a land where cultural differences are integrated, creolisation forms an important part in the understanding of Caribbean literature. creolisation is the process of the meeting of two cultures, which results in a product that has the influences of both cultures. creolisation can be defined as ‘the process of intermixing and cultural change that produces a creole society’.

The origins of the literary and cultural concept of creolisation are from the field of linguistics, a ‘creole’ language is a stable language that has originated from a pidgin language that has been nativized, that is, acquired by the second generation. The vocabulary of a creole language consists of cognates from the parent languages, though there are often clear phonetic and semantic shifts.

On the other hand, the grammar often has original features but may differ substantially from those of the parent languages. Most often, the vocabulary comes from the dominant group and the grammar from the subordinate group,
where such stratification exits. For example, Jamaican Creole features largely English words superimposed on West African grammar.

A ‘creole’ in English, is derived from the Portuguese Criolulu (Spanish Criolo) meaning ‘native’, via the French creole, meaning indigenous. The original meaning of a ‘creole’ was that of a ‘white’ man of European descent who was born and raised in a tropical colony. Later, it just came to mean anyone born in West Indies. As the English language and culture was an integral part of West Indian culture, which itself was multifarious, the society itself was creole.

The terms ‘Pidgin’ and ‘Creole’ are sometimes erroneously used interchangeably. A Pidgin language is formed “when an immediate means of communication is needed by at least two communities”. It is acquired by communities in a contact situation consisting of a basic vocabulary and simplified grammar. The characteristic feature of Pidgin is its flexibility and adaptability to a given context. Pidgin is thus “a contact language of two or more communities whose native languages are not mutually intelligible”. This language expresses basic needs in elementary exchange situations like trading.

While Pidgin involves the reduction of linguistic resources, Creolisation involves an expansion of basic structures and vocabulary. Creolisation “[..] is an evolution of Pidgin towards more stabilized forms, and it arises when a second
generation of speakers adopt the Pidgin as their first language. In other words, when Pidgin becomes the mother tongue of a community, a process of creolisation has started. So, while Creolisation involves the acquisition of a first language, Pidginisation is more about second language learning. However, linguists are still debating about whether Pidginisation is necessary for Creolisation.

There are serious objections to classifying Pidgins/Creoles as subsidiary languages of a European language. David De Camp says: “the origin of pidgins and creoles is indeed controversial. […] These are genuine languages in their own right, not just macaronic blends or interlingual corruptions of standard languages”.26

It is part of the colonial ideology to dismiss such Creole languages as ‘impure’, or as just ‘dialects’, as compared to ‘Standard English’, held up as the ultimate way of speaking and writing English. However, it is now accepted that these languages have an identity of their own. Creolisation could be possible almost only in the colonial situation, as Colonisation is the typical ‘contact situation’ where Pidgin, and later, Creole originated. L.Todd in *Pidgins and Creoles* describes the process from pidgin to creole as a very complex one, with four overlapping stages.
the first phase occurs when there is chance and intermittent contact between two populations, such as the case of English people with native people (i.e. in the colonies); in the second phase, local people adopt the newly acquired pidgin English and a process of expansion begins (with the inclusion of direct translation and words from the user’s mother tongue). In the third phase, a continuity of linguistic contact brings about the acquisition of new lexical terms from the prestige language (i.e. English). Then, in the final stage, a process of decreolisation begins, because if the contacts persist—as in the case of the colonial relationship—English gains power in local institutions, such as in administration and education, and, as a consequence, strong pressures towards conformity—i.e. Standard English—are exercised by foreign elites.27

The continuing interest in Pidgin and Creole is due to the trend in linguistics that maintains that languages should be studied on their own, without reference to high prestige languages such as Greek and Latin. Early modern linguists such as De Saussure proved that grammar is not an a priori set of norms, but an a posteriori written record of speakers’ oral linguistic habits.28 This view
was instrumental in the origin of new scientific approaches in even the field of literary criticism.

Creole is also used in regions other than the Caribbean. In Nigeria, Ken Saro-Wiwa used a mixture of linguistic registers, including pidgin, which draws on a variety of indigenous languages in combination with English, and Standard English to write his novel *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English*. (1985) David Mavia created ‘Sheng’, a combination of Swahili and English. But this concept holds greater importance to the West Indies.

Creolisation is similar to other concepts that are used in the postcolonial discourse to indicate an interaction of cultures such as hybridity and syncretism. What sets Creolisation apart is its almost exclusive use in the Caribbean context. This concept is best understood in the context of Caribbean history and societies, as it has a widely multiracial society.

In the Caribbean context, language is an indication of general issues of colonial power and resistance. The sugar and cocoa estates required hard labour, leaving hardly any time or energy for the workers for their subsistence, leave alone preservation of their culture and traditions. Savages were not allowed to speak in their own language; they were whipped and tortured if found guilty of the offence. These measures were part of the efforts to keep order and to quell resistance.
Yet, a survival counterstrategy came into being in the form of the Creole languages. Braithwaite believes that the Caribbean ‘nation language’ (i.e. Creole) is the result of an “underground or suppressed language influencing the English that slaves were forced to speak”. He speaks of a hidden African identity that surfaces and continues in certain words and forms, for instance, ‘nam’ for ‘to eat’ and ‘I and I’ for ‘we’. These African antecedents also come through in the sound of the language and the particular characteristics of voice.

M. Dalphinis, in his *Caribbean and African Languages: Social History, Language Literature and Education*, has proved that “every language is the result of a process of creolisation, that is, of contamination, of successive contacts within linguistic families”. Supposedly superior European idioms take their root in the Indo-European family of languages.

These findings are the result of studies by eminent scholars starting from the brothers Grimm. Contemporary linguistic studies prove that Caribbean Creole, derogatorily called ‘broken English’, is neither a corrupted form of Standard English, nor an inferior layer of a lower culture, as supposed till recently. This prejudice was partly originated and encouraged by Victorian travelers to the Caribbean, such as Anthony Trollope (1815-1882)’s *West Indies and the Spanish*
Main(1859) and Edward Bean Underhill (1813-1901)’ *The West Indies: Their Social and Religious Conditions* (1862).

West Indian writers used its full potential, the subversive resistance of the Creole language. Strategies employed by these writers include: ‘mixing different cultural influences, extensively drawing from the oral/written and Standard/Croole continua, and playing with the blending of several languages’ […]”.

Manipulation of linguistic forms is an important means by which Caribbean writers, for example, proclaim their sense of place (and displacement), and construct a distinct identity in terms of difference to a dominant construction of Englishness. In literary texts, this alternative is often negotiated through a manipulation of, and experimentation with, ‘Standard’ English. The crucial function of language as a medium of power demands that postcolonial writing define itself by seizing the language of the centre and replacing it in a discourse fully adapted to the colonized place.

There is a paradox about Caribbean Creole. P.A. Roberts points this out and says,

[…] On the one hand as a result of the constant presence of English accompanied by more social intercourse, economic betterment and greater educational opportunities for many, the
linguistic spectrum seems to be losing its extreme Creole

Varieties preserve their historical and

Cultural experience and allow

for more genuine expression of

things West Indian”.32

The partial lack of a written language of Creole provides resistance to Western classifications of language. The use of Creole in literary language is loaded with multiple meanings: Firstly, it proves that Creole is not an inadequate language, but, in fact, well suited because of its flexibility. Secondly, it contributes to the formation of personal, communal, and ultimately, national pride.

Creole has been put to not just comic or grotesque use in literature, but also to add realism in narration, to bring out the distinctness of Caribbean society and to decolonize the Caribbean culture through language.

One of the most influential advocates of the use of Creole or Caribbean English rather than Standard English is Edward Kamau Braithwaite. He coined the term ‘nation language’ which he defines as “the kind of English spoken by the people who were brought to the Caribbean, not the official English now, but the language of slaves and labourers, who were brought in by the conquistadors”.33 ‘Nation language’, thus, refers to culturally specific ways of speaking English in
the Caribbean, i.e. distinctively Caribbean aspects in syntax, intonation and pronunciation.

Another concept that is important not just in the context of Caribbean literature but also in the context of world literature, politics and society is Racism. Racism can be described as the belief that the genetic factors constituting race, ethnicity, or nationality are a primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that ethnic differences produce an inherent superiority or inferiority of a particular race. Racism’s effects are called “racial discrimination”. In the case of institutional racism, certain racial groups are denied rights or benefits, or receive preferential treatment. Racial discrimination is about taxonomic differences between different groups of people, although anyone may be discriminated against on an ethnic or cultural basis, independently of their somatic differences. According to the United Nations conventions, the terms racial discrimination and ethnicity discrimination are the same.

The term “racial discrimination” shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life
Racial discrimination amounts to treating people differently through a process of social division into categories not necessarily related to races. UNESCO marks March 21 as the yearly International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, in memory of the events that occurred on March 21, 1960 in Sharpeville, South Africa, where police killed student demonstrators peacefully protesting against the apartheid regime.

Slavery and racism are very inter-connected. Trans-atlantic trade in the Caribbean is an important issue. The transatlantic slave trade witnessed the greatest deportation in history. From the mid 15th century to the end of the 19th century tens of millions of Africans were brutally wrenched from their villages and transported to the plantations and mines of the Americas and West Indies. The impact of this unprecedented movement can still be experienced by the descendants of the slaves, and the continent that was their home.

Although Slavery is a universal phenomenon, institutionalized first by the ancient Greeks and followed universally, the transatlantic trade is unique in history. In a period spanning over four centuries, the transatlantic slave trade developed into a major industry that fuelled the world economy in the 18th century.
No-one really knows how many men, women and children left Africa in the holds of slave ships, but historians agree that it changed the continent’s demography. In the “boom” decade from 1783, with record prices being fetched for slaves, also known as “black gold”, French ports alone dispatched more than 1,100 slave ships to the coasts of Africa.

The racial nature of the triangular slave trade between Africa, Europe and the Americas also sets it apart. The trade was supported by a racist ideology that saw white people as being the most perfectly developed and blacks as being at the bottom of the ladder. This was further enhanced by the French Code Noir (Black Code). This came out as an edict by Louis XIV in March 1685. Its 60-odd articles regulated the way black slaves lived and died in French possessions in the West Indies and Indian Ocean.

Racism is neither universal nor is it the same everywhere it exists. As Stuart Hall (1980) states, racism is always historically specific. There are two broad interpretations of racism and it’s shifting meanings. One is the traditional notion that is related to scientific racism, that is, genetic or biological racism. The second is what is known as the new racism (Barker, 1981), sometimes called cultural racism. Taguieff (1987) and Balibar (1991) in France, and Gilroy (1987;
1993) in Great Britain use this notion to refer to a racism of ethnic absolutism or racism differentials.

Nevertheless, cultural racism is always related to a notion of biological racism to the extent that the culture of groups is naturalized in terms of some notion of inferior versus superior nature. Cultural racism is applicable in relation to poverty, labour market opportunities, and/or marginalization. The problem with the poverty or unemployment of minorities is constructed as a problem of habits or beliefs, that is, a cultural problem, implying cultural inferiority and naturalizing culture. Culture of poverty arguments fit very well with the new cultural racist formation. Puerto Ricans in the United States and West Indians in Great Britain were among the first groups to be racialized along these lines. The way cultural racism is developed in each metropole differs according to the diverse nation formations and colonial experiences. Thus, the nation’s foundational myths are strategic in the determination of the articulation of this new racism.

The Anglo-Saxon and the continental European countries have different meanings when discussing racial discourses. First, the United States was a colonial society with slavery as one of the most important forms of labour. Since its formation, the United States has had a large, subordinated Black population inside its territorial boundaries. Secondly, the United States and Great Britain
were not invaded by the Nazis during the Second World War, unlike France and the Netherlands.

This is a crucial factor which must be addressed in order to understand the differences in the construction of racial discourses after the war. Post-war France and the Netherlands developed an official discourse against biological racism, while Great Britain and the United States did not have a problem with biological racism until much later. In the United States, the shift from biological racism to cultural racism happened during the 1960’s Civil Rights struggles of African-Americans and other racialized minorities such as Native Americans, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans. After the 1964 Civil Rights amendment to the United States Constitution, it became politically difficult to continue articulating a racist discourse based on traditional, logical reductionism.

In Great Britain this form of racist discourse was not problematized until the 1960’s anti-racist struggles of West Indians and South Asians and the subsequent approval of laws against racial discrimination such as the 1968 Race Relations Bill. Discrimination on the basis of biological racist discourses became criminalized. As a result, racist discourses shifted and acquired new forms and meanings. Cultural racism became the dominant discourse about race in France, the Netherlands, Great Britain, and the United States. It is the central racial discourse in today’s global colonial/racial formation.
Thus, Creolisation and Racism are two important concepts to understand Postcolonial literature. Several West Indian writers have dwelt on these significant issues. George Lamming (b.1927), Edward Kamau Braithwaite (b.1930) are few of these writers. Samuel Selvon is also an important Caribbean writer who deals with these themes. The theoretical evaluation and explanation of the terms related to the study, including colonialism, hybridity, creolization, colonial discourse and postcolonialism, exile and identity. As Kenneth Ramchand says:

*The characters and settings of most novels by West Indians in England are drawn from the native islands they remember or imagine; the novels deal, moreover, with issues that are of immediate relevance to the West Indian people. The situation is ironic. Higher labour costs, greater individual spending power, and the existence of a vast network of institutions purchasing automatically have put the price of a novel manufactured in Britain beyond the means of most West Indians.*

It is easy to come across a preoccupation with isolation, exile, alienation and the moral predicament in the works of writers belonging to the ex-colonies too. ‘Black Literature’, as it is known today, is a varied and complex term inclusive of various ethnic and cultural strands. It includes the American Negro Literature, African literature and that of the Caribbean territories. The common dilemma of Black literature has been the loss of history, indigenous folk-
traditions and culture, and the consequent search for one’s roots. It is not surprising that Alex Haley’s Roots, which speaks directly to the Black man and his history became an instant success.

Conversational tone marks the majority of the Caribbean novels too. Commonwealth literature is a literature of e-colonies being the result of various types of migrations and cross-cultural accidents. The very existence and the meanings of the ex-colonial literature are rooted in history and the colonial aftermath. With its multi-dimensional subject of study. Commonwealth literature includes the whole complex fate of man in time, space, history and ecology. It records the process that changed the life and status of the natives, and bought slaves under centuries of domination. It pinpoints the existential reality of inhabiting a multi-cultural, polycentric society, full of question marks. What indeed constitutes the triumph of commonwealth literature is its having enabled continents, cultures and traditions to come together, interact and move towards a new creative vitality. In the hands of the white and non-white writers, it has emerged as a very powerful and promising response to human situation in a world of change, pulls and pressures. The writers and poets have portrayed a world which can no longer be denied.

The West Indian fiction portrays the mood of the distressed and the despair. However what disturbs the West Indian novelists most is the afflicted
psyche of their people. They depict the fear, agony, humanization and consequent psychological complexes and conflicts experienced by their people during and after the colonial era. Psychological problems like inferiority complex, rootlessness, alienation and exile, search for identity and cultural traditions, like creolization have been the dominant themes in their poets and fiction.

The important thing is that colonialism which has shaken the world most violently about two centuries and left an indelible impact on the facets of human life. In fact native social structures and natural lives have been destroyed and family unions have been shattered, cultural and traditional and orthodox values have been dislocated and individual psyche has been affected. Susantha Goonatilake in his sociological study “Crippled Minds: An Exploration into Colonial Culture,” says that “the European expansion of the last five hundred years … resulted in the throwing of a near complete cultural blanket over almost all the world. This cultural blanket, has suppressed local culture, local arts … and has resulted in a virtual genetic wipe out”.35

The slave was not only delimited physically, but was also the quintessence of evil for the white settler. To quote Fanon on the character of colonial exploitation. “Native society is not simply described as a society lacking in values. It is not enough for the colonialist to affirm that those values have disappeared from, or still better, never existed in the colonial world. The native is
declared insensible to ethics, he represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values”.36

Together with this the Western World, and what we now call the Third World, were tied in a strange, uncomfortable knot of the relationships bred on hatred and mistrust. It formed the dubious link between the oppressor and the oppressed. The worst aspect of the colonial oppression was the sabotage of the subject people from within. It was a sort of psychological invasion from within to undermine the faith in their own values and patterns of life. For the colonizer, the native traditions and myths were the very symbol of their poverty of spirit and moral depravity. They were caught in the past political and economic strategy of the European Powers. This ultimately resulted in the loss of their cultural, religions and physical identity, and the virtual surrender to the white value-system. With the gradual movement towards de-colonization in the first-half of the twentieth century, the situation became more complex. The colonial legacy left the former colonies in a state of moral and spiritual inertia. On the one hand, the newly-freed people looked desperately at their homeland, on the other, they had to make imaginative adjustments to exist in the New World with its own ecology and other necessities. In short, they had to reject the historical past in favour of the geographical present.
The writer in this work is someone who had ambitions of being a musician and a philosopher. The philosophical strain does come through in his novels, especially the two with Tiger as the protagonist. The scale of Selvon’s achievement can be gauged by the fact that although these writers had some success in their career, none of them could even come close to the quality and quantity of Selvon’s work.

In 1950, co-incidentally on the same ship as George lamming and others, Selvon left Trinidad for the UK. This West Indian batch that made its way into London and established itself is often known as the *Windrush* generation, after the ship that took them to The United States. Selvon himself illustrates his early years in Trinidad and his reasons for leaving.

The reason why I left is that I was finding myself in a situation where life was beginning to become very complacent and easygoing; this general impression of beach parties and boozing-up parties and driving a car around and going swimming in the blue Caribbean waters, and things like that, is a part of the life in Trinidad. And I felt myself getting into it. Socially, you meet people, and you want to start a serious discussion, and there again, this laughter comes out very clearly. May be the laughter started to jar on
me and I said, what the hell? Why should we laugh at a serious discussion? Let’s rather come to grips with it. I’m too young to fall into a pattern like that. Is this what I want my life to be like? And I said to myself, I think I should get out and live abroad for some time.\(^{37}\)

To Selvon, Lamming, and several others, England was their promised land, and their attempt to be ‘writers’ was not overconfidence, but attempts to escape penury, which is why they left the Caribbean in the first place. Selvon says that national identity, which was not a thing to be proud about in the Caribbean, was present in the U.K. that is, a sense of belonging was shared by the immigrants. It is immigrant experiences like these that are reflected in his immigrant novels that he is remembered by.


“Sam Selvon’s fiction, published between 1950 and the mid-1980s when he left Britain to live in Canada, was a milestone in the history and development of Caribbean and black British literature. Frequently described as the father of ‘black writing’ in Britain, a ‘natural philosopher’ and “alchemist of language’, Selvon was one of a group of now – distinguished writer who arrived in Britain from the Caribbean during the 1950s. Whilst in Britain, Selvon wrote ten novels set both in Trinidad and London, and was a frequent contributor to BBC Radio, author of several radio plays as well as co-author of the screen play for pressure, directed by Horace Ore in 1975”.

The study is justified by a number of cultural processes that reify the post-colonial situation in Trinidad; that is, a difference in the culture, especially the living styles and the thinking of the colonials. A more detailed look at his work will be taken in the next chapters.
REFERENCES


3. Ibid, p.3.

4. Ibid, p.3.


22. Ibid, p.57.


24. Ibid, p.112.

25. Ibid, p.112.


37. Nasta Susheila “Critical Perspectives on Sam Selvon (Washingtons Three Continents Press),” 1988, p.82.