ATILIM UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE MASTER'S PROGRAMME

A POSTCOLONIAL ENCOUNTER WITH MODERNISM: *THE LONELY LONDONERS, MOSES ASCENDING* AND *MOSES MIGRATING*

Master's Thesis

Tuğçe Çar

Ankara 2020

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Supervisor

Prof. Dr. N. Belgin Elbir

Ankara 2020

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis titled "A Postcolonial Encounter with Modernism: *The Lonely Londoners*, *Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating*" and prepared by Tuğçe Çar meets the committee's approval unanimously following the successful defense of the thesis conducted on 21-01-2020.

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Tuğçe ÇAR

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ÖZ

Çar, Tuğçe. Samuel Selvon'un *The Lonely Londoners*, *Moses Ascending* ve *Moses Migrating* Romanlarında Sömürgecilik Sonrası Edebiyat ile Modernizm Akımlarının Buluşması, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2020.

Bu tezin amacı Samuel Selvon'un *The Lonely Londoners*, *Moses Ascending* ve *Moses Migrating* üçlemesinde anlatıcının kullandığı dil üzerinden Modernist edebiyat ve sömürgecilik sonrası (postkolonyal) edebiyata ait ortak unsurların araştırılmasıdır. Bu üç romanda da yazar dil ile bazı deneysel çalışmalar yapmış, sömürgecilik dönemine ait olarak ortaya koymak istediklerini, kullandığı ya da oluşturduğu özel dil ile ifade etmeyi tercih etmiş, böylelikle sömürgecilik sonrası döneme ait bulgularını kendine özgü yöntemlerle ortaya koymak suretiyle eserlerinde Modernizm akımı ile sömürgecilik sonrası dönem arasında bir köprü kurmuştur.

Tezin teori bölümünde, teze konu olan romanların tarihsel bağlamı içerisinde anlaşılmasını sağlamak amacıyla sömürgecilik sonrası döneme ait tarihsel bilgi sunulmuş, postkolonyal kuramların ve postkolonyal edebiyatın kavramsal temelleri üzerinde durulmuş, edebiyatta Modernizm akımının gelişimi ile ilgili bilgi verilerek bu iki akımın hangi yönlerden kesiştiklerine dair bir tartışmaya yer verilmiştir. Analitik bölümlerde, *The Lonely Londoners*, *Moses Ascending* ve *Moses Migrating* romanlarında anlatıcı tarafından kullanılan kendine has dilin, adı geçen edebi akımların ortak yönlerinin ortaya konulması bakımından ne gibi bir önem taşıdığı üzerinde durulmuştur.

Sonuç olarak, Samuel Selvon'un bu üç romanda anlatım dili olarak lehçe kullanmasının, dönemin edebi akımları açısından deneysel ve öncü bir çalışma olduğu, bu durumun gerek postkolonyal gerekse Modernist edebiyat için önemli anlamlar ifade ettiği, Selvon'un dil ve lehçe teması üzerinden hem postkolonyal hem de Modernist edebiyatın ortak konusu olan "yurtsuzluk" ve "yalnızlık" temalarını son derece etkin bir şekilde işlediği anlaşılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Lehçe, Deneysellik, Melezlik, Modernizm, Postkolonyal.

ABSTRACT

Car, Tugce. A Postcolonial Encounter with Modernism: Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners, Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating*, MA Thesis, Ankara, 2020.

This aim of this thesis is to analyze the extent to which certain aspects of postcolonial literatüre in Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners, Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating* converges with elements of Modernism, through an exploration of the dialect employed in the narration of these three novels. In all of them, Selvon opts to experiment with language to the extent that he conveys his postcolonial agenda through this fabricated language, turning his unprecedented linguistic experimentation into a bridge between the postcolonial and Modernist remits.

The theoretical chapter presents a brief account of the historical context of the postcolonial period, the foundation and concepts basic to postcolonial theory. A brief discussion of the relationship between Modernist literature and postcolonial literature has also been provided. In the analytical chapters, the significance of the unique and hybridized register employed by the narrators of *The Lonely Londoners*, *Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating* in relation to the conveyal of the major points of convergence between Modernist and postcolonial liteartures is studied in detail.

It is concluded that Modernism and postcolonialism intersect at two major points: experimentalism and the concept of dislocation, which are expressed in and symbolized by Selvon's employment of a fabricated and hybrid dialect in the narration of his three novels.

Keywords: Dialect, Experimentation, Hybridity, Modernism, Postcolonialism.

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines the affinities between the postcolonial and Modernist elements found in Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*, *Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating* through an exploration of the dialect employed in the narration of these three novels. As an author concerned with the relationship between identity and language, the multilayered works of Samuel Selvon, a Trinidadian *Windrush* generation writer, go beyond the search for an identity through language; they serve multiple purposes to fit his literary agenda, which comprises the major point of inquiry in this study.

Samuel Selvon was born into an Indian-Scottish family in San Fernando, Southern Trinidad in 1923. His father, a dry-goods merchant, was a first generation immigrant from Madras. When his parents could no longer afford his education in Naparima College, he was forced to quit when he was 15 years old. Upon receiving his Senior Cambridge Certificate in 1938 from Naparima College in Trinidad, Samuel Selvon subsequently sought employment as a wireless operator in the Royal Naval Reserve during World War II and it was in those long work hours that he equipped himself for his writing career. He moved to Port of Spain after the war where he worked for the *Trinidad Guardian* as a fiction editor and journalist, which marked the beginning of his literary career. He began publishing short stories some of which were aired in BBC's *Caribbean Voices*, an influential programme for a whole generation of Caribbean writers including George Lamming, Kamau Brathwaite, Derek Walcott, and V. S. Naipaul.

Selvon's international literary career begins as an expatriate in London with the publication of his first novel, *A Brighter Sun* in 1952. His accomplishments are accompanied by a significant number of book prizes, grants, fellowships and special awards. His publications include the novels, *An Island Is A World* in 1955, *The Lonely Londoners* in 1956, *Ways of Sunlight* in 1957, his short story collection, and *Turn Again Tiger* (1958), sequel to his first novel. These early works present the expatriate experience of West Indians both in Trinidad and London, often in an amusing undertone. *I Hear Thunder* and *The Housing Lark* are published in 1962 and 1965 respectively, whereas *The Plains of Caroni*, *Those Who Eat Cassadura* and *Moses*

Ascending, a sequel to *The Lonely Londoners*, emerge in 1970s. The sequel is finally completed in 1983 with the publication of *Moses Migrating* in Canada. Selvon never ceases to write about alineation, migration, quotidian trials of survival until his death in 1994 due to lung disease on a return visit to Trinidad.

Although the general critical perspective regarding Selvon's works centres mostly on his position as a Caribbean, therefore a postcolonial writer, there is a growing need for an appraisal of his work from a contextualized perspective, namely "postwar British fiction in general", as suggested by Looker (19). It is, therefore, crucial that Selvon is read with respect to the predominant literary modes, such as modernism and experimentalism, *as* they relate to Selvon's postcolonial agenda and the novel as a genre.

Within the postcolonial context, the novel shoulders a significant role in establishing a relationship between the novel and the postcolonial issue of national identity. As suggested by Head, since the geographical as well as psychological boundaries of such an identity is one that is difficult to define or locate, the quest for national origins is rendered highly problematic, mainly due to imperialism (154-55). Therefore, the question of identity and national affiliation in the postcolonized era emerge as complex and indeterminate issues, rendering the novel as a rewarding site for the exploration of the hybridized cultural identities as the products of an evolving, multicultural Britain (Head 161). The fictionalized identities of the post-war era, on the other hand, can be portrayed so as to reflect a sense of vulnerability and embattlement. Thus, the quest for a postcolonial identity becomes more of a process than an arrival and integration tantamount to "assimilation" within a host nation that is bewildered in the face of cultural diversity, giving way to "a new kind of imperialism" to borrow Rushdie's words. (Morton 19)

The plurality of the modern novel, on the other hand, its questioning of reality, its quest for finding *new* ways of representation with an interest in aesthetic form were "matters of encounter with new worlds beyond Europe", in which the West had to tackle the necessity of acknowledging "other cultures as alternatives." (Matz 146) Edward Said comments in a similar manner, attributing the "formal dislocations and

displacements in modernist culture" to "a consequence of imperialism" in his *Culture and Imperialism*.

The reverse also holds true, however: the developments of peripheral cultures attest to the role of the modern novel, playing an active part in the colonial progress. Thus, according to Matz, African writers have themselves contributed to the "modernization" of fiction, because the forms of modern fiction is well suited to the needs of colonial writers, who do not find old rules of fiction suitable and sufficient to represent new identities, concerns and subjects. Such efforts result in the emergence the postcolonial novel, the prefix "post" referring to "what happens to the colonized peoples and places after colonization has ended." (148-149)

Thus, the relationship between postcolonial and Modernist fiction is but a close one. As observed by Matz, the modernist novel's talent for mixing languages pave the way for an exploration of the postcolonial concept of *hybridity*. Its reliance on alienation expounds on the state of *exile*; its interest in the means of mimemis revealed in the insight into *mimicry*, and its insistence on the exploration of consciousnes shed light on the alternations of the *double consciousness*, experienced by people torn between the imperial world and the unique decolonized culture. (151)

Equally important to the authorship of the novel is the kind of language to be employed in the process of creating it. Since language is an integral part of national or cultural identity, writers from the first as well as the second generation of immigrant families in Britain are faced with the same problem concerning language: is it appropriate to relate the experience of the "colonized", and perhaps the "agonized", through the language of the colonizer, or is it more fitting to write in the creole and risk not being fully understood and remain local or regional? Before moving onto a survey of the debate on which English to write in, it might be more fitting here to provide a brief description of how this creole or patois has emerged in the Caribbean.

As recounted by Kamau Brathwaite in his essay "Nation Language", after their discovery by Colombus in 1492, the Caribbean islands, stretching out in an arc of two thousand miles into the Atlantic from Florida to South America, were home to the Amerindian culture until it became fragmented by a European intrusion, of mostly

Spanish, French, English and Dutch origin. Then followed another influx of slaves from Ashanti (present day Ghana), Congo and Nigeria. The colonial powers did not favor their use of their native languages and imposed the colonial language on them. As these people were adapting to their environments, so were they to the language they were enveloped by and it is through the interaction between their native language and the language of the colonizer that there emerged a creole, or the "nation language" as coined by Brathwaite, "that is now beginning to surface in" British literature. (Brathwaite 2731)

So where should a writer or a poet wishing to present a vivid account of the immigrant experience stand in the scale, with Joyce, whose Stephen Dedalus will never be at ease with using the familiar and foreign English, or Yeats, tortured by his hatred for and love of using English, or Salman Rushdie, claiming that English is no longer owned by the British (2750) at one end, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who feels that English is alienating in and of itself and one cannot reclaim his true ethnic identity without turning to indigenuous languages, on the other (2737). More recently, Seamus Heaney asserts in his *The Goverment of the Tongue*, that using Standard English is tantamount to commiting "an act of linguistic perjury." (194)

Although language is regarded a controversial ground for the communication of ideas, it still instills a certain sense of belonging in or an affiliation with the culture of the colonizer. In fact, the immigrants from the former colonies, especially West Indies, perceive Britain not just as a land of opportunity but as a kind of home, as a "mother country", whose culture, literature and history are only too familiar through imperialism and its "textbooks". Upon disembarking the *Windrush* in 1948, however, the passengers onboard, with such high hopes of British hospitality, educational or job opportunites, were yet ignorant of the upcoming decades of racial injustice and of those jobs they would be granted that were much below their actual levels of competency; thus, the greatest challenge that these immigrants had to tackle was a sense of frustration posed by their mother land. According to Head, through a confrontation of such a "dislocation", the novel becomes an arena for addressing this culture of denial. (164) So, Louis Bennett's famous lines in "Colonization in Reverse" works in both directions, ranging from the once colonized, now colonizer to colonizer, and still

colonizer. Selvon's fiction evolves out of this experience of disillusionment, as suggested by Head, transforming English literature to encompass a form of migrant postcolonial expression "while encapsulat[ing] that imaginative freedom of the novel". (165)

A significant part of this "freedom" is his use of dialect in the narration of his novel, merging two crucial elements of the postcolonial fictional remit: language and identity. Although preceded by the Jamaican V. S. Reid to a certain extent, Selvon can be considered a pioneer in the use of local dialect with respect to characterization as well as narration in the West Indian novel. Despite Naipaul's greater international reputation, it is Selvon who becomes the first of the two Trinidadian authors to introduce his fellow countrymen and their unique style of oral output to the British readership.

In his introduction to *The Lonely Londoners*, Ramchand characterizes the deployment of the narrator in Selvon's fiction as a part of his literary artefact, acting as an agent in creating a "tightness of structure", glueing the parts of the narrative in a way that it is otherwise impossible to be avoided, along with "a sublety of development" that reveals the theme through linguistic cunning. In the sequels to *The Lonely Londoners*, in *Moses Ascending*, on the other hand, such "subtlety" gives way to deliberation on the part of the author, inasmuch as Selvon not only uses dialect for the narration of his novel but incorporates an archaic form of English into this colloquial style to bring about an unprecedented form of experimentation with language and dialect. In the last novel of the trilogy, *Moses Migrating*, on the other hand, Selvon's employment of dialect in the narration of his novel turns dialect into a site for an inquiry into whether it is ever possible for a decolonized nation to feel at home, be it in his native land or in the land of the colonizer. Although this capacity on the part of the colonized to adapt to and survive in the world of the colonized is regarded as an empowering force, Selvon's ambivalence in this regard is a key note for the appreciation of his Moses novels.

The aim of this study is to explore the dual function of Samuel Selvon's employment of dialect in the narration of his Moses Trilogy, *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), *Moses Ascending* (1975) and *Moses Migrating* (1983) in terms of establishing

a link between the modernist and postcolonial remits as it relates to key postcolonial issues of language and identity. The first chapter is devoted to a contextualization of postcolonialism and Modernism by providing a brief account of postcolonial history, the foundations of postcolonial theory, theoretical framework and those concepts basic to postcolonial studies and finally a survey into the relationship between the postcolonial and Modernist literary modes. The second chapter is devoted to an exploration of the significance of the narrator's dialect in *The Lonely Londoners* as it relates to the survey into the relationship between postcolonialism and Modernism. The third chapter includes an analysis of Moses's search for a sense of identity through the writing of his memoirs and Selvon's experimentation with language to convey Moses's social displacement in the second novel of the trilogy, *Moses Ascending*. The fourth chapter deals with Moses's sense of displacement within his own society and exploration of how this concept is reflected in the experimental linguistic forms employed by Selvon as well as the significance such experimentation bears in terms of postcolonial discourse.

CHAPTER ONE

POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

Britain's loss of the empire, known as decolonization, came about incrementally over half a century, quickened by not only the war's devastation but also by political change brought about by the postwar power shift. When coupled by the former colonies' longing for liberty and independence, dissolution was inevitable.

By the time of the First World War, imperial powers controlled nine-tenths of the total surface of the globe, with Britain governing one-fifths of its surface territory and a quarter of its population (Young 2). Apart from the colonies of Spain and Portugal, which had remained neutral during the war, the apertheid regime of South Africa and the expanded empires of the Soviet Union and the United States, the decolonization of the seven remaing colonial powers of 1945, namely Britain, France, Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Australia and New Zealand, came about relatively rapidly (3).

1.1 The Historical Background

The histrorical backdrop that brought about such a rapid dissolvement of the British Empire, however, did not happen overnight. It came about as a result of a longer period, dating back to late nineteenth century but quickened by the war's devastation, especially due to postwar realignments of geopolitical power. As a result of such systematic damage, Britain lost its political and financial resources to maintain an "empire". The 1956 Suez Canal Crisis was seen as a clear indicator of such a shift in dynamics and in situating Britain in its new position. Britain's attempted invasion of the Suez Canal, nationalized by President Nassar, was marred by the United States, clearly illustrating a diminishing in Britain's imperial reach (Innes 42).

Although not all colonies possessed the urge for independence, some in the Caribbean and Africa were "caught up in the wave of decolonization", reflected in Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's famous speech "winds of change" in a speech in South Africa in 1960. (Innes 42) Expanding over a time period starting with the 1947 Indian Independence Act though the late 1960s, Britain's empire in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Caribbean was dissolved.

The aftermath of such dismantling, however, was complicated: While some were locked up in the desire for freedom and political autonomy, fueled by a sense of ethnic or cultural pride, others responded with more genuine feelings of affiliation to the British Empire. (Innes 42)

In his influential essay, "Nation Language", for example, Kamau Braithwaite eloquently points out to the fact that the educational system in the Caribbean, as in South Africa, was designed in such a way to include the English literary heritage; hence those aspects of the curriculum, "intimate to Great Britain" but not quite reflected in the Caribbean setting were the norm, making snow, something to write or read about instead of the hurricanes that took place every year. (Brathwaite 2731)

As a part of the wartime discourse and strategy, Britain had sustained a political rhetoric, encroached in an egalitarian British Empire, battling globally against tyranny, which was still dominant in the postwar discourse. One of the strategies employed to instigate a progressive imperial solidarity was the formation of the British Commonwealth, a reformulation of Britain's relationships to its former colonies and dominions. (Innes 43)

Although much of the Commonwealth's significance remained symbolic, it contributed to a central development in the post war era in terms of maintaining links between former colonies: emigration, or in the witty and famous lines of the Jamaican poet, Louise Bennett, "colonization in reverse", largely due to the post war immigration policies to make up for the labour shortage. (Innes 44)

According to the 1948 Nationality Act, all Commonwealth subjects were, by definition, British citizens entitled to the right to live and work in the United Kingdom, with their families. Thus, with its 492 passengers, *SS Empire Windrush* set sail on June 21, 1948, pinning an iconic moment in British contemporary history, symbolically referring to a generation of people, known as the *Windrush* generation. Of course, these passengers could not foresee the diffuse forms of racism and discrimination that they would have to struggle with, either institutionalized or informal, especially in employment, housing and social relations (Innes 44). Nobel Prize winner, Wole Soyinka eloquently dramatizes the situation in his well-known poem, "Telephone Conversation", in which the dramatic persona tries to convince the land-lady that parts of his body *are* white.

As early as five years after the influx of immigrants arriving with the *Windrush*, Beresford Craddock MP mentioned in a speech in the Commons that 95 percent of these people were primitive, accounting for their expulsion from hotels due to their lack of sanitary habits. (Childs 193) This was followed by 1958 Nottinghill Riots and Enoch Powell's 1968 "Rivers of Blood" speech, foreshadowing mass rioting if immigration was not halted.

Following the 1948 Nationlity Act, British immigration policies took a different turn, becoming progressively more restrictive. For example, 1962 Immigration brought limitations to employability based on skills. (Innes 44) According to a Gallup poll conducted in 1969, it turned out that 74 per cent of Britons were actually in tune with Powell, resulting in the issue of the 1971 Immigration Act that restricted emigration from former colonies, especially those in the West Indies, Africa and Asia. (Childs 193) In 1981, the British Nationality Act turned its 1948 counterpart upside down by denying full citizenship to those without at least one parent who held British citizenship, thus passing a judgment on debates concerning what it entails to be British and questions of ethnicity, identity and nationality, expressed in Duncan Sandy's words: "The breeding of millions of half-caste children would merely produce a generation of misfits." (Kureishi 11)

1.2 The Foundations of Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial literary studies originate mainly in the creative writings produced in the 1950s and 1960s, a time period coinciding with the transition of several African, South East Asian, and Caribbean states or nations from colonial to postcolonial existence. Such disassembly of nations under British rule coincides with the formation of the British Commonwealth, a structure made up of the former colonies. The study of Commonwealth literatures begins officially with the 1964 Commonwealth Literature Conference held at the University of Leeds, inaugurated by A. Norman Jeffares, followed by the inclusion of similar courses into the curriculum in English departments across Britain. (Boehmer 15) Later the scope of such courses expands to include Australia, Canada, Sri Lanka, India and other African countries, with a major focus on their own writers rather than a comparative or interdisciplinary approach. (17)

The presence and efforts of those writers from former colonies contribute to the study of Commonwealth literature, with writers such as Kamau Brathwaite, V. S.

Naipaul or Wole Soyinka, moving to Britain for their higher education, while other writers, like George Lamming or Samuel Selvon, seek employment or opportunities for publication. The study of such African, Caribbean or Indian writing is reinforced by the children of the families, recruited after World War II to work in factories or sustain the governmental systems, as they pursue their secondary education.

Although most practitioners of Commonwealth literature strove to stay apolitical, mostly dwelling on such literary aspects as form and style in fiction or in the employment of language in poetry, especially in the works of Derek Walcott and Kamau Brathwaite, sometimes within a comparative framework between mainstream British literary works and Commonwealth literature, there remained a tendency to place the Commonwealth literature within a political context, especially in such academic fields as African Studies, Asian Studies or Third World Studies, in an attempt to pay tribute those countries and peoples that were in a disadvantaged position through colonialism.

Whether seen from a political or apolitical vantage point, self-representation is a major issue within the postcolonial remit, in which writers strive to relate their stories of their encounter with colonialism, creating the common psychological and historical ground for their interpretation. Thus, one of the most significant consequences of such an encounter is what the African American writer W. E. B. DuBois calls a "double consciousness", described as the capacity to live within and beyond two worlds, two cultures, perspectives, resulting in the creation of a particular form of postcolonial modernism. (Innes 5)

By means of elaborating on the connection between written discourses and the European domination over the rest of the world, writers and academics, with origins in the Caribbean, Africa, the Indian subcontinent and Palestine but settled in North America or Britain, became prominent figures in the field. The most conspicuous figures whose works they have drawn upon were Theodore Adorno, Helene Cixous, Jacques Derrida, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault, paying particular attention to the emphasis these intellectuals have placed on the power of language and modes of discourse. Thus, four prominent names stand out, shaping and formulating the postcolonial theory, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

Fanon, born in a former French colony in 1925, studied medicine and psychiatry in France, where he was taught by Lacan. He published a psychological analysis of racism and its echo in *Black Skin, White Masks*, in 1952, in which he concludes that cultures and people are valued and judged by the norms set by the European centre, as a result of which everything outside of the norm is considered "abnormal", exotic and/or inferior. *Black Skin, White Masks* is a pyschoanalytical study that ventures to delve into the reasons behind racism and colonialism and effects on the colonized peoples. Through his analysis Fanon arrives at the conclusion that the colonized have accepted their inferior status as opposed to the superiority of the colonizer and this acceptance sometimes resulted in a struggle to prove to the colonized his equality, but according to the the terms and conditions preestablished by the colonizer.

Fanon's later works include *The Wretched of the Earth* (*Les Damnes de la Terre*), published in French in 1961 and in 1965 in English. In this work, Fanon prolongs his psychoanalytical appraisal of the colonized, this time probing into the psychology of the colonizer, who, he argues, feel the need to justify his occupation and rule over the narive's territory, and creates a "Manichean Society": a world in which the "native" stands in diametric opposition to all that is represented by the European society, that is, civilization, law and order, morality, cleanliness, even masculinity, rendering the "native" uncivilized, childlike, devoid of reason, barbaric, even feminine, without roots, history or literature (Boehmer 78). Therefore, it was not considered a "sin" on the part of the colonizer to apply their labour to menial or routine clerical posts, examples of which can be seen in the enslavement of Africans to work in the plantations in the Americas.

Whereas Fanon concentrated on the kind of relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in the African or Caribbean context, Edward Said, a literary and cultural critic, dwelled chiefly on the representations of Asia and the Middle East. In his widely read and debated study *Orientalism* (1978), Said outlines the exclusion or dismissal of knowledge that natives might have a claim but cannot access due to its exoteric nature on the part of the Europeans, used to reinforce power. (21) He drew mostly on Foucault's work, along with his conception of systems of discourses, manipulated or controlled by those in power to define "the reality", the judgement

system that operates in the society. He refers to diverse academic fields, including history, anthropology, linguistics and literary criticism for an understanding of the "discourses" lying at the heart of the way "orientals" are portrayed, especially as a people to be ruled rather than those that possess the ability and sometimes the will to self-govern. Therefore, in Said's conception, Orientalism is not just a geographycially situated phenomenon but a general concept referring to a "style", an eye for domination, restructuring, controlling the Orient. Said's work has received criticism on grounds that he perceived the Orient as a whole, homogenous entity, without paying particular attention to the geographical and historical specificities.

Published fifteen years later, Said responds to some of those in his *Culture and Imperialism* for his exclusion of the responses of native writers to orientalist representations, "orientals" pictured as silenced subjects. He provides analyses of the presence of the empire in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), as well as referring to such native writers as Achebe, Fanon, Salman Rushdie and W. B. Yeats as a part of colonized or postcolonial countries. (23)

While Said concentrated on the significance of the academic study of the Orient, along with its problems, Fanon focused more on how the effects of colonialism on the colonized should be resisted. In his *The Wretched of the Earth*, for example, he argues that the colonized people strive to acknowledge their worth based on those standards set by the Western world, by either mimicry or, as a second stage, by citing their own achievements throughout history, namely the Egyptian pyramids, the academic achievements found in Timbuktu, Mali and Ghana, the Zulu King Chaka, the kingdoms of Benin and Zimbabwe. Fanon believed that such a restorative view of the past could enable the colonized peoples to envision a future devoid of European rule and with further achievements. (Innes 10) However, according to Fanon, such a revival of the past is not sufficient in itself, without a regard for a sense of cultural identity, since it runs the risk of being confined to the realm of the cultural elite. Instead, he advocates a revival of "folk culture", speaking of and *for* the folk, namely peasantry and the rural population, rather than the urban. (Innes 11)

Another historical movement, coinciding with the aforementioned revival, is the rewriting of the story of the Subaltern, known as Subaltern Studies, the study of those who are not a part of the ruling class, therefore the history of the subaltern class

is written by the dominant class, who are also subjectified by their own "writings". The study of subaltern sects has been mostly influential in India, comprising a very important aspect of the work of another prominent postcolonial scholar, Gayatri C. Spivak. Being born in India, she gained prominence after receiving her doctorate from Cornell University and through her translation of Derrida's *De la Grammatologie* (1967), in which she shoulders the difficult task of weaving together Marxist, deconstructionist and feminist theory in her analysis of Bengali, American, French and British texts. In her influential essays, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" and "Can the Subaltern Speak?", she explores the neglected and often distorted world of women.

As a fourth theorist and a critic whose name consistently recurs in the postcolonial remit, Homi Bhabha draws on the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, elaborating on the key concepts of hybridity and mimicry. While Fanon and Said focused their analyses on the opposition between the colonized and the colonizer, Bhabha formulated such discourses in terms of "ambivalences". Bhabha maintains that the "mimicry" of the colonized subjects is to be seen as a form of subjection to authority, a means of subservience, since making an unstable insistence on difference, forming the basis of nationalist ideologies. (25) Bhabha valours "hybridity", like Spivak and Said, viewing their affiliation with the European cultures as a positive drive that enables writers and critics to appraise the West from both within and without.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

The term post-colonial crisscrosses a wide range of academic fields with its roots in such diverse fields as anthropology, political science, history, psychology, sociology and literature. However, since every theoretical framework has its own agenda and a set of certain criteria to prioritize and each views the "world" from its distinctive vista, it is important to establish the fundamental guidelines for assessing and denoting the term post-colonial within the literary context, the most fundamental part being its very name, or title.

It is imperative that a distinction between "post-colonialism" and "postcolonialism" be made: Whereas the hyphenated version indicates a certain time period, an epoch, in the timeline of history, corresponding to the one *after* colonialism or the end of the British rule as an Empire, the dehyphenated term, "postcolonialism" applies to a wide of range of representations, practices and values that trespass the boundaries between imperial, or colonial, rule and national independence. Since this study is not mainly concerned with the expoloration of the epoch after colonialism, the dehyphenated term will be used in reference to the literary works.

Postcolonialism, hence, reflects certain moods and view points, borrowing terms from diverse theoretical and conceptual frameworks but employing each for its own particular purposes. As Said's seminal work, *Culture and Imperialism*, demonstrates, language, literature along with culture each play within the postcolonial context, which cuts across various cultures from Africa to Asia, from Australia to the Middle East, acquiring a different meaning and translated into a different code in each. It is, therefore, necessary to establish the basics of this vastly deployed terminology by those who follow a postcolonial inquiry.

The most fundamental understading behind postcolonial theory is that colonialism, and its direct corollary, imperialism have influenced the world in such a way that transcends the boundaries of the colonized the countries, stretching to cover the rest of the diasporic world. Within this conceptual framework, such terms coined by Gayatri Spivak, the most prominent of which are "othering", "strategic essentialism", "catachresis", "worldling" and "epistemic violence" bear on specific conceptual denotations whereas "mimicry", "hybridity" and "ambivalence" are meant to convey different meanings from their more widely accepted denotations when used

by Homi Bhabha. Even the "Orient" found in Said's title has come to represent various "others", be they women, children, indigenous peoples, or any other oppressed or "disabled" community at large. (Burney 174) The basic concepts essential to postcolonial theory that are to be brought under scrutiny in this study will be presented in alphabetical order.

Although *abrogation* literally refers to "cancellation" or a "repeal", in postcolonial terms, it means the abdication of the Standard, or correct, linguistic forms and accents in favor of the "marginalized" or "peripheral" forms of spoken language. In order to undermine the notion that Standard language, pronunciation and other correct linguistic representations indicate a social hierarchy or superority of class, postcolonial authors use local dialects, Creole, Pidgin or other regional variations in order to *abrogate* the mainstream language for a means of liberation and an expression of cultural identity. Thus, the concept can be applied to the investigation of the relationship between cultural identity and language, cultural differences and social status. (Burney 175)

Whereas *ambivalence* in common discourse refers to a lack of certainty, be it between ideas, states, choices or objects, it also refers to a simultaneous attraction to or a repulsion from a particular thing. (Young x) Bhabha, on the other hand, adapts the term to reflect the complex relationship, based on symbiosis on the part of the colonizer and the colonized, resulting in such binary oppositions as love and hate, or attraction and repulsion (101).

Binary, a prominent word in postcolonial theory, denotes a system of diametric oppositions such as black and white, Orient and Occident, birth and death, man and woman, subduing the grey areas. Contemporary feminist and poststructuralist studies affirm that there is a power struggle between such polarized categories and one dominates the other; hence, man dominates the woman, the advanced surpasses the backward, the primitive. (Burney 180)

Chromatism is adapted by postcolonial theorists to often refer to the power of skin color as a form differentiation, although it is defined by OED as "the science of color". Chromatism implies the fundamental differences between human beings solely based on the color of their skin, or their "shades" rather, offering a caste where the lighter colored has supremacy over the darker shades. This notion is especially

abundant within postcolonial theory in the sense that a lighter skin color indicates a superiority, thus opening new doors and providing new opportunities. (Burney 185)

Colonial Discourse is a postcolonial term coined by Said to depict the systemic policies and forms brought about by colonial domination and illustrations of the Orient. Foucault defines discourse as a system of statements that allow the world to be known. (Ashcroft, Griffths and Tiffin 34) Hence, within colonial discourse, the ground rules of inclusion or exclusion are all based on the colonized group's ability to adapt to the literature, art, history, language, political structure and social conventions of the colonizer, resulting in a clash in the consciousness of the former, since not all presented by the latter befits his understanding of the world at large. (Ashcroft, Griffths and Tiffin 35)

Counter Discourse is a term introduced by Richard Terdiman in his *Discourse/Counter Discourse: The Theory and Practice of Symbolic Resistance in Nineteenth Century France* (15). As used in post-colonial theory, it implies a reaction to the discourse established by the colonizer in an attemp to redo it.

Cultural Difference is a term that needs to be differentiated from cultural diversity, although sometimes they can be used interchangeably. The term "difference" connotes not just term but theoretical or conceptual framework upon which the notion that "sameness" is held inferior to "difference", connoting more than physical difference. Rather, it is an acknowledgement of other cultures' distinguished patterns and is a valid indicator of cultural identity, whereas "cultural diversity" simply implies the variety of cultural attitudes, norms, structures and peoples. According to Bhabha's theorization, such an acknowledgement on the part of systems of diversity implies "aberrant", "backward" or "exotic" behaviour, being a part of a pre-given cultural framework. (113) This notion of difference is often underestimated in multicultural settings, since all forms of human existence are considered the same. The term has come to bear significance within the postcolonial theoretical framework with its symbolic, positive and even "empowering" connotations. (Burney 183)

Essentialism is a debated term wihin postcolonial theory which means that all societies and cultures thereof share typical qualities within them; furthermore, each group possesses certain essential qualities that are distinct from those of other cultures and societies. Essentialism connotes a stereotyping of the Other in literature, media

and other forms of representation. Under these terms, the concept of essentialism is challenged by postcolonial theorists. However, Spivak ingeniously subverts the term essentialism by referring to the concept of "strategic essentialism", suggesting that essentialism may play a key role in liberation and finding or locating a cultural identity once again, helping the colonized retrieve a feeling of pride and identity as in pre-colonial terms. (Griffiths, Tiffin and Aschcroft 65)

Eurocentricism denotes a process by which Europe has been constructed in social terms as the "center of the world", setting the norm and taken as the natural and universal initial point of all kinds of discourse. (Burney 187)

Exile is a postcolonial term implying an individual's emotional or physical distance to his or her homeland, culture, origin or simply home. Exile defines the boundaries of becoming the Other, an outcast from the mainstream. Diasporic people often find themselves in this predicament of belonging to the new country and prolonging a tenacious hold onto the native culture. Said argues in his *Out of Place: A Memoir* that such a distancing can provide a better appraisal of oneself as well as the Other. (194)

Exoticization as a postcolonial term implies the rendering of an entity as "foreign" or "alien" and therefore, picturesque and strange, desirable but unattainable at the same time. The term is also important in terms of the social construction of the Other in a mystifying manner, suggesting that it is not a part of the quotidian, but belongs to an alien, myterious and remote realm. (Burney 188)

Hegemony is a significant concept originated by Antonio Gramsci in the 1930s, often signifying in postcolonial and poststructuralist theory "domination by consent". The ruling class has the authority and power to outwit the working class, the subalterns and the colonized in that the governmental benefits are for the universal good of all. Hegemony functions not through overt power structues but through such cached institutions as eduation, media as well as other social and economic entities. (Griffiths, Tiffin and Aschcroft 95)

Hybridity is a key conceptual framework within postcolonial theory, popularized by Bhabha, denoting the "ambivalence of postcolonial identities" due to their mingling with a variety of cultural sources. Since our identities are not static, the term hybridity implies interdepency and a common construction of subjectivity on the

part of both the colonizer and the colonized, which takes place in the "Third Space" in Bhabha's terms. (Griffiths, Tiffin and Aschcroft 97)

Metropolis denotes the "center" or "the mother land", which is the seat of education, culture, advancement and civilization, standing in diametric opposition to the periphery, or "the outpost", the Other. (Burney 190)

Mimicry is another term coined by Bhabha, used to refer to a condition on the part of a class of individuals who feel the need or obligation to mimic the cultural habits, ways of life, social norms and values of the colonizer in order that they are recognized, inscribed in and successfully blended with the colonizer's "world". This is especially reflected in the education, which is arguably a part of an imperial policy, resulting in a class of individuals "almost the same but not quite." (Bhabha 86)

Miscegenation is a concept related to the physical mixing of black and white races, regarded as a threat to imperialism. Miscegenation was not approved, but Bhabha along with other critics argues that such fear stems from the fascination with the Other, cached by the love-hate ambivalence mentioned earlier. (Griffiths, Tiffin and Aschcroft 142)

Orality is an essential term for postcolonial discourse, for it highlights the importance of oral cultures, based on storytelling, folklore, anecdotes, or anecdotal tales and many other cultural oral traditions. The essentiality of the term stems from the orality of most pre-colonial cultures, which was considered as significant, or even more so than, literacy. Therefore, it is crucial in terms of a postcolonial inquiry into the intermingling with and influence on literary practices. (Burney 191)

Subaltern, a term originally coined by Gramsci, is a term that stands in close relationship with the term hegemony, discussed earlier, and literally means "of inferior rank". While the subaltern classes in Gramsci's coinage indicates the peasants, workers, or any other group denied access to power, within the postcolonial context, it implies any marginalized sect of postcolonial society subject to the control of ruling classes. (Wisker 206) The term has also been popularized by Spivak in her famous essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak", encompassing all marginalized societies without the chance to have controlling power.

The World, in Said's conception, is a prominent term entailing the cultural, geographical and, especially, "the circumstantial" reality of worldliness, which Said

defines as “situated”, therefore, belonging to this world, coexisting within and without the text. Said asserts that texts are to be infiltrated through and informed by their centrality, since, after all, they are texts belonging to *the world*, not an imaginary medium. (Said 25) Spivak formulates the term “worldliness”, linking it to Eurocentricism, designating the ways in which the colonized medium is brought into the world. (Burney 193)

1.4 A Postcolonial Encounter with Modernism

Modernist literature takes its roots from the late nineteenth century, with the onset of the aesthetic movement that insisted on "art for art's sake", attacking middle class values and assumptions about the function and place of art in society. In reaction to the Victorian conception of the artist's moral and educational duties, the aesthetic movement contributed to a widening of the gap between writers and the general public, making the breach progressively harder to bridge through the "alienation" of the modern artist from the "rest" of the society. Examples of such alienation are to be cited in the works of French symbolists and other late nineteenth century artists who rejected or denounced the conventional notions of what it takes to be respectable. Such conceptions are foregrounded in the essential works of modern literature, namely James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (Greenblatt 1895).

The rejection of middle-class Victorian values, essential to modernism, was already gaining ground twenty years prior to Queen Victoria's death in 1901. Samuel Butler, for example, assaulted the key Victorian conceptions of education, religion, and, especially, family in his *The Way of All Flesh* and as a focal figure in the transition from Victorianism to modernism, Thomas Hardy pinpoints the end of the Victorian Era and the beginning of a new phase in his "The Darkling Thrush", a poem that illustrates a bleak sense of the modern world, foreseeing the social, cultural and religious instabilities of the upcoming century. The rapidity of social and technological change, the dislocation of masses through war, empire and economic emigration disrupted the old congruity, uprooting ethical and social codes, when seen through a critical lens, cast doubt on the sound assumptions on community, the self, the divine and the world. (Greenblatt 1896, 1897)

The echoes of such breaks were to be detected across Europe, from Pablo Picasso's iconic cubist paintings, shattering centuries old artistic conventions to Igor Stravinsky's ballet, *Le Sacre du Printemps*, strikingly and controversially departing from harmonic and rythmic conventions of classical art. The common understanding they shared was an assertion of "a radical newness in the arts", be it in music, painting, fiction, poetry, or any other genre, paving the way for an exploration new thematic possibilities. The startling effects of cubism were instaneously responded to in

London, especially by the American expatriate Ezra Pound and in his literary circle, a member of which was T. S. Eliot, making London a centre in the formation of anglophone modernism. (Greenblatt 2056)

This idea of "the new" became "the tradition" in Harold Ronsenberg's words (Childs and Fowler 145), thus the landmark for modernist art. However, it is important to make a distinction between what the terms modern, modernist and modernism entail from a critical perspective. Whereas the term modern has much wider applications outside of the literary remit, with its Latin root "modo" meaning "current", "modernist" is a relatively older version, denoting a person who follows trends that are characteristically modern. "Modernism", on the other hand, was used in a variety of senses, encompassing a sympathy for modern styles and ideas, becoming a term for progressive movements in the Catholic church in the nineteenth century. (Childs 1)

From a more contemporary perspective, the difficulties of defining "Modernism" persist. Its peak is arguably the aforementioned Anglo-American context between 1910 and 1925 with its intellectual roots stretching back to the works of Marx, Freud and Nietzche, (Bell 9) who had reformulated the social, the natural and the individual. Less clear than its peak, however, is its start or whether it has ended: it can be regarded as a "time-bound" concept (roughly from 1890 to 1930) or a timeless one. Nevertheless, a focus on the works of major writers, namely those of James, Proust, Conrad, Mann, Svevo, Kafka, Joyce, Musil or Faulkner in fiction, reveals certain common characteristics. The works of these authors are "aesthetically radical", involve technical innovation, and opt for technical rather than chronological form. (Childs 2)

Modernist art is experimental, complicated in form, and elliptical, with an artistic departure from realism, materialism, traditional genre and form. In terms of social context, it includes a bohemian or *avant garde* style. It envisions a futurist, rather than a conservative, artist, whose target audience is deemed "foolish if potentially redeemable". (Childs and Fowler 145) It stresses the complexity and difficulty beneath the surface, emphasizing the change brought about by a mechanized age. Modernists do not share the Victorian concern with morality and its expression in literature; rather, they view art as the highest form of achievement, rendering aesthetics a major concern. (Childs 3)

Modernist texts' major themes are social, spiritual or personal collapse, with subsumed under mythology and symbolism. Other characteristics include a focus in the city, technical experimentation alloyed with stylistic innovation, a critical and suspicious view of language as a sound medium for the comperehension and appraisal of the world. Modernism can be summed up as an artistic response to several urban, social, industrial, military, philosophical or scientific developments. Such a response gave way to a re-evaluation, thus, a new perception of reality.

Such an evalutation inevitably led to certain changes in the conception and production of literary works. In prose, for example, in contrast to the predominant modes of mimesis, verisimilitude and realism, Modernism moved towards sophistication, introversion and self-scepticism. Authors refrained from employing a dependable narrator and the portrayal of a fixed, stable self, allowing for human subjectivity to be portrayed "in a way more real than realism." (Childs 3) The representation of the consciousness, of human perception, emotion, meaning, especially one that is created through the individual's relationship with society, were revealed through interior monologue, tunnelling, stream of consciousness, and defamiliarization, making it harder for the Modernist writer "to make it new" in Ezra Pound's well-known phrase. (Childs 3, 4)

Virginia Woolf became the major developer of the technique, interior monologue, which put emphasis on psychology producing a prose style that required the effort and the collaboration of the reader for an appreciation of characters. (Childs 74) Tunnelling, likewise, was a method of constructing character, invented by Woolf, denoting a dig into the charactes' pasts to "unearth" their history, rendering the characters divided between a life anchored in both the past and the present. (Childs 106) Stream of consciousness was pioneered by Woolf, along with Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce, and denoted a record of the flow of impressions crossing the mind of a character with all its irrelevances and paradoxes. (Childs and Fowler, 224) Defamiliarization, on the other hand, was a term that originally belonged to Russian Formalism, coined by Shklovsky, meaning "making strange", with the basic argument that reality was not to be perceived through the habitual, running the risk of rendering reality stale or automatic. (Childs and Fowler 93)

There have, of course, been certain objections to aligning postcolonialism with Modernism, based on geographical and historical grounds. First of all, Modernism is a term more commonly attributed to the "First World", especially cities of this "world", emerging "as a literary response to the anonymity, stress and speed of modern life." (Ramazani 207) According to Brooker and Thacker, posing such a question, "*Where was modernism?*", is functional in directing the attention to a wider, cross continental geographical scope, where Modernism could find itself new outlets for form, idiom and expression. This view of a new differentiation is referred to by Appadurai as "modernity at large", expanding spatially to the subcontinent, Africa, Latin America and China. (3)

The temporal, however, infringes on the spatial, thus is closely linked to and shaped by it. The accepted time frame for Modernism in arts spans from mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century; however, there exist considerable variants within that time frame. (Hyssen 6) The most period-based conceptions of Modernism, on the other hand, situate Modernism in the first half of the twentieth century while most of postcolonial literature effloresce in the second half, following World War II and the decolonization of certain regions. Chinua Achebe, A. K. Ramanajuan, V. S. Naipul, Derek Walcott, Wole Soyinka, for example, started producing their works after the high tide of Modernism, literally losing the chance to be contemporaries with T. S. Eliot or Ezra Pound from a historical perspective. (Ramazani 207)

Although not considered contemporaries, many well known Caribbean, South Asian and African poets and writers acknowledge the role of Euro-modernism "in the formation of their aesthetics". (Ramazani 208) Kamau Brathwaite, for instance, attests to T. S. Eliot's part in his famous "Nation Language" in introducing "the notion of the speaking voice", helping to create a vernacular poetic style taking its roots from the speech rhythms of regional dialects. (Brathwaite 2733) It is, therefore, essential to find a common ground, beyond the spatial and the temporal, to propose relevant and significant intersections at the crossroads of postcolonialism and Modernism. Similarly, George Lamming goes even further than Brathwaite in the time line, citing William Wordsworth as well as T. S. Eliot in terms of a comparison between their claims and the "expressly experimental aims of himself and his peers". (Brown 132)

Despite the Empire’s efforts to transplant the English culture through the introduction of British literature into the colonial curriculum, such efforts resulted in the cross fertilization and the eventual “hybridization” of cultures observed in Boehmer’s very words:

> Taking into account not only the involvement of colonial writers but also the new hybridity of aesthetic influence, Modernism is, therefore, revealed as the beginning of a process of global transculturation in literature which has continued to effloresce. (130)

It is even possible to use term postcolonial-modernism in this context, as suggested by some critics, drawing on the contributions of the modernist novel to the postcolonial progress through its characteristic narrative technique, linguistic diversity and presentation of reality. Jesse Matz, for example, explores the extent to which forms of modernist fiction helped these colonial cultures to “imagine new possibilities, to reshape time and space.” (147)

Thus, postcolonialism, as a mindset is closely associated with the essential viewpoints harboured by Modernism. For example, the preoccupation with displacement, loss of identity experienced in the postcolonial remit matched the modernist concerns for the dismantling of the ground on which universal systems and codes were based. Hence, it is possible to conclude that issues like identity, exile, alienation and disorientation were the concerns of most twentieth century writers.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LONELY LONDONERS: THE NARRATOR'S ROLE WITHIN THE POSTCOLONIAL AND THE MODERNIST ENCOUNTER

The Lonely Londoners is the story of a group of Trinidadian characters told in an unconventional narrative style and language, drawing on and inflecting the Western episodic narrative models by employing a lyrical Calypsonian mode and a "fabricated" register of Creolized English. If form, in essence, is a matter of who the speaker is and who the addressees are, even in terms of the most basic communicative experience, then, interaction is moulded and determined by this relationship between the identity of the speakers. Thus, as Mah Chamberlain observes, the narrator and the narratee in the novel share a discursive medium. (3) Who, then, are the narrator and the narratee in Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*: an immigrant, a West Indian, a West Indian immigrant or another Londoner?

When compared to the overtly structured European frame narratives written in a highly organized manner, the integrity of the narrative in Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* is "exiled" from the European frame narrative tradition, in which more than one story is embedded within a frame narrative. (Mah Chamberlain 3) In Emily Bronte's frame narrative *Wuthering Heights*, for example, Lockwood and his fictional experiences set up the narrative framework, in which Nelly can relate the stories of the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Another important characteristic of the nineteenth century frame narrative tradition is the insistence on addressing the reader directly with the inclusion of "Dear Reader", as if to denote a deliberate authorial effort to distance the narrator from the characters, so that the narrator has greater authority, omniscence and credibility. In Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now*, for example, the narrator addresses the reader with the epithet "Dear" in such critical moments that the reader is most vulnerable to get caught up in the speed of the action so as to bring the reader back to his "senses".

The Lonely Londoners is a compilation of a series of short narratives, told in "ballad" format, mostly in direct speech. The style in which these ballads are framed provides a better insight into Selvon's linguistic as well as structural achievement. The

embedded conversations within these ballads reveal Selvon's communicative purpose, not only to entertain but to create a sense of solidarity, not only among the characters, major and minor, but the narrator and the narratee. The narrator weaves together the individual stories of a number of West Indian characters. Although the narrator might eavesdrop on the characters' lives and conversations at times, making it similar to a traditional frame narrative, the narrator exercises no control over the characters, does not step in to provide background information and expound on what the narratee "hears", only installing subjective remarks so as to establish a close alliance among characters *and* the addressee. For example, in the well-known scene where their gathering at Moses's house is held analogous to Sunday mass, the characters are portrayed to share their ballads in "ole-talk", determining the overall structural framework of the novel.

Thus, Selvon creates a novel which breaks free from the conventions of frame narratives through his inclusion of multiple vantage points, by allowing West Indian speakers and listeners to interact freely and directly in dialect. According to Mah Camberlain, the role of this direct address provides the framework for organizing the distinct ballads into a cohesive whole, allowing the various voices and linguistic codes to be heard directly "rather than being subjected to representation by the overarching frame narrator of the European tradition." (6)

In fact, Selvon's most crucial innovation is his rendering of the Trinidadian dialect in narration. In an interview, he comments that in an earlier version of *The Lonely Londoners*, he uses Standard English to link the various parts of the dialogues written in dialect. His stylistic acccomplishmet is to have concocted a strategy of making the two, dialect and Standard English interact through his narrator. Through the narrator, Selvon ensures that the language of narration is integrated into the language of his characters so that distinct stylistic registers are merged together and do not remin distinct. Hence, as Head puts it, the creolization of the English novel and its integration with folk tale, irony, farcical anecdotes and racial stereotyping expressed in topical political material mark the staples of Selvon's method. (165)

In *The Lonely Londoners* through such stylistic innovations Selvon addresses the difficulty of creating a community in an unfriendly social millieu. Whereas the

narrator, with his use of dialect, steps in to mediate the ballads and the dialogues the characters share with one another, creating a bond to identify with the same social network. For example, the narrator sometimes steps in to draw the narratee into the story making the necessary explanations, thus becoming a character in the story and even allowing the reader to become one of the "the lonely Londoners".

This inclusion on the part of the narrator, his style, use of dialect and acting as a character in the narrative serve a major function from a postcolonial perspective. The inclusion of "marginalized voices" functions as a corollary to a portrayal of the interests of these marginalized characters to the authories in an attempt to seek equity and justice in the society. In her well-known essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak", Spivak bespeaks the dangers that mainstream academics get entangled in terms of a claim to represent the positions of marginalized subjects. The interests of the people in representation are often subordinated to the way the stronger members of the society perceive and create these representations. In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Past*, Spivak draws attention to the importance of identifying the marginalized voices in narratives as socially prominent or culturally acceptable, since it is impossible to know otherwise whether the represented perspective is true to the marginalized experience. (49)

It is true that the use of dialect in the narration of *The Lonely Londoners* establishes the narrator as a member of the "mob" as opposed to former novelistic conventions in which the implied author or the narrator establishes his social world as distinct from that of the characters fictionalized through his use of Standard English. In this sense, Selvon creates a sense of place by merging the two forms of narration, preventing a clash between two voices that exclusively belong to and reflect distinct remits. As discussed earlier, Aschroft, Griffths and Tiffin identify language as a key site in which the postcolonial writers reflect the cultural distance between the literature of the colonizing power and that of their own. Accordingly, through a manipulation of linguistic forms, Caribbean writers proclaim their sense of place.

However, the diametric opposite of the same phenomenon is also valid in that while Selvon's narrator contributes to a sense of solidarity and brotherhood through his use of Trinidadian dialect, he also establishes a distance, a sense of separation

between the rest of the society who do speak Standard English through this stylistic innovation, as if drawing graphic lines with words. For example, in the passage where the narrator describes the living conditions in Tolroy's neighborhood, inhabited by other members of the immigrant workers, the speaker's dialect contributes to a better understanding and sympathy on the part of the narratee as opposed to narration in Standard English which immediately corrresponds to a "long" distance between not only the addressee and the narrator, but between the narrator and Tolroy and, especially, his neighborhood and the world.

It is important at this point to analyze two concepts with respect to the narrator: the kind of dialect he uses and the kind of narratee he has in mind. To start with the narrator's particular dialect, one of the most prominent aspects on his part is that, as directly indicated by Selvon himself in an interview, the narrator takes into account the kind of addressee and writes, or "speaks", accordingly. Selvon comments that he writes "a modified dialect which could be understood by European readers, yet retain the flavour and essence of Trinidadian speech." (Fabre 66)

> The place where Tolroy and the family living was off the Harrow Road, and
> the people in that area call the Working Class. Wherever in London that it have Working Class, there you will find a lot of spades. This is the real world, where men know what it is to hustle a pound when Friday come. The houses around here old and grey and weather-beaten […] it ain't have no hot water, and in the whole street that Tolroy and them living in, none of the houses have bath in.
> You had was to buy one of them big galvanise basin and boil the water and full it
> up, […] Some of the houses still had gas light, which is to tell you how old they
> was. All the houses in a row in the street, on both sides, so your house jam-up
> between two neighbours: is so most of the houses is in London. (*TLL* 57)

The above passage exemlifies that Selvon writes in his own special version of both dialect and English, merging forms and abandoning the conventions of both. The maintenance of the Creole is gauged in such a way that while the English reader can follow the narration, the English millieu is created through a narrator who speaks his own version. One aspect of this kind of dialect is the reduction of the auxiliary verb forms, namely saying "living" instead of "were living", or a disregard for subject verb agreement, as in "it have" instead of "it has", or "when Friday come". Other prominent linguistic features include the absence of the copula, as in "The houses around here old and grey" instead of "the houses around here *are* old and grey"; the use of double negatives, as in "it ain't have no hot water", avoidance of passive voice or the participle

for adjective forms, as in “so your house jam-up between two neighbours” instead of “jammed-up”. Apart from linguistic determiners, the abundant use of idiomatic expressions and vocabulary particular to the Caribbean context together with “ole talk (old talk)” is also significant as in “a lot of spades” used for “blacks”. This witty allusion is both comprehensible and reflective of a Trinidadian flavour within language, allowing Selvon to kill two birds with one stone, both asserting an identity through manipulation of language and creating a sense of space.

In fact, the relationship between identity and language is maintained through the personality of the character, which in essence is a major comment on Selvon’s style. Inasmuch as language is the essential tool through which a writer or speaker asserts his or her personality, the narrator’s use of language, his combination of informal structures of oral output with the patterns of written language can be regarded as an assertion of a unique artistic fictional style. The most significant aspect on the part of the narrator is that he is a member of the crowd, whose indivual experiences he relates. The narrator relates their stories as they are experienced, intervenes to provide clarification if and when necessary.

Apart from being one of the party, on the other hand, the narrator has significant personal qualities that distinguish him from the rest of the sect that he is ascribed to. First of all, he has a sense of humor and a capacity for irony as expressed in his description of Henry’s arrival, describing Henry to arrive at the Waterloo Station “to swell the population by one”. (*The Lonely Londoners* 35) This kind of irony, quite reminiscent of Louise Bennett’s poetry, is an indicator of his experience and expedience. In the introductory chapters where the narrator describes London, he is one that has seen and suffered more than any of the other members, or any other Londoner even. In his descriptions he has the capacity and background knowledge to generalize freely about men and the world. For example, he can use sentences starting with “It ain’t have no place in the world that…” (*TLL* 45) He has seen enough of the world to make bold deductions.

The aloof and sage-like narrator gradually starts to sound more like a person than an omniscient narrator. Although it is not possible to describe him physically, his presence in the story is solidified through his descriptions of the experiences of the characters, as if it did not matter whether it was him or another character in the book

who is experiencing the events narrated. Bart's enthralled search for Beatrice, for example, is a moving instance of this kind of stance on the part of the narrator. When it is summer time, he can exult over summer like one of the boys as expressed in the well-known stream-of-consciousness passage. This exultation over summer, however, is not one without the rememberance of winter, unlike the rest of the "boys" who are overjoyed perhaps. The narrator is truly articulate about the dualities ever present in life. He still has capacity for joy, with an all-knowing acceptance of reality. For example, in the passage where he expounds on Cap, starting with "it have some men in this world." (*TLL* 56), the narrating persona gains more and more credibiliy, becoming a chronicler, a "repository of the experiences of the group", with more attuned sensibility. (Nasta 76)

Selvon's use of dialect is also significant in terms of its implications for both postcolonial and modernist criticism. From a modernist perspective, the use of Creole, but not just any kind of Creole but a talor-cut one to address more than one type of readership is innovative and groundbreaking in its own right. From a postcolonial perspective, the hybridized form of discourse used by the narrator serves to plant the "seeds of cultural hybridity", combining Trinidadian dialect and Standard English, a vascillatory narrative stance both withdrawn from and engaged in the individual experiences of the characters. However, it also has a dual function in terms of asserting a cultural identity as well as an attempt to "colonize England in reverse".

Language, in fact, for most postcolonial writers is a key remit through which they can express the amount of distance their works bear from those of the colonizer. Therefore, the manipulation of the accepted language forms is seen as a way of expressing a sense of displacement as well as an assertion of a distinct, unique identity.

> And this sort of thing was happening at a time when the English people starting to make a rab about how too much West Indians coming to the country: this was a time, when any corner you turn, is ten to one you bound to bounce up a spade. (*TLL* 24)

In the above quotation, for example, it is possible to detect the use of slang words such as "make rab", meaning "to behave in an impolite manner" with "rab" meaning a rough young boy, or "bounce up a spade" which means "to come across an African-American male" or "a spade". The use of elision as well as non-standard English syntax as in "how too much West Indians coming to the country" where the

main verb of the subordinating clause has been replaced by a gerund can be cited as examples.

It is possible to question at this stage whether the quality of the narrator's linguistic scope, both oral and written in this case, and his choice for a dialect for the medium of narration stems from a deliberate urge on the part of the author to stray away from the Standard English to take a postcolonial stance, known as *abrogation* in the postcolonial theory. Abrogation, by definition, is a deliberate use of or a preference for non-Standard linguistic forms with the desire to "cancel out" or "repeal" the "correct" ones, including oral forms and accents. Authors with such a view perceive language as a medium through which they can subvert the basic understanding that Standard language, pronunciation and other widely accepted linguistic representations contribute to the formation of a social hierarchy and, through their use of local dialects, Creole or Pidgin, they can liberate language to assert cultural identity as part of their postcolonial agenda.

In an interview, Selvon expresses that when he begins to write his novel in Standard English, he finds that "it would just not move along..." After an attempt to shape both the dialogues and the narration in Trinidadian form of the language and starting "to experiment with it", Selvon finds that the writing process for the novel goes "very rapidly along." He even adds that "...with this particular book, I just felt that the language that I used worked and expressed exactly what I wanted it to express." (Nazareth 421)

It is quite explicit from this quotation that Selvon believes in the power of language, more specifically Trinidadian form of the English language, as a liberating agent. However, Selvon's deployment of this form applies not only to the dialogues of the particular characters but also to his narrative purposes which attest to Selvon's dual agenda in an attempt to bring the Modernist and the postcolonial remits together in his novel.

Selvon mentions he writes in dialect for the sake of "verisimilitude", overtly expressing that his use of dialect stems from a desire to portray reality rather than undermine the English language for his postcolonial purposes. He asserts that in the first draft of his novel, the narration was in Standard English, which to him, was not the proper medium to relate or connect in a sense the various experiences of the

members of the *Windrush* generation in the novel. (Nasta 67) In another interview, on the other hand, the same Selvon, in a somewhat boastful manner, reminds that he was one of the first authors to write in dialect. (Nasta 76)

What can be deduced from these two complementary statements is that Sam Selvon chose to write in dialect, not only from a postcolonial perspective but from an experimental perspective as well. It is true that he is a writer of the Windrush generation and it is only natural that he would write in the dialect that was widely used by the same generation of people. However, introducing a narrator who also writes, or "speaks" in dialect does not rule out his stance as a modernist writer; his postcolonial agenda does overlap with his modernist one. First of all, his overt claim that he is "one of the first writers to write in dialect" does meet the modernist notion of "making it new" in Ezra Pound's standards. In fact, it also attests to another modernist quality of experimentalism; that is, experimenting with linguistic forms, writing in dialect, not only to reflect the way people speak but also to narrate their stories is essentially a means of "making it new". However, it is not only in experimentation with dialect that Selvon's postcolonial agenda intersects with his modernist one: by allowing the story to be narrated in dialect, Selvon also absolves the narrator from his conventional role, allowing him to be a part of the society, of one of those characters as opposed to the omniscient and distant narrators of the traditional frame narratives discussed earlier. So, manipulating the narrator's language presents Selvon not only with the opportunity to experiment with language but with form as well.

It is true that by narrowing or removing the distance between characters and the omniscient narrator, Selvon gives the "subaltern" a voice, as discussed earlier. However, the kind of Creole he deploys in his narrative is not altogether authentic, rather a combination of different Creoles used across the Caribbean as described in his very words: "...when I wrote *The Lonely Londoners*, my intention was not primarily to be realistic... The modified version in which I write my dialect may be a manner of extending the language." (Fabre 67) This very notion of "fabrication" and "experimentation", despite its postcolonial ramifications, is more than sufficient to associate Selvon with Modernism.

A closer study of the text would reveal other instances in which Modernist elements are interlaced with postcolonial counterparts. Chromatism is considered

another postcolonial concept which Selvon manages to merge with elements of experimental writing in his novel. Selvon incorporates poetic devices into his narrative, intensifying the communicability of his postcolonial discourse. Galahad's apostrophe to his hand after the incident with the little girl and the mother is a powerful example of how poetic devices can be integrated with the novel form and how this sort of experimentation can reiterate on the writer's postcolonial discourse.

> And Galahad watched the colour of his hand and talked to it, saying, Colour, is you that causing all this , you know . Why the hell you cannot be blue or red or green if you cannot be white? You know is you that cause a lot of misery in the world. Is not me, you know is you! I ain't do anything to infuriate the people and them is you! Look at you, you so black and innocent, and this time so you causing misery all over the world! (*TLL* 88)

The most prominent reason for associating Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* with Modernism is his devotion of a whole chapter to the stream-of-consciousness technique; however, such an association would entail certain considerations to be made on the part of the readership the novel intends to access. According to Cooper, "experimental writing", which in most instances is believed to be tantamount to modernist writing, is intended for certain socio-cultural groups in the society, excluded from certain minorities and marginalized groups and possessing access to certain educational privileges. Therefore, modernist writing is mostly aimed at the representation of the subjective experiences of the alienated and isolated individuals in society, subverting any attempt to express or make a claim to the representation of collective, therefore communal experiences. By articulating the feelings, thoughts and subjective experiences of a non-white working class character through the stream-of-consciousness technique, thereby rejecting the use of this technique only for a specific addressee, Selvon stretches the limits of elitism until the voices of the "subaltern" is heard by all, including the educated, European or Western, and middle class. In a way, Selvon implants a new understanding to the very concept of Modernism, even making Modernism "new", or modernising Modernism.

In this chapter written with the stream-of-consciousness technique, Selvon explores the manner in which nonwhite and white people interact in an iconic London setting: the Hyde Park where people congregate to find partners in the summer. The narrator gives a romantic and lyrical account of the summertime, as if "the boys" endure the grey, grueling winter to reach the festive part of the year. However, the

major function this stream-of-consciousness passage serves goes well beyond a promise of hope. Instead, it mainly serves to emphasize and elaborate on how the "black" identity is constructed by the dominant white culture which is expressed through the consciousness of an alienated, marginalized individual. The passage makes the claim that the norm, the origin or the universal initial point of all kinds of discourse is determined by the Western or the European standards, known as Eurocentricism in postcolonial terms. For example,

> ...the cruder you are the more the girls like you you can't put on any English accent for them or play ladeda or tell you studying medicine in Oxford or try to be polite and civilise they don't want that sort of thing at all they want you to live up to the films and stories they hear about black people living primitive in the jungles of the world.
> (*TLL* 108)

The deliberate omission of punctuation marks and the flow of language as they cross the narrator's mind are typical of the stream of consciousness technique. However, the passage is dense with steoreotypical images of black sensuality produced by a culture that puts their way of life and means of existences at the "centre of the world", taking it as the only norm and not willing to accept any other way of life or culture as part of it, viewing these people as marginalized and "primitive".

This basic Eurocentric attitude, expressed through a modernist technique, however has far reaching ramifications when read with a more profound insight. The passage echoes Bhabba's theorization of cultural difference, connoting a theoretical or conceptual framework upon which the notion that "difference" is held inferior to "sameness". This kind of differentiation, however, connotes more than physical difference; rather, it implies "aberrant", "backward" and "exotic" behavior as part of a pre-constructed cultural framework (Bhabba 113). In the passage, the man who approaches Moses in matchmaking makes it very clear that the white ladies have a prefabricated notion of these nonwhite individuals mass produced through "films" and "stories, living in a primitive state, without any hint at civilization. Moses is simply urged by the man to live up to these expectations, by being as "crude" as possible.

This notion that ladies have a larger than life picture of Moses, or any other non-white male, since his *name* and *identity* do not matter to them, also echoes the postcolonial term *exoticization*, which implies the rendering of a human being as "alien" or "foreign", therefore picturesque and exotic, desirable and simultaneously

unobtainable. Burney holds that this is also a mystified social contruction of Said's "the Other", (188) sending *him* to an exile from the boundaries of the quotidian to a mysterious and out-of-the-way kingdom. This is significantly conspicuous in the passage, since ladies would favor crudity over gentility and would rather imagine Moses as an exotic pimitive man from a remote land living in the jungle than one of the Londoners she meets everyday on the Tube or the bus. It is again significant that it is not Moses who makes the request; rather, the request comes from the lady and the lady has certain expectations to be fulfilled, putting the female in a more powerful position than the male, "the advanced", in a way, surpassing the primitive. By presenting such a reality through the immediate consciousness of Moses and the narrator, Selvon manages to merge the two distinct remits of postcolonialism and Modernism.

The passage is in fact laden with both postcolonial and Modernist details; in that, it is possible to pinpoint another postcolonial concept, mimicry, a term coined by Bhabha signifying a need or an obligation on the part of a certain class of individuals to mimic the cultural habits, life styles, social norms and social values of the predominant class, namely the colonizer, in order that they are seamlessly blended in with the "world" of the colonizer with education (86) and language being one of the most prominent aspects of this kind adaptation. This notion is especially echoed in the man's insistence that Moses act as a crude man instead of pretending to "put on any English accent for them" or to study "medicine at Oxford". Mimicry is ever present in such idioms as "play ladeda", or an attempt at exaggerated gentility, or in the man's request that Moses be not "polite and civilise". It is quite ironic that these efforts on the part of the marginalized to blend in with the dominant sect, such as trying to put on a British accent, or pretending to get the sort of education available to an exclusive class or simply trying to act civilized proves fruitless. The subaltern has no way out of his exile, from his alienation from the dominant sect; the harder he tries, the more he is cast out, epitomized by the expression "ladeda" in the passage.

Orality, another essential postcolonial concept, highlights the significance of the expression of culture through oral means, such as storytelling, folklore, anecdotes or anecdotal tales, such as ballads in *The Lonely Londoners*. However, the inscription of orality into the novel form is considered another incidence of Selvon's

experimentalist propensities.

Creating an effect of orality entails a reconciliation of a folk culture, deeply rooted in orality, with a conventionally British mode of writing. As Walter Ong clearly demonstrates in his “Orality, Literacy and Medieval Contextualization”, the most important characteristic of orality is its context dependency as opposed to written accounts which widen the gap between context and cultural expression. (6) The intimacy between orality and context, however, presents a challenge to Selvon as a writer who intends to experiment with how this gap could be bridged in his novel whose addressee may not be too familiar with the context in which the oral accounts have been produced. He explains to Michel Fabre that his West Indian characters "live[d] from day with ups and downs; encounters ... are just as important as social rituals." (66) By setting his story in metropolitan London, in which his characters are obliged "from day to day" to fit in with "the social rituals" of *standard* British life style, this story of adaptation transforms into a search for meaning within the boundaries of their exile, with language becoming a tool for making sense of their individual experiences, either to themselves or to each other. This is another means by which Selvon "extends the language", by seeking a language which can interpret the world, especially through its "ups and downs".

When a writer chooses to experiment with dialect by incorporating an effect of orality into his aesthetic venture, he runs the risk of widening the gap between the signifier and the signified, as if the reader is "listening" to the dialect "spoken" by the novel's characters. This discrepancy between Standard English and dialect requires a certain effort on the part of the reader to pay close attention to decode meaning. This effort parallels the characers' efforts in a sense to make sense of *their* world and the effects of such a quest are mirrored by the narrative itself, reflecting the unstability of the nature of the lives lived to the moment, related verbally in Calypsonian style. This gap also accounts for the bewilderment of the characters, which is to be compensated by mimicry, as well as the episodic nature of the novel, seemingly devoid of unity. The characters, therefore, invent a language that translates London to them so that it *sounds* more familiar. Bit City's ballad, for example, eloquently demonstrates this notion of approriating the metropolitan to make it his own. In Kathy Birat's words, Selvon "increas[es] the capacity of the language to become a dimension of the

narrative, to express more than just a Caribbean reality." (3)

It is this angle that reveals an underlying structure below its surface episodic nature in which language takes on a key role. Moses, as the major character who initiates his fellow West Indians with the ins and outs of London life, plays a key role in acquainting them with the ways and means of survival in the metropolitan, language being one the main areas of adaptation. The language "spoken" by Moses is moderated by the heterodiegetic narrator, coinhabiting their world, despite his partial omniscence, allowing Selvon to achieve unity in his work. The narrator paces the narration by setting the tone and the rhythm, mandating in a way to share the story in his mode: in a dialect that has been "extended" or "fabricated" by Selvon. This sort of experimentation proves a fruitful site for the anonymous but heterodiegetic narrator who has direct contact with the reader, introducing the story of West Indian Londoners, a process mirrored by Moses in his initiation of new comers to London life.

Walter Benjamin, in his well known article, "The Storyteller" ascribes the most prominent quality of storytelling to its orality and the best story "writer" to a quality of simulation of this oral source thereof. According to Benjamin, there are two basic types when it comes to oral storytellers: those who have travelled from a remote region of the world, telling of their adventures, embodied in the image of the "trading seaman", and those who stay at home and relate the local events, represented by "the resident tiller of the soil". (36) He argues that stories are not a mere account of a collection of interesting events but an expression of a basic human urge to cope with the mystery behind human experience in reality. Whereas the story originates in orality, recounting a collective experience of individual characters, the novel takes the "solitary", and essentially middle class, "individual" as his point of origin. (38)

Benjamin further asserts that the basic reason behind the death of storytelling, or orality, is a reluctance on the part of human beings to have a claim to communicability, simply resisting imparting their experiences, (38) which is a predominant concern within Modernism. By incorporating an oral tradtition into his narrative through his narrator, Selvon brings a revolutionary attitude to the form of the novel. However, the same attitude presents Selvon with another opportunity: by placing the experiences of the Trinidadian characters at the centre of his narrative,

Selvon is not only able to bring the "tiller of the soil" together with "the seaman" but the working class with the middle class.

The experiences of "the lonely Londoners" upon whom Selvon builds his narrative are an amalgamation of the experiences of "the resident tiller of the soil" and "the trading seaman", in the sense that they have had to go through a long journey to a place they do not totally belong but would like to become its "residents", represented by mimicry of the characters. In an effort to juxtapose these two distinct, if not contrary experiences, Selvon sheds new light on Benjamin's understanding of orality, even innovating the Calypsonian style. Although Benjamin's definitions and assertions have wider European implications, it is significant that Selvon's characters correspond both to the exiled sailor and the settled peasant, displaced in the metropolitan centre, relying on an oral tradition to assert an identity and relate to their cultural heritage.

John Thieme, in his article, "The World Turn Upside Down: Carnival Patterns in *The Lonely Londoners*" asserts that Selvon "subvert[s] the norm of the novel genre". (72) Much of this subversion, however, is achieved through Selvon's substitution of the collective experiences of working class non-white characters for the conventional representation of individualistic middle class life. By creating a novel whose overall narrative structure dwells on the anecdotal and collective experiences of "solitary individuals", Selvon both challenges and affirms the Eurocentric conception of "the Other".

In his introduction to the first edition of *The Lonely Londoners*, Kenneth Ramchand cites the importance of the Calypso form, alluding to it as a novel that is "an admirable illustration of how writing can feed on oral literature and on the stuff that oral literature itself draws upon without losing its identity as writing." This angle presented by Ramchand renders a fruitful interpretation of *The Lonely Londoners*, as a novel innovative in form as well as in content.

In terms of form, Selvon's narrative is innovative due to its three major qualities. First of all, Selvon attempts to restructure an oral tradition in a recognizably conventional and British literary mode, namely that of the novel. Second, the episodic structure of the novel parallels the disconnected narratives used by the calypso singer.

The comic situations, picaresque characters, exaggerated events and carnivalesque attitudes in the novel are to be found within the calypso tradition as well (Bentley 271). *The Lonely Londoners* abound in comic characters and descriptions created mostly through a naive or romantic Caribbean appreciation of life which do not interlock with the harsh realities of London life. Galahad's naive encounter with the little girl in Piccadily, the reaction of the little and the mother and Galahad's inner stir is only an example among many instances which reveal a sense of loneliness and alienation of the individual among crowds, a very popular theme within the Modernist context.

The enigmatic narrator orchestrates all the voices and episodes in and out of the lives of the characters, some of whom are recently off the boat or have lived in London long enough since they unboarded *The Windrush*, each having developed a strategy for coping with the challenges presented by metropolitan London. Through his carefully crafted unique "voice", the narrator appears, at times, to leap out of the page, contributing to a sense of solidarity and collectivity by encompassing the voices of all the other characters. The narrator's unique voice gives away the potential the "boys" have for poetic language, culminating in a Modernist reading of a densely postcolonial discourse. While the long stream-of-consciousness monologue echoes Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, the narrator's use of dialect contributes to a sense of intimacy and exoticism simultaneously. As Selvon experiments with sound and voice, he manages to bring the rhythms of his invented dialect in consort with the the voices that can be heard in the English of Woolf and Joyce, allowing him to truly communicate the verbal equivalent of what it means to be a Trinidadian in London.

The final chapter of *The Lonely Londoners* gains further signifance in terms of postcolonial commentary in that, it provides a transition to the sequel, *Moses Ascending*, with Moses left standing on the banks of the river Thames wondering if he could ever write a book "what everyone will read" (*TLL* 141), and that this part of the text resonates with liberation and freedom, symbolized by the change in weather as opposed to the description of foggy weather at the beginning of the book. However, this liberation, ironically, is to be accessed through a black identity, represented through formal experimentalism in the novel. As Bentley suggests, by releasing the language from its conventional usages, both through omission of punctuation and through use of dialect, Selvon symbolically refers to a release from the conventions of

the dominant culture. The "excess" in form mirrors the excess achieved through culturally and ideologically distancing the characters from the dominant culture and the dominant discourse. (285) According to Homi Bhabha, the weather strategically allows postcolonial writers to create an effect of distance, cold weather representing harsh London reality and summer, a reference to tropical excesses and chaos. (319)
The London setting furnishes Selvon with the opportunity to explore the binary opposition between two worlds: the one inhabited by his characters and the rest of the city inhabited by *other* Londoners, allowing him to create a fully developed representation that demands a definition of a peculiarly Caribbean conciousness within the British context. It is possible that Selvon uses his own experiences and interaction with London as a catalyst, to borrow T. S. Eliot's words, since he mentions in an interview, "Only in London did my life find its purpose... [It was] the first time that people from all different parts of the Caribbean were meeting." (Nasta 65) It is possible to find a portrayal of such a Caribbean identity in *The Lonely Londoners*, incarnated through Moses Aloetta and his fellow Trinidadians, who are ready to "colonize England in reverse" in Louise Bennett's terms.

CHAPTER THREE

MOSES ASCENDING: THE LANDLORD AND THE TENANT

Moses Aloetta is reinvented in the sequels, *Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating*. Moses, the lonely Londoner, introduced in the earlier novel is not the same character at heart, partially owing to the changes in the context and time period that the novels were written in and partially owing to a shift in the writer's perspective and his disillusionment with London life.

Drawing on the above discussion, the final passage, written in a particular technique, serves another purpose: a transition not only between the sequels, *The Lonely Londoners* and *Moses Ascending*, but between Moses, the character in *The Lonely Londoners* and Moses, the narrator. This section of the study shall be concerned with the significance of this sort of transition, as it relates to the major argument presented, by focusing again on the language used by the narrator.

The demystification of the "mother land" allows room for the assertion of identity as well as an urge to confront the self. *The Lonely Londoners* closes with a Moses, who becomes more and more frustrated and disillusioned with the routinized, circular style of London life. Behind the "kiff kiff laughter, behind the ballad and teh episode, the what happening, the summer-is-hearts", Moses experiences a "great aimlessness, a great restless swaying movement that leaving you standing in the same spot." (*TLL* 125) The "what happening" is a key term, a common denominator of all the comi-tragic experiences of the London "boys", to echo the narrator's term, gradually revealing less of a Calypsonian tone and more of a sense of dislocation, incongruity and emptiness that parallel only the works of T. S. Eliot.

Selvon is an author who believes in the power of laughter and of having a comic vision in putting across emotions as well as feelings, alluding to laughter as a "sort of protection, a defense mechanism against tribulation and harship." (Nasta 32) However, he is also very well aware of what lies beneath the "kiff kiff laughter", adding that, "... But every joke is made out of the facts of a tragic situation".

The final chapter, especially the ending of *The Lonely Londoners*, in this respect, captures such a feeling of bitter sweet joy, with Moses caught up between his purposelessness and despair and the surface joyfulness of his London boys. The question of whether he *could* write a book posed by Moses as the book comes to a

close regards Moses's desire to separate himself from the rest of the society to develop an individual consciousness and perhaps assert a unique identity. It, therefore, does not come as a surprise when Moses, in *Moses Ascending,* "draws apart" from "all the hustling of his early days", the subject of *The Lonely Londoners*.

In *Moses Ascending*, the attempt on the part of Moses to fulfill an individual identity is further complicated and complemented by his becoming a landlord instead of a tenant by his ascent from the cellar to the attic, a metaphor too obvious to be missed. The gradual transition between Moses, the character and Moses, the writer marks the end of the final paragraphs of the earlier book, signalling a kind of change not only in narration and style but in terms of the character himelf.

When asked by John Thieme in an interview, entitled "Old Talk: An Interview with Sam Selvon" about how much of the writer that stands and looks back at the world around him at the end of *The Lonely Londoners* corresponds to Selvon, himself, he winks at the possibility, especially in his later works, *Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating*. (72) In the final paragraph of *The Lonely Londoners*, Selvon introduces, or explores, the possibility of shaping and giving meaning to the world through language and literature, an idea introduced by Daniel, a friend of Moses's, on his return home from France, reporting that on the other side of the channel, it is possible to find "all kinds of fellars writng books what turning out to be best-sellers [...] One day you sweating in the factory and the next all the newspapers have your name and photo saying how you are a new literary giant." (123)

Selvon's juxtaposition of this episode with the exploratory stream-of-consciousness passage marks a search for self that is to be realized through the world of literature, suggested by the last lines of the novel, "He watch a tugboat on the Thames, wondering if he could ever write a book like that, what everybody could buy." (126) Although it appears to be a more public goal, the search for the self through fiction seems to be at the heart of the narrative.

Thus, *Moses Ascending* becomes the story of a new Moses, in pursuit of a dream, or a set of dreams, private and public, the public being the publication of his memoirs and the private his establishment of himself as a landlord. The seemingly public pursuit, however, becomes more private as he further proceeds with the process of writing, becoming incrementally self-absorbed, whereas the private one becomes

more of a public issue, as Moses begins to adopt carnivalesque attitudes towards his tenants, exulting "I was Master of the house. [...] When the tenants hear my heavy tread, they cower and shrink in their rooms, in case I snap my fingers and say OUT to any of them". (*Moses Ascending* 16)

The Moses witnessed in the above quote seems to have a come a long way from the lonely Londoner, tyring to help out those with a jumpstart on their journey in the mother land. The tension between the public and the private worlds stems from a frustration and disillusionment whose origins are to be found in the last chapter of the earlier novel, in which Moses's disengagement leads to a pursuit of writing, miroring that of his creator who seeks to align his verbal realities with the uncertainty of the recent social and political realities, as the interview suggests. *Moses Ascending* is as much of a novel about the tension between the non-white individual and his "community" as it is a novel about a member of the Windrush generation who no longer fully understands or sympathizes with what is going on in *his* community. In a sense, "the what happening" persists.

The kind of language employed by Selvon in the sequel is well worth exploration, in particular relation to how the use of language can shape a character's interaction with society and pass a comment on how much he has changed, transformed or improved over a certian course of time. Upon Thieme's inquiry into the techniques employed by Selvon and the new language that shaped the characters in an English setting, Selvon replies that he feels language to be "tied up so much with the characters that it is part of them", and language is the only medium through which "the type of people you are talking about" can be described. He contiuues with an analogy, stating that this method is similar to having characters speak, turning an oral image into a visual one, as if "the page becomes a tape recorder". (Thieme 73)

Although Selvon is well aware of the affinities between an exploration of language and communicating a social reality as it relates to their postcolonial situation, his exploration with language differs in quality and resonance compared to the "fabricated" language used in *The Lonely Londoners*. Selvon comments on the specific change by stating that what he was striving to do was "to try and push the language form [...] used in *The Lonely Londoners* as far as [he] possibly could." (Thieme 74) He admits to having extended his experimentation with language form to convey the

development in Moses Aloetta through "all these years that he has been living in London." He decides to use "a kind of archaic English together with the dialogue format and see how two would combine." He believes "it has worked very well." (Thieme 74)

It is possible to infer from Selvon's own words and comments on the sequel is that the spontaneity with which he wrote *The Lonely Londoners*, expressed in his own words, "it all came naturally to me", is somewhat interchanged with a gradual but more conscious "fabrication" in *Moses Ascending* (Thieme 74). This partly stems from the necessity of adapting the change of tone and language of the characters to their new environment. According to Nazareth, however, this conscious effort also stems from the desire of a more experienced writer, who, after a series of successful publications, is trying to live up to the standards set by himself (86).

By becoming a memoir writer, Moses conforms to and simultaneously subverts the Eurocentric norms and forms of literature. While writing in a genre that is originally European, Moses employs a language quite unlike the "Standard", subverting the genre altogether. Thus, Selvon manages to appropriate, in a subtle and sophisticated manner, the form of language to a literary style formerly reserved to a certain group in the British society.

It is necessary at this point to refer to the changes underwent by Moses in order for him to adapt to "the environment" and the historical context the novel was written in. As a novel topically dealing with the economic and the racial issues of 1970s, *Moses Ascending* was written in a time when two major changes were taking place in the lives of immigrants. On the one hand, the members of the Windrush generation were getting more and more access to prosperity, hinted at by Moses's becoming a landlord through his purchase of a dilapidated house, while on the other, the racial tension, characterizing the Britain of the 1970s and foreshadowed by the idea of "swelling the population by one" in *The Lonely Londoners*, was more profusely felt.

Selvon himself descibes *Moses Ascending* as a means of registering progress within the migrant West Indian population or the society at large, as well as improvement in the very society through the development of rapport between groups and races (Nasta 70). This vision held by Selvon underpins Selvon's postcolonial agenda, which once again crisscrosses the boundaries of Modernism through his

expression of postcolonial truths pertaining to social and economic change with a form of language that is even more "fabricated" and experimented with than his first attempt in the earlier novel.

Moses, confronted with a post-colonial challenge in the face of constant demographic, social and economic change, finds that he must readjust himself to fit in with all of them at once. The end of the 1960s witnesses a demographic change in relation to the origins of the immigrant population, shifting to Asian groups, expressed in the novel through his Pakistani tenant, who are stereotyped as the "Paki" in the novel. Apart from the new arrivals, there is also a new population of the children of the older immigrants, born and raised in Britain, therefore having a stronger claim to "Britishness" and a different outlook from that of their parents. In other words, they may never have had a "worm's view of life" in the first place.

Moses is no longer the major character whom the "boys" turned to for protection and shelter, welcoming those new arrivals in London, but an embittered, cynical landlord, both psychologically and economically aloof from the man at the close of the previous novel, where the outlook towards such issues as estrangement, racism and the commodification of the immigrant still bore a more positive and hopeful tone with a touch of warmth established through a ten-page prose poem.

One of the reasons for such pessimism is a historical development, featuring Enoch Powell's notorious speech against people of colour. The "old diplomacy" of *The Lonely Londoners* is substituted by a struggle to address how to handle the immigrants already settled in Britain, with both the state and the public regarding the non-white citizen as a problem to be solved and discarded. Certain legal measures were taken to this end towards the end of 1960s, gaining the support and the sympathy of the public on grounds that they ensured the continuation of a national identity and social integrity, while aggravating anti-racist groups struggling for the basic rights of the citizens of color.

All of these political and social changes along with anti-racial movements find expression in *Moses Ascending*. Selvon, however, is no advocate of such movements, depicting the weaknesses and inconsistencies of the Black Power Movement, which in his view, falls short of providing solutions to the fundamental problems posed by the society. In 1979, he publishes a paper entitled "Three into One Can't Go: East Indian,

Trinidadian and West Indian", expressing his uneasiness with black nationalism evident in his cynical remark, "we best hads don't talk too loud before we antagonize the Black people."

It is, therefore, not surprising that Moses Aloetta, "the welfare officer" of the 50s, is now a cynical figure, who wants to have nothing to do with "black power, nor white power, nor any [...] power but my own". He enters in his memoirs, "I just want to live in peace and reap the harvest of the years of slavery I put in Britain. I don't want people like you around, to upset the apple cart." (*MA* 65) "It is, ..." he adds, "...always your own people who let you down in the end." So, Moses has possessions and exults over his "Chippendale furniture and Wedgwood crockery, albeit third hand, with which [he] had furnished the rooms" (*MA 30*).

The affinities between Moses and Robinson Crusoe in the text are too straightforward to be missed, as Moses describes himself taking on a "man Friday, a white immigrant name Bob from somewhere in the Midlands." (*MA* 4) Moses further describes Bob as "a willing worker eager to learn the ways the Black man." (4) trying to "indoctrinate" him by advising him to read the Bible when he could find the time, and telling him to avoid consuming too much alcohol. The obvious allusion to Robinson Crusoe's colonization of Friday resonates with Louise Bennett's well-known lines, "colonization in reverse".

What surges through the narrative, however, is a Moses who is neither capable of becoming a true Crusoe or moving on with the role of Friday. As Thieme puts it, he is a man stuck between two worlds, a hybrid subject with a longing for an English identity that is not possible for him to fully attain and with rudimentary loyalties to his Caribbean descent too inherent to be discarded. (95) He waits or struggles for a breakthrough and his efforts to "kill two books with one pen, as it were" proves fruitless, attesting to his ambivalent position both as an author/narrator and a character.

The language employed by Moses is a highly self-conscious one: He boasts to his old friend Galahad, "I will knock them in the Old Kent Road with my language alone [...] My very usage of English will have them rolling in the aisles." (*MA* 78) While composing his "Memoirs", Moses mixes Creole with a form of "Standard" English, which is anachronistic, and the final product amounts to nothing but his own unique register. In the following quotes, for example, the Creole of *The Lonely*

Londoners is intespersed with an archaic English, creating an effect of peculiarity with style due to the incongruity between content and language. He uses an archaic register of English to convey quotidian realities: "I am not getting any younger and cannot [...] scout the streets of London as in the days of yore." (*MA* 26) or "If I had had time, I would of said, 'Unhand me, knave, but instead I say, 'Let me go man, I ain't done nothing". (*MA* 36) "Galahad left me with a nasty taste in my mouth. I could withsand the slings and arrows of misfortune, but when it come to my penmanship, your treading on dangerous ground." (*MA* 43-44) Besides these obvious anachronisms, the dissociative qualities of Moses's narrative style and language include a parody of Islamic discourse, ambivalent references ot Greek mythology, use of slang words, Crole proverbs, Calypso allusions as a part of a "uniquely hybrid register" that Selvon employs. (Thieme 97)

Despite Selvon' s confessions that Moses reflects certain common qualities of his creator and the "extended " language employed "has worked very well", Moses cannot escape his criticism through the Black Power activist Brenda, who, as described by Moses, is "so high, she didn't sound like them woman what try put on English [...] but sound like the real thing." (*MA* 23) Brenda advises Moses "to stick to oral communication and leave the written word to them what knows their business." (*MA* 105) Brenda provides further feedback by:

> Your conjunctions and your hyperboles are all mixed up with your syntax, and your figures of speech fall only between 10 and 20. Where you have punctuation, you should have allegory and predicates, so that the pronouns appear in the correct context. (MA 105)

Although Brenda's language is not without its faults, there is an element of truth in her advice: Moses's endeavour to write in a literary style that is formerly reserved to the English born in Hall's terms falls short of reflecting the truth. Moses's venture to "knock them down in the Old Kent Road with [his] language alone" are only mannerisms that prove bizarre in the end.

Moses, therefore, is more satisfactorily interpreted either if he is taken as a representative of a culturally dislocated section of the society, especially the first generation of immigrants, exiled from his Caribbean roots as well as the recent social and political developments or as a form of discourse hybridized to allow him to 47iterat his own individuality through a uniqe language and an outdated form of writing. Either

way, the search 48iterat self through 48iteratüre, a theme that closes the previous book, is both parodied by Moses's appropriation of his "Master's language" and is elevated for his search for a unique identity through experimentation with language. Once again, linguistic experimentation allows Selvon to convey postcolonial comments.

So, what resemblance does the Moses at the end of *The Lonely Londoners*, looking at back at the boats on Thames, wondering whether he could ever write "a book what everyone would buy", bears to the Moses of *Moses Ascending*? He is still the same Moses who is in search of an identity through writing and everything comes secondary to the writing of his memoirs and becoming a well-known, prolific writer. After Brenda's censure, Moses, believing that "a masterpiece was coming" is "stultified" by Brenda's vicious assessment of [his] work. (*MA* 114) When Brenda strikes the final blow: "You should be ashamed to be the author of such an ignorant unschooled piece of work." When coupled with Brenda's criticism, Galahad's reproval of Moses's subject matter leaves Moses hurt, uncertain about himself and dejected:

> I try to put down a few words, but I couldn't write anything. I just sit down there, morose and dejected […] But in truth, I was brooding. Suppose, just suppose, that there was an element of truth in what Galahad say? Suppose, when I finish and ready to present my Memoirs, nobody want to read them? Suppose he was right and I should write about Black Power and ESN schools and the new breed of English what are taking over the country? (*MA* 52)

The episode with Brenda, along with the above passage, eloquently conveys Moses's ambition for writing is closely associated with his sense of self, especially his self-worth, and "the joy and satisfaction" of owning a house comes only secondary to becoming a successful writer. This is evident in his reaction to his final loss and failure. The lighthearted humor that he displays at the end is no match for the deeply felt hurt upon Brenda's and Galahad's criticism of his *Memoirs*, promising that he will establish himself in "the highest flat in the house", sneeringly determined to defy the notion that "it is the white man who ends up Upstairs and the Black man downstairs." (*MA* 149)

Connected to the theme of "the white man" ending up upstairs is Selvon's conception that social elevation and linguistic incapacity are not two qualities that co-exist. After Bob, who is not known to be a man of letters heretofore, gets the highest flat in the house, he gets more and more interested in the particulars of the English grammar, asking Moses a series of questions as to the conjugation of verbs or inquiring into how one can "tell which is transitive when the pluperfect is irregular, and the past

participle superlative" (148) It is clear that for Selvon language is an indicator of social status and for Bob, it is only the language barrier he must surmount, a bitter remark communicated through the skin color of Bob.

Moses pretends not to know the answer to the questions of Bob, in a manner that "reinforces […] the irony of earlier Selvon narrators who keep a knowing silence as a part of the desire to gain personal advantage" (Wyke 103). One cannot help but remember the narrator of *The Lonely Londoners* and wonder if the shift in narration from third person point of view to first person point of view bears any special significance, especially when Moses's tone and perception come closer and closer to those of the prose passage and Moses finally yearns to become a writer himself. In the final chapter, it is almost impossible to distinguish whether the narrator has already become Moses.

The change in the point of view bears another significance for *Moses Ascending*: *Moses Ascending*, may, after all, be the *Memoirs* of Moses. The final observation leads the reader to believe so as well:

> One final word. It occurs to me that some Black Power militants might choose to misconstrue my Memoirs for their own purposes, and put the following moral to defame me, to wit: that after the ballad and the episode, it is the white man who ends up Upstairs and the black man who ends up Downstairs. But I have an epilogue up my sleeve. (*MA* 149)

Which memoirs could those be that Moses apprehendeds will be "miscontrued" by the activists? Are they the ones that lack an epilogue that Moses claims he will write next, or are they the events and experiences related by Moses that are worth being published and read by the Black Power activists? Either way, the story presented is publishable material with language being an indispensable part of it.

When Selvon's depiction of Moses's economic "ascent" is taken as a metaphor for his private pursuit of becoming a published author, Moses's Memoirs "become a point of convergence for the social and fictional worlds reflected in the novel." (Wyke 104) As Moses's private and public worlds converge, so do the social and fictional ones which for Moses is a means of a search for a unique self and a unique voice. Moses does not want to be misinterpreted by the Black Power activists, attempting to draw a fine line between reality and fiction but contributing to the irony as to how such an ideal can be achieved when such a line is drawn. The final moral of the "ballad and the episode" furthers the irony that even after revealing one's private life for the world

to see, merging the private and the public, it is still the color of one's skin that determines success.

The irony of Moses as a narrator/author leaves the reader with questions: Could the epilogue mentioned by Moses be a reference to the sequel, *Moses Migrating* and the book "that chronicled" the early "colourful days" in Britain, *The Lonely Londoners*? Suddenly, fiction is intermingled with authorial biography, revealing multiple strata from which the narrative could be viewed. First, there is the stratum belonging to Moses, the social ascender, trying to climb the ladder to the highest flat and loses it to the illiterate white immigrant while dealing with all the political and social changes some of which are staged in his very household. The second one is the realm of Moses, the memoir writer, who is, to an extent, able to alienate himself from the "hussle of the world" and devote himself fully to the writing of his memoir. The third level belongs to Selvon, himself, as an author who aims to portray social and political realities at his own disposal.

Moses's entry "None of this narrative is fiction: If I lie, I die." (*MA* 98) further complicates the irony and the question of verisimilitude, leaving the reader both skeptical and reassured that the narrative is real in the first place. The reader is left in a position to take Moses's point of view for real, but have an eye out for those events that may not reflect reality, attributing it to Moses's fictitious world: "It might sound so but I can't help if the people in this city live in a dream world and refuse or accept the very things that happen under their noses." (*MA* 99) So, Moses's memoirs is the real world reflecting the reality, and the people of London retreat to their own dream worlds, each living their own visions.

The clash between Moses's private and public pursuits, between becoming a published author by means of reclusion which will result in a search for self and becoming a person actively involved in the recent social and political developments echoes the Tennysonian dilemma expressed in his famous poem "Lady of Shallott". Galahad's rebuke, "How do you expect to stay lock up in your room, don't go and investigate and do research, and take part in what is happening and write book?" (*MA* 43) It is interesting that "the what happening" which characterizes the previous work has turned into "what *is* happening" for some characters at least. For Moses, on the other hand, he knows his ropes no longer and he finds it harder and harder to grope his

way through.

Moses resorts to several alternative solutions for resolving such a dilemma, such as observing people around him like Farouk and Faizull, "scouting amongst black citizens [which] might prove fruitfull" (*MA* 88) or watching TV for inspiration. However, no matter how much he struggles, he is unable to fulfill his vision, as he summs up in his own words, "all that come like a dream the way how circumstances continue to pester me and keep me away from my ambition [...] It would appear that Fate would intervene everytime I am in the clear..." (*MA* 109) Beneath the superficial jovial and carefree atmosphere, there is a profound sense of disappointment and loss. He is only left empty handed with only the quest and no end.

This is exactly what Selvon, or "Fate", would want for Moses. Selvon does not present the reader with a simple character on a quest to fulfill his dreams, whether private, public or both. Selvon presents Moses within a social and physical context, making it a primary determiner of how events should ensue. Selvon's depiction of the social, ethnic and political particulars through Moses provides insight into the sensory world in which the story is set as well as the interaction between group and individual behavior and the irony created thereof. While the character's sense of space makes room for sociological commentary, sometimes contributing to the depiction of a series of funny events, it also allows Selvon to construct a picture of the narrator's psychological state.

In the passage, for example, in which Moses philosophizes about how people of colour toil by performing fundamental tasks in the social or economic setting, Selvon intermingles humor with sociological commentary, mostly caused by irony on the part of the narrator and the distance between the situations of the speaker and the people he ventures to describe. As Moses lies comfortably in his warm bed, he muses in bed, reflecting on his memories of rising early to go work, absolved that he is now from such an obligation:

> Strangers to London – even bona fide Londoners too – have been heard to remark that they can't see the hordes of black faces what supposed to clutter the vast metropolis. Ah, but at what time of day do they make this observation? If they had to get their arses out of bed in the wee hours, if they had to come out of cosy flat and centrally-heated hallways to face the onslaught of an icy north wind and trudge through the sludge and grime of a snow-trampled pavement, they would encounter black man and woman by the thousands. (*MA* 12)

The passage continues for another five pages in which Moses confides in the reader that "black people [...] have the privilege of rising earliest to breathe the freshest air, "stride the streets" as if he is "in charge of the city whilst the rest of the Britain is still abed" (12). He philosophizes that he is a "pioneer", doing the all the important albeit seemingly tirivial chores, such as "polishing the brass and chrome, washing the pots and pans [...] As he stands, may-hap in some small wall-to-wall mansion" (13), leaning on his broom or vacuum cleaner, through his dreams, he is the sovereign of all that he "surveys", the work he is entitled to do by race also entitles him to dreams, as if the is the owner of the whole world while the rest is still in "slumberland". The tone and philosophical depth results in irony, especially due to the discrepancies between the social world of the citizens of color and the line of thought and ideology that occupy Moses's mind.

The language employed to create such an effect of irony resonates with the hybrid language, a combination of Standard Language and Creole, used in the narration of *The Lonely Londoners*. According to Warner-Lewis, whereas the episodic narrative style in *The Lonely Londoners* corresponds to the calypso format, in *Moses Ascending* he resorts to another calypso technique, the anecdotal kaiso which is characterized by a humorous and ironic final twist of fate. The loosely connected thematic episodes, or "bands", are adjoined to form a "macrocosmic festival, Carnival", allowing Selvon to recreate the "exuberance and eclecticism" found in the Carnival pageant through linguistic "manipulation", or "linguistic extravaganza" in short. (60) According to Wyke, on the other hand, Selvon's method of juxtaposing loose episodes, his inability to sustain a grave attitude or his swift transtion in linguistic register between episodes could also correspond to Menippean satire, a miscalleneous form that is held together by loosely constructed episodes that center around the dialogues of talkative pedant involving "philosophical ideas supported by ludicrous intellectual attitudes." (106)

In the passage in which Moses eulogizes black people, especially their lives and their work, Selvon gives a loosely connected narration through Moses, who addresses the reader as if he is not truly aware of or appreciate their existence and the roles they play in society. Moses's tone and diction in doing so, however, results in a discrepancy between the social situation described and the choice of words that tread

the boundaries of pompousness. He struts between levels of the linguistic continuum, high, low or medium, "unconsciously paralleling his own inner shiftiness." (Wyke 107) After all, he is the one who is still in bed, even if not in "slumberland" with the rest of the world, in contrast to the black people who need to rise early as he describes; he is the one who has high expectations of becoming a landlord but who ends up where he starts or strives to write a book "what everyone will want to read" but is violently ridiculed for his incompetency in handling the English language.

Irony in this passage is intensified through linguistic diversity employed in the passage. For example, conventional subject predicate formations ("he can breathe the freshest air") are mingled with archaic diction ("whilst the rest of Brit'n is still abed"), with the contraction creating an effect of orality and intensifying irony, alliteration ("he strides the streets"), parallelism juxtaposed with a colloquial style (He is Manager... He is Chief Executive... he is Superintendent... he is Landlord... He ain't reached the stage yet...), dialect ("as a pioneer what preparing the way"), subject-predicate patterns characteristic of Trinidadian Creole, ("Great thoughts does come to men..."), apostrophe ("Oh, the ingratitude, the unreasonableness..."), even Shakespearean cues, ("Fie, I say").

Thus, the narrator of *Moses Ascending* is no longer the confident, self-assured West Indian persona of *The Lonely Londoners*, confident with the knowledge of the world, the events, the people, making generalizations, passing judgements. His language is no longer the strong Trinidadian dialect but has been modified, or even tampered with, winking at the hybridization or the decreolization of language. In the opening passages, for example, it is possible to find standard, or even elevated, language form intermingled with Creole grammar, standard disregard for subject predicate agreement, giving the reader the impression that the writer has not yet been able to make a choice between either mingling with the dominant society or preserving an identity, belonging to the "boys" and passing one last "ballad". Such an opposition also gives the narrator a chance to distance himself equally from both parties and direct his criticisms at his fellow countrymen as needed, resulting in comments like, "It just goes to say how right I was all the time to have nohing to do with the black brotherhood." (*MA* 45)

The language employed for the narration of the following passages that make

up the novel still communicates a sense of displacement, with passages written totally in Creole, often peppered with slangs and colloquialisms, juxtaposed with paragraphs written in Standard English, a quality not found in the earlier work. According to Wyke, this non-uniform usage of language can best be accounted for under the heading "experimental"; however, given the satirical purposes of Selvon's narrative, such an "erratic and uneven" usage of language also allows room for parody, especially with a Swiftian undertone in his descriptions of Oriental clothing hanged in the room for drying (108):

> They did rig up a clothes line right across the room and it was full of saris, turbans, fezzes, dhotis, poshteens, lungis, shantungs, caftans, and other oriental items of dress that I had to look up in the dictionary afterwards. (*MA* 94)

Selvon's more satirical and less optimistic tone in this sequel could be attributed to the afore-mentioned changes in the British society and economy, and it could be that Selvon had to create his character(s) to reflect those changes, language being the most prominent. The account of the black rally, described over five pages, Moses's consequential imprisonment, references to the activities of feminist groups are all conundrums for Moses and perhaps for Selvon himself, since it presents him a challenge to appropriately represent all of these characters in the story linguistically.

In order to plausibly reflect the language spoken by these people, Selvon might have had to allow himself greater flexibility as to the language patterns, combining or isolating elements of both Standard English and dialect. After all, the languge spoken by the new generation of West Indians had less affinity with the dialect spoken by the first generation, which Selvon most likely identified with and belonged to. It is quite understanble, then, that Selvon turns to his cultural and linguistic roots in the sequel to *Moses Ascending*, shifting the locale from London to Trinidad, to pass a final comment on British colonialism as she hands over her authority to the "natives".

As mentioned earlier, Bhabha views hybridity with its positive connotations, allowing the colonized to become immersed in both cultures. For Selvon, on the other hand, the postcolonial issue of hybridity rests ambivalent. In the same vein, mimicry is not portrayed as a positive force that allows “the Lonely Londoners” to become a part of the society but to be further cast away from it. In the sequel to *Moses Ascending*, Selvon tests the idea of hybridity and mimicry as a positive force that unites two cultures and poses the question whether it is a force that unites or divides.

CHAPTER FOUR

MOSES MIGRATING: BOTH SIDES OF A COIN

If *The Lonely Londoners* is the story of a whole generation of West Indians, who, despite their status as British citizens, find themselves frustrated in the face of inadequate housing, widespread discrimination, whether institutionalized or informal, *Moses Ascending* is the story of how they have changed and what they have transformed into, with the central character utterly bewildered with all this change. Whereas Moses of *The Lonely Londoners* tries to extract beauty and optimism out of his frustration, Moses of *Moses Ascending* finds himself bitter and at a loss, somewhat attesting to Duncan Sandy's 1967 assertion that "The breeding of millions of half-caste children would merely produce a generation of misfits and create national tension." (Kureishi 11) Wheras the majority of the non-whtie community turn to an assertion of their identity through their skin color, Moses does not opt to become part of such a quest. Instead, he turns to literature and language to battle the idea of becoming a "misfit". The type of language Moses employs in the writing of his memoirs, however, is neither acceptable by his own kinsman nor by the mainstream British society. He employs a hybridized form of language to express a hybridized form of identity. Although the issue of language for people of the West Indies is already a complicated issue, Selvon further complicates it by making Moses adopt a language that draws on many sources, old and new. Selvon does so not only to point to the postcolonial position of Moses and other members of his generation, but to take his experimentation with language and Creole, started in *The Lonely Londoners*, to the next level.

As Hall points out, 1970s is a time period in which immigrants in Britain stop wondering if they will ever return home and come to terms with the fact that they are not in England as part of a "temporary sojourn" (52), but the question of not returning home is as complicated as the question of returning home, or whether such a return is ever possible. The search for home has always been apparent for Moses; in *The Lonely Londoners*, for example, it is exemplified in the form of a Sunday gathering, taking place in Moses's apartment, whereas in *Moses Ascending*, the idea of home is equated with economic ascent and prosperity, symbolized by landlordship. In the sequel, *Moses Migrating*, the quest for home is still an issue; having lost his penthouse, Moses decides to return home for the Trinidad Carnival and ends up in the "upside down"

world of a hotel room, a "tourist" in his very "own country".

Nasta equates the hotel room image with artificiality, unreality, with "the hollowness and disorientation of post-colonial identity", explaining that Selvon expounds on "the metaphorical possibilities of rooms and houses"; however, it is neither a basement nor an attic, but a hotel room in the case of *Moses Migrating* (6). The setting, and the creation of a sense of space, is very important for all three novels for the communication of post-colonial realities. Whereas Selvon makes use of imagery in his desciptions of dwellings both in *The Lonely Londoners* and *Moses Ascending* to eloquently express the social means through which non-white citizens lead their lives, in *Moses Migrating*, the sense of place gains a new dimension and becomes a new medium for exploration. As his world becomes more and more unsettled, unpredictable and threatening, ending up even at a lower point than where he starts, Moses needs a new vision, a place where he can call home and assert his identity. Language again plays a major part in this quest. As the new generation of immigrants adapt to Standard English and the creole forms used by their parents incrementally recede to the background, all that is left for Moses is to return home where language still develops as people get more and more educated and literate. Selvon explores the possibility of returning home in *Moses Migrating* once again through language, this time not only through experimentation with language but through revisiting the modernist concepts of homelessness, uprootedness, the loss of centre with the sense of space turning into a new sight for investigation.

Moses does not only end up where he has started in social or economic but in emotional terms as well; in that, he now harbors the same elation he might have shared with Tolroy or Galahad on his journey to London, evident in Galahad's farewell, "At last you are realising your dreams. And you will be in Trinidad for Carnival." (*Moses Migrating* 9) Moses's nostalgia is, reminiscent of the kind of nostalgia felt by the narrator of *The Lonely Londoners*, perhaps reinforcing the idea of ending up where one has started, "leaving you standing in the same spot." (*TLL* 125) Added to Moses's emotional status is a sense of alienation, however, exressed in no further than the opening lines, "I have been living here for more than twenty years and I have more black enemies than white." (*MM* 1)

Apart from the desire to take part in the carnival and do away with his sense of

alienation through a communal experience, Moses has another item on his agenda:

> to show the outlanders in the Caribbean that Brit'n was not only on her feet, but also still the onlyest country in the world where good breeding and culture still come before ill-gotten gains for call of the flesh. I would go forth with a stout heart and proclaim that Johnny Walker was stilll going strong, that the British bulldog still had teeth, that Britania still ruled the waves. (*MM* 30)

Are these the words of a Moses who has turned into a true Briton to the bone, competent enough to prove all that is good about the British way of life, driven by a passion to become "an ambassador of […] good manners", or is Moses still the same dreamer misplaced not only culturally and spatially this time, but temporally as well, since the whole world knows at the time about the imperial condition of Britain as a "ruler of the waves"? Once again in this last novel of the trilogy, language becomes a site for Selvon through which he can explore such a dividedness, reminiscent of Derek Walcott's "far cry", through the eyes and tongue of Moses Aloetta, who, despite all the hardship he has encountered, has not moved an inch further from the lofty dreamer he once was, standing on the banks of Thames and dreams of becoming a writer. Although Moses has no such intentions of becoming a writer in this novel, he is still the romantic dreamer. His quest this time is that of becoming an ambassador on behalf of Britain, without ever questioning how fit he is for such a position. The languge he uses in the narration of such an experience reflects the ambiguity and hybridity of his position, since he feels the need to "sound" like a Briton, but as he comes closer to the culture he was born into, the desire to be one of the islanders surges through with the native dialect being the most prominent aspect of adopting such an identity.

Language, therefore, comes to signify a lot more than the expression of an identity or site to inquire into the possibilities of experimentation; it becomes a medium, a setting on its own, in which feelings and attitudes towards the homeland are embedded. It reflects the trajectory of where Moses has started in *The Lonely Londoners*, how his dreams have evolved over the years and what has become of them. Moses, the narrator, of *Moses Migrating* is acutely aware of the differences between the setting of the two worlds, the extent to which the festive occasions in London and in Trinidad can vary, and he reflects his observations through the words: "When is Cup Final in London you have to battle a barrage of boozers before you even glimpse the bar. When is Carnival time in Trinidad you are lucky to get a whiff of liquor, 57ol ive masses who want to 57ol ive" (*MM* 152)

The Moses of *The Lonely Londoners* is a man full of potential, full of dreams that he feels he might fulfill one day, although it is evident in the final chapter, written in the stream of consciousness technique, Moses is living in a dream world where people of color are commodified rather than seen as individual who are there 58ol ive up to their dreams. The Moses of *Moses Ascending*, however, is a man torn between his dreams, namely that of becoming the writer of "a book what people would buy" and a world he no longer fully understands nor feels a part of. The Moses of *Moses Migrating* is again a man torn between, this time, his native land, Trinidad, and Britain, although if he was inquired into his country, he would most probably answer "Britain". Thus, the setting plays a distinctive part in reflecting the world Moses believes he lives in and the reality that he "inhabits".

Once again Selvon makes use of language to portray this sense of dividedness and the conflicting worlds he coinhabits, not only between Trinidad and London, but between his dream world and reality. For example, in the passage in which he becomes enamoured with Dorris, "I do not know how much time, nor how it pass. It was only when I feel a hand on my shoulder that I started as if from a dream." (MM 101), the reader is acquianted with how much he can get engulfed in his "dreams". The more he becomes preoccupied with his dreams, the more his language shifts to convey such preoccupations. Upon meeting Dorris, who rejoices over Moses's bouquet of flowers, he shifts to a kind of language, reminiscent of the poetic language of the narrator of *The Lonely Londoners*: "her face alight and sparkling like two pearls of dew […] her face [covered] with the posy and smell[ing] the roses" (*MM* 103). As Moses is in anticipation of a future life with Dorris, he begins to sound more like Moses, the narrator, of *Moses Ascending*, with his dialect intermingled with both Standard Englsih and archaic language, "Was this what I had come to Trinidad for? Was it writ in the stars that this was to be my destiny, and after all my wanderings and adventures that I was to sit in a rocking chair with my slippers on, with a string of little piccanies playing around me?" (*MM* 96).

As his dreams "swell", so do the images and the language he uses to convey them. He begins to form a picture in his head of his future life with Dorris, but in this picture, Moses is not a humble islander or a humble Londoner living in a meagre house. He is once again a landlord, or even more:

> We could have a town-house round the Savannah and just visit the estate Doris felt like it-perhaps we could intall Tanty in charge there, give her a nice little bungalow 59ol ive in. We might have a couple of cars, but I wouldn't like to drive, nor let Dorris, we might find a teetotal chauffeur if we could find one… (*MM* 96)

His insistence on "teetotal" for *teetoler* marks a disposition in Moses's mind to become an islander, a Trinidadian instead of a Londoner. As the dreams of Moses become lofty, so does his language to reflect his state of mind:

> Our protective feelings, our gentle considerations, our yen to sacrifice, everything for a sweet smile or a single touch of the hand […] what has happend to all of these beautiful and lovely emotions in this world that we live in today? Are people really so bitter and hardened and disillusioned, that they are blind to the flash of a hummingbird's wings in flight, to the heady, intoxicating perfume of the hibiscus, to the sun setting in colorful splendour over the green mountains of Venezuela. (*MM* 99)

Once again, Selvon's narrator, Moses this time as opposed to the heterodiegetic narrator of *The Lonely Londoners*, resorts to lyricism in such a way that the overall response to the passage is almost tantamount to that of reading Romantic poetry, a Wordsworthian attitude of questioning what man "has made of man". Repetitive phrases and rhetorical questions all contribute to this lyricism, underscoring Moses's criticism of people for turning a deaf ear to the beauty and joy that can easily be found in the nuances in the nature, be it the wings of a bird or the smell of a small flower. Moses addresses our sense of touch in the opening lines and to our senses of sight and smell through the imagery presented in the final lines of the passage, just as a poem would.

What could Selvon's objective be in equipping Moses with the capacity to make such poetic utterances and linguistically flawless sentences? As Moses's dreams become lofty, so does his language to reflect such a state of mind, as if his dreams feed on such philosophical and poetic language. However, just as this style of register is not his native "land", these dreams are not his either. In following section, Moses sets himself an agenda which includes "expounding on the theme" of "aiding Brit'n" through his costume in the carnival, getting his photograph printed on the papers and getting Dorris to tailor the Britannia costume. (*MM* 105) As he gets more down to earth with his goals, so does his philosophy and the language that accompanies it. "Employers dream of sitting in the manager's chair; the manager dreams of a cruise on his yacht; the yachtsman dreams of becoming a millionair; the millionaire dreams of becoming a multimillionaire." (*MM* 115) He conludes that the one who is content

with dressing up as a penny 60ccent60 carnival is the happiest one among all, and that "sitting on [one's] side", sipping Scotch is no use, "for actions speak louder than words". (*MM* 115) He once again mixes old English with new, dialect with Standard.

Moses comes back into contact with the reality, which is a yardstick against which his dreams can be tested as well as his language. This relocation of Moses to his native land both linguisticallly and geographically allows Selvon to explore the issues of hybridity and exile upon returning to his homeland, since the context of the real world is very much dependent on cultural and geographical definitions. The decreolization of Moses's language, his insistence on formal use on occasions that do not necessarily call for it as well as his use of dialectal patterns and idioms interspersed with formal English all attest to his sense of displacement and estarangement in his native land and in his dreams.

From a narrative perspective, this sort of linguistic ambiguity may also be taken as a sign of an inward dividedness on the part of the narrator. At the end of *The Lonely Londoners,* the narrator and Moses begin 60ccent60e a world view, coming closer and closer to each other until their voices overlap in *Moses Ascending*. The same dividedness virtually initiates with Moses becoming culturally and socially dislocated in a society he no longer feels he belongs in; metaphorically his home, the safest place in the world for many, turns into the most insecure place for him, a trap on its own. The same sense of belonging is elaborated on through the same trope, home, in the sequel, and accordingly the concept of intermingling Creole with Standard English still persists.

Selvon demonstrates this point in *Moses Migrating* on several occasions. The ambassador of manners as he is, he speaks in a condescending manner to his aunt, Tanty, who is an orange vendor and he is disdained by her as he speaks in a kind of language that sounds more like a tourist than a native islander. The aunt laments, "You sounding strange Moses. You learn to talk like white people? […] You don't sound Trinidadian to me no more, though. Maybe as you been away so long." For a response, Moses's "God forbid" turns into "Yeah, that's it!", claiming that he "wanted to blow the scene with decorum." (*MM* 65-66) It is noteworthy that Moses uses the 60cce "decorum", which is a key 60cce underscoring Moses's predicament, his displacement. For Moses, there is no decorum; he writes in an archaic form of English,

mixes it with Creole English and adds poetic devices on top, interspersed with Standard English forms here and there. Decorum entails anchorage into a certain spot. For Moses, there is no such spot and for Selvon, language becomes the most prominent site for revealing such a profound truth. Another instance where Moses projects this sense of ambivalence and dividedness is the scene between Dorris and Moses in which Moses tries to impress Doris with his property in England. He begins, "You know I got property in England." Doris makes fun of him by commenting, "And no doubt you got a white wife too.", to which Moses replies, "I am not married, if you want to know." (*MM* 89) He is not the same Moses, one of the "boys", a lonely Londoner, but a British with *perfect* English. When Tanty returns with the drinks and sees the two talking, Moses exclaims, "I did nothing to upset her, Tanty.' I say. 'She just resents the fact that I went away to England to better myself." (*MM* 89)

The "I say" part in the narration, instead of "I said" is significant, as it attests to again how Moses oscillates between geographies and ironically how his language forms vary accordingly. Moses, the narrator, is quite comfortable with his present tense usages which also refer to the past in Creole English, but when it comes to a conversation with, Doris, he uses the grammatically correct and standard past form of "do", as in "I did nothing…" It is quite ironic that Moses should use Creole in his "asides" to the reader and use Standard English in his conversation with his fellow Trinidadians *in* Trinidad. As Tanty fusses over Moses's 61ccent, Doris strikes the blow, "Just like white people…", upon which Moses shifts once again to his odd hybrid language, inserting a misplaced subject pronoun to sound more Trinidadian (as in "like we") into the language of an elite: "I could talk like we when I want to. It's just that I am a man of many parts." (*MM* 90)

Whereas Moses's speech is an invaluable source of amusement and mirth for Tanty, for Selvon, it is another instance where people need to stop and think once again as to what bitter reality lies beneath the surface. If Moses *can* talk like "we" whenever he wants, then why would he choose not to? The key question here is whether it is a matter of choice to speak in dialect or not. It is a common phenomenon in sociolinguistic terms to modify one's accent and speech patterns according to his addressee. In Moses's case, one might expect him to speak like a Trinidadian in Trinidad and like an Englishman in London. Alternatively, he might choose to assert

his identity and speak with an accent in London and in Standard English in Trinidad to impress his fellow countrymen as to how he has "bettered" himself. He does neither. Both in London and in Trinidad, his language is a unique mixture of Creole and Standard English and a few other things. He sounds odd in England, and he sounds odd in Trinidad. He is culturally and geographically displaced which is reflected in his language. The episode in which Moses has difficulty with buying hotdogs and some beverages is another instance in which Selvon resorts to the use of Creole to communicate the idea of misplacement; however, this time Creole becomes a barrier for Moses rather than a means of asserting identity. Moses wants to buy "mauby", a local drink, and goes to the cashier to buy his beverage, but he cannot. The cashier keeps asking him, "What for?"; Moses tries to explain the girl exclaims, "I just told you!" and Moses passes the final judgement, "She talk like she was talking to a dummy." (*MM* 81) This kind of a conversation is held in numerous spots around the world at this very moment between tourists and cashiers. Moses is a tourist in his homeland; and this time it is the language barrier that labels him as such.

The overall impression on Moses at the end of this conversation is one of "restlessness, depression, and irritability, not necessarily in that order…" resulting in an inquiry into whether he is "a mad dog or an Englishman." (*MM* 83) This marks a climax in Moses's position in Trinidad. Is he a tourist, or a native; a Trinidadian, or a Londoner? He once again philosophizes about his position, once again through beverages that are symbolically British or Trinidadian:

> What about all the things you miss when you was in England, besides a glass of frothy mauby, which is out of fashion any way. Are you not now, at this very moment, among your countrymen, and do you mean to say that you do not know a single soul, male, or female, or a juvenile, or even a tot, in all these crowds? (*MM* 83)

Moses longs for a drink that is no longer fashionable in Trinidad. The image of home he has harbored all this time is no match for the reality. His dreams about the future nor memories of the past can culturally or socially locate Moses. He is among his "countrymen" but he feels he is on a strange land. His reference to the modernist concept of loneliness among crowds is significant and subtle; in that, he is not only a lonely soul among people but he is a loner among his fellow countrymen.

As Moses starts to "wend" his way to the old neighborhood that he grew up in, he comes into contact with his childhood memories; as he wanders around "the hillside

with broken down houses where reputedly the worst and poorest elements of the city dwelt […] for the first time I begin to feel as if I come back home in truth. It was in this section of Port of Spain that I grow up." (*MM* 85) It is the first time Moses ever feels as if he is back home, and it is the power of the setting that evokes such a feeling of restoration. Moses reminisces about how he would pitch "marbles at the dusty backyards," "roll hoops or bicycles wheels without the tyre", or "climbing mango trees". (*MM* 86) He feels at home, because he is in contact not with people but with places that he lived in before he *migrated* to London and the language he uses to reflect his experience is sincere and heartfelt. He again juxtaposes the Creole English with Standard forms, especially through his use of the past tense, as in "dwelt", the Standard past form of the verb "dwell" as opposed to "grow up" which is used in the present tense to refer to the past. As Moses tries to draw a line between his old self and the new one, he once again mixes his two distinct registers, but this time there is a seamless transition between the two as Moses feels more and more at home.

Moses's decision to return home, prompted by Enoch Powell's encouragement of immigrants to return to their homelands, is an important consideration at this point. Although Moses writes a letter addressed to Powell for sponsorship, his true motive for returning to Trinidad is to participate in the Carnival. The theme of the Carnival, in this respect, becomes significant in terms of a search for "home". Bakhtin defines the carnival as the second life of the people, who would, for a brief period of time in their lives, enter into the exoteric realm of equality, freedom and community. The carnival was a celebration of a detour from the established order, the suspension of hierarchical ranks, a "feast" of change and renewal. (Rivkin and Ryan 686) The Trinidadian Carnival first came to be celebrated in its present form in the nineteenth century by emancipated slaves and their descendants in much the same way described by Bakhtin including the inversion of roles and parody (Thieme 193).In Moses's case, Moses, after careful consideration, chooses to play Britannia inspired by the Queen's head on a coin. He decides to participate in the Carnival dressed up as a coin. The coin is an important metaphor in Moses's context. Although Tiffin relates the idea of dressing up as a coin to the issue of currency and to the gain of profit through colonization (132), the coin is also significant in terms of an allusion to the expression "both sides of the coin". The coin can attest to two different versions of the same

reality. If carnival is described in terms of a reversal of roles with the endeavour to experience a communal feeling, freedom and change, then one can flip the coin so fast until there are no boundaries between the heads and the tails, the picture merging into one.

Selvon complicates the irony in Moses's situtation by making him want to represent "the mother land" due his unofficial role as an ambassador. Moses does not want to be ironic nor does he want to change roles with anyone. He only wants to show to the participants of the Carnival that "Brit'n still rules the waves" and still on her feet. However, his inclusion of Jeanne, his tenant from the earlier novel, as the white hand-maiden and Bob as a helper impresses the carnival judges and the audience who interpret the costume and the accessories as a take over Britain. So, Moses wins due to a misinterpretation on the part of the judges who take Moses part as a reversal of roles, whereas Moses believes that, through his costume, he is supporting Britain out of loyalty. Such is Moses's predicament, his estrangement and the irony of his trophy.

The concept of the reversal of roles was already alluded to in *Moses Ascending* through a reference to Robinson Crusoe and Friday. Although they start out as master and servant, Selvon restores their positions as tenant and landlord with the "white man" finally "ending up upstairs" and Moses to the basement, his point of origin. By extending this trope in *Moses Migrating*, however, Selvon underscores the idea that Moses reflects both sides of the same coin by becoming a master and a servant, a tenant and the landlord, the Trinidadian and the Londoner.

What Moses cannot achieve through his participation in the Carnival, the reversal of roles, the change, the becoming and the renewal promised by the feast, he is endowed with by Selvon through his hybridized language which allows Moses to become an Englishman and a Trinidadian, at times Chaucer, or Shakespeare at other; here Defoe or Fielding and there Dickens, or even T. S. Eliot. His subheading to *Moses Migrating*, "A Special Preface by Moses Aloetta Esq." like a writer of a canonized work, his Fieldingian address to the reader as "Dear R" or his loneliness among crowds like Prufrock can be cited as examples. Moses is an epitome of homelessness and perpetual exile. He wishes to belong, but does not know where. As Tiffin puts it, he is "a norphan" of the "motherland" and a resident of "the other land". (133)

CONCLUSION

Although there is no consensus on referring to Selvon's Moses novels as a trilogy, since they are also referred to as his London novels, there are numerous patterns, voices, themes and methods that overlap in *The Lonely Londoners*, *Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating* whether considered a trilogy or not.

One of these overlapping patterns and themes is the circular action of the stories. Selvon reiterates on this issue of "standing on the same spot" and ending up where one has started both within and among the novels. No matter how much Moses struggles, he climbs the ladder only to descend later rather than portraying an upward trajectory of constant ascent on a graph.

The reader is reinitiated with the Moses of *The Lonely Londoners*, whom he is left contemplating whether he could ever write a best seller, twenty years later as a landlord in *Moses Ascending*. However, he loses the house he brags about owning in the end in a position not unlike his initial. Another instance of circular action in the overall action is the Moses of *Moses Migrating*, who is full of romantic feelings and nostalgia about his homeland, Trinidad, very much like the narrator of *The Lonely Londoners*.

The same nostalgic feelings are harbored by both the narrator of *The Lonely Londoners*, the first book in the sequel, and *Moses Migrating*, in which the narrator is Moses himself. The sense of alienation that leaves them feeling as if "standing in the same spot" reinforces the idea of ending up at the point of origin. Moses's waiting in Heathrow Airport to be admitted to England upon his return from his long journey to Trinidad can be cited as another instance of such a circular action.

Another important thread that runs through the three novels is the idea of a sense of place, how it is reinforced in each book, and the search for a place one can call home. In *The Lonely Londoners*, characters search for a home by gathering in Moses's apartment, telling each other ballads or the latest news of their fellow Trinidadians. In *Moses Ascending*, however, the search for home is solidified in the trope of landlordship. Moses's eventual loss of his house, therefore, metaphorically represents a loss of home, or simply homelessness. In *Moses Migrating*, the home that Moses attempts to search for is his native land, with Moses longing to go back to Trinidad for the Carnival. The issue of returning home for Moses, who has been away from his

native country for decades, proves a sensitive issue, since he cannot feel at home in Trinidad as he hoped he would. Just as his loss of his house reinforces the idea of loss of home in *Moses Ascending*, the hotel room.

It is significant to note that language serves a crucial part in the portrayal of the quest for home in each book. In *The Lonely Londoners*, just as the concept of home is reinstated through a come together in Moses's apartment, which is likened to Sunday mass, the language kind of language the "boys" in relating their ballads also gives them a sense of home while communicating a sense of homelessness upon consideration of the distance their dialects bear with Standard English. In *Moses Ascending*, Moses searches for his home through the writing of his memoirs. As he becomes a stranger in his own after all the hardship he must endure, language and literatüre becomes the only haven which Moses can resort to in his search for home. Just as he cannot be restored to his home, however, he cannot be restored to a language that he could feel at home with, writing in a hybridized linguistic form of archaic language and Creole English. In *Moses Migrating*, language, the very tool that allows communication, becomes the barrier itself. Moses cannot get himself across to his fellow Trinidadians, not even being able to carry out the simplest transaction.

Moses's dreams are another key factor that weaves each narrative together. The Moses of *The Lonely Londoners* dreams of becoming a writer at the close of the book and the sequel opens with a Moses, despite a twenty-year lapse, who strives to become a memoir writer. After his failure, however, Moses swears to be born from his ashes and concocts another plan: representing Britain in the Trinidad Carnival as an ambassador of good will, which proves quite ironic in the end, once again reinforcing the idea of "standing in the same spot". Language is again another crucial factor in communicating his dreams and underscoring the impossibility of attaining them. In *Moses Ascending*, for example, the impossibility of a dream come true is commuicated through the impossible language employed by Moses. Likewise, in *Moses Migrating*, as Moses's dreams get loftier so does the kind of language he employs, often sounding more like a Romantic or a Renaissance poet, which allows Selvon to communicate the impossibility of Moses's realizing his dreams.

The most important thread that runs through the three novels is Selvon's experimentation with dialect and its ramifications in terms of the intersection between

postcolonial and Modernist writing. As Selvon as well as his fellow Trinidadian writers acknowledge, he is one of the pioneers who employ dialect not only as part of a discourse in his novels but in the narration itself. The narrator's voice overlaps with the voices of the other Trinidadian characters resulting in an entirely new way of storytelling as opposed to the traditional frame narratives in which the narrator is almost always aloof from the characters whose stories he or she undertakes to relate.

It is quite clear from his own assertions as well as the evidence provided with his text that Selvon consciously manipulates language so that he is better able to commuicate his ideas and the social reality behind "the kiff kiff laughter". His experimentation with language also has certain ramifications for style and form.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, for example, he employs a dialect which is not entirely Trinidadian but an amalgamation of Standard English and Trinidadian, resulting in a certain experimentation with linguistic forms. However, the fact that Selvon uses dialect not only for purposes of characterization but for narration as well also results in a certain experimentation with form as well, especially when compared to the mainly European frame narratives in which the narrator is mostly aloof and acts as a commentator rather than an active participant in the events narrated. In the case of the narrator of *The Lonely Londoners*, on the other hand, the narrator is almost a character, one of the "boys" with the only exception that he appears more seasoned than the rest of the characters as if he has seen more of the world then the rest. The narrator's use of dialect also adds to a sense of unity among characters weaving together the individual "ballads" told by the individual characters. This sort of interaction created through the creolization of the English language also allows room for the integraation of folk tales, farcical anecdotes and even racial representation into the narration of the novel.

This process allows Selvon to communicate post-colonial realities through express experimentation and fabrication of a unique dialect, which in essence a way of abrogation of the Standard English forms, is not the only instance of Selvon's method of "making it new". He also brings insight into postcolonial matters by looking at them from new angles. For example, in order to pass a comment on the postcolonial concept of chromatism, the idea that human beings are judged only in reference to their skin colors, Selvon makes use various poetic devices and successfully weaves them

into the texture of his novel. Galahad's apostrophe to his hand is one such example. Another eloquent example is Selvon's use of the stream of consciousness technique in a novel that is narrated in dialect. Although it is possible to regard the introduction of dialect in the narration of passage written in the stream of consciousness technique, it is not the only innovation on the part of Selvon. By extending the boundaries of this exoteric technique to relate the experiences of the minority, Selvon gives "the subaltern" a voice, making them heard by all. However, that he communicates the postcolonial concept of exoticism through this technique again reinforces the possibility of an intersection between the Modernist and postcolonial realm. Selvon's incorporation of orality, another postcolonial term, into his narrative is another instance in Selvon experimentation with form as well as content, especially through the unique language of his narrator, turning the overall effect of the narrative into a ballad or Calypsonian format.

In *Moses Ascending* and *Moses Migrating*, on the other hand, Selvon takes his experimentation with language one step further. In *Moses Ascending*, for example, he incorporates an "archaic" register into Moses's narration of his novel and his memoirs which is written mostly in dialect.

Such an experimentation with language in this particular novel, which deals with the social and economic changes taking place in the 1970s in Britain, can be interpereted as a means by which Moses, as a character who is less in tune with these changes, tries to cope with them, since Moses is no longer "the welfare officer" that the immigrants would turn to for shelter and expedience. Moses is bewildered and embittered in the face of the changes he feels he does not fully understand, thus turning to literature and language as a coping mechanism to restore his peace. His hybrid language, which is a curious blend of archaic language, Standard English and Creole, attests to his ambivalent position, his incapacity to fully belong to a certain territory or group, leaving him utterly frustrated. These points are also significant in terms of the major argument presented in this study, since Selvon once again conveys the postcolonial situation of Moses, a representative character, through his experimentation with language.

In *Moses Migrating*, the hybridized form of language employed by Moses both in narration and as part of his persona bears symbolic quailities. First of all, the unique

register of Standard and Creole English in this last novel symbolizes the hybridized identity of Moses, who is this time at a loss in his native country, unable to communicate with or relate to his own kinsman, representing Moses's perpetual exile in the pithiest way. The variations in Moses's style, which reflect his state of mind as well as the intensity of his dreams, symbolically refer to the impossibility of realization of his dreams. As a third example, Moses's employment of such a "motley" language conveys a carnivalesque attitude, with Moses turning into an array of personas at his will.

Although Bhabha views hybridity and mimicry in terms of a positive force that enables migrant individuals to attain a sense of belonging in the coloniser's world, allowing them to gain a superior position to the colonizer in effect, Selvon's employment of mimicry and hybridity connote a negative attitude in his Moses novels. This might stem partly from his Selvon's own ambivalent position as a postcolonial writer and partly from his ambition to employ Modernist techniques to address such an ambivalence. Either way, he manages to reconcile the hybridized form of language employed in narration through the theme of carnival in the final novel by allowing Moses to become the persona he would like to adopt through his unique register.

Likewise, the weather, in Bhabha's conception, strategically allows postcolonial writers to create an effect of distance, cold weather representing harsh London reality as opposed to the tropical climate found in Trinidad. The London setting furnishes Selvon with the opportunity to explore the binary opposition between two worlds: the one inhabited by his characters and the rest of the city inhabited by *other* Londoners, allowing him to create a fully developed representation that demands a definition of a peculiarly Caribbean conciousness within the British context. It is possible that Selvon uses his own experiences and interaction with London as a catalyst, to borrow T. S. Eliot's words, since he mentions in an interview, "Only in London did my life find its purpose... [It was] the first time that people from all different parts of the Caribbean were meeting." (Nasta 65) It is possible to find a portrayal of such a Caribbean identity in his Moses novels, incarnated through Moses Aloetta and his fellow Trinidadians, who are ready to "colonize England in reverse" in Louise Bennett's terms.

Apart from technical experimentation and stylistic innovation, another aspect of Selvon's Moses novels, also known as his London novels, that intersects with the

boundfaries of Modernist writing is an apparent interest in the metropolitan life and its effects on shaping the lives of individuals, rendering them displaced and at a loss within the society. In *The Lonely Londoners*, this concept is explored through Moses's isolation from his fellow countrymen, despite his efforts to get them settled in the city, expressed in the final passages of the novel. In *Moses Ascending*, it is reiterated by Moses's alienation and bewilderment due to social change discussed earlier. In *Moses Migrating*, on the other hand, the sense of displacement and isolation is taken to the next level with Moses feeling displaced within the community he grew up in. His inability to connect with his own kinsman, symbolized by the dialogue between him and the waitress and his loneliness among crowds, mentioned earlier, can be cited as examples of such a displacement. Through Moses's perpetual exile, his uprootedness and inability to truly feel a part of a society, Selvon's Moses novels crisscross the boundaries of the Modernist novel.

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