A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF SAMUEL SELVON'S *THOSE WHO EAT THE CASCADURA*

(Master's Thesis)

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Kütahya-2006

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Kabul ve Onay

Fatih AKDENİZ'in hazırladığı "A Postcolonial Reading of Samuel Selvon's *Those Who Eat the Cascadura*" başlıklı Yüksek Lisans tez çalışması, jüri tarafından lisansüstü yönetmeliğin ilgili maddelerine göre değerlendirilip kabul edilmiştir.

/ /2006

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Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak sunduğum, "**A Postcolonial Reading of Samuel Selvon's** *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* " adlı çalışmanın, tarafımdan bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım kaynakların kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım.

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/   /2006

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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ÖZET

Bu yüksek lisans tezinin amacı, sömürgecilik sonrası dönemde ortaya çıkan değişim, farklılık ve gelişmelerin Trinidad ve Tobago Cumhuriyeti üzerindeki etkisini ve sözü edilen etkinin Britanya Uluslartopluluğu Edebiyatı altında sınıflandırılan İngilizce yazılan Trinidad edebiyatında ki yansımalarını Samuel Selvon'un *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* adlı romanı üzerinde incelemektir.

Bu yüksek lisans tezi iki bölümden oluşmaktadır.

Tezin birinci bölümü, Trinidad ve Tobago Cumhuriyeti'nin tarihsel belgelere ve resmi kaynaklara dayalı kısa bir tarihçesini vermekte ve konu hakkında teorik bilgileri sunmaktadır. Bu bölüm, farklı teorisyenlerin sömürgecilik ve sömürge sonrası anlayışları ve sömürgecilik sonrası süreçler ile ilgili sömürgecilik, sömürge sonrası, sömürgecilik söylemi, hibrid, *creole* gibi terimlerin tanımlama ve açıklamalarını kapsamaktadır.

İkinci bölüm, sömürgecilik sonrası süreçleri ve bu süreçlerle ilgili kavramların kolonilerin yaşamları üzerindeki etkisini ve yol açtığı değişiklikleri ele almaktadır. Tezin ikinci bölümünde Trinidadlı yazar Samuel Selvon hakkında kısa bibliografik bilgiler verilerek sonrasında yazarın *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* adlı romanı üzerinde sömürgecilik sonrası ile ilgili süreçler ve kavramların temalaştırılması analiz edilmektedir.

Değişik araştırmacıların ortaya koyduğu sömürgecilik sonrası kuramlarının ışığında gerçekleştirilen çözümlemeler sonucunda Trinidad'ın ırksal yapısının sömürgecilik sürecinden etkilendiği ve romanda tasvir edilen karakterlerin hibridleşmiş ve *creole* karakterler oldukları sonucuna varılmıştır.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the present thesis is to analyze the effects of the changes, differences and developments that emerged during and in the aftermath of colonialism in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and the reflections of the Trinidadian literature in English which is classified under British Commonwealth Literature, specifically in Samuel Selvon's novel *Those Who Eat the Cascadura.*

This master's thesis consists of two chapters.

Chapter 1, presenting the theoretical background of the thesis, contains a brief historical account of Trinidad's history based on historical documents and official sources along with providing theoretical information concerning the issue. In this chapter, the concepts of colonialism and post-colonialism of different theoreticians and the definitions and explanations of terms such as colonialism, post-colonialism, colonial discourse, hybridity, creolisation that belong to post-colonial processes have been given.

In the second chapter, the post-colonial processes and the effects of these processes on the lives of the colonials and the changes caused by these processes are presented. Furthermore, the thematization of the postcolonial processes and concepts as observed in the Trinidadian author Samuel Selvon's novel *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* have been analysed.

As a result of the analyses carried out under the light of the postcolonial theories and processes identified by various scholars it has been concluded that the racial composition of Trinidad is reflective of the process of colonization and the characters depicted in the novel exhibit hybridised and creolised characteristics.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The present thesis demonstrates the changes, differences and developments that emerged during and after colonialism and analyses the thematization of the post-colonial processes that came into being as a result of colonialism.

The study is justified by a number of cultural processes that reify the post-colonial situation in Trinidad; that is, a difference in the culture, especially the living styles and the thinking of the colonials.

The confirmation of this major aim regards the following concrete objectives of the thesis:

- the theoretical delimitation and explanation of the post-colonial processes and concepts, according to different theoreticians such as Bhabha, and Ashcroft;

- the theoretical evaluation and explanation of the terms related to our study, including colonialism, hybridity, creolization, colonial discourse and postcolonialism;

- the theoretical evaluation of the notion of creolisation and its cultural implications;

- the practical approach to Sam Selvon's *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* concerning the issue of the postcolonial processes embedded within the text;

The theoretical foundation of the study allows the exposition and argumentation of the existence of post-colonial identities in Trinidadian cultural life and the processes of hybridity and creolisation are explicated.

However, the theoretical and methodological basis of our research is connected to the most recent and accessible bibliography, or to the fully acknowledged and accepted nationally and worldwide contributions to the study of post-colonial literatures and culture, and the essential reference points of our study constitute the theoretical and critical contributions of, among others, Bhabha, Ashcroft, Cesairé, and Loomba.

The structure of the thesis corresponds to the proposed objectives and consists of an introductory section, followed by two chapters, each chapter comprising a

number of subchapters, which are followed by a section of conclusions, representing our final reflections, and by the bibliography and index.

CHAPTER ONE

A HISTORY OF TRINIDAD AND POSTCOLONIALISM

1.1. History and Culture of Trinidad

The social, political, economic and cultural standing of Britain's former colonies after the Second World War and the literary expression of the cultural processes experienced by those colonies, which moulded them into what they presently are, requires an understanding of certain relevant concepts commonly referred to as postcolonial theory. Evidently, an overview of each and every aspect pertaining to the field of post-colonialism and post-colonial theory would be irrelevant in a study that aims to lay bare the dynamics of the Trinidadian experience of colonialism with regards to its articulation through a distinctive response and aims at the reassessment of the post-colonial situation in Trinidad through the discursive practices that define the nature of things in Trinidad as observed by Samuel Selvon in his *Those Who Eat the Cascadura*.

In order to comprehend the postcolonial situation in Trinidad the general historical background of the island and the Trinidadian experience of colonialism should be given. As far as the study concerns, the history of Trinidad provided by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago on the official web site of the government points to the fact that the islands of Trinidad and Tobago have been the object of colonial expansion during different times and by different colonizers. The first European known to land on the island was Christopher Colombus, who landed on the island in 1498 and took possession of it on behalf of the Crown of Spain naming it Trinidad. The island was then inhabited by Amerindian tribes, the Caribs and the Arawaks. However, with the arrival of settlers from Europe who colonized the island in 1532 and established mission villages throughout the country to Christianise the indigenous peoples of the island, the native population was greatly reduced by foreign diseases.

It might be stated that the modern, or to put it more appropriately the colonial, history of Trinidad started only after the island was opened to settlement by

the Spanish Government in 1783. The Catholic French population residing in the neighbouring islands including both whites and slaves were encouraged to inhabit the island through the "Cedula of Population" (Brereton, 1979: 7). Trinidad was rapidly transformed into a colonized island, with French planters and free persons of colour from the neighbouring islands. The population leapt from 2,700 inhabitants in 1783, to 17,700 in 1789. African slaves represented almost 10,000 of the new population. The reason for this ratio was because "the Cedula" allowed extra grants of land for each slave owned (Miller and Slater, 2000).

By the time of the British invasion in 1797, the majority of Trinidad's free population was French-speaking and of French origin, and Trinidad possessed an unusually large free coloured class, considerably outnumbering the whites. (Brereton, 1979: 8) As Meredith points to the fact, "Spanish and French Catholics comprised the bulk of white inhabitants of the island, there were twice as many free coloured residents-many of whom owned both land and slaves-as white residents, and nearly two-thirds of the inhabitants of the colony were slaves" (1988: 37).

From the time Trinidad was captured by the British in 1797 to the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade within the British Empire in 1807, the population of Trinidad continued to grow, though more slowly. The white and free coloured populations grew at average annual rates of 0.5% and 1.8% respectively. The slave population grew at 7% per annum, increasing from 10.009 slaves in 1797 to 20.761 slaves in 1806. By 1807 there were more than 30.000 people in Trinidad, which might be considered to be a large number compared to the 2.811 inhabitants of the island a quarter of a century earlier (Meredith, 1988: 37).

In 1838, 20.656 apprentices, the majority of whom were nominally patois-speaking Roman Catholics and the others nominally English-speaking Protestants, were set free. Most of the Trinidad slaves were born in West India whereas some were

natives of Africa. The free coloureds and free blacks in Trinidad had a significant role in the formation of the island's social and economic structure. The group showed a wide range of variety; that is, it consisted of not only prosperous planters and professionals but also illiterate peons and free black artisans.

After the emancipation, the former slaves and their owners orientated themselves into the new state of freedom and also new ethnic and national groups entered the society. The ex-slaves continued working in the sugar estates, however most of them moved from these estates. They began to dwell along the main roads and in adjoining estates; thus, the eastern main road between Port of Spain and Arima and suburbs of Port Spain and San Fernando developed. The establishment of villages of Creole ex-slaves is uncertain. They might have been organized with the help of the tribal links, common language or past solidarity in the same area.

Most of the peons and many of the ex-slaves settled down in the valleys of the Nothern Range and Montserrat hills as squatters and small cultivators. These residents generally dwelled in the inner parts of the country which prevented them from accessing facilities including schools and churches. They were also so remotely located that they could hardly benefit the newly introduced social system.

By 1840, the planters accepted the proposal to bring in new types of people and anchoring them on the estates by means of coercion for the continuation of sugar estates. Consequently, Trinidad's black population was augmented by two streams; the immigrants from eastern Caribbean and immigration of the Africans. The immigration of the Africans began in 1841 and continued until 1861. The Africans were once under the slavery of British Navy and they were sent to Sierra Leone or St. Helena after having been liberated. They did not know English and their un-Western clothing was entirely different from that of the Creoles. They were apt to unite with the tribal groups preserving their customs and their language.

The white population was supplemented from two sources after 1840; people coming from the British Isles and Portuguese Madeirans. People from the British Isles came to the island to work in the positions of civil service posts, professional jobs or management; whereas, Maderans worked as market gardeners and shopkeepers in Trinidad.

After 1840, the most significant immigration was that of East Indians that took place as an indentured system between 1845 and 1848. The financial crisis put a temporary end to it; however, between the years 1851 and 1917 the indentured immigration continued. They came from a developed country and had ancient religious and cultural traditions, that is, they were a completely new and also a motley community in Trinidad. 134.183 Indians that arrived Trinidad during this period constituted over twenty-five percent of the whole population.

Trinidad was composed of white, coloured and black Creoles; however, the complex society of Trinidad was established after the time of emancipation owing to the immigrants from Africa, Maderia, Europe, including Britain, Venezuela, the eastern Caribbean, China, and India (Brereton, 1979: 8-10).

Much, however, was to happen before this event. In 1889, Trinidad unexpectedly found itself saddled with a dependent when the Colonial Office decided that Tobago could no longer stand on its own, and decided to annex the impoverished little island to its larger neighbor. This was the beginning of the unitary state of Trinidad and Tobago: a relationship whose problems have not yet been completely resolved.

The 20th century began in turmoil. The Water Riots of 1903, caused by the government's attempts to impose new taxes on water, ended with the burning to the ground of the Red House, Seat of Government.

Meanwhile, a discovery had been made which was to change the course of Trinidad's history almost as much as Columbus' discovery of the island had done. Oil was unearthed in south Trinidad. The first oil-well was drilled in 1857, but the industry did not really get off the ground until 1910, when Trinidad exported its first batch - 125,000 barrels- of crude oil. In 1923/24, oil exports for the first time exceeded those of sugar and cocoa combined; by 1936 Trinidad became the leading oil producer in the British Empire.

The country's growing interest in its Black Gold led to a neglect of other sectors of the economy: agriculture and manufacturing suffered a sharp decline. The emphasis on oil also meant the creation of a new class of industrial worker - one that would, eventually, form the backbone of the powerful trade union movement. The oilfield riots of 1937, together with the militant nationalism, which followed, finally succeeded in persuading the British government that the island should be allowed elected representation.

The onset of the Second World War meant a postponement of any action along these lines; but the post-war Labour government in Britain was sympathetic to the cause, and in 1946, the first universal adult suffrage election was held in Trinidad and Tobago. It was still a very limited form of democracy, in as much as only half of the seats were put up for election, the other half being nominated by the governor or reserved for senior civil servants. Nevertheless, it was the first step along the road to the country's independence.

In 1956 a new, nationalistic political party was formed. The People's National Movement (PNM) and was headed by a young historian named Dr. Eric Williams. The PNM won 13 of 24 seats in the 1956 elections, becoming the first Party government in Trinidad and Tobago. The PNM was in the vanguard of efforts to establish a West Indian Federation in the later years of the 1950s; Trinidad was the designated Federal Capital until the Federation fell apart in May, 1961. In the national elections of 1961, the PNM won 20 of 30 seats, and moved full steam ahead to achieve the country's independence from Britain. On August 31, 1962, Trinidad and Tobago became an independent nation.

1.2. Culture of Trinidad

As obvious in the historical background of the island the European influence on the culture and racial structure of Trinidad and Tobago primarily comes from Spain, France, and Britain, given that all three countries claimed the islands at various times during the country's colonial history.

During the latter part of Spain's occupation, French immigrants moved into political offices; in addition to African and Spanish influences, Trinidadian culture began to adopt French traits, language, and customs.

Under colonial rule, slaves were shipped from Africa to work in the sugar fields and plantations. The labour force consisted of black slaves bought by British traders from African merchants. The slaves were transported to the sugar plantations in West Indies in huge quantities. It is estimated that during 1780s about 350.000 people were exported to the plantations and this reached 420.000 by 1790s (Marshall, 2001: 20). When the African slave trade was abolished officially in 1834, East Indian and Chinese peasants were hired as indentured servants to work the fields most of whom

chose to stay and live in Trinidad and Tobago, even after the practice of indentured servitude ended in 1917. The first group of indentured labourers from India arrived aboard in 1845; they numbered only 213. By 1848, their numbers had enlarged to more than 5,000. These workers proved satisfactory; and by the time the Indian government finally banned emigration to Trinidad in 1917, the number of indentured workers had risen to more than 145,000. East Indians constitute about 45 per cent of the total population, almost exactly the same as Africans (Miller and Slater, 2000).

As demonstrated above, descendants of these African and East Indian laborers make up approximately 80% of the country's total population. Trinidad and Tobago were politically united in 1888 when they became a British Crown Colony. In 1958, the Federation of the West Indies was formed. Trinidad and Tobago became an independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations in 1962, and in 1967 joined the Organization of American States. On August 1, 1976, the twin islands became the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (Meridian International Center, 1998).

The culture of Trinidad and Tobago is a reflection of a creative and vibrant, ethnically mixed and cosmopolitan society (Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 2000). All the different cultures that exist on the island as a legacy of her colonial history keep the cultural artefacts of their ethnicity and express their ethnic origins either through steelband music, the beat of the tassa drums, the calypsos and chutney songs, the romantic swaying of paranderos at parang time. Such lingo tell the tale of a people instituted through four centuries of colonialism, independence and republic rule.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago state on their official web site that "the contribution of the East Indians to national cultural survival" is not disregardable. "The lighting up for Divali, the rhythmic swaying of the Holi Dancers at Phagwah, East Indian planting and harvesting songs, all bear open testimony to the rich cultural diversity of a people in a land where" as the motto of the government clearly states

'every creed and race find an equal place', in a land where a blend of Spanish, French, English, African, East Indian, Chinese, Portuguese, Syrian and other minority groups tell the story of togetherness as a people.

1.3. Trinidad Today

Today, Trinidad and Tobago accommodate the legacy of hundreds of years of colonisation and display a large population of mixed races and cultures. The country has reached the population of 1.096.585 as per July 2004. The age structure according to the age groups 0-14 years, 15-64 years and 65 years and over occur as 21.4%, 70.6% and 8.1%, respectively, which can be interpreted as a fact that the country has a young age profile yet acknowledging the population growth rate of –0.71% it may be asserted that the country is prone to ageing (CIA, 2004).

As it can be observed in Table 1, the ethnic composition in today's Trinidad is reflective of her colonial history. According to year 2000 data, collected and processed by Trinidad and Tobago Central Statistical Office, the ethnic composition of Trinidad has occurred as East Indian 40.03%, African 37.52%, mixed 20.46%, white (Caucasian) 0.63%, Chinese and other 1.36%.

Table 1: Population and % of ethnic groups in Trinidad and Tobago as per 2000.

Sex / Ethnicity	Male		Female		Total	
	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number
African	18,78	209,354	18.74	208,914	37,52	418,268
Indian	20,16	224,745	19,87	221,528	40,03	446,273
Chinese	0,18	2,048	0,16	1,752	0,34	3,800
Syrian/Lebanese	0,04	460	0,03	389	0,08	849
Caucasian	0,32	3,525	0,31	3,509	0,63	7,034
Mixed	9,94	110,779	10,52	117,310	20,46	228,089
Other	0,09	992	0,09	980	0,18	1,972
Not Stated	0,38	4,207	0,38	4,280	0,76	8,487
Total	49,89	556,110	50,11	558,662	100,00	1,114,772

Source: http://www.cso.gov.tt/cso/census2000_/default.asp

The religious groups in Trinidad include Roman Catholic 29.4%, Hindu 23.8%, Anglican 10.9%, Muslim 5.8%, Presbyterian 3.4%, and other 26.7%. The languages spoken throughout Trinidad are English as the official language along with Hindi, French, Spanish, and Chinese (CIA, 2004).

Also the country has experienced a change in economic activities, which is expressed today as Trinidad's being the leading Caribbean producer of oil and gas. Trinidad has earned a reputation as an excellent investment site for international businesses. Tourism is a growing sector, although not proportionately as important as in many other Caribbean islands. Prospects for growth in 2004 are good as prices for oil,

petrochemicals, and liquefied natural gas are expected to remain high, and foreign direct investment continues to grow to support expanded capacity in the energy sector.

1.4. Postcolonial Concepts and Processes

Postcolonial theory studies the process and the effects of cultural displacement and the ways in which the displaced have culturally defended themselves. (Bertens, 2001: 200) Once culturally uprooted and displaced people are inclined to display anomalies stemming from the fact that the adaptation process to the new cultural atmosphere takes some considerable time. Here, "adaptation" implies the existence of a state of being in-between two spheres, without aligning to any of the sides. This state of being in-between two, or at times multiple, spheres in the post-colonial context is most efficiently reflected by the term "hybridity" which is directly related to the cultural self-definition of the individual or ethnic group.

Having observed the racial complexity in Trinidad, it is convenient to focus basically on a concept of post-colonial cultural identity through what Homi K. Bhabha calls "hybridity" (1994: 20). Hybridity is a metaphorical term which is derived from biological terminology, referring to a cultural standpoint created by the blending of elements that are "neither purely one thing nor the other; but something else besides which contests the terms and territories of both" (Bhabha, 1994: 28). The term refers to the cultural identity of the post-colonial subject, in this case the uprooted Indian and African community living in Trinidad, as being a fusion of host and native cultures along with the addition of a dominant and colonising culture, the white British culture. According to Bhabha, this state is achieved through acts of "mimicry" on the part of post-colonial subjects, who ultimately turn out to be "almost the same but not quite" the same as the members of the colonizing culture (1994: 87). Hybridization assumes that 'the postcolonial culture would consist of ideas, institutions and customs of the

colonizer that would be adapted to the local culture and grafted on to it.'(Betts, 2004: 115)

Hybridization can be observed in a variety of disciplines covering linguistic, cultural, political, and racial concerns. Needless to say, all the fields where hybridisation might be observed, that is culturally, politically and racially oriented fields, are subject to the articulation of the hybrid qualities through language. This gives the linguistic hybridity that might be observed in pidgin and creole languages a pre-eminence as the mouthpiece of the issue. However, it must be noted that the concepts and processes of hybridity and creolization are not only limited to changes pertaining to language but to changes in and about culture, as well.

A better understanding of the state of being in between might be achieved through analysing the development of the concepts and theory pertaining to postcolonialism. In this sense, it would be most convenient to start the investigation with colonialism which is derived from the word colony which can be defined as a group of people living in a territory under the control of a parent state, and it is the process of subduing the inhabitants of a new land whereas according to the *Oxford English Dictionary,* a colony is, "a settlement in a new country…a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up." (1991: 289) Colonialism is defined by Boehmer as the 'settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands' (1995: 2).

Loomba points out the fact that the idea of any inhabitant other than the colonizer is missing in this definition. Hence, any possible encounter with the "other" is not touched upon. The same can be observed in Aimé Cesairé's definition of

colonialism which asserts that between colonizer and colonized there exists "[n]o human contact, but relations of domination and submission which turn the colonizing man into a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the indigenous man into an instrument of production" (Césaire, in Bertens, 2001: 206).

Loomba takes stance on the contrary asserting that "the process of forming a community in the new land necessarily meant unforming or re-forming the communities that existed there already, and involved a wide range of practices including trade, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, enslavement and rebellions." (Loomba, 1998: 2) That is to say, both the colonizer and the colonized are affected by the act of colonization and gain new features as a result of the colonial encounter and interaction. However, it is a must to note that colonial knowledge is provided only through the lenses of the colonizer though it actively took part also in the process of colonial conquest. Hence, 'cultural forms in newly classified "traditional" societies were reconstructed and transformed by and through colonial technologies of conquest and rule, which created new categories and oppositions between colonizers and colonized, European and Asian, modern and traditional, West and East, even male and female.' (Dirks, 1992: 3)

Such binary oppositions take us to the discursive othering, which stems from and replenishes racial segregation. The process of othering insists 'that the colonized subaltern *subject* is irretrievably heterogeneous' and denies the history and culture of the colonized other and leaves no room for the possibility of change. (Spivak, 2003: 26) Only after generations of racial experience the colonized can reach a standpoint closer to that of the 'white' master. Perhaps the most significant example of how the other races are assessed by the male British colonizer is best defined in the following lines of Marryat quoted in Castle:

The progeny of a white and a Negro is a *mulatto*, or half and half – of a white and mulatto a *quadroon*, or one quarter black, and of this class the company were chiefly composed. I believe a *quadroon* and a white make the *mustee* or one-eighth black. And the *mustee* and white *mustafina*, or one-sixteenth black. After that they are *whitewashed* and considered as Europeans…The quadroons are certainly the handsomest race of the whole, some of the women are really beautiful…I must acknowledge at the risk of losing the good opinion of my fair country-women, that I never saw before so many pretty figures and faces. (2001: 87)

It can be argued that the West has always been certain that its presence overseas greatly affected the 'natives' even to the degree that common opinion came to be that the colonials immediately tried to adopt Western ways and values. The idea has occupied the Western mind for a long time yet it was mostly disregarded that the colonizers might 'in their turn be affected by the cultures they encountered.' Nevertheless, Bhabha was quite certain that the colonizer was not able to avoid a complex and paradoxical relationship with the colonized, mostly including sexual desires concerning the 'exotic' beauties of the colonials. (Bertens, 2001: 206-207)

As Ashcroft suggests 'Creole' originally referred to a white man of European descent, born and raised in a tropical colony. The term has later pointed at a larger target embracing indigenous people and others of non-European origin and was soon applied to the languages spoken by creoles in and around the Caribbean and in West Africa. Yet, the most common use of the term in English was to mean 'born in the West Indies', whether white or black. (Ashcroft, 1998: 57) As Brathwaite points out the term was used in Trinidad to refer to "the black descendants of slaves to distinguish them from East Indian immigrants". (Brathwaite in Ashcroft 1998: 58)

The process of racial mixing brings along the issue of creolization which is regarded as a cultural process based upon the stimulus/response of individuals within the society to their [new] environment and to each other'. (Brathwaite in Ashcroft 1998:

59) The newly produced society, through a process that can be explained with the concepts of acculturation and interculturation, is moulded into a new sphere carrying the vestiges of both of the cultures. To shed more light on the working principles of the concepts mentioned it may be argued that since the concept was born into a world of colonisation it would be possible to talk about a dominant, hegemonic culture that imposes its set of ideas, beliefs and customs on an indigenous society which is valued as inferior to the colonizer. The indigenous society being exposed to a dominant culture absorbs the white master's rules, both consciously and unconsciously, yet in return alters, and tough limited, provides room for the dominant other to adapt to the new circumstances.

Creolization, as the definitions put forward by Brathwaite suggest, is specific to and is best analysed and understood in the framework of Caribbean history and societies. However, it must be noted that Brathwaite's model of creolization can be compared with, and be accepted to be doing some of the similar work discussed under the title of 'hybridization'. Robert Young identifies an 'unconscious hybridity, whose pregnancy gives birth to new forms of amalgamation rather than contestation' or 'the French métissage, the imperceptible process whereby two or more cultures merge into a new mode' as creolization, in contrast to a Bakhtinian hybridity which he regards as more 'contestatory' (Young 1995: 21 in Ashcroft, 1998: 59).

The British Empire changed not only the people but also the culture in which they lived and defined the world. The changes and desires of the Empire have been dictated to the colonial mass through a form of linguistic device named colonial discourse. This is a term brought into debate by Edward Said who examined the ways in which colonial discourse operated as an apparatus of authority. The best known colonial discourse theorist, apart from Said, is Homi Bhabha, whose analysis posited certain disabling contradictions within colonial relationships, such as hybridity, ambivalence and mimicry, which revealed the inherent defencelessness of colonial discourse and demonstrated how it could be argued against. (Ashcroft, 1998: 41)

Discourse has been basically defined as "a system of statements within which the world can be known. It is the system by which dominant groups in society constitute the field of truth by imposing specific knowledges, disciplines and values upon dominated groups." (Ashcroft, 1998: 43) It can be interpreted as a purposeful use of language that has physical results due to the change in the mentality of the individuals or groups it appeals to. As a part social formation it works to represent reality not only for the objects it appears to represent but also for the subjects who form the community on which it depends.

Colonial discourse thus becomes a system of statements that can be made about the colonies and the colonial peoples, about the colonizing powers and about the relationship between these entities. It is a system of knowledge and beliefs about the sphere within which acts of colonization occur. The impact of colonial discourse on the colonials can be observed in the form of an assumption of the superiority of the colonizer's culture, history, language, art, political structures, social conventions, and the assertion of the need for the colonized to be 'raised up' through colonial contact. Colonial discourse defines the colonized, whatever the nature of their social structures and cultural histories, as 'primitive' and the colonizers as 'civilized'. Nevertheless, colonial discourse excludes statements concerning the exploitation of the resources of the colonized, and the political status affixed to colonizing powers. On the contrary, colonial discourse represents such benefits in statements about the inferiority of the colonized, the primitiveness of races other than white, the moral and social degeneracy of colonized societies. Therefore the duty of the imperial power is to reproduce itself in the colonial society, and to enhance the civilization of the colony in trade, administration, cultural and moral assets which came to be known as 'white man's burden' (Ashcroft, 1998: 41-43).

In Trinidad and Tobago Indians comprise a much larger proportion of the population than in other parts of the region. As latecomers, however, they were never entirely incorporated into the dominant creole cultural paradigm. In recent times, however, due to a strong Indian identity movement and the increasing economic and political power of the Indian community, this is changing. This identity movement has included cultural nationalist tendencies as well as religious fundamentalist movements of Hindus and Moslems. (Reddock, 2001: 203)

The racial complexity of Trinidad results in a muddle even in identifying which race is a descendant of another and what to call whom. In this sense, throughout the study the word "creole" will be used to describe the East Indian settlers in Trinidad, and the word "hybrid" will be used to describe those inhabitants who share both the racial and the cultural values of the "white" masters in Trinidad.

Hybridity has frequently been used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural 'exchange'. This use of the term has been extensively criticized, since it usually implies negating and neglecting the inequity and variation of the power relations it references. By stressing the transformative cultural, linguistic and political impact on both the colonized and the colonizer, it has been regarded as replicating assimilationist policies by masking or 'whitewashing' cultural differences. (Ashcroft, 1998: 118-119)

However, Young offers a number of objections to the indiscriminate use of the term. He stresses that the term 'hybridity' was much more important in imperial and colonial discourse especially while giving negative accounts of the union of disparate races, such accounts implied that unless actively and persistently cultivated, such hybrids would inevitably revert to their 'primitive' stock. Hybridity thus became, particularly at the turn of the century, part of a colonialist discourse of racism. A distinction is necessary here as there is a difference between unconscious processes of

hybrid mixture, or creolization, and a conscious and politically motivated concern with the deliberate disturbance of homogeneity. Young notes that for Bakhtin, for example, hybridity is politicized, made contestatory, so that it embraces the subversion and challenge of division and separation. Bakhtin's hybridity 'sets different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure, which retains "a certain elemental, organic energy and openendedness"' (Young 1995: 21– 22 in Ashcroft, 1998: 120). It is this potential of hybridity to reverse 'the structures of domination in the colonial situation' (Young 1995: 23 in Ashcroft, 1998: 120).

At the same time as assertions of national culture and of pre-colonial traditions have played an important role in creating anti-colonial discourse and in arguing for an active decolonising project, theories of the hybrid nature of post-colonial culture assert a different model for resistance, locating this in the subversive counter-discursive practices implicit in the colonial ambivalence itself and so undermining the very basis on which imperialist and colonialist discourse raises its claims of superiority.

Decolonisation is the process of revealing and disbanding colonialist power in all its forms. This process includes dismantling the hidden aspects of those institutional and cultural forces that had maintained the colonialist power and that remain even after political independence is achieved. Initially, in many places in the colonized world, the process of resistance was conducted in terms or institutions appropriated from the colonizing culture itself. This was only to be expected, since early nationalists had been educated to perceive themselves as potential heirs to European political systems and models of culture. This occurred not only in settler colonies where the white colonial élite was a direct product of the system, but even in colonies of occupation (Ashcroft, 1998: 63).

Postcolonial reading is defined by Ashcroft as "a way of reading and rereading texts of both metropolitan and colonial cultures to draw deliberate attention to

the profound and inescapable effects of colonization on literary production; anthropological accounts; historical records; administrative and scientific writing." (1998: 192) This form of deconstructive reading aims at laying bare how the text reveals colonialist ideologies and processes. In this study such a strategy has been employed to identify the post-colonial processes embedded within the text and how these processes affect the characters in the novel.

The last concept to be revised is that of post-colonialism which deals with cultures that have emerged from colonial rule and the effects of colonization on these cultures and societies. The term offers a chronological meaning specifying the post-independence period. However, from the late 1970s literary critics have used the term to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization. Although the study of the effects of colonial representation were central to the work of these critics, the term 'post-colonial' as such was first used to refer to cultural interactions within colonial societies in literary circles. The attempt was made to politicise and focus on the concerns of fields such as Commonwealth literature and the study of the so-called New Literatures in English which had been started in the late 1960s. The term has subsequently been widely used to signify the political, linguistic and cultural experience of societies that were former European colonies (Ashcroft, 1998: 186).

With reference to the above-mentioned developments and concepts, this study aims at analysing the experiences of the decolonised people who have been living in Trinidad in the post-colonial era. Just after the dissolution of the British Empire many of the objects of colonialism immigrated to Britain for better economic and social capabilities and yet a large body of people stayed in Trinidad as previously uprooted members of a different culture. They have been implanted to the island and they have lost connection with their own cultural background to a very large extent, however their being exposed to the dynamics of colonization enabled them to create a new writing that

incorporated indigenous materials, stressed the unique nature of colonial society, and reached toward a national identity apart from that bestowed by the Empire. While drawing from the established text handed to it, the literature introduced all manner of invigorating themes, characters, setting, conflict; it incorporated untried usage of the English language and developed fresh stylistic devices. (Ross, 1991: xv)

The lives of the colonized subjects was highly problematic, as Chauhan comments on the issue, "stripped of their native histories and wrenched from their traditional homes, descendants of various peoples try in vain to eke out a parody of a sensible existence among institutions the Empire sloughed off." (1996: 43)

Hintzen notes as for the identity politics in Trinidad that:

In reality, what is "West Indian" or "Caribbean" has come to be cognitively constructed as the product of cultural and racial hybridization. To be "West Indian" is to be located along a continuum spanning from the "pure" European at one pole to the "pure" African at the other. These refer to putative notions of racial and cultural purity. However, in the hybridized reality of Creole space, racial and cultural purity cannot exist together. The Creole at the European end of the spectrum is always tainted by contact with the "uncivilized" that has emerged historically as creation of the European discursive imagination. At the African end, the Creole is the historical product of redemption from a past rendered "savage" in the panoptic gaze of the conquering European. Such redemption is achieved in contact with European's civilising influences. The extremes exist as cultural hybrids. They represent the implications of a culturally compromised racial purity. Without a compromised polluted culture, the European could not be accommodated within the social space. For the racially pure African, accommodation at the "lower" extremes of *créolité* is accomplished through cultural redemption. The combination of racial and cultural hybridity determines location in between the extremes. For the European, this pertains to the degree of cultural and racial pollution. It implies a descent from civilization. For the African, creolization implies ascent made possible by the acquisition of European cultural forms and by racial miscegenation whose extensiveness is signified by color. This, in essence, is the meaning of creolization. It is a process that stands at the center of constructs of Caribbean identity. (Hintzen, 2002: 478)

The rationale behind the selection of this novelist and the specific work and not other novels by other post-colonial fiction writers for this study is shaped by two specific factors. The first of these factors is Samuel Selvon's experience of creolisation as a member of a "crown colony" which was directly subject to colonialism.

The second factor has been the selection of specific novels from among other works of this writer. It is true that the writer has written other novels that are set in different time periods, both in his country of origin and in Britain. For the specific purpose of this study, represented as the assessment of the effects of postcolonialism on the social makeup of Trinidad and Tobago, Samuel Selvon's *Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, which is set in Trinidad in the post-war period, specifically, the 1960s, has been selected.

CHAPTER TWO

THEMATIZATION OF POST-COLONIAL PROCESSES IN *THOSE WHO EAT
THE CASCADURA*

2.1. Life of Samuel Selvon

Samuel Dickson Selvon, was born in 1923 in South Trinidad as the son of an Indian father and a half-Indian, half-Scottish mother. He graduated from San Fernando's Naparima College in 1938. Selvon grew up in Trinidad's multiracial society and considers himself as a creolized West Indian. He gives details of and comments on his own life and ancestral belonging along with his standpoint in relation to creolisation as follows:

> My father was from India and my mother was herself half-Scottish by her father. They lived on a cocoa plantation where her father was an overseer. My father was a dry goods merchant. I was creolised from an early age, which is a good thing, in my opinion, as a mixing of traditions makes for a more harmonious world. Also my education helped; at school, the only thing I really liked was literature; it was a medium in which I could express myself. This is maybe why I developed as a writer. But my readings in English literature brought me very much under the influence of the British tradition (Nasta, 1988: 70-71).

Selvon began writing while he was doing his military service in the Royal Navy Reserve during The Second World War, and became the fiction editor for the *Trinidad Guardian* newspaper after the war. He migrated to England in 1950 and his short stories and poetry were published in various journals and newspapers, such as the *London Magazine*, the *New Statesman*, and the *Nation*. He worked with the BBC during the 1960s and 1970s, and produced two television scripts: *Anansi the Spiderman*; and *Home Sweet India*. He also produced many radio programs and a film version of his book, *The Lonely Londoners*. He received two Guggenheim Fellowships in 1955 and 1968, and held university appointments in Great Britain, North America, and the Caribbean. He moved to Calgary, Canada, in 1978. Selvon married Draupadi Persaud in 1947, later divorced her and married Althea Nesta Daroux in 1963. Selvon's lifetime works include the following books: *A Brighter Sun* (1952), *An Island is a World* (1955), *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), *Ways of Sunlight* (1957), *Turn Again Tiger* (1958), *I Hear Thunder* (1963), *The Housing Lark* (1965), *A Drink of Water* (1968), *The Plains*

of Caroni (1970), *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* (1972), *Moses Ascending* (1975), *Moses Migrating* (1983), and a collection of selected prose written between 1946-1986, namely *Foreday Morning: Selected Prose* (1989).

It might be observed that his biracial parentage and the socio-cultural environment of the country in which he lives, that is Trinidad as his hometown until 1950s and London until 1980s, merging with his ethnic affiliation, appears as a major theme in his works. The issue is consigned and illustrated by McLeod through a reference to Selvon's statement in a 1979 lecture where he recalls an Indian fisherman who used to visit his street in San Fernando, Trinidad, when he was a child. The fisherman, a partly paralysed man, was called Sammy. One day Sammy brings a "white assistant" with him. Selvon states that seeing the white man as the assistant was unusual and in his perception the white man should be the master. As the anecdote exemplifies there seems to be a latent consciousness in the minds of the colonised so as to regard non-whites and/or non-Westerners as inferior. Such a pattern of behaviour has also been observed in and indoctrinated by the discourse of the colonial writings that relate what non-West is through Western eyes. However, as a point of further reference and enquiry, Selvon notes that:

> When one talks of colonial indoctrination, it is usually about oppression or subjugation, or waving little Union Jacks on Empire Day and singing 'God Save the King'. But this gut feeling I had as a child, that the Indian was just a piece of cane trash while the white man was to be honoured and respected – where had it come from? I don't consciously remember being brainwashed to hold this view either at home or at school (Selvon, 1989: 211 in McLeod, 2000:17).

The idea might be interpreted as the process of colonization in Trinidad worked not through suppression but through a voluntary commitment to Western values and masters. The process of voluntary creolisation continued until a point of saturation had been reached and as Fanon puts forward, "colonialism [saw] that it is not within its

powers to put into practice a project of economic and social reforms which will satisfy the aspirations of the colonized people" (Fanon, 1963: 208). Hence, the camouflaged tension between the multiplicity of races co-inhabiting Trinidad surfaced, especially after the discovery of rich oil resources which would enable any of the parties to lead a life 'without worry'.

2.2. The Role of Race and Colour in Trinidad

When one accepts the white, Indian and African races and cultures as separate spheres each displaying their own modes of behaviour, thinking and action, Trinidad emerges as a sphere where cultural and racial contact and interaction has resulted in a hybrid identity that demonstrates the lack of racial and cultural purity. Here, the white Creole is contaminated and changed by contact with the "uncivilized" that has emerged historically as the creation of the European discursive imagination. In the African case, the black Creole is the historical product of emancipation and contact with European's civilising influences. They exist as cultural hybrids belonging to neither of the pure spheres of identity. Hence, creolisation for the European implies a descent from civilisation, and moves the creolised individual downwards on the rungs of the social ladder. However, for the African, creolization implies "ascent made possible by the acquisition of European cultural forms and by racial miscegenation whose extensiveness is signified by colour" (Hintzen, 2002: 478).

In this sense, being Caribbean is occupying the hierarchical, hybridised "Creole" space between two racial extremes that serve as markers for civilization and savagery. The white Creole is at the top as the historical product of cultural hybridisation, whereas, the Afro-Creole is located at the other end of the spectrum of Creolisation. As a result, racial and cultural purity are rendered unattainable ideals in Creole representation and practice. However, genotypically and phenotypically closer matches to European standards ranked higher in the social hierarchy (Hintzen, 2002:

478). As for purity, the observable physical appearance such as having white, coloured or black skin colour was taken into consideration. Likewise, skin colour, facial features, and hair quality were also determinants to evaluate an individual.

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

The results of hybridisation and creolisation in praxis may be best observed in the conditions of the different racial and cultural groups within Trinidad. For instance, Indian indentured labourers were kept apart geographically and culturally from the rest of the confined labour force. This separation produced an atmosphere that perpetuated the negative stereotypes initiated by the white planters. The planter elite rationalized the division of labour by claiming that Africans were poor workers, lazy, irresponsible and light-hearted while East Indians were characterized and discursively created as hard-working, subservient, obedient and manageable. Later, some East Indians also adopted this view of the enslaved Africans perpetuating and institutionalising a cliché image of the oppressed although they were a group in a similar situation. East Indians were also stereotyped as tight-fisted, prone to domestic violence, and heathens for not adopting Western ways. Therefore, it might be deduced that, the planter elite, as a means of effectively controlling the labour force, created the division of labour among races (Brereton, 1979: 146-149).

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

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

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

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

On the other hand, Africans were dispossessed of their language, culture, religions and customs. The African population in Trinidad was utterly hybridised and viewed as not belonging to any identity. Starting from the time of slavery, Africans

were encouraged or even forced to accept the culture of another people. As racial opposites of 'white masters' they represent the mimic part of the society as they have willingly or unwillingly suffered the loss of their ancestral culture and also losing their religious beliefs kept for themselves only the concept and practice of 'obeah'.

2.3. Thematization of Post-Colonial Concepts and Processes in Samuel Selvon's *Those Who Eat the Cascadura*

Samuel Selvon's *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* carries traces of both indigenous and uprooted mythologies, beliefs, customs and their re-making and re-evaluation by postcolonialism. The socio-cultural standing of the inhabitants of the cocoa estate is reflective of their creolized and hybridized identities and the effects of colonialism on the social make-up of Trinidad. There are a series of instances suggesting what colonialism did to the island. These expressions and the underlying ideas can be discursively read under the premises of postcolonialism, that is, as both a result of and a response to the process of colonization.

Since post-colonialism is a vast area of study, scholars "who consider themselves part of the field of postcolonial studies may understand themselves to be working towards a description of imperial or colonizing cultures and their literatures at different moments...or towards a description of specific colonized or "post-colony" cultures and their literatures" (Slemon, 2001: 104) The aim of this thesis corresponds to the latter in essence and for this reason cultural artefacts presented in *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* have been discursively analysed to shed light upon the effects of colonialism and the resultant changes.

The action takes place in Sans Souci, a small cocoa estate near Port-of-Spain, which is owned by a white émigré named Roger Franklin. The plantation

exhibits a divided community; the white master, the Indians and the blacks. The very first person encountered in the novel is Manko, the obeahman, who does not hesitate to exploit naive people and finds a weak identity in the vestiges of African religion. Eloisa, Franklin's black cook, is also his surrogate wife and mother, but she lives with him in what might perhaps be described as a state of immense happiness. The other inhabitants of the cocoa plantation are Indians. Although, the Indians and the blacks share common characteristics, they are not fully developed as individuals. Instead, they are generally stereotyped as blacks as observed by Selvon in the novel; which is best observed when Sarojini tells Manko that she is not black which reads:

'I not black Manko!' Sarojini said sharply. 'I is Indian!'

'You still black' (Selvon, 1990: 23)

The response of the black obeahman corresponds to the fact that colonial discourse identified any "Other" as black regardless of his/her racial belonging. Furthermore, a more crucial statement comes through the end of the conversation and reads:

All that don't make no difference. Black and white will mix until black is white.' The last three words, he spoke in Trinidad acceptance of them, meaning everything would equate (Selvon, 1990: 23)

The idea beyond the lines quoted above may be identified as the notion that the process of decolonisation is at work, and after colonial rule there is hope for the different races to join under an overarching identity that embraces the whole population in the island as later promoted by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

There is a scarcity in the number of people of African descent in the plantation and only two black people are introduced: Eloisa, Franklin's black cook, and Manko, his "old handy man". "The others are Indians" (Selvon, 1990: 42). There is a further point of reference for understanding the dimension of colonisation, which points to the fact that the indigenous Carib population has been destroyed. Selvon, expressing a historical truth, states through the words of Roger that "there aren't many Caribs left in the entire Caribbean" and the population is constituted of "Indians who came [to Trinidad] originally after slavery was abolished" (Selvon, 1990: 42).

The African people in Sans Souci are not considered as black people: for instance Manko, while blowing the conchshell, gains white qualities as "the black of his skin, suffused with pressure and blood, appeared a lighter colour for a few moments" (Selvon, 1990: 11). The depiction also suggests that Manko is close to whiteness and he has internalized white qualities that could turn him to a white person at any instance. Eloisa is also hybridised to the point that she believes in Christianity as she expresses during the storm and begs for mercy of the Lord. Furthermore, she considers that the place "beyond the house and the yard, the world held evil spirits, dissension, confusion, and every conceivable badness her imagination could conjure up" (Selvon, 1990: 12). The issue is reflective of the fact that the creolised blacks adapted themselves to the machinery of the white culture to the degree of assimilation and losing their identities became copies of the white colonizers.

The people of Indian ancestry co-inhabiting Sans Souci display a broad range of characteristics, which is reminiscent of the fact that each Indian individual, as a result of partially preserving their identity, responds differently to the colonial impulses. The Indian population in Sans Souci maintain and prevail a series of linguistic and cultural markers as emblems of their identities. These markers include the words derived from Indian names and Indian clothing such as saris and dhotis. Also the supernatural beings including *soucouyants*; a great ball of fire, *lagahoos*; things that can take the shape of anything, and *La diablesse,* the devil woman are reflective of a Creole

English that serve as a mediator between Indian and British cultures. However, it must be noted that the mentioned supernatural beings although presented by Manko receive largest recognition among Indian people. Hence, in a sense the non-white culture has a unified sense in developing a common difference compared to the white culture, which is achieved through a sharing of common myths. Likewise, the Creole language exhibits words and grammatical patterns that are carried into Standard English. The newly formed language is a hybrid belonging neither to English nor to Hindi as far as linguistics concerns.

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

Prekash is Sans Souci's overseer and has a jealousy of and obsession with the beautiful Indian woman Sarojini. Prekash's small-mindedness and flattery are emphasized to the point of caricature, and he is depicted as an insecure person and he is contemptuous of blacks. Moreover, although critical of the white dominance, it is a given fact that he acknowledges "that all the things he was learning taught him to behave as the white man, to think like him, to talk like him, to live like him" (Selvon, 1990: 29). Selvon explores the mistrust and prejudice between races and the organization of racial hierarchy in Trinidad in the character of Prekash. Prekash is not fully creolised as Selvon himself was and seeks for better prospects even if they necessitate overthrowing the white master.

Ramdeen, is depicted as a drunkard who does not want to get involved in the torrents of life in Sans Souci. At the end of the novel it becomes clear that life was bitter for him after the death of his wife giving birth to Sarojini. He is merely interested in leading his life in the wilderness and finding the money to obtain rum.

Although occupying a minor role Dummy is an important character in view of his displaying the effects of the postcolonial processes on the society in Trinidad. Dummy is portrayed as a physically challenged child who "can't talk, can't hear, and can't even walk true-true backwards like a *douen*" (Selvon, 1962: 162). The *douens*, as Manko explains how he encountered them as a child, are:

> children who never been christened, and because of that, they have long hair covering their faces, and their feet turn backward, so when you think from the footprint that they going one way, they really going the opposite. Well, I was really frighten, but they hold my hand and make me start to play with them. They was really trying to lead me far into the forest, so lucky thing my father come to look for me. When the *douens* see him coming they run away. My father say that *douens* is children who dead before they could christen. (Selvon, 1990: 90)

Under the light of this information, it might be stated that religion as an indispensable part of colonialism has a great influence on the lives of the colonials to make them acknowledge the unchristened people as zombies only. As a friend of the *douens* and never as successful and complete even as they are, the condition of Dummy might well be taken to mean that colonialism deprived the indigenous people of their very personal feelings such as hearing, talking or moving properly. As a consequence of the process of postcolonial stereotyping, the productive capacities of the indigenous are silenced by the colonizer through an inevitable process of Westernization of local and

national voices, where the subaltern's voice is silenced as it mingles and reproduces the voices of the West.

Sarojini has a defiant sense of Indianness as well as a strong contempt for blacks. Sarojini finds a companion to herself and reaches personal integrity through union with the visiting Englishman Garry. In the meantime Garry Johnson's perception of Sarojini is noticeably confusing. He confesses his love for Sarojini, but he is not at all certain of his intention. Sarojini appears as a sort of West Indian fairy with whom Johnson can couple in the bush, at the same time freeing himself of all the responsibilities such a relationship would normally entail. Sarojini's symbolic raping of Johnson is a superfluous reversal of sex roles; but this vicious sexual union brings her neither insight nor any sort of self-awareness. Nor, significantly enough, does it change her dependence on the white male. At the end of the novel Selvon shows Sarojini as pathetic, living in hope of Johnson's unlikely return from England. This ending is appropriate: her integrity has always given way to her fantasy of permanent union with a white male. (Barratt, 1993: 281-290)

As a result of her dependence on Garry, Sarojini loses her sanity but is surely reminded of the factual world. She believes in Manko's obeah on the one hand but on the other accuses him for not using his powers and lays the blame on the superstitious beliefs which she rejects as black values while she also held the views until that moment. She expresses her ideas as follows:

Is all your fault, Manko! All this business! You and your obeah! You and your donkey-eye and your cascadoo! If you is this great obeahman you suppose to be, you should work some obeah and make people wishes come true, instead of dealing with the devil! (Selvon, 1990: 181)

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

> Now girl, I just give Manko a piece of my mind. Now for your share. What happen done and finish with. Mr Johnson is a big white man what living in England, and he was only here on holiday, and the two of you like one another, and now he gone back to England. Crick crack, monkey break my back, wire bend and the story end. (Selvon, 1990: 182)

Sarojini has no choice but to accept the situation she is in although she believed and chanted in an instance of psychosis that "Them who eat the cascadura got to go dead in Trinidad!" (Selvon, 1990: 164). At the end of the novel we see that the issue is not resolved as the thing suggested because the legend is left open-ended.

Another female character in the novel is Kamalla who is the village whore. However, she does not want to remain as "the courtesan of Sans Souci" (Selvon, 1990: 123). Kamalla, as she has a sexual encounter with Roger Franklin, is envious of the life of the white people and also Sarojini, who she thinks is the new favourite of Roger. Her envy can be observed in her conversation with Sarojini after the hurricane:

> Last night I sleep on the floor in the school, like everybody else. And you allowed to traipse about in the big house like a *lady*! Is not you should be there, Sarojini. After all I do for Mr Franklin! (Selvon, 1990: 168)

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

The last characters to be examined in the novel are the two white masters of the plantation; Roger Franklin, the owner of Sans Souci, and Garry Johnson, a friend of Roger from England who has been visiting Trinidad with an intention of collecting data for his book on the customs and beliefs in Trinidad.

Roger Franklin appears as a "perfect" white man, in other words the colonizer, who is depicted as unaffected by the environment around him. Yet, it is later disclosed that even such a faultless white man has a relationship with an Indian woman which he keeps secret. Detailed information concerning the inner world of Roger is not given however taken physically he supports the idea that not only the colonized but also the colonizer changes and adapts to the new environment in which he lives. It is a given fact that on the arrival of the colonizer "even the poorest colonizer thought himself to be-and actually was- superior to the colonized" (Memmi, 2003: 8). This idea gives an exceptional social place to the colonizer which depends clearly on that of the colonized. As Memmi states:

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

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

Garry is in search of an exotic life and his adventures can be taken as symbolic of the process of colonization. Garry is preparing a book concerning the traditions and beliefs of the people overseas and he is collecting data on these. The exotic quality he seeks is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "of or pertaining to, or characteristic of a foreigner, or what is foreign; hence outlandish, barbarous, strange, uncouth" (1991: 549). The exotic becomes a site for projection of perceived Western lack; the experiences that cannot be achieved in the "civilised" world may freely be experienced in the exotic world. In *Those Who Eat the Cascadura*, Garry wants to remain as an observer, but actively takes part in the lives of the colonized through his affair with Sarojini. He would someday return back to whiteness and the idea came to him as he saw himself "indulging in this confidence with the natives… and with the thought, he realized he had used the word 'natives' for the first time" (Selvon, 1990: 105). Whatsoever he has experienced, he wants to take back home only good memories but not the reality of living in Trinidad. His ideas are expressed in his reflections on Sarojini:

> He did not truly want to formulate impressions like these, there would be time enough when he turned. He wanted to remember her as a wild flower in the open, dancing the cocoa, laughing on the beach at Balandra, lying under the trees with the wind in the leaves and sunlight broken by green foliage (Selvon, 1990: 172).

At this point it should be noted that Selvon's third-person narrator is extraordinarily successful in keeping objectivity and in identifying with characters no matter what the racial identity of the character in question is. The characters are justly and vividly described and objectively presented.

The culture in Trinidad as observed in the lives of the inhabitants of Sans Souci has undergone modifications as necessitated by the process of colonisation.

Culture lost its authenticity as Selvon clearly expresses in the novel. The culture in Trinidad "like a great many customs…had borrowed bits and pieces from others until it was nothing like the original version. Many people did not know or care about the reasons or authenticity of rites, and certain aspects were modified or magnified." (Selvon, 1990: 107) The change is observed in a number of instances and expressed via a series of symbols.

In the first place, Selvon provides the notion that "like all the Indians of the island, those in Sans Souci were lured by Western influences, and Manko injected mystery and spiced rituals with a little excitement lest he became expendable" (Selvon, 1990: 107). The Western culture gave and did not give things to the island as observed in the sarcastic comments of Kamalla on the clothing of Sarojini. Kamalla thinks that Sarojini is "too cheap to buy she own clothes" as she was "obsessed with humiliating Sarojini." She comments that "every day she was coming by me to borrow this, and borrow that, as if the white man don't give she nothing!" (Selvon, 1990: 115) Here the clothes, when taken symbolically of the culture, create the idea that the relationship with a colonizing force does not provide one with benefits unless the colonized is subservient.

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

> Manko laughed, a rare sound for him. 'You frighten, eh? I was always longing to get a
> white man in my power, to get some samples of blood. I hear it's blue.'
> 'Mine is red, same as yours.'

'If you was dying and I was the onlyest man with blood to give you a transfusion?' (Selvon, 1990: 103)

The process of othering and its appreciation by the Indian population of Trinidad may be further exemplified with the words of Prekash: "These people from England have some funny ideas when they come here. They think we live like cannibals in Africa" (Selvon, 1990: 67). The words clearly point to the fact that colonial discourse defines the "Other" as inferior. The colonial discourse is used by the colonised as a means of challenging the practice yet it is observed that the colonised as a shadow of the colonizer mimics even the most derogatory language he uses. The status of the colonised can be explained as "mimicry" of the process of "Othering" where Prekash, as a fully mimic character, is Othering the black.

Furthermore, Selvon is critical of the Western achievements through the deeds and words of Manko. In an instance where Garry seeks the solution to his disease in obeah Manko reproachfully says: "All those big brains in the world, London, America, Germany… none of them can't do nothing? They just left you to dead?'" (Selvon, 1990: 91). He was "constantly advocating acceptance of what was decreed and had to happen, yet here he was, tempted to pit his puny knowledge against the might of powers which controlled a man's mission" (Selvon, 1990: 93). He belittles and humiliates Western ways in Manko's thoughts as he thinks

A chinky little bit of thing stick up in a man head, and all the big professors and inventors in the world couldn't do nothing! They sending men to the moon, they inventing babies, they making bombs what could wipe up the whole world, and a chinky bit of thing stick in a man head and causing panic and pandemonium! Any kiss-me-arse bush doctor could do that! Even Manko! What if the spirits themselves had put the idea in his head, and sent this white man all the way from England so that he, Manko, could put a spoke in the wheel?" (Selvon, 1990: 93)

The title of the novel points us to an indigenous myth, which suggests that those people who eat the native fish cascadura are bound to die in Trinidad. The cascadura is actually a small horny-scaled fish which is plentiful in the rainy season in Trinidad.

> The cascadura is still alive hours after it is caught. It looks lifeless, and only moves if it is disturbed by touch. The flesh has a coarse texture and the taste of a sardine. In pre-war days it was only eaten by poor people in the country villages. But now it appears on the stalls of the city market and fetches a handsome pride (Selvon, 1990: 158).

Later in the novel, it is also disclosed that the superstitions surrounding the fish also are a construct of the process of colonisation. Manko states that cascadura was taught at schools to the native population. He defines the issue as "some stupidness about the cascadura. You don't remember when you was in school it had some stupid poetry we used to learn." (Selvon, 1990: 163). The verses concerning the cascadura reads as Sarojini repeats it: "Those who eat the cascadura will, the native legend says, wheresoever they may wander end in Trinidad their days" (Selvon, 1990: 163). Upon the performance Manko commented that "it was some stupid Englishman what say that. White man don't know nothing about obeah. Even the people in Trinidad don't believe that foolishness." (Selvon, 1990: 164). When discursively examined the words do carry the traits of the colonizer as the native legend is recalled. It is disclosed by Manko that the verses repeated by Sarojini were taught to the population in Western schools. The legend is also defined as a "native legend", a definition which cannot be recounted by a member of the indigenous population. Thus, it is obvious that culture in Trinidad, including legends and myths, is created by Western hands.

While re-shaping and re-defining the culture of the colonized land the colonizer also causes some segments of the indigenous data to disappear. Garry, as if he consciously admits the process, points to this loss as he says that he has not "heard one calypso since" he "came to Trinidad." (Selvon, 1990: 142) Another illustration of the loss of culture surfaces in Prekash's complaints about Sarojini to her father Ramdeen. It is apparent that Indian customs do not accept a girl "to fling sheself like that at a white man" (Selvon, 1990: 97). Prekash voices his uneasiness concerning the deeds of

Sarojini and justifies his point with reference to Hindu religion. He says that all the black people in the village would "be saying that those coolies only go by the temple to pretend" (Selvon, 1990: 97). But through Ramdeen's words we understand that Sarojini has lost her Indianness and "she doesn't even do *puja* in the temple no more" (Selvon, 1990: 97). Acknowledging the matter, Prekash's protest increasingly goes on and says "East is East, and West is West, and Never the Twain Shall Meet!" (Selvon, 1990: 98). However, his point can only be taken sarcastically having recognized the encounters of the colonizers with the colonials.

The indigenous culture as embodied in the description of the qualities of the cascadura as it "is still alive hours after it is caught. It looks lifeless, and only moves if it is disturbed by touch" (Selvon, 1990: 158) gains recognition as it is discussed in *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* and the indigenous cultures of Trinidad exist as the different tastes in the Creole soup *callaloo*.

Nonetheless, it must be observed that all the events narrated in the novel take place after Trinidad became an independent country, which also suggests that the tracts of colonial legacy cannot be eradicated in a short span of time.

CONCLUSION

In this study a postcolonial reading of the cultural processes as reflected in Samuel Selvon's *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* has been presented. In support of the hypothesis both major and minor characters in the chosen novel have been analysed in the light of the data from diverse fields of study such as post-colonial literary theory and criticism, cultural theory, and linguistics.

The first chapter consists of a historical and cultural account of life in Trinidad. The historical evolution of society in Trinidad and the current status quo have been presented in this chapter.

The second chapter consists of an illustration of the standpoints of the characters in relation to post-colonial processes. Firstly, major and minor East Indian characters, Sarojini, Kamalla, Prekash, Dummy and, Ramdeen, have been analysed with respect to their experiences of hybridization process. For this end, all of these five characters have been evaluated with reference to the general patterns and typical phases of the process of hybridization and also to such factors as English language skills, and internalization of Western values, which are considered to have influence on the formation of their standpoints. The outcome of these analyses is that the East Indian characters in *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* seem to be highly hybridized and they stand in between two cultures without belonging to either of them. Their use of the English language and other cultural practices are copies of the white master's yet they keep refrained to their own cultures a large sum of which they have lost.

The close analyses of the female Indian immigrant characters, Kamalla and Sarojini, have revealed that they represent two contrasting attitudes towards hybridization and colonization. Both of the female characters have gone through the critical phases and processes of hybridization. Sarojini's experience of the process has

been shown to depend largely on her encounter with Johnson and her implied white parentage, whereas Kamalla contacts whiteness through her encounters with Roger Franklin. As a result of her contact with whiteness Sarojini becomes dependent on whiteness while Kamalla freely enjoys herself with the white master.

The overall conclusions that can be offered with reference to the historical and social background to the experiences of colonization in Trinidad, to the theoretical data concerning the cultural processes resulting from these post-colonial conundrum, and to the post-colonial reading of Samuel Selvon's *Those Who Eat the Cascadura* as a literary reflection of the colonial and post-colonial experiences of Trinidadian society may be put down in three statements: the racial composition of Trinidad is utterly reflective of the process of colonization; the characters presented in the novel preserve vestiges of their cultures of origin yet they also exhibit Western qualities which make them hybridized and creolised; the novel is not created artificially by the author, but is a credible representation of social realities observed in Trinidad.

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