

SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN CARIBBEAN FICTION

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by

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under the supervision
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DECLARATION

I, ASHA MUHAMMED, hereby declare that this thesis is a bona-fide record of research done by me and that no part of this thesis has been presented earlier for any degree, diploma, fellowship or similar title of any University.

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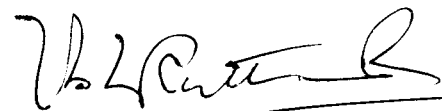
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled
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my supervision and guidance and that no part of this
thesis has been presented earlier for the award of any
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CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Man is forever in search of his self. This search takes him through the dark corridors of the past into the complexities of the present, leading on to the vast, unknown future. It makes him probe within the psyche, unravelling the mysteries of the conscious, subconscious and unconscious layers to arrive at the myths and archetypes that define the meaning of existence. It also assumes the form of an outward quest, struggling against the odds of exploitation and deprivation, fear and aggression, race and gender, politics and religion, identifying the paradoxical relationship between individual and community, 'self' and 'other' in a vast and incomprehensible world. All literature is involved with this search in one way or the other, twentieth century literature more so, on account of the interest in psychology fostered by the works of Freud, Adler and Jung. Different aspects of this search are portrayed through different modes and genres by the stalwarts of the twentieth century like D.H. Lawrence, T.S. Eliot and Samuel Beckett. In post-colonial literature, the search takes on an added

dimension because of the Prospero-Caliban relationship of colonization and the inevitability of Caliban's use of Prospero's language to rail against the colonial master.

When one examines the genre of the novel, one finds the fictional mode adapted in ingenious ways to portray this search in all its complexity. In the present day world, the novelist is very much aware of the inadequacy of interpretation and the disorienting reality of the unexplainable. Language is the tool whereby he tries to create order out of chaos. Language itself is bonded to ethnicity and tradition as is evident in the vast differences in idiom and syntax among people who speak the same tongue. Among the literatures written in the English language, there are differences dependent upon geography, ethnicity and other factors. The English used by the Canadian author is different from that used by the native British writer as well as those used by the Australian or the Caribbean. If one compares a Caribbean novelist writing in English to an Indian novelist doing the same, the nature and extent of the difference seems to be

overwhelming. The presence of an extant, viable native literature tends to intimidate the Indian writer though he draws his sustenance from it. The Indian writer exercises his choice of writing in the language of his intellectual make-up fostered by a colonial education. In contrast, the Caribbean novelist is forced to use the language of the colonial master as the creole version of English has replaced completely the native Amerindian and African dialects. The trauma of colonization and enslavement had annihilated and marginalized the native traditions so that the only tradition he is familiar with is that of the white masters. To quote Gareth Griffiths from his book, A Double Exile "If the African writer in the twentieth century has been concerned with questions of identity and place and has suffered a double exile from his own tradition and from that which has been offered by education and colonial example, the West Indian writer has suffered these same problems with an added intensity. The African writer has an alternative living tradition to that offered by his schooling; a language which he possesses by birthright, and an historical identification with the continent he inhabits. The West Indian has only the fact of his

separate existence, his colour, and his distinctive habits to oppose to the colonial values he has inherited. It is not surprising then that the central fact of West Indian writing is the struggle to define a separate West Indian reality and to establish its values as significant and worthwhile" (1978, 79).

Though Griffiths's concern here is with the black writers of the Caribbean, it holds true for the East Indians and the Chinese as well whose ancestors had come to the Caribbean as indentured labourers. The collective Caribbean experience made it difficult to keep to ethnic traditions in places far from the soils that nurtured them. Moreover most of the indentured labourers were illiterate just as the Negro slaves had been in the era before their arrival. So the legends and folk tales could survive only in the oral tradition in the wake of displacement and enslavement. The plurality of Caribbean experience with people of different races living side by side and often together, presents anomalous situations that are redefined in terms of fiction by writers hailing from different ethnic groups. Trying to grow roots in a world that

transcends meaning, the Caribbean novelists' search for the 'self' becomes a quest for a Caribbean tradition, a community to which you belong.

When one examines the Caribbean preoccupation with selfhood in the midst of all this confusion, one is amazed by the similarity of approach among the writers who hail from different islands and different racial and social strata. The attitudes are different but the basic problems tend to be the same. Though the term 'West Indies' is a misnomer, the islands of Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados and British Guyana forming part of the South American continent, share a common heritage of colonization, enslavement and indentureship that makes the term a useful one for classification. They share common problems and a common language though they do not come under a single head of administration. Caribbean fiction itself is a twentieth century phenomenon, the first novel identified as Caribbean, being Tom Redcam's Becka's Buckra Baby published in 1903. The social, historical and political problems of a multicultural society tend to occupy the thoughts of the Caribbean novelist whose sense of rootlessness gets projected in

his fiction as the search for identity. The genre of the novel is in the process of growing up, each creation being an attempt to arrive at the core of Caribbean experience, by questioning the norms of the colonial masters, presenting alternative attitudes and techniques to break free from the shackles of systems and controls imposed from without. Though techniques vary, one can recognize six characteristic situations that recur again and again in Caribbean novels. These situations present the conflict between the inherent 'self' and the alien 'other' in an attempt to arrive at the true recognition of the 'self.' This does not mean that the scope of enquiry is limited or that the writers do not make use of other situations or other methods. On the other hand, the attempt here is to present a contrastive analysis of different authors and different works in the light of how they make use of these situations to explore the search for identity.

Childhood has special relevance in Caribbean fiction as the child's growing awareness of the world around him provides the novelist with the analogue of the West Indian experience. There are many novels where

the protagonists are children. The two novels by Michael Anthony, The Year in San Fernando and Green Days By the River focus attention on the child's progress to maturity in alien environment. In addition to novels devoted wholly to childhood, childhood experiences form integral parts of most of the West Indian novels. Reader's Guide to West Indian Literature by David Dabydeen and Nana Wilson-Tagoe has the following comment to make:

The children's responses to their environment, their interpretation of adult standards and their confusions about history and race reflect both the confusions and fantasies of childhood and the sensibilities of a colonial upbringing. (1987,39)

In George Lamming's work, In the Castle of My Skin, the world of childhood becomes part of the colonial ethos. The emphasis is on the maturing consciousness of the child narrator and the boy G's personal growth is linked with the changes in the society he finds himself in. In Jean Rhys's novel, Wide Sargasso Sea, the childhood experiences of the white heroine play a crucial role in determining her character. V.S. Naipaul's Miguel Street presents a

child's view of the world around him. A House for Mr Biswas by the same author records the childhood experiences of the protagonist with comic irony unveiling their role in determining his later experiences. In Jane's Career by H.G. De Lisser the white author projects the experiences of a black girl who leaves her rural home to work as a domestic servant in the city. Jane's gradual movement from the innocence and naivete of childhood to the experience and cunning of adulthood form the mainstay of the novel.

In post-colonial literature, the struggle for existence becomes a prominent motif providing scope for the conflicts between the 'self' and the 'other.' The struggle assumes different forms and manifold facets depending on character and situation. At the grassroots level, it is the struggle to survive in the midst of poverty and deprivation. The struggle to get food, to procure employment, to get cheap accommodation, to get education, to avail medical help, to keep up appearances, to get recognition in society - the list is endless. In the Caribbean milieu attention is focussed on the difficulty to eke out a living in a country where

to be black is to be stupid, illiterate and poor. The social hierarchy is based on colour and the educated 'coloured' class snatches all the jobs left after the white people have had their pick. In this milieu women characters are portrayed as suffering from double exploitation. De Lisser's Jane's Career shows Jane exploited as a menial in the Mason household but when she breaks free, she finds that she has to give in to the overseer to keep her new job. Roger Mais's novel Brother Man portrays the struggles of the slum dwellers with a great deal of sympathetic understanding. Mais seeks to highlight the social neglect of the slums at the same time revealing the indomitable will of the people and the healing, unifying power of the communal spirit. Alvin Bennett's novel, God the stonebreaker, presents the craftiness of the woman of the slums that helps her survive in a vicious world. Mittelholzer's Corentyne Thunder presents the stark, careworn existence of the East Indian peasant in a landscape that is totally unsympathetic to him. A particular incident in the novel portrays Ramgollal's absolute bewilderment when his daughter complains of agonising pain.

The struggle to get employment and a decent place to live are other aspects portrayed in different works. Mr Biswas's dream for a house of his own is both the actual struggle to get one and also his attempt to carve out a niche for himself in a world that is indifferent and alien. C.L.R. James's Minty Alley focusses on the difficulty of getting cheap accommodation. The struggle to get educated is also portrayed in many works. In Sam Selvon's novel, A Brighter Sun, the rising aspirations of the illiterate Tiger to come up in the world are poignantly portrayed. A House for Mr Biswas depicts the struggles of Mohum Biswas's son Anand to pass the examination that would open the doors of higher education to him.

Another viewpoint of the struggle is portrayed in Wide Sargasso Sea where the declining fortunes of the white creole family add to the sense of isolation and feeling of insecurity in the heroine. In Children of Kaywana, Mittelholzer portrays the struggles of the pioneering European settlers through the fortunes of the van Groenwegel family. They face violence, rioting and natural calamities and survive despite them. Wilson

Harris's novel, The Secret Ladder, shows the clash between progress and ancestral roots as the descendants of the bush Negroes are threatened with eviction by a proposed dam on the land they had identified as home.

Understanding or recognition of the self becomes possible only through tracing the roots of tradition and culture. The chaotic nature of the Caribbean society with its intermingling of races makes a journey into the past inevitable. The private world of the slave and indentured labourer is one of frustration, anger, pain, brutality and fantasy. He yearns for a home either in Africa or India, a yearning that is romantic and illusory, never to be realized. Though emancipation freed the slaves and independence did away with the colonial fetters, the emotional dependence on the white masters continued. To many West Indians, England was home country, regardless of race and colour, a continuing syndrome of dependence fostered by colonialism. In striving to break free from it, he recovers past relations endowing them with different meanings. To George Lamming, history came to signify more than the history book's definition, it came to mean

not a succession of episodes with causal connections but the creation of a situation offering antagonistic opposition and a challenge of survival that had to be met by all involved. He explores colonial relations probing the nature of colonial dependence and rebellion. His novels, In the Castle of My Skin and Natives of My Person present the persistent symptom of psychological and cultural division in terms of past experience. Claude McKay, articulates the divided Afro-Caribbean consciousness in his poems and novels. His novel, Banana Bottom represents the superiority of an ethnic black culture in opposition to the borrowed culture of the whites that is acquired by Bitia Plant through her European education. In the end she rejects surface sophistication to come back to her real stature as a black girl in a rustic milieu. In sharp contrast to this, the black protagonist of De Lisser's novel Jane's Career adopts the role of passive acquiescence to the norms of colonial society. She is successful by the standard of the white author, getting herself a husband, a house and ironically, a servant. In Wide Sargasso Sea the heroine lives in a society where the hostile Negroes threaten their existence. Her gradual isolation

contributes to her later unstable state of mind. Her estrangement with her husband completes the crisis. At home she is ridiculed as "white cockroach," in England she is shut up as a mad woman. Among writers of East Indian descent, the racial themes surface as awareness of ethnicity. Naipaul's A House for Mr Biswas redefines Indianness in the context of a multiracial society. Selvon's Turn Again Tiger presents Tiger stepping back into the past to confront the trauma of indentureship. The mere process of creolization, Selvon seems to imply, does not bring in liberation.

Full length historical novels have also been popular among Caribbean novelists. Mittelholzer's trilogy of three novels record the social and historical reality of Guyana. In them, he makes an attempt to unravel the causes for the cultural and emotional ambivalence in the Caribbean. V.S. Reid's novel, New Day makes use of the fortunes of the Campbells, a fictional family of mixed African and European ancestry to illustrate the situation in Jamaica as it moves towards a responsible political leadership. The Guyana Quartet by Wilson Harris consists of four novels that shed light on different aspects of Guyanese history.

Using the imaginative language of myth and archetype, he redefines the paradoxes of the past in terms of the mixed inheritance of the present. His quest for wholeness embraces all the races of the Caribbean and the ambivalence of ethnic relationships based on history.

Love and sex are favourite themes of novelists all over the world. Relationship with the opposite sex plays a crucial role in the emergence of selfhood. But the conventional framework of romantic love with its pattern of courtship and marriage is not popular in Caribbean fiction. The peculiar nature of Caribbean society makes the portrayal of love and sex different from that elsewhere. Kenneth Ramchand quotes Philip D. Curtin's Jamaica Legislative Council report entitled Two Jamaicas (1955) in his book, The West Indian Novel and Its Background:

The planters had little interest in the sexual mores of the slaves. The slaves made whatever sexual union they chose and these were usually more permanent than simple promiscuity. The Jamaican Negro normally had a "wife", perhaps more than one, this family made a social unit that had nothing to do with the blessing of the established church... By the time, the missionaries arrived on the scene, Afro-Jamaican "marriage" was too well established to be easily changed. (1970, 120)

This presents only one side of the picture however. In the days of slavery, the slave women were valued in terms of their ability to produce the labour force. The white planters often succumbed to the attractions of the easily available slave women. Though some of the coloured offspring that ensued were treated well by their white fathers, vast numbers of them were unacknowledged. In the post-emancipation era, the freed slaves found it difficult to form meaningful relationships. The sanctity of church marriage was not always insisted upon by the Negroes who preferred to live together without getting the consent of priests. The system worked for some people but not for the vast majority. Many of the men preferred to be free of responsibility as they had no legal obligation towards their children, so the burden of parenthood fell completely on the mothers. Many novelists present women acting both father and mother to the child. In George Lamming's novel, In the Castle of My Skin, the image of the rural mother appears as a person committed to her child and the land, uncritically optimistic and unquestioning. This is not the only image however. The vulnerable woman who is doubly deprived and oppressed

appears in many novels. Jane's Career contrasts the life of the woman in the rural and urban environments in Jamaica, exploring the exploitative nature of her relationships with men. In an atmosphere free of romantic sentimentality the men she comes into contact with try to exploit her sexually. With natural cunning, she comes through however and is finally glorified by a church marriage. In Roger Mais's novels, the degraded woman of the slum is presented as possessing a generosity of spirit that is part of the communal spirit of the slum.

Illicit and incestuous relationships are also portrayed by many novelists. Novelists like Claude McKay, Jean Rhys and Edgar Mittelholzer portray abnormal ways and questionable relationships. McKay's Banana Bottom portrays Crazy Bow Adair, a lunatic with great musical talent who exploits Bita sexually before she is quite mature. This results in her being taken on as a protegee by the Craigs who provide her with the opportunity of studying abroad. One of Bita's suitors, Herald Newton Day, goes into disgrace because of his sexual aberration with a nanny goat. Jean Rhys's

heroine in Voyage in the Dark gets degraded gradually into a life of prostitution though all she seeks in life is a little love and warmth. Mittelholzer's main theme is the schizoid tendency within the psyche brought about by the opposite pulls of the Spirit and the Flesh. In Corentyne Thunder, Geoffrey's inner division becomes manifest in his relationship with Kathree: "I's not in love with you yourself only with your body. I told you that on the second day we were together, if you remember, and you said that you were fully satisfied with my loving only your body. Ugh, but I'm sick of loving bodies, Kathree. It leaves me unsatisfied and depressed" (1941, 292). The Harrowing of Hubertus portrays Hubertus's division of loyalties that harrows him. Later on he rejects the uncompromising Christian stance he had taken earlier to describe his illicit relationship with Faustina as a deep and sincere love that is a joy in the eyes of God. Mittelholzer also portrays sexual perversions as manifestations of psychological trauma. Wilson Harris uses questionable relationships as metaphors for the traumatic events of history.

In the East Indian milieu, man-woman relationship becomes significant in the larger context of the family. In the case of Mohun Biswas, his marriage into the Tulsi household becomes the starting point for exploring different family relationships, especially with the other members of the Tulsi household. The vast numbers of Tulsis tend to intimidate Biswas and question his claim on his own wife and children. In Sam Selvon's Tiger novels, Tiger's wife Urmilla is presented as dominated over by her husband. But in his Moses Ascending, a novel depicting the migrant London experience, women are portrayed as more aggressive.

The motif of sexual union with a white woman occurs often in the novels of Caribbean writers who are non-white. In Turn Again Tiger Tiger's obsession with a white woman is portrayed as the residue of the colonial experience with its emphasis on white superiority. Tiger has to overcome this obsession to be liberated completely from the shackles of indentureship. In the novels of white writers the coloured girl is depicted as attractive and promiscuous, often threatening the

existence of the white heroine. At the basic level, the woman is presented as either a worker or a prostitute doggedly pursuing her path in life. The women of the upper classes are also portrayed as victims of social exploitation. There are exceptions however, for Children of Kaywana presents the character of Hendrickje, the cruel matriarch of indomitable will.

Attitudes to religion help to highlight the contrasts of 'self' and 'other.' In the Caribbean, the Christian missionaries were largely responsible for the emancipation of slaves. Earlier, the white planters had preferred to keep the slaves in heathen ignorance, looking upon the Negroes and Amerindians as races ordained by God to serve the Christian masters. The Christian ideas of morality, sin, mercy etc., pertained only to their dealings with white men and the slaves could be treated as cruelly as possible. At the same time, they objected to the slaves worshipping their own deities as they considered such worship satanic. The missionaries changed the situation by converting the slaves to Christianity and insisting on kindness and fair treatment. Their protests against cruelties and

slave concubinage created awareness among the British public and led to the decree of emancipation being passed in the parliament. Conversion to Christianity did not change the Negroes completely, however. Many of them continued to worship their god 'Obi' in secret, attending the church at the same time. The practice of obeah, a type of African witchcraft, was banned by law but continued to be practised in secret. In the era of indentureship, the East Indians brought the Hindu and Muslim religions into the Caribbean. Their beliefs and festivals too went into the Caribbean melting pot and became common for all.

Obeah and cult practices occur in novels of every racial origin as the belief in obeah is not restricted to the Negroes alone. The obeahman is a character frequently met with in Caribbean fiction. Ismith Khan's novel, The Obeah Man presents the obeahman as protagonist. The White Witch of Rosehall by Herbert. G. De Lisser presents a white woman indulging in Haitian witchcraft. The white protagonist of Wide Sargasso Sea resorts to obeah to keep her hold on her husband. In Roger Mais's novel, Brother Man, the obeah man Bra' Ambo

is presented as the antithesis of Bra' Man: he sells ganja and exploits the people. Brother Man, the Rastafarian protagonist, spreads the message of peace and love. The Rastafarian cult itself aims at regaining the dignity of the African through the religious association of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia with a god like figure. In many novels the poor people are depicted as spending their hard earned money on obeahmen, who exploit their naivete.

Many writers present the functionaries of the Christian religion with irony. Their missionary zeal concerning the morality of the Negro population is often exposed as hypocritical and fraudulent. When it comes to the authors of East Indian origin, the rites and ceremonies of the Hindu religion are presented as bizarre in a society rapidly undergoing creolization. Naipaul depicts the irony in the Tulsi household where the very pious Hindus become perpetrators of Christian dogma. The sons of Tulsi assume god like stature on account of their western education. Naipaul's novel, The Suffrage of Elvira, depicts the doctrinal confusion of Hindu, Muslim and Christian beliefs with comic irony.

In addition to them, there is also the practice of obeah complicating the issue.

Another motif in Caribbean fiction is nationhood and political power. The political arena is full of predatory politicians preying upon the susceptibilities of the ignorant masses. The shifting nature of political dominance does not bring true freedom. It only substitutes one type of oppression by another. So political themes are popular among the writers who aim at creating greater awareness among the people. George Lamming's novels, Of Age and Innocence and Natives of My Person explore the themes of political and nationalistic aspirations in the West Indies. Naipaul's Guerrillas and The Mimic Men examine the relationship between the colonial experience and nationalistic aspirations bringing out the ineffectiveness of nationalism in a society devoid of a centre. Political questions are also treated comically by Sam Selvon in his Moses novels.

In addition to novels where the political theme is centralized, there are many novels that raise political questions as subsidiary concerns. In

Jane's Career, the rustic Jane quenches the political ardour of a budding trade-unionist making him a pro-establishment figure. This is in keeping with the reactionary politics of the author. Mittelholzer's Kaywana Blood traces the family fortunes of the van Groenwegels in terms of the changing political climate of Guyana. Turn Again Tiger presents Tiger's confrontation with the colonial experience bringing up questions about his own place in the social hierarchy. Thus the need for forming meaningful relationships in a multiracial society is explored in fiction from political and nationalistic viewpoints.

Proceeding from the thematic to the formalistic, the first thing that strikes the eye is the language. The English of the Caribbean is different from that of the native speaker, its essential rhythm and grammar being charged with the tropical environment. The early African slaves used to speak their dialects with some mixture of broken English. Their white masters in turn had to adopt African words in order to make themselves understood by their slaves. This passed through the generations of white, black and coloured

populations adding to the varieties of creole. When the East Indians and Chinese came, they too got creolized, while the other groups assimilated words and expressions from their languages. As education was restricted to the privileged few, most of the common people used dialect. Different registers are made use of by the authors in depicting characters of different social and cultural strata. As the fictional mode of the omniscient narrator is the most popular, most of the novels present alternations between standardized West Indian English and different dialects. For example, the white author of Jane's Career uses dialect in the conversation of the Negroes often for comic effect. Daddy Buckram, one of the marginal characters, uses dialect to impress the rules of morality on the young girl's mind but he borrows from the language of the Bible creating a most incongruous mixture. Sam Selvon uses dialect in A Brighter Sun but his sense of identification with the character, Tiger, closes the gap between the language of narration and the language of the fictional character. Authors like V.S. Reid and John Hearne use dialect to do the work of both narration and dialogue. The natural rhythms of creole are made

use of as stylistic devices by certain authors. The use of calypsonian rhythm gives a distinct flavour to Selvon's novel, The Lonely Londoners. Wilson Harris's choice of language creates the effect of poetry both in terms of imagination and in terms of rhythm.

As has been stated earlier, the presence of various ethnic groups living side by side complicates the Caribbean situation, but it takes on an added significance when one considers how most of these races are not native to the soil but have migrated there from elsewhere. The original inhabitants, Caribs and Arawaks, were decimated by the early European settlers barring a few groups that chose to cohabit with the Negro slaves in the days of the plantocracy. In the days of indentureship, the Chinese labourers also mingled freely with the black population. The East Indians were more reserved and traditional but there were several instances of mixed marriages even among them. Moreover, white supervisors continued to take advantage of coolie women just as the white planters had earlier exploited the Negro women. All this goes to prove that racial purity is just an illusion in the

Caribbean. As Caribbean fiction tends to be vast, some method of narrowing the field of enquiry has to be resorted to. Though classification based on ethnicity is arbitrary, I have resorted to such a method on the basis of the essential sensibilities and sympathies of the novelists. For example, Mittelholzer has been identified as "coloured" while George Lamming has been classified as "black." The classification also helps to unravel the historical reasons for the Caribbean crisis in identity.

The novels have been classified as white, East Indian, black and coloured. The two white novelists chosen for detailed analysis are Jean Rhys and Herbert De Lisser. Two novels of each author, Voyage in the Dark and Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys and Jane's Career and The White Witch of Rosehall by De Lisser, have been subjected to scrutiny on the basis of the six situations described earlier. V.S. Naipaul and Sam Selvon have been selected from among the East Indian writers. The two novels of Selvon depicting the peasant experience are taken as one unit as Turn Again Tiger was

written as a sequel to A Brighter Sun. A House for Mr Biswas has been selected from among the novels of Naipaul to offer effective contrast. The chapter on black novelists elucidates the theme of selfhood by contrasting three novels by three different authors. Of these, Claude McKay's Banana Bottom is a pioneering work, George Lamming's In the Castle of My Skin is a bildungsroman and Brother Man by Roger Mais presents a Rastafarian protagonist. The saga of race achieves a new proportion with the emergence of the mulatto. The three novels of Edgar Mittelholzer that form the Kaywana Trilogy have been contrasted with the four novels of Wilson Harris that form The Guyana Quartet. Both Harris and Mittelholzer aim at re-telling the history of Guyana through these novels. So a contrastive analysis becomes worthwhile in terms of the Caribbean identity. As other novels and other authors cannot be ignored altogether, an attempt has been made to touch upon a few relevant works in the final chapter that also sums up the conclusions drawn from such a critique.

CHAPTER II

THE BUCKRA'S STORY: WHITE WRITERS

The earliest writers of the Caribbean were white or 'buckra.' Before one examines their novels, it would be worthwhile to delve into the history of the white community prior to the emancipation of slaves, with regard to their literary aspirations. Kenneth Ramchand's The West Indian Novel and Its Background, a pioneering work in the criticism of Caribbean fiction, quotes a petition written by a white Jamaican journalist for representation in the British House of Commons in 1831: "The haughty aristocrats who have property in that island, and who may obtain seats in the House of Commons have no community of interest, no identity of feeling with the resident inhabitants of Jamaica; to these aristocrats what may become of the people of that country is and ever must be a matter of perfect inconsequence, so long as they can retain in England what they call their station in society" (1970, 32). Most of the Europeans who had made their fortunes preferred to migrate back to Britain or to the Continent and those who inherited fortunes in the way of West Indian plantations preferred to remain 'at home'

allowing caretakers to look after them. This deprived the Islands of the best people, and also created the idea of Britain as home and the Islands as hunting grounds for wealth. Those who did remain behind evolved a way of life that was not English or even European, living in large homesteads, waited on hand and foot by the large servile population, they ate well, drank well and entertained well. The sunny climate moved them to indolence and the presence of Negro slave girls to licentiousness. Ironically however, they did not use their wealth for building schools or libraries, as the wealthy creoles preferred to send their children to England to be educated. England was the proud centre of art and culture and they looked to it in these matters. As a result of this, the literary output of the white creole community prior to the emancipation of slaves, was minimal. With the emancipation came a drastic change. The slaves turned hostile and the plantations became derelict. Many of the white creoles migrated back to the home country. Those who remained behind had a hard time till they started using indentured labour to work the canefields. By this time, the scene was

dominated by the 'coloured people,' for the generations of white creoles cohabiting with the slaves had produced a new class, who now started making their presence felt. When one examines the writing of the early white creole writers one finds that most of it is amateurish and trifling. Later on however the descendants of the plantation owners migrated abroad and started writing about the Caribbean experience. The cultural ethos of the West Indies was resurrected in their works, not as it was written by outsiders, but as experienced by white people who were part of it.

When one talks about the 'white' community, it is to be noted that the demarcation is based more on identification than on actual complexion. Of the two writers chosen for indepth analysis, Jean Rhys was long thought of as a British writer rather than as a Caribbean. But the sensibility of the author manifested in her writings is essentially Caribbean. The Caribbean experience has contributed more to her artistic genius than any other factor or experience. Born at Roseau, Dominica, Jean Rhys spent her childhood in the West Indies. Her father was a Welsh doctor and her mother a

white creole. At sixteen she went to England and a little later she met and married a Dutch poet. Her first novel, The Left Bank was published in 1927. The two novels that have been selected for analysis are those where the West Indian component is dominant, namely Voyage in the Dark and Wide Sargasso Sea. Both the novels depict female protagonists caught up in the tidal waves of emotional upheaval struggling to attain selfhood. Of these Voyage in the Dark published in 1934 was reprinted in 1967 after the success of Wide Sargasso Sea (1966). The Penguin edition of Wide Sargasso Sea was brought out in 1968. Anna Morgan, the protagonist of Voyage in the Dark, goes through life suspended between two dreams; the warm bright dream of her childhood in the Caribbean and the nightmare of cold and hostile England where she becomes a victim of exploitation. Through Anna Morgan, Rhys presents the vibrant picture of a sensitive woman whose romantic illusions are ripped apart by a hostile world. Antoinette Cosway, the protagonist of Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea has many points of similarity with Anna Morgan. She too is a victim, a creole heiress whose marriage to an Englishman ends up in her being

locked up in the attic of his ancestral homestead as a mad woman. Here, Jean Rhys tells us the story of the first Mrs Rochester of Jane Eyre but the tale is hardly a pastiche of Charlotte Bronte's novel. Antoinette Cosway suffers traumatic experiences both at the hands of the Negroes, who set fire to her house, and at the hands of her husband who married her for her money. Like a captive slave, she is wrenched from the shores of the sunlit Caribbean and taken to England. In England, her identity undergoes a complete change: Antoinette Cosway with her pretty clothes and perfumes, vanishes, Bertha Mason, mad and violent takes her place. The novel ends with the protagonist setting fire to Thornfield Hall to escape the death-in-life that she is forced to endure. Jean Rhys's other novels like Good Morning, Midnight and The Left Bank also treat women protagonists caught up in a world that does not understand them. These two novels have been chosen especially because the Caribbean experience portrayed in them are crucial to the attainment of selfhood.

H.G. De Lisser is a Jamaican writer born of a family of very old Jamaican ancestry, Portugese-Jewish on the paternal side with a modicum of Negro blood.

Technically speaking, he should be considered coloured rather than white. However, his sense of identification with the white planter class makes him a spokesman for wealth and political conservatism. Moreover his scorn for the 'coloured' people, the rising browns and light browns of his day, is scathing. His novels reveal this attitude, especially Revenge that deals with the Morant Bay uprising of 1865. The criticism of the middle class as the real exploiters of the West Indian peasant is apparent in the novel, Jane's Career where the protagonist is a black girl who comes from the village to the city of Kingston to work as a domestic servant. It is in fact, De Lisser's first novel that he dedicates to Sir Sidney Oliver, the Governor of Jamaica from 1908 - 1913. Through Jane's experiences in Kingston, De Lisser unravels the West Indian milieu and delineates her attainment of selfhood. Ironically enough, Jane ends up as a member of the respectable middle class, the exploited turns exploiter. The White Witch of Rosehall presents a totally different picture with its series of sensational happenings and an exotic setting. Though the protagonist is an Englishman, Robert Rutherford, who comes to the West Indies as a book-keeper, the focus of

attention is a white woman, the beautiful, strange and ruthless Annie Palmer. She is the white witch of Rosehall who uses witchcraft to attain what she wants. The story of love and intrigue, jealousy and rivalry unravel the complex identity of the woman who has murdered three husbands without a qualm. Jane's Career and The White Witch of Rosehall have been selected from among De Lisser's novels in order to contrast the attainment of selfhood in the two women characters, Jane and Annie, with the protagonists of Rhys's two novels. The particular use of the six situations described in the Introduction would contribute to such an analysis.

Childhood: The experiences of childhood, recollected or otherwise, are crucial in the attainment of selfhood. In Voyage in the Dark the scene of action is England, where the heroine tries to earn her living as a chorus girl. Having left the warm sunny atmosphere of the Caribbean, Anna thinks nostalgically of her childhood, whenever the English experience is cold, hostile and debilitating. The experiences of childhood occur as reminiscences to contrast the present with the past; England with the Caribbean; security with insecurity.

Though Anna is nineteen, everyone calls her "kid" ironically implying her lack of maturity. Anna is incapable of looking after herself. She is sensitive and vulnerable like a child seeking the maximum of protection but never getting it. The novel begins with the focus of attention falling on her feeling of being uprooted when she lands in England, having been taken there by her stepmother Hester:

It was as if a curtain had fallen, hiding everything I had ever known. It was almost like being born again. The colours were different the smells different, the feelings things gave you right down inside yourself was different. Not just the difference between heat, cold; light, darkness; purple, grey. But a difference in the way I was frightened and the way I was happy. (1967, 7)

On one occasion, Anna falls ill and remembers the black girl Francine who had looked after her in childhood. She used to fan her with a palm-leaf fan. Anna had always wanted to be black. "Being black is warm and gay, being white is cold and sad" (31). Yet the relationship with Francine was hardly smooth. Hester, Anna's stepmother, disapproved of it and Francine herself disliked Anna because she was white. A similar ambiguous situation is seen in Rhys's other

novel, Wide Sargasso Sea where the little Antoinette makes friends with a black girl Tia. Though Antoinette enjoyed playing with her, she turned malevolent on more than one occasion.

The reminiscences of childhood are made use of in Voyage in the Dark to show Anna's sense of alienation in the cold atmosphere of England. Anna liked to talk about her island home to her lover, Walter Jeffries. She talked about the moonlight rides they used to have in a boat with their boatman Black Pappy. Walter, however was unable to appreciate it. He told her that he did not like hot places much. "I prefer cold places. The tropics would be altogether too lush for me, I think" (54). The preference for cold places underlines the cold reserve of Walter Jeffries to whom the liaison with Anna is only temporary. When Walter broke up with her, he made his friend Vincent write a letter to Anna. The letter made her remember a childhood experience. She had suddenly come up on her uncle sleeping with his two false teeth protruding out of his mouth like a pair of fangs. The sudden memory makes her think thus: "But what's the matter with me? That was years and years

ago, ages and ages ago. Twelve years ago or something like that. What's this letter got to do with false teeth?" (92). The very falseness of the relationship is thus symbolically portrayed.

After being rejected by Walter, Anna fell a prey to a life of easy virtue. She became pregnant and had to undergo an abortion. In moments of delirium and sickness images of her childhood come to her of people with masks dancing in the Masquerade sticking their tongues out at her, making her feel squeamish. She also had the feeling of falling off a horse. Ironically enough, her friend Laurie told her to explain her excessive bleeding as the result of a fall. The sudden fall from the horse of sensuality into the sordidness of prostitution is symbolically portrayed.

Another aspect of childhood that is highlighted is the loss of parental love and security. Anna Morgan's father was a fine man but he had left nothing substantial for his daughter. The emotional bond between the two had always been strong. In London she remembers his handsome carriage and resents Hester's reference to him as poor Gerald. Once in childhood, she

had been crying for no reason at all but instead of being vexed with her, he had hugged her commenting that her nature was like his own. When her father died, her stepmother took over her affairs. Hester was a very poor mother-surrogate. Having come from England the habits of the Caribbean were shocking to her. She failed to understand the Caribbean identity of the little Anna, making her wear clothes and gloves imported from England. These were too warm for the sunny climate and made her sweat. She did her best to make Anna a little lady by scolding her whenever she mingled with the Negroes. However, she failed to establish an emotional rapport with the little girl. The lack of a mother's love was accentuated later on when Hester absolved herself of all responsibility for the nineteen-year old Anna. The insecurity and absence of parental affection made her an easy prey to a man like Walter Jeffries who was many years older than her.

In Wide Sargasso Sea, Antoinette Cosway's childhood in the Caribbean is described in detail in the first part of the novel. The childhood experiences perform a keyrole in shaping the events to come.

Antoinette's sense of isolation started in childhood itself. With her father's death, her family was cut off both from the white community and the Negroes. The white people had never approved of her mother who was from Martinique and who had married a man many years older than her. The blacks were malevolent towards them since the emancipation. The estate was derelict, the fortunes ebbing and the blacks laughed and jeered at them. Antoinette's mother who had been beautiful and gay became a recluse when her only neighbour Mr Lutterell committed suicide. Antoinette's younger brother Pierre had something wrong with him; he staggered when he walked and could not speak distinctly. Her mother preferred to spend all her time nursing him. Though Antoinette loved her mother, she was usually pushed away:

My mother usually walked up and down the glacis, a paved roofed in terrace which ran the length of the house and sloped upwards to a clump of bamboos. Standing by the bamboos, she had a clear view to the sea, but anyone passing could stare at her. They stared, sometimes they laughed. Long after the sound was far away and faint she kept her eyes shut and her hands clenched. A frown came between her black eyebrows, deep -- it might have been cut with a knife. I hated this frown and once I touched her forehead trying to smooth it. But she

pushed me away, not roughly, but calmly, coldly, without a word, as if she had decided once and for all that I was useless to her. (1968,17)

The child then turned to Christophine, the Negro woman from Martinique for a surrogate mother. Christophine was unlike the other blacks who were all terrified of her. It was she who managed the house in their days of want. Apart from her there were only two other servants, a deaf old man called Godfrey and a boy Sass. The girls in the village used to help Christophine without expecting payment because of her powers of obeah or witchcraft. As a child Antoinette was extremely lonely and insecure. After her mother's horse was poisoned, she used to keep a stick with her, with the pretentious idea of defending herself with it. Things changed for the better when her mother married again. Mr Mason was a rich man and for a little while Antoinette felt safe. The hostility of the Negroes, however, increased. Annette, Antoinette's mother sensed it intuitively and begged Mr Mason to take them away. Mr Mason refused to do so, feeling confident of his position, talking of importing labourers from the East to run the plantation. Unfortunately the Negroes heard

of it. One night they surrounded the house and set fire to it. Though Antoinette's mother managed to take Pierre from his crib half burnt, he did not survive the tragedy. The incident made her lose her sanity. She blamed her husband for the loss of her son and started becoming violent. Antoinette herself was sick for many days. Mr Mason left the country leaving his wife in the hands of coloured serants and enrolling Antoinette in a convent. Her mother's madness became a trauma for her. The coloured couple who were supposed to care for her treated her badly and each visit to see her mother became a nightmare for Antoinette. She herself was often insulted by others with insinuations of madness. Anna Morgan in Voyage in the Dark is likewise labelled "Potty" by an irate woman with whom she stays for some time working as a manicurist. In each case the absence of love and security warp the development of the child leaving a permanent stamp of insecurity and lack of confidence on the adult.

Jane's Career delineates the gradual evolution of the protagonist from the innocence of childhood to the cunning of adulthood. The novel is thus a

bildungsroman of a black girl who moves from the rustic to the urban milieu in her search for identity. Though Jane goes as a domestic servant in the household of Mrs Mason, she is referred to as a "school girl." Though the appellation pertains only to her age, the idea of apprenticeship is underlined; the household of Mrs Mason is the school where she learns how to make her way in the world. The novel starts with Jane being given a lecture by one of the village elders prior to her departure to Kingston. In contrast to Anna Morgan and Antoinette Cosway, Jane's relationship with her mother was a very strong one. It was poverty and the lack of opportunities for betterment that prompted Mrs Burrell to send her daughter away. Jane herself was not unhappy about it. Though her mother's eyes filled with tears, Jane did not break down feeling as she did of being on the threshold of new experience:

She had reached as it were, the boundary line between her old life and the life that was to begin that day. She thought in concrete images and Stony Hill represented to her the change that had taken place in her career. She was acquainted with one or two persons there; beyond that town, south, east and west was an unknown world; and though Celestina had told her about the delights and wonders of Kingston,

her friend the guitar player had also depicted to her some of its perils, and had warned her of the trials she might have to endure. (1972, 24)

This experience of leaving familiar surroundings may be contrasted with Anna Morgan's experience of leaving the Caribbean for England. In Voyage in the Dark, Anna like Jane, leaves home to earn her living but her mind is full of sadness:

It was when I looked back from the boat and saw the lights of the town bobbing up and down that was the first time I really knew I was going. Uncle Bob said "well, you're off now" and I turned my head so that nobody would see me crying - it ran down my face and splashed into the sea like the rain was splashing -- Adieu sweetheart adieu -- And I watched the light heaving up and down. (32)

Jane's confidence too was shortlived. She was thoroughly confused and awkward and her inexperience made her commit many blunders. Her first grave mistake was to leave a packet of moist sugar on her mistress's mahogany table. A stain appeared and Jane was thoroughly reprimanded for spoiling Mrs Mason's expensive furniture. Mrs Mason's other servant Sarah also announced that were it not for Mrs Mason's kindness, she would have been given corporal punishment.

This alarmed Jane. Her bewilderment grew when Sarah later confided that Mrs Mason was a wretch. She also warned Jane against the other inhabitants of the house. Mrs Mason's nephew, Cecil, for example had the habit of flirting with the domestic servants.

As the days passed, Jane got over her timidity and awkwardness. She also acquired new skills like telling lies and helping Sarah to cheat her mistress. In the beginning, she was terror-stricken when she lied to her mistress but she soon got used to it. Sarah reassured her saying that she need not feel guilty, for, her mistress's meanness was excuse enough. In fact, Jane was made to work very hard indeed and was paid just one shilling per week. She also had to pay out of this for any damages she caused to her mistress's crockery. The long hours of rest she was accustomed to were also denied to her.

On one occasion, Jane was beaten by Mrs Mason for talking to a friend of Sarah's in the yard after dark. Sarah had asked Jane to be with her while talking to her boyfriend to prevent Jane from carrying tales to Mrs Mason. Mrs Mason had strict ideas about the

morality of her servants and had forbidden such goings-on after dark. On hearing noises in the yard in the middle of the night, she questioned both the servants the next day. Though Sarah lied easily enough, Jane's inexperience gave the game away. This resulted in Jane's being beaten up and Sarah being dismissed. Sarah, however gave vent to her opinion about "brown" people and wrested her wages from a reluctant Mrs Mason before leaving the scene. The speech of Sarah criticising the 'coloured' people as the real exploiters echoes De Lisser's own opinion regarding the situation in his country: "De trute is dat people like you shouldn't have servant at all! I know I am black, an' I know that God meck two colour, black an' white, but it must be de devil meck brown people, for dem neider black nor white. In fact y'u better pay me at once an' let me go. I not stayin' here any longer. Pay me wages, an' meck me leave you yard" (56).

After this incident Jane felt more lonely than ever. As she was alone in her room, Cecil started pestering her even more. The threat of dismissal made her feel afraid. She felt that she had not "kept

herself up" as instructed by her parents. At the same time, she felt more self-reliant. As the days passed by she got to know more about Kingston. As she realized that there were thousands of people like Mrs Mason in Kingston, her earlier awe changed into contempt. She was after all a "mulatto" woman in a city with thousands of pure white folks.

When one compares Jane with Anna Morgan, one finds that while Anna never learns to take care of herself, Jane learns the tricks of survival very fast indeed. The promises made to her parents were forgotten as Jane developed new friendships. Unlike Anna, Jane never allowed these friends to exploit her.

A very interesting scene is introduced by the author to mark the end of Jane's period of innocence. Jane's mother came to visit her at Mrs Mason's bringing a girl from the village. What Jane wanted to do was to seize this opportunity to acquaint her mother of Mrs Mason's meanness. Unfortunately however, Mrs Mason very cleverly refused to leave the two alone together even for a moment. Jane was bewildered to see her mother being taken in by Mrs Mason's sanctimonious utterances.

She even granted her mistress absolute freedom to deal with Jane as she thought fit. Jane felt sad to think that her mother had deserted her for the enemy side. The only thing she could do was to confide her troubles to her friend who had accompanied Jane's mother. As her mother and her friend left, Jane watched them with a heavy heart. She felt strangely alone:

She and her mother had in a way, become strangers. This she felt more than thought; for such a proposition, she never would have been able to formulate clearly in her mind. Her mother's way of looking at things seemed more or less that of Mrs Mason, and between Mrs Mason and herself there was a great gulf fixed. Mrs Mason looked upon her as a little servant girl merely, but Jane felt she was an individual with feelings, desires and rights of her own. Her mother had left her entirely in Mrs Mason's hands, and there she was perfectly determined not to remain. If she went away, her mother and father would probably blame her, but that she could not help. Kingston was big, she had become accustomed to it, she would probably be able to make her way in it as other people were doing. One by one the ties that bound her to the past were being loosened, unknown to her conscious self. What she did feel was that now she was free to do as she pleased. (77)

The childhood experiences of Annie Palmer in The White Witch of Rosehall bear little resemblance to the experiences of the other three. These experiences

are described in two chapters of the novel, one entitled, "Who is Annie Palmer?" and the next one, "Putting on Death." Here the attention of the reader is focussed on Annie's attainment of supernatural powers. The strange and ruthless owner of Rosehall had no serious trauma in childhood. Unlike Rhys's heroines, Anna Morgan and Antoinette Cosway, Annie Palmer's childhood was reasonably happy with no cause for insecurity. Unlike Jane in Jane's Career, Annie did not have to seek employment on account of her poverty. The only point of similarity that she shares with Antoinette Cosway is her association with a black woman in childhood who is gifted with supernatural powers.

In the chapter entitled, "Who is Annie Palmer?" Robert Rutherford and the other two book-keepers discuss the complicated personality of Annie Palmer, who though white, makes use of voodoo to achieve her object. Rider, one of the book-keepers had been a priest before alcoholism forced him to seek another job. He had heard that Annie had originally come from Haiti, which was the centre of devil craft. Though her parents were Irish, Rider surmised that she might have had a voodoo

priestess as a nurse. In the next chapter, "Putting on Death," the omniscient author corroborates Rider's story by making Annie remember her childhood as she proceeds to harm her rival in Rutherford's affections, Millicent, through voodoo. Annie's father had been an Irish merchant who had gone to Haiti attracted by the chance of making money under the rule of King Henry Christophe. Unlike his predecessor Christophe encouraged white people to come to Haiti. Though he was strict, he was unable to suppress the priests and priestesses of voodoo who worshipped their deity, the green serpent in secret. A high priestess of this cult had taken a fancy to Annie. She was a woman of property, a well respected baroness and she used to give presents to the beautiful little girl. She herself had no children of her own and once she presented a valuable diamond necklace to Annie. Her parents encouraged her, for, her friendship and patronage was advantageous to their business. It was she who taught Annie witchcraft. Though she hated the white race as a whole, she loved Annie. Annie was as intelligent as she was beautiful. So under her tutelage she learnt how to control the spirits and call up visions. The baroness hinted to her, that there was no

height she couldn't aspire to were she to remain in Haiti. Her whiteness, instead of being a disability would have aided her with the voodoo priests and priestesses. Unfortunately, both Annie's parents and the baroness died within months of each other. As their white friends thought Haiti an unsuitable place for a young unmarried white girl, Annie migrated to Jamaica where she met and married John Palmer.

Of the four novels, three depict unhappy experiences of childhood. The White Witch of Rosehall presents the happy childhood of Annie who becomes jealous and sadistic as an adult. Jane in Jane's Career develops the courage to face the challenges of the world despite the poverty of her environment. Both the heroines of Jean Rhys carry the vulnerability of childhood into adult life.

Struggle for Survival: The struggle to survive in society is another factor that is crucial to the emergence of selfhood. This struggle is determined by the difference in circumstances rather than the difference in colour. The question is of power or lack of it. In a male dominated society women often become

victims of chauvinism. The weaker women are exploited by men and women alike. The question of power is determined by economic considerations in the case of both Jane Burrell and Anna Morgan. In the case of Antoinette Cosway, power continues to elude her in poverty and prosperity alike. Annie Palmer starts by being powerful but loses it at the end through her own rashness and cruelty.

In Voyage in the Dark Anna Morgan's ancestral estate, "Morgan's Rest" had been sold by her stepmother after her father's death. She had then brought Anna to England to earn her own living. Hester did not feel that she had robbed Anna of anything; in fact she thought that she had done her best for her. When Anna could not make a success of her career as a chorus girl, she tried to send her back to the Caribbean to her mother's relatives, as she did not want Anna to come to her whenever she was in need of money. Her mother's people too, did not want to take on the responsibility of a penniless girl. In a long harangue Hester declared to Anna that she had absolutely no responsibility to look after her as all the money had already been spent

on Anna's education and clothes. Anna retorted that she could get all the money she wanted, making Hester stare at her with curiosity and disgust.

As a chorus girl, Anna had a tough time finding money for good food, decent accommodation and pretty clothes. Being unused to the cold climate, she had a tendency to fall sick. She was often miserable yearning for things she didn't have.

The ones without any money, the ones with beastly lives. Perhaps I'm going to be one of the ones with beastly lives. They swarm like woodlice when you push a stick into a woodlice nest at home. And their faces are the colour of woodlice. (26)

The drab, grey atmosphere of England had the quality of a dream. She was often very lonely. The girls she mingled with were friendly but they had their own problems. They were also impatient with her due to her inability in coping with problems. She often had a sad, anxious expression on her face. It was this that attracted Walter Jeffries to her as he watched her choose a pair of stockings. He was more a father-surrogate than a lover to Anna, for, he gave her pretty clothes and a furcoat and made her feel warm and

secure. But to him, it was only a temporary fling and Anna too knew it to be so. In a telling incident, Anna Morgan watches Walter Jeffries putting money in her handbag through a mirror. Though she knew what it meant, she did not stop him. After Walter left her, she started training as a masseuse under a girl called Ethel Mathews. Anna was not very good at that. Surrounded by people who did not understand her, Anna felt alone, vulnerable and lost: "The damned way they look at you and their damned voices, like high, smooth, unclimbable walls all round you, closing in on you. And nothing to be done about it either. The answer is a lemon, as Laurie says" (147).

Anna's descent into a life of easy virtue was gradual. The whole process seemed unreal and nightmarish. The admirers were faceless as she proceeded on her course of self destruction. On one occasion Anna started to vomit and the man disappeared like a streak of lightning. Anna realized that she was pregnant, and she tried every trick she knew to get rid of it. In the end she had to apply to Walter for financial assistance. Though Walter sent her money

through Vincent it was a purely business transaction. Vincent took away all the letters Walter had written to her. The end of the novel sees her being told by a doctor that she would soon recover to start all over again. The struggles of Anna's friends likewise were similar. They were all victims of an unfeeling society bent on exploiting their beauty and youth.

When one compares Jane in Jane's Career with Anna, one sees that Jane too is faced with problems of survival in the wilderness of Kingston. In the beginning she was naive enough to believe that there was plenty of money in Kingston. Her mother, however, pointed out that all the money belonged to white people. In the household of Mrs Mason she learnt that her wages were too meagre to buy all she wanted. After leaving Mrs Mason, she took up the job of pasting labels on bottles in an establishment. She shared a room with a girlfriend Sathyra by paying half the rent. The new found feeling of independence made her feel elated but soon the novelty wore off. She discovered that Sathyra had a jealous disposition. When Sathyra asked Jane to clear out of her room as her boyfriend wanted to move in

with her, Jane retorted that Sathyra would have to wait until Jane made alternative arrangements. This prompted Sathyra to play a foul trick on her. She accused Jane of theft in front of the entire neighbourhood. This frightened Jane, for as far as she was concerned, being accused of theft was equivalent to being prosecuted. Though most of the neighbours sympathized with her, a few twisted their lips in condemnation. Jane soon found another room to stay but the additional expenses were a great strain on her pocket. She had to cut down on her food and clothes to manage:

For the first time in her life, she was thrown absolutely on her own resources. She had lived under Mrs Mason's care, such as it was: she had shared a room with Sathyra. She had come to Kingston under Mrs Mason's protection, and had left Mrs Mason to go under the protection of Sathyra. But now she had to depend on herself entirely; she was her own mistress in every sense of the word. She was lonelier than she had ever been before; yet, on the other hand, she felt far more independent than she had ever done. (133)

Here we find Jane coming to depend upon herself whereas Anna Morgan continues to look for outside support even at the end of the novel. Jane also learns to tackle problems of male exploitation. She starts by

escaping Cecil's clutches. At work, her overseer, Mr Curden starts pestering her to come and live with him. In the beginning, she tells lies to escape him but later on she is faced with the dilemma of either giving in or losing her job. Jane with natural cunning managed to escape the situation. Perhaps, fortune was kind to her in the form of Vincent Broglie who could be persuaded to help her. Jane survived the crisis by resigning her job before Curden could dismiss her.

Unlike Anna, Jane had dreams about her future in which marriage, a good house and clean children figure prominently. Though it was a typical middleclass dream, Jane managed to achieve it through her common sense and resilience. It was she who convinced Vincent Broglie of the foolishness of going on strike. Jane's logic was reactionary but it brought her material success in the form of Vincent Broglie as her husband. The irony however lies in the fact that Jane too joins the rank of the exploiters by employing a servant girl.

In Wide Sargasso Sea, the first part of the novel portrays the miserable conditions of the white creole family following the emancipation. The estate

turned into a wilderness and the house became shabby. Antoinette's mother was forced to give up her luxuries. The only pleasure that was left was to ride around on a horse: "She still rode about every morning, not caring that the black people stood about in groups to jeer at her especially after her riding clothes grew shabby (they notice clothes, they know about money)" (16).

The Negroes poisoned her horse, taking away even this enjoyment. If it were not for Christophine the family would have starved. One day, Antoinette's playmate Tia, the black girl, dared her to turn a somersault under water. Though Antoinette did as waghered, Tia took away the few pennies she had. In her anger Antoinette called Tia a cheating nigger but Tia's answer was venomous and taunting: "Plenty white people in Jamaica. Real white people, they got gold money. They didn't look at us, nobody see them come near us. Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger" (21). The girl then robbed Antoinette's only clean dress and left the place. Antoinette was forced to return home wearing the dress of the Negro girl. This incident made her mother realize that something must be done.

After Antoinette's mother married Mr Mason who was rich, things were all right for a while. After the catastrophe of the Negroes' violence, her stepfather left the West Indies. In the case of Anna Morgan, in Voyage in the Dark Hester the stepmother, robbed her of her meagre inheritance. Antoinette's stepfather in contrast, satisfied his conscience by putting her in a convent and leaving her an inheritance. What she wanted most, namely love and security, were denied her. Neither her insane mother nor her stepfather could provide her with the strength of family ties. Even the inheritance became a source of trouble rather than comfort. Antoinette was married by Mr Rochester, the younger son of an English family, purely for monetary advantage. The second part of the novel depicts the newly married Mr Rochester writing an imaginary letter to his father. It goes as follows:

Dear father, the thirty thousand pounds have been paid to me without question or condition. No provision made for her (that must be seen to). I have a modest competence now. I will never be a disgrace to you or to my dear brother the son you love. No begging letters, no mean requests. None of the furtive shabby manoeuvres of a younger son. I have sold my soul or you have sold it, and is it such a bad bargain? The girl is thought to be beautiful, she is beautiful. And yet... (59)

The word "yet" suggests regret. Antoinette's Aunt Cora had not liked the arrangement at all and had objected to the marriage. Antoinette herself had shown signs of hesitation but Rochester persuaded her to accept him not because he loved her but because he did not want to play the role of the rejected lover of a creole girl. The marriage was thus doomed from the beginning as it was the result of a conspiracy between Mason's son and Rochester's father.

In spite of all this, Rochester was attracted by Antoinette's beauty and sensuality but she remained alien to him. This made it easy for him to believe the insinuations made by a man who claimed to be her half-brother. Though Antoinette related to him the whole sad tale of her mother's insanity and her own loneliness, Rochester's mind was made up. Only Christophine, the black servant of Antoinette, had the guts to confront Mr Rochester. She guessed the intention of Rochester to label his wife mad and requested him to settle some money on her. Mr Rochester refused to listen to her and threatened her with prosecution for practising obeah or African witchcraft.

He hated Antoinette for buying him with her money. So he took her away from the island which she loved. She was shut up in the attic of Thornfield Hall as a mad woman. Her husband thus became her judge, jury and jailor.

Antoinette had thus turned into the archetype of the slave woman with no will of her own. She was even denied a looking glass. In her childhood the blacks had burnt down her house, the symbol of white ownership. Antoinette in turn set fire to Thornfield Hall, her house of captivity. She thus re-enacted the act of protest. Though she died in the flames, it was her only way of hitting back.

Annie Palmer in the The White Witch of Rosehall presents a totally different picture from Antoinette Cosway. The novel being set in the pre-emancipation period, presents the white woman at the height of her power. In Annie's case, the power became indomitable coupled with her mastery over the spirits. Annie loses her power and becomes a victim at the end of the novel but one feels that the tragedy is justly deserved. When a comparison is made with Wide Sargasso Sea we see

points of similarity between Rochester and Rutherford and Millicent and Amelie, the Negro girl with whom Rochester had 'laughing sex.' Like Rochester Rutherford too was a stranger to the Caribbean. He was equally fascinated by its beauty and magic. Unlike Rochester, Rutherford was not in search of a wealthy wife. He had hopes of inheriting a plantation and had come to learn the planting business by working as a book-keeper on Rosehall estate. He soon found out that life was very strenuous for a book-keeper. After spending the whole day working in the fields, he was expected to keep watch over the fermented spirit every alternate night. The book-keeper was only a slave driver, in very many ways a slave himself. As for the Negro slaves, they were forced to work from dawn to dusk and flogged even for petty offences. Soon after arrival, he witnessed an incident of flogging. What surprised him was the fact that a white woman, the owner of Rosehall, could watch the flogging without any squeamishness. The other book-keepers never interfered, for jobs were hard to get in the Caribbean and any protest warranted instant dismissal.

Just like Rochester, Rutherford was fascinated by the sheer sensuality of the Caribbean woman Annie Palmer. At the same time he was perplexed by her contradictions. Unlike Antoinette Cosway who could not keep her hold on Rochester, Annie Palmer was unwilling to let go of the man she loved. When Rochester indulged himself with the Negro slave girl Amelie, Antoinette was hurt but she could do nothing. Annie Palmer, however, used her powers of witchcraft on Millicent who was trying to take Rutherford away from her. She was indomitable and strong-willed with a streak of cruelty in her nature.

In the beginning of the novel, we see Annie Palmer, using witchcraft to keep the Negro slaves cowed and frightened. Her supernatural gifts symbolize her powers; with them she gets rid of people whom she does not like. She killed three husbands but no one dared protest. The slaves hated her but did as she told. If they murmured, she sent apparitions to frighten them. She also had an efficient foreman, Mr Ashman, who was also her lover. With his help her estates were being managed well. In spite of all this, she was basically

lonely. She was unpopular among the white folk also. On his first visit to her house, Annie told Rutherford about her sheer loneliness. Of the people in Spanish Town and Kingston she had this to say: "You don't know them. And the people horrible! They are narrow, fussy, inquisitive, full of envy and bitterness, always talking about one another and nothing good to say. Wait till you know them!" (1929, 47). She also gave her own version of her three marriages; her first husband died of apoplexy, the second went mad, stabbed her and then killed himself, the third drunk himself to death. The people of Montago Bay blamed her for the deaths, little did they know of the beatings she received at the hands of the drunkard. This experience made her shun all company. As for the flogging, she described it as absolutely essential for discipline. Though she hated it, it was not possible to control the slaves without resorting to corporal punishment: "I hated to be there, though I could not show it, for weakness would be fatal in dealing with slaves. But I had to be present, for they would have been treated far more harshly than they were had I not been. That was why I was there" (49).

Besotted by her beauty, Rutherford believed her then but later on he questioned her veracity. In contrast, Rochester in Wide Sargasso Sea had no ears for Antoinette's version of her past. Robert Rutherford was attracted to Annie but he could not seriously consider marrying her as that would bring about a total estrangement with his father. In Rochester's case, it was his father who forced him to marry the rich creole girl. Annie Palmer in contrast to Rutherford, really loved him and was willing to go to any length to get him. Though she harmed her rival, she was unable to win him. When he turned against her, she was faced with the agony of loneliness:" She did not think that she could go through the future without Robert. She was no longer very young, and she wanted no man save him. She had known the awful agony of a boredom almost without relief in the months before Robert's coming; it would be much worse in the years to come, a nightmare black and hideous as hell. Think as hard as she could, she saw no way of escape. She had built a prison about her. Its impalpable wall would hold her faster than could walls of iron and stone" (224). Thus Annie Palmer, despite

her wealth and supernatural powers, was unable to achieve happiness in love just like Anna Morgan and Antoinette Cosway.

When one examines Annie Palmer's dependence on her overseer Ashman, one sees points of similarity with Jane Burrell in Jane's Career. Mr Curden, the foreman threatened Jane with dismissal if she did not give in to him. In Annie's case, Ashman had been her lover before the arrival of Rutherford. Being of inferior status he could not hope to be her husband but felt resentful when he saw Annie taking an interest in Rutherford. He threatened Annie with resignation. Annie knew that she was in no position to dismiss an efficient overseer. The ideas that float through her mind as she thinks of Ashman reveal her helplessness:

Annie's gaze narrowed, and for one long minute, she sat silent, her fingers beating a tattoo upon the table at which both of them were sitting. She would have ordered this man peremptorily out of her sight and off the premises at once. But that the crop must be taken off day by day now, and that there were disquieting rumours about the disposition and plottings of the slaves. But, if not now, a little later, certainly Ashman must go. But if he knew too much -- and he could have found out too much in these last three years -- was it safe that he should be allowed to go, with a thirst for revenge in his heart? That was a question to be answered later on. (92)

Ironically however, things turned out differently. Rutherford threatened Annie with exposure when Annie harmed Millicent. Faced with such a turn of events she was forced to seek Ashman's help to get Rutherford out of the way. Though she loved him, she had to do so to save herself. This was a very traumatic decision for her to make. Ultimately when she was surrounded by the Negroes led by Millicent's grandfather Takoo, it was Rutherford who gallantly came to her aid, though he was unable to save her.

Search for Roots: The search for identity involves a delving into the past, the racial and cultural past, to understand oneself. Of the four female characters considered here, three are white and one black. Strangely enough, all the three white women are accused of being 'coloured' at one moment or the other. The Caribbean experience has made them alien to the white European culture. In the case of both Anna Morgan and Antionette Cosway, they themselves desire to be black. They envy the happy existence of the primitive, that they do not have. In the case of Annie Palmer, though she is white, she makes use of voodoo which is alien to her Christian faith as well as her white culture.

When Anna Morgan arrived in England she hated the climate and the drab atmosphere contrasting it with the warmth and lushness of the West Indies. In the beginning she used to shut her eyes pretending that the heat from the bed clothes was sunheat. The misery was not just physical, it was psychological too; the absence of warmth in human relationship made her feel alien. On one occasion she muses thus: "I was thinking it was funny I could giggle like that because in my heart I was always sad, with the sort of hurt that the cold gave me in my chest" (15).

Anna had always wanted to be black like Francine for she felt that it was happy and gay to be black. Here we find her wishing to resort to the identity of the happy primitive. In spite of this, she was full of protest when Hester insinuated that she was coloured. After receiving a letter from her maternal uncle refusing to accept Anna's responsibility, Hester flared up and told Anna that she had done her best for Anna "Considering everything." Anna took offence at this and retorted that Hester was trying to insinuate that her mother was coloured and that she wasn't.

Though Hester protested that it was only the way in which she spoke, like a nigger, that made her say so, the point was made. Hester being English could not understand the Caribbean situation at all. She disliked Anna's friendship with Francine, the Negro servant girl. She was also shocked by the open way in which the white plantation owners cohabited with the Negro slaves. Once as a child Anna had seen an old slave list in their estate house giving the names of the mulatto slaves on their estate. It was a revelation to her that she could be related to so many black slaves. In London, after Walter's desertion, she remembered the history of the Caribbean with its tilting scales of power. Here she too was just like a Negro slave, to be enjoyed and cherished for a little while and then to be cast away.

Anna Morgan had to put up with the dislike of the blacks who disliked her for no reason at all, other than her whiteness. In the case of Antoinette Cosway and Annie Palmer, the dislike deepened into hatred and ended in violence. Wide Sargasso Sea set in the early 1830s, depicts a very violent scene where Antoinette's house is burnt down by a crowd of hostile Negroes. The

incident robbed her of everything she had - her brother (who died), her mother (who became mad), her stepfather (who left the country) and her only friend Tia. The relationship with Tia is full of ambiguity with its tilting scales of love and hate. Antoinette sees Tia as the mirror image of herself, a 'black' self, poor but free. After the blacks burnt her house, Antoinette and the others were forced to flee. Just before she got into the carriage, she saw Tia and ran towards her but Tia threw a stone at her. "When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only something wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. We stared at each other blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking glass" (39). At the end of the novel, the mad Antoinette saw Tia again as she jumped off the roof of the burning building. She had the feeling that she was jumping into Tia's arms. It was a re-enactment of the childhood incident.

The black/white conflict also makes its presence felt in a dream that recurs. Antoinette saw it first when she was staying in the convent. Later on,

she saw it again as a captive in Thornfield Hall. She saw a Negro leading her frightened and helpless, through the woods. Though she tried to resist by clinging to a tree, it was in vain. Here the colonial situation is reversed with a Negro male dominating a white woman. The white plantation owners had exploited the Negro girls over the generations. Her own father had fathered many coloured children. It was one of them, who created a rift between Antoinette and Rochester. Daniel Cosway wrote many letters to Rochester insinuating that Antoinette was bad and mad. Ironically enough, Rochester was not surprised. It was as though he was expecting it. When he met Daniel Cosway, he was shocked by the latter's hatred of Antoinette's family.

Rochester did not believe Antoinette's version of her own past. To him she was alien; on at least two occasions Rochester doubts her claim of being creole of pure English descent. Once, immediately after arrival at Coulibri estate, he noticed that Antoinette's eyes were large and disconcerting: "Long, sad, dark, alien eyes. Creole of pure English descent she may be, but they are not English or European either" (56). The

second occasion was when he confronted her with questions about her past: "She raised her eyebrows and the corners of her mouth turned down in a questioning, mocking way. For a moment she looked very much like Amelie. Perhaps they are related, I thought. It's possible, it's even probable in this damned place" (105). Rochester failed to understand the feeling of affection that Antoinette had for Christophine whom she hugged and kissed. When Christophine announced her decision to leave the house, Antoinette was very much upset but Amelie the Negro girl was happy. This moved her to violence, greatly shocking Rochester who did not consider it lady-like. Similarly, The White Witch of Rosehall depicts a scene where Annie Palmer is moved to violence by the insolence of the coloured girl Millicent. Rutherford, likewise was shocked by the obvious exhibition of jealousy and passion. In Wide Sargasso Sea Amelie sang a song about "a white cockroach" to insult Antoinette. It was Antoinette who explained it to Rochester: "That's me. That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people sold them to the slave traders. And I've heard English women call us white niggers. So between you, I often

wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all. Will you go now please. I must dress like Christophine said" (85). The passage highlights Antoinette's bewilderment in understanding her place in white society.

The third part of the novel depicts Antoinette as having lost all sense of time, place and identity. Even her name was changed to Bertha Mason: "There is no looking glass here and I don't know what I am like now. I remember watching myself brush my hair and how my eyes looked back at me. The girl I saw was myself yet not quite myself. Long ago when I was a child and very lonely I tried to kiss her. But the glass was between us hard, cold and misted over with my breath. Now they have taken everything away. What am I doing in this place and who am I?" (147). She felt that the house was made of cardboard. She did not believe that it was England. When her stepbrother Richard Mason came to see her, she attacked him with a knife. Her madness was a re-enactment of her mother's insanity. In her dreams she saw her mother with her streaming hair.

Annie Palmer, in The White Witch of Rosehall was also suspected of having Negro blood in her veins. When the three book-keepers were discussing her antecedents, Rider supplied them with the information that she had originally come from Haiti. Immediately Rutherford wondered if she was French as Haiti had been a French colony. Burbridge went one step further to wonder if she had Negro blood in her veins. He was prompted to make such a suggestion because of certain historical facts connected with Haiti. After the revolution in Haiti Dessalines, the Negro leader, had driven out all the whites and had massacred quite a few. Those who seemed white were allowed to stay only if they could prove that they had Negro blood in their veins. With typical white superiority Burbridge wanted to impute the practice of witchcraft to the 'black' blood in her veins. Annie Palmer, however, had no Negro strain at all. Dessalines was succeeded by Christophe who did not hate the white people and Annie's family had no difficulty whatsoever in Haiti. On another occasion Rider suggests that Annie might have insanity as her heritage which shows some similarity with Antoinette Cosway.

The novelist also unravels the situation prevailing in Jamaica in the nineteenth century by placing the action of the novel in the month of December, 1831. The period was one of great antagonism between the blacks and the whites. Though Annie Palmer died as a result of Negro violence, her death was more a case of personal vendetta than a racial one. Takoo, her murderer, allowed both Rutherford and Rider to escape though he strangled Mrs Palmer to death.

The protagonist of Jane's Career is black in contrast to the other three. But even there, the author does not seem to be too sure:

All of them were to superficial appearances, black. But in a country where racial intermixture has been going on for some two hundred years, large numbers of persons who appear black have a strain of white blood in their veins, a strain which sometimes shows itself in the smoothness and shading of the skin, sometimes, in the features. A practised eye would have pronounced Celestina to be 'a sambo' or one fourth white. Jane was a trifle darker, strongly built and robust but her features, the nose especially, hinted at some white ancestor. And anyone accustomed to the Jamaican peasants' appearance would have pronounced her good-looking, an opinion with which she would have entirely agreed. (12)

De Lisser does not allow Jane to indulge in much soul searching. The questions that formulate in her mind are mainly economic questions as to why the black people are poor. Her mother replies philosophically that God has decreed so. In Kingston, in the household of Mrs Mason, Jane got used to the middle class values and ways of life, though she herself was outside of it. She felt that the white ladies were fortunate in having husbands to look after them. When her friend Sathyra pointed out that the white ladies could not get rid of husbands who beat them, Jane replied that it was better to have a husband to beat you than no husband at all. She thus becomes the spokeswoman for the civilized values of life upheld by the white society. Jane remained virtuous unlike many other black girls, not out of any religious sentiment but out of pride. Eventhough the temptations were great, she wouldn't give in: "She too had come to find out that for one's respectability one often pays a price. But still she revolted against the idea of throwing herself away" (41). Ultimately she achieved what she wanted: the white wedding at the end of the novel marks the highest point in her career.

The four novels raise the question of race with regard to identity. But it is interesting to note that only the black protagonist Jane, achieves respectability in terms of the values of the white race. Annie Palmer's final defeat comes about through a coloured rival. She has no contenders to beauty among the white ladies of Jamaica. Anna Morgan succumbs to a life of easy virtue. Antoinette Cosway is insulted by Rochester who seeks a Negro girl in front of her eyes. At the same time, she herself is denied marriage to Sandi, the coloured boy who understands her. The pure Englishman who marries her, locks her up as a mad woman. The traditional white society discards all three but the Caribbean milieu adopts Jane as one of them.

Man-Woman Relationships: Man-woman relationships also help to highlight facets of identity. Voyage in the Dark is a brilliant account of self destruction brought on by failure in love. Anna Morgan met Walter Jeffries at the most vulnerable and lonely point of her life. He was kind to her and this made her cling on to him eventhough she knew that it would be short-lived. When she fell ill, she sent for him and he was kind and nice to her. He

got a doctor to examine her and spoke to the landlady who had earlier threatened to evict her. The very room looked larger after his visit. Later on, she went to his house. Though there was a conflict inside her, she gave in to the temptation of making love. For days after that, she was haunted by the memory of it and yearned to be with him. He gave her gifts of money, pretty clothes and country holidays. Everything seemed good but soon it was all over. Anna received a letter from Walter's friend Vincent offering her plenty of advice but ending the affair. This made Anna panic; she sent a telegram to Walter who agreed to meet her for the last time. She wanted to tell him many things: "I imagined myself saying very calmly, the thing is that you don't understand. You think I want more than I do. I only want to see you sometimes, but if I never see you again, I'll die. I'm dying now really, and I'm too young to die" (97). At the meeting however she felt his awkwardness and knew that he hated her. The affair ended and Anna moved on again.

Thereafter she picked up many men but she had no illusions at all. She thought of the hibiscus flower she had admired in childhood. It was so red and

beautiful with its golden tongue hanging out. It was sad to think that it was dead. Her pride in herself had likewise ended. Her pregnancy and the abortion that followed marked the end of her self destruction.

Wide Sargasso Sea depicts the marginalized first Mrs Rochester of Jane Eyre as the protagonist. Charlotte Bronte elicits the reader's sympathy for Rochester but Jean Rhys presents the traumatic experiences of the woman stamped with the stigma of insanity. In her article, "Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea: The Other side/Both sides Now", published in Caribbean Quarterly, Paula Grace Anderson makes the following comments: "Wide Sargasso Sea is a book about being a woman, a particular type of woman in a particular cultural environment, at a particular point in history. It is also about a particular environment and its psycho-cultural reality. It is also novel about the dualism of life" (1982, 59).

The novelist juxtaposes the heroine's stream of consciousness with that of Rochester to unravel the mystery of human relationships. The lady's relationship is explored in terms of power. From the very beginning

Antoinette is powerless. In fact all the women characters are. One and all they are pitted against institutionalized masculine hostility. Antoinette's mother had married Mr Mason for protection but he had failed her. He in turn had been attracted by her fascinating sensuality. When she became violent following the traumatic experiences, he left her in the care of a coloured couple who even abused her sexually. Before dying Mr Mason entrusted his son Richard with the responsibility of taking care of Antoinette, to assuage his conscience. Richard conveniently handed her over to Rochester.

The second part of the novel reveals Rochester's thoughts about his marriage: "It was all very brightly coloured, very strange, but it meant nothing to me. Nor did she, the girl I was to marry. When at last I met her, I bowed, smiled, kissed her hand, danced with her. I played the part I was expected to play. She never had anything to do with me at all" (64). Once the marriage was over, he gave himself up to sensuality. They made love but he felt very little tenderness towards her. This made her desperate and she

appealed to Christophine for help. Christophine's answer to Antoinette's lament that her husband did not love her is significant: "When man don't love you, more you try, more he hate you, man like that. If you love them, they treat you bad, if you don't love them they after you night and day bothering your soul case out" (91).

Christophine helped her with obeah but the result was disastrous. Rochester was repelled thinking that he had been poisoned. On the rebound he had laughing sex with the Negro girl Amelie. This was too much for Antoinette; her love changed to hate and she declared that before she died she would show him the extent of her hatred. The feeling of hate was reciprocated by Rochester who felt that he had been bought by her money. He took his revenge by taking her away from the magic and loveliness of Jamaica to be shut up as a captive in cold, grey England.

Apart from Antoinette's relationship with Rochester, another relationship is also touched upon. In childhood, a cousin of hers, a coloured boy Sandi, had come to her aid. He had taught her a few tricks of

survival. It was his name that Daniel Cosway had taken to hint that she was unchaste. In the last part of the novel, the mad Antoinette remembers a previous experience: "I took the red dress down and put it against myself. 'Does it make me look intemperate and unchaste?' I said that man told me so. He had found out that Sandi had been to the house and that I went to see him. I never knew who told, 'Infamous daughter of an infamous mother', he said to me" (152). The red dress reminded her of fire and what she must do.

Annie Palmer, the white witch of Rosehall, also dies a violent death. Her tragedy is brought about through rivalry in love. The coloured girl Millicent may be compared to Amelie in Wide Sargasso Sea. Millicent, however evokes sympathy in the reader whereas Amelie leaves with the money given her by Rochester. Annie Palmer also does not elicit any sympathy. Throughout the novel, it is Rutherford's waxing and waning fascination for Annie that is dominantly portrayed. In his case, it is Millicent who evokes a feeling of tenderness rather than Annie. Yet, her beauty and sensuality attract him like a moth to the flame.

The first meeting between Annie and Rutherford is described with all the aura of romanticism. "It was as though an electric shock had passed through him. He found himself gazing into a pair of eyes which he thought the most beautiful he had seen. They were black and of a peculiar, penetrating brightness; they looked through you, gazing intently into them you became conscious of nothing else; they absorbed you" (34). On her side, she scrutinized him openly seeing him as a man, not as a book-keeper. Ashman saw this by-play and felt jealous. Annie Palmer did not seem to care; she invited Rutherford to her residence.

Rutherford went there as a guest eager to get to know the mistress of Rosehall. The next morning he returned as her lover. In her company he forgot everything else except the fact that he wanted her. In the morning, he was full of uneasiness. He was used to decorum and worried about the gossip that would be circulated by her servants. Annie seemed to be strangely impervious to that. He was also startled to think that he had succumbed so easily to customs of the Caribbean. Marriage with her was out of the question.

His father would ^vneer[^] approve of marrying a lady who had buried three husbands before him. She was also older than he and in the morning she did not appear as enticing as she did in the night, the lines on her face could be seen. Moreover, her desire shocked him: "He believed that she loved him, that he loved her also; yet he knew, felt that hers was a volcanic passion, that hers was a tempestuous temperament, wild as the sea fronting Rosehall, when it was lashed to fury by the winds that rushed down from the north, fierce as the storms that sometimes raged over this country, devastating it in an hour or two" (67). Rochester in Wide Sargasso Sea feels the same about Antoinette. In both these cases, the cold Englishmen fail to comprehend and are bewildered by the natural sensuality of the white Caribbean woman. They would have understood Negro women behaving with such abandonment but they failed to understand white women giving in to sensuality. They were fascinated by them but they were also critical.

Rutherford's involvement with Millicent offers a contrast to his relationship with Annie. When Millicent came to him as his housekeeper, he was

surprised and amused when she offered to do more than cook and clean for him. She was no ordinary Negro girl but was good looking, free and educated. Her grandfather enjoyed a higher status among the Negroes as a well-known obeahman. After spending the night at the Great House, Rutherford returned to his lodgings to find Millicent extremely anxious about him. When she warned him against the evil designs of Mrs Palmer, Rutherford was irritated. On seeing that her feelings were hurt, he apologized to her. Millicent told him about the deaths of the people who had gone there before him. She openly declared that she loved Rutherford. This was so amusing that he pondered thus: "This was extraordinary, two women, one white, the other brown and both indubitably handsome in their respective ways had told him within very few hours that they loved him. This was flattering to his vanity but he perceived that jealousy might be engendered between the two; this brown girl already spoke as one bitterly jealous" (73 - 74).

Jealousy did flare up when Annie arrived suddenly at his lodgings to find him with Millicent. Annie tried to convey her contempt by calling Millicent

a thief but Millicent openly defied her. Enraged, Annie tried to whip Millicent and Rutherford had to intervene. At the critical juncture Millicent's grandfather Takoo arrived there and took her away. Before she went, Millicent insulted Annie by calling her a murderess and a witch. This provoked Annie to seek revenge. When Rutherford pointed out that her behaviour was distasteful and not lady-like Annie retorted sarcastically that Rutherford too had become the typical West Indian gentleman: he had gone from her embraces into the arms of a coloured girl. Antoinette in Wide Sargasso Sea makes a similar comment about Rochester's involvement with Amelie: he was no better than the white planters whom he had criticized for cohabiting with the slaves.

The flame of revenge was lit in Annie's heart when Rutherford tried to defend Millicent. She decided to kill Millicent through witchcraft. Finding her whereabouts through Ashman, Annie went there in the middle of the night and inflicted a mortal injury. In the beginning, Rutherford did not believe the tales of witchcraft but when he went to see the girl he felt

sorry for her. Millicent thought Annie responsible for her plight. So Rutherford went to Annie and begged her to help the girl. Millicent had touched his heart by worrying about his safety even in the midst of her own pain. This made Annie even more jealous. She knew that even if she helped Millicent she would lose him to Millicent. At the ceremony arranged to exorcise the evil spirit feeding on Millicent's body, Annie sent another apparition which pronounced Millicent's doom.

Unknown to her, Rutherford had gone to watch the ceremony. He had seen her own part in it and it revolted him. The next day, he went to see her and openly accused her of witchcraft and murder. He threatened to go to a magistrate if anything happened to Millicent. The girl's grandfather who had helped Annie in murdering her husbands, would turn king's evidence. Annie realized that Rutherford no longer loved her, the coloured girl had taken him away from her. With great pride she declared that he could go to the authorities with his wonderful story but no one would believe it especially as his witness was a black obeahman. After he left her in bitterness, she realized the danger she

was in. With pain in her heart, she asked Ashman to get rid of Rutherford before he could harm her. She thus pronounced the death sentence of the only man she had ever loved. The future stretched out before her, empty and desolate with her overseer holding his dangerous knowledge over her head like a sword.

When Rutherford went to see Millicent for the last time, he was devastated with grief. He had taken a doctor along to help her but he could do nothing. Her last words to him were to take care of himself. She died the same night and Rutherford announced his decision to leave Rosehall the next day. The same night, the Negroes stormed Annie's house under the leadership of Takoo. By some stroke of fate Rutherford happened to reach there, along with Rider. Seeing Annie in this helpless condition his attitude changed. His racial pride and sense of chivalry prompted him to fight for her safety. He also felt vaguely that he loved her still. "If needs be, he was prepared to give his life for her" (244). In spite of his efforts, she died at the hands of Takoo.

The tragedy of Annie Palmer was brought about by her use of her extraordinary powers. Had she been an ordinary woman, she might have lived comfortably with a planter husband. The absence of children might also have affected her nature by making her ruthless and cruel. In the case of Antoinette the inability to control her affairs brings about her tragedy. She too had no children to love and cherish. As for Anna Morgan, she was forced to abort her foetus as she did not know who the father was. Only Jane Burrell achieves fulfilment through motherhood by giving birth to a little boy "the splitting image of his father."

Jane Burrell unlike the other three had pragmatic ideas about marriage. Jane and her friends view man-woman relationships purely from the point of view of material advantage. In the village, Jane did not have anything to do with the boys apart from talking to them. She knew that they were interested only in getting what they could out of a girl without spending any money. After reaching Kingston, the first man who tried to establish contact with her was Cecil, Mrs Mason's nephew. At first she was awkward and nervous,

not knowing how to handle his increasing interest in her. Her fear was that his aunt would see him. As the days passed by, her confidence grew and she also realized that she did not like Mr Cecil. Cecil tried his best to woo her by giving her small amounts of money. Cleverly, Jane accepted the money but refused to have anything to do with him. This made Cecil angry. He accused her of stealing but Jane raised her voice in protest bringing Mrs Mason to the spot. The same day, Jane left Mrs Mason's household to stay with Sathyra.

Jane's next encounter was with Mr Sampson, Sathyra's boyfriend. When Sathyra announced that a boyfriend of hers was going to call on her, she expected Jane to take the hint and make herself scarce. Jane was too inexperienced to do so. She stayed with Sathyra throughout the meeting with disastrous results. Mr Sampson liked Jane because she was simple and straight forward. When she agreed with his opinions he felt flattered. Sathyra however, was a hard, calculating female who wanted to extract the maximum from Sampson. She knew that men like him would make love to half a dozen young women at once. In Jane she

saw a potential rival. As the evening progressed, she became more and more angry. In the end, she asked Jane to leave her premises saying that Mr Sampson wanted to move in with her.

The third encounter Jane had was with Mr Curden, her foreman at work. He was a married man with family. So when she first saw his friendly interest in her she suspected nothing. When the other employees pointed out that it was not just friendship, she declared that she did not want to have anything to do with a married man. Mr Curden however would not leave her alone. When she started leaving early, he questioned her about it. She lied to him that she was staying with her parents. This made him suggest that she should get independent lodgings. Jane replied that she preferred to stay with her folks. After this, the foreman became distant in his attitude and exacting in his supervision of her work.

In the meanwhile Jane became acquainted with Vincent Broglie, a newcomer to the neighbourhood. A child belonging to one of the neighbours died. As the mother had no money for the funeral expenses, Jane came

forward to collect the money from the other residents in the yard. When she approached the newcomer, he surprised everyone by donating four shillings. Later on it was he who accompanied Jane to the burial as there wasn't enough funds for a grand funeral. While coming back from the churchyard Mr Curden saw Jane in the company of Vincent. He had also found out that she had lied to him. The next day, he confronted Jane with these two items of knowledge. Jane explained that Vincent was only a neighbour. This led him to put a proposition before Jane: she should move in with him as his mistress. Jane did not want to do this but her job was at stake. So she asked for a little time to think it over. Curden was willing to wait only for one week.

Jane found herself in a fix. It was then that she thought of Vincent Broglie as an alternative:

She had said that Vincent was nothing to her and that was true, she had said that she was nothing to him and that was still more true. But she had been proud to be seen driving with him yesterday, he was much younger than this man, he was single, he was generous too, and was probably quite as well paid as the foreman. But how would that help her? (162)

Unlike Anna Morgan, in Voyage in the Dark, Jane Burrell used her head. In the days that followed Jane made earnest attempts to get close to Vincent. Her interest in his activities made him take her to the union meeting. He thought that her doubts about the proposed strike would be cleared there. The speeches did not convince Jane as to why the strike was essential. She told Vincent that he was being foolish in jeopardizing his job. This made Vincent irritated. He told her not to interfere in things she did not understand.

As the week passed, Jane became resigned to her fate. Curden arranged new lodgings for her and she was asked to move in on Monday. With a heavy heart, she bid goodbye to all her neighbours including Vincent. Vincent was busy with the preparations for the strike but he felt sorry to hear that Jane was going to give in to Mr Curden. She had earlier told him all about it. Jane advised him once more against going on strike. She also declared vehemently that she hated Curden and wished that she could live with Vincent. Vincent realized that Jane was a dependable kind of girl

who liked him for himself. He decided not to let her go to Curden. He in turn, backed out of the strike. As a result of this, the two were able to climb the social ladder together. It is Jane's practical side that helps her make a success of the marriage.

Religion: The Caribbean set up gives religion a prominent place in its day-to-day activities. This does not mean, however, that people are staunch believers. In fact, the very situation is full of irony. The white colonizers had condescended to baptize their African slaves at the insistence of the missionaries but their activities were often against the tenets of Christianity. The slaves had brought their deity, 'obi' of African origin and continued to worship him even after conversion. The worship involved the supernatural and was banned by the law as witchcraft. Though the black slaves worshipped Jesus and Mary with great fervour, they also indulged in the practice of obeah side by side. People who were capable of calling the spirits were in great demand in the Caribbean. Not only the Negroes, but the white people too resorted to obeah sometimes to cure illnesses, to destroy enemies or to

succeed in business or in love. The conflict between Christianity and obeah thus becomes a prominent motif even in the novels of the white writers.

Of the four novels under consideration, two novels, Wide Sargasso Sea and The White Witch of Rosehall, give prominence to the practice of obeah. In Voyage in the Dark obeah is mentioned but Jane's Career makes no reference at all to obeah. This is all the more striking because the protagonist is black.

Jane's parents were hardworking, God-fearing Jamaican peasants. Prior to her departure to Kingston, they invited one of the village elders to give Jane some good advice. The description of the black preacher is given with humour and irony. Though he tries to look dignified in shoes and collar, some of the effect is lost because of the soiled nature of his clothes. His advice to Jane likewise sounds ludicrous with its mixture of peasant dialect and Biblical archaisms:

"Jane", he continued impressively after a pause, "Kingston is a very big an' wicked city, an' a young girl like you who de Lord has blessed wid a good figure an' a face must be careful not to keep bad company. Satan goeth about like a roaring lion in Kingston seeking

who he may devour. He will devour you if you do not take him to the Lord in prayer. Do you' work well. Write to you' moder often, for a chile who don't remember her parents cannot prosper. Don't stay out in de street in de night, go to church whenever you' employer allow you. If sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Now, tell me what I say to you."
(2)

When Jane repeated his instructions back to him, he was pleased. Reaching Kingston, she found that Mrs Mason had double standards. She and her family attended church but she grudged her servants the same facility. When Amanda, her servant wanted every alternate Sunday off, she was most sarcastic: "All right, Amanda, I hope goin' to church will do you good. Everybody go to church now; in fact the church is making ladies and gentlemen of everybody. It don't prevent people from lying and stealing though" (79). This shows her attitude that grudges even religion to the working class. She preferred her servants to be pious, chaste and good without going to church and without getting married.

Jane's basic honesty won her many friends. Her generosity was also appreciated by the lady who lost her baby. It was Jane who took the lead in collecting money

for the funeral. It was in this connexion that she met Vincent for the first time. Though Jane did not marry Vincent till after her son was born, one might excuse her on the grounds that it was a common practice among the coloured population of the West Indies. They did get married eventually in the very church attended by Mrs Mason. The church wedding, in the presence of family and friends, marks the social recognition of Vincent and Jane.

Anna Morgan in Voyage in the Dark though white, looks on the Christian faith with a certain amount of irony. While roaming around with a friend Maudie, they met a preacher who was trying to instil the fear of God into the people. Nobody seemed to listen to him. All they could hear were the words, God... the wrath of God... etc. The situation appeared funny and Maudie laughed at him. The man got angry at this and started shrieking after them that their sins would find them out. This infuriated Maudie; she felt that the man was insulting them because they did not have a gentleman with them. Anna felt that the man was thin and cold with little, sad eyes. She wanted to talk to him and

find out what he was really thinking of, as his eyes had a blind look, "like a dog's when it sniffs something." The author underlines the inefficacy of religion that has nothing to offer the lonely woman except a few meaningless words.

On another occasion Anna remembered the injunctions of Mother St. Anthony in her convent school. This happened after she had given in to Walter for the first time. Mother St. Anthony had told them: "Children, everyday one should put aside a quarter of an hour for meditation on the Four Last Things. Every night before going to sleep - that's the best time - you should shut your eyes and try to think of one of the Four Last Things" (55). The Four Last Things were Death, Judgement, Hell and Heaven. Anna lay still and thought of death; her old self had died. The little girl with her innocence had become a thing of the past. She had given in to a man before marrying him, without any surety of a marriage in the future. She felt guilty and ashamed: "That was when it was sad, when you lay awake at night and remembered things. That was when it was sad, when you stood by the bed and undressed, thinking,

when he kisses me, shivers run up my back. I am hopeless, resigned, utterly happy. Is that me? I am bad, not good any longer, bad. That has no meaning, absolutely none. Just words. But something about the darkness of the streets has a meaning" (57).

Though white, Anna Morgan could not completely escape from the myths of obeah in childhood. Francine, the Negro girl liked hanging pictures of Jesus and Mary in her bedroom. But whenever, she started telling stories, she would use the obeah ritual of saying, 'Timm Timm' to be answered by 'Bois seche.' In England, after a bout of sickness Anna remembered the mountains of the Caribbean that were haunted and obeah. She remembered stories of obeah women who dug up dead bodies to cut off their fingers. In England they sounded unreal but Anna's eyes looked red, like the eyes of soucrints, who were spirits that fanned you to sleep and sucked your blood. When Anna identifies herself with the soucrints, it projects her own loss of self-esteem. She is no longer, a good, desirable woman - she is a bad, blood sucking harpy.

The conflict between Christianity and African obeah becomes a major issue in Wide Sargasso Sea. Antoinette, the white creole girl, received no solace whatsoever from the Christian faith. In the poverty-stricken days of her childhood, it was Christophine's reputation as an obeah woman that kept them going. However, on the night of the fire, religion did come to their rescue in a strange sort of way. When surrounded by the hostile Negroes, Mr Mason started to pray. It was then that something happened. The author's description is ironic: "Mr Mason stopped swearing and began to pray in a loud voice. The prayer ended, 'May Almighty God Defend Us!' And God who is indeed mysterious, who had made no sign when they burned Pierre as he slept-not a clap of thunder, not a flash of lightning - mysterious God heard Mr Mason at once and answered him. The yells stopped" (36). Ironically however, it was their parrot, Coco, that saved them. It had its wings clipped and could not fly. So it fell down from the roof, burning. The Negroes believed that it was unlucky to kill a parrot. This superstitious dread made them stop and move aside for the white people to flee. The crisis, however, was not over. Before

they could get into the carriage, they were stopped by a man carrying a machete. He wanted to kill them, for he was afraid that they would go to the police. Aunt Cora stepped forward and told him that they should be allowed to go, for the boy Pierre was badly hurt. This made the man comment about black and white burning alike. Aunt Cora retorted back:

"They do" she said. "Here and hereafter as you will find out very shortly."

He let the bridle go and thrust his face close to hers. He'd throw her on the fire, he said, if she put bad luck on him. Old white Jumby, he called her. But she did not move an inch, she looked straight into his eyes and threatened with eternal fire in a calm voice. "And never a drop of sangoree to cool your burning tongue", she said. He cursed her again but he backed away. (37)

After their escape, Antoinette was sick for a long time. When she recovered, she was sent to a convent. The nuns there tried to make the children good and pious by telling them stories of the saints. Even as a child, Antoinette was skeptical. Her traumatic experiences had left indelible impressions on her mind. She used to have terrible dreams that tormented her. When she asked the nuns why terrible things happened in the world, they could give her no convincing reply. So

she resented their cloistered lives and their feeling of security. Her mother's insanity was a terrible wound to her. When she died, Antoinette could not cry. She tried to pray for her but the words seemed to fall to the ground.

In spite of her convent upbringing, it was to Christophine she turned when things started going wrong with her marriage. Christophine had warned her that obeah was not for 'beke' or white people. When Antoinette continued to beg, she gave her a potion to mix in Rochester's drink. The altered taste made Rochester think that he was being poisoned. He was horrified and repelled.

In contrast to Antoinette, the man who described himself as her illegitimate half-brother always talked in terms of God and retribution. The belief in God did not prevent him from wrecking the marriage of Antoinette who had not done him any harm. He also told Rochester about Christophine having been imprisoned earlier for practising obeah. This helped Rochester to deal with her. The last part of the novel depicts the so-called Christians ill-treating a helpless

woman. Rochester changed Antoinette's name to Bertha. Earlier, when he had called her that, she had protested that it was obeah to change a person's name. She felt that Rochester had found out that her mother was called Annette and had hence changed the name. Rochester's intention was to erase Antoinette's Caribbean identity. He succeeded, for the mad, unkempt woman shut up in the attic had no resemblance at all to the lovely girl with pretty clothes that Antoinette once was.

The name symbolism is carried over to her caretaker too. The lady in charge of her was called Grace Poole. She had accepted the job out of monetary considerations and had no solace to offer the lonely woman dubbed mad by her husband. In the end, Antoinette re-enacted the story of Coco, the parrot with clipped wings when she jumped off the burning building. She thus brought ill luck to her captors.

In The White Witch of Rosehall De Lisser delineates the bad effects of obeah and witchcraft by focussing attention on Annie Palmer. In spite of the efforts of the missionaries, the use of obeah was prevalent in the Caribbean. Obeahmen like Takoo were

feared and respected. The bad deeds of such people were condoned out of fear. Annie Palmer had used the power of witchcraft to subdue a superstitious people but ultimately it brought about her doom. In the case of Takoo too obeah brought him only misery and tragedy at the end.

When Robert Rutherford arrived in Jamaica he was fresh, young and chivalrous with a deep sense of religion and morality. As he was not superstitious, he was incredulous when he heard the tales of sorcery and witchcraft connected with Annie. On his first visit to the Great House, Annie herself told him of the ghosts that haunted the house but he paid no heed. But when he started kissing her, a thunderous noise filled the house and all the lights went out. Though Annie explained it as a door banging shut in the wind, he suddenly remembered the three dead husbands of Annie and felt alarmed. The next day Millicent too warned him about Annie's use of witchcraft. Though he was irritated by all this foolish talk, he excused the girl on account of her sincerity.

Later events made Rutherford change his mind. When Annie inflicted a mortal wound on Millicent, Takoo, her grandfather became Annie's enemy. He had earlier helped Annie to murder her husbands. Rutherford found himself caught in the feud between Takoo and Annie Palmer as he was the bone of contention between Annie and Millicent. In the war between Haitian witchcraft and African obeah, no one enjoyed the ultimate victory. Though Takoo killed Annie to avenge his granddaughter, he was shot by Ashman.

The novel portrays the strange rituals of witchcraft in vivid detail. To scare the Negroes and control them, Annie used to conjure up apparitions. One such apparition was a three footed horse that struck them with holy terror. Only Rider, the unfrocked priest-turned-book-keeper, kept his cool. Annie inflicted an injury on Millicent by staring fixedly at the door behind which Millicent was sleep. She also placed a cardboard piece with the picture of Millicent in a coffin outside the room along with a child's skull smeared with blood. Her sorcery had its desired effect. Millicent woke up and started yelling. A bruise

appeared on her chest and she firmly believed that a 'Hige' had sucked her blood. To get rid of the foul spirit, Takoo arranged an elaborate ceremony of exorcism. To the accompaniment of drumming and chants, a snow white kid was sacrificed and Millicent was bathed in its blood. At the critical juncture, Annie sent another apparition, a huge bull that the Negroes called 'Rolling calf'. This frightened the Negroes who scattered calling to Jesus. The fright had made them come out of the trance like state which was alien to the Christian faith they now professed. The exorcism failed and Takoo lost all hope.

The Christian faith is projected in the novel through Rider, an unfrocked priest. His addiction to drink had resulted in his losing his job as a preacher. Thereafter he had wandered around seeking different jobs. He had ultimately, come to Rosehall as a book-keeper. In spite of his dissolute state, his training in religion brought him respect on a number of occasions. It was he who tried to explain to Rutherford the mystery of witchcraft and its sway over the superstitious multitude. He accompanied Rutherford when

he went to see Millicent for the last time. When the doctor was unable to do anything for the dying girl, Rider stepped forward to administer religious solace to a tormented soul. The waiting Negroes were greatly affected on listening to his serious voice repeating the words of prayer and comfort. Many of them knelt down and started praying forgetting their participation in the heathenish ritual of the night before. Because of his kindness to Millicent, Takoo spared his life when the Negroes rose up in revolt.

Politics: The political angle seems to be more important to the black writers than to the white writers. In black writing, political affiliations play a crucial role in the development of identity. The two novels by Jean Rhys exemplify the comparative lack of interest in politics among the white writers of the Caribbean. In these two novels Rhys portrays the sexist politics of power: the male predator versus the female victim. In the case of *De Lisser*, a conservative pro-establishment stance is taken by him.

The lack of a sense of belonging becomes a crucial factor in both Wide Sargasso Sea and Voyage in

the Dark. Though Voyage in the Dark is set in England in the period just before the First World War (1912-14) the volatile political events of Europe are not touched upon at all. Anna's dilemma has a timeless quality to it; its significance is universal. In Wide Sargasso Sea the period is the 1830s just after the emancipation of slaves. The hostility between the races had upset previous equations and the white masters had turned victims at the hands of the Negro slaves. Apart from the individual story of Antoinette's family, mention is made of other white people too, like Mr Lutterell, but the political angle is not explored in depth. Antoinette is depicted as having no voice at all in determining her destiny. Her only act of self-assertion occurs at the end of the novel when she escapes from her living Hell by setting the house on fire.

De Lisser's novels portray the political angle from the viewpoint of his own political affiliation to conservatism. In Jane's Career the political angle is projected in connection with the strike call given by the printer's union. Vincent Broglie, enjoying the benefits of a good paying job, was lured into the union

by the excitement offered. The union leader's political jargon sounded profound to his unaccustomed ears and he was fired with enthusiasm to fight for better wages and working conditions. Under the influence of the union leader he started feeling that the lot of the printers was indeed miserable. De Lisser is most sarcastic in his description of the members of the union: "The most enthusiastic members of the union were the men who were out of work, and had been so for some time. Their support was moral for it was long since they had been in a position to contribute financial aid to anything; steady work had never appealed to them, it being regarded by them in the light of tyranny and oppression" (81). Here the intention of the author is obvious. By portraying these people as parasites on society, De Lisser underlines the foolishness of the working class who are led by them.

Jane came to know about the union when a meeting was arranged in Broglie's house to whip up enthusiasm for the strike. The people of the yard, being poor and uneducated, listened with interest to the fiery speeches given by the leaders though they could

not comprehend the meaning. One by one the speakers listed their demands and grievances till the listeners felt that the printers were the most downtrodden of the working class. One of the speakers even voiced his protest that the printers were denied the right to wear swords, a privilege they had earlier enjoyed. Jane had listened carefully to the speeches, not because she was interested in politics, but because she wanted to catch the attention of Vincent Broglie. When the meeting was over, Jane went up to him and asked him what would happen if the strike failed. Her peasant wisdom with its inherent pragmatism made her wonder how Vincent would survive if he lost his job. Though the doubt had occurred to him, he told Jane confidently that the workers would never fail.

Thinking that the rhetoric of the union leader would convince Jane of the feasibility of the strike, he took her to another bigger meeting. The union leader's adages were culled from cheap American publications. All the workers were favourably affected by his pronouncements but Jane was not convinced. She felt that Vincent was running a grave risk of losing a good

paying job. She told him explicitly: "But it seem to be all foolishness dat man was talkin'. If you leave your good job wid a lot of other people, none of them can help you; an' suppose anyone go behind your back an' ask for it, what you would do?" (174). Vincent resented her attitude and told her to look to her own affairs. But the doubt she raised remained in his mind to torment him.

Broglie's employer was a white man who was fond of him. He was sorry to see Broglie among the strikers. On the eve of the strike, he tried his best to dissuade him. The other workers saw Broglie talking to 'the Enemy' and called him back. This deepened his feeling of doubt. When Jane came to see him to announce that she was leaving the yard, she talked to him again about the foolishness of going on strike. She herself was forced to accept a man she did not like out of economic necessity. When Broglie heard this, he made up his mind. He went back to work and was teased by the workers on strike. His employer however was pleased with him. Within two weeks the whole thing blew over when the union leader went away. The workers realized

that they had been cheated. Broglie, however, received a raise. Six weeks later he was promoted to the position of foreman. Broglie also offered asylum to Jane believing firmly that it was her wisdom which saved him. De Lisser uses the strike to expose the fraud of political leaders who exploit the poverty stricken masses.

The White Witch of Rosehall projects racial politics as they were the most important in the period presented in the novel, December 1831. The Negroes were discontented with the slave owners as they believed that the decree of emancipation had already come from England, but was being withheld from them by the white planter class. There were sporadic outbursts of violence and the white owners had to rule the slaves with an iron hand.

On Rosehall estate things were under control. Ashman, the overseer, was efficient and ruthless but Annie Palmer had the power of witchcraft to aid her. The Negroes hated her but her control over the spirits frightened them into submission. She also had them

flogged mercilessly. The author comments that had she lived fifty years before, she would not have hesitated to flog a slave to death.

An incident is described in the novel that sheds light on contemporary politics. Mr Hancock, an attorney connected with the local militia, called on Rosehall's mistress with an important message. All the white men on the estate were asked to attend the meeting. Mr Hancock had received information that the Negroes were likely to revolt in the days following Christmas. The Negroes were usually granted three holidays for Christmas. That year, one day happened to be Sunday; so they wanted one more day. The white plantation owners did not feel that the demand was just and therefore refused it. But they were afraid of the Negroes rising in revolt. Mr Hancock's attitude represents the opinion of the white people in general:

"The government, Mr Ashman, is secretly with these missionaries and slaves - we are in a devil of a position when it comes to getting justice and our rights, I can tell you. The Government backs up the Negroes whenever it can; this governor seems to have been sent out to do nothing but that. We'll never get fair play from him any more than from the English government; so we have to do what we can for ourselves. But there's a good lot of fight left in us still!" (175)

He, like the other white men, believed that the slaves had nothing to complain about. The plantation owners were afraid of the blacks and ruled them with an iron hand. Added to that, was the boredom of the Caribbean set up which offered no channels of creativity. Most of the white men lived dissolute lives drinking and womanising in excess. Though Hancock was aware of the situation at Rosehall, he preferred not to interfere. He felt that white people should stick together in a crisis. This in fact was the attitude of the entire white population. When Rutherford threatened Annie Palmer with exposure, she laughed at him because she knew that no white magistrate would convict her, a white woman, for practising witchcraft.

Rutherford hated Annie for what she did to Millicent but later on his hatred changed to compassion when he saw her a helpless victim at the hands of the Negroes. His only consideration was that she was a white woman and that the attackers were her inferiors. The Negroes on the other hand felt justified in killing a woman who was responsible for so many deaths. When Rider implored Takoo not to kill Annie, Takoo replied that she deserved hanging more than anyone else:

"I sentence her to death, as chief an' leader of the people of St. James. You talk about me an' dese men hanged, Mr Rider? It is the white men who have to look for themselves now, for we are all free from tonight -- every slave in Jamaica is free -- and we taking to the mountains to fight until the damn slave owners here acknowledge our freedom. It come from England an' they keeping it back. Very well, we will take it ourself, even if some of us have to die for it. I expec' to die, but dese men with me will live free for ever. And before I die dis woman will; she will go before me. No power from hell or heaven can save her!" (243 - 244)

A personal vendetta became a political murder. Annie Palmer's destiny was to die at the hands of the people she had terrorised.

Narrative Styles and Techniques: The narrative style adopted by the author underlines his concept of selfhood. This becomes all the more relevant in terms of inter-racial relations and gender issues. Of the two authors, Jean Rhys prefers the first person narrative while De Lisser adopts the narrative mode of the omniscient author. In Rhys's Voyage in the Dark Anna Morgan relates the whole story and it becomes poignant in terms of the feminine perspective. In Wide Sargasso Sea, except for the second part and a small portion of the third part, the narrator is Antoinette. Part II

presents the thoughts of Rochester and in Part III a small section is devoted to Grace Poole who relates the tale of the mad Antoinette. These sections complement Antoinette's depiction of herself by presenting the other side of the picture. In the case of De Lisser's novels, the mask of the omniscient narrator helps him to offer comments on the characters and events. This is more evident in Jane's Career as the protagonist is black and of a different milieu from the author. In this novel he makes use of the Jamaican peasant dialect in the conversation of the Negro characters. In The White Witch of Rosehall, a similar method is adopted to underline the difference in culture. The author's use of dialect is condescending rather than sympathetic. Though Jean Rhys too makes use of deviations from standard English in the speeches of the Negro characters, they are reduced to the minimum. The purpose served is not ridicule as in De Lisser but irony. The white creole heroines are presented as more vulnerable than their black counterparts by Jean Rhys.

Thus the search for identity assumes different forms in the four novels. One factor that is common in these novels by white writers is the reversal of

colonial relations. Anna Morgan, in Voyage in the Dark is exploited by white people in England in the same manner as her own ancestors had exploited the slave women. The colonial relationship is thus reversed. In Wide Sargasso Sea the reversal occurs twice, once in Antoinette's childhood with the blacks burning her house and later by her white husband who locks her up. A Negro girl and Antoinette's coloured half-brother play prominent roles in wrecking her marriage. In The White Witch of Rosehall, the powerful Annie Palmer, is defeated in love by a coloured girl and killed in revenge by a Negro. In Jane's Career the black girl Jane achieves social recognition on par with her erstwhile mistress, the coloured woman, Mrs Mason. At the same time it is to be noted that Jane achieves this not by negating but by accepting the values of the white race. De Lisser with his bias towards political conservatism criticizes the coloured population but portrays the white people as dignified and worthy of respect. Even the wicked Annie Palmer achieves a certain dignity through her death, in his other novel, The White Witch of Rosehall.

CHAPTER III

COOLIE TALES: EAST INDIAN WRITERS

The East Indians arrived in the Caribbean much later than the white settlers and their black slaves. After Negro emancipation, the sugar estates of the Caribbean became derelict and the need of the day was to procure cheap labour. India became the main overseas source of cheap labour though labourers were brought in from China as well. Between 1839 and 1917 nearly 416,000 indentured labourers were brought in from India and most of them were transported to Guyana and Trinidad where the shortage of labour was most acute.

Most of the Indian immigrants were contracted from the poverty-stricken districts of Northern India though a significant number were from Southern India. They were labelled 'East Indians' or 'coolies' to distinguish them from the West Indians, mostly Negroes and coloured folks. There were Hindus and Muslims among them. J.C. Jha's article entitled "Indian Heritage in Trinidad, West Indies" published in Caribbean Quarterly in 1973 gives us information about their background. He states that most of these immigrants had possessed land in India before unforeseen circumstances forced them to

emigrate. So they were good farmers and were used to methods of irrigation and cultivation of marshy lands. Most of them preferred to work on the land and save money to acquire property so that their children at least could live in comfort.

When a comparison is made between the Negro slave and the East Indian coolie, one is struck by the latter's adherence to his culture. Jane Grant attributes this state of affairs to a particular reason. In her introduction to Sam Selvon's short stories entitled Ways of Sunlight (1987), she describes how the indentured labourers were forced to live in unusually harsh conditions like the Negroes under slavery; but there was no attempt to destroy their culture and traditions as there had been earlier to destroy the African culture of the slaves (vi). In the beginning, the coolies preferred to keep to themselves, for they had brought from India an entire culture. They followed their own religions and celebrated their own festivals. They married among themselves. Though caste was adhered to, taboos regarding caste were not very strict. They were largely illiterate but they could speak different

languages. In spite of all this, the West Indian looked down upon the East Indian. There were several reasons for this. In the early days of indenture, the East Indians were looked upon as transients, protected by the white planters and the colonial government and assaults on them were common. Many of the Indians returned to India but a larger number stayed on. Their numbers soon increased. As they were good, hard workers, they were encouraged to own land by the authorities. But the attitude of derision and discrimination persisted. The East Indian could not be at par with the West Indian for the former had to carry a passport; he was denied full citizenship rights and the chances of modern education. The coolie way of life in mud huts devoid of comforts, the habits of sleeping on the floor on flour sacks, eating food with the hand etc., invited derision and contempt. The Negroes preferred to spend all they earned on comforts and a good life. The coolies preferred to save and hoard money. The East Indians made significant contribution to society in terms of agricultural produce but they were denied representation. Indenture ended in 1917 but by this time one third the population of Trinidad consisted of

East Indians. Against heavy odds, many of them managed to educate themselves and quite a few intellectuals emerged from among them. This, in turn, led to socio-political awareness and various organizations became active in the East Indian community. By the early 1920s they had become strong enough to demand proportional representation in the Legislative Council.

In the fast changing society of the Caribbean, it was impossible for the East Indians to retain their ethnicity for long. Though in the villages, the peasant community still held on to their own culture, the cities influenced the East Indians who had migrated there. The process of "creolization" soon gained momentum. Slowly the Indian languages ceased to be spoken and were replaced by the lower class dialect of English. Many East Indians converted to Christianity. Even those who did not convert, lost touch with the Hindu scriptures. Dress, food habits and recreational activities also underwent change. It was the local environment that decided them but in spite of these changes, the East Indian sensibility remained distinct. This was most reflected in their domestic lives, their family

relationships and their priorities. The two East Indian novelists chosen for contrastive analysis, Sam Selvon and V.S. Naipaul, are from Trinidad. Though both of them were born in Trinidad of East Indian parents, they had to migrate to England to achieve success as writers. But there the resemblance ends. Though their concerns especially in the novels chosen for analysis, are sociological, their attitudes are completely alien to one another. Their attitudes, their linguistic styles and above all their world-view as a whole are contradistinct from each other and therefore provide enough scope for contrast.

Sam Selvon, born in 1923 in Trinidad started writing early in life. However he achieved success only after emigrating to Britain in 1950. His first novel A Brighter Sun though completed before he left Trinidad was published in London in 1952. From this beginning he went on from success to success to establish himself as a well-known literary figure. Selvon's novels fall into two categories: those that record Caribbean experience and those that relate the experiences of West Indian immigrants in England. His novels, The Lonely Londoners

and Moses Ascending belong to the second category. In the novels that are set in Trinidad we get an authentic picture of East Indian peasant life. The London novels on the other hand transcend the East Indian identity to assume a cosmopolitan Caribbean identity emerging from the engulfing sea of British supremacy over the immigrants from the erstwhile colonies of Britain. The characters, Moses and Galahad are black if one goes by ethnicity, Caribbean if one goes by region. Though these novels are full of pinpricks at the English prejudices against the immigrants, they are devoid of bitter denunciation. The Trinidad novels present both sides of East Indian life: the close-knit almost exclusively Indian village communities and the open cosmopolitan atmosphere of urban areas. A Brighter Sun centres upon Tiger, growing up in Trinidad at the time of the Second World War. It opens with Tiger's marriage at the age of sixteen to Urmilla, and follows his attempts to establish himself away from the influence of his family. In the sequel to this, Turn Again Tiger published in 1958, he returns with Urmilla and his daughter Chandra to the canefields to help his father. Selvon's other novels like The Plains of

Caroni, Those who eat the Cascadura etc., also deal with life in Trinidad but the Tiger novels have been selected because of their sociological interest and the authenticity of their peasant experience.

V.S.Naipaul was born in 1932 in Trinidad. If Selvon's father was a merchant, Naipaul's father was a reporter for the Trinidad Guardian. Seepersad Naipaul was an author in his own right having published The Adventures of Gurudeva and other Stories in 1943. He was thus a pioneer among the writers of Trinidad. His son, Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul received a scholarship to Oxford and went to England in 1950, the same year as Selvon. Naipaul's The Mystic Masseur was published in 1957 five years after A Brighter Sun but it was awarded the John Llewelyn Rhys Memorial Prize. Naipaul thereafter lived mostly in England working for the B.B.C and writing novels, returning to Trinidad only for short spells. His novel A House for Mr Biswas set in Trinidad is based upon family history. Published in 1961, the novel is a tribute to Naipaul's skill as a social historian. Naipaul has written a significant number of novels since then and many of them have won

him world wide recognition. His chief concern is the problem of identity in post-colonial societies and he depicts it in his own characteristic way, tinged with humour and irony. His analytical vision and intuitive understanding of people and nations have earned him esteem as a novelist. A House for Mr Biswas has been selected for closer study here because it presents the East Indian community of Trinidad in all its diversity. It explores the lives of not only the East Indian peasants in the sugar estates but also the emerging educated middle class from among them. Above all it depicts the joint Hindu family in Trinidad society in its state of waning and decay.

Before we proceed to the dilemma of identity with reference to the six situations mentioned earlier, it would be worthwhile to look at the opinion of critics regarding the two authors. Of the two, Naipaul is one who inspires a love-hate ambivalence among his critics. In A Double Exile Griffiths makes the following statements:

In his early work like Miguel Street, The Suffrage of Elvira and The Mystic Masseur, the interaction of Indian and Negro, of Chinese and

mulatto is implicit but despite his unsurpassed eye for recording detail and his ready compassion for their suffering and deprivation, Naipaul's view of the relations between these inhabitants of the urban slum and straggling rural village is dominated by his sense of their shared eccentricity and pathos. For Naipaul they are united beyond their racial differences in their shared lack of meaning. There is no sense here, as in Selvon's novels, of a new kind of man, emerging uniquely and distinctly West Indian. (1978, 122-123)

In the same work the author praises Selvon for his lighter touch and sharp eye. Kenneth Ramchand holds a different view however. His The West Indian Novel and Its Background makes the following comments:

While in his first three works, however, Naipaul was, on balance, a popular but ironic entertainer and gentle satirist, his fourth, A House for Mr Biswas (1961) established him as the author of a major twentieth century novel on the increasingly rare scale of Middlemarch, Anna Karenina or The Rainbow. The three generation span of the novel gives free play to Naipaul's favourite pattern of authorial stage setting summary followed by abundantly rendered and partly illustrative episode; and the wide cast of secondary characters allows the author's manner of swift and vivid characterization enriched by occasional glimpses in depth, to operate with reasonable legitimacy. (1970, 7-8)

At the same time, Ramchand concedes that Naipaul is the most observant and the least metaphysical of West Indian novelists. Naipaul's style and irony

contribute to his popularity as a novelist and there is no denying the fact that he is the most well-known and most widely read Caribbean novelist to date.

Selvon in contrast does not excite extremes of love and hate. Michel Fabre in his essay on Selvon in West Indian Literature makes the following comments:

A pioneer in Trinidadian fiction, quick to exploit the topical tensions of his time and render them in striking, accurate, literary terms, Sam Selvon has moulded the folk tradition of the Caribbean into a recognized literary form, somewhat in the way Ralph Ellison used the blues in Invisible Man. Throughout his novels, he has achieved a convergence of the written and oral modes in Trinidad, largely by bridging the gap between local creole and accepted standard English. He has extended that form to accommodate the European tradition. His pre-occupations with language are contemporary; he is still creating new ironical tools fitted to the demythification of solemn postures, be they imperialistic dictates or frozen modes of expression which prevent the spirit from moving in harmony with fundamental emotions. Selvon's humanistic vision extends beyond social concern, whether explicit or muted. It centres on the essential worth of the individual within the community. (1979, 124-125)

Even while noting the success of Naipaul, one has to take into account the pioneering nature of Selvon's work which had been almost completed before he

went to England. Selvon as such has contributed to the creation of a Caribbean ethos-thematic as well as formalistic.

Childhood: Though A Brighter Sun is a bildungsroman childhood experiences are given little importance within the novel. When the novel starts, Tiger the protagonist is sixteen and the most important event that happens to him at that age is his marriage. Tiger is hardly grown up and the premature nature of the event is thus expressed: "Tiger didn't know anything about the wedding until his father told him. He didn't even know the girl. But he bowed to his parents' wishes. He was only sixteen years old and was not in the habit of attending Indian ceremonies in the village. But he knew a little about weddings, that Indians were married at an early age and that after the ceremony friends and relatives would bring him gifts until he began to eat; only then would they stop the offerings" (1985, 4-5). Here Tiger seems to be unaware of the responsibilities that marriage incurs. When the boys and girls of the neighbourhood started teasing him, he felt that they were still little children and that he, as an adult,

should learn to forget them. Tiger did not know what to do but he just obeyed the instructions given, with all the naivete of a child.

Once the marriage was over, Tiger had to take charge in the hut in Barataria that was provided by his wife's family. He understood that he had to prove his manhood to his wife and felt acutely nervous about it. We see Tiger trying to assert himself in various ways including smoking and drinking; the smoking ended up in Tiger coughing and Urmilla laughing at him. Drinking at the rum shop gave him the courage to establish physical contact with his wife. He also went to the estate office and leased out some land for cultivation. He was illiterate and inexperienced and not quite sure of himself. But he managed to find the office and did the job without resorting to outside help. This made him feel self-confident. Having proved himself a man to his wife, Tiger now had to prove it to his parents and the world. For this he had to wait till he became a father. His father and his other relatives came to see Urmilla and the child. Feeling that it was an important

occasion, he wanted to offer drinks to his guests but was afraid of rebuke. In the end, he offered to get drinks from the shop and the old man was pleased:

The old man said, "well, you should have'am here already! After all, you is a man now, boy and you must have'am drink in house for when friend come." Tiger thought, to my wife, I man when I sleep with she. To bap, I man if I drink rum. But to me, I no man yet. (45)

Tiger realizes that he has lost the carefree existence of childhood. Unlike the other young men of his age, he could not wander around doing nothing:

Sometimes a heart slowing homesickness overcame him and he wanted to run back into his life as a boy in the canefields, with no thoughts to worry him, with parents to give him food and occasionally short khaki pants to wear. How easy it had been to get up and milk the cows or fix the harness on the mules, and go to work with the others, talking about games and who had the most marbles. He remembered once, a game of "hoop", he had got lost in the cane. Right in the middle of the field he went to hide, and when he wanted to come out he didn't know in which direction to turn. The way he felt then, it was the same when he cowered under the shadow of life now. When Urmilla and the baby were asleep he looked up at the roof and felt revulsion for his wife and child. They were to blame for all his worry. If he were alone he could be like Boysie, not caring a damn. (81-82)

The childhood remembered thus with its aura of enchantment offers a contrast to the self-same childhood remembered by Tiger in the sequel, Turn Again Tiger. The sudden discovery of a white overseer on the cane project was something of a shock to Tiger who had left Barataria and come to Five Rivers to help his father. The sight of the overseer's house with all modern amenities, tucked away in the wilderness, strikes a raw nerve somewhere. Having forgotten the whip of the white master, the coolie is reminded of it again:

He could remember clearly now -- it was funny how the memory came, after sleeping all those years when it wasn't needed -- how the overseer used to come in the morning, a cork hat on his head to shade the sun, white shirt tucked into leather leggings polished smooth as glass by some labourer's child, and legs straddling the saddle of a big horse, one hand holding the reins, the other a riding whip flicking against the leggings as if the man was brushing away mosquitoes all the time. And the stories which had fed his growth told of nights when the old men sat around smoking their pipes after a day in the fields. Working for the white bosses day after day. The white man was making all the money and they had all the work to do. Tale after tale but only variation on a theme. The white overseer screwed the young Indian girls in the cane, and nobody could do anything about it. They were short-paid last week but no one said anything. Everybody grumbled, but they still worked, because not to work was to starve. That was the tune ringing in his ears

as he grew up, and he got to link rebelliousness with cane and he had been happy to leave Chaguanas and go to live in Barataria vowing never to return to such labour. (1971, 47-48)

The other side of childhood is thus portrayed in the second novel helping to complete the picture.

Though actual reminiscences of various experiences in childhood are not described in Tiger's case, Selvon gives a graphic picture of Tiger's friend Joe whose mother had abandoned him at birth leaving him in the care of her aunt. The lady in question, Ma Lambie, derived some sort of satisfaction from beating Joe. As the boy grew up, the stick grew in proportion. Something significant happened to Joe when he was sixteen. The incident is described with grim humour. Joe's aunt had been searching for Joe in vain and her temper had touched its highest point when she discovered him playing with his friends near the river. Hiding the stick behind her, she lured Joe with honeysweet words but once he got close enough, she started beating him up mercilessly. Seeing the state of Joe, one of his friends remarked that he was too stupid to allow an old woman to beat him. Hearing this, Joe

got up as if the devil had got into him. He advanced upon Ma Lambie and started beating her. When she tried to run away, he followed her home beating her every step of the way. The incident became a delicious scandal, a big "bacchanal" but it also helped to establish Joe's adulthood. He found himself a job and refused to pay any attention to the old woman. The oppressor soon turned into a cringing frightened woman.

Though both Joe and Tiger come out of the cocoon of childhood at sixteen, Joe emerges the tougher of the two due to the deprivation he had suffered. Tiger had been denied education as a child. His father had sent him early enough into the canefields to work. Later on, he managed to acquire the ability to read and write. When one looks at Naipaul's novel, A House for Mr Biswas one sees that it was the same for Mohun's brothers Prasad and Pratap. Biswas himself was more fortunate in this regard for, after migrating to Pagotes he was enrolled in a school and learned to read and write. Ironically enough it was his misfortune in losing his father that brought about the shift to Pagotes. At the same time the acquisition of education

was regarded as a great achievement by the peasant community. In Turn Again Tiger Selvon portrays the respect that Tiger inspired among the villagers on account of his education. Tiger was ranked top man in Five Rivers though it was like "one-eye man in a blind eye country" (39). At first Babolal, Tiger's father felt jealous of Tiger for he felt that he should get more respect as the big boss. But after some time he started becoming proud of his son as the educated one. Ironically enough he started falsifying the past trying to take credit for Tiger's knowledge. The scene is depicted with humour:

"Yes," he told them, drinking in the shop in the evening, "if wasn't for me, he grow up like any other poor child, not learning his lessons or anything, only playing all the time. But from small, I take behind him. I used to beat him everyday and make him study how to read and write and how to count."

"You is a lucky man to have a son who know so much," they told him.

"Well, seeing as I didn't have much education myself, what else I could do but see that the boy learn lessons? Ask him, ask him, how I had to beat him everyday to go to school."

"Is true Tiger, is true?"

"Yes," Tiger said, seeing that his father was happy in his fancy. "If it wasn't for bap I wouldn't know anything." (39)

Thus an artificial past was created for Tiger in Five Rivers. A Brighter Sun describes how painstakingly Tiger had acquired the ability to read and write by cajoling his neighbour Sookdeo with rum. He had learnt bit by bit and had augmented it by reading. The case of Tiger and Biswas's brothers point to the lack of educational facilities in the villages where the East Indian coolies lived. In Five Rivers too it was the same, but in Barataria there were schools and Joe's adopted son Henry could attend one, just as Biswas could after migrating to Pagotes. Though Tiger promised to teach the children in Five Rivers, the events that befell him did not allow him to keep his promise.

In Naipaul's novel A House for Mr Biswas the experiences of childhood are given a great deal of importance. After the first chapter, entitled 'Prologue,' which describes Mohun Biswas's death, the author goes on to narrate the entire life history of his protagonist. Part One is significantly named 'Pastoral' tracing as it does the origins of the protagonist in the cane community of indentured labourers. The term 'pastoral' has no romantic illusions about it, though

one tends to associate it with the image of a magical existence under the greenwood tree. The protagonist is doomed from the very beginning, having been born in the wrong way with six fingers. The midwife herself pronounced him unlucky and the pundit who was called by his maternal grandmother confirmed the opinion. He went on further to pronounce that the boy would grow up to be a spendthrift, a liar and a lecher with an unlucky sneeze. He was particularly advised not to go anywhere near ponds and rivers. The pundit also forbade his father from looking at him for twenty one days and then to see his reflection first in a brass plate filled with coconut oil collected and made by hand. It was easy to keep the father from seeing the boy because his mother Bipti had quarrelled with her husband Raghu and had left him to go to her parents' home only the previous day. The name chosen was Mohun and the pundit left the mud hut pleased with the florin the poor woman gave him. Needless to say, the superstitious folk attended to every word of the pundit and did likewise. Thus the atmosphere painted is one of superstition, ignorance, poverty, deprivation and greed.

In the days that followed, though the importance of Mohun diminished, he still carried weight as an unlucky child. Naipaul describes it with grim humour: "But he still carried weight. They never forgot that he was an unlucky child and that his sneeze was particularly unlucky. Mr Biswas caught cold easily and in the rainy season threatened his family with destitution. If before Raghu left for the sugar estate, Mr Biswas sneezed, Raghu remained at home, worked on his vegetable garden in the morning and spent the afternoon making walking-sticks and sabots or carving designs on the hafts of cutlasses and the heads of walking-sticks" (1969, 20). The only occasion on which Raghu did not pay any attention to his son's sneeze brought him misery in the form of an accident at his workplace!

Mohun grew up thin and unhealthy due to malnutrition. At home his brothers Prasad and Pratap were already working on the sugar estate. Soon it would be his turn; in the meanwhile he stayed at home playing with his sister Dehuti. However, unforeseen events happened which prevented his joining the labour force. Mohun was given the calf of one of the neighbours to

look after in return for a small wage. Wandering about with the calf he saw a stream. Because of the pundit's warning, Biswas had been forbidden to go anywhere near the water. So the stream held an unusual fascination for him and he started going there regularly. One day he lost the calf.

While he was watching the fish in the stream, the calf had wandered off. A diligent search was unfruitful and Mohun decided to hide being frightened to face the consequences. Soon the owner of the calf came looking for Mohun and when some of the neighbours remarked that they had seen the calf near a pond everyone was alarmed. Mohun's father decided to go and dive in the pond looking for his son and the calf. The first time Raghu dived, he came up with the dead body of the calf. He dived a second time looking for Mohun. He didn't come up for a long time. So one of the neighbours dived in and brought him up unconscious. Raghu died soon thereafter fulfilling the prophecy of the pundit.

After the funeral, attended by Bipti's wealthy sister Tara, they started looking for the money Raghu had hoarded through his miserliness. They couldn't get

it. Dehuti was taken away by the childless Tara to her house in Pagotes. The rest of the family had a hard time with the neighbours becoming treasure hunters overnight. Searching for Raghu's money they dug up the vegetable patches. In the end Bipti sold off her land and migrated to Pagotes to live in a hut on the back trace with some of Tara's husband's dependent relatives. The sons Prasad and Pratap were sent with a relative to work on an estate far away. Mohun however, stayed with his mother. Thus Mohun's ill-luck led to his family unit being broken up and scattered. The sense of loneliness and rootlessness which thus began is depicted in vivid detail: "And so Mr Biswas came to leave the only house to which he had some right. For the next thirty five years he was to be a wanderer with no place he could call his own, with no family except that which he was to attempt to create out of the engulfing world of the Tulsis. For, with his mother's parents dead, his father dead, his brothers on the estate at Felicity, Dehuti as a servant in Tara's house, and himself rapidly growing away from Bipti, who broken, became increasingly useless and impenetrable, it seemed to him that he was really quite alone" (40).

The shifting to Pagotes had one advantage. Mohun Biswas was admitted at the Canadian Mission High School. But before that could be done, a birth certificate had to be procured. Bipti had no record of Mohun's birth. Tara helped her to procure one from a solicitor, a Muslim East Indian F.T.Ghany, for the sum of ten dollars. The education he received is also described with ironic humour. "Mr Biswas was taught other things. He learned to say the lord's prayer in Hindi from the King George V.Hindi Reader and he learned many English poems by heart from the Royal Reader. At Lal's dictation he made copious notes, which he never seriously believed about geysers, rift valleys, watersheds, currents, the gulf stream and a number of deserts. He learned about oases, which Lal taught him to pronounce 'osis' and ever afterwards an oasis meant for him nothing more than four or five date trees around a narrow pool of fresh water, surrounded for unending miles by white sand and hot sun. He learned about igloos. In arithmetic he got as far as simple interest and learned to turn dollars and cents into pounds, shillings and pence. The history Lal taught he regarded as simply a school subject, a discipline, as unreal as

the geography, and it was from the boy in the red bodice that he first heard with disbelief about the great war" (46). The unreal nature of education under colonialism is outlined here. Children were being taught things that had little relevance to themselves. But unlike his father and his brothers he learnt to read and write and to do sums. He also discovered his talent for lettering which helped him later on in his job as a sign painter. He made friends with a Negro boy called Alec who used to wear multicoloured dresses belonging to his sister-in-law with whom he stayed. After six years at Lal's school, Tara decided to make him a pundit and made him the apprentice of Pundit Jairam.

Biswas's brahmin caste did not alleviate his homelessness or his poverty. But it gave him a curious status during religious ceremonies. The eight months spent by him at Pundit Jairam's made him acquainted with the more important of the Hindu scriptures. Pundit Jairam himself is satirized by Naipaul as a bundle of contradictions. The mechanical side of the puja was delegated to Biswas on Jairam's visits to people's houses. He was supposed to take round the brass plate

with the lighted camphor and collect the coins offered by devotees. Though Jairam would appear unconcerned, he would feel the boy all over to make sure he hadn't kept anything back after they returned home. Biswas was also supposed to carry the fruits and vegetables that people gave Jairam. On one occasion someone offered Jairam a bunch of unripe bananas. These were hung in the kitchen to ripen. Thinking that one or two bananas would not be missed Biswas took two of the ripe ones and ate them. Jairam however did not take it lightly. Instead of flogging his apprentice he forced Biswas to eat the whole bunch of unripe bananas saying that no one would touch them since Biswas had begun on them. With sadistic zeal, he forced banana upon banana on the poor boy making him sick. The incident is used by Naipaul to satirize the element of cruelty in a man of God who is supposed to be holy and altruistic. By making him incapable of pardoning the theft of a couple of bananas, Naipaul questions the validity of the attitudes of holiness that such people project. The Hindu religion as practised by such people in the West Indies had lost its core and survived only in the form of rites and rituals. The feeling of identifying God in every human

being had vanished to be replaced by a wholly materialistic philosophy. To Pundit Jairam, his job was like that of any other professional and as such the bananas that he received as wages belonged to him alone.

Thanks to Pundit Jairam's method of punishment, Biswas developed stomach trouble. It followed him throughout his existence. Because of his bad stomach, the call of nature started coming to him at awkward moments. Once in the middle of the night, he got the call. The latrine was far from the house and the boy was afraid to disturb the sleep of Pundit Jairam by opening doors and locks. So he relieved himself on a handkerchief and threw it out of the window. It fell on the cherished oleander tree in the garden. The next morning Jairam who was extremely angry with Biswas dismissed him saying that he would never make a pundit. The neighbours watched as Biswas left Jairam's house in disgrace. His childhood was over.

Childhood experiences are also used in a secondary fashion in the novel by describing Biswas's relationship with his children. Biswas's relationship with his mother is also portrayed on several occasions

but his relationship with his father is described only in the beginning. Selvon, in contrast does not provide much information about Tiger's mother who makes a brief appearance in A Brighter Sun. Babolal, his father, however plays an important role in the sequel, Turn Again Tiger. These relationships even when portrayed in adulthood echo the childhood experience.

After his marriage to Shama, Mr Biswas found it hard to claim his children for himself living as he did at Hanuman House, the family abode of the Tulsis. His children were named without consulting him. When his eldest girl Savi was born, Biswas tried to assert himself by calling her Lakshmi but she continued to be known as Savi. Thereafter he ceased to protest. When Anand was born, Biswas was running a shop in a village called The Chase. Savi used to stay for long spells at Hanuman House because it was full of children. One day she asked her mother if she couldn't exchange her for Aunt Chinta's son Vidiadhar. She preferred Chinta because it was this aunt who distributed all the delicacies in Hanuman House. Shama treated it all as a joke but Biswas got extremely annoyed on hearing this.

He wanted to claim his children for himself and therefore he used to visit Savi every week at Hanuman House to enquire after her well-being.

The atmosphere of the joint family had many disadvantages which Naipaul pinpoints piling satiric detail upon detail. The quarrels among the elders were reflected among the children. Insults were hurled at one another and often children were flogged for the sake of other people. On one occasion Biswas witnessed his five-year-old daughter Savi being beaten by her mother for not being able to tie her shoelaces. Biswas could only look on helplessly as the aunts and cousins watched the scene with enjoyment. Naipaul comments on the psychology of flogging: "At The Chase, Shama had seldom beat Savi and then it had been only a matter of a few slaps. But at Hanuman House the sisters still talked with pride of the floggings they had received from Mrs Tūlsi; certain memorable floggings were continuously recalled with commonplace detail made awful and legendary by its association with a stupendous event; like the detail in a murder case. And there was even some rivalry among the sisters as to who had been

flogged worst of all" (199). The meaning here is obvious: these floggings had little to do with the correction of the children, they were more for show.

Another incident is described by Naipaul to show the effect of the joint family on single individuals. One Christmas, Mr Biswas bought his daughter Savi a doll's house as a gift. It was extremely extravagant of him because he had spent one month's wages on it. But he had done it on impulse and it was a beautiful little house with all the amenities that Biswas had dreamt of as part of the house that he would own some day. The arrival of the doll's house created confusion in the Tulsi household. After the initial exclamation of the children over the beauty of the house, Mrs Tulsi came out with a scathing comment. Thinking it a personal affront, she asked Biswas cuttingly what he had bought for the other children of the house. Her own gifts were not spectacular but she had something to give every child in the house. Shama's sisters took their cue from her and started threatening their offspring with dire consequences if they touched Savi's doll's house. In the end, Shama whispered to

Savi to go and put it away. The other sisters banded together isolating Shama who in turn looked accusingly at Biswas. Biswas left the scene hurriedly promising to buy a car for Anand whom he had forgotten. Biswas returned again the next Saturday but was horrified to hear that Shama had smashed up the doll's house. It was lying in the yard shattered like his own dream to own a house. Shaking with rage he started shouting at Shama but his rage was ineffectual. Feeling angry with Shama for destroying something that he had bought with his hard earned money, he took Savi with him and left for Green Vale.

Father and daughter spent a subdued week at the barracks. Biswas had to leave her alone for most of the day but he tried to amuse her by telling her stories. On Saturday, Shama arrived with her uncle Seth who had come to pay the wages. Biswas was startled to see the excitement in Savi:

While he sat beside Seth, calling out tasks and wages and making entries in the ledger, he listened to Savi talking excitedly to Shama and Anand. He heard Shama's cooing replies. Soon she was so sure of the children's affection that she was even scolding them. What a

difference there was though in the voice she used now and the voice she used at Hanuman House!

And even while he noted Shama's duplicity, he felt that Savi had betrayed him. (223)

Later on Shama made up her quarrel with Biswas saying that she had to do it because of the pressure the family was putting on her.

On another occasion, on the brink of a nervous breakdown Biswas turned his ire on his wife kicking her viciously. She was pregnant at the time and her loud cries brought in the neighbours. They advised her to go home. She started packing but Biswas insisted that his son should be left behind. Though Shama asked Anand to come with her, he decided to stay behind. Later on when Biswas questioned Anand as to what had prompted him to stay behind, his answer was full of exasperation. He told his father that had done so because they were going to leave his father all alone. In the days that followed a rapport was established between father and son. He even told him that his father was God and not Mohun Biswas who was just a man he knew! With Anand he moved in to the finished room of his incomplete house.

They were not able to stay there for long however. A thunderstorm broke out destroying part of the house and Biswas suffered a total breakdown. In the end, some of the Tulsi kinsfolk had to come and rescue father and son.

Later on, while working as a journalist in Port of Spain, Biswas was able to supervise Anand's education. Finding that Anand was intelligent he started making arrangements for him to appear for the Exhibition Examination. These included not only coaching classes but also special diets of milk and prunes. Anand had to meet stiff competition both within and without the Tulsi family. His chief rival was his cousin Vidiadhar. The competition actually led to an intense antagonism between the two. Naipaul uses Anand's experience of writing the examination to portray the importance of the Exhibition Examination in the Caribbean. In fact winning an Exhibition was the only method whereby the lower middle class could see the portals of a college. As the day of the examination got closer the tension mounted. Shama and Biswas were afraid that Anand would get an asthmatic attack on the

day of the examination. Fortunately he was spared that. The experience is described piling detail upon ironic detail:

The exhibition candidates prepared for years for the sacrificial day had all come dressed for the sacrifice. They all wore serge shorts, white shirts and school ties, and Anand could only guess at what charms these clothes concealed. Their pockets were stuffed with pens and pencils. In their hands, they carried blotters, rulers erasers and new pots of ink; some carried complete cases of mathematical instruments; many wore wrist-watches. The schoolyard was full of Daddies, the heroes of so many English compositions; they seemed to have dressed with as much care as their sons. The boys looked at the Daddies; and the Daddies wrist-watchless eyed each other, breeders of rivals. There were few cars outside the school and Vidiadhar had achieved a temporary glory when he arrived in his father's car. But Govind hadn't left quickly enough and the boys skilled in noticing such things, saw the H on the number plate which indicated that the car was for hire. Altogether it was a dreadful day, a day of reckoning, with Daddies exposed to scrutiny on every side, and the examination to follow. (471 - 472)

After the examination Anand was gloomy and Vidiadhar jubilant but when the results came Anand had secured the third place in the entire island whereas Vidiadhar had failed. So Anand was congratulated and Vidiadhar was flogged by his mother!

The Tulsi household presents the Caribbean in miniature. Naipaul portrays the scramble for education by portraying "the learners and crammers" who flock to the Port of Spain house of Mrs Tulsi's to get a decent education. Biswas's illiterate sister Dehuti makes her son recite his lessons to his uncle when Biswas goes to stay with them. Mrs Tulsi is willing to go to any length to provide her sons Owad and Shekhar with the best of education. Owad is sent to England to study medicine. Whenever she helped Biswas, he was made to feel indebted to her and as a consequence he felt trapped. His circumstances made it difficult for him to refuse her help. Naipaul describes a situation where Biswas looks on the future of his children:

And now Mr Biswas began to make fresh calculations working out over and over the number of years that separated each of his children from adulthood. Savi was indeed a grown person. Concentrating on Ananad, he had not observed her with attention. And she herself had grown reserved and grave; she no longer quarrelled with her cousins, though she could still be sharp, and she never cried. Anand was more than half way though college. Soon, Mr Biswas thought, his responsibilities would be over. The older would look after the younger. Somehow as Mrs Tulsi had said in the hall of Hanuman House, when Savi was born, they would survive; they couldn't be killed. Then he thought: "I have missed their childhoods."
(533)

When one looks at Turn Again Tiger, one sees that the relationship between Tiger and his daughter is not explored in detail but the relationship between his father Babolal and himself is explored. Though Tiger returns to Five Rivers as a grown-up person, Babolal often treated him as if he were a child. On one occasion Babolal got angry with Tiger and fought with him because he thought that Tiger was not giving him due respect: "Tiger got up and fought. There was too much at stake. Babolal knew that he had to tame his son of superior airs or else suffer the indignity of being beholden to Tiger, who knew so much more about everything. The matter had to be settled once and for all if they were going to work together in Five Rivers" (36). Though they fought Tiger waved Urmilla away when she tried to join in by threatening Babolal with a mortar pestle. When the fight was over Tiger felt remorseful and apologized. But Babolal remained sullen. In the days that followed the busy schedule made them forget the fight.

In Five Rivers, Tiger made friends with Soylo who preferred to remain aloof from the villagers. Though Soylo was reluctant at first, he soon started

liking Tiger's company Soylo had an intense hatred for sugarcane. The reason was revealed to Tiger during the harvest season. The cane had grown to full size and it was time to cut it. Prior to cutting, the canefields had to be set ablaze. The day the fires were started Tiger found Soylo sitting hunched up and gloomy. When Tiger asked him the reason Soylo told him a sad story. Soylo had a son who had gone into the canefields to play, the day they were set ablaze. Soylo and his wife had not missed him but when they did, they started searching frantically. But they had to wait for the fires to die out. Without waiting for the fields to cool, Soylo went in, burning his feet. The search was in vain; the next day they discovered his bones. The shock killed his wife and left Soylo embittered. Tiger was shocked to hear the story which affected him deeply. As he was going home Urmilla met him and asked him if he had seen Chandra anywhere for Chandra had gone to Manko's house to play. Panic seized Tiger and he rushed to Manko's house. Shocking Manko's wife, Tiger seized Chandra who was playing quietly with the children. Soylo's story was still fresh in his mind and all of a sudden he had realized how much Chandra meant to him.

Of the three novels, A House for Mr Biswas explores childhood experiences in greater detail when compared to the other two. A House for Mr Biswas is full of childhood experiences not only of Biswas and his children but the other Tulsi children as well. A certain family member is called "the expert lace knotter" and so on. These experiences help to highlight Biswas's own dilemma in a world that is alien and incomprehensible. He continues to remain a little man in a big world, with a cap that comes right over his eyes.

Struggle for Existence: The struggle for existence starts for both protagonists, Tiger and Biswas, early in life. In Tiger's case, he is pushed into marriage at sixteen. Though he was working earlier, it was his marriage that made him realize the importance of the struggle. A Brighter Sun starts with Tiger's marriage. Immediately after marriage he moves into the hut his wife's people had provided in Barataria. Urmilla had also been given a cow and a hundred dollars as part of the dowry. This custom of providing a dowry was peculiar to the East Indian community in the Caribbean.

In A House for Mr Biswas we have a similar situation, when Biswas marries Shama. The question of dowry was not mentioned at all by the Tulsis. When Tara, Biswas's aunt, went there later on she was told that it was a love match and that a shop would be offered to Biswas in a village called The Chase if he did not want to carry on with the sign painting. Late in life Biswas regretted his impulsive action of passing a note to Shama that had led to his marriage being labelled a love match.

Immediately after marriage, Tiger started seeking ways and means of supporting a family. He leased out some land and started planting crops on it with the money he had in hand. When Urmilla became pregnant, Tiger counted the money he had in hand. They had only one hundred dollars and there was plenty of work still in the garden. So Tiger suggested that they should start selling milk:

Tiger knew that money was necessary, that life could be hard, rootless without it. He had seen his father and mother scrape together the remains of supper for breakfast in the morning, and how often had he gone out in the cane with nothing but a weak cup of tea in his belly? Hours and hours in the blazing sun. Out there

in the sun one forgot hunger in the swing of cutlass on fat, juicy stalks of cane. There was no time to think - it was work, work until the back ached and the days burned into weeks and months. (33-34)

Tiger even thinks in terms of a barter system to solve his problem. When Urmilla started selling milk, Tiger insisted that she should not mix any water with it because as they were new they should try to be on good terms with everybody. This actually proved beneficial for Urmilla was able to sell all the milk. Rita, also became one of her customers.

Urmilla became very friendly with Rita, her creole neighbour who offered to act as midwife for Urmilla. But when Rita went into the hut she was startled to see that they had no bed. Though she abused Tiger, she went into her own house and lent her bed to Urmilla. When Joe came home that evening he was irritated to hear what Rita had done, for, he did not like her interfering too much with the "coolie" people next door. He was also afraid of something going wrong when Rita acted as midwife. Tiger likewise was irritated to hear that Urmilla had allowed Rita to bring her own bed into the hut. But he was afraid to return it. The very next night, Urmilla's pains started. Rita

helped her with the delivery while Tiger talked to Joe. Contrary to his expectations Urmilla gave birth to a girl. The same situation is projected in A House for Mr Biswas. Biswas had looked up only boys' names for his first born but Shama gave birth to a girl who was named Savi. The East Indian community gave importance to male children, a fact that perplexed the Negroes who did not give undue importance to the sex of their children.

Tiger worked hard on his land. But though he weeded and manured and watered his plots, Sookdeo his neighbour had a better crop than he. Sookdeo was addicted to drink and worked very little. Oneday he asked Sookdeo about it. Sookdeo told him to love the things he planted. Tiger found it difficult to understand why Sookdeo's plants were doing better than his and wondered if he knew more about agriculture than Tiger or if it was because he was following the advice of the man from the agriculture department. Sookdeo, however felt that the men from the agriculture department knew nothing. As time passed, Tiger too learnt from experience and things began improving on his plots.

Another of Tiger's struggles was to educate himself. Being illiterate he was always at a loss to answer the many questions that were forming in his mind. He wanted to learn to read and write in order to read the books that would tell him everything. Sookdeo was cajoled with rum and treated with great respect by Tiger because he knew how to read and write. Slowly, painstakingly Tiger learnt from him and augmented it with the school books that Henry used. Soon his learning was put to the test when the Americans posted a notice on the door of Tall Boy's shop. None of the other Indians could read, so Sookdeo was asked to. He told them that they were going to lose their land. The Indians did not believe him. So they asked Tiger to read the notice. This was a big moment for him, like his wedding and his fatherhood, Selvon treats it with humour:

He cleared his throat. "Well, as you could see for yourself, the American and them going to build a road right by here. The notice from the estate people. It say that we will be compensated by the estate company. I don't know what the word mean, but the sense is that get money for whatever we lose. It say we have two weeks to clear out. It say a man will come from the estate-owner office, and assess the gardens and them. That must be mean to see how

much crop we have plant. And we will get compensation to match. It say that we could get all the information from the office in San Juan. Then below here like they add something, let me see good. Oh yes, they say that the road will not take up all the room, and may be some people will have to move and others could stay. And it say that whoever still want to keep garden could get other land to rent, just as soon as the American finishing surveying the land to see how much they will want. But it say again that the best thing to do is to see the man in the San Juan office, who will explain properly." (106)

So Tiger had to give up his land. He did not mind this as he was happy for a change. After the assessment, Tiger did not lease out more land. Instead, he began to slowly and painfully write down the entire story of his garden. He also read several books on roads. When the Americans started building the road, he got a job with them at twenty dollars a week. In the meanwhile Urmilla became pregnant again. His responsibilities were increasing.

Tiger's experience with the Americans opened new avenues of speculation for him. He was given the exalted job of carrying the surveying instruments for the Americans and this made him feel like one of the surveyors. The Americans were very friendly with Tiger.

Realizing that his vocabulary was poor, he tried to improve it by using a dictionary. Tiger's conversation became a humorous mixture of dialect words and pompous sounding words that he lifted from the dictionary. He also startled Urmilla by describing cigarettes as "cylinders of narcotics rolled in paper."

Gradually Tiger's confidence grew and he invited his American bosses to his house. When Urmilla heard this, she was thunderstruck. Tiger gave her orders left and right as to what to cook and what to wear, but she only got more confused. In desperation she went to Rita for help. Rita and Joe, being creole, used forks and spoons while the East Indians had the habit of eating food with their hands. Rita lent all her cutlery and crockery. She also helped her with the arrangements. She even pulled a wire from her own house to provide electricity. She made Urmilla apply make-up on her face. Though the function went off well and the Americans enjoyed themselves, Urmilla got no words of praise from Tiger. He was angry because she borrowed things from the neighbours and because she had put on make-up. He kicked her viciously in the belly. Joe

Martin too was vexed with Rita for interfering with the neighbours. Urmilla fell sick and Joe and Rita stopped talking to Tiger. Haunted by guilt and loneliness Tiger started drinking. One day in the rainy season Urmilla fell seriously ill and Tiger had to rush out to get a doctor.

Tiger's experience with doctors is similar to Mohun Biswas's experience that is described in A House for Mr Biswas. In desperation Tiger went to an Indian doctor first who refused to come out in the night saying that he would come in the morning. He then went to a Negro doctor who treated him likewise. Finally he went to a doctor who had come to the Caribbean from England. This doctor took his own car to go to Tiger's house and see Urmilla. He gave her some medicine and told Tiger to allow her to rest. He also told Tiger that they should get a doctor's help at the time of her delivery. Tiger was extremely grateful to him and thanked him profusely. The next day Tiger went to see the East Indian doctor and the Negro doctor to give them a thorough scolding. His vehemence took them by surprise and they felt embarrassed. The people listening to him felt sympathetic and started passing comments on the

inhumanity of the doctors. In Biswas's case Naipaul describes how Biswas was upset because a doctor was very rude to his brothers when they requested him to sign his mother's death certificate: "They had been made to wait for very long in the doctor's verandah; they had complained and the doctor had damned them and damned their mother. His bad temper continued all the way to the house; with anger and disrespect he had examined Bipti's body, signed the certificate, demanded his fee and left. This had been told to Mr Biswas by his brothers, not in anger; they told it simply as part of the tribulations of the day: the death, the sending of messages, the arrangements" (482). Biswas, like Tiger, was badly affected by the inhumanity of the doctor who was an East Indian like himself, but who had converted to Christianity. He wanted to do something about it; after several abortive attempts Biswas, with Anand's help wrote a scathing letter to the doctor which ran to eight pages. It had some effect on the doctor who came in person to the Sentinel office to return the letter. Both the incidents show how the protagonists try to retain their self-respect by protesting against insult and indifference. Though they cannot make

anything happen, they can at least comfort themselves with the thought that they are doing something instead of taking every blow without protest.

After Urmilla lost her baby, Tiger sent her home to Chaguanas. The relationship with Joe and Rita had gone sour because Urmilla had insisted on Rita attending on her at the time of delivery against medical advice. Rita was Urmilla's closest friend and though Joe and Tiger had moved apart after the party given to the Americans, Urmilla wanted the friendship to continue. As Rita had attended on her the first time, Urmilla felt confident that Rita could handle the situation with competence. When the child was born dead Rita felt that they were blaming her. The road work was now over. So Tiger started building a house in the place of his hut. Brick by brick he worked on it. He was very much alone as the relationship with his neighbours had deteriorated. He didn't want to talk about his wife or his lost child, so he shunned the villagers. But after some time, he started doing odd jobs round the village and selling milk. He didn't know how to approach Rita about the milk. So he just left a bottle for her on the

back step. Rita accepted the milk and soon the coldness was forgotten. After a while, Tiger's friends started helping him with the house and soon it was completed. Urmilla returned from Chaguanas looking more healthy and they started living in the new house. The war was over and there was a big celebration. The end of the novel sees Tiger facing the future not having decided what to do.

The sequel to A Brighter Sun focusses on Tiger's return to the canefields in his struggle for existence. Creolization and the process of self education had put a distance between Tiger and his own roots in Chaguanas. According to Sandra Pouchet Paquet, Tiger's estrangement from the traditions of the East Indian peasant community had made him vulnerable to the lure of emigration and the prospect of further education. In her introduction to the 1979 edition of the novel she states that Turn Again Tiger makes it clear that Tiger's roots in the cane community are not easily laughed away. She also emphasizes Tiger's need to reconcile himself with his peasant roots in the cane community; and this is a vital and necessary

grounding if the process of creolization is not to lead to a crisis of disconnection and directionlessness (vii).

Selvon does not romanticize the peasant experience of Tiger in the novel. Though Tiger is a self conscious and sentimental character, the hard life and the stress and strain of the rural community, are portrayed with authenticity. The description is vivid with comic touches that help to relieve maudlin sentiment. The poverty and lack of opportunities of the labourers is contrasted with the amenities enjoyed by the white supervisor but Selvon does not portray the white man as unduly harsh or cruel. The white couple lived apart, in a good house complete with car, refrigerator and radio. They had a gardener and a maid to wait upon them. Robinson's style and appearance suggest the stereotype of the plantation owner; even the name is suggestive with its affinity to Robinson Crusoe, the archetype of the colonizer.

The first chapter of Turn Again Tiger focusses on Tiger and Urmilla leaving Barataria for Five Rivers. Arrangements had been made with Joe and Rita and Deen

for taking care of their house and garden. When they leave Barataria, they leave behind all the amenities that the suburban multi-racial society had to offer them. Babolal, Tiger's father had induced them to leave by asking for his son's help to supervise an experimental cane project. Tiger was reluctant to leave the house that he had made with his own hands; he was even more reluctant to leave his friends and the comforts of city life for a remote village but the decision was made and had to be effected.

On reaching Five Rivers, Tiger found that he had to adjust himself to his father's ways. His years in Barataria had changed him from the boy he was and his education had made him a better man. His father on the other hand had spent his entire life in the canefields. Babolal was not capable of profound thoughts or niceties of behaviour but he expected respect from his son. When he was denied the room he coveted, and spoken to disparagingly he picked a quarrel with Tiger. They fought, man to man, the ultimate victory coming to Tiger. Later on, Tiger felt remorseful. Looking at his father, Tiger pondered over the struggle for existence:

No one had ever asked to be born. A baby had soft hands and soft skin on its body, but it grew up and the sun and rain hardened that skin, and the struggle to live made the eyes sink in the head and the skin grew coarse and wrinkled. That was something, just being, and maintaining an equilibrium in a place where nothing seemed worth living for. Age was what he had to go by. Of all the other things he wasn't sure, but for a fact he knew he would grow old. What he saw around him was life, growing up, growing old, dying and rotting in six feet of earth. What had kept his father going all the long, lean years, never prospering, never ever wealthy enough to sit back for a minute of leisure, canefield after canefield, harvest after harvest. If even there was nothing in a man, still it was something that he had lived, that he had survived to reach an old age. (35)

Tiger's next hurdle was to be accepted by the villagers. When Babolal announced that he was the new foreman in charge of things, the people wanted to know who Tiger was; when Babolal announced that his son Tiger was going to help him, they felt resentful thinking that Tiger was too inexperienced. Their reaction changed to admiration when they heard that Tiger was educated. But Tiger's troubles were not over. He had thought that his duties would involve only book-keeping for his supervising father. The first seed of doubt was sown in his mind by Soylo. Soylo was an East Indian living a hermit's life in the the hills coming into the village

only to sell vegetables. Tiger tried to make friends with Soylo by offering him a drink. When Soylo heard that Tiger was helping his father supervise the cane, he laughed loudly; "Supervising! What estate going to leave white man and put Indian to supervise?" (25). He then mentioned a house two miles away built for a white man who had come all the way from England to be in charge of the cane in the valley. Soylo laughed at his story saying that it was a joke but when it was repeated a second time, Tiger felt the need to investigate; he was horrified to find that the white supervisor did exist.

In the days that followed Tiger was full of resentment. He wanted to go back to Barataria instead of working under a white man. He even felt that instead of moving ahead in his life, he had come back full circle to where he had started, a mere lackey to the white master. Yet the knowledge that he was free to leave any time made him wait. When Babolal was questioned, Tiger found that the words "supervisor" and "foreman" did not make much difference to him. Tiger was much upset:

"Why I bothering!" Tiger exclaimed, fighting hard to keep his voice low. "When you come to me in Barataria you tell me how you will be boss up here, and how I would just have to help you manage things. That was the onliest reason why I leave Barataria to come up here in the bush. And now I find out you was lying all the time. I have a feeling that you know all the time ~~that~~ it had a white overseer."

"No, Tiger, I didn't know," Babolal said. "Who tell you is true? You see the supervisor with your own eye?"

Tiger began to walk off and Babolal caught his arm.

"What you going to do, Tiger? You can't go back to Barataria now?"

"I mad to do just that", Tiger said, stopping and raising his voice now, not caring if others heard. "I mad to pack up and go back and leave you here and see what you will do."

"Don't do that, Tiger, don't leave me alone. You know I can't read or write, I can't make up the paysheets..."

He left Babolal in distress, angered at the turn of events, angered by the memory of his flight from the river, but angered most of all by the helpless feeling of being unable to cope. (53)

Soon it was payday. A transformation came over the village. Selvon describes it with characteristic vividness "as the sum total of their lives." When the news came that the white supervisor was coming to pay the men, Babolal acted as if he had been expecting this

to happen all the time and Tiger had another bitter quarrel with him. The coming of the supervisor worried Babolal. He thought that he would lose his job if he couldn't make a good impression on the white supervisor. It was a question of prestige for him. So he went on seeking Tiger's advice as to how he should receive the supervisor. This irritated Tiger who was busy with the books. According to Sandra Pouchet Paquet, "In Babolal, Selvon evokes the stereotype of the foreman, anxious to prove himself, nervous that his people will let him down, obsequious before the white man" (ix-x).

When the supervisor arrived, Tiger was amazed to see his wife accompanying him. Her presence upset his composure due to his earlier encounter with her near the pool where she was taking a bath. He had fled from the scene in panic. The payments were made, the labourers forming a line and Tiger calling out the days and hours of their work. In the end, only Babolal and Tiger remained, but the supervisor had something to say about Tiger: "I didn't think you'd need a time keeper, Babolal. You've only got a few labourers to look after until the crop season starts" (60). Babolal argued

putting on an expression of anguish and in the end, he had to promise not to employ any more men without consulting the supervisor. In the days that followed, Tiger kept his distance from the supervisor letting Babolal do all the bowing and scraping but the worst was yet to come. One day Babolal came and announced that Mr Robinson wanted somebody to help round the house. He then said that he couldn't send any of the villagers and Tiger understood the hint. He was extremely annoyed:

"You talking damn foolishness!" Tiger looked up at last. "This thing getting from bad to worse. You make me leave my own home and come up here under false pretences, and now you want me to go and shine down the boss car. Why it is you 'fraid to send somebody from the village, eh? You frighten he do something with Robinson wife?" (92)

In spite of these protests, it was Tiger who did go ultimately. Selvon thus manages to portray Tiger's journey backward into the servile cane community.

On his way to the white man's house, Tiger thought out a strategy of remaining aloof and dignified and not doing anything he didn't like to do. On reaching there however, he became nervous. It was the

supervisor's wife who gave him instructions about clearing the land and making a garden. She also told him, though gently, to address her as "madam."

In the days that followed Tiger found himself in a state of confusion, due to his extraordinary infatuation for Doreen, the supervisor's wife. One night he found himself unable to sleep. Selvon reveals the inner consciousness of his protagonist in his state of restlessness:

He went out on the verandah. The night was beautiful and still. He sat down on the steps, watching the mountains shape in front of him, thinking, this is a night in my life. A restlessness of mind had kept him awake, and he couldn't come to terms with his thoughts laying on the bed. Always with this assessing he would pile circle on circle and get nowhere, his life flashing in a series of pictures, and he would find himself bewildered and without direction. If there had been some progress he would not have minded. But it was as if there was nothing to hold on to, and it would amount, in the end, to contemplation of events of the day and flashbacks to the past, and when he thought of the future he could see nothing that urged him toward. There was one thing he must do soon: he must come to grips with his life, understand the possibilities and reconcile himself to the limit of opportunity. Unless he did that the restlessness would dog his life for ever. (110-111)

Tiger then did, a very uncharacteristic thing -- he burnt all his books. He felt that they could offer him no solace in his misery. This was the start of Tiger's deterioration. In the days that followed, he started drinking heavily. He surprised everyone by giving away his radio to Otto, the Chinese shopkeeper. He also started picking up fights with people, in a drunken state. On one occasion Urmilla had to come to fetch him home. Tiger was trying to find answers to his problem. He approached Soylo, a man older and more experienced than he. Soylo advised him to work hard for his family for misery was brought on by idleness. Drinking too much rum was no solution: it could only ruin his health.

Another person Tiger tried to talk to was More Lazy. More Lazy is cast by Selvon as a rootless drifter, a dreamer who survives by entertaining people. While the entire village was hard at work More Lazy preferred to lie around doing nothing. Soylo threatened him several times to make him move without success. His chief occupation was to recount dream fantasies to entertain the villagers. After their initial

irritation, the villagers came to humour and support him. He thus became an established presence in Five Rivers. On the night that he burnt his books, Tiger sought him out to talk to him. Though More tried to offer sympathetic responses, Tiger realized that it was no use. More Lazy told Tiger that he was a born scholar and should go to college. Tiger, however, insisted that he was going to turn over a new leaf with the burning of his books. He then went to sleep next to the vagabond. This incident is used by Selvon to focus on Tiger's deterioration. Though More Lazy is presented as an idler, the end of the novel shows him joining the harvesting of sugarcane. He escapes from total isolation by becoming part of the cane community.

The root cause of Tiger's frustration was the white supervisor's wife Doreen. Though he had sex with her in the end, he felt no pleasure, he only felt a sense of relief. Once it was over, he was able to go back to book-keeping. He stopped going to the white man's house and many of the villagers suspected that he had been fired. No one knew of Doreen, however. The villagers had been surprised to see Tiger doing menial

jobs for the white supervisor. Being educated, they thought that he would stand for his rights. Selvon pictures Tiger's mixed reactions through this conversation:

"You really surprise me, boy. You who could read and write who have more education than all of we, went and doing the worse jobs. Why?"

"Some times when you take one step back you could make two in front after." But I wonder if a man could really do that? I mean, it must be going forward all the time: at least you getting older. (150)

Tiger had done exactly that. Through going back to the canefields he had come to terms with his past, his country's past, his people's past. He had also reversed the colonial equation by having sex with the white master's wife and then discarding her. As the harvesting season came, Tiger counted the days left before his voluntary indentureship would be over. After the job in Five Rivers Tiger returned to Baratania with new hopes.

When Tiger is contrasted with Babolal, one finds that Babolal's struggles are different from Tiger's. From the very beginning, he does his best to make a good impression on the white supervisor. For

example, on payday, he instructed all the labourers to clean their courtyards and be neatly dressed. He even irritated his son by his eagerness to please the white bosses. As a foreman, he was proud of being in charge of the experimental cane. He was so careful of it that he allowed no one to touch it. A lifetime in the canefields had made him an expert in that. In fact, his very rhythms were attuned to the cane. His relationship with cane is portrayed thus:

It was the first time in his life that he had been given such authority and now that the cane was about to be reaped, he would have a chance to exercise it fully, It was as if in firing the cane, he fired his own ambition. The smell of the smoke, the crackling of the flames, the black wisps of straw rising rapidly into the air with the heat - these were the things he had lived with all his life. For Babolal there was no romance in the work, it was just that cane was all the he had ever known and out of a canefield he was helpless and lost. (165-166)

Babolal successfully completed his work and Tiger was surprised by his dignity. Earlier, he had looked upon his father with a mixture of sympathy and contempt, for he was illiterate and his scope of experience limited. But now he started looking up to him with admiration.

In contrast, A House for Mr Biswas marginalizes the peasant experience. Biswas, like Tiger was born of peasant parents working in the canefields but Naipaul prefers to gloss over it and moves on to the urban milieu. Fate takes Biswas away from the canefields to Pagotes to struggle through life working at different jobs as varied and fantastic as sign-painter, shopkeeper, conductor, overseer and ultimately, a journalist. According to F.G.Roehler, the central character, Mohun Biswas is frustrated and isolated in his lonely task of self discovery. In an article on the novel published in Caribbean Quarterly in March 1964, Roehler makes the following comments: "It depicts an individual carrying out a pathetic rebellion against a society, which he neither likes nor can discard which offers him both protection and imprisonment" (4). Biswas's struggles, like Tiger's start early in life. In his case, it starts before marriage. Biswas's childhood ends with the disgrace he suffers at Pundit Jairam's. Thereafter it becomes a continuing struggle where the ownership of a house becomes the symbol of fulfilment.

Reaching home after his experience at Pundit Jairam's Mohun Biswas was pained to see the reaction of his mother who did not seem to be in a welcoming mood. He himself was tired and hungry but he did not realize that her reaction owed a great deal to his sister Dehuti who had disgraced herself by running away with Tara's low caste yard boy. Bipti was worried about Tara's reaction to Biswas's return. But Biswas himself felt no shame or anger about Dehuti. He could only remember the little girl who had wept pressing his dirty clothes to her face when she thought that her brother was dead. Tara, however, was angry about Dehuti and vowed never to mention the name again. When Tara was informed about Mohun's return from the pundit's house, she did not get angry. She comforted the boy and provided a job for him in the rum shop managed by her husband Ajodha's brother Bhanadat. He was to be paid a salary of two dollars a month in addition to food, clothes and accommodation. Thus he started earning his keep.

From the very beginning, Bhanadat mistrusted Biswas looking on him as Tara's spy. He himself used to steal from the rum shop but even when Biswas realized

what was happening he kept his mouth shut. Bhanadat, however, irritated him by ridiculing him in front of the customers by calling him "smart man." One day he beat up Biswas accusing him of stealing a dollar. This event had occurred when the entire family of Bhanadat had left to attend a funeral. Biswas had a cut on his cheekbone and the blood started to flow. Though it was early in the morning, Biswas went back to his mother, startling her by his unkempt appearance. When she was told what happened, she blamed it all on fate recounting the prophecy of the pundit who had cast Mohun's horoscope. Biswas was very angry when he heard it and described Bhanadat as the liar, lecher and spendthrift. That evening Tara came trying to comfort Biswas but she was irritated when Biswas justified Dehuti's action of running away from Tara. She left the place in anger though Bipti tried to stop her. When Bipti blamed Biswas, he announced that he would get a job for himself and a house to live in.

The struggle to find a job is portrayed by Naipaul with sardonic humour:

On Monday morning, he set about looking for a job. How did one look for a job? He supposed that one looked. He walked up and down the Main Road, looking. He passed a tailor and tried to picture himself cutting Khaki cloth, tacking and operating a sewing machine. He passed a barber and tried to picture himself stropping a razor; his mind wandered off to devise elaborate protection for his left thumb. But he didn't like the tailor he saw, a fat man sulkily sewing in a dingy shop; and as for barbers, he had never liked those who cut his own hair, he thought too how it would disgust Pundit Jairam to learn that his former pupil had taken up barbering, a profession immemorially low. He walked on. (67)

In the end, tired and dejected he returned home. The next day he went out of Pagotes and met Dehuti's husband Ramchand casually. The latter tried to establish friendly relations with him by inviting him home. Biswas went but the visit made him realize that the tie with his sister was broken. Though Ramchand tried his very best to please Mohun, Dehuti remained sullen and remote. She was uneasy because she feared rebuff and she was afraid of the reports he would carry back. Soon the visit was over and Biswas left promising to come again.

The next day Biswas met his school friend Alec who had taken up sign-painting as his profession.

Biswas joined him because he had a natural gift for designing letters. Though the job was enjoyable, it was irregular. In the days that followed Biswas travelled from district to district, sometimes working, sometimes not, the partnership with Alec being spasmodic. He spent his spare time reading books and improving his skill in drawing. The Christmas season provided a great deal of work as did the elections. In between spells of work, he would work as conductor on one of Ajodha's buses. He also read a great deal especially about intoxicating and fantastic lands, far away from his own dull land scorched by the sun.

It was while working as a sign-painter that he met and married Shama. He had gone to the Tulsi store to paint Christmas signs and had met Shama, one of the daughters of Mrs Tulsi. She was working as a salesgirl in the store. Feeling attracted towards her, he passed her a note confessing that he loved her. Unfortunately for him, it landed in the hands of Mrs Tulsi. Mrs Tulsi did not create a hue and cry about it but called him and suggested a simple marriage. Before Biswas realized what was happening the marriage was over and no mention

at all was made about dowry. Biswas found himself in a strange situation. He had very little money in his possession and had no means of supporting himself or his family. He had no house of his own to take his bride to. These things did not matter to the Tulsis because in the community life of the Tulsi family, the sons-in-law worked for the Tulsis and stayed in Hanuman House. It was too late when Biswas realized that he was enmeshed in the thralls of Tulsidom. Naipaul describes the situation with dark humour:

The organization of the Tulsi house was simple. Mrs Tulsi had only one servant, a Negro woman who was called Blackie by Seth and Mrs Tulsi and Miss Blackie by everyone else. Miss Blackie's duties were vague. The daughters and their children swept and washed and cooked and served in the store. The husbands under Seth's supervision, worked in the Tulsi land, looked after the Tulsi animals, and served in the store. In return they were given food, shelter and a little money; their children were looked after; and they were treated with respect by people outside because they were connected with the Tulsi family. Their names were forgotten, they became Tulsis.
(97)

Biswas realized that they had shown him no special favour in marrying Shama to him. They had done so on account of his brahmin caste just as Shama's

sister Chinta had been married off to an illiterate coconut seller. Biswas had no money or position so they expected him to become a Tulsis. Biswas did not want that and he rebelled. Thereafter Biswas's sole ambition in life became the possession of his own house. The house symbolized independence from the Tulsis; it signified his ability to provide for his own family; it was synonymous with his identity. In the vast crowd at Hanuman House, Biswas felt lost. Unless they could move into his own house, he wouldn't be able to claim his family for his own. With Biswas's marriage the struggle for existence becomes synonymous with the struggle to get a house of his own.

The struggle for existence made Biswas take up one job after another. The Tulsis had told his aunt Tara that they would offer him a shop in a village called, The Chase. As the days passed by, no mention was made of the shop at all. Biswas continued with the sign-painting but it did not provide a regular income. Time hung heavily on his hands until he met Misir, an under-employed correspondent of the Trinidad Sentinel. Thereafter they spent their spare time discussing jobs, Hinduism, India and their respective families.

Living in the confusion of Hanuman House was an ordeal for Biswas. There were so many people that he had no privacy at all. He started observing their idiosyncrasies and giving them nicknames. In the beginning Shama was hostile but soon she too started enjoying the game. Biswas found that the two sons of Tulsi, Owad and Shekhar, enjoyed special privileges within tulsidom. So he nicknamed them 'gods.' Seth, Mrs Tulsi's brother-in-law managed the Tulsi lands and estates and he called Seth 'the big boss' Mrs Tulsi with her airs of philosophy, sentiment and piety, he called 'the old queen' and 'the old hen.' As long as only Shama heard these blasphemies there was no trouble. But one day, Biswas was foolish enough to voice his opinions to Govind, Chinta's husband. Govind reported everything to Seth and Mrs Tulsi and Biswas was summoned by them. He was accused of ingratitude and blamed for not taking up work on the Tulsi estate. Aspersions were cast upon Biswas's family and Owad declared that Biswas should apologize to his mother for his rudeness. This was too much for Mohun Biswas. He lost his temper and declared that he would not apologize. Then he started preparing to leave. In the end, the wives of the offenders, Chinta and Padma (Seth's wife) came to apologize and pacify him and he stayed on.

Incidents like this became common in the days that followed. On one occasion, Govind, Chinta's husband, beat him up for throwing food out of the window which landed on Owad who was standing below. After the beating even Shama seemed to be unsympathetic towards him. So he went out of the house to eat oysters from outside. Yet his disgrace turned out to be his triumph. Seth told him to move to the shop at The Chase, saying that he was a trouble maker. Thus Biswas became a shopkeeper.

The shop at The Chase, was hardly a big affair. The Chase itself was a long straggling settlement of mud huts in the heart of the sugarcane area. It was like the village where he had spent his early years. Shama was at that time pregnant. Most of his savings had been spent on buying pots and pans and other necessities for the house. Shama was not very happy about leaving Hanuman House but once the sobbing was over, she took charge of the shop and house which looked dirty and derelict. In the weeks that followed the house became cleaner and habitable but Biswas continued to feel that it was temporary and not quite real. Though Biswas

tried hard to be successful, he found that it was not easy. In the article mentioned earlier F.G. Roehler states that Biwsas is destined to fail:

He blames everyone and everything for his position -- fate, his parents, the Tulsis, life itself -- never his gullibility and lack of drive. To admit these is to admit defeat and in the storm he is nearly defeated by a recognition of his helplessness. Biswas accepts the idea that he is predestined to fail and as the prologue suggests, Naipaul is almost as fatalistic. The only thing man is left with in his struggle against nonentity, he seems to say, is a sense of his individual reality. To strip him of that (as does life in Hanuman House) is to leave nothing at all. Moreover a man must own something concrete and tangible to be convinced that his life is meaningful. (16)

Biswas spent six years at The Chase but he had to give it up in the end. When things began going downhill, a lawyer's tout approached him. He promised to issue notices to the debtors who owed Biswas money. Unused to the world of lawyers and lawsuits, Biswas fell an easy prey to his beguiling offers. Instead of regaining his money, he lost more when the lawyers of the debtors started issuing him counter - notices for denying their credit. It was too late when he realized that he had been caught in snare set by the two advocates Seebaran and Mahamoud. In the end he had to

borrow money from his friend Misir to settle the case. Much of what he earned had to be spent in repaying the debt. In the meanwhile he had fathered three children - two girls and a boy. Shama was getting tired of The Chase and wanted to move back to Hanuman House. Though Biswas resisted at first, he gave in at last and his days as a shopkeeper came to an end.

Biswas's next adventure was at Green Vale. He was given the job of driver-cum-overseer on the Tulsi estate at a salary of twenty five dollars per month. Accommodation was provided in the barracks with the labourers. His room was at the end of the row and was hardly comfortable. Biswas knew nothing about estate work and the labourers fooled him easily. But he was too ashamed to complain to Seth. Naipaul pictures him walking around the estate in a hat that is too big for his head. The absurdity of his protagonist assuming an authority he is incapable of exercising is focussed here.

Biswas had got seventy five dollars as insurance money on the shop. With it in hand, he started dreaming of a house again. He had a clear picture of the house he was going to build:

He wanted, in the first place, a real house made with real materials. He didn't want mud for walls, earth for floor, tree branches for rafters and grass for roof. He wanted wooden walls, all tongue and groove. He wanted a galvanized iron roof and a wooden ceiling. He would walk up concrete steps into a small verandah; through doors with coloured panes, into a small drawing room; from there into a small bedroom, then another small bedroom, then back into the small verandah. The house would stand on tall, concrete pillars so that he would get two floors instead of one, and the way would be left open for future development. The kitchen would be a shed in the yard; a neat shed, connected to the house by a covered way. And his house would be painted. The roof would be red, the outside walls ochre with chocolate facings and the windows white. (210-211)

The importance given to solidity and beauty symbolizes Biswas's desire to claim a portion of the earth as his own. It is a rootless drifter's craving to grow roots, to belong somewhere but the house when it does materialize, is full of drawbacks. Seth had told him that he could build on Tulsi land. So he had started, with one hundred dollars in hand.

As the work on the house progressed, Biswas had to make several compromises. The earlier emphasis on beauty and solidity was forgotten. Now what was important was to make do with what was available, what his depleted purse could buy. The roof was made up of

the rusty iron sheets rotting in the Tulsi backyard, the floor was made up of rough hewn cedar planks instead of pitchpine. The holes in the rusty roof had to be closed with melted tar. With the house still half-way through, Biswas was overcome with despair. He had no money and a hostile situation had developed between the labourers on the estate and himself thanks to Seth's announcement that the land leased out to the labourers was going to be taken back.

Shama made frequent excursions to Hanuman House leaving Biswas alone at the barracks. Many of these visits were occasioned by quarrels between husband and wife. On one occasion, Biswas brought Savi to stay with him for a week because he was angry with Shama for destroying a doll's house he had bought her. On another occasion, he kicked Shama viciously in the belly. She was at that time carrying his fourth child. So she left with all her children except Anand. Most of these quarrels were occasioned by his feeling of defeat. The sight of his unfinished house filled him with helplessness and despair. He felt that he was about to die. He was physically and mentally on the verge of a

nervous breakdown. Yet he tried to make an effort with Anand. It was with Anand that he moved into the finished room of his unfinished house. He thought of it as a positive action: "... There was his hope that living in a new house in the new year might bring about a new state of mind. He would not have moved if he had been alone, for he feared solitude more than people. But with Anand, he had enough company" (281-282).

These hopes were unrealized. His fear intensified when somebody killed his pet dog Tarzan and put the body on the steps of the house. The sight sickened Anand, who started screaming saying that he wanted to go back to Hanuman House. That night a terrible storm broke out blowing away part of the roof. The storm was the last straw and Biswas gave in to a nervous breakdown. In the end, Ramkhilwan, one of the labourers, rescued Anand and Biswas from the half wrecked house and sent word to the Tulsis.

Biswas returned to Hanuman House on the shoulders of Govind, the man who had beaten him up in the past. He was in a state of bewilderment. Naipaul portrays it vividly: "Lying in the room next to Shama's,

perpetually dark, Biswas slept and woke and slept again. The darkness, the silence, the absence of the world enveloped and comforted him. At some far off time he had suffered great anguish. He had fought against it. Now he had surrendered and this surrender had brought peace" (299). In the days that followed Biswas took complete rest but a sense of apathy had overcome him. His wife had given birth to his fourth child, a girl, but he did not feel inclined to see her. He survived on the medicines and tonics given him by the doctors but this state of affairs could not go on. His money had dwindled and when Seth announced that Mrs Tulsi and Owad were returning from Port of Spain, Biswas decided to move. He packed up his few clothes and paint brushes and left the house telling his daughter Savi. He had not gone to see Shama or the baby.

Biswas had no clear idea as to where to go or what to do but he ended up going to Port of Spain. He went to see Ramchand, Dehuti's husband who was staying there. Ramchand was working in a lunatic asylum and was happy to see Biswas. Biswas stayed there for some time. Ramchand took him round the city and showed him all the

sights. The job-hunting started and the apprehensions began to reappear. This time it was not fear that caused it but regret, envy and despair.

It was by accident that he got a job on the Trinidad Sentinel. When he met the editor and demanded a job, the latter was embarrassed. This changed into surprise when Biswas told him that he had no previous experience as a reporter. On hearing that he was a sign-painter, the editor gave him some work, painting signs. The signs were good and the editor decided to put him on trial for a month as a reporter. The incident is described with humour: "A chance encounter had led him to sign-writing. Sign-writing had taken him to Hanuman House and the Tulsis. Sign-writing found him a place on the Sentinel. And neither for the Tulsi store signs nor those at The Sentinel was he paid" (323).

This was a job that Biswas enjoyed. Even after a dozen years he never lost the thrill which he had felt the first time, at seeing what he had written appear in print. His natural facetiousness helped him in his work. In his fourth week, he was made shipping reporter

in place of a man who had died and his salary was fixed at fifteen dollars a fortnight. Recognition in his work made the reconciliation with Shama easy. When he went to Hanuman House, he was welcomed with cheer by the Tulsis and he was happy to see his youngest girl Kamala whom he had not seen at all. When Mrs Tulsi offered to accommodate Biswas and his family at their Port of Spain house, Biswas was very happy. Though this involved Shama doing all the housework, the offer was a good one. The next four years were spent there in comparative comfort. Mrs Tulsi was not as tyrannical and distant as she used to be in Hanuman House. Owad too made friends with Biswas and enjoyed talking to him. Biswas was able to supervise his children's education for the first time in his life. He also tried to improve himself by learning shorthand and doing a correspondence course in journalism.

This happy state of affairs did not last long. Owad went abroad to study medicine and Mrs Tulsi returned to Hanuman House. At the newspaper office too, there were changes. The editor who had employed Biswas, Mr Burnett was sacked and a new person appointed. The

new regime went by decorum and dignity rather than humour and interest. Biswas was forced to write features he was not particularly interested in. This was extremely difficult, and he felt cramped in style as he laboriously wrote and rewrote the sentences. He also had to face financial difficulties on account of the rising prices.

In the meanwhile, things at Hanuman House were also changing. Seth had quarrelled with Mrs Tulsi and had threatened her with lawsuits. The Tulsis decided to shift to their estate house in Shorthills after leasing out the house and shop to others. Mrs Tulsi also proposed an increase in the rent paid by Biswas on the house in Port of Spain. So Biswas was forced to move to the house in Shorthills along with the others. Though the shift entailed difficulties of transport Biswas considered it as an interlude, an adventure:

For him Shorthills was an adventure, an interlude. His job made him independent of the Tulsis, and Shorthills was an insurance against the sack. It also provided an opportunity to save, an opportunity to plunder. And secretly he was plundering; half a dozen oranges at a time, half a dozen avocado pears or grapefruit or lemons, sold to a cafe keeper in St.Vincent Street with some story about the variety of

fruit trees he had in his backyard. The money was little but regular, the thrill of plundering delicious. (402)

But there were other members of the Tulsi clan who were smarter than him. They plundered whole truckloads of fruit and even trees. As there was no one to supervise things, it was each one for himself. The cleverest managed to acquire lorries and taxies while people like Biswas remained detached, being unable to prevent the dereliction.

It was difficult to maintain domestic harmony amongst the multitude of Tulsis. Biswas's children wanted to move especially after Shama's sister Chinta accused Anand unjustly of theft. So Biswas selected a site and started building a house for the second time. This time, however, the house was completed within a month though they had problems like transport and shopping. After moving in, Biswas sent for his mother who came and stayed with them for a fortnight. He thus fulfilled his childhood promise to his mother. Unfortunately for Biswas, his house did not last. It was destroyed by fire. Though the family escaped, the house was gutted and they had to move back to the family house in Shorthills.

After a while, Biswas moved back into the Port of Spain house of Mrs Tulsi. This time he was given only two rooms and was cramped for space. The other rooms were let to the other members of the Tulsi clan, who had started flocking to Port of Spain to provide better educational facilities for their children. Very often Biswas found the house so claustrophobic that his office seemed a haven of refuge.

Biswas's financial difficulties continued to mount. As a journalist, he was used to travelling in the official car in the villages but he had less money than the illiterate Govind who had a taxi of his own. Another brother-in-law whom he had nicknamed "W.C.Tuttle" had a lorry. Biswas often felt frustrated and angry about his own fate. He used to talk to his children about his childhood:

He told them of the hut, the men digging in the garden at night; he told them of the oil that was later found on the land. What fortune might have been theirs, if only his father had not died, if only he had stuck to the land like his brothers, if he had not gone to Pagotes, not become a sign-writer, not gone to Hanuman House, not married! If only so many things had not happened! (438)

When the newspaper started a fund for deserving destitutes, Biswas was put in charge of it. This was a job that entailed immense responsibility and power but it had its hazards. There were fraudulent applications that had to be distinguished from just claims. He also became unpopular when some of the widows of the Tulsi clan wanted him to help them and he refused. Another applicant was Bhanadat, his one time employer who had suffered setbacks in fortune after their initial encounter. The job, however, helped to establish Biswas as an expert on social welfare. When the Government formed a Community Welfare Department, he was called for an interview by the head of the department. Miss Logie was impressed by Biswas and offered him a job as the community welfare officer at a salary fifty dollars higher than what he was getting from The Sentinel. Biswas accepted the job and sent in his resignation to the newspaper.

Biswas enjoyed this job because the head of the department was a lady, Miss Logie, who was very kind and gracious towards him. He had to tour the villages collecting information. So he was offered a car on a

painless government loan. The possession of a car created jealousy among the Tulsis. When Owad announced his return to the Island, Biswas was asked by Mrs Tulsi to move into a tenement till repairs were done. The years abroad had changed Owad into a windbag full of prejudiced opinions about religion, politics and art. Through Owad's bragging Naipaul satirizes the West Indian who shows off his culture and refinement acquired from abroad to his kinsfolk who have not had the same opportunity. In the beginning Biswas's son Anand was a great admirer of his uncle. But after a quarrel, a rift was created between the two and tension mounted within the family. Biswas and Mrs Tulsi competed with one another issuing notices to each other about vacating the house. Mr Biswas was forced to seek alternative accommodation.

Biswas had only eight hundred dollars in hand but a house was offered for sale at five thousand dollars. Though the house had its defects Biswas did not notice them at first. He was full of despair because he had very little money in hand. Then, out of the blue, an offer came from a Negro for the materials

left behind on the gutted house at Shorthills. Borrowing the rest of the money from Ajodha, the sale was effected. It was then that Biswas noticed the numerous defects of the house. It was too late then and Biswas's family moved into the house. They settled down so well that soon they had the feeling that they had never stayed anywhere else.

At the end of the year, the Government abolished the Community Welfare Department forcing Biswas to go back to The Sentinel. His salary was reduced and the debt on the house was still outstanding. He was unable to repay it in the five year period as promised. In the meanwhile both Savi and Anand won scholarships to study abroad. The prospect of repaying the debt became even more bleak but new hopes were born. It was then that Biswas suffered a heart attack and had to be hospitalized. During his recovery he was put on half-pay but after a month he had to go back, because of financial constraints. After his second attack, he was issued three month's notice by the newspaper office. Biswas was full of anger and helplessness as he wrote to his two children. Fortunately for him, Savi returned

immediately and got a job at a higher salary than her father. Biswas died with his house still mortgaged but he was happy to die in his own house rather than in one belonging to the Tulsis. His struggles at last were over.

When one compares the two protagonists, Tiger and Biswas, one is surprised by the variety of roles that Biswas has to enact in his struggle for survival. Tiger's jobs also vary from canefield worker, to gardener to labourer and back again to the canefields as a time-keeper. Biswas's roles are many and varied. Starting off by looking after a cow, he goes on to become the apprentice of a pundit and then a server in a liquor store. From there he goes on to become sign-painter, shopkeeper, driver, journalist and the community welfare officer. Biswas's natural facetiousness makes him see the comic side of every role but it is a dark comedy born out of despair and helplessness. Though Tiger too has a sense of humour, bitterness does not tinge it as it does Biswas's. Moreover, Tiger's peasant experience is authentic and deep-rooted whereas Naipaul fails to portray Biswas's

roots in the cane community with the same intensity. After reading the two Tiger novels by Selvon one gets the feeling that Tiger does have bright prospects for the future. At the end of A House for Mr Biswas, we find Shama returning to their mortgaged house after the cremation of the protagonist.

Search for Roots: Both Naipaul and Selvon emphasize this motif by presenting characters with questioning attitudes. In Tiger's case his growing consciousness accentuates his search for meaning in life. In A Brighter Sun the process of creolization is ac^eclerated by Tiger's newly acquired literacy and his growing social awareness that recognizes inter-relationships with different ethnic groups as important in a multiracial society. In this novel we see Tiger interacting with Negro, Chinese, American and East Indian people. In the sequel, Turn Again Tiger, a new dimension is added by the introduction of the white supervisor and his wife. In Naipaul's novel on the other hand, we see Biswas interacting with different people belonging to different ethnic groups. But they are treated as individuals, not as representative of the

ethnic groups that they belong to. Selvon's novels portray the protagonist searching for his roots both in terms of ethnicity and in terms of societal values. Naipaul's protagonist searches for the meaning of existence through the religion and culture of the East Indian in the Caribbean. But his dilemma is the dilemma of the modern man in the work-a-day world who is unable to find the answer to his problems in his tradition and heritage. Yet he cannot wholly give it up either for he has no alternative tradition or culture to belong to.

In the beginning of A Brighter Sun Selvon presents the atmosphere of Barataria, the place to which Tiger moves with his bride Urmilla;

The village was almost as cosmopolitan as the city, Indians and Negroes were in the majority. In the back streets, the Indians lived simply, observing their customs and tending their fields, bringing the produce to sell in Sixth Avenue or going to the market in San Juan, a town bordering the eastern side. The earth was black and rich; they grew vegetables in the yard, kept a few chickens and perhaps a few cattle or a donkey. The Negroes were never farmers, and most of them did odd jobs in the village or the city. But it didn't need any knowledge of farming to dig a hole and put in tomato seeds; the land was so rich that nearly every villager grew peppers or bananas or string beans. (9-10)

Tiger lived in a mudhut but his neighbours, the Joe Martins, lived in a yellow and brown brick house with glass windows. They were Negroes but from the very beginning Urmilla got along well with Joe's wife Rita. Soon a friendship developed between the neighbours. It was Rita who attended to Urmilla when she was in labour. But when Rita announced that the child was a girl, Tiger was disappointed. This made Rita angry and she commented about the Indian people who only wanted boy children. When Tiger's relatives came to see Urmilla and the child, they did not approve of the close friendship that had developed between Joe and Tiger. Joe and Rita had joined them in the celebration but when Joe was called to make a toast he felt embarrassed and mumbled something about long life and health. This induced Tiger to propose a toast. But even as he began he found it difficult to go on because of his lack of experience:

"Well" he began waveringly, "I-we-glad to have family and friends here today, especially as the baby born. Is true we not rich and we have only a small thing here, but still, is a good thing. So let we make a little merry for the baby. I should really begin different, I don't know what happen to me. I should say, 'Ladies and gentlemans', and then make speech. But I

cannot speechify very good I would learn though" - That was as far as he could go. He felt he would talk foolishness if he continued, and he gulped his drink. (47)

This speech by Tiger indicates his desire to better himself through learning and establishing relationships with other people in society. He wants to belong to the community, to carve out a niche for himself. Selvon presents Tiger as achieving this by the end of the novel. In sharp contrast, Biswas is portrayed as drifting from one thing to another, insecure and rootless in a world that is beyond his understanding. The dream of a house, signifies his desire to grow roots and belong but the numerous houses that he inhabits give him no such sense of belonging. The house he dies in, is heavily mortgaged and the burden of redeeming it is passed on to the next generation.

The clash between races forms a major theme in Selvon. At one point Selvon portrays Tiger as pondering the problem of ethnicity:

"Why I should only look for Indian friend? What wrong with Joe and Rita? Is true I used to play with Indian friend in the estate, but

that ain't no reason why I must shut my heart
to other people. Ain't a man is a man, don't
mind if he skin not white, or if he hair curl?"
(48)

A Brighter Sun portrays the interaction with the Chinese through the character of Tall Boy and the Chinese connection is carried on through Otto in Turn Again Tiger. Through a telling incident that describes the arrival of Tall Boy's children in school for the first time, Selvon portrays the prejudice that each race has about the other. At recess the newly arrived Chinese were surrounded by all the children who started singing a song about flat noses and chinky eyes. But Ling (Tall Boy's son) was no coward. In retaliation Ling sang a song about the Negroes stinking with perspiration. Then noticing the Indians, he mocked them for using a bottle of water in the W.C. Soon it became a shouting match with each child mocking the other's race. A white skinned girl with a blue ribbon in her hair was called a "whitey cockroach" to which she retorted by calling the offender "a black tar baby." In the end the teacher had to interfere with a stick cut from the hibiscus fence to make the children stop. Among Tiger's Indian friends were Boysie and Sookdeo. Boysie

preferred to forget his East Indian identity by going around with a creole girl. In Turn Again Tiger we are told about his marrying a white girl while abroad leading to unforeseen difficulties. Tiger too had difficulties in digesting white supremacy. In A Brighter Sun, Selvon describes how Tiger feels offended when a salesgirl in a shop passes him by to attend to a white woman. When Tiger told Boysie about it, he told him that white people "were god" in this country. Tiger's antipathy for the white race assumes a new dimension in Turn Again Tiger. Tiger's return to the cane community had not been deliberate. In the beginning he had delusions of just helping his father by keeping the books but when he found out that there was a white supervisor above them, he felt cheated. His immediate thought was to go back to Barataria. He decided to stay on in the end, thinking that his education would help him to hold his own with the white man. His composure was shattered when he suddenly confronted the white supervisor's wife, bathing naked in a pool. His reaction reveals how he was still tied to the fears and inhibitions surrounding the white race which formed his inheritance as a worker in the

canefields: "There was danger here, his thoughts were jumbled as he tried to reason it out, flashing across the years to his childhood, keep off the white man's land, don't go near white man's wife. Such were the warnings of old men who in their youth had laboured in the fields and passed their experiences to their own sons" (49). Despite his best efforts, he succumbed to his fears and ran away, even as the woman hailed him with a friendly hello. Later on he felt foolish though he tried to rationalize his action by telling himself that he had run away because she was a woman, and naked at that.

The preoccupation with the image of a white woman as a goddess to be respected and feared was a colonial heritage deeply ingrained in Tiger's make up. Tiger's fascination for Doreen threatened to destroy Tiger emotionally as he took to drinking and behaving in an uncharacteristic way. Working as a gardener in the white supervisor's house, Tiger's self-esteem was lost. When he had sex with her, it was more like an exorcism than an extra-marital affair. Afterwards, he felt a sense of release, as if he had been freed from the

dominance of the white woman over his emotions. A similar feeling is to be detected in More Lazy's fantasies also. In his dream, the black man becomes the rescuer of a white damsel in distress, who is held captive by a huge American giant. The psychological and sociological trauma of colonization had infected the Caribbean psyche to the extent of making them look upon the white race as untouchable in a superior sort of way.

Strangely enough, Tiger's encounter with the Americans in A Brighter Sun projects no such feeling of alienation. The Americans were Tiger's bosses but they were happy to accept Tiger's invitation to dinner. They enjoyed the Indian food and the company of Urmilla and Tiger, and the dinner was a success. Afterwards however, Tiger quarrelled with Urmilla about the arrangements she had made with Rita's help and kicked her viciously in the belly. Later on Urmilla gave birth to a still-born son.

Selvon makes use of cane as a symbol in Turn Again Tiger, using it to delve into the economic and political history of the Caribbean. Tiger had left Baratania to go to Five Rivers to help his father with

an experimental cane project. His forefathers, significantly had come to the West Indies, as indentured labourers to work in the canefields. Soon after his arrival in Five Rivers, we see him confronting his past while looking at the cane: "Standing on the hill, gave him a feeling of power. He hated the cane. Cane had been the destiny of his father, and his father's father. Cane had brought them all from the banks of the Ganges as indentured labourers to toil in the burning sun. And even when those days were over, most of them stayed shackled to the estates" (1). Here Tiger's elevated position on the hill signifies the distance he has achieved from his peasant roots. But his descent into the valley symbolizes his psychic journey into unexplored areas of self-identity and national history. His stay in Five Rivers is a sort of voluntary indentureship to cane. The backwardness of the village, its limited scope of educational development, the presence of the white master and his wife and the menial jobs Tiger finds himself doing all indicate a journey backward. He resents it and is happy when he is released after the harvest. The experiences help him understand the privations and humiliations suffered by

his race and set him free to go back to Barataria like a man "who has walked through fire and come out, burnt a little, but still very much alive" (81).

Naipaul plays down the interaction between races in A House for Mr Biswas. Alec, Biswas's school friend, who later becomes his partner in the sign-painting venture, is a Negro. But the intricacies of interaction on an ethnic level are not portrayed. Other characters like Mr Maclean, (the contractor who undertakes to build Biswas's house), Miss Blackie (the Negro servant of the Tulsi's) and Mr Burnett (the editor who employed Biswas) make their appearance as individuals. Biswas's interactions with them are portrayed with intuition as man-to-man relationships. The elements of racial prejudice is hinted at, as for example, Biswas's experience in the house belonging to his brother-in-law Ramchand in Part of Spain, but these elements are not probed in depth. Most of the characters in the novel belong to the East Indian community and Biswas's dilemma is portrayed specifically from an East Indian stand point.

Biswas's marriage to Shama gives Naipaul the opportunity to portray the Hindu joint family in the Caribbean, a system that was slowly dying down. The world of Hanuman House was strange and weird even to an East Indian like Biswas; so one can only imagine its strangeness to the other ethnic groups of the Caribbean. Regarding the Tulsis, Naipaul gives the following description:

The Tulsis had some reputation among Hindus as a pious, conservative, landowning family. Other communities, who knew nothing of the Tulsis, had heard about Pundit Tulsi, the founder of the family. He had been one of the first to be killed in a motorcar accident and was the subject of an irreverent and extremely popular song. To many outsiders he was therefore only a creature of fiction. Among the Hindus there were other rumours about Pundit Tulsi, some romantic, some scurrilous. The fortune he had made in Trinidad had not come from labouring, and it remained a mystery why he had emigrated as a labourer. One or two emigrants, from criminal clans, had come to escape the law. One or two had come to escape the consequences of their families' participation in the mutiny. Pundit Tulsi belonged to neither class. His family still flourished in India -- letters arrived regularly -- and it was known that he had been of a higher standing than most of the Indians who had come to Trinidad, nearly all of whom, like Raghu, like Ajodha, had lost touch with their families and wouldn't have known in what province to find them. The deference paid to Pundit Tulsi in his native district had followed him to Trinidad and now that he was

dead attached to his family. Little was really known about this family, outsiders were admitted to Hanuman House only for certain religious celebrations. (81)

As a member of the family Biswas found himself caught in the Tulsi whirlpool. He had no money or position of his own, so all his efforts to call his family unit his own were thwarted. He was ridiculed for wanting "to paddle his own canoe." When his daughter Savi was born, they made fun of her calling her "the little paddler."

Struggling to survive, Biswas tried to find solace from books. He read many books including philosophers both oriental and occidental but it often left him with the feeling that their sayings had no relevance to his particular situation. An experience he had while serving as a conductor on one of Ajodha's buses made a profound impression on him. One day at dusk, while speeding along a country road, he saw a boy leaning against a hut, staring at the road, not seeming to know where the road or the bus went. This image he carried with him throughout his life because it seemed to be a reflection of his own predicament on the road of life.

Being naturally facetious, Biswas was detested at first by the Tulsis because of his habit of giving nicknames. But after some time his pungent witticisms gained acceptance. Whenever there was an important religious ceremony in the household, Biswas was invited to have disputations with the visiting pundits. Most of his pronouncements were dismissed as waggishness, all they wanted from him was the likeness of a clown. But throughout the clowning Biswas feared about the future: "The future he feared could not be thought of in terms of time. It was a blankness, a void like those in dreams, into which past tomorrow and next week and next year, he was falling" (90).

While staying at Green Vale, Biswas was overcome with nervous fatigue. The hostility of the labourers made him feel insecure and unable to sleep. He started biting his nails, tormented by the intense questioning that went on in his head. It was in such a mood that he kicked Shama and sent her packing to Hanuman House. Ultimately he collapsed because of nervous strain after the night of the storm.

Though Biswas survived the breakdown and recovered, he carried the burden of doubt and insecurity throughout his life. This made him look back into the past and wish that things were different. He preferred to lay the blame on other people, on fate, rather than on his own inadequacy. On one occasion visiting the deserted Hanuman House after the Tulsis had moved out, he felt a change of attitude to the house he had detested:

Here, claimed by no one, he had reflected on the unreality of his life and had wished to make a mark on the wall as proof of his existence. Now he needed no such proof. Relationships had been created where none existed; he stood at their centre. In that very unreality had lain freedom. Now he was encumbered, and it was at Hanuman House that he tried to forget the encumbrance: the children, the scattered furniture, the dark tenement room, and Shama, as helpless as he was, and now, what he had longed for, dependent on him.
(531)

The passage indicates Biswas's ambivalent attitude. When one looks at Selvon's protagonist Tiger, one finds that Tiger too is tormented with questions within the mind. He thought that education would help him find answers to those questions, like "What I doing here now? Why I living" etc., but like

Biswas he found himself unable to find all the answers he sought in books. In Turn Again Tiger, we see him burning all the books he had bought with his hard earned money. He then sought out Soylo to ask him, as an older and wiser person. He wanted to know how Soylo confronted the big disappointments of life. Soylo had no readymade answers for Tiger. He told Tiger that it was useless to seek another's advice about life; one had to live it on one's own. Selvon portrays Tiger seeking even the vagabond More Lazy in the hope of finding answers.

Man-Woman Relationships: Man-woman relationships are given prime importance by both the novelists. In Selvon's case the Urmilla-Tiger relationship that begins in A Brighter Sun takes a different turn in Turn Again Tiger with Tiger's fascination for Doreen brought in. Mohun Biswas on the other hand has no time to indulge in extra-marital affairs, pre-occupied as he is with the problem of survival. Being romantic, he does fantasize about delicate, barren, heroines but they remain dreams, Shama being his only reality. In addition to the protagonists' relationship with their wives, other couples are also portrayed for comparison and contrast.

In A Brighter Sun along with Tiger's relationship with Urmilla his friend Joe's relationship with Rita is given equal importance. Along with Tiger's growing consciousness, Urmilla's growing awareness is also probed. When Tiger married Urmilla, he didn't even know her name. Immediately after marriage, he felt that he had to prove his manhood to her. Selvon describes how Tiger attempts to demonstrate his manhood by smoking, something he had never done before. However, he made a mess of it and Urmilla laughed. Though irritated for a moment, Tiger realized the humour in the situation and started laughing too. This made them less nervous. When they came together, instinct took over and Tiger realized that all his apprehensions were baseless.

In A House for Mr Biswas, Naipaul elucidates with ironic humour, Biswas's entry into the holy state of matrimony. He had gone to the Tulsi store on a sign-painting assignment. Watching the Tulsi girls who served in the store, he felt attracted towards one of them. One day, he passed her a love note which landed in the wrong hands. Thereafter things were taken

completely out of his hands. The marriage itself seemed unreal to him:

After a brief ceremony at the registrar's as make-believe as a child's game, with paper flowers in dissimilar vases on a straw coloured, official looking desk, Mr Biswas and Shama were given a part of a long room on the top floor of the wooden house.

And now he became cautious. Now he thought of escape. To leave the way clear for that he thought it important to avoid the final commitment. He didn't embrace or touch her. He wouldn't have known, besides, how to begin, with someone who had not spoken a word to him, and whom he still saw with the mocking smile she had given that morning in the store. Not wishing to be tempted, he didn't look at her, and was relieved when she left the room. He spent the rest of that day imprisoned where he was, listening to the noises of the house. (96-97)

Here the tone is one of denial and escape. In Tiger's case, he does not want to escape, at least not in the beginning. Later on, when he compares himself to his friend Boysie, he wishes to escape, living a life without cares and worries and getting an education for himself. Even as Tiger was growing up, Urmilla too was attaining maturity. But Urmilla was too shy to talk about herself. When she felt lonely, she would talk to her daughter Chandra. Tiger thought her stupid. When Urmilla conceived a second time, Tiger scolded her for not informing him. He even hinted at infidelity but

when Rita heard his suspicions, she was furious with him. She told Tiger that Urmilla had no thought for anyone else other than Tiger and asked him to get out of her house. It was Tiger's naivete which made him talk like that. He felt ashamed of himself. On another occasion, he kicked Urmilla viciously in the belly while she was pregnant. She had committed no mistake at all other than try and please Tiger but when she fell sick, Tiger was very much worried and went hunting around the countryside in search of a doctor. Ultimately when she lost her baby, he sent her home with plenty of money asking her to rest. The rest did her good. By the time she came back, he had completed his house and they could move in. She looked very much healthy and was happy to be back in Barataria with her husband.

Urmilla and Shama in A House for Mr Biswas have many points in common. Naipaul describes the character of Shama with all its inherent contradictions:

Shama was a puzzle. Within the girl who had served in Tulsi store and romped up and down the staircase of Hanuman House, the wit, the prankster, there were other Shamas, fully grown it seemed, just waiting to be released: the wife, the housekeeper and now the mother. With Mr Biswas she continued to be brisk,

uncomplaining and almost unaware of her pregnancy. But when she was visited by her sisters, who made it plain that the pregnancy was their business, Tulsi business and had little to do with Mr Biswas, a change came over her. She did not cease to be uncomplaining: but she also became someone who not so much suffered as endured. She fanned herself, and spat often, which she never did when she was alone; but pregnant women were supposed to behave in this way. (159 - 160)

Urmilla too takes pregnancy in her stride though she has to talk to Rita before she can confirm it. She started selling milk in order to make more money. But the arrival of Chandra made an immense impact on Tiger. After hearing that it was a girl, not the boy he wanted, Tiger had run out in the night. He felt that all the incidents that had happened since his marriage were like giant hands coming out of the night to hold him down. It was the thought of Urmilla and the baby that made him return. Biswas too was unhappy because his first born was a girl. He got even more vexed when he heard that the Tulsis had named her Basso without consulting him. He was also angry because they had written in the birth certificate that the father was a labourer.

In A Brighter Sun the relationship between Joe Martin and Rita is used as a foil to contrast Tiger's relationship with Urmilla. Rita and Joe had been going steady for some time before they decided to settle down. In spite of this, they used to quarrel a lot. On more than one occasion, the quarrel was caused by Rita's involvement with "the coolie" people next door. At the time of Urmilla's first pregnancy, Rita offered them her bed and her services as a midwife. On another occasion Joe quarrelled with her for helping Urmilla by lending all her things when the Americans visited them. When Urmilla insisted that Rita should attend on her during her second delivery too, Joe did not want her to accept it as it was too risky. The doctor had told Urmilla to get medical help during delivery but Urmilla was adamant. When the baby died, a coolness developed between the families. After some time Tiger and Rita were equally glad when the friendship was restored. Rita is presented as much more dominating than Urmilla who always goes by Tiger's looks. But in Turn Again Tiger we see Urmilla maturing into an individual in her own right. In the first novel, Urmilla is presented as a loyal, faithful wife, who helps her husband in his

struggles. Tiger's assessment of Urmilla as stupid is naive and shallow. Though she is too shy to articulate, she does not lag behind while Tiger gets creolized.

In Turn Again Tiger, Tiger's relationship with two women, Urmilla and Doreen, play a pivotal role in his quest for identity. From the very beginning of the novel, we see how Urmilla has matured into an individual. She is the person with whom Tiger shares his doubts and fears. When Soylo hinted at the presence of the white supervisor, all the time insisting that it was a joke, Tiger was sorely perplexed. Seeing him in this mood Urmilla wanted to know the reason why but was hesitant about asking him directly. Her feelings are portrayed in vivid detail throwing light on the growing awareness in Urmilla:

Every morning she liked to share a few words with Tiger, because she had made no friends in the village yet. And sometimes Tiger played a little with Chandra and remarked how she was growing, and how she resembled Urmilla. Nothing important really, but it left a good feeling in her heart after he was gone. But this morning he was quiet. Whatever was on his mind, why didn't he share it with her? Why didn't they talk together and discuss things, and may be she could help him? (43-44)

In the end, she mustered up enough courage to ask him and Tiger told her what Soylo had told him. Urmilla was able to help Tiger by giving him the information that Soylo had a habit of telling the truth while insisting that it was a joke. This made Tiger decide to go and investigate. However, when she suggested that she too would come along, Tiger told her to remain at home. This made her wonder how unpredictable he was.

Another incident in the novel humorously portrays the women's uprising in Five Rivers. Berta, the wife of the Chinese shopkeeper was the one who sowed the seeds of unrest in the village. The ladies were angry because their menfolk spent much time drinking in Otto's shop. Berta told them to go in a procession to the shop with the demand that Otto should stop supplying drinks on credit. It was Urmilla who led the ladies, though inwardly she was apprehensive about Tiger's reaction. Though Otto was amazed at the turn of events, he couldn't antagonize the entire female population. So he agreed. When the menfolk heard about this, they were infuriated at the audacity of the ladies. One and all

they beat up their wives, all except Tiger. Tiger questioned Urmilla about it. Though Urmilla was frightened, she stood her ground, saying that she had done the right thing. Tiger's reaction was unexpected. He told her that he was proud of her but he also made her promise not to repeat it. The women, he suggested, should talk to their husbands, and Urmilla should tell Otto to forget the whole thing. This incident throws light on Urmilla's growing assertiveness. Urmilla and Berta were the only two ladies in Five Rivers who escaped getting beaten up. But as Tiger sat on the door step, he wondered if he had forgiven Urmilla because of his own feeling of guilt regarding his fascination for Doreen, the white supervisor's wife.

Tiger's first meeting with Doreen had been accidental. He had gone to investigate Soylo's story of a house in the wilderness and had discovered to his dismay the existence of the white supervisor. While making his way back to the village in a mood of anger and frustration, he suddenly caught sight of a white woman bathing naked in a pool. For a moment he was so amazed that he did not know what to do. He could go

forward as if unconcerned or he could go back as if he were guilty of something. He was seized with panic because of his innate fear of the white race. In the end, he decided to walk past looking straight ahead. All of a sudden, the lady saw Tiger and dived into the pool. He heard the splash and had to turn his head rather casually. But when he saw her regarding him, he was embarrassed and turned away but she hailed him with a loud 'hello'. Tiger was so taken aback with a mixture of emotions that he ran away from the scene: "Tiger ran. He stumbled around the corner and kept on running, his bare feet thudding lightly on the trail, the sound deadened by dry leaves. He stepped blindly on a horsewhip snake sunning itself in the path, and it wrapped itself around his foot with the speed of a taut spring suddenly released. Tiger grabbed it and pulled it away and flung it in the bush, still running in a kind of one-legged madness" (50). Later on, he felt ashamed of his action, thinking that it was childish. In his mind he could remember the nakedness of the woman and it roused a desire in him. Doreen thus became a rival for Urmilla.

In the days that followed, Doreen appeared again, with her husband on payday. Though Tiger had resolved to distance himself from the white supervisor, he found it impossible to do so with his wife. He found himself relinquishing his chair for her. He had the feeling that she was laughing at him. He caught her name when her husband called her 'Doreen.' As the days went by, Tiger was unable to get the picture of Doreen out of his mind. When Babolal suggested that Tiger should go to help at the house of the white supervisor, he was extremely angry. In the end, he agreed.

When he left for the supervisor's house, Tiger had decided not to bow and scrape in front of him. When he reached the house, he found that Robinson was not there. The orders were being given by Doreen. Her close proximity affected Tiger. In the days that followed, Tiger started treading the path of self destruction on account of his fascination for Doreen. He started drinking too much, he burnt all his books, he gave away his radio and he started picking up fights for no reason at all. At work, in the supervisor's garden, he had the feeling of being watched the whole time.

Berta, Otto's wife, was working as a maid in the white supervisor's house and Tiger was happy for her presence. He felt that something would have happened if she were not there.

Urmilla noticed the change in Tiger. She was worried but could do nothing. One night, Urmilla and Singh had to help Tiger home in a state of intoxication. That day Urmilla opened her mind to Tiger:

"You does only think of yourself" she said. She didn't speak angrily or noisily, she was resigned, but it was this quietness and lack of stress which made him listen. "You think you is the only one in the world growing up, that nothing happening to other people, only to you. All these years we live together, Tiger, and you 'ave a girl child what you don't think about. She getting big you know."

"I tell you already we going send she to school in Port of Spain next year," Tiger said. "The best school it have in the island."

"I only telling you to show you how things happening to others besides yourself. You remember how she was a little baby? Look how big she getting now. And you think I would of talk to you like this five years ago? All these years, i ain't open my mouth to you or ask you for anything, and you always making the decision what to do, when to do, how to do. Sometimes you get on as if I ain't here at all, as if you forget all about me until somebody or something remind you that you have a wife. The same way you getting older, I getting older too, you know." (126)

Urmilla confided in Rita about the change that had come over Tiger when she visited Barataria. Rita immediately sensed the presence of another woman but Urmilla wouldn't hear of it: her faith in Tiger was absolute.

Meanwhile Tiger's frustration increased. Berta told him that Doreen was asking questions about him, especially about why he was drinking so much. Tiger felt angry because his condition was caused by her. Even in his drunken state the desire for her burnt hot within him. Though he tried hard to avoid it, the inevitable happened. Out in the open, he was cutting a piece of bamboo when he encountered Doreen. It was very hot and the sweat was running down his body. She stood motionless staring at him as he stared back. All of a sudden, he wanted to kill her because she was the reason for all his trouble. He clutched the cutlass tightly as she approached him. When she came near, he held her tightly meaning to kill her but she held on too. The whole incident with its contradictions is thus described:

The cause of every personal catastrophe was in his arms, and hatred and lust struggled equally in him. What he did was done blindly and vengefully and he never knew how it was with Doreen. What had tortured him had taken the form of her and that was what he had under him writhing and biting his arms and chest. (146)

Though he had not fulfilled his wish of killing her, he felt a sense of release after it was over. They had not talked at all and after it was over, Doreen put on her clothes and left after giving Tiger a long look. Tiger dived into the water, scooped the mud from the bottom and cleaned himself in a sort of ritualistic cleansing. He then felt free. According to Sandra Pouchet Paquet, "the phallic image of the blackman's cutlass on white flesh neutralizes the anguish of a memory in which it was always the white overseer who took Indian women and not the other way round. There was absolutely no tenderness in the lovemaking. In the violence and exhaustion of their mutual passion, Tiger succeeds in killing off that part of himself that is vulnerable to the mystique of the white woman and with it the legacy of the colonial past" (xii).

In Mohun Biswas's case, the joint family system was responsible for many of his quarrels with Shama. From the very beginning, Biswas found it difficult to

stay in a house full of people. Though Shama was quite young when she married Biswas, she surprised him by her skill in nagging. Biswas was totally unused to such a thing but Shama would resort to it whenever Biswas denied her something she wanted. On one occasion, she tormented Biswas by her sighs and looks of martyrdom when he refused to arrange a house blessing ceremony at The Chase inviting all her relatives. In the end, he had to give in. On another occasion, Biswas hit Shama and she packed up and left for Hanuman House. She was carrying her third child at the time. This time Biswas decided that he would not make the first move towards reconciliation. For many months, he stayed away. In the end, he had to go, judging that his wife would have given birth to their child by then. When Biswas saw his wife, she was bathing Myna, the baby. She went on with her work refusing to pay any attention to him. While dressing the baby, she asked him if he had eaten. Her behaviour seemed to suggest that their separation had lasted hours only instead of months.

In contrast to Urmilla, Shama's identity as a Tulsi gives her confidence. Moreover, she is not illiterate, having gone to school as a girl. Urmilla

remains uneducated though Tiger achieves literacy. Her loyalty to Tiger is absolute and she obeys him implicitly. She could never run home even if her husband beat her. In contrast to Biswas, Tiger's achievements were entirely his own. In Biswas's case, he had to depend on the Tulsis, one way or the other till the end of the novel. Urmilla gradually acquires the courage to stand up to Tiger but in Shama's case the opposite happens. After Biswas achieves recognition as a journalist, Shama becomes less assertive. The quarrels do take place but she stops running home to Hanuman House every time they have a slight misunderstanding. Though this owes a great deal to the gradual disintegration of the Tulsi power, the change in Shama's attitude is welcomed both by Biswas and his children.

Shama continued to surprise Mr Biswas even after a lifetime spent with her. Earlier he had been surprised to find a collection of letters in her possession sent by a friend from England. Though Shama found it difficult to manage the household on Biswas's meagre income, she amazed him by suddenly producing

acquisitions he had not known about, like a sewing machine and a cow. Though she did not get along with Biswas's aunt Tara, she was the epitome of Hindu virtue when Biswas's mother Bipti came to stay with them in their house at Shorthills. Though she was shy with strangers, especially those of another race, she got along well with Miss Logie, the lady in charge of the Community Welfare Department. The scene in the car as Biswas and his family accompany Miss Logie on a picnic, is described with humour:

Mr Biswas was worried about Shama. Sitting next to Miss Logie on the front seat, her elaborate georgette veil over her hair, Shama was showing herself self-possessed and even garrulous. She was throwing off opinions about the new constitution, federation, immigration, India, the future of Hinduism, the education of women. Mr Biswas listened to the flow with surprise and acute anxiety. He had never imagined that Shama was so well informed and had such violent prejudices, and he suffered whenever she made a grammatical mistake. (504).

In A House for Mr Biswas, Tulsidom is presented as a parallel to the colonial setup. The advantages of Tulsidom were many but the disadvantages were even greater. The prosperous facade that the Tulsis projected was very much like the facade of the British

empire. The economic advantages offered were outweighed by the loss of self-esteem suffered. In the end, Biswas did break free, like one of the colonies gaining independence but his mortgaged house symbolizes the dependent financial status of the erstwhile colonies, that were heavily in debt. In Tiger's case, he moves from the independence of Baratania to the indentureship of Five Rivers. But even there, Tiger is able to assert himself, for Urmilla always remains staunchly by his side. Even after their most bitter quarrels, she stays on never thinking of going back to her parents' home. It is this strength in her that helps Tiger exorcize himself of Doreen's fascination and return to her, whole and healed.

Both Selvon and Naipaul use other relationships to contrast the main one. In Turn Again Tiger the Otto-Berta relationship is explored to show the henpecked husband. Otto was willing to do everything for his wife Berta but he was deeply hurt when he found out that she had been unfaithful to him. In the end, he beat up the culprit, a man called Singh. Though Singh was stronger and heavier than Otto, Otto fought bravely

and broke Singh's hand. He also beat up Berta to teach her a lesson. A House for Mr Biswas explores a number of relationships that serve to contrast with the main one. Mrs Tulsis's memories of her dead husband provide a foil for the relationship between Biswas's mother and father. Biswas's father had been a miserly man while Pundit Tulsi had been one who had never had a disagreement with his wife. The story of Bhanadat is used to highlight how a bad relationship can lead to absolute ruin. Ajodha's brother Bhanadat had taken up abode with his mistress after his wife's death. This led to an estrangement between Ajodha and his brother. When Biswas met him later on, he was overcome with pity to see his sad state, living as he did in the worst quarter in the city. Biswas's sister Dehuti was ostracized by Tara for running away with a low-caste yard boy. Ramchand proved to be a good husband and later on he was accepted. The story also indicates how barriers of caste were being broken down in the fast movement towards creolization.

Religion: The attitude to the Hindu religion plays a significant role in the search for selfhood in the East

Indian novels. Of the two novelists under consideration, Naipaul explores the intricacies of the Hindu faith in greater detail than Selvon. Selvon's protagonist does not follow the orthodox Hindu faith. Though a great deal of time is spent by him speculating about the meaning of existence, he never accepts any orthodox creed. In Biswas's case religious questioning was part of his mental make-up and contributed to his search for selfhood. Mohun Biswas's parents like Tiger's took the ritualistic aspects of religion very seriously. For example when Tiger's daughter was born, it was the pundit who gave her a name. It was the same in the case of Mohun Biswas's unfortunate birth. But Mohun Biswas was of the Brahmin caste and as such enjoyed a privileged position. Selvon gives no indication of Tiger's caste. Both the novelists portray the increasing creolization among the members of the Hindu community. Many of the educated East Indians had converted to Christianity. In A House for Mr Biswas, both the sons of Tulsi marry ladies who follow the Christian faith even though Mrs Tulsi gives a great deal of importance to her religion. A Brighter Sun presents the character of Mr Bunsee, an East Indian who had come

up in the world. Mr Bunsee was in love with a Portugese - Indian girl who insisted on a church wedding causing a rift with his parents who were strict Hindus. In A House for Mr Biswas, Dehuti, Biswas's sister was ostracized because she ran away with a low-caste yardboy. Every time a quarrel flared up between Mohun Biswas and the Tulsis, they would refer to her to irritate him. He in turn would shout back that she lived in a much cleaner house than the abode of the Tulsis. The self-same Dehuti later on became a great favourite of the Tulsis coming to help them whenever a social function was held there.

The subject of religion, Christian and Hindu, is treated with irony by both novelists. In Selvon's novel, A Brighter Sun, Joe's aunt Ma Lambie is presented as a deeply religious woman though she has a streak of cruelty in her. In A House for Mr Biswas the holy man Pundit Jairam, treated Mohun Biswas most cruelly for taking two bananas from a bunch. Religion plays no part whatsoever in the sequel to A Brighter Sun: Five Rivers does not even have a church.

Though orthodox religion is treated with irony, both protagonists are religious in a different sort of way. Biswas's interest in religion got him interested in the Aryan Association to the great consternation of the Tulsis. He also used to read a lot of books and paint quotations from the scriptures. This greatly surprised the members of the Tulsi household when the placards were brought into Hanuman House after Biswas's nervous breakdown. Biswas also taught Anand the Hindu hymns. Though he was not very much interested in ritual, Biswas's belief in God was strong. In fact, it was strengthened by the events that befell him. On one occasion, after his quarrel with Mrs Tulsi, Biswas felt impelled to move out of her house in Port of Spain. It was next to impossible to buy a house on the eight hundred dollars he had in his hand. All of a sudden, a Negro came and offered him four hundred dollars for the materials on the burnt down house in Shorthills. This made a great difference to him and he told his son Anand: "You don't believe in God, but look" (567). In the last months of his existence, Biswas found himself in great difficulties. After his illness, the newspaper office had issued a notice to him prior to dismissal.

Both his older children were abroad and the debt on the house was still unpaid. But things righted themselves when Savi arrived and took charge. She got a job at a higher salary than her father and Biswas felt relieved to think that God had answered his prayers.

A Brighter Sun projects Selvon's attitude to religion through the consciousness of Tiger: "Whenever big things happen, I does go out and look all about, at the hills, and the trees and the sky, and them. And I does get a funny feeling, as if strength coming inside me. That must be God"(117-118).

Politics: When one approaches the political angle, one sees that both the novelists give importance to it though politics is not the main issue in the novels under consideration. This is all the more significant when one considers Naipaul, for, Naipaul has written other novels where politics enjoy the central position. A House for Mr Biswas portrays Mohun Biswas's inability to find answers to problems from political creeds. In the two novels by Selvon, the political angle is developed through Tiger's growing awareness of his

responsibilities in society. Tiger emerges from the ignorance of illiteracy to become a spokesman, not just of his race but of the entire society.

In A Brighter Sun, Selvon touches upon the political angle in a significantly unique way. The narrative of the omniscient narrator frequently dips in and out of the consciousness of Tiger. International events are described keeping intact the naivete of the uneducated protagonist in the beginning of the novel. For example, the start of the novel describes the New Year's day of 1939, with Trinidadians, trying to win money at the horse races, the Jewish refugees landing on the island etc., to come to the most important event, namely Tiger's marriage. Elsewhere in the novel, the novelist elucidates how little the war has affected the ordinary people except in the way of rising prices and shortage of food:

Though the tentacles of war reached into the country districts as in the shortage of foodstuffs and in the putting up of bases here and there, village folk plodded on in life and didn't worry about how the war was going. A man named Soylo who lived in the Northern Range, up on the Aripo hills in the central part of the island, didn't know there was a war until a day in August 1942. And when he heard he shrugged

his shoulders and said "O - no! Dat is why we seeing so much trouble to get saltfish in de shop now!" But when he heard about submarines and bombs he got nervous and wanted to know if the Germans were coming to bomb Trinidad. (63)

Tiger, however, was different. He wanted to find out about things. So he used to spend hours in the shop listening to the opinions of those who had at least a passing interest in the war. As a result of this his political awareness increased. Tiger's friend Boysie once took him to Port of Spain but though he could talk enthusiastically about the governor's speech, he had little knowledge about the governor's policy. Boysie's attention had been taken up by the paraphernalia that was part of the governor's set up. Tiger, however was more discerning.

The influence of the Americans on the economy of the island is also touched upon by Selvon. The arrival of the United States personnel brought in prosperity in the form of the yankee dollar. As far as Tiger was concerned, it helped him find work with the Americans. Later on, however the Americans became unpopular because many yankees had left Trinidadian

girls with illegitimate babies. In Tiger's case, the Americans were very friendly to him. When they visited his house he had a discussion with them about politics. One of them advised Tiger:

"It's politics that builds a country, John, don't ever forget that. Don't sit back and let things happen to you. Interest yourself in how you are governed, find out why laws are passed. Oh yes, I've already seen you're an easy going people. But, John, when you vote for a man who gets a seat in the Government, remember that you want a man there who'd fight for your rights, a man you and other poor people like you could trust." (173)

When the war ended there was a big celebration and Tiger got drunk. But he realized that everything was the same as before. "There was too much of this sameness, all over, in the gardens, in the shops, in the village streets. What difference did anything make" (214).

In Turn Again Tiger, one is surprised by Tiger's total apathy regarding community welfare. Earlier we had seen Tiger wanting to work for the whole community regardless of race as he had told Joe. After his arrival in Five Rivers the events that befell him made him lose interest in community welfare. The

villagers who had looked up to him as the educated man who would teach their children were disappointed in Tiger. Selvon uses this to show how Tiger's stay in Five Rivers is a journey backward. After the Doreen episode however, Tiger started moving forward again. He visited Barataria and had a heart-to-heart talk with Joe. Both Joe and Tall Boy made him feel happy by talking about the plans they had for Tiger. They had suggested his name for membership on a committee because they were sure of his potential. This induced a feeling of optimism in Tiger. The end of the novel presents Tiger with the glowing prospects of working for the people in the community of Barataria and carving out a niche for himself there.

The political angle is explored in A House for Mr Biswas in connexion with the conflict Biswas had with his two brothers-in-law, Shekhar and Owad. For a short period Biswas enjoyed the status of a government servant while working under Miss Logie in the Community Welfare Department. He was feeling happy in his new job when the department came under attack by a political party. Shekhar his brother-in-law, was a prominent member of this party and this in turn led to a strained

relationship between the two. Biswas felt bitter because Shekhar, though in affluent circumstances, did not care a damn about Biswas losing his job.

When Owad, his younger brother-in-law, returned from England, Biswas found to his dismay that Owad's head was full of prejudiced opinions about a great many people. He had the habit of airing his opinions to the other members of the Tulsi household. He bragged about the distinguished men that he had defeated in debate and these included Russell, Joad, Radhakrishnan and Krishna Menon just to mention a few! Owad's sisters, who had never heard these names before, were suitably impressed. The nephews, especially Anand, also started voicing the opinions of their uncle. Speaking about the inherent virtues of the Soviet Union Owad started spinning tall tales about trees growing coloured cotton and rice being shot from aeroplanes. Of the listeners only Biswas was skeptical.

One day while playing cards with his brother and his two nephews, Anand and Vidiadhar, Owad lost his temper, because Anand voiced his opinion about Picasso. Owad insulted him by comparing him to a portrait by

Picasso. Anand was so confused that he made wrong moves and lost the game. Owad blamed him saying that this was the reward for his genius. This was too much for Anand who shouted back that he was no genius. The infuriated Owad slapped Anand. The same day Biswas too quarrelled with Owad and exposed his humbug about the Soviet Union. The incident cured Anand of his hero-worship and made him recant all the opinions he had expressed about Eliot, Picasso and the others echoing Owad's opinions. Biswas also felt forced to seek another place of residence.

Though the Community Welfare Department was abolished, Biswas was able to go back to the newspaper office. As for Shekhar, he was defeated miserably in the general elections and had to withdraw from politics.

Style and Technique: Both Selvon and Naipaul make use of omniscient narration. Both of them elucidate their themes with humour and pathos but Naipaul's humour is tinged with darkness. His protagonist performs like a clown but it is a performance necessitated by circumstances. Biswas induces laughter both at himself and at the people he ridicules. Biswas looks comic in

his hat that is too big for his head eventhough we feel sorry for him as he is on the verge of a nervous breakdown. In Tiger's case there is no bitterness in the humour, that is created mainly through interaction with other races. The characters of Tall Boy, Otto and More Lazy provide scope for fun and add a local flavour to the narrative. Moreover the omniscient narrator dips in and out of Tiger's mind and Selvon makes use of different registers to differentiate the characters. Dialect is made use of to portray the thoughts that pass through Tiger's mind in A Brighter Sun and this helps to establish a closer link between the narrator and Tiger. In Naipaul's case the use of dialect is at a minimum though the West Indian flavour is retained in the conversations. Michael Thorpe, in his book, V.S. Naipaul states that the plot structure of A House for Mr Biswas follows the novelistic tradition of Dickens, Thackeray, Hardy, Wells and Lawrence (1976,15) Naipaul alludes to a variety of subjects ranging from philosophy and Hinduism to international politics and world literature. Very often the reader is amazed at the range of subjects that the ineffectual Mr Biswas is capable of getting involved in. In Selvon's case,

A Brighter Sun adopts a style where events of national and international importance are mixed up with those of local interest that pertain to the protagonist. This helps to underline the limited range of Tiger's vision, that is in the process of broadening. This method is discarded in Turn Again Tiger to emphasize that Tiger has become more mature after his years in Barataria.

In the ultimate analysis one finds that both Selvon and Naipaul present the search for identity in their own individualistic ways. In Selvon however, there is a gleam of hope for the protagonist who is at last able to come to terms with his own identity as the creolized West Indian descendant of the indentured, illiterate East Indian coolie. Not only has he come a long way from indentured labour, he has plans to help other people do the same. In A House for Mr Biswas the protagonist escapes from the sugar estate only to end up in Tulsi thralldom. The education that he receives and the exalted job of a journalist that he acquires, do not help him to find his own identity. He continues to remain perplexed and rootless. The house that he has acquired is heavily mortgaged. The quest has to be continued by the next generation through Savi and Anand.

Chapter IV

CALIBAN'S WOES: BLACK WRITERS

The Negroes were not indigenous to the Caribbean, having been brought there as slaves by the newly established plantocracy in the sixteenth century. After the discovery of the islands by Christopher Columbus, people from different European countries had come there in search of wealth. There followed fierce rivalries between them for domination and a systematic decimation of the native population of Caribs and Arawaks. Most of the Negroes had been contracted from West Africa and transported into the islands in overcrowded ships. A systematic annihilation of their language and culture was resorted to by the white masters who believed in controlling them through fear. Members of the same family were separated from each other and sold in different lots. People speaking the same dialect were also shuffled to prevent the Negroes from banding together. The white owners were a minority compared to the large number of slaves stationed on every plantation. So they were suspicious of any communal activity among the slaves. All cultural activities were therefore discouraged except work songs that helped field work. Colonized and enslaved their

woes became like those of Caliban in The Tempest who had to use his master's language even to curse. The languages of the slaves were gradually replaced by those of the masters and this depersonalized them further. Louis James presents their situation thus in his work, The Islands in Between:

The attitude held towards the slaves is epitomized in the oppression of the slave owners to the activities of the missionaries. To baptize a Negro would have been to admit that he was a fellow human being and that he held claims on the owner's conscience. In the nineteenth century, the slaves were emancipated. But by then, they had to bear the profound psychic wounds of slavery that Franz Fanon analyses in The Damned of the Earth (1961) and the temptation towards self-contempt. At the same time they had to face the already entrenched mulattoes and Europeanised middle classes. The era of colonialism left peoples divided against themselves by culture and by class. (1968, 3)

As has been stated earlier, the missionaries were responsible for emancipation but the Negroes found it difficult to get acclimatized to the new creed and new way of life. On the one hand was the patronising attitude of the "white" preachers committed to rescue the "black" heathens from Hell; on the other, were the responsibilities of freedom that the Negroes had to face

with nothing but deprivation and illiteracy to assist them. As stated earlier they had been deprived of their own traditional values and ways of life under slavery and their dialects had been replaced by the 'creolized' version of the English language. The evolution of creole is elucidated in detail by Kenneth Ramchand in his, The West Indian Novel and Its Background. The evolution of creole takes place through several stages. In the first stage, the African dialect predominated with only a mixture of broken English. The masters had to make the slaves understand the orders. To quote, "To make orders and instructions understood, the whites would have had to invent a species of essential English, partly made up of a number of formulaic words and phrases and in general showing fewer inflexional variations than would occur in exchanges between whites. There would, however, be a compensatory increase in the reliance upon the linguistic context, upon word order and upon intonation to make necessary discrimination and to fill out meaning" (83-84).

Though the plantation system restricted intercourse with the upper orders of the plantation

hierarchy, there were points of contact between the masters and slaves. The language evolved by the slaves was close to English though not grammatically sound. In the next stage this imperfect English became the language of communication amongst the slaves themselves. From this stage onwards, there was a gradual reduction of Africanisms in "Creole English." Ramchand also quotes F.G. Cassidy's Jamaica Talk published in 1961:

...There is no real evidence... that any articulate African speech survives in any community in the island today, and it is doubtful whether any has been spoken at all within the twentieth century. A few snatches of African or African-like words are preserved in some songs and some of the revivalist cults keep up a terminology among themselves that has African elements, but these are all vestiges in a structure that is not genuinely African but Jamaican...(86)

Language, or the absence of a native indigenous language, plays a decisive role in the search for identity of the black writers. Writing in the master's tongue tends to be restrictive. Its nuances are unable to carry the weight and flavour of a native tradition especially when the writer has no choice. Rene Depestre sums up the dilemma in an article, "Problems of Creativity for the Black Man in Caribbean Literature."

Originally in French, it was translated by George Irish and published in the Caribbean Quarterly in September, 1973.

The West Indian Negro has not been able to reject the master's language, although in some cases, as the existence of creole in Haiti, Guadeloupe and Martinique proves, the linguistic escape has been crowned with success. As is well known, language is an important element in the identity of any man. For us to be fully ourselves, it would be necessary to be able to think, and create languages that are Haitian, Martinician, Jamaican, Barbadian, and so on which would be able to give us a more accurate image of ourselves than that which we have when using instruments such as French, English or Spanish thinking apparatus, which by force of acculturation, we have had to add to our own experience and which we must conquer, to our own advantage and wish to express our identity (53)

By the eighteenth century there were two million slaves imported into the Caribbean. There were frequent rebellions which had to be put down by force. The slaves were treated harshly because the owners feared revolt. There were many landlords who allowed the slaves to buy their freedom by working on the small plots that were allocated to each slave. Some of the white planters helped their coloured children with money

and education but the overall picture was one of trauma and indignity. In 1833, the slaves were freed but by this time there had evolved a hierarchy among them with the educated coloured class on top of the ignorant black slaves. Educational facilities were at a minimum in the Caribbean. Though the Act of Emancipation carried a resolution to provide facilities for education, the meagre funds allocated did not provide much scope. The secondary schools followed a policy of financial and social exclusiveness by denying entry to the illegitimate, which meant the majority of Negro children. Only very bright and fortunate children could gain entry into these schools. Things improved with the passage of time but one of the reasons for the late blossoming of Negro writers in the Caribbean is the lack of educational facilities. With the advent of the twentieth century many Negroes left the islands to work at the site of the Panama Canal. Many migrated to the U.S. and England. These migrations that were necessitated by unemployment proved beneficial in terms of Caribbean fiction. The emigrant experience brought the people into contact with Negro movements that marked the resurgence of black racial pride. One of the first

writers to get involved in such a movement was Claude McKay. McKay's novel Banana Bottom is generally regarded as the first West Indian classic.

In the Caribbean, the blacks had to combat both the oppression of colonialism and the trauma of slavery. The wretched and helpless condition of the black man in the Caribbean is vividly portrayed by Rene Depestre in the article mentioned earlier:

Having robbed me of my creative energy, I was robbed of my past, my history, my psychological integrity, my legends and my secret beauties as a humanbeing. Subsequently, when slavery had already been abolished, I was still kept as a West Indian, at the point where it was impossible to work out a synthesis of different African and European components of my culture. By means of a frightening acculturative pressure, everything was done before my very eyes, to make the African substratum of my life appear unworthy of the human race. I was made to have a terrible opinion of myself. I was forced to deny a decisive part of my social being, to detest my face, my colour, the peculiarities of my culture, the specific reactions of my sensibility in the face of life, love, death and art. And all this was also done so that I might idealize the colour, history and culture of my white masters. (52)

All the three novelists chosen, Claude McKay, Roger Mais and George Lamming, are concerned with the helplessness and deprivation of the black people in the

Caribbean. A study of these novelists therefore entails a brief survey of the major black movements of the Caribbean.

An article published in Caribbean Quarterly in December 1962, provides us with information about the Rastafarian movement. In the nineteen twenties there were two men in Jamaica who were reputed to be prophets. One of them was called Bedward who attempted to fly to heaven. He was deemed a lunatic and sent to a mental hospital where he died. The other was a man called Marcus Garvey. He founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in the United States. He proclaimed black nationalism and preached "Africa for the African at home and abroad," "one God, one aim, one destiny." He wished to form a state in Africa to which Negroes from the western world could be transported. Though he was unable to realize the ambition, his message got across to many Negroes. In 1927, Garvey was deported from the United States to Jamaica where he continued to preach his doctrine. Unfortunately he did not enjoy much popularity among the white people or the coloured folk. Even fellow blacks were put off by his

stress on thrift, hard work and perseverance. He died in England in 1940 but before that he had made a prophecy, "Look to Africa, when a black king shall be crowned, for the day of deliverance is near." When Emperor Haile Sellasie was crowned in Ethiopia some Jamaicans of a Garveyite persuasion consulted their Bibles. Later Ethiopia was invaded by Italians but in 1941, the Emperor returned. They felt that the verses in the Bible justified their belief in the Emperor's divinity. The doctrine that Ras Tafari, known to the world as Emperor Haile Sellasie I was the living God, was developed by several people independently. One of the first was Leonard P. Howell but he was followed by Nathaniel Hibbert and Archibald Dunkley; all these men had experienced white racism abroad. Though they worked independently, they were united in the idea of the divinity of Ras Tafari. Later the movement became suspect in the eyes of the police because Leonard Howell who established a headquarters of the brethren started growing ganja. Many of the followers looked with favour upon the 'weed.' They also grew beards but by and large they were a disorganised and heterogenous group: "From the history which has been presented... the reader may

readily deduce that Rastafari brethren are a very heterogenous group. They hold in common only two beliefs; that Ras Tafari is the living God and that salvation can come to the black man only through repatriation to Africa. On all other matters, the opinions of the brethren vary as widely as the opinion of the rest of the population. Some wear beards, others do not; and only a small minority wear the locks. Some are men of the highest moral fibre, while at the other extreme are men of crime and violence. Some smoke ganja; others abhor it. Some are excellent workmen, while others avoid work. In all matters except two, the divinity of Ras Tafari and the necessity of repatriation, Rastafarians are a random group" (17-18). Though the movement was not an unequivocal success it was able to rejuvenate the black people with a sense of pride in their race. Roger Mais's novel Brother Man (1954) projects a Rasta as the protagonist.

Another movement that influenced the outlook of black writers was the Harlem Renaissance Movement. Harlem, in New York, was a place of refuge for black intellectuals of America. It had a symbolic status as

African America's capital city. It was the goal of many African American migrants in the 1910s and 1920s, increasing to a number of two hundred thousand Negro residents creating a black belt in a dominantly white nation. Most of the writers of the Harlem Renaissance were wanderers who had come there from other places but one and all they were affected by the spirit of the place and a feeling of identification basically racial with it. Collectively they developed a vision of Harlem as an organic place on the one hand and as a cultural aspiration on the other. Though their wanderings took them elsewhere to different parts of the globe, they looked to Harlem as their primary symbolic home. Claude McKay became a prominent member of the Harlem Renaissance Movement after his emigration to the United States. McKay's wanderlust took him to different parts of the globe but he looked to Harlem for a community and a sense of belonging as his book Home to Harlem proves. In Banana Bottom he tries to recreate a similar sense of belonging to a community within his native Jamaica. The emphasis in both works is on the vitality of a Negro community as opposed to the artificiality of a white colonial set up.

Both these movements created a greater awareness of Africa. In the struggle to find their roots, West Indian intellectuals came to play lead roles in the cultural revival of Africa itself. The Pan-African movement fascinated the black intellectuals of the Caribbean and many of them visited Africa. But they could not find there a complete answer to their quest for identity. The "middle passage" across the Atlantic and the centuries spent in the Caribbean with its racial intermixture had changed them completely. Eventhough African culture had survived in spite of oppression, it was a selective continuation. Though the Caribbean cultists and the Rastafarians built up bizarre myths of Africa, they had little relevance to reality. At the same time African folk-tales and songs survived. Louis James exemplifies this aspect by mentioning the African folk-tales of the Ashanti spider god, in his work The Islands in Between. In the Caribbean, the spider god was called Anancy and the tales about him usually depict him as physically weak but ingenious and cunning. For the slaves he was an expression of the human spirit overcoming great odds, both physical and supernatural.

A study of the backgrounds of the three novelists under consideration helps to elucidate the quest for identity. Of the three, Claude McKay was the first Negro novelist of the Caribbean and also the first of the exiles. Kenneth Ramchand opines that McKay being black was obliged to emigrate whereas Redcam and De Lisser, his white predecessors, could survive in the West Indies as writers and journalists (The West India Novel and its Background, 241). Born in 1890, McKay migrated to the U.S. in 1912 shortly after the publication of his Constab Ballads. He had left Jamaica to study at the Tuskegee Institute but he left it finding it too claustrophobic. He wandered around trying his hand at different jobs but these were also years of preparation. His experience with racism had a deep impact upon him and it was this that made him a spokesman for the blacks by identifying with the Harlem Renaissance. Though he started his career as a poet, he went on to become a novelist of repute. His earlier novels Home to Harlem (1928) and Banjo (1929) are set in locales far away from the Caribbean. But Banana Bottom (1933) is set in his native Jamaica. The protagonist, a black girl returns to Jamaica after spending seven years

in an English university. According to Kenneth Ramchand, Bita Plant is the first achieved West Indian heroine and Banana Bottom is the first classic of West Indian prose (219).

In Roger Mais, one finds a person of uncompromising ideals and principles. Born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1905, he belonged to a middle class background and was also fair skinned. Technically speaking that makes him "coloured" rather than "black." But as an intellectual Mais had always identified with the black people rather than with coloured middle class. He too had tried his hand at different jobs ranging from journalist to a time keeper on a banana estate. He was also involved with West Indian nationalism and was imprisoned for a short spell in 1944 for criticizing Winston Churchill for his policy of denying independence to the island. Edward Brathwaite, the noted Caribbean poet, has the following comments to make on Roger Mais in his Introduction to the novel Brother Man (1974 edn.): "Mais became a 'socialist' that is an intellectual committed to the cause of social justice. There was nothing orthodox and doctrinaire about this

however, just as there was nothing orthodox and doctrinaire in his strong moral sense of Biblical reading. These were all part of his perception of the human animal struggling for equilibrium, the artistic endeavour striving for style and order" (VI). Mais left Jamaica in 1952 taking the manuscript of Brother Man along with him though his first novel, The Hills Were Joyful Together was published in the same year. Brother Man was published in 1954 and the same year saw him return to Jamaica crippled with cancer. He died in 1955 and his novel Black Lightning was published posthumously. He also has a number of short stories, radio plays and prose pieces to his credit in addition to these three novels. The protagonist in Brother Man being a Rastafarian, this novel provides us with the opportunity of tracing the influence of the Rastafarian movement on the emerging black identity.

George Lamming, the third novelist included in this study, was born in Barbados in 1927. He describes himself as belonging to the peasant class and his primary concern is politics. After teaching in Trinidad for a short spell he migrated to London in 1950.

Working in factories, he broadcast and published works in English. His first novel, In the Castle of My Skin is closely related to the facts of his boyhood and was published in 1953. Lamming is known as the most outspoken nationalist of his generation and his novels chronicle the sweep of West Indian history starting with the colonial setting in In the Castle of My Skin, through the achievement of independence in Seasons of Adventure (1960) to a post-independence critique in Water with Berries (1971). It was Lamming's emigration to England that created in him the need to define himself as a black West Indian. The novel In the Castle of My Skin is the best known of his works and it has been chosen for the present study because it traces the changes that happen in the society of Barbados or "Little England" through the story of the boy 'G'. It thus offers a contrast to the Jamaican scenario presented by both Mais and McKay.

Childhood: Childhood experiences in Banana Bottom are rendered as recollections of the protagonist, Bitia Plant, after her return to the island. Lamming's novel on the other hand, is a bildungsroman, tracing the

growth of the boy G through a period of nine years starting with his ninth birthday. The novel ends with his leaving Barbados for Trinidad at eighteen. In Brother Man the childhood experiences of slum dwellers are presented to focus attention on the protagonist's milieu. The hero's kindness to children helps to highlight his stature as a messiah.

Banana Bottom starts with Bitá's return to her native land after seven years abroad. Childhood experiences are brought in as nostalgic memories of the sophisticated brown beauty she had become at twenty two. These memories of her past help her realize what she is and what she wants to be as opposed to what her benefactors had planned for her.

Bitá had been the victim of a tragic event in her past; she had been raped by a crazy man as a girl of thirteen. As a child, Bitá had been a tomboy, living a carefree life with her father and her stepmother Aunt Naomi. Crazy Bow belonged to a prominent 'coloured' family whose ancestor was a Scotch landlord who preferred to liberate his slaves. The Adairs were neighbours of the Plants and Bow Adair was a frequent

visitor to Bitá's house eventhough he was considered crazy. Bow had great talent for music and Bitá liked to listen to him. The unfortunate incident occured when Bow was twenty five. The two of them were romping together on the banks of Cane River when all of a sudden Bow lost control over himself. Soon the news spread and the natives made a ditty about it. Bow was arrested, tried and sentenced to the madhouse. When the head of the Jubilee Mission, Reverend Malcolm Craig, heard about it, he was shocked as the Plants were family friends of the Craigs. His wife Priscilla Craig felt great compassion for Bitá and had the idea of taking her in to train her as an exhibit to show the community how a girl with social stigma could attain success with careful training. Their own son Patou was mentally retarded but Mrs Craig could never dream of adopting another boy. With Bitá she had no problem especially because her warm presence brightened up the family life of the Craigs. Bitá's own father was pleased with the idea as he was thinking of sending Bitá away to a relative till the whole thing blew over. Her success with Bitá made Priscilla Craig decide to send her abroad for higher studies.

When Bitá returned to the island, she appeared poised and confident on account of her education but she could not forget her instinctive yearning. Unlike other natives whose education made them despise their own traditions, Bitá revelled in pure joy as she recognized the colour and smell of the native market. Her going away had actually given her the opportunity of looking at her native life in perspective. As a girl she had never felt the same. Bitá's nostalgia became more pronounced when she visited her native village of Banana Bottom. The very landscape thrilled her as she remembered instances of running barefoot and swimming naked in the pools.

As a visitor of eminence, Bitá was asked to preside over a Sunday School ceremony and distribute the prizes to the children. During the ceremony she chanced to look at her father and caught him with tears in his eyes. It was then that she remembered that the rape had occurred right after she had received a Sunday School prize for good conduct. Bitá had great affection for her father. After his death she remembered various instances of his kindness and affection including his

emotion after the rape. "Now she thought of the time when she was raped by Crazy Bow, how strange and terrible her father's face had been, yet he had been so kind and more fatherly than ever to her. A fine father. And she had loved him deeply with a love rooted in respect. All the men that she really respected had something of his character. Malcolm Craig, Squire Gensir, Jubban" (1970, 288).

Recollections of childhood help Bitá realize the superficiality of her education. She decides that the atmosphere of Jubilee Mission is not for her as she is basically a black Jamaican girl who feels at home only in her native village of Banana Bottom.

In Lamming's novel, the childhood experiences elucidate the mental make-up of the boy G as he looks at the world around him. The novel starts with G's ninth birthday that coincides with heavy floods. His own disappointment is an index of the dismay of the villagers whose houses and crops are damaged by the deluge. Thereafter the two strands of experience, of G's private life and the story of his village, are interwoven. Innovations of style are resorted to by

Lamming especially in the case of narration. After starting off with a first person narrator, Lamming goes on to adopt omniscient narration, and dialogue between characters, and then reverts to first person narration. The characters in the dialogue are given no names but are called First Boy, Second Boy etc. The variety in narrative style helps to underline the multi-faceted nature of experience by presenting the story from different angles.

In contrast to Bitá Plant whose father plays a dominant role, the boy G has no father to offer guidance or protection. His mother is his only living relative: "My father who had only fathered the idea of me had left me the sole liability of my mother who really fathered me" (1986, 3). G's condition was similar to millions of Negro children in the Caribbean where the tradition of slavery had destroyed the basic framework of family responsibilities. In spite of the efforts of the missionaries many of the blacks found it difficult to accept the social values of the whites. Their own tribal communities had virtually ceased to exist. In G's case, he also had no other relatives:

"My birth began with an almost total absence of family relations. My parents on almost all sides had been deposited in the bad or uncertain accounts of all my future relationships, and loneliness from which had subsequently grown the consolation of freedom was the legacy with which my first year opened" (4).

The novel presents childhood experiences centred in three spheres - the home, the school and the world outside. At home the dominant influence is that of his mother. A humorous incident is described where the fence comes down as G's mother is bathing him in the yard outside his house. The boys of the neighbourhood who were watching the proceedings with great interest were responsible for the incident but the broken fence filled G's mother with perplexity: "My mother on such occasions looked pitiful beyond words. I had often seen her angry or frustrated or in tears but there were other states of emotion she experienced for which tears were simply inadequate. Seized by the thought of being left alone, she would become filled with an overwhelming ambition for her child, and an even greater defiance of the odds against her. Then she'd be silent as she was

now, or would talk in a way that was mechanical while her meaning seemed to go beyond the words" (10). Her ambition for her son was to help him attain respectability in society. In spite of poverty and deprivation she struggled hard to educate him. At the same time, she also tried to cultivate in him ideas of cleanliness and godliness. Even the deluge that washed down the boy's ninth birthday was referred to by her as "the showers of blessing." Though she punished and scolded her son she had an overwhelming affection for him, and though the entire responsibility of his upkeep fell on her shoulders, she discharged it with faith and love.

The second sphere, that of the school, is illustrated through the description of the Empire Day Celebrations. The description satirizes the educational system imposed under colonialism. The inspector's speech to the students gathered for Empire Day is pregnant with irony:

"My dear boys and teachers, we are met once again to pay our respects to the memory of a great queen. She was your queen and my queen and yours no less than mine. We're all subjects and partakers in the great design, the

British Empire and your loyalty to the Empire is seen in the splendid performance which your school decorations and the discipline of these squads represent. We are living my dear boys, in difficult times. We wait with the greatest anxiety the news of what is happening on the other side of the world. Those of you who read the papers may have read of the war in Abyssinia. You may have seen pictures of the King of Ethiopia and the bigger boys may have wondered what it's all about. The British Empire you must remember has always worked for the peace of the world. This was the job assigned it by God and if the Empire at any time has failed to bring about that peace, it was due to events and causes beyond its control. But, remember, my dear boys, whatever happens in any part of this world, whatever happens to you in the island of Barbados, the pride and treasure of the Empire, we are always on the side of peace. You are with us and we with you. And together we shall always walk in the will of God." (30)

The inspector deliberately identifies servility to the Empire with obedience to God and injects the boys with a false sense of loyalty to the colonial masters. In addition they are forced to look upon fellow blacks in Ethiopia and Abyssinia with contempt. The colonial authority is reinforced by the severity of its punishments as is exemplified by the incident of beating that occurs immediately after the celebrations. For a minor misdemeanour like giggling, the head teacher pounced upon a likely culprit and beat him till his

trousers were rent and the filth slithered down his legs. After the beating, the boy had to be supported by the other boys as he was carried to the tap to be cleaned. The rest of the story is related through the conversation of the four boys at the water tap. They are given no names, being referred to as First Boy, Second Boy etc., and no hint is given as to whether G is one of them. Discussing the brutality of the beating, they devise various methods of revenge. After dismissing conventional methods like complaining to parents, they decide to "create history" by hiding behind the fence and attacking the head teacher when he is least aware. But when the victim revealed why he was beaten up, the boys were surprised. The boy's mother was the domestic help in the head teacher's household and was therefore in possession of his shameful secrets. The head teacher suspected that the boy was gossiping about them in school. So he had been waiting for an opportunity to beat the boy up. Here Lamming underlines the ineffectiveness of an educational system where punishment is not corrective but is resorted to, to settle private grievances.

In the meanwhile more serious trouble was hatching for the head teacher. This time, the culprit was one of the masters who had in his possession photographs of the head teacher's wife in intimate embrace with him. By accident, the envelope landed in the hands of the head teacher who was totally unnerved by the contents. He could not hush it up nor could he give it publicity. As the head teacher he could not condone immorality. Lamming does not tell us exactly what happened next but the erring subordinate soon left the teaching profession to enter into politics.

Another childhood experience that is described is on the seaside where G goes with Bob, Trumper and Boy Blue. Though the boys relate tales and discuss race and colour, G hardly utters a word. Some of the pronouncements of Boy Blue are precocious and concern problems of self analysis. But immediately afterwards, he has to be rescued from the sea by a surly fisherman. Other areas of experience like playing on the railtracks and waiting at the bath house are also described by Lamming to present a complete picture of community life. The timeless nature of these pursuits is depicted by his reference to:

Three Thirteen Thirty Boys
Three Thirteen Thirty Knives. (23)

Side by side with this, the changes coming over the village are also depicted. Gradually the old landlord Mr Creighton loses his authority and Mr Slime, the politician, gains power. The security enjoyed under Mr Creighton's hegemony is replaced by dispossession and anarchy as numerous new landlords arise in the place of one.

In Brother Man, childhood experiences of the protagonist are not portrayed but various instances of his interaction with children are depicted to highlight his status as a messianic hero. Life in the slums was extremely difficult for children with its squalor and poverty and threats by authority. In the first chapter, Roger Mais portrays Corporal Jennings stopping a small boy Joe to find out if he was trafficking in drugs. The boy's reaction ranges from cunning to innocence and ends in real terror. Having ascertained that the parcel that the boy carried had no drugs in it, the policeman started pumping him for information. When information was not forthcoming, he terrorized the boy by telling

him that it was against the law to carry a slingshot. He then made a deal with the boy telling him that in return for letting him go this time, Joe should pass all the information about dope-smugglers back to him.

Mais presents Brother Man as a person of a kind and charitable disposition. One day a nightingale hit the glass pane of his window and died in spite of Brother Man's attempt to save it. He was wondering what to do with it when Joe came there. Seeing the dead bird, the boy wanted to take it home and eat it. Mais here focusses on both the extreme poverty of the boy with his torn shirt and wasted belly and the love and kindness of Brother Man who sees God's hand in the fall of a bird. He also gives him sixpence out of his own meagre store.

In another incident which involves a child, the protagonist's kindness to animals is focussed upon. Brother Man met a small boy carrying a crab which he had "handcuffed" by making it cling to its own claws. Brother Man asked the boy if he would sell the crab to him saying that he would pay sixpence for it. The boy was reluctant to accept it as the crab was a very small

one but Brother Man insisted that he wanted only that particular crab. When the boy agreed, the crab was bought and set free. This led to a discussion between the boy and Brother Man about mercy to all God's creatures. Though the boy could not understand everything that Brother Man told him, the experience opened his eyes to a certain aspect of religion. These incidents highlight Brother Man's significance as a beacon of light in the dark squalor of the slums. They also echo Christ's attitude to children described in the New Testament.

Struggle for Existence: All the three novelists are concerned with social problems and struggle for existence is a motif that is viewed from a communal angle in all three works. In Banana Bottom the protagonist Bitá Plant is presented as an individual who is fortunate in attaining advantages that are beyond the reach of the peasant community. In the Castle of My Skin presents G's difficult circumstances but thanks to G's mother's hard work, G manages a high school education that is denied to his boyhood friends. Brother Man presents a protagonist who is a cobbler but

he attains the status of a spiritual healer. He plays a pivotal role in helping the slum dwellers face their difficulties.

In both Banana Bottom and In the Castle of My Skin the struggles of the peasant community in the face of natural calamities are explored. The day to day struggle of slum dwellers that are portrayed by Mais present an even more difficult existence.

The village of Banana Bottom had all the disadvantages of a colonial set up, like other places in Jamaica. The people were hardy peasants with little opportunity for education or betterment as institutions of higher education were too few and extremely expensive. Jaban Plant, Bitá's grandfather had been closely associated with Angus Craig, the founder of Jubilee Mission and Malcolm Craig's father. Their friendship had started at the time of the Coffee Pool Scandal. In an effort to help the peasants get the maximum price for their coffee, Angus Craig started a coffee pool. His intention was to collect all the produce during the flush season when the price was slow and to sell it later when the price went up. But the

Free Church Coffee Pool turned a disaster because the price of coffee went down on account of the spread of Brazilian Coffee in the world market. The ignorant peasants started murmuring against Angus Craig and many of them left his church to attend that of his rival called the Ark. Only Jaban Plant and his family continued to attend his service. Angus Craig mortgaged his property to pay back to the peasants the money they had lost by joining the Coffee Pool. But he was thankful to Jaban Plant who alone believed in him when everyone else looked on him with suspicion. When Bitas rape occurred, Malcolm Craig, thought that by adopting Bitas he would be repaying an old debt. Things had changed by then with Malcolm marrying a rich woman of good social standing. Jordan Plant too had prospered^e as a farmer through hard work. It was now left to Malcolm Craig to find a successor as his own son was mentally retarded. He selected the son of Deacon Day to succeed him at the mission and also to fulfil his father's dream of a coloured minister leading his flock. When Bitas came back to the island after her education, she was expected to marry Herald Newton Day and become the mainstay of Jubilee Mission as the new minister's wife.

Bitá found it difficult to fit into the pattern set for her by her benefactors. She was expected to suppress her natural urges and always think of the Mission as the most important thing. As the days passed by, Bitá's actions like talking to Hopping Dick or attending a tea meeting became subjects of controversy. Mrs Craig reiterated that she expected Bitá to behave with decorum. When her aunt fell ill, Bitá actually felt relieved because it would give her a reason to leave Jubilee and go to her native village of Banana Bottom.

At Banana Bottom, Bitá made the acquaintance of Squire Gensir whose influence made her capable of realizing her real self. Squire Gensir was an Englishman who had come to the island to live among the peasants collecting folk-tales and songs. Bitá enjoyed her discussions with him just as much as she enjoyed playing on his piano. In one such discussion about freedom, Squire Gensir expressed his admiration for the freedom that the peasants enjoyed. Bitá could not agree with him, she felt that the hard lives limited their areas of experience. But Squire Gensir was talking about the unconscious freedom of the peasants which

allowed them to follow their natural instincts without repression. This was denied to the educated. According to Squire Gensir, the system of education produced fixed types and had no room for people who could think and act independently.

The life of the peasants was hardly comfortable as they had to deal with the vagaries of the weather trying to eke out a living from the land. Many of the young men wished to escape this by writing the civil service examination and getting into government service. But the policies of the government favoured the 'coloured' class and made it difficult for the peasant class to achieve a higher status.

McKay describes the yam planting in Banana Bottom in picturesque detail to highlight a group activity rooted in the soil. The spirit of cooperation and camaraderie infects Bitá and helps her achieve a true recognition of her self: "Digging yambanks and sweating in the sun. The holes were dug wide enough to take three yamheads in a row, with space enough for the young yams to bulge and swell and grow down into the soil. From two to three feet deep. And then the earth

was broken finely and heaped into a mound. Twenty five of these for one man were not a bad showing for a day's work" (112). The yam planting also gave her an opportunity of getting to know Jubban, her father's drayman. Though she had seen him earlier, she noticed him only then. Having started as a worker, Jubban had risen to a position of confidence through honesty and hard work. Other incidents that describe the peasants' struggles include the drought and the floods that racked the countryside. In the floods, Bitá lost both her father and Malcolm Craig who were drowned. After her father's death, she married Jubban surprising the villagers by her choice. They criticized her for her foolishness as the Craigs had left their property to the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals after Bitá's rebellious exit from Jubilee Mission. But Bitá inherited Squire Gensir's house and land after his death in England. He had always felt that he had influenced her decision of asserting her independence. Unlike others who had felt alienated from their own kind on account of their education, Bitá had settled down in her native peasant milieu. McKay stresses this point by contrasting her with others who in trying to attain respectability negate their own selves:

The great founder of Jubilee had declared that the idea of his work was to help make men free and materially independent, but not in the image of their white masters. But as humanity is prone to be inspired by the imitative rather than the initiative qualities of life, there was a tendency in many who had been freed from the slavery toil and soil to efface the traces of their origin and past servitude from a sense of shame and to approximate, not to the rugged principles of the pioneers of their struggle but rather to the antedated patterns of the vanquished class. (42)

In Brother Man, the author's primary concern is sociological. The "Chorus of People in the lane" with which the novel starts, presents the utter poverty of the slums where the people struggle for basic necessities. The condition of the slum dwellers is worse than that of the peasants, for in the city cunning people exploit the poor by leading them into vice. Different forms of corruption ranging from dope smuggling and prostitution to passing counterfeit coins and indulging in obeah are explored in the novel, to show how poverty drives people to commit offence against the law. Authority, in the form of policemen, is dreaded and resented by the slum dwellers. The protagonist achieves messianic status in the midst of such deprivation by helping the people to resist temptation by his example of kindness and uprightness.

Roger Mais starts his tale with the gossip of people in the lane. The description is poetic and musical carrying the nuances of conventional idiom and the rhythm of speech: "The tongues in the lane clack, clack almost continuously going up and down the full scale of human emotions, human folly, ignorance, suffering, viciousness, magnanimity, weakness, greatness littleness, insufficiency, frailty, strength" (1947, 7). The tongues wag about Cordelia, Papacita, Bra'Ambo, Bra'Man and so on and they do not cease even when night falls. It is their own tale that they relate overlaying it with slander, as incidents of beating, obeah and dope-smuggling are related. As the author says, they renew their own wounds which the world has inflicted upon them.

Among the people in the lane, the first to be introduced is the Girlie - Papacita couple. Of the two, Girlie works while Papacita lives the life of a gay dog unwilling to settle down to regular work. In the first scene, Girlie expresses annoyance because Papacita had been absconding the previous night. Papacita had several excuses to offer none of which satisfied Girlie

as she had heard them all before. Her disbelief angered Papacita and he threatened to walk out on her but she was not afraid as it was she who was supporting him. In spite of her acid tongue, Girlie had a strong passion for Papacita, and it was this that kept them going. Papacita disliked hard work and his search for an easy job made him take up passing counterfeit coins. Though he got plenty of cash, the risk involved was great. Being a man with a flirtatious temperament, he started flirting with other girls, especially with Minette, the girl whom Brother Man had rescued from prostitution. Feeling jealous of Brother Man, he decided to frame him with counterfeit coins. After Brother Man's arrest, he bailed him out thinking that Minette's gratitude could be taken advantage of. In the meanwhile, his relationship with Girlie broke up after a bitter quarrel as Girlie had come to know of his overtures to Minette. The police however were on the trail of the counterfeit coins. Papacita decided to leave town to escape them. Before he could do that, Girlie came to see him eaten up with hatred and jealousy. Asking her to leave him alone, he went to wash his face at the wash basin. Just then, Girlie crept behind him and killed him with a

clasp knife. She was tired of his infidelities. The Girlie-Papacita story interacts with Brother Man's struggles to attain self-hood and also portrays how easily poverty leads people to crime.

Two other characters whose struggles are portrayed in detail are the sisters, Cordelia and Jesmina. Cordelia's husband Jonas had been arrested for peddling ganja leaving her to fend for herself and her little son. When Cordelia fell ill she became absolutely incapable of clear thinking. In desperation she clung to her sister Jesmina making her promise not to leave her. Jesmina had a boyfriend named Shine but Cordelia did not want her sister to have anything to do with men. Her own experience with Jonas had brought her shame and misery and she thought that all men were interested in exploiting women. Cordelia made Jesmina promise to look after her and her son till Jonas returned from gaol. In the days that followed Brother Man came to the aid of the sisters on more than one occasion. Thanks to his healing touch, Cordelia soon became well but when her son Tad fell ill Brother Man could not cure him as easily. Though Cordelia and he

prayed together by the boy's bedside, the fever became worse. Brother Man then gave Cordelia money to take the child to a doctor. The doctor's medicines did not cure the child and Cordelia was so worried that she lost her reason. She started to resent Brother Man feeling that the healer had failed her. She decided to go to his rival, Brother Ambo the obeahman. Brother Ambo fanned the flames of superstition in Cordelia's mind and set her against Brother Man. He also extracted money from her for invoking his powers. Jesmina was surprised to see the change in her sister. When she saw Cordelia meeting Papacita in secret, she became very uneasy: "Then there was the matter of her stealthy meetings with Papacita... They must be transacting some business, otherwise what interest would Papacita have in Cordelia? Her unreasoning intuitive fears went grimacing across the blurred screen of her mind. She thought of herself and Shine, and of the hopelessness of the situation. She could not leave Cordelia in her trouble, she would have to stick to her, even though Cordelia made it more and more difficult to do so. She wanted to be loyal to her sister for whom she had only respect and affection all her life, as far back as she could remember.

Cordelia was many years the elder, she had been almost like a mother to her" (123-123). A dressmaker by profession, Jesmina had no intention of deserting her sister but she realized that her sister was going out of her mind. Cordelia even locked her up in her own room. Jesmina managed to escape and went to Brother Man who soothed her in her stricken fearful state and promised to talk to Cordelia. But Brother Man's talk did not have the desired result. Though Cordelia agreed with him in his presence her attitude changed completely after he left. Cordelia suspected Brother Man of ulterior motives and refused to trust him.

In the meanwhile Jesmina's fears about Cordelia intensified when she discovered counterfeit coins in her sister's possession. She was afraid of a police raid. At the same time she was reluctant about confiding in anyone as it involved her sister. In the end, she decided to remove the coins when Cordelia was away. Unfortunately, she was unable to locate the coins and was caught red-handed by Cordelia who accused her of being a sneak. Later Brother Man was arrested for being in possession of counterfeit coins. Jesmina now

realized that her sister had framed Brother Man. This was the business that she was transacting with Papacita. Refusing to stand by as an onlooker, Jesmina confronted Cordelia and accused her calling her Judas. She then left the house to comfort Minette. The accusation had a terrible impact on Cordelia. She had a hallucination that her son was a monster. After killing the child, Cordelia committed suicide by hanging herself. It was as if she had tried everything for her son and failed. After Cordelia's death, Jesmina started staying with Minette and Brother Man. Earlier she had related the story of the counterfeit coins to the two of them. Though she was unhappy about her sister, she started helping Minette. When Brother Man was beaten up by a crowd, she and Minette rescued him.

In the case of, Brother Man the struggles were more of a spiritual kind. A cobbler by profession, he always kept a Bible on the stool beside him. Though he worked hard, he always gave away the money he earned to the poor and the needy. The people thought him mad; "Sometimes when they heard other people abusing and traducing Brother Man, they stood up in his defence, the

people whom he had helped in times of trouble and sickness, but at other times they thought better of it, because they feared what their neighbours might have to say about them behind their backs, lacking the courage of their convictions. Sometimes they forgot, some of these people, that he had helped and comforted them, and healed their wounds. Sometimes they secretly despised him that he cared so little for himself and so much for others, that he would give what little he had to succour another whose need he thought greater than his" (23). Brother Man had saved Minette from prostitution. The girl had come to the city from the country seeking a job and had soon get enmeshed in its filth. She had accosted Brother Man as a potential customer but he had seen her hunger beyond the lure of the flesh. He offered her food and shelter telling her to describe herself as his sister's child from the country. Thus he had given her self-respect and a purpose for living. All around them people were living in poverty and deprivation. There was a lady called Hortense who had got herself pregnant by a sailor. She had no other means of supporting herself other than prostitution. Out of his meagre resources Brother Man tried to help

one and all, some with money and food, some with his healing touch, yet others with words of comfort. Some of them remembered him with gratitude. After he achieved fame as a healer he had quite a large following. But his popularity did not last. He had his enemies. One of these was Brother Ambo, who worked obeah. On one occasion he came to see Brother man asking him to keep a few things for him saying that the police were after him. Though kind-hearted by nature, Brother Man refused him firmly as he didn't want to have anything to do with obeah. Papacita was another of his enemies. With Cordelia's help he framed him and made the police arrest him for keeping counterfeit coins in his possession. When Papacita later bailed him out, Brother Man thanked him smiling and Papacita thought that he had fooled Brother Man.

The people started suspecting Rastafarians after a bearded man attacked a couple killing the boy and injuring the girl. The counterfeit coin charge made Brother Man suspect in the eyes of the people. Brother Man was in the habit of going for walks in the night. Earlier, the people used to greet him and talk to him

but their attitude had changed. Minette advised Brother Man to stop going out in the night as she thought it dangerous but he refused to listen. On one occasion the people started jeering at him and abusing him. Brother Man tried to talk to them spreading his message of peace and love but they retaliated with anger. Soon a frenzied crowd collected around him; they started throwing bricks and stones at him accusing Rastafarians of murder. A woman in the crowd tried to come to his aid but she was pushed into the gutter. After the crowd's anger abated, Minette and Jesmina went to get him along with Nathaniel the man whom he had helped in the past. Brother Man was unconscious and bleeding. They put him into Nathaniel's handcart and took him home. The two girls washed his wounds and nursed him; on the third day, he opened his eyes. After this incident the neighbours came to see him. They were thoroughly ashamed of themselves. The incident did not dampen Brother Man, it only made him more determined to continue his work. Minette was also willing to help him in his struggle to attain spiritual fulfilment. "And she went before him, carrying herself proudly, shielding the little flame of the candle with her hand" (191).

In Lamming's novel the struggle for existence becomes inextricably linked up with the criticism of the colonial set up. Sandra Pouchet Paquet opines that the narrative reproduces the historical process whereby a feudal mercantilist economy gave way to a capitalistic economy. In the book The Novels of George Lamming she illustrates: "In the Castle of My Skin focusses on Creighton's village, a representative West Indian community on the island of Barbados. Lamming depicts the feudal pattern of life in the village and the changes that occur under pressure from a growing labour movement. He makes the structure and development of life in Creighton's village a metaphor for the evolution of colonial society in the West Indies. The corrosive effects of colonial rule are discernible everywhere in the everyday life of this representative community. Lamming is concerned especially with the themes of economic and cultural dependence, the relationship of the child to his environment, and the stress of social and political change" (1982,13). The novel starts by describing the colonial hierarchy of the village with Creighton, the white landlord on top. His house set on the hill has the aura of a castle surrounded by a

stonewall, topped by broken glass bottles. Beneath him were the overseers appointed by him to patrol the land. These men were hated by the villagers though they had respect for the landlord. Their contemptuous attitude to the villagers mingled with their positions of authority made them the objects of hatred. They were always fierce and aggressive to their own race and this feeling was carried on even after they left the land and got into the professional class becoming doctors, lawyers and civil servants. The villagers in turn had no respect for the overseers. The mutual antipathy is thus portrayed:

The overseers carried bunches of keys strung on wire which they chimed continually, partly to warn the villagers of their approach and partly to satisfy themselves with the feel of authority. This seemed necessary since the average villager showed little respect for the overseer unless threatened or actually bullied. Many a day poverty adventure or the threat of boredom would drive them into the woods where the landlord's hens lay and the rabbits nibbled the green weed. They would collect the eggs and set snares for the birds and animals. The landlord made perennial complaint and the overseers were given a full-time job. Occasionally the landlord would accuse the overseers of conniving, of slackening on the job, and the overseers who never risked defending themselves gave vent to their feelings on the villagers who they thought were envious and jealous and mean. Low down Nigger

people was a special phrase the overseers had coined. The villagers were low down Nigger people since they could not bear to see one of their kind get along without feeling envy and hate. (18)

The villagers had no direct contact with the landlord. Once a quarter or after some calamity like the flood, the landlord would come to inspect the damage. The village people would scurry here and there, especially those who were dirty or unkempt and the landlord would look on with an air of patronage. After he left, the children would play games imitating the landlord and his family for, his world was one of make-believe for them. On one occasion Miss Foster went to call on the landlord because her family had suffered the most in the flood. The overseer tried his best to prevent her but the landlord was most gracious and polite. He gave her a cup of tea and listened sympathetically to her woes. When she had finished, he gave her half a crown which made her feel honoured and elated. Such was the subservient attitude of the villagers. Lamming also describes an incident where three boys spy on a party being held at the landlord's place. To the boys, the landlord represented "the

great" other whom they could not understand. The whole thing had a fairy tale appearance to them. Unfortunately however a nest of ants that they disturbed led to their discovery. They had to run for their lives with the overseer in pursuit. Ultimately they managed to escape by taking refuge in a Revivalist meeting. The incident took on another colour when it was related by the landlord to an old woman of the village. He related how hooligans broke into his party trying to molest his daughter shocking the old woman by the extent of disrespect. According to Gloria Lyn, "Lamming is presenting the party as a social ritual, a symbolic act of social cohesion and by connecting the men of the "HMS Goliath" with the landlord and his family in terms of race, class and colour, one sees the further implications when the same ship, significantly named Goliath, arrives in the harbour during the riots and fires some shells, which angers the rioteers because of its interference. The Biblical reference to the conflict between David and Goliath is only too obvious. This may serve as an example of the way in which mythology may be used for the purpose of economy in narrative, among its other uses. The explicit connexion

between Goliath and landlord allows for an identification of the two as symbolic representatives of the imperial power" (Critical Issues in West Indian Literature, 1984, 121-122).

The feudal set up offered protection and security to the subservient but the stable nature did not last. The first change was brought about by Mr Slime's Friendly Society and Penny Savings Bank. After resigning the job of teacher on account of a scandalous photograph, Mr Slime had started the Society and Bank. This social change is recorded through the conversation of an old man and an old woman who are called Pa and Ma and they act as chorus similar to Mais's technique of the "Chorus of the people in the Lane." Speaking about the changes, the old man depicts the feelings of the village:

"Ever since we get the news 'bout the schoolmaster Mr Slime, I feel a sort o' change happen, an' though I ain't got the words to repeat what's in my mind I feel it all the same. They says he was the best teacher in the whole school from top to bottom, an' my heart hurt me to think what might happen to the children. It ain't everyone as got the gift to give a little learnin' and they says all of them that he had it. Now look what he go an'

do, he open a Friendly Society an' a Penny Bank, an' in the twinklin of an eye, Ma, before you says Jack Robinson, he has them all two both flyin. A year before we never hear 'bout such things, an' now there ain't a single soul in all Creighton's village who ain't in Society an' Penny Bank all two at the same time. Everybody puttin' they pennies one by one week after week an' only God knows what sort o' thing'll lead to". (69)

This marks the first appearance of capitalism in the old feudal world. The Friendly Society encouraged a new attitude to wealth and to the land. Neil Ten Kortenaar elucidates this aspect in his article "George Lamming's In the Castle of My Skin: Finding Promise in the Land," published in Ariel, "The empowerment brought by new conceptions of wealth is a double edged sword, however. Some are given power, some find themselves in the power of others. Capitalism brings with it a new attitude to the land. The land is no longer where one lives and what one works. In the feudal system, the land belonged to the owner, but it was worked by villagers and it was inconceivable that Mr Creighton could ever take the land from them. Under the new dispensation, land is a commodity to be bought and sold. Mr Creighton sells to Mr Slime with the result that the shoemaker and Mr Foster are dispossessed and Pa is sent to the almshouse" (1991, 47-48)

These events do not occur all of a sudden. By the time the change occurs the protagonist has grown into an adult. In the meanwhile the struggles of the villagers continued in search of work and wages. Mr Slime had also turned politician and had become the undisputed leader of the ignorant villagers. When the dock workers went on strike they did not know much about the reasons but they trusted Slime's sagacity. The landlord was a partner in the shipping firm and the villagers were afraid of what would happen. So a group consisting of Bob's father, Mr Foster, the overseer's brother and the shoemaker waited anxiously but Mr Slime told them to return to work at mid-day saying that a revision of wages had been promised by the shipping company.

The next significant event that happened was the outbreak of riots. The riots had broken out in the city but the villagers did not know who was fighting whom. Soon the violence spread to the village. The boys who had gone to town were terrified by the violence and ran back to the village with the police in pursuit. The riots saw a great change in the status of the

landlord. He was reduced to a frightened creature with all the uncertainty of the hunted. His greatness had vanished as he walked up the road in soiled clothes. The mob was ready to attack him with sticks and stones but he was saved by the arrival of Mr Slime who thanked them for not attacking Mr Creighton.

As the years passed by, the protagonist managed to pass the public examination and get into high school. None of his friends had made the grade. He himself had managed to do that because of the private lessons he had been made to take by his ambitious mother who struggled hard to provide her son with decent education. G's friends, Trumper, Bob and Boy Blue remained in the village and G felt separated from them. His mother always reminded him of his responsibilities. The end of the novel sees G on the eve of his departure for Trinidad bidding good bye to Pa and talking to Trumper who was annoyed at what had happened to the villagers. He felt that they should have refused to buy the land. His years abroad had taught him many things about the world and had matured him but G was going out in the world for the first time.

Lamming links up the struggle of the village with G's struggles in growing to maturity. The change in social set-up is gradual and coincides with G's growing awareness. As such it has more affinity to Bita's struggles than those of Brother Man. Another significant feature that emerges from the comparison is that the clash/interaction between races is minimal in Brother Man. Both Banana Bottom and In the Castle of My Skin portray the struggle in terms of race as well as in terms of social status. Roger Mais's novel focusses on the social and economic aspects but the protagonist's detractors and defenders are members of his own race. The Rastafarian cult is based on the racial consciousness of the black people but the Rasta hero of the novel in betrayed and abused by his own people rather than by those in authority. But his sufferings help to augment his status as a messianic hero.

Search for Roots: The search for roots is a motif that all the three novelists make use of to unravel the emerging identities of their protagonists. Claude McKay exposes the past in terms of the racial-colonial set up to focus on the search for identity. In the case of

Roger Mais, the motif is centred around the protagonist in order to focus on his emerging identity as a messiah. In Lamming's novel G's growing awareness of his own place in the scheme of things is augmented by exploring the history of the island in terms of slavery and colonialism.

The first chapter of Banana Bottom describes the history of the place and the personal history of the protagonist who had been raped by a member of the Adair clan and this information leads to a description of the place's past. Crazy Bow was a descendant of the Scotsman who had bought the vast estate of Banana Bottom in the eighteen twenties. Unlike other white planters, he liberated his slaves and married one of them. He also sold his land in little plots to those who were willing to buy them. His Negress bore him plenty of children of different shades. Crazy Bow who belonged to the third generation was of a light brown complexion and was reputed to be very clever. So people thought that he would achieve success as success on the island was largely dependent on colour:

For the island colony was divided into three main groups in a political and social way. The descendants of the slaves were about three fourths of the population and classified as black or dark brown. The descendants of Europeans and slaves were about one fifth of the population and classified as coloured or light brown. The rest were a five thousand East Indians and Chinese and perhaps the same number of pure European descent.

The demarcations were not as real as they seemed. East Indian and Chinese blood were mingled in the dark brown group and obviously there were thousands who were drawn from European stock. But a strong transfusion of black African blood had determined their pigmentation and group. In the coloured group were many of a light complexion distinguished by Sudanese features and hair, while others of original coloured stock had approximated to and turned white.

But the social life of the colony was finely balanced by the divisions. The coloured group stood between the mass and the wealthy and governing classes and all the white collar jobs of business and government were reserved for it. (4-5)

Crazy Bow, however, did not complete high school. His intuitive understanding of music made the villagers excuse his eccentricities. Moreover, his identity as a member of the Adair clan also worked in his favour. The rape changed everything. Bow was sent to the madhouse and Bitá left Banana Bottom for Jubilee as a protege of the Craigs. At fifteen, Bitá gained the

unique privilege of going abroad for studies. Mrs Priscilla Craig wanted to redeem her from her past by a long period of separation without any contact with her native place. During the seven years of her education abroad, Bitá did not visit the island even once returning only after it was completed. Mrs Craig wanted her to be English in everything except the colour of her skin. But Bitá was basically unchanged despite the veneer of sophistication that she had acquired. This created a clash between her and Mrs Craig.

Bitá's education had made her aware of new trends by liberating her mind. Mrs Craig who was very tribal underneath had selected an institution famous for sound educational principles. Little did she realize that things had changed since her own days in school. The Victorian attitude had been replaced by Socialist and Feminist schools of thought. As for Bitá's classmates in England they had little knowledge of the Caribbean. They were thinking of Negroes in terms of cannibalism and grass skirts; even the term 'West Indies' was understood as India rather than the Caribbean.

McKay offers Squire Gensir as a contrast to the Craigs. Though he did not believe in God, he was more enlightened and liberal than the Craigs. It was he who suggested that Bitá should attend a tea meeting when Bitá's cousin Bab introduced her to him on her first visit to Banana Bottom after her return. The Squire's impression of Bitá is thus portrayed. "Squire Gensir had taken a quick mental inventory of Bitá. When Bab told him about his cousin he had assumed that he was going to meet a very affected made-to-order young lady indeed. And he had asked her to go to the meeting out of pure mischief. Her ready decision to go and her manners had been a delightful surprise. He had thought that with her background and her training, she would probably be an impossible if not an intolerable person with mannerisms that would be irritating to him. If there was one thing he detested it was that social quality that has been ridden so hard by moderns and Bohemians: middle-class gentility" (81). Soon Bitá and the squire developed a friendship. In one of their discussions Bitá expressed hatred for obeah. The squire had another attitude to it. He described it as part of Bitá's folklore like the Anancy tales and the digging

jammass. He told her, "And your folklore is the spiritual link between you and your ancestral origin. You ought to learn to appreciate it as I do mine. My mind is richer because I know your folklore. I am sure you believe the fables of La Fontaine and Aesop fine and literary and Anancy stories common and vulgar. Yet many of the Anancy stories are superior. It's because of misdirected education. But Mrs Craig could never see that" (125).

Mrs Craig had only contempt for the culture of the peasants. That was why she was horrified to learn that Bitá had attended a tea meeting. But on hearing that she was accompanied by Squire Gensir, she was mollified, because he had a reputation that was impeccable. On another occasion, we see Mrs Craig contemplating the idols that a missionary had brought back from Sudan. She felt that they had no artistry at all, so far removed were they from the Greek and Roman traditions. Yet she was fascinated by them. She felt that they were potent but decadent and immoral:

There she stood in contemplation, convinced that she understood more about them than the missionary exhibitors. There was much more

behind their exhibition than they thought. The objects were so positively real. Surely they possessed some elemental force representing more than mere idol making. She was troubled to think that they might have their origin in some genuine belief, troubled to think that such a belief might have prompted magic-workers to celebrate and preserve its potency. That the night-wrapped creatures of Afria might also have had there in the dim jungles their own vision of life. (198)

The impact of the images was so great that Mrs Craig had a hideous dream where the monsters started dancing all around her. Her own son Patou was among the masks grinning and dancing around her. Incidentally, the natives had called her son Patou or screech owl because of the noises he made in his semi-idiotic state. When her experiment with Bitu failed it was Mrs Craig rather than Malcolm Craig who felt crestfallen. Unlike her husband, the tropical island was a strange place to her and she could not understand Bitu's motivation. She could not fathom why Bitu should choose to repudiate the values of white society that her education had given her. Malcolm Craig was willing to accept the fact that Bitu would be happier in her own sphere.

The attitude of a large segment of the white population is shown through Busha Glengley. He felt that Bitu, a Negro girl, had been educated above her

station. Squire Gensir, to whom he expressed the view, was annoyed to hear this. The squire believed that real education was an intrinsic thing and not the monopoly of any class. It was useless to express this view to Busha Glengley whose only interest in Negro girls was physical, for he had coloured children by the score. One of them called Arthur actually tried to assault Bitá. Being of a healthy pink colour, he had the false notion that black girls would welcome his attentions. He first tried to use charm but when it failed he started to use force. Fortunately for Bitá, Jubban arrived in the nick of the moment and saved her. But his phrase, "only a Nigger girl" rankled within her. It made her muse upon the racial problem:

She thought how the finest qualities of mind or brain or heart were the attributes of only the rarest spirits, who may spring like flowers in the commonest as much as the most exclusive places, in the proud domain as well as the peasant's lot and even in hothouses. How then could any class or people or nation or race claim a monopoly of a thing so precious and so erratic in its manifestations? Oh, she marvelled at the imbecilities of a sepulchre white world that has used every barrier imaginable to dam the universal flow of human feelings by suppressing and denying to another branch of humanity the highest gifts of nature, simply because its epidermis was coloured black. (266)

Musing thus, Bitá came to the conclusion that she was proud of her Negro identity. "And no sneer, no sarcasm, no banal ridicule of a ridiculous world could destroy her confidence and pride in herself and make her ashamed of that fine body that was the temple of her high spirit. For she knew that she was a worthy human being. She knew that she was beautiful" (266).

Unfortunately however, the coloured people also shared the attitude of the white people. Herald Newton Day, Bitá's betrothed, had the same prejudices. He associated purity with a white woman and was inspired because Bitá had been trained like one. His ideal was Mrs Craig, who possessed a fine mind and lofty ideals. Bitá however did not share his view. She preferred to be herself despite her training and was bold enough to tell him so in the initial stages of courtship. On another occasion Herald expressed great tolerance for the lack of belief of Squire Gensir saying that it was craziness that resulted from too much erudition. In his opinion, it affected the white people only, an attitude that irritated Bitá. At their meeting, Herald Newton did not hit it off with Squire Gensir for, Squire Gensir

did not believe in progress. This attitude made him retort. "Really sir! But life without progress is stagnation. Look at us Negroes for example. The savage brutish state we were in both in Africa and in America before civilization aroused us. We owe all we are today to progress" (71). Here we find him completely enslaved by the attitudes of the white colonial masters. Bitá, in contrast, benefitted by the influence of Squire Gensir whose outlook on life was completely different from the lives and attitudes of the majority of the white people. It was he who made her examine her own tradition and ancestry with pride, whereas people like Mrs Craig were trying to make her forget it and accept an alien culture as her own.

In Lamming's novel, the search for roots is implicit in G's growing awareness of himself. Other people's experiences and attitudes are also introduced to complete the picture. G's life starts with a total absence of relatives with the exception of his mother. This symbolizes the absence of tradition. To quote Gloria Lyn, "The novel opens as in some romance structures, with the descent theme: the description of

the strict social hierarchy with the landlord at the top reflects the sharp descent in status of the descendants of slaves. Enforced departure from Africa means the struggle to survive, a separation from families, a sense of individual loss and confusion, a break in the continuity of identity, all of which are reflected in the conversation between G and his mother about the absence of his father and all his other relatives. It is clear that Lamming is using the amnesia motif in getting his story started" (114).

In Creighton village, the activities of the villagers are attuned to those of the landlord. When the light inside the landlord's house is put out at night, the villagers would do likewise and go to sleep. Their thoughts and habits were influenced in the same way.

The Empire Day celebrations is used by Lamming to satirize the education offered by the colonial masters. The boys were taught about William the Conqueror but not about slavery. When the older people in the village described Queen Victoria as the queen who had set them free, the boys were puzzled. Slavery

appeared unreal to them: "The idea of ownership. One man owned another they laughed quietly. Imagine any man in any part of the world owning a man or a woman from Barbados. They would forget all about it since it happened too long ago. Moreover, they weren't told anything about that. They had read about the Battle of Hastings and William the Conqueror. That happened so many hundred years ago. And slavery was thousands of years before that. It was too far back for anyone to worry about teaching it as history. That's really why it wasn't taught" (50). When the pennies are distributed to them, they contemplate the king's face depicted on them and imagine bizarre things about him.

Among the villagers there was a shoemaker who liked to read books on History. He presented his own concept of imperialism to his friends by describing the Greek empire as owned by Alexander the Great. But even he was critical of the education granted to Barbados that never mentioned Negro leaders like Marcus Garvey. Marcus Garvey had become unpopular because he referred to Negro brotherhood based upon African ancestry. A highschool teacher had walked out of the meeting where

Garvey was speaking because he did not like to be identified with black Africa. This was the prejudice of the coloured folks. In the episode by the sea, we see the boys discussing the colour prejudice:

We had taken in like our daily bread a kind of infectious amusement about the colour, black. There was no extreme comparison. No black boy wanted to be white,, but it was also true that no black boy liked the idea of being black. Brown skin was a satisfactory compromise, and brown skin meant a mixture of white and black. The best-looking girls in the village and in the whole island where those whose mothers had consorted with white men. They were brown skin, soft chocolate creamed with long hair that curled and flew in the wind. (119)

Lamming also describes how the word "black" was used in anger to insult the opponent. This did not however mean that all white people earned respect. Apart from gentlemen like Mr Creighton, the other whites who came to the island to work were butts of ridicule. Early in the novel, Miss Foster describes how a boy called Gordon makes a fowlcock dirty a white gentleman's shirt. As the unfortunate gentleman rushed home, the other boys followed him singing a ditty about a fowlcock. In one of the inset tales a white woman is mentioned as coming to the village to propagate the idea

of marriage among the blacks who preferred to live together. Her interference only brought misery and tragedy to Bambi who had married Bots at her suggestion. The people preferred to lead their own lives without being hedged in by the rules of white society:

Miss Foster. My Mother. Bob's mother. It seemed they were three pieces in a pattern which remained constant. The flow of its history was undisturbed by any difference in the pieces nor was its evenness affected by any likeness. There was a difference and there was no difference. Miss Foster had six children, three by a butcher, and two by a baker, and one whose father had never been mentioned. Bob's mother had two, and my mother had one. The difference between six and two and one did not belong to the piece itself... The sun let its light flow down on them as life let itself flow through them. Three. Thirteen. Thirty. Three hundred. (16-17)

According to Gloria Lyn, the colonial experience has analogies to falling asleep and entering the dream world which has images of nightmare (114). Lamming makes use of this on two occasions within the novel. The boy G has dreams where he sees phantoms which laugh at him. This indicates his loss of identity and may be compared to Mrs Craig's nightmare of African masks with her own son Patou among them in Banana Bottom. In Mrs Craig's case the African presence

threatens her identity eventhough she had never given it importance earlier. On another occasion in the novel Lamming uses the dream of the old man as a sort of spiritual revelation that outlines the flow of history. As the old woman testifies, the old man was fluent and coherent in his dream but she could not follow the meaning. The old man becomes the ancestral voice describing the tale of slavery:

And strange was the time that change my neighbour and me, the tribes with gods and the one tribe without. The silver of exchange sailed across the sea and my people scatter like clouds in the sky when the waters come. There was similar buying and selling 'amongst tribe and tribe, but this was the biggest of the bargains for tribes. Each sell his own. A man walked out in the market square and one buyer watch his tooth and another his toe and the parts that was private for the coming of a creature in the intimate night. The silver sail from hand to hand and the purchase was shipped like a box of good fruit. The sale was the best of Africa's produce, and me and my neighbour made the same bargains. I make my peace with the middle passage to settle on that side of the sea the white man call a world that was west of another world. The tribes with gods and the one tribe without we all went the way of the white man's money. (202)

The dream goes on to become a critique of feudalism, colonialism and capitalism. Ironically however, immediately after this sequence, we see the old woman dying leaving the old man all alone in the world.

In G's case, however, his quest for identity goes on beyond the novel. His friend Trumper, who had earlier migrated to the U.S came back to the island on the eve of G's departure for Trinidad. Unlike G Trumper's experience in the outer world had made him realize his identity as a black man. G was bewildered by Trumper's pronouncements.

"Tis a tremendous difference," said Trumper. "One single word make a tremendous difference, that's why you can never be too sure what a word will do. I'm a nigger or a Negro an' all o' us put together is niggers or Negroes. There ain't no "man" an' there ain't no "people." Just nigger an' little as that seem 'tis a tremendous difference. It make a tremendous difference not to the whites but the blacks. 'Tis the blacks who get affected by leavin' out that word "man" or "people." That's how we learn the race. 'Tis what a word can do. No there ain't a black man in all America who won't get up an' say I'm a Negro an' I'm proud of it. We all are proud of it. I'm going to fight for the rights o' the Negroes, and I'll die fighting. That's what any black man in the states will say. He ain't got no time to think 'bout the rights o' Man or People or whatever you choose to call it..." (289)

Trumper also told him that a man who knew his people would never feel alone. In G's case, he was on the threshold of a new life. "When I reach Trinidad where no one knows me I may be able to strike identity

with the other persons. But it was never possible here. I am always feeling terrified of being known; not because they really know you, but simply because their claim to this knowledge is a concealed attempt to destroy you. That's what knowing means. As soon as they know you they will kill you, and thank God that's why they can't kill you. They can never know you. Sometimes I think the same thing will be true in Trinidad. The likeness will meet and make merry, but they won't know you. They won't know the you that's hidden somewhere in the castle of your skin" (253).

G's confused state of mind is revealed here and the confusion owes to the absence of knowledge of his true roots. The amnesia of colonialism and its system of education had made him a stranger to himself. In Trumper's case, however, his first hand experience of racial prejudice in the United States had made him identify his own people as opposed to the white "other." In Barbados the majority of people were black or coloured but the educational system was based on the values of white society. As a result, education did not

liberate a person into the realm of free thinking. On the other hand it alienated and isolated him from his own people.

In Brother Man the search for roots is centred in the protagonist who is in the process of emerging in the identity of a messiah. John Power had become 'Brother Man' when he joined the Rastafarian group. The movement was based on black pride being linked up with the quest for a black king 'Ras Tafari.' As a Rasta man, the protagonist had to spread the message of 'peace and love.' Side by side with him, another Rastaman is also portrayed who is 'Evil' as opposed to the good of Bra' Man. Though the weed was used by many Rastas, Roger Mais presents his protagonist as opposed to social evils like ganja and obeah. Brother Man is presented as a person doing his very best for his people whereas Brother Ambo practises obeah and extorts money out of them. Yet both the protagonist and his movement are often misunderstood by the very people whom he helps. Brother Man sometimes felt weary:

He felt a sense of physical weariness when he got home. He decided he would go to bed and get some sleep. Some crazy ganja-smoker or

other, trying to get himself a pass'1 of the weed. She would be safe enough with Minette for company. Lord, there was trouble enough in the world. So many people who were led, as though by a ring in the nose, into all the paths of violence. Already too much excitement for one day. Must do something about Miss Ida's Joe, the boy should go to school. Too young to be earning his own money, feeling himself a man, even though it was selling papers. Boys get into no ends of mischief, that way.

He turned over on his other side and tried to will himself to go to sleep.

What a man needed above all was a clear vision. Sometimes what a man wanted to see stood in the way. A man must go down inside himself and search himself earnestly, and after that he should stand and wait. And when the call came he would hear it. What a man needed most was to be quit of himself, and be still, and wait the call. (56-57)

Here we see how his involvement in community life goes parallel to his search for his true self. On another occasion, we find Bra' Man explaining his cult to a little boy. He had bought a live crab from the boy only to let it go explaining how the animal was being hurt. This set them talking and the boy wanted to know why he wore a beard. Brother Man replied that it was the Bible way of John the Baptist and Samson. He then related how the Spirit of the Lord had gone over to Ethiopia when Israel was parted among the nations.

Though the twelve tribes had got scattered, the Queen of Sheba had learnt all the wisdom from Solomon and had taken it back to her land. So it was black men from out of Africa who were the Chosen People of God for they had learnt the way. Here we find Roger Mais making his protagonist explain the tenets of Rastafarianism. In the novel, however, the little boy did not understand everything that was explained to him. After leaving the boy, Brother Man went over to the seaside to watch the waves. He was in search of something:

He closed his eyes, let his thoughts go, his mind a near blank, and felt them wash over him with the rhythm and sound of water.

He saw in a vision a man in shining scales like chain armour stand up out of the water, come striding towards him across the bay.

"What do you want here?" the man said but his voice was gentle, without menace or challenge.

"Nothing..... only looking the way"

"Why come here to look?"

"To be alone, and invite the vision, and listen for the call."

The vision melted before his eyes like mist, but a voice said: "Go, and anoint yourself, and fast for three days!"

And sitting there, a great wave of ineffable peace flowed over him, and he just lay with his eyes closed and fell asleep. (75-76)

The progress to messianic status is slow in the protagonist. His healing powers become manifest at first. People started flocking around him after an incident when he healed a child through prayers. He realized that he was only a channel through which life flowed. Soon his followers increased and many of them touched him with their hands believing that he had miraculous powers. He felt embarrassed but he addressed the people in simple, down-to-earth language showing them the path of righteousness. But when they wanted to become his followers, he told them to fast for three days and come again. He himself went to Warraka Hills to fast for three days and nights. After this, he started writing his testament recording all the facts of his life.

At home, he had a different sort of struggle. His affection for Minette had changed to love but though Minette too was in love with him, Brother Man thought that he should control himself. An incident from his early life had made him wary of physical love. One day he related the whole story to Minette. His real name was John Power and he had been living with a girl called

Velta. The two of them were happy together till his friend Ben became the bone of contention between them. His generosity to Ben was resented by Velta. On one occasion Brother Man bailed Ben out from police custody and took him home. Velta was so annoyed that she created a scene. This affected Ben deeply and he committed suicide. This incident changed the relationship between Brother Man and Velta. His coldness towards her made Velta frustrated, and she boasted that she had other male friends. So Brother Man deserted her. Velta then took revenge on him by planting ganja in his place and informing the police. This led to his arrest and later to imprisonment. Hearing the story Minette declared that she would never betray anyone let alone her benefactor. Ironically however, the very next moment Corporal Jennings arrived there with a search warrant. Thanks to Papacita and Cordelia, Brother Man was arrested though he was innocent. The incident is used by Roger Mais to highlight how the protagonist's experiences in his youth make him more human and understanding. His involvement with Minette becomes a source of strength as the novel proceeds. When Brother Man's popularity suffered on

account of the counterfeit charge and the general animosity towards bearded men, it was Minette who stood by him and helped him.

Man-Woman Relationships: Man-woman relationships are explored in detail in all the three novels. In Brother Man and Banana Bottom the protagonists' relationships with the opposite sex play key roles in determining their identities. In Lamming's novel, the awareness of the protagonist regarding human relationships is that of an adolescent. He surveys the world around him and in the company of his friends draws his own conclusions. Lamming also uses inset tales on the subject of marriage to portray the complexities of the Caribbean milieu where the values of the white colonial society are an interpolation. He comments wryly on people who get entangled emotionally with one another and find themselves unable to be free of the mess. Banana Bottom portrays the hypocrisy of the upper crust of society with humour. Apart from Bita's involvement with several men, other ladies like Belle Black, Yoni Legge and Mrs Priscilla Craig are also portrayed in relation to the opposite sex both for commentary and for contrast.

In Brother Man the Papacita-Girlie relationship is offered as a contrast to Brother Man's relationship with Minette. Jesmina's relationship with Shine, and Brother Man's earlier involvement with Velta are touched upon for further contrast. These relationships contribute to the emergence of selfhood in the protagonist as all these characters are associated with him at one point or the other.

In the Castle of My Skin projects G as a boy whose only relative is his mother. G's mother cared deeply for him and abstained from promiscuity for his sake. She tried to instil in him good, religious values which played a significant role in determining his identity. Some of her friends, like Miss Foster for example had children by different fathers but G's mother preferred to devote all her time and effort in bringing up the son she had brought into the world.

The old couple Ma and Pa are presented as examples of affection and tenderness. A lifetime of togetherness, even in the midst of poverty and deprivation had made them staunch believers in God and in one another. We see the old woman soothing the old

man after his nightmares. She would hold his hands whenever he was frightened telling him to trust in the Lord. When she died, he was left all alone in the world.

In the village, girls and boys met frequently in the woods close by. An incident is described where a crowd of villagers buying black pudding are surprised by the appearance of a white man who comes to buy the delicacy. The villagers moved back as he arrived smiling and urbane. They did not protest as he made his purchase ahead of the others who had been waiting for a long time. Obviously, the purchase was made for the black girl in his car, his date for the evening. The incident focusses on promiscuity as quite common in the village. On the night of the party at Creighton's house, the boys watched one of the sailors trying to seduce Creighton's daughter. Later on, the story was falsified and the white sailor became a gallant knight who rescued Creighton's daughter from the clutches of black ruffians. The story of Mr Slime's extra-maxital affair is told with wry humour. The head teacher's

discomfiture at the discovery of his wife's infidelity comes immediately after he has beaten up his servant's son for gossiping about him in school.

Two inset tales on the subject of marriage are introduced to show the growing awareness of the boys about man-woman relationships. At the seaside Trumper related the story of Jon, Jen and Susie. Jon had been living with Susie and had fathered two children when he joined a Christian sect called "Free for all Brethren." His decision had been influenced by the preacher Brother Bannister who insisted that his church was the door to salvation. Religion did not quell promiscuity, however; soon Brother Bannister's daughter Jen became pregnant by Jon. This made the preacher angry and he threatened to shoot Jon if he did not marry Jen. When Jon related his story to Susie, she threatened to poison Jon if he did not marry her. So Jon promised to marry her just as he had promised to marry Jen earlier. The same date and time was fixed for both marriages but the churches were different. Each girl was told to be secretive about her plans to prevent the other from knowing. On the appointed day, both the brides waited while Jon hid

himself in a mahogany tree. Soon the secret was out and absolute confusion reigned as Jon watched from the tree. The next day Jon was caught by the villagers in the same state of indecision. Gloria Lyn comments on the situation in the article referred to earlier:

It was not until Jon joined the Free For All Brethren and Brother Bannister asked him to do his duty as "a man and a Christian" (123) that he found himself faced with an impossible task.

Not only did he find it impossible to bear his burden as a "man" or as a "Christian" which to him at the moment seemed highly contradictory; but he was threatened by the "Christian" Brother Bannister with a gun if he did not marry Jen and with poison by Susie, if he did. The satirical thrust against this kind of "practice" in Christianity becomes clear when a fight nearly broke out between Brother Bannister and the priest. Lamming underlines the confusion in Jon's mind and his total ignorance of the mystery of marriage ritual when he has him admit he isn't sure what the decision to marry entails. (119)

Here Jon's fear of dying makes him promise marriage to two ladies. At the same time he finds it difficult to make a choice. The boys discuss Jon's split personality. In fact, they think that there are three Jons - one in each church and one in the tree. Trumper felt that it was so, though it made no sense. This story led Boy Blue to relate the next tale about

Bambi, Bots and Bambina. In this case Bambi had been living with two women and had been providing for both of them. All three - Bambi and his women - were satisfied with the arrangement. It was then that a white lady appeared in the village advising marriage as a way of salvation. She had come from England and was bent on redeeming the heathens. She insisted that Bambi should get married to one of the two women - either Bots or Bambina. Without understanding the implications, he tossed a coin and the lot fell to Bots. Bambina had no complaints provided Bambi treated her the same way as before. After a grand wedding where everyone enjoyed themselves, Bambi began to change. He became moody, took to drinking and beating up both his women. Both the ladies realized that something was wrong and started blaming one another. Soon the two ladies became bitter enemies and because of the strain Bambi died of a heart attack in Bambina's house. This led to a quarrel as to who should claim the body, Bots being his legal wife and Bambina being the person with whom he was at the time of his death. The undertakers arranged by the ladies took it upon themselves to worsen the quarrel. Scandalizing events took place with Bots trying to steal Bambi's body

from Bambina's house in the middle of the night and Bambina finding out in the nick of time. In the morning the police arrived and then it was revealed that both the ladies did not have enough money for a funeral. In the end, the poor man was given a pauper's grave. The author stresses the contrast in Bambi's character before and after marriage to focus attention on the effects of a religious ritual imposed from outside by the sinister white lady.

In the light of the two tales, the boys come up with their own thoughts on the subject of marriage. Trumper's version goes thus:

"But I tellin' you I ain't," Trumper said. He spoke with great confidence. "Cause there's so many other things bad about it," he said, "I, you can't sort of get 'bout as you like, an' the woman always seem to think she's got some special kind of claim on you, as if you're a kind of pigeon or fowl. You say you goin' here or there, she want to ask you where, an' sometimes you don't really know wher you goin', you just takin' a walk to stretch yuh legs, but she says you lyin', an' she can't believe a word of what you sayin'. You can't pitch or play bat-an'-ball when you like 'cause there's a chil' to feed, an' this to do an' that to do and when you ask what the bloody hell she was doin' or would 'ave do if you di'nt come along and put yourself in all that, she up an' talk you. You don't trouble trouble trouble

till trouble trouble you. An' you can' tell her to fly in hell 'cause there's the police court ready to land you in gaol an' only God knows what." (134)

Here the attitude of the West Indian man is portrayed on the subject of marriage. In Banana Bottom we get the female perspective through Bitia Plant. But even here there is an obvious limitation. Claude McKay makes Bitia his mouthpiece, and though his portrayal is sympathetic, an indepth analysis of the feminine psyche is lacking.

Bitia's involvement with the opposite sex starts at the tender age of twelve before she is mature enough to understand all the implications. After her rape by Crazy Bow, she gets involved with different men till she finally marries Jubban. These involvements play crucial roles in helping her understand herself and realize her identity. The involvements of other characters like Yoni Legge, Belle Black etc., are also brought in to present the general situation.

Bitia was not mature enough when Crazy Bow forced her but the fault was not completely his. Bitia was romping with him as he played on his fiddle on the

grass close to the river. It was she who started kissing him. At first he pushed her off but the temptation was too great. He lost control over himself. Her aunt was the first to discover the damage. As Bitá's father was away, she called the midwife of Banana Bottom, Sister Phibby Patroll who confirmed the rape. It was she who spread the story in the village and took it to the Craigs in Jubilee. Soon Bitá became the subject of gossip. The incident changed her life completely as it did Crazy Bow's.

Bitá's next involvement was with her prospective husband, Herald Newton Day whom the Craigs had selected as the successor to Jubilee Mission. Bitá was not impressed by Herald Newton but when he proposed to her, she accepted the proposal because the Craigs expected her to. The Craigs had made her what she was and she had to please them. Anyway she would have to marry, then why not marry someone the Craigs would approve of? Thus the decision was made for convenience rather than for love and the days that followed found Bitá devising ways and means to escape the company of her fiancée who was extremely pompous and boring. She

found him physically and mentally unattractive. Even the local lad, Hopping Dick, was better than he! So she was thankful when she had to return to Banana Bottom on account of her aunt's illness. At Banana Bottom, Bitu mentioned her coming marriage to Squire Gensir saying that it was an arranged one. Surprisingly he came out with the following statement: "Lots of marriages are arranged and turn out all right. Perhaps better than the falling-in-love ones. Nearly all marriages are arranged among Eastern peoples. That is for the greater majority of mankind" (126). While leaving Squire Gensir's house, she was seen by Busha Glengley, a white man who looked at her in a purely animal way. Squire Gensir was repelled by his attitudes.

In Banana Bottom, Bitu had an experience with a disreputable young man called Tack Tally who spied on her while she was bathing in a pool and hid her clothes. Bitu was annoyed and shouted threateningly at him. He ran away but a few days later she got a letter from him suggesting that they be friends. Bitu found the letter extremely funny and presumptuous and showed it to Yoni Legge, the seamstress of Banana Bottom. Yoni was

infatuated with Tack Tally and Bitá thought that this letter would show him up for what he was. Yoni, however, became jealous of Bitá and went to consult Wumba, the obeahman, to devise ways and means to make Tack Tally hers. Unfortunately for Yoni, she was caught red-handed by the minister while enjoying herself with Tack Tally. This led to her dismissal from service. Yoni's stepfather in anger turned her out of his house and went to shout at Tack Tally. When the old man started abusing him, Tack Tally collared him but the old man collapsed in his hands and died. In fright Tack Tally ran away to Wumba, the obeahman to whom he had paid a good sum of money to be protected from evil. When he reached there, Wumba was away. In sheer desperation Tack Tally hanged himself. When Wumba returned, the sight of the half-eaten corpse terrified him. He ran through the village shouting about Jesus's judgement making the people think that he had gone mad. Later on they discovered the corpse through the gathering and flapping of buzzards over the trees.

In the meanwhile Bitá's aunt had recovered from her illness. During the Harvest Festival, Herald Newton arrived and Bitá had to devise clever ways of evading

him. Belle Black was of great help to Bitá in this regard for, she arrived in Banana Bottom with Hopping Dick. Herald Newton was supposed to deliver a sermon but as the congregation waited, Herald Newton defiled himself with a nanny goat. This sexual aberration discovered by the owner of the nanny goat, finished his clerical career and his engagement. The Craigs were terribly disappointed but Bitá was relieved. About this particular incident, Kenneth Ramchand has the following comment to make in his The West Indian Novel and Its Background: "The plot demands that Herald Newton should be removed from the scene but one cannot help feeling that the author is indulging a spiteful impulse. The spite in this account may be compared with the humour and tolerance with which in a later section, McKay presents the scandal discovered by Sister Phibby Patroll, at the height of a religious revival, that sister-in-Christ Yoni Legge is pregnant by a fellow convert Hopping Dick" (270). The point is that Herald Newton is thus got rid of as the protagonist seeks a better man.

Back in Jubilee, Bitá started frequenting dances and parties horrifying the Craigs. She enjoyed the company of Hopping Dick who was a very good dancer. At first she practised secrecy but this was a strain upon her because she was basically honest. She even considered telling Mrs Craig about her outing with Hopping Dick but she was put off when Rosyanna, the maid, related an example of Mrs Craig's hypocrisy. Rosyanna was indignant when Mrs Craig ran off with her slippers that were beneath her husband's bed. She wanted to hide the fact that she had matrimonial relations with her own husband! So Bitá decided not to tell Mrs Craig. But in time however, she found out. Mrs Craig objected to Hopping Dick escorting Bitá to parties and challenged her with the question as to whether she would marry Hopping Dick. To her amazement, Bitá replied that she would. Bitá realized that she would have to leave Jubilee Mission as sensational scenes became common between her and Mrs Craig. When Bitá in anger slapped Rosyanna's face for not serving her food on Mr Craig's instructions, Mrs Craig was horrified. Her people were summoned and an irate Mrs Craig described her as a nymphomaniac to the

ignorant Aunt Nommy. Hopping Dick too was summoned as Bitá insisted that she loved him. Unfortunately however, Hopping Dick was not willing to undertake the terrible responsibility of marriage. His reaction to the proposal is presented thus:

Hopping Dick had never thought that his little philandering would have carried to such a crisis. He had been prancing proud of the opportunity of going about in the company of the most cultivated Negro girl in Jubilee. How it had enhanced his prestige among his associates of the Saturday-night dances and card parties and in the grog shops!

But for all his vanity he had never entertained the slightest possibility of Bitá becoming his wife. Bitá was piquant to him as the young lady of the Jubilee Mission. He had never thought of her out of that setting, much less that he would be called upon to remove her thence - to what other? Yet there he was faced with the necessity of that.

How could one in his station dream of marrying a girl like Bitá who had been brought up to refinement and accustomed to large comforts and nice things. He couldn't take her to live with his mother in their little two roomed house. And how would he provide for her? He who was still indirectly supported by his father. (223-224)

The incident ended Bitá's stay at the Mission. She went back to Banana Bottom. Bitá had several suitors but she did not like any of them. Some of them,

especially the "coloured" men, felt indignant at her refusal. She also had an unhappy experience with Busha Glengley's mulatto offspring who tried to force his attention on her.

Bitá's interest in Jubban was slow to develop but after the incident with Arthur Glengley, Bitá started paying him more attention. She made the servant clean out his room and presented him with a bouquet of flowers. Earlier, Jubban had picked her up in his arms after she had fainted at a fetish dance. She observed that Jubban was a responsible person and started treating him with affection. Unlike Hopping Dick, Jubban was no dandy but Bitá found him attractive. She started attending tea-meetings with him. His quiet strength made her feel secure and the way in which he declared his love revealed his character. He did it by kissing her at a tea meeting: "She was touched by the manner he had chosen to reveal his feeling for her. He had taken his kiss without a word. But no word was necessary, for the kiss itself had spoken warmly telling her more than speech could tell. And now she was struck again by the attractiveness of him, how although he was

always working in the sun and rain, day and night, his skin possessed a velvety indigo-black tone like an eggplant and that among all the men gathered there at that tea-meeting he was the most appealing" (278-279). When her father died, it was with Jubban that she went to fetch his body home. The journey together established a new intimacy between them. Though her father's body was in the carriage, they made love feeling sure that the soul of Jordan Plant would approve. Once the decision was made, Bita wanted an early marriage but Aunt Nommy insisted that they should wait a decent interval for the sake of her father's memory. After the marriage Bita settled down to contented domesticity. Though Jubban did not excel in many things he accepted it with grace because Bita was educated.

Bita no longer had romantic illusions about love. In fact she felt that the idea of romance itself was not intrinsic to her race. Here we find McKay using the protagonist as his mouthpiece to summarily dismiss the western idea of romance. But one wonders how realistic Bita's contentment with Jubban was. In the

idyllic setting of Banana Bottom, with even financial constraints cleared through Squire Gensir's legacy, did Bitá lack intellectual companionship? One is inclined to think that she did when one remembers her sessions with Squire Gensir and how they motivated her. But one can easily understand Bitá's preferring Jubban to the sanctimonious Herald Newton Day even without his sexual aberration.

In the case of Yoni Legge, she recovered from the Tack Tally episode by joining the Religious Revival. In due time however she was discovered to be pregnant by Hopping Dick, another religious enthusiast. Both of them were dismissed from churchly fellowship but Dick decided to marry Yoni Legge and settle down. The two had a double wedding with Jubban and Bitá. Dick and Yoni were suited to each other but the villagers were surprised because Bitá chose to marry her own father's drayman after all her education.

In Brother Man, the protagonist's involvement with Minette is explored as growing in proportion to his messianic status. According to Brathwaite, Minette presents as an aspect of 'eros' or sensual love while

Brother Man presents as an aspect of 'caritas' or impersonal love (Introduction xvi). Later on however, the dualistic divisions are laid aside as their love deepens into beauty and permanence. The relationship of Papacita and Girlie in contrast is based purely on carnal love. It progresses to boredom, irritation, hatred and violence. Papacita's lack of responsibility, dislike of hard work and flirtatious nature spoil the relationship and bring about his own doom.

In the first chapter Papacita and Girlie are seen engaged in a game of cat and mouse. After arguments about Papacita's absence the previous night, the mood changed to passion. Their love-making is compared to a pair of wrestlers engaged in mutual combat. Girlie liked to be overcome by Papacita's sheer strength as the fight usually acted as an aphrodisiac for the two of them. After their fierce love-making, they lay side by side, spent. After a while, Girlie tried to reawaken his passion. This irritated Papacita who considered it a taunt to his manhood to indicate that she was still unfulfilled. This was a sore point

between them as their love was based only on sex. Talking about the previous night, the two started to quarrel, Papacita threatening to quit. This made Girlie furious and she slashed at him with a knife. Papacita was wounded but he retaliated by twisting Girlie's hand. He then left the house after bandaging his wound with a towel. In spite of this, Papacita felt great love for Girlie when he returned that night and found her sleeping looking helpless and lost. "She looked so helpless lying in the bed, something reached out and touched him with a sense of pity and loss. He saw her in that moment as something out of himself, but he didn't use that word" (44-45). Nevertheless he could not escape from his identity as a woman-chaser. He started flirting with Minette and when Girlie came to know about his outing with her, a bitter quarrel ensued. Papacita kicked and beat Girlie while she reacted by scratching him and biting his throat. He had to hold her by her own throat to force her jaws loose. Girlie swooned in his arms and Papacita felt nauseated as he carried her to the washstand in an effort to revive her.

After this incident he stopped living with Girlie and moved into another apartment. Though he missed her little attentions, he did not like her possessive nature. He did not want to give up his freedom for her sake. Girlie felt hurt and resentful by Papacita's attitude because she really loved him. As the days passed by the love turned to hatred. She realized that she had made a fool of herself with Papacita. Her resentment grew till she became insane. Finding Papacita's new apartment she went there but Papacita was irritated to see her. He told her to leave him in peace. As he was washing his hands, with his back to her, Girlie struck him from behind and killed him.

In the case of Brother Man and Minette, it was Minette who started loving Brother Man on a physical level. She had been taken off the streets by him and had started living with him. But she was disappointed because he established no physical intimacy with her. In their society, the girls usually provided every comfort to the man who gave them bread and board.

Brother Man made no such demand. As the days passed by, her affection deepened into love and she felt frustrated because Brother Man seemed to disregard it:

But she was young, and things were stirring inside her, and she couldn't make him understand or aware of her in that way at all. She wanted more than anything in the world that she should be able to give him something in return for all that he had done for her, that she should share his life with him, as she shared his home; in short, become his mistress, since she never thought of asking him to marry her. And in her simple way of looking at things there was nothing at all the matter with that; man and woman lived like that all over the place, in the country and the city alike. It didn't matter the least, it was nothing.
(32)

So Minette tried to get close to him, talking about love and standing close to him. She was happy to note that her closeness had its effect on Brother Man, for, he moved away instinctively. In the meanwhile Papacita started chasing her but Minette did not like it very much as she knew about Girlie's jealousy. Papacita's pursuit of her made her impatient with Brother Man: "How come he didn't look at her as a man might look at a woman at all? He was a holy man? Yes, so what did that matter? Only among the Roman Catholics a thing like that mattered. And Bra' Man wasn't like

that at all. He was like other people - all the people who lived in the lane for instance; only he saw things a little different from them. And he was better than them, yes. But all the same a man, and in his prime. And it didn't make sense to her at all, and she wondered in what way had she come short" (33). One day while having dinner she asked him why he had not married. He replied that the time had not come for him. She also came to know that his real name was John Power, that Brother Man was his Rastafarian identity.

Finally Minette decided to go out with Papacita. The latter entertained her well at the Rockney Club and she enjoyed herself. But when he started making jibes at Brother Man she got annoyed and Papacita had to apologize. The arrival of the police at the club made Papacita scared and the sight of his ashen face was a surprise to Minette. Though Papacita was attracted towards Minette, Minette was getting more and more absorbed in Brother Man. She often found him acting strangely. One day, in the middle of the night, she woke up to find him staring down at her with a candle in his hand. Sitting on a stool close to her

bed, he started reading the Bible. When she started asking questions about man-woman relationships, his answers became evasive. The sudden appearance of a cockroach made Minette scream and run into Brother Man's arms. But he disappointed her by disentangling her hands and leaving the room without killing the cockroach.

Though Brother Man came to know about Papacita's involvement with Minette, he did not sit in judgment of her. He only thought of her as "a poor unhappy little girl with a bad conscience." One night, feeling restless and unable to sleep he decided to make himself some cocoa. In the midst of his activities Minette woke up and remonstrated with him for not waking her up. Coming close to him, she tried to make him aware of her presence. Her close proximity disturbed him and he moved away suddenly. This, however made Minette sob in grief and noticing this he reacted in an hitherto unforeseen manner:

Something like an animal cry went from him. He blundered back across the distance that separated them, went down on his knees beside her on the floor.

He took her by the wrists, pulled her hands down from her face. No words passed between them; but something did, something that went without words.

Slowly his arms went around her, pulling her towards him. She opened her eyes, as in a dream, and felt his hot, panting breath upon her face (136-137).

Here we find the protagonist trying hard to fight the temptation of sexual attraction and failing at it. An incident from his past had made him wary of emotional attachments with the opposite sex. It was this more than a religious understanding of sex as sin, that had made him reluctant to establish the bond of physical intimacy with Minette. When Minette heard the whole story of his betrayal by Velta she told him that she could never betray anyone, let alone Brother Man. Brother Man had taken her in his arms when he was rudely interrupted by the arrival of Corporal Jennings. Papacita had been behind the scheme, and he had done it to take Minette away from Brother Man. The scheme did not work, for Minette and Brother Man became even closer after his arrest and release. When the people started shunning him, Minette's love sustained him. After the

brutal assault on him, Minette and Jesmina nursed him back to health. It was Minette's confidence in him that made him sure of his success in the days to come.

Side by side with this, Cordelia's relationship with Jonas and Jesmina's relationship with Shine are explored as contrastive relationships. Jonas had been arrested for passing ganja and had made Cordelia embittered with the entire male population. In Jesmina's case, her love for Shine was beautiful and fulfilling but she was forced to forego it at her sister's insistence. We find her seeking Brother Man's consoling words at her moments of crisis as she struggles hard to keep sisterly affection from obliterating her deep love for Shine. Cordelia's warped mind brings her to a tragic end but Jesmina is sustained by the kindness of Brother Man. She repays him both by relating her sister's involvement with Papacita's scheme and by nursing him after the brutal attack of the mob. Brother Man, proves to be a true brother to her and to many others in the lane, spreading the message of "peace and love."

The man-woman relationships in Brother Man are convincingly portrayed and the "Chorus of people in the Lane" completes the picture by providing the common gossip. The rhythmic nature of the utterance provides a structure similar to New Orleans Jazz, according to Edward Brathwaite (XV). When the novel is contrasted with the other two, what we miss the most is the wry, sardonic humour that tinges Lamming's inset tales and McKay's satire of genteel hypocrisy. This however owes to the serious role of the protagonist of Roger Mais's novel.

Religion: The motif of religion is made use of by all three novelists to shed light on the influence of religion in the emergence of 'self.' Both the Christian religion as well as obeah are treated in the novels but it is of significance to note that obeah is not given much importance. When you contrast these three novels with the novels of the white writers treated in the first chapter, we see that the white writers give more importance to obeah than the black novelists. Though the focus is on African ancestry and the sense of pride in Negritude, all the three novels under scrutiny,

relegate obeah or the worship of the African deity Obi to the side. In the case of McKay's Banana Bottom both the Christian religion as well as African obeah are treated with sarcasm and humour. In fact, the latter is treated with disrespect, and ridiculed through the character of Wumba, the obeahman. Though Squire Gensir, speaks about it with tolerance, Bitá the protagonist does not give it any credence. In Brother Man religion is treated with respect and the Rastafarian hero upholds the Christian faith. The evil Brother Ambo is the practitioner of obeah. In Lamming's In the Castle of My Skin, no importance at all is given to obeah but the Christian religion is treated in a light vein.

Roger Mais's Brother Man portrays a Christ-like figure through the protagonist. There are many points of similarity between the two. But Mais redeems an otherwise monotonous development of character by focussing on Brother Man's involvement with Minette on a physical level. The novel also helps to dispel many misconceptions regarding the Rastafarian cult. Though the authorities suspected the Rastafarians, the movement itself was based on 'Peace and Love.' 'Brother Man' is

a Rasta name for the members had the habit of addressing one another as 'I-re brother' 'I-re man' etc..., John Creary expresses the following opinion in an article included in The Islands in Between edited by Louis James: "Mais insists on Brother Man's basic humanity when he shows Power finally taking Minette in total, unashamed love. Yet Mais uses his portrait of a Rastafarian cultist - the Rastafarian greeting, 'Peace and Love, Brother Man' comes at once to mind - only as a fulcrum between the human and the ideal. We learn something of John Power's thoughts but very little of his motivation, because as his name implies, he unites in himself Everyman - hence the common name John - with the ultimate motivation, Power. In him the humanity that gleams fitfully, fragmented, in the various characters of The Hills comes together. And his significance moves beyond that of John Power, the Healer and the Leader, to that he assumes in his final confrontation with the hysterical, violent mob that cannot endure his goodness. He is Mais's vision of the reincarnate Christ. There is no escape into sentimental mysticism from the political realities. Mais's conviction of spiritual values was too absolute" (1968, 57).

As the novel proceeds, the protagonist's stature as a messiah grows. Starting with the incident of the nightingale that he gives to a hungry boy he goes on to become a healer to the sick and a comforter for those in sorrow. As the people flock around him, he becomes more and more introspective and goes in search of truth. The vision by the seaside and the incident with 'Old Mag' are instances of his being different from other people. Old Mag was supposed to be the ghost of a lady who had lived and died alone. The people believed that if her ghost stopped and blessed anyone the person would be blessed. On the other hand if she cursed any person the person would be cursed. One night while out on a walk, Brother Man met a bent-over old woman who blessed him. As he was preoccupied he did not hear her. All of a sudden he realized that he had not answered her salutation. So he retraced his steps to find her but was unable to. Soon the story spread that old Mag had blessed him. Mais makes use of Biblical language to describe the many blessings that he brought the people as a healer. This is evident in 'Chapter Three' where the author describes his rising fame:

But the crowd of people who followed him became so great that it was an embarrassment to him, so he turned east and then north until he came to the Race Course ground in the centre of the city, and he climbed up on to the grand stand, and from there he addressed them.

He spoke to them in simple, down-to-earth language, telling them that they were to turn away from evil and to follow righteousness and many, realizing that was all he had to say, turned away in disappointment and some turned aside to mock, but even when they had gone there was still a great crowd left who listened to him and they would not let him go until late in the afternoon when he was spent and could scarcely lift himself up from the ground.

And even after the crowd had dispersed, and had gone to their homes, or to their business, a few still remained, and they called him 'master' and asked him diligently what things they should do to become his followers, swearing that they would follow him, even unto death. (109)

Here the parallel to Christ is obvious, and it also prepares us for the inevitable 'crucifixion.' The man who comes to help him after the beating is a person called Nathaniel whom he had helped in the past and who was one of the first to reaffirm his belief in him after the arrest. Minette and Jesmina accompany him. Brother Man recovers or is 'resurrected' on the third day and is fully determined to go ahead with his mission. The only difference from Christ is that the protagonist has a female counterpart in Minette.

Brother Ambo is the antithesis of Brother Man. Where Brother Man helps people in distress, Ambo extracts money from the poor people to work obeah. He boasted that he was 'a higher scientist' than Brother Man, for, he knew the science of the dead. When the people came and quoted these words to Brother Man, the latter replied that he preferred the Book of Life to the Book of the Dead. In her demented state Cordelia started imagining that her son was like a monster. So she went to consult Brother Ambo who took all her savings and told her how to work the obeah spells to dispel the ghosts on her son Jesmina was nauseated to see her sister boiling something in an iron pot in the middle of the night. She was horrified when she saw her killing a cock and collecting its blood, an obeah ritual. The obeah did not cure her son but her own mental state became worse. She started hating Brother Man and this hatred made her become an accomplice of Papacita. Papacita himself is compared to an Anancy spider early in the novel. Anancy is a deity of African origin and is looked upon as a trickster. To quote, "The wind came in and fluttered the calendar on the wall. The noises of people came up to them from the

lane below. A spider on the ceiling spun his web in silence, and they were as unconscious of him as he was of them. And the spider spun away, carrying out the design, the pattern of which lay concealed somewhere inside him, and he might have been the instrument of some spider deity working out and perfecting his narrow intention in the wide world" (34). Papacita's tricks brought about Cordelia's and his own doom though they were levelled against Brother Man. The novelist seems to underline the Christian idea of death being the wages of sin.

Claude McKay's treatment of religion is pregnant with irony. The author satirizes both the Christian missionaries and the obeah man, Wumba. Squire Gensir, the non-believer, is presented as a superior character to Priscilla Craig, Vaughan and others. Malcolm Craig is presented as a more understanding and humane person than his wife and Herald Newton Day becomes a source of comedy rather than pity.

At the beginning of the novel, the omniscient narrator describes the pioneering work of the Non-Conformist churches in the Caribbean:

In the glorious epoch that marks the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century a band of zealous non-conformists went forth to the famous and fertile slave belt of the New World to preach the Word to the Quashees. To bring to the jungle creatures light. But they were soon aware that to preach the light it was also necessary to teach. But the men who waxed rich upon black folk in the dark were opposed to the light. That started the great crusade for Freedom and Light for jungle folk. While some assailed the strongholds of non-conformists of religious and social slavocracy in Europe, others set forth to labour in the fields. Generally they were called missionaries. But upon examination the best of them will be found to be very different in spirit from the popular idea of missionaries prevailing today (11-12).

He then goes on to describe the Craigs as a family with a long history of service to the church. Though the Craigs served the community, they felt superior to the flock they led. Mrs Craig in particular is presented as fussy, partronising and hypocritical. She believed that black people were more prone to the snares of the flesh than other races. When Bitá rebelled and announced that she wanted to marry Hopping Dick, she was horrified at the girl's lack of gratitude. In her anger she described Bitá as a "nymphomaniac" to the ignorant Aunt Nommy who didn't know the meaning of the word.

Another preacher who is satirized in Evan Vaughan. He cashed in on a drought to usher in a religious revival in the village. The gullible villagers were taken in by him just as their ancestors had been taken in by Jacob Brown during the Coffee Pool scandal. Vaughan had the ability to raise the congregation to the level of frenzy making them wail and weep confessing their sins. On one occasion Squire Gensir and Bita attended one of their meetings. The nastiness of Vaughan made Squire Gensir extremely annoyed. Vaughan thought that the occasion was befitting to single the non-believer out and make him the butt of sanctimonious preaching. Squire Gensir put on an air of indifference eventhough he was irritated. Something funny happened to break up the meeting. A black woman started beating on a drum and singing. This set off a number of people in the crowd who began to prance and howl. Vaughan lost control over the congregation. Bita got caught up in the crowd of fetish dancers who started beating with supple-jacks. The whole atmosphere was pagan rather than Christian. Bita was mesmerized and was more affected by the fetish spirit than by the Penitent's Forum of Vaughan. Her reaction is thus captured:

In the midst of them Bitá seemed to be mesmerized by the common fetish spirit. It was a stranger, stronger thing than that of the Great Revival. Those bodies poised straight in religious ecstasy and dancing vertically up and down, whole shapes, seemed filled with an ancient nearly forgotten spirit, something ancestral recaptured in the emotional fervour, evoking in her memories of pictures of savage rites, tribal dancing with splendid swaying plumes and the brandishing of the supple-jacks struck her symbolic of raised and clashing triumphant spears. (250)

The author seems to suggest that Bitá's nature is closer to the African cult than the Christian. Even Squire Gensir affirmed that the supple-jacks had more authentic power in them than a thousand Vaughans.

Though Squire Gensir expresses an opinion about obeah as part of their tradition, the author does not have a good opinion about the practitioner as he screams through the village about the judgment of Jesus after he comes across the corpse of Tack Tally outside his cave. He is similar to Roger Mais's Brother Ambo who exploits the gullibility of the blacks for his own benefit. The author expresses his opinion through Squire Gensir who tells Bitá that it is foolish to waste money on either Christianity or obeah as money could be put to good material purposes. This seems to be the general message of the novel.

Lamming's In the Castle of My Skin presents two aspects of religion. One is the deep-rooted faith in God's providence that helps the peasants go through the hardship of life without complaint. This is manifested through G's mother, the old couple Ma and Pa, and other minor characters. The second aspect presents the zeal of the missionaries who are outsiders, but who are bent on saving the infidel blacks. This category includes people like Brother Bannister, and "the white missis" of the inset tales. They are treated satirically. Another significant aspect about this novel is that there is no mention at all of obeah.

G's mother was a deeply religious woman bound to see God's showers of blessing even when G's ninth birthday was washed out in floods. The novel starts with the floods similar to the deluge of Noah but the prayers of the poor, innocent villagers were not heeded by God. The boy's skeptical attitude is thus portrayed: "As if in serious imitation of the waters that raced outside, our lives - meaning our fears and their corresponding ideals - seemed to escape down an imaginary drain that was our future. Our capacity for

feeling had grown as huge as the flood, but the prayers of a simple village seemed as precariously adequate as the houses hoisted on water" (2).

Throughout the novel G's skepticism is contrasted with his mother's deep faith. She punished her son often because she wanted him to grow into a good, God-fearing individual. On the eve of his departure for Trinidad we see G reassuring her that he would keep a copy of the Gospel in his pocket. She was pleased. She then recited a passage from John: "Let not your heart be troubled, Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (271). Even as she read she was overcome with emotion thinking of parting from her son who was the centre of her existence.

The old couple, Ma and Pa, were also deep believers in God. When Pa in his enthusiasm compared Mr Slime to Moses, Ma was prompted to say that it bordered on blasphemy whatever be his achievements. But

she herself became enthusiastic over Mr Creighton when the latter singled her out and talked to her in a friendly way. Ironically both Creighton and Slime proved to be idols with feet of clay. Ma died suddenly comforting Pa after his nightmare about slavery. Her last words to him were to put his life into the Master's hand. The end of the novel sees Pa on the threshold of the almshouse, in the hands of the Master!

The boys were more critical of religion than the elders. The inset tales narrated by the boys at the seaside satirize the imposition of religious ritual from outside. Both "the white missis" in the Bambi story and Brother Bannister in the Jon story assume sinister roles. Another scene presents the Revivalist meeting that helps the boys escape from the overseer who was pursuing them. The meeting itself is satirized with its members getting into the spirit and confessing their sins. The author adds the wry comment that spectators flocked to these meetings mainly to hear the embarrassingly intimate testimonies of those "who got saved." Earlier in the novel, we find the boys on Empire Day wondering about the idea of servility to the

Empire as equivalent to subservience to God. This idea was perpetrated by the Inspector in his speech. The author's comment is ironic. "Nobody wants to be a prisoner. You aren't free when you're a prisoner. But it is different when you are a slave. When you are a slave of the Empire and the Garden at the same time, you can be free to belong to both" (63). It is obvious that Lamming disapproves of slaveryⁱⁿ any form.

Politics: Of the three novels, the political aspect assumes maximum significance in Lamming's novel whereas Brother Man gives it very little importance. McKay's politics is mainly racial. To quote Michael G. Cooke from his article, "Claude McKay and V.S. Reid: The Simple Way to Magical form" published in Claude McKay: Centennial studies edited by A.L. McLeod: "Both Claude McKay and V.S. Reid (1913-1987) may be viewed as political writers; not in the sense of articulating a political vision, but on the strength of having a political mission in their work. In both writers a key impetus comes from having a group to defend, a wrong to rectify, a figure to save from rejection and/or to raise to heroic status" (1992, 41). The group referred to is

the Negro race. In the Castle of My Skin goes beyond racial politics to show the emergence of trade unionism and capitalism in the feudal set-up of Barbados.

Brother Man is not a political novel. By the time Mais wrote it, he had lost the keen sense of political protest that had made him write the article against British imperialism. Brother Man offers Rastafarianism as a way out of poverty and deprivation but surprisingly the protagonist expresses no plans of taking the people to Africa. Nor does he express an intention of leaving the people who had "crucified" him, to go to Africa. He is determined to stay there and work among them. At the same time he seems not to link poverty to colonial underdevelopment. The only political aspect in the novel is the animosity towards Rastafarians generated by a violent incident involving a bearded man. "Chapter five" focusses attention on the public's suspicion of bearded men gathering momentum as political opportunists fan the flames of hatred: "About three days after the Palisadoes incident, a wave of resentment swept through the city. It was directed against all bearded men. The leading newspapers played

up the angle that a community of bearded men in their midst, formed together into a secret cult, was a menace to public safety" (173). Soon the people were in a state of frenzy hounding out people with beards. In the end, the innocent Brother Man became the victim of mob violence while scoundrels like Brother Ambo went free. By portraying this aspect Roger Mais tries to dispel the misconceptions about Rastafarians. His viewpoint is one of hope as opposed to the one of despair that is portrayed in Orlando Patterson's novel, Children of Sisyphus, where the author presents the futility of the Rastafarian dream.

In Banana Bottom, the author comments upon the politics of the island rooted in race. Even the economic aspect was subservient to 'colour' as all the well-paid jobs were reserved for those with a light coloured skin. For example, Bitá's cousin Bab wanted to get into Civil Service. Though he worked hard to succeed in the examination, a change in the mode of selection shattered his hopes. This change made at the suggestion of people in responsible positions, ensured that the civil service would be restricted to 'whites'

and the 'coloured' folk only. The Eurafrican snobbery based on colour is elucidated through an incident in the novel where Bitá and her friends are denied rooms in a hostel by a light complexioned manager on account of their colour. In the end, Squire Gensir, a white man from England, had to intervene to see the Negroes get their rights in their own country.

The novel also focusses attention on the problems created by indenture. The East Indian and Chinese coolies were forcing more and more of the Negroes to migrate to the canal zone in search of work as unemployment became acute. Yet the people did not really hate them. The Chinese became creolized and mixed freely with the Negroes, marrying black girls. The East Indians were more reserved but they were admired for their different features and their neat way of walking. Whenever there was a debate about coolie immigration, the villagers were more favourable towards the Chinese than towards the East Indians. Bitá developed her sense of politics through her discussions with Squire Gensir and Teacher Fearon. Both Squire Gensir and Bitá were in favour of free immigration but they were against the method of importing coolie labour.

When natural calamities hit the island, the prejudice against immigrants became redoubled. Meetings of protest were organized against the yellow and brown foreigners and the legislature was summoned to prohibit a further influx of them. But in spite of all the difficulties, the peasants survived because they were bonded to their land. Three years after marrying Jubban, we find Bitu happy because the land had prospered under Jubban's hand. They had also managed to buy more land.

Lanning uses characters as both individuals and symbols. This aspect becomes clear when one looks at the novel from the angle of politics. Mr Creighton, the landlord assumes a paternal role in the feudalist set-up but it is a role that he relinquishes when he sells his land. He is thus exposed as an idol that has feet of clay. The old man Pa in contrast, is also a father figure for he and Ma provide the social commentary. The first indication of change is signalled by Mr Slime's Penny Bank. Mr Slime, as his name suggests is the trickster politician who is both a trade unionist and a capitalist. He enters politics after cuckolding the head teacher and ends up by cheating the entire village

of their houses. He forces the patriarch Pa into the almshouse. The villagers had looked upon him as an undisputed leader, and at the time of the strike had joined it at his suggestion without knowing any of the details. The situation is thus portrayed: "The year after he left the school, he won his seat in the general election with a great majority. It had seemed to everyone that he had resigned from the school with the intention of doing bigger and in a way better work in another field. He had been responsible for the education of the children but he had extended that work to include the education of the workers. They had never meddled in politics and they were never easy prey to promises, but Mr Slime had won their sympathy completely. No one questioned why he had resigned, since the reason seemed clearly demonstrated in the new role he was playing. He was their chief and the chief of many others who lived beyond the village" (90).

At the time of the riots Mr Slime's sudden appearance helped to save Mr Creighton from assault. Though the shoemaker had read articles about riots breaking out in Trinidad, he could never imagine the peaceful inhabitants of Creighton's village marching to

the governor's house with sticks and stones. But the riots did break out in the town and spread to the village. The villagers did not understand the political intricacies of the situation. Their state of ignorance is thus portrayed: "They were trying to understand what the fighting really meant. They understood certain things about it. They knew that the strike had started on the water front the night before. There was a mass meeting in the city which Mr Slime had attended. Three men had spoken to the people but they hadn't said anything about fighting. They had reminded their listeners of what had been happening in Trinidad, and they were warning certain people in the audience that if steps weren't taken to remedy the situation it was possible a similar thing would happen in Barbados" (188-189).

Nothing significant happened immediately after the riots but gradually the society underwent a change. Mr Creighton started selling his land to Mr Slime and his syndicate of coloured bigshots. The Penny Bank and Friendly Society that the villagers had fostered started to play prominent roles in evicting the villagers from their houses. They had either to buy their plots or

relinquish the places they had called home for years and years. Mr Slime, the leader of the workers, had become the capitalist.

The boys in contrast to the older people did not have much of an opinion about politicians in general and Mr Slime in particular. After spending a day at the seaside G related the story he would tell his mother to explain his absence. The boys commented that he would make a good lawyer or politician. In their opinion both these professions were equivalent to that of a blasted liar. On another occasion, they were discussing the increasing importance of Mr Slime who had promised to make the villagers the owners of the land. "Seems to me there be only two great men round here," said Boy Blue, "Mr Slime an' the landlord. An' if you don't watch out there goin' soon be one, Mr Slime only. The landlord will sort o' stay where he is in the big house, but Mr Slime will be sort o' captain o' this ship. 'cause, a day don't pass here when somebody din't got something to say 'bout him an' the Penny Bank an' the Friendly Society. He get in a short space o' time a kind o' black Jesus" (159).

According to Sandra Pouchet Paquet, "Lamming relies heavily on what he calls "collective character." Such characters are representative of a group or class or value system within the society. Characters such as Ma and Pa in the novel are collective characters in the sense that they express the cumulative experience of the village community. The different responses to social and political change which they articulate reflect a division in the village to which they belong. The dilemma of the village in turn articulates the dilemma of the island, and the frame of reference broadens indefinitely" (The Novels of George Lamming 1982, 5). Viewed from such a perspective, the political aspect of the novel contributes to the search for racial and national identity.

Narrative Styles and Techniques: Of the three novelists, McKay's style is the most traditional. A pioneer among black writers of the Caribbean, McKay is forced to follow the models set by the colonizers. Like Caliban, he has to use Prospero's language and syntax to expose his humbug. His theme of a black girl liberating herself from the superficial gloss of European education, to revert to her real identity as a peasant

working on the soil, is revolutionary. But the tale is told in the tradition of story-telling set by the nineteenth century English novelists, making use of an omniscient narrator. Moreover, at certain points in the novel, the reader is prompted to ask if Bitá is just the mouthpiece of the author. Roger Mais and Lamming experiment with narrative styles and techniques. In Brother Man, the style partakes of the rhythm of black folk music in certain places while in others it echoes the New Testament. The "Chorus of People in the Lane" which starts the novel describes the Kingston slum in picturesque detail to continue with snippets of conversation in creole. The description is taken up again in the form of a refrain, creating a musical effect. The chorus also provides us with a commentary on the events that befall the protagonist and the people he comes in contact with. These people are then introduced like scenes in a play, Girlie-Papacita, Joe-Jennings, Cordelia-Jesmina and so on. The narration likewise swings from solos to duos and back to the chorus, though the omniscient narrator tells the tale. The style is reminiscent of the New Testament, in the places where the author describes Brother Man's

activities as a messiah. The Chorus, however, comes at regular intervals to remind the reader of Brother Man's frailties and the feeling of people towards him. George Lamming, like Mais, uses inter-related perceptions of the entire community to highlight the search for identity. A chorus consisting of an old man and woman called Pa and Ma, is used to provide information about social change. The novel In the Castle of My Skin is anticolonial in form and content. Lamming subverts pre-conceived notions of excellence in story-telling by shifting from one form of narration to the other. For pages on end, the protagonist G, who is also the first person narrator in the beginning of the novel, disappears or if present hardly utters a word. He then comes back with first person narration. Many of the characters are given no names, for example the boys at the water tap are given numbers. Some characters are identified by profession - the shoemaker, the overseer's brother etc. Some names assume symbolic overtones - Mr Slime, the trickster politician and "HMS Goliath," the ship that sets off the riots by firing a few shots. G's friends are Bob, Boy Blue and Trumper, but G's mother is given no name. Social changes are made the subject of discussion by the old man and woman.

The Empire Day celebrations and the beating that follows trigger off discussions among the boys about colonialism, slavery, education and social justice. The boys at the seaside discuss race, marriage and religion. The comments and perceptions are tinged with irony and social criticism. When the old man has his nightmare of the middle passage that brought his ancestors to the islands, the style becomes solemn. It becomes mocking when it describes the Revivalist meeting. The overall effect is multi-dimensional.

All the three novelists are concerned with Negro identity. In Banana Bottom and In the Castle of My Skin this concern surfaces through interaction with the white and coloured population. McKay also refers to the dimension added by the indentured labourers. In Brother Man no such contrast is used with other ethnic groups but the pride in African ancestry is underlined. Mais identifies with the poor people of the Kingston slums through his protagonist. This is all the more significant because Mais belonged to the educated middle class and was fair-skinned in complexion. By depicting a Rastafarian protagonist in the role of a messiah, Mais makes his allegiance clear.

Chapter - V

CARIB FLUTE: THE "COLOURED" WRITERS

The term "coloured" is the most difficult one to define in the Caribbean situation as intermingling of races has been its salient feature from the very beginning. The earliest European visitors were pirates and freebooters who clashed with the Indians and sometimes cohabited with them. The native Indian population of Arawaks and Caribs were soon marginalized by the Europeans who established a plantocracy. The planters gave asylum to the remaining number of Indians for they were helpful in providing game and fish for the white "massas." With the arrival of the Negro slaves, these Indians were given the job of keeping law and order among them by tracking down slaves when they ran away. Cohabitation with Negro slaves produced a new generation with mixed ancestry just as cohabitation with the Europeans in the earlier phase had produced a small population of half-castes. The white planters themselves hailed from different parts of Europe and marriages were contracted among them without considering differences of language and nationality. Cohabitation of white planters with the Negro slaves produced a new

generation of "coloured" or mulatto offspring. With the emancipation of slaves, labourers were brought into the Caribbean from Portugal, Malta, China and India to meet the labour shortage; of these, the maximum number were from India and China.

The term "coloured" was first used to signify the resentment that the blacks had towards the mulattoes who enjoyed certain privileges of education and status that the pure Negroes did not enjoy. But the situation was far from uniform. In the aftermath of colonization, a light complexion came to be identified with racial superiority. Some of the luckier mulattoes were given property and education by their white fathers but this was not the case for everyone. Kenneth Ramchand comments:

In the first place, there is more than an element of nonsense in speaking about a coloured class. In complexion they ranged from near-white to black; some were wealthy and owned property, some were well-educated, and many were as poor and illiterate as Negroes. Upto the 1830s they were subject to disability laws. Few of them achieved social prominence in the eighteenth century and when they began to gain strength, most of their energies were taken up in the fight to obtain full civil rights for their class. (39)

The Eurafricans were partly responsible for the resentment that the blacks had towards them. The coloured people were humble and ingratiating to the whites but supercilious and contemptuous of the blacks. Even after the removal of civil disabilities, the man of mixed blood was faced with the problem of social adjustment. They irritated the whites by trying to identify with them whereas the blacks jeered at them for trying to be "buckra.") When the mulattoes started treading the path to whiteness, the blacks started looking to Africa as home. The novels of the black writers tend to present the 'brown' man with ridicule and irony and the white writers too portray them as unstable and unreliable. Panty, in the novel God the Stonebreaker by Alvin Bennett is an example. In his attempts to rise in the world Panty behaves with cringing deference to the white people but looks upon his own grandmother as the stumbling block on his road to success. But there were many writers who were interested in the psychological problems fostered by mixed ancestry. The intermingling of blood strains between the master and the slave, created problems of identification. The Carib flute symbolizes this

dilemma. The Caribs, who were the cannibalistic aborigines of the Caribbean, had the habit of hollowing out the bone of the enemy to form a flute after eating the flesh. The flute thus becomes the home of the ghosts as well as the bridge between victor and victim. Wilson Harris describes it thus: "...the flute became the home or curiously mutual fortress of spirit between enemy and other, an organ of self-knowledge suffused with enemy bias so close to native greed for victory" (The Guyana Quartet, 1985, 10). This aspect of dual loyalties becomes the focus of interest for many writers, who refuse to identify with either the black or the white strain of their ancestry. It is such writers that I have in mind while discussing the "coloured" quest for identity. Among these the two prominent names are those of Edgar Mittelholzer and Wilson Harris. Both of them are from Guyana which shares with the Islands a common history of colonization, slavery and indentureship. There are differences, however, in the landscape, for Guyana is part of the South American continent and its rivers and forests loom larger than those found on the Islands. Yet the experiences of the fictional characters seem to have a great deal in common

with those of the Islands. Both these novelists also take into account the native Indian heritage which tends to get neglected by writers of Caribbean fiction. Kenneth Ramchand's comments about this situation in The West Indian Novel and its Background are relevant: "With the European discoveries, the natural and original inhabitants of the West Indies were virtually eliminated, the small communities which survive in Dominica and Guyana today are regarded as marginal to the society. This would seem to account for the fact that the aboriginal Indian seldom appears and is not a centre of social or political interest, either in verse, in drama or in fiction by writers from the West Indies" (164). Wilson Harris is an exception to this. His novels discover relevance in the Indians and they come alive in them. Edgar Mittelholzer too portrays them in his historical novel, Children of Kaywana which is the first novel of the Kaywana Trilogy. His presentation of them is rather exotic. Both these novelists view the emergence of selfhood from a historical perspective that accepts all the different racial strains within the Caribbean psyche.

Edgar Mittelholzer was born in New Amsterdam in British Guyana in 1909. His autobiography, A Swarthy Boy (1963) details the difficulties that he had encountered due to a swarthy complexion, especially because his father was a confirmed Negrophobe. His father's disappointment in his first born's complexion heightened within him the awareness of the polyglot colonial society with its hierarchy based on colour. It also developed in him a strong sense of racial and psychological taint that resulted from the admixture as the major cause of the schism within; his lack of restraint and irrational behaviour being the result of the opposing pulls of mixed ancestry. Living as harrowed a life as many of his characters, he committed suicide in 1965 in England. In the meanwhile, however, his output of fiction was significant. He explores the themes of religion, sex and history from a psychological stand point. In his quest for a permanent home, he went to different places like Barbados and Canada before settling down in England. His first novel Corentyne Thunder (1941) presents the character of Ramgollal the cow minder of East Indian origin but he explores the psychic split through the character of Geoffrey Weldon.

A Morning at the Office (1950) and Shadows Move Among Them (1952) came next with new fictional techniques. For example A Morning at the Office satirizes the colour hierarchy through the device of "telescopic objectivity." This technique focusses attention on inanimate objects which tell the tale of persons and events associated with them. Mittelholzer had more than twenty novels to his credit at the time of his death but his magnum opus is the trilogy of three novels that capture the past of Guyana in all its exotic splendour. The novels are Children of Kaywana (1952), The Harrowing of Hubertus (1955), and Kaywana Blood (1958). The novels cover approximately three hundred and thirty seven years of Guyanese history through the fortunes of a pioneering family. Michael Gilkes's The West Indian Novel provides the following information about the trilogy:

The Kaywana trilogy is generally accepted as Mittelholzer's most outstanding work. It is certainly the finest example of his ability to organise a wealth of detail (the time span of the novels is approximately 337 years) in the telling of a story of epic proportions. To Mittelholzer who identified with a Swiss/German ancestor and felt a sense of 'genetic damage', the sexual and racial conflict and the resultant mixing of 'bloods' involved in the

violent slave past of Guyana in which his ancestry actually took root, must have seemed a natural choice for what was to be his magnum opus. His love of story telling, his sense of the mystery and excitement of the past, his ability to evoke the atmosphere and 'feel' of a place, his delight in vigorous often violently sensational action, his prodigious ability for inventing, amassing and organizing detail all came together to equip him for the formidable task he set himself: the imaginative reconstruction of the social and political history of Guyana, from the early seventeenth to the middle of the twentieth century and within this framework, the epic saga of the growth and development of the van Groenwegel family tree. Mittelholzer's diligent research and scrupulous honesty are apparent in the use he makes of the slim documentation available and in the chronological accuracy of historical, factual events in the novels. Like The Life and Death of Sylvia (1953) the main theme of the Kaywana trilogy involves a working out of the author's theories of 'strength' and 'weakness.' Within the maze like winding corridors of 'Huis Kaywana' runs the thread of 'blood,' the 'strength' or 'weakness' of which finally determines the character and actions of every member of this extraordinary family and it is this with its complex irony (a complexity which has generally gone unacknowledged or unnoticed by Mittelholzer's critics) that one can trace through these three novels. (1981,57)

Of the three novels, the second one namely The Harrowing of Hubertus is a digressive work where the central focus is the character of the protagonist Hubertus. This provides us with ample opportunity to study the quest for identity with reference to the six

situations. But the historical perspective has to be elucidated with reference to all the three novels of the trilogy.

Wilson Harris, born in Guyana in 1921, is of mixed European, African and Amerindian ancestry. He started his literary career while working as a surveyor in the interior of Guyana by writing poems and short stories. These were published in a Georgetown magazine. Before he migrated to England in the late fifties he had already published two collections of poems. His first novel, Palace of the Peacock was published in 1960. Since then he has achieved recognition as a novelist, poet and critic with nineteen novels, two volumes of novellas, four volumes of essays and numerous articles of literary criticism to his credit. He continues to write and is now regarded as the leading novelist of the Caribbean. As a writer, he rejects the realistic mode of writing as he thinks that it sacrifices the deeper unconscious reality by its emphasis on the concreteness of external reality. His novels are rich in psychological content as his major theme is the growth of consciousness of his subject. The history and

landscape of his native Guyana provide him with sources for his imaginative vision. His fiction explores the lost, hidden, unconscious and unacknowledged elements that shaped the West Indian psyche. These have to be retrieved and understood before the individual can attain selfhood and the society be liberated from the errors of the past. Though the focus is on Guyana, Harris's vision transcends the narrow limitations of space and time to become universal. Hena Maes-Jelinek has made a pertinent comment in The Naked Design.

... The Guyana of Harris's novels is obviously a microcosm standing for the world at large. His main subject is the growth in consciousness of his characters, their understanding of the past and of the diversified configuration of the Guyanese community; such understanding, however does not only lead them to a sense of their own distinctiveness as a nation but makes them aware of what they share with the rest of mankind. (8)

The four novels of The Guyana Quartet are Palace of the Peacock (1960), The Far Journey of Oudin (1961), The Whole Armour (1962) and The Secret Ladder (1963). Together they offer a wide picture of Guyana and its people and bring to focus major historical facts from the period of colonization to later independence.

Of these, Palace of the Peacock offers plenty of scope to study the quest for identity but a short survey of the other novels of the quartet is necessary to study the search for roots. Both the Quartet and the Trilogy seem to be telling the same tale of Guyana but the difference in technique and the shift in focus make a contrastive analysis worthwhile.

Mittelholzer follows a linear pattern of narration starting from the beginning, his obvious strength being his factual accuracy and wealth of detail. Harris follows a cyclical pattern where the past mingles with the present and the characters merge into one another at a level deeper than the conscious. He thus achieves a timeless quality within the fictional framework. Mittelholzer's probe into the psyche is at a conscious level whereas Harris builds upon the mythical framework that has its origin in the unconscious. The four novels of The Guyana Quartet are set in different landscapes of Guyana and different communities are involved in their actions. In each novel the landscape comes alive with a spirit born of the trials of the past. These trials include exile (first for the

Europeans and then for the marginalized groups of Amerindians and runaway slaves) dismemberment of peoples (particularly African) and exploitation of man by man (which involves all the races brought into the Caribbean to bring prosperity to the colonizers). The very rivers in Guyana recreate the music of the past as the name Guyana is derived from the Amerindian root word which means "land of waters." Thus we move with the early explorers on a dangerous river running through jungles and rapids, to the coastal plains where the East Indian coolies grow rice, moving on to the mouth of the dark Pomeroon river and the strip of land between bush and sea, to go back into the forests of the Canje region where Fenwick meets the descendants of runaway slaves. Mittelholzer also makes use of landscape to inform and control his characters' behaviours so that the natural environment and human thought and action become inseparably welded together. But this geographical panorama is unfolded to better advantage in his other novels, Corentyne Thunder being an example. In the Trilogy the landscape looms as the living background for action as the van Groenwegels move from one region of Guyana to the other in pursuit of wealth and power. The

two novelists also differ widely in their characterization. Harris's characters are always in a state of flux as he objects to fiction that upholds the perpetuation of given, unquestioned conceptions of the individual or society. The Naked Design sheds light on this:

... Those of his characters who at the outset strive to maintain their position or to confirm to a static order not only lack the open-mindedness required for a constant development but are also obstacles to other people's fulfilment. Donne is an obvious example but Magda in The Whole Armour is a more difficult one to understand. By ordinary standards, she is a magnificently powerful character. But her very strength and self-assurance make her utterly blind to the potential for spiritual discovery and renewal that her less assertive son responds to. By the same standards, Fenwick must appear irresolute and weak. Yet he is the one who with full maturity recognizes his (or man's) limitations and throws light on the whole Quartet by his unremitting analysis and revision of conflicting convictions. Moral strength in Harris's characters demands a good deal of humility and the courage to face the often terrifying ordeal incurred by the breakdown of a familiar view of reality. However varied their experience, all Harris's main characters face this test through which alone the hidden face of truth can be revealed. (11-12)

About Mittelholzer Michael Gilkes has the following comments to make "Mittelholzer apparently believed that strength of will was a pre-requisite for

happiness and that his 'Germanic' European blood represented this "strength" while his "West Indian" blood harbored a "weakness." This attitude undoubtedly led to a psychological disunity which became in turn not only the chief cause of his unhappiness as a man but also the main theme of his work as a novelist" (41). However, the evidence from the Trilogy shows him to be sympathetic to the West Indian side of his ancestry. In fact the characters with obvious strength of will cause unhappiness to those around them and the ironies and paradoxes of Fate get the better of them in the end.

Children of Kaywana starts the saga of racial intermixture beginning with Kaywana which means "old water." She is half aboriginal Indian and half English sailor. She has unalloyed pride in her English blood which sets her apart from the other Indians and liberates her from the naivete and taboos of Indian society. It is her admiration of strength that brings her close to August Vyfuis, a Dutch sailor. Unfortunately August dies heroically in a Spanish raid leaving Kaywana with a son. She is then attracted towards Adriansen van Groenwegel, a Dutch sailor and

merchant who combines strength with cunning. Adriansen's use of flattery and guile do not appeal to Kaywana. When there is a threat of Indian revolt, Kaywana wants Adriansen to get the help of the soldiers to put it down but Adriansen prefers to act with diplomacy. Kaywana's enemy Wakkatai, the witch doctor, is the leader of the rebellion and Kaywana and most of her children get killed though they fight bravely to the last. She thus goes down as the first heroine of the van Groenwegels. Two of her sons, Willem and Aert survive the fight largely on account of Adriansen's cunning but the impression that is left behind in the children's minds is of bravery and strength. August, her son by August Vyfuis also survives. In the next generation Willem inherits the mantle of strength but he marries a German girl called Griselde hailing from an artistic family. Of his sons Reinald is the artistic one while Laurens inherits the courage and strength that helps to save the family during a raid by Major Scott and his marauding band of Caribs. Willem pins his hopes on Laurens to achieve his ambition of making the van Groenwegels the most powerful family in Guyana. Brute strength and determination was the credo that he tried

to instil in his sons. Laurens however invites his father's ire by marrying a mulatto slave girl who is the daughter of his uncle August and a coloured slave. He thus brings the strain of Negro blood into the van Groenwegel family. Reinald marries a white girl and their son Ignatius becomes an artist. But the daughter of Laurens and Katrina, Hendrickje, becomes the fierce embodiment of van Groenwegel pride in spite of her slave blood. To keep her family name she marries her own cousin, the weak and artistic Ignatius. She institutes the family motto "The van Groenwegels never run," underlining the importance of courage and determination. In her ambition to make the family the most powerful one in the colony, she oversteps all boundaries of kindness and scruples reducing her husband to a mere cipher whose only function is to provide her with sons. Ironically however she manages to have only two sons who grow up in fear and hatred of the mother. Her callous behaviour and her constant harping on the legends of the van Groenwegels affect their lives and they become warped in thinking. Her excesses drive her husband to suicide; her elder son Cornelis becomes a homosexual and the younger son Adrian becomes insane later on. But her

courage and efficiency make her out as a legendary figure. When the French invade the colony Hendrickje gets an opportunity to demonstrate the family motto. But her son Cornelis runs away with his male friend. Her son Adrian stays back and fights though the slaves desert the cruel mistress in her hour of need. Adrian's emotions are highly unstable where his mother is concerned. He hates her as a child but develops a physical desire for her when he grows older. Hendrickje finds nothing strange in this but she does not indulge in physical intimacy with her son. Her chats with Adrian help to soften her attitude towards the slaves. After a while Adrian's attitude changes again to hatred. Hendrickje who had until then refrained from sexual excesses now indulges herself with a slave named Bangara. When Rosaria, a half-caste slave arrives on the plantation with her nephew Jabez's son, she starts scheming. Jabez had been castrated by a jealous rival for Rosaria's affections and he had sought asylum with his aunt to escape the embarrassment. Under Hendrickje's influence Rosaria seduces Adrian who is made to believe that Hendrickje is dead against his relationship with a half-caste. In order to hurt

Hendrickje's sense of family pride, Adrian fathers a brood of children who are of mixed blood. Jabez in the meanwhile had committed suicide after sending his son Hubertus back to his father, Aert van Groenwegel. Soon Adrian goes mad with hate for his mother and Rosaria leads her own voluptuous existence. Hendrickje establishes absolute control over Adrian's children. Under her tutelage they grow up wild and tough because their worst vices are encouraged by their grandmother who does not want them to grow up as dreamers like her own husband. Many sensational events follow with Rosaria engaging in rivalries with Hendrickje and trying to murder her. Hendrickje's training helps Adrian's children to shoot down Rosaria while she is at her lover's house. They have absolutely no qualms of conscience about it. Only two of the children, Jacques and Juliana, show any difference from the rest. When the slave rebellion of 1763 breaks out, Hendrickje insists on following the Groenwegel motto of fighting to the last. Though they are successful at first they are not able to hold out till the end. Jacques who had been captured by the slaves, manages to escape only to die

fighting, at the door of his house in Canje. Hendrickje and all her grandsons are wiped out except Jacques's wife Faustina and her three infants.

The Harrowing of Hubertus, the second novel of the Trilogy, concentrates on the character of Hubertus, the protagonist. Hubertus, the son of Jabez and Rosaria is brought up by his grandparents. Aert, Hendrickje's brother had two daughters, Flora and Mathilde and a son Jabez. One of his daughters, Flora, married into a family called Teuffer and prospered till that family was wiped out by the slave rebellion. The other one, Mathilde, was left in the lurch by a Dutch sea captain, whose illegitimate daughter Faustina was brought up along with Hubertus. Faustina later on married Hubertus's half-brother Jacques. The Harrowing of Hubertus delineates the history of Guyana by focussing on the fortunes of Hubertus and his children but it is different from the other two novels of the Trilogy being a more personal novel than a mere record of historical events. As a character Hubertus is aware of the split within himself. In a letter written to a friend the author Mittelholzer described the novel as a

quiet book devoted to the study of Hubertus van Groenwegel whom he described as "a projection of a facet of my own personality." Hubertus is aware that he is not an integrated being suffering as he does from division of consciousness: "There were times when Hubertus believed that he possessed another self over which he had no control. It caused him to do and say things he would normally have hesitated to do and say. It sprang surprises on him. Yet he knew that he approved of this self, he did not regret its presence" (1954, 17).

The author makes use of this division as a metaphor for the dilemma of the coloured man whose inheritance involves rival streams of colonizer/aborigine and master/slave. Hubertus is quarter Indian, one sixteenth Negro and the rest white. Within the white strain he has ancestors of English, Dutch, German and Spanish nationalities. This mixed inheritance makes his search for selfhood a harrowing experience.

Palace of the Peacock recreates the European pursuit of gold and Indians in the sixteenth century through a crew of conquistadors who are timeless. They

are a group of people that belong to every race leaving us in doubt as to the age in which the action takes place. The only thing we know about them is that they have joined the violent taskmaster Donne in the pursuit of his rebellious Amerindian labourers. Their racial and social backgrounds are revealed in little bits and pieces as the journey proceeds but it is a description that transcends the narrow confines of realistic portrayal. When Donne and his crew arrive at the Mission Mariella in their guise of modern day conquistadors, the Amerindians flee. The abandoned settlement exerts a strange power over the racially mixed crew who are all escapees from modern day civilization seeking refuge in the bush for personal failures. In the hallucinatory landscape of the rainforest, they begin to unearth "the grave of memory" reflecting on the frustration and lack of fulfilment in their lives. But they are a "dead" crew and have to "die" a second time before they can attain fulfilment.

Childhood: The motif of childhood is used in an imaginative manner by Harris to shed light on adulthood. The narrator "I" is both the brother and the

alter-ego of Donne, the leader of the crew. In contrast to Donne, the narrator is a visionary, a dreamer and in his reminiscences he describes how he first separated from Donne in childhood:

His name was Donne and it had always possessed a cruel glory for me. His wild exploits had governed my imagination from childhood. In the end he had been expelled from school.

He left me a year later to join a team of ranchers near the Brazil frontier and border country. I learnt then to fend for myself and he soon turned into a ghost, a million dreaming miles away from the sea-coast where we had lived. (1985, 20)

Here the allegory of ambivalence pinpoints how Donne separates from his visionary self as he grows hard and cruel. The theme of childhood is brought in again during a discourse between Donne and the narrator, as the narrator tries to explain his dream to Donne who advocates toughness:

"It is an old dream," I plucked up the courage to express my own thoughts.

"What is?"

"It started when we were at school, I imagine. Then you went away suddenly. It stopped then. I had a curious sense of hard won freedom when you had gone. Then to my astonishment, long after, it came again. But this time with a new striking menace that flung you from your horse. You fell and died instantly, and yet you were the one who saw, and I was the one who was blind. Did I ever write and tell you" - I shrank from Donne's supercilious smile and hastened to justify myself - "that I am actually going blind in one eye?" I was gratified by his sudden startled expression.

"Blind?" he cried.

"My left eye has an incurable infection" I declared, "My right eye - which is actually sound goes blind in my dream," I felt foolishly distressed. "Nothing kills your sight," I added with musing envy. "And your vision becomes," I hastened to complete my story, "your vision becomes the only remaining window in the world for me." (22)

Here the visionary self goes blind and the only vision left to him is that of the cruel taskmaster. Donne advocates toughness saying that one has to be a devil to survive. As the last landlord he has to play all the roles - of doctor, gaoler, judge and hangman. One has to rule over the land to rule the world and Donne reminds the narrator that he had looked after him as if he were a son.

In Mittelholzer's novel, Hubertus recollects childhood experiences at crucial junctures and these memories help to shed light on his duality. He had grown up in the care of his grandparents without experiencing his mother's affection. His companion in childhood was Faustina, the illegitimate daughter of his Aunt Mathilde. Faustina too had been neglected by her mother who had grown bitter and resentful after her lover had jilted her. This had drawn Hubertus and Faustina together in a bond of affection almost like a brother and sister. Ironically however they developed a physical intimacy in later life that was illicit. Though both of them belonged to the powerful van Groenwegel family, their attitudes towards the family were different. Hubertus was suspicious of some of his relatives and ashamed of their excesses though he was proud of the name. His suspicions were rooted in the stories he had heard in childhood: "Years and years ago, as a boy he had heard vague rumours about his own mother - that she was a profligate who had abandoned him as an infant so that his father had to send him to Essequibo to be cared for by his grandfather. She and his father had lived with the van Groenwegels on the upper Canje;

he knew that for certain; his grandfather had told him so. His father had died when he was an infant; the rumour was that he had committed suicide. He had never been able to get a clear picture of what had happened. His grandfather and grandmother had always avoided discussing the affair but the impression had been left on Hubertus that very dark deeds had been committed on the upper Canje when he was an infant and a boy. Hubertus had grown up with the conviction that his relatives on the Canje were people to be regarded with suspicion and uncertainty" (11). Faustina in contrast was proud of being a van Groenwegel in spite of her illegitimacy. She married Jacques, Hendrickje's grandson, who wooed her through letters. After his death, she came to Demerary to stay with Hubertus. From Jacques, Faustina had come to know the whole bitter story of Hubertus's parents. She told everything to him confirming his worst fears. Hubertus blamed his heridity for his lack of restraint. Even before Faustina had told him, some intuition had informed him that his mother was a pit of Evil. He was now sure that all his temptations for the sins of the flesh were because of his mother's tainted blood.

The childhood experiences of Hubertus's children and the children of Faustina presage the events to come. Of Hubertus's four daughters, Luise was the one closest to him. She developed a strange attraction for Edward, the son of Faustina, who was ten years younger than her. In Hubertus's case he was caught between his wife Rosalind and Faustina, for both of whom he had great love and affection. The story repeats itself in the next generation with Luise, Edward and Edward's step-sister Clara Clackson. An incident is described where Faustina watches the children at play and the focus of attention becomes Edward:

As she watched, Clara, Cranley's girl, came into view round the water tank carrying an Indian basket filled with what looked like palm seeds and stones. She made straight for Edward, and seating herself beside him began to select items from her collection which she handed to him one by one, a concentrated smile on her face. He touched them, examined them and put them down in a pile before him, then without warning uttered a crowing sound, rose and gave her a push. She laughed and he laughed. (75)

Edward was a strangely precocious boy given to observing things. He was rather quiet and not given to romping and had a streak of cruelty in him. By the time

he was eight, he was aware of the eighteen-year-old Luise's love for him. Rosalind, Luise's mother, had not noticed anything till she saw the following scene that disturbed her:

Luise stood watching Edward, who ignoring her, edged his way slowly round the rounded tank, evidently still observing the movements of ants. Without warning, he stopped, looked up at Luise, then straightened up. He was a full head shorter than Luise. Rosalind saw him smile, and then silently he put his hand up and patted Luise's cheek. He did it as he might have done to some pet animal. Luise brushed his hand off, then almost in the same motion caught his wrist and pressed his hand against her breast. Rosalind was sure the girl trembled as she stood there half-leaning against the water tank. Suddenly she released Edward's hand and turned and ran off. (125)

Lusie waited ten more years before the two announced their decision to marry. Neither Faustina nor Rosalind approved of it; only Hubertus could understand Luise's reasons.

Struggle for Survival: In Palace of the Peacock, the struggle for survival is equated with the pursuit of fulfilment. At the beginning, one gets the impression that the narrative starts at a critical juncture in the life of the main character. His physical destruction

presages his birth into another state. The narrator's dream immediately follows the death of Donne, who has been killed by the vengeful Mariella. The dream is a reconstruction of the significant events in Donne's life. Mariella is a part of themselves and the duality of the hero manifests itself in Donne's ill-treatment of her and the narrator's attempts to appease her. She now becomes an assassin and an enigma becoming identified with spiritual fulfilment. The title of the book, "The Mission of Mariella" suggests this.

The multiracial crew set off in search for the missing labourers. The description of the crew offers different layers of meaning and significance:

The crew swarmed like upright spiders, half-naked, scrambling under the burden of cargo they were carrying ashore. First I picked and counted the da Silva twins of Sorrow Hill, thin, long-legged, fair skinned, of Portugese extraction. Then I spotted old Schomburgh, also of Sorrow Hill, agile and swift as a monkey for all his seasoned years. Donne prized Schomburgh as a bowman, the best in all the world his epitaph boasted and read. There was Vigilance, black haired, Indian, sparkling and shrewd of eye, reading the river's mysterious book. Vigilance had recommended Carroll, his cousin, a thick-set young Negro boy gifted with his paddle as if it were a violin and a sword together in paradise. My eye fell on Cameron, brick-red face, slow

feet, faster than a snake in the forest with his hands; and Jennings, the mechanic, young, solemn-featured, carved out of still wood it seemed, sweating still the dew of his tears, cursing and reproving his whirling engine and toy in the unearthly terrifying grip in the water. Lastly I counted Wishrop, assistant bowman and captain's understudy. Wishrop resembled Donne, especially when they stood side by side at the captain's paddle. I felt my heart come into my mouth with a sense of recognition and fear. Apart from this fleeting wishful resemblance it suddenly seemed to me I had never known Donne in the past - his face was a dead blank. I saw him now for the first faceless time as the captain and unnatural soul of heaven's dream; he was myself standing outside of me while I stood inside of him. (25-26)

Obviously, this poetic description establishes the real nature of their quest as something more significant than missing labourers. The names like Vigilance and Wishrop convey multiple layers of meaning and the statement that follows about the names matching those of a dead crew inscribed on Sorrow Hill underline the nature of the quest, as spiritual fulfilment.

The river presents obstacles to the crew. In a particular section they are forced to lift the boat out of the water and haul it along the bank till the obstruction is cleared. The whirlpool offers a vision of a wild inverse stream that makes the narrator relive

Donne's first innocent voyage in pursuit of Mariella. It took the crew three days to take to the river again. Though the rapids looked less dangerous now, they could still be treacherous. It is Vigilance who warn the others when he sees the pale smooth patch that looks like the moon's reflection. It hides dangerous rocks but they are able to steer away from them because of Vigilance's warning.

When the crew reaches the Mission of Mariella, the news spreads among the people who remember the dead crew who had earlier visited Mariella before they were drowned in the rapids. The unexpected image of Donne makes them flee. Their action may be justified as superstitious fear for Mariella had killed Donne because of his cruelty. The abandoned settlement exerts a strange influence upon the crew. On the first night that he spends on the soil of Mariella the narrator feels separated from the rest of the crew. In his isolation he feels the desire to abandon the world. In the morning however he experiences a sense of inner refreshment. Donne and one of the da Silva twins go to explore the land while the others engage in

conversation. Donne and his companion return with an old Arawak woman who had been coerced into agreeing to accompany them. Donne thinks that she will be helpful in providing information about the missing labourers.

This triggers off a discussion between Donne and his visionary self. Donne admits to ill-treatment of his folk but he excuses himself by blaming their irresponsible behaviour. He is bitter about the rights of the Indians to the land for, he feels that he too has earned his right. When he claims that he belongs there like Schomburgh or Cameron or anybody, the narrator sees the irony of belonging: nobody belonged as yet. Unless somebody demonstrates the unity of being, there will be no sense of belonging. But as the narrator struggles with his expression, Donne's attention is diverted to Schomburgh who acts as the interpreter between Donne and the Arawak woman. They realize that they have to follow the dangerous river for seven days before they can reach the hiding place. Both Schomburgh and Jennings advise Donne against undertaking the journey on account of all the pitfalls ahead; only Cameron and one of the da Silva twins support him. As they argue, Carroll begins to laugh. His laughter has all the effect of music:

...It was like a bell and it startled away for one instant every imagined revolution of misery and fear and guile. It was an ingenuous sound like the homely crackle of gossiping parrots or of inspired branches in the leaves, or the shining ecstasy and abandonment of the laughing wood when the hunter loses and finds his game in the foot mark he has himself left and made. (54-55)

Carroll's music is primitive and peculiar, confesses Harris himself in "A Note on the Genesis of The Guyana Quartet." It is not pure or sophisticated but it implies a paradise where the infernal deeds of the crew are engrained. In Wishrop's case his enemies are reborn again and again and move before him. These different characters also present different facets of Donne's personality and the warring elements within him. Donne's desire to escape the inequities is seen through Carroll's song, Wishrop's dance and Vigilance's gift of vision. Each member of the crew becomes the focus of attention in turn.

Book III entitled "The Second Death" portrays their progress up the river and the disintegration of their ambition and lust. The moments of tension alternate with spells of calm that help them to reconnitre. The new member of the crew, the Arawak woman is described thus:

... She belonged to a race that neither forgave nor forgot. That was legend. In reality the legend and consciousness of race had come to mean for her-patience, the unfathomable patience of a god in whom all is charged into wisdom when the grandiloquence of history and civilization was past. It was the subtlest labour and sweat of all time in the still music of the senses and of design. (61)

The river gets identified with the Arawak woman when the waves and ruffles of water are correlated to her heaving bosom and the embroideries on her handkerchief. As they watch in fascination the awesome spectacle of a voiceless soundless motion, they are caught in the dangerous War Office Rapids. There follows a tough struggle where each one blames the other for having had an evil intercourse with fate. They think that their plight is due to the arrest of the Arawak by Donne for they had aided and abetted it. It is then that the first catastrophe occurs in the death of Carroll, the youngest member of the crew. Carroll slips and falls into the water and disappears completely. Though the others are stricken by the sense of wasted youth they realize the permanence of art as "Carroll's voice and head" turned to "stone and song."

The death of Carroll triggers off Schomburgh's who is both his father and his uncle. Schomburgh had committed incest without knowing that the lady was his half-sister. Vigilance, Carroll's step-brother, had introduced him to Schomburgh and the old man had stared at him as "at a ghost whom he dreaded and loved." Schomburgh dies peacefully in his sleep the same night as Carroll.

With the death of the interpreter, the next day's journey through the rapids becomes even more dangerous. Jennings expresses misgivings and Donne tells him to remain behind if he wants to. This sets an argument into motion between Jennings and Cameron and Donne has to interfere to stop them. The journey starts once more; this time catastrophe comes in the form of a rock on which the boat strikes. Wishrop falls into the maelstrom and dissolves into nothingness picked clean by the perai. Only Vigilance can see his skeleton crawling up the rock-face to the sky dancing and gambolling a little.

As they proceed, Donne perceives a herd of tapir with one of the animals wounded. This makes him feel that they are close to the missing Indians. But

when he voices this, the Arawak woman smiles and Vigilance winces. Yet Donne is adamant about catching up with them and repairing their fortunes. He thinks that the Indians will lead them home safely and they will be able to cultivate their fields and be with their wives. But the crew however feels dejected and downcast. "They had forgotten the miraculous escape they had had and recalls only fear and anxiety and horror and peril. This was hard hearted nature they contemplated, without thinking they may have already suffered it and endorsed it and re-lived it" (84).

A flock of parrots pointed out by the Arawak woman starts off an argument between Cameron and one of the da Silva twins. In a flash of intuition, da Silva identifies the parrot with the silver ring as his lady's. He is laughed at by the rest of the crew especially Cameron. Cameron throws a stone at the parrot flock and wounds the bird with the silver ring. Da Silva starts to whimper and Cameron asks him to stop. This makes him mad and before the crew realizes what is happening, da Silva kills Cameron. This murder is committed out of despair for da Silva believes that Cameron has destroyed his chance of a reunion with his woman.

On the fourth day they wake up in a cave where they had found refuge on the previous night. They leave the body of Cameron there and proceed. By this time the crew has dwindled to Donne, Jennings, the twins and Vigilance. The deaths of the others are redemptive and the crew realizes this as they see their own deaths in the deaths of their companions:

... So Donne had died in the death of Wishrop, Jennings's primitive abstraction and slackening of will was a reflection of the death of Cameron. Schomburgh had died with Carroll. And da Silva saw with dread his own sogging fool's life on the threshold of the ultimate stab of discredit like one who had adventured and lived on scraps of vulgar intention and detection and rumour that passed for the arrest of spiritual myth and the rediscovery of a new life in the folk. (96)

In terms of Guyanese experience, the regression into the grave and womb of history is absolutely necessary for the emergence of a true rebirth in terms of identity. The death of Carroll redeems them from sin and creates a new relationship with water. When Cameron dies Jennings loses an adversary within himself. Wishrop's dance expresses the harmony of death. He is also identified with the Anancy spider, a symbol of the survival of the exploited. The living quality of the

spider is transferred to Vigilance when he sees Wishrop's spidery skeleton climbing up. Significantly, the narrator, Donne's visionary self, now melts into the character of Vigilance who becomes the connecting link between death and life.

Book IV is entitled "Paling of Ancestors" and proceeds to the fifth day. In the dawn Donne misses three more people - one of the da Silva twins, Vigilance and the Arawak woman. They disappear without a trace but Donne decides to go ahead rather than remain behind. As Jennings' wrist is swollen, it is Donne who starts the engine with the help of da Silva. All of a sudden they reach a thunderous waterfall, the biggest they have encountered so far. Steps and balconies are seen to be cut on the rock-face making a hazardous ladder right to the top. Donne realizes that his destruction is at hand. They discard the boat and start climbing up with hands and feet.

The climb becomes synonymous with the breakdown of Donne's arrogance as a ruler and boss. His first experience is the memory of the house he has left behind on the savannah. As he slips on the misty steps, a

noose round his neck sustains him from falling. He understands Hell in an intuitive flash. Hell is "the dreaming return to a ruling function of nothingness and a false sense of home." Through this metaphor, Harris highlights the emotional dependence of the 'coloured' man on the artifacts of western civilization. As Donne ascends the steps, he encounters different faces at the windows which highlight different aspects of Guyanese history. The first one is that of a carpenter whom Donne has to recognize as a spiritual forebear within himself:

A rectangular face it was, chiselled and cut from the cedar of Lebanon. He was startled and frightened by the fleshless wood, the lips a breath apart full of grains from the skeleton of a leaf on the ground branching delicately and sensitively upward into the hair on his head that parted itself in the middle and fell on both sides of his face into a harvest. His fingers were of the same wood, the nails made of bark and ivory. Every movement and glance and expression was a chiselling touch, the divine alienation and translation of flesh and blood into everything and anything on earth. The chisel was old as life, old as a finger nail. The saw was the teeth of bone. Donne felt himself sliced with the skeleton-saw by the craftsman of God in the windowpane of his eye. The swallow flew in and out like a picture on the wall framed by the carpenter to breathe perfection. (102)

The carpenter is a spiritual redeemer but not Christ. Donne hammers on the window to attract his attention but he looks through and past him. The room transcends all concepts of time. The next image is that of the wounded animal which appears as a picture on the wall of the carpenter's room. It seems to fill the room with its presence. The image recalls the wounded tapir they had spotted earlier. The image sets off in motion a sort of cosmic dance in which all elements and experience are controlled by the carpenter's creative touch. Time and space coalesce into one another and the room becomes "...a dancing hieroglyph in the illumination of endless pursuit, the subtle running depths of the sea, the depths of the green sky and the depths of the forest" (104-105). After this, they see a comet trailing into a flock of birds standing before the huntsman of death who stands in the waterfall rewinding his horn. Then the sky becomes an endless stream of running prey fleeing the hunter. The walls of the carpenter's room are besieged by the stampede of ghostly men and women, reminding one of the stampede on the Day of Judgement. Thereafter the tumult subsides and the carpenter closes his window on Donne, Jennings and da Silva.

As they proceed on the journey, Jennings slips and falls into the depths. Donne and da Silva identify themselves with the wounded animal they had seen earlier, shaking and scanning the cliffs in fear and ecstasy. The stars in the sky shine as they crawl up the fantastic ladder. At one of the windows they encounter the image of the woman and child with its paradox on "richness" and "threadbareness." The arrogance of Donne is annihilated by the spectacle that may be identified as Madonna and Child. Donne realizes that he is blind but this blindness makes him aware of his nothingness. All his life he had loved only himself but now he focusses upon a far greater love and self-protection that has created the universe.

When they reach the top, they are exhausted but find nothing there. So they fall not having been able to lay hands on anything. In the dawn of the sixth day, da Silva wakes up inside the house hearing Donne hammering on the door. He opens the door to Donne who is blind and mad but who knows that da Silva and he are dead. In their death they have come home "...to the compassion of the nameless unflinching folk."

On the seventh day, the creation of the windows of the universe is completed. The narrator merges into Donne and sees Vigilance standing at the top of the sky, a position he has acquired through the pursuit of love. At the different windows of the palace, the different members of the crew can be identified. Carroll's music merges with the cry of the peacock. Schomburgh is free of all threats of hoax. Wishrop waltzes like the grace and outspread fan of desire. The narrator also sees Jennings, Cameron and the missing da Silva twin. They are all free from the chains of illusion. Having realized the ambivalences of predator/prey and ruler/ruled within themselves, they have at last slipped out of these limitations into a better understanding of themselves.

The struggle for survival in The Harrowing of Hubertus is presented in a realistic but prosaic manner. It does not have the grandiloquence of poetry. The novels of the Trilogy outline the difficulties that the pioneers had to face in an alien land. These include difficulties with weather and transport, lack of medical and educational facilities and threats from hostile

slaves, Indians and rival European powers. The planters often found themselves in the grip of circumstances out of their control. In the beginning of the novel, we see the letter written by Faustina to Hubertus explaining her situation of poverty and destitution. Her husband had died in the Berbice Insurrection and his entire family had been wiped out. So she wanted Hubertus to offer refuge to herself and her three sons. It also blamed the planters for cowardice for, she felt that they could have done better had they put up a fight instead of crowding on board the ships. This cowardice is ironic when one considers the deeds of cruelty that they had earlier inflicted on the slaves. The planters used to put them in stocks, cut off their ears, pour boiling tar over them etc. Lashes and whips were used to control them. During the rebellion, the slaves paid them back with interest making them submit to every sort of torture before killing them.

Faustina arrived in Demerary in 1764 and Hubertus received her warmly. He had already added two rooms to his house to accommodate her and her children

as he had received advance information. Faustina's description sheds light on the difficulties that the planters had to face:

She felt in no way self-conscious as she stood there in her stained, frayed, weather-worn dress. The events of the past year had cured her of feminine vanity. She knew that Jacqueline and Mary and the younger girls were staring curiously at her and the three infants, but the fact did not discomfit her, either. After months and months of life in a hut at St. Andries, and with disease and death around one continuously, who could feel sensitive about the clothes one wore! After the many grim sights of suffering she had endured, after the many hungry days and the battle for food for the children as well as for herself, how could she be concerned about the trifling circumstance of her being bare-footed, or about her bleached and tangled hair and the vague, unpleasant odour that surrounded her person.
(60)

Faustina's arrival set off in motion a number of events that affected Hubertus and his family.

Unlike other planters Hubertus was humane in his treatment of slaves. Yet he believed that harshness was necessary to control them. He thought of the Negroes and the Indians as heathens ordained by God to serve the white people. He used to keep a group of Indians on his plantation to keep a check on the

Negroes. His Indian blood helped him in securing their services. They also provided him with fish and game for his tables. But he had to provide them with rum to keep them happy. Though it was against his principles to encourage intoxication among them, he had to compromise on his ideals. In the beginning each compromise he affected harrowed him. Later on in life he started cohabiting with Negro slaves though he had restrained himself in the early years of marriage.

As a planter Hubertus was reasonably rich and he had few problems of a financial kind. His problems were always of a spiritual kind. So Rosalind was surprised when her brother told her that Hubertus indulged in illicit trading with the Islands for greater profit. As they were a Dutch colony, they were supposed to export everything they produced to Holland. Hubertus excused himself by saying that God would understand when a person acted out of corruption and when he acted out of urgent necessity. Rosalind was baffled by this inconsistency.

Hubertus was shrewd in matters of cultivation. There came a time when his land started yielding less and less and he decided that it was time to move on. In

the meanwhile Guyana was in the grip of uncertain politics with power changing hands from the Dutch to the English and then to the French and back again to the Dutch. But Hubertus was not ruffled by these events. Though he was Dutch he did not hesitate to take the oath of allegiance to the English when they came to power. In fact he felt that they were better than the privateers who would have looted the planters without any consideration. At the same time his van Groenwegel blood made it difficult for him to accept English domination. As he tells his brother-in-law Wilfred:

"We Dutch have flourished on this wild coast since early last century. One cannot forget the past hundred and seventy years in a few weeks. And remember the name I bear. Aert Adriansen van Groenwegel came to Essequibo in 1616... My Dutch fellow colonists have every right to ostracize me, Wilfred. I, of them all should have refused to take the oath you English framed - yet I took it. And I took it because my personal principles dictated that I should. From youth I have believed that one should be loyal to no one group - not to a nation. That is why I found it no problem to marry your sister. That is why I took such pains to learn your language, and saw to it that my children learnt it, too. I wish it were in my power to learn all languages on the earth. I believe in the brotherhood of man on earth - not in the brotherhood of separate nations." (226)

When the French came to power they started development work and asked the planters to apply for lots near the new town. Edward, Hubertus's son-in-law suggested that they should apply and Hubertus agreed. He also announced that they were leaving Plantation Good Heart for a new one on the coast that he had purchased for a quarter of the market price. He built a new house there, designed by Edward and called it "Huis Kaywana" after his ancestress. Soon the new plantation flourished under his supervision.

Slave insurrections were often instigated by rival colonial powers. The novel describes one such incident provoked by the Spanish. One day Luise and Edward were taking a walk in their grounds when Edward mentioned seeing a white man on the premises. Luise, later mentioned the fact to her father who seemed to take it very seriously. His overseer had already reported that someone was plotting mischief among the slaves. Hubertus started getting his muskets ready shocking his wife. Hubertus explained that he would not hesitate to kill the Negroes like wild pigs if they threatened him or his family. He thus demonstrated the

toughness of the van Groenwegels in spite of all the principles he preached about human brotherhood. At the same time he tried his best to diffuse the issue by talking to the slaves first. Most of the slaves listened with downcast eyes as he reminded them about their duties but one of the slaves had the courage to voice his protest. He accused Hubertus of not giving them enough of rations. Hubertus understood immediately that some white man was behind it. Though he questioned the slave and threatened him with punishment, the man wouldn't divulge any information. In the end Hubertus surprised everyone by not punishing the man. At the same time he started getting his ammunition ready. Three days later a messenger came with the information that the slaves had rebelled all over the colony. Hubertus decided to send his family away to Borssele while he joined the Burgher Militia to resist the attack, but Luise chose this opportunity to remind her father of the van Groenwegel motto: "The van Groenwegels never run." In the end, the shoot-out took place in their yard with Luise helping her father to load the muskets. Clad only in a petticoat she stood by

her father and fought and the incident brought the father and daughter close to each other. Hubertus's comment to her underlines his divided loyalties:

"You're mad, my girl, Luise. ... Running out there half-dressed without a thought to modesty. With two muskets. Almost laughable. But how can you help it? It's the blood in you. There is madness in the van Groenwegels, I'm convinced of it as I was never before. Yet it's a madness I admire and revel in." (154)

He was both proud and ashamed of being a van Groenwegel.

The planters of eighteenth century found it difficult to provide good education to their children. There were no schools of any kind and the great majority of the coloured people and Negroes were illiterate. The rich could afford tutors and that was how Hubertus's children were taught. He himself had studied in the same way but had decided against going to Europe to study surveying. One or two families used to join together to avail of the services of the tutors. Another difficulty was the lack of medical facilities. Large numbers of people died due to various illnesses. One particular infection called 'sickness' for want of a

specific name claimed a large number of people. In fact, most of the people who survived the Berbice Insurrection died of sickness immediately after. All the soldiers who were sent to crush the rebels died of it. Among the casualties was Hubertus's aunt Flora and her sons.

One particular incident of sickness greatly influenced the events to come. Woglinde, the flirtatious wife of Clackson came to Hubertus's house in great agitation saying that her husband was ill. As she had tried to ensnare him earlier, Hubertus refused to go with her thinking that she was lying. His wife Rosalind decided to help her and went with her to her house; she returned the next day with Woglinde's little daughter Clara offering to take care of her till her father was better. Thereafter Rosalind made frequent trips to Rylands till Cranley Clackson recovered. Woglinde, however fell a prey to it. On the day of her death, she sent Clackson to bring Hubertus, for, she wanted to see him for the last time. Rosalind was at that time with her. Cranley came back with Hubertus but Woglinde had died before he arrived. The incident made him feel depressed.

In comparison to Harris, Mittelholzer's view of the struggle to survive is limited in scope. He presents the struggle from the point of view of the planters. Though mention is made about their excesses and cruelties to their slaves, the attitude that emerges is definitely in favour of the planters. This fails to provide a comprehensive picture of the colonizer and the colonized. In Wilson Harris's novel, the struggle is of a spiritual kind and at the end of it, the colonizer loses his arrogance and realizes the presence of the colonized within himself. The flight of the Amerindians and the pursuit of them by Donne's crew ends in the latter's recognition of the basic truths of existence.

Man-Woman Relationships: Man-woman relationships in the novel, Palace of the Peacock are metaphors for the strange alliances and rivalries of Guyanese history. Mariella, Donne's woman, is both his benefactress and his murderess. She is also identified with the Muse. All the women characters who appear are facets of the same primordial woman just as all the members of the crew are facets of Donne's personality. Donne's initial quest of Mariella, that happens in the past, is "his

first innocent voyage." Once he possesses her, he treats her cruelly, forcing her to be vengeful. Donne's brother, his visionary self, tries to appease her and in his vision he sees Donne falling from his horse and dying because of her arrow in the dark. Here Mariella becomes Guyana, who is first wooed by the European powers and then abused by them. The settlement of the Arawak Indians is described as the "Mission of Mariella" but when the crew reaches there, the Amerindians flee. This may be attributed to their treatment of Mariella. If Mariella is looked upon as the 'Muse,' the visionary narrator's attempts to appease her become the author's attempts to woo the Muse. Incidentally the word "musing" is frequently used by the visionary narrator. The next woman who appears is the old Arawak woman who is forced by Donne to show them the way. The visionary narrator is shocked by a sense of recognition when he sees her. Though she is old and wrinkled she suddenly assumes new vitality once she is on the river. She is identified with the river: "Tiny embroideries resembling the handwork on the Arawak woman's kerchief and the wrinkles on her brow turned to incredible and fast soundless breakers of foam. Her crumpled bosom and

river grew agitated with desire, bottling and shaking every fear and inhibition and outcry. The ruffles in the water were her dress rolling and rising to embrace the crew" (62). The river claims Carroll and the next minute the woman looks as old as ever, contrasting with her youth and desirability a minute ago.

Carroll's death becomes the cause of Schomburgh's to whom he is joined in a strange relationship. Carroll was Schomburgh's son and nephew. In his youth he had fallen in love with a girl from a distant mission. Schomburgh remembers the incident thus: "What a chase it was. He cornered her and poured upon her his first and last outburst of frenzied self-forgetting eloquence until he felt the answers of her lips. She smelt like leaves growing on top the rocks in the sun in the river, a dry and yet soft bursting smell, the dryness of the hot scampering sun on the fresh inwardness of a strong resilient plant" (66). But all of a sudden she left him and he went in pursuit of her. When he reached there, he found out that she was the daughter of his father by another mistress. Later on, she became the wife of Vigilance's father who

was a widower. Carroll was only five years old then and Vigilance was thirteen. Though Vigilance's father offered to give his name to her son, she did not want the hoax of sin upon her son. So the boy continued under the name Carroll that had no connexion with any one. The confusion of identity in Carroll's case is thus depicted: "Carroll was one burning memory and substance for his mother and another dimmer incestuous substance and myth for his uncertain and unknown father folk. He had become a relative ghost for all as all ultimately became a ghost for everyone" (68). Carroll's case is symbolic of the many coloured offspring born through slave concubinage whose fatherhood was uncertain. As such, no one could detect or check incestuous relationships.

Later on Carroll fell in love with Vigilance's sister Tiny who became pregnant by him. She was only fifteen and Carroll was seventeen at the time. When she lost her baby Carroll went to his mother and told her about it saying that he wanted to marry her. His mother asked him to make his fortune first before settling down. His stepfather was sure to object if he wanted to

marry her immediately. Though Carroll objected at first he agreed in the end. He also felt bitter because his mother was carrying his father's child that child would live but his own had died. Vigilance who was witness to everything accompanied Carroll when he set out. It was he who introduced him to Schomburgh and Schomburgh had stared "at the ultimate ghost he both dreaded and loved" (67). After Schomburgh's death the unnatural relationship does not matter at all.

Wishrop's tale is one of unfaithfulness and violence. His boon companions had been thieves and the women were whores. Though Wishrop did not feel superior to them he was basically honest. But as everyone else was cheating he too did. This, however made him hate himself. When he fell in love with a woman, he decided to marry her but the catechist who performed the ceremony sniggered behind his book. Wishrop marked this and never forgave him. One day he came upon his wife in bed with another man. He killed both of them. He then shot dead, all the thieves who were his boon companions and the catechist. Lastly he shot himself. But his life was saved by an old Arawak woman who saw him

crawling like a spider into the river. Ironically however, Wishrop in return shot the poor Arawak woman, "his muse and benefactress." The author's comment about him is significant: "His faith and optimism endeared him to the crew and they fed upon his brief confessions and ravings as the way of a vicarious fury and freedom and wishful action they had known, not believing a word in the improbable tale he told of a harmless lover and lunatic: nevertheless they pledged themselves anew to the sense of their indestructibility" (58). Wishrop's resemblance to Donne has to be studied with reference to Mariella's killing of Donne. These two murders complement one another shedding light on the violent nature of sexual passion. Another member of the crew, one of the da Silva twins, also commits murder: he kills Cameron for wounding a parrot in the flock. He identifies the bird with the silver ring as the bird belonging to the girl at the mission whom he had courted on his previous visit and abandoned in a pregnant state. He declares that he is going to marry her this time but when Cameron pelts the bird and wounds her, he is overcome with rage:

Da Silva muttered wildly - "I tell you when you pelt she, you pelt me. Is one flesh, me flesh, you flesh, she come to save me, to save all of we. You, murderer! what else is you but a plain, vile murderer? She aint no witch..." His face was mad. (90)

The bird also becomes the albatross - the symbol of good fortune. Cameron dies at the hands of da Silva who later on looks foolish: "He looked around foolishly, telling himself Cameron had attacked him in some idle and faithless fashion. It all seemed blind and empty now like the air and stream that jostled them" (91).

In the later stages of the journey, the Arawak woman disappears to reappear again as the Madonna in one of the windows of the palace. In this spectacle there is more grandeur than anything known before: "It was richer than all the images of seduction combined in the treasuries of the east..." (107). She thus becomes the symbol of spiritual fulfilment.

A.J. Seymour quotes Mittelholzer in his work, Edgar Mittelholzer: The Man and His work: "Sex and religion are my themes as a writer. I hold very strong views on these two subjects and in everything I write

you will note that I shall touch on them" (1968, 4). The Harrowing of Hubertus is no exception. The Trilogy records relationships both normal and abnormal; they range from homosexuality to incest. Excesses and perversions are also brought in to highlight the psychic imbalance of the van Groenwegels. For example the thread of homosexuality starts with Cornelis and is carried on by Raphael the son of his nephew Jacques. In the next generation Graham, the son of Storm van Groenwegel turns homosexual. Incest too, starts in the first novel, where Adrian develops a strange fascination for his mother. Mary, the daughter of Dirk van Groenwegel develops the same feeling for her father in the last novel. The van Groenwegels are either creatively gifted and effeminate or physically courageous and given to excesses in sex. There are, however, exceptions to the rule. The Harrowing of Hubertus depicts the protagonist's relationships with three different women. Through these relationships the author highlights the clash between "low urges" and "high principles." As a young man, Hubertus had sown his wild oats before marrying Rosalind Maybury, an English girl. He admired her for her restraint and

after his marriage, he tried his best to be faithful to her. Though other planters used to cohabit with the slaves, he resisted the temptation. It was then that Woglinde Clackson arrived in the neighbourhood in the form of a temptress. Years ago, before her marriage, she and Hubertus had been lovers but her family had gone away and she had married another man. When Cranley Clackson bought the estate close to Hubertus's own, she wanted to go back to the old days without regarding the fact that both Hubertus and she were married. She was a flirtatious woman and she shocked everyone by openly admitting her infidelities. Hubertus was repulsed by her advances but she would not give in. Looking on Hubertus as a challenge, she started seducing him but Hubertus was able to restrain himself. Unfortunately for her, she died without accomplishing her aim. After her death, Rosalind brought her daughter to stay with them as her father could not care for her. Though the child was a delightful little girl Hubertus was filled with foreboding. Years later, his fears were justified when Clara became a threat to the happiness of his daughter Luise and her husband Edward.

Hubertus's relationship with Faustina is one that undergoes change from brotherly affection to sensuous love. Though Rosalind did her best to welcome Faustina and make her feel at home, there was a barrier between them. It was the barrier of emotional understanding. With Hubertus she had no such problem as the two of them were very close to one another. Even earlier, she had wanted to marry him but he had been against marrying into the family. Close proximity with him reawakened the old passion. In the meanwhile Cranley Clackson became interested in Faustina and Faustina felt instinctively that Rosalind wanted to get rid of her by marrying her off to Cranley. When she mentioned this to Hubertus Hubertus too agreed that Rosalind was feeling left out because of the close bond between them. When Faustina announced that she was going to say 'yes' to Cranley's proposal Hubertus was upset though he realized the inevitability of her decision. The same evening he shocked everyone by the harsh treatment he meted out to the slaves. As a person Hubertus was always harrowed by questions. The memory of his mother was ever a torment and he was able to resist Woglinde because he imagined that his mother must

have been like her. With Faustina's arrival the entanglement became more. Seeing his strange moodiness Faustina came to a decision. One evening she met Hubertus as he was coming home from Borsselen and told him that she wanted to have one experience of physical intimacy with Hubertus before she married Cranley. She wanted desperately to be with him:

"I think I could be happy with Cranley, Hubertus, but only if I could go to him taking with me the memory of you. Have me - just once. No I won't mind going to him after. But - but - to go to him without ever having known you - without ever having, no, no! I couldn't face it, my love. I would grow old feeling that God had cheated me of the best and most treasured thing I needed." (94)

Hubertus did not need much persuasion and they made love in the open air in the pouring rain. Faustina felt no remorse at what she had done. She told Cranley about it before she married him. Hubertus too told Rosalind but Rosalind was deeply hurt though she did not show any trace of hatred.

Hubertus hated himself for what he had done. He resigned from the Burgher Militia. When Faustina and her kids moved into Cranley's place after her marriage,

a great change seemed to come over him. But the families continued to see each other. Rosalind had forgiven her husband but she thought that he should make it up to her for her great sacrifice. When Faustina gave birth to a son, she pretended that the child was premature to prevent Hubertus from knowing that it was his son! Rosalind knew about it but she too wanted to spare Hubertus. The boy was named Graeme after one of Cranley's relatives. After some time Hubertus came to know the truth and this knowledge made him even more harrowed.

Hubertus's sense of guilt and his harrowing thoughts did not prevent him from continuing his relationship with Faustina. As the years passed by, Rosalind became bitter. Hubertus's daughter Luise came to know about the affair through Faustina's son Edward. She was thunderstruck by this as she had always had great respect for her father. Yet she did not like Edward describing him as a hypocrite. She started watching her father and soon she realized that her mother was too frigid for a man like her father. Later on, after his marriage to Luise, Edward too came to feel

that Rosalind was partly responsible for the affair. As he told Luise: "Cousin Rosalind sulks like a bear all the time and hardly speaks to him, so how can he be blamed for seeking Mother as a companion. It is only since I came to live here that I've discovered how Cousin Rosalind really treats him" (229).

Edward's decision to marry Luise had been precipitated by his discovery of Faustina and Hubertus making love in a spot that he had intended to be a rendezvous for Luise and himself. The sight angered him very much and it was in this furious mood that he went back to see Luise and tell her about it. Earlier they had thought of waiting till their marriage before indulging in sex. They now decided to go ahead and soon Faustina and Hubertus were forced to talk to the two children. Faustina tried to dissuade Luise from marrying Edward saying that he was only eighteen but Luise was adamant. Hubertus however allowed Edward to decide for himself offering him a home with the family after the marriage. His own experiences with love had made him understand that it was always best to allow love to flower and bear fruit. In the years that

followed Edward got really close to him but the affair with Faustina came to an end. After the move into a new house, Hubertus hardly saw Faustina.

Even after Faustina and Hubertus ceased to meet, Rosalind found it difficult to feel the same way for Hubertus. Her trust in him had collapsed. Though Hubertus and she enjoyed playing with Luise's children, Rosalind often felt left out when she saw the great bond of affection between Hubertus, Luise and Edward. Hubertus tried to warn Edward against Clara but Edward fell a victim to her charms. He could now understand why Hubertus had told him that it was not easy to tell where the flesh ended and the spirit began. Unlike Hubertus, he kept it a secret from Luise but he was devastated when he came to know that he was the father of Clara's child. He then revealed everything to his wife. Unlike her mother, Luise understood his difficulty. She decided to take her husband away from temptation. When she told her father that they were leaving Plantation Kaywana, he was unhappy but he knew that her decision was the right one. He also felt that he was being punished for his own indiscretions. As an

old man, Hubertus felt lonely and desolate; Rosalind had become cynical and sarcastic. When Rosalind and Faustina died he turned to Sarah, a Negro slave and had a mulatto bastard by her. In the struggle between the flesh and the spirit, the flesh had won. Hubertus had no regrets. He was only concerned about the future of his daughter by Sarah. Before he died, he told Edward and Luise to take care of her.

The picture that emerges from Hubertus's relationships is that of a warm, sensuous person whose weaknesses make him compassionate and understanding. In contrast, Rosalind Maybury though pious and with high principles and sense of integrity, emerges as cold and puritanical. Rosalind, whose actions are governed by Christian ethics forgives her husband when he tells her of his intimacy with Faustina. Yet she feels that he should make it up to her for the great sacrifice. When this does not happen, she becomes aggrieved and cynical. In the ultimate analysis one feels that Mittelholzer is deliberately portraying Rosalind in this fashion to fit his idea of sex and human relationships. Moreover the conventional framework of the story makes it difficult to compare it with the man-woman relationships in Palace of the Peacock.

Religion: Religion is also used by Mittelholzer to focus on Hubertus's duality. Much of his dilemma is caused by the double standards adopted by the plantocracy. Though most of the colonials were staunch Christians, they showed no Christian charity or decency to their slaves, whom they treated as animals. The last novel of the trilogy, Kaywana Blood, elucidates how the Christian missionaries played the keyrole in alleviating the miseries of the slaves and in bringing about emancipation. Early in the novel, we see Hubertus leading the prayers, the prayers being sacrosanct in his household. He believed in loyalty to all Christian men; ironically however, the Indians and slaves were heathens who were ordained by God to serve the white people. Yet he treated the slaves with kindness. The irony is intensified when we consider that he had both Indian and Negro blood in his veins.

Hubertus's schizoid tendencies are evident from the very beginning. Though attracted towards Woglinde, he restrained himself with the thought that his mother must have been like her. With Faustina he had always been close and their physical intimacy gave him great

pleasure though he knew that it was illicit. Conventional religion could provide him with no answers to the numerous questions that were forming in his head. He read Spinoza's Ethics and St. Augustine trying to achieve psychic wholeness. But they were unable to help him. As he told Rosalind, "I do not subscribe to the view held by St. Augustine... that the fleshly in us can only be related to evil. This is foolish! Absurd! It is contrary to all one's instincts. A man who can hold such a view has never experienced any joy in his relations with woman. If the flesh is abused the result is evil, but if the flesh is respected and treated with reverence and restraint only good can come from such an attitude" (118). He also believed that people were born with tendencies for good and evil - it was blood that decided the allegiance. Rosalind in contrast could never tolerate laxity of morals. Hubertus's unfaithfulness destroyed her own faith in him which had earlier been greater than her faith in God.

As time passed, Hubertus's harrowing questions led him to form his own concept of God and sin. When his daughter Jacqueline was found to be having an affair

with the overseer, he told Rosalind that being a sinner he had no right to despise her. Yet he took her to task and reprimanded her severely telling her to do as her mother would have done in her circumstances - put the man out of her mind and restrain herself. When another daughter, Mary, announced her decision to marry a middle-aged widower, Hubertus left the decision to her. At the same time he expressed his opinion about it saying that God smiled only on marriages of love. Rosalind took this opportunity to ask him if God smiled upon love outside of sanctified wedlock. Hubertus had his own answer: "God does not possess the narrow limited outlook of his puny creatures who call themselves men. God, it is my conviction smiles upon love, sacred or profane. The only measure he applies in judging such love is the measure of sincerity. So long as love is deep and sincere, whether the predicants or the law officials approve of it or not, such love is a joy in God's sight" (172). As far as he was concerned his love for Faustina was as deep and sincere as his love for Rosalind. When he saw Luise's deep devotion to Edward, he had no difficulty in sanctioning the marriage despite the fact that she was ten years older than Edward. When

he became closer to Edward he spoke about his love for Faustina which was considered adulterous by other people. To him it was beautiful and magical. But he wanted Edward to resist the same temptation with Clara because his relationship with Faustina had lost him the very precious jewel of Rosalind's love. On another occasion Edward asked him if he believed in God. The answer depicts Hubertus's departure from the orthodox creed: "I used to think of God as an austere Spirit whose one purpose was to punish mankind when the flesh triumphed, and scatter rewards when the spirit showed its superiority... well, now I am doubtful what my conception is, because I have changed in my attitude towards the flesh. Now I ask myself at what point does the flesh end and the spirit begin..." (270). He further clarified that he preferred to believe in himself as he felt that God did not care one jot whether human beings praised Him or not. He continued to hold this belief till death.

Religion in Palace of the Peacock may be understood with reference to the author's "A Note on the Genesis of the Guyana Quartet:"

... Carroll's music in the last stages of Palace of the Peacock slices through every character mask, "mixing blind joy and sadness and the sense of being lost with the nearness of being found" (p.114) to intimate distances that cannot be measured in the body of the crew, distances that breed a gateway or intangible architecture when El Dorado or the city of gold, secretes a resemblance to the city of God. In such resemblances lie profoundest self-judgements converting music into terrifying vision.

Donne, the master of the El Doradonne, crew, hangs upon a scaffolding to which he is secured by "the unflinching clarity with which he looked into himself and saw that all his life he had loved no one but himself. He focused his blind eye..." (p.107) to surrender to the folk constellated in the stars he had exploited and the woman Mariella of the moon and the sun, the rapids and the forests, he had abused. (8)

This quotation reveals how Harris makes use of Amerindian, Negro and Christian myths within the novel to present a comprehensive picture. Harris talks about the Caribbone-flute in the same note. Harris looks upon the flute as an organ of self knowledge suffused with enemy bias because it partakes of both 'self' and 'other,' so does its music. It is a music that befits the mixed ancestry of the Guyanese, part colonizer, part native.

Harris also makes use of the African spider god Anancy. This god is usually associated with cunning and indestructibility. In the slave era, it symbolized the cunning of the exploited and their tenacious will to survive. In the novel, the character of Wishrop is associated with it. Wishrop kills his enemies and dies but is saved by the Arawak woman, whom he kills. When he dies during the journey, Vigilance perceives him climbing upward like a spider. His every movement is a dance bringing to mind the dance of the Africans duplicating the movement of the spider as they crawl beneath the rod.

The last part of the story depicts Donne's encounter with different beliefs of redemption at the different windows of the palace. The carpenter is a creator and redeemer who is ageless and timeless. When Donne slips and is sustained by the noose round his neck, he becomes the hanging god. He encounters the mother and child which is the Virgin and Son of Christian religion. The spectacle is rich in its paradoxes. The flowing garment of the lady is rich yet

threadbare and yet it flows from out of her and joins the hay in the manger. Ultimately he realizes that it is her own hair:

He stared and saw her astonishing face. Not a grain of her dress but shone with her hair clothing her threadbare limbs in the melting plaits of herself. Her ancient dress was her hair after all, falling to the ground and glistening and waving until it grew so frail and loose and endless, the straw in the cradle entered and joined it and the whole room was enveloped in it as a melting essence yields itself and spreads itself from the topmost pinnacle and star into the roots of self and space. (107)

The vision helps Donne to overcome his arrogance and perceive the void within himself. His "blindness" that had prevented him seeing, now makes him realize his nothingness. He is now ready to be companion of the nameless unflinching folk.

Harris also correlates the seven-day pattern of the world's creation with the seven-day period of Donne's quest. The days are described as first day, second day etc., till the seventh day on which the visionary narrator reaches the palace and perceives his companions who have already reached there. The music of Carroll now mingles with the cry of the peacock. The

city of gold becomes the city of God. Donne's ultimate realization is thus portrayed: "This was the inner music and voice of the peacock I suddenly encountered and echoed and sang as I had never heard myself sing before. I felt the faces before me begin to fade and part company from me and from themselves as if our need of one another was now fulfilled, and our distance from each other was the distance of a sacrament, the sacrament and embrace we knew in one muse and one undying soul. Each of us now held at last in his arms, what he had been forever seeking and what he had eternally possessed" (116-117).

Politics: The political angle is explored by Harris at the level of colonial relations. In retrospect, the colonial empowerment with the exploitation and enslavement of the natives in the beginning and the dismemberment of the Africans in the next stage are facts of history that cannot be changed. The independent Guyanese have to accept it as their heritage. Harris tries to outline such an acceptance through the character of Donne. Donne's pursuit of the Amerindian labourers is justified by himself as part of

the mechanism of survival. When the Indians speak about their rights where the land is concerned, he thinks that he has as much right as they. His abuse of Mariella is his abuse of the land and the people. At the end of the journey Donne realizes that he is the ruler of nothing. This realization is the political vision that the novel has to present, not only in terms of Guyana but the entire world where exploitation of man by man continues.

Mittelholzer's vision is confined to the historical perspective of politics in Guyana. Political events influence the life of the characters and their way of looking at things. Faustina's arrival at Demerary is the result of the Berbice Insurrection of 1764. Another rebellion instigated by Spaniards helps to identify Luise as one of the tougher van Groenwegels. The incident also forges a bond with her father. Later Luise's marriage to Edward has to be postponed because war breaks out in North America. Hubertus seems to have dual strains of toughness and mercy, religion and sensuousness in his character. The other van Groenwegels were either tough and cruel or artistic and effeminate. But plantation culture demanded toughness

on the part of the slave owners. Hubertus was no exception; even his kindness to slaves had the hint of superciliousness about it.

Guyana saw a great deal of political change in the late eighteenth century. Hubertus's reaction to these changes have been recorded by Mittelholzer to shed light on his duality. His reaction to the change of colonial proprietorship is characteristic. In his old age, Hubertus saw the French, originally allies of the Dutch turning enemy and the English becoming friends. The Guyanese people were faced with the dilemma of accepting either the Batavian Republic or the King of England as colonial master. The Prince of Orange had given authority to the King of England. Hubertus was informed of these changes by his overseer Overgaar. Though old, his political acumen continued to be sharp. In 1802, when the planter class disapproved of the new governor's 'coloured' wife, Hubertus was worried: he was thinking of his own daughter by Sarah and her fate in the days to come.

Search for Roots: Both the Trilogy and the Quartet are written from historical perspectives. So the search for roots is a motif that has to be studied in relation to

the other novels of the Trilogy and the Quartet to get the complete picture. Mittelholzer elucidates historical events while portraying the psychological duality of mixed inheritance. The linear pattern of the narrative makes it easy to study the van Groenwegels in terms of their particular era. Harris's Quartet delineates significant aspects of the Guyanese past, each novel unravelling one facet of experience. Together, the four novels cover the entire Guyanese experience. Harris also differs from Mittelholzer in perspective, emphasis and style.

The first novel of the Trilogy, Children of Kaywana depicts the pioneering Europeans and the establishment of the plantocracy. The mixing of blood strains also starts there. But as time passed, prejudices about mixed blood became hard and rigid. Adriansen van Groenwegel had children by his half-caste Indian woman Kaywana to whom he was not even married and was still able to become the governor of Essequibo. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the attitude had changed drastically and one of the governors was looked upon with disfavour because his wife was thought to be

of mixed blood. Another irony involves Hendrickje, the daughter of a coloured slave, who is therefore considered an "octoroon". She is depicted as the cruel mistress of her slaves who does not hesitate to bury a slave alive when he has outlived his usefulness. At the same time she is the epitome of van Groenwegel pride. Her husband who is pure white is depicted as kind and considerate though weak and irresolute. Hubertus, who was quarter Indian, blamed his half-caste mother (Rosaria was half-Carib half Spanish) for his tendencies towards Evil. Yet his own father was no puritan. It was his pursuit of Rosaria that ended in his castration. Another reason that Hubertus attributed to the perversions among the van Groenwegels was in-breeding. Hendrickje and Aert were children of Laurens and the coloured daughter of August, Laurens's uncle. Hendrickje married her own cousin Ignatius, to keep the van Groenwegel name after marriage. Hendrickje's grandson Jacques married her brother Aert's granddaughter Faustina. In the next generation Faustina's son Edward married Hubertus's daughter Luise and the two were related in more ways than one, Hubertus being Jacques's half-brother and Faustina's cousin.

Hendrickje's son Cornelis was a homosexual and Adrian became mad later in life. One of Faustina's sons, Raphael became a homosexual. The last novel, Kaywana Blood describes how Storm, Edward's twin brother, fathers a son by a slave who is passed off as the overseer's. Storm's son Graham becomes a homosexual. Of Edward's sons, Pelham died in a fire while he was involved in an illicit affair with Graham's wife. Pelham's son Francis developed strange ideas of sex early in life and became a source of embarrassment to the family. Pelham's daughter Harriet was no better, she became a bawdy-house keeper. Mary, daughter of Dirk van Groenwegel also had strange sexual instincts that made her love her own father on the one hand and enjoy coarse brutal sex with a sea-captain on the other. After her indulgence, she was so overcome with self-loathing that she committed suicide.

In the saga of van Groenwegels we find certain characters who are given more importance by the author. Mittelholzer explores the theme of psychic imbalance through these characters. In the first novel, Laurens the son of Willem van Groenwegel is one such character.

He is the tougher of the two sons just as his father had been the tougher one when compared to his brother. Though Willem did not approve of Laurens marrying a coloured slave, he was fond of Hendrickje because of her toughness. He had no interest in Ignatius, the son of Reinald and his German wife. Laurens's toughness did not make him cruel. Though he was fond of his daughter Hendrickje he was shocked by her treatment of her husband and sons. His letters to her revealed how his attitude to her had changed on account of her cruelty.

Jacques has many points in common with his cousin and half-brother Hubertus; like Hubertus he too felt the dual pulls within the psyche. He often questioned his grandmother's code of toughness and courage. His father had gone mad and was of no use to him and his mother liked to live a life of voluptuousness. So his grandmother was all in all for Jacques and his brothers and sisters. On one occasion he set his mother free when his grandmother put her in stocks for plotting against her. Later he joined the others when they set out to kill her at Hendrickje's instigation. Though his mother deserved it, Jacques

felt agitated and guilty about the matricide. Another instance of his duality is his relationship with Amelia George, another white girl. Jacques was very much in love with his wife Faustina but this did not prevent him from getting involved with Amelia. During the Berbice Insurrection, the two of them were captured by the slaves. Amelia was made the mistress of the slave rebel leader and Jacques was forced to become his secretary. The proud van Groenwegel was forced to suffer every sort of indignity at the hands of the slaves, his pain intensified by the cruelties that they were perpetrating on Amelia. With stoicism he managed to survive and was offered a way of escape by some of his own slaves. He did not leave immediately but waited till he could save Amelia from their clutches. It was through Amelia that he sent his last letter to Faustina. After his escape he went home to Canje determined to fight the rebels but he was surprised to see his tough brothers give up the struggle. Hendrickje who was disgusted by this, applauded Jacques saying that for all his softness, he was the tough one. But it was of no use, all the brothers and their grand mother died at the hands of the slaves.

In the last novel Kaywana Blood a canister of old letters play a crucial role in determining the character of the protagonist, Dirk van Groenwegel. Though the historical novel covers the entire nineteenth century and extends upto the middle of the twentieth century, importance is given to the period in which Dirk lives. Dirk the son of Storm van Groenwegel, Edward's twin brother, lives through the period that sees the emancipation of slaves and the importation of coolie labour. Through Dirk, the duality of blood strains is elucidated with Dirk's negrophobia undergoing several changes before he ultimately realizes the folly of white superiority.

Storm van Groenwegel, son of Faustina and Jacques had married Elizabeth, daughter of Hubertus's brother-in-law Wilfred Maybury. Wilfred had a passion for collecting records. When one of his friends, a naturalist, found a canister of old letters from the place where Hendrickje's house had once stood, he gave it to Wilfred.

This contained letters written to Hendrickje by Laurens. Wilfred decided to keep these letters of historic importance. Storm's sons, Graham and Dirk,

came into contact with these letters in childhood. In Graham's case the letters did not have much effect, for he was basically a soft person, afraid of the dark and excessively fond of his Negro nurse Nibia. Dirk, however was so influenced by the letters that he became a reincarnation of Hendrickje. Even as a baby, Dirk had an aura of toughness about him and his uncle Edward depicted him with racoon eyes in a family portrait. His own mother had an instinctive antagonism towards him. Dirk grew up with a fanatic sense of pride in the van Groenwegel family. One of Hendrickje's dreams was to have many sons and spread out throughout Guyana to become the most powerful family in the region. Dirk now developed a similar ambition. Early in life he started scheming to keep the family pure of slave blood little realizing that it was already tainted. He forced his brother Graham to change his name when he married a coloured woman. Towards the end of his life he came across another set of letters written by Hendrickje's father to his sister Susannah in Surinam. They revealed that Hendrickje's mother was a coloured woman. By this time, the number of respectable male van Groenwegels were very few. Dirk died realizing the folly of racial superiority.

As an individual Dirk was given to egotism and worship of power. But he had a great loyalty to van Groenwegel blood. When he realized that Jacob, Nibia's son, was his half-brother, he did his best for him by teaching him to read and write. His father had passed Jacob off as the son of Frick, the overseer. From childhood Jacob became his closest friend and ally in spite of his Negro blood. In the meanwhile Hubertus's daughter by his slave Sarah was brought into the neighbourhood by Edward and Luise who had got her adopted by a coloured midwife. As Edward had promised Hubertus to take care of her, Rose, Hubertus's daughter was educated along with Dirk and Graham. When Dirk came to know that Rose had van Groenwegel blood in her he started scheming. He suggested to Jacob that he should cultivate Rose and marry her when he grew up to come up in the world. His efforts in this direction did not work. Jacob married Milicent, the daughter of the coloured carpenter to whom Jacob was apprenticed. When Rose grew up into a beautiful woman, Dirk himself fell in love with her. Rose too returned his affections but Dirk did not marry her. He wanted to keep the van Groenwegel blood pure of Negro taint, even if it meant breaking Rose's heart.

Even as a child, Dirk had a cruel streak within him. Once he used a pet puppy to catch an alligator rationalizing the incident as the ruthlessness necessary to achieve one's object. On another occasion he went to see Jacob's grand father, an old man who had witnessed the Berbice Insurrection. The man told him the story of the rebellion but Dirk was angry when he described the insults heaped on his own grand father Jacques by the slave leader Cuffy. When the old man went inside to shelter from a sudden downpour, Dirk tried to assert his authority as 'massa' by ordering him to come out. Jacob only laughed at him. The incident finally ended with Dirk and Jacob playing a game of make-believe.

In contrast to Dirk, Graham grew up into a kind and humane person. When he was put in charge of Plantation Kaywana by his uncle, he did his best for the slaves there. This made him unpopular with the other planters. Under the influence of Clara Hartfield and the missionaries, he converted a disused barn into a chapel and held services there for the slaves. As a planter too he was efficient but his 'soft' streak had not so beneficial side effects also. He had an illicit

affair with Clara Hartfield, his own father's step sister, older than his own mother. The affair came to an end when Clara's son returned from England. It was Clara who encouraged him to get engaged to another girl but the girl ran away with another man. Dirk in the meanwhile had selected Cornelia Reuff as the tough mother of the coming generation of van Groenwegels. When Graham went home to attend Dirk's wedding, he met Rose after a long interval and fell in love with her. The fact that she was coloured did not matter to Graham but it did to Dirk who tried his best to prevent the match. When every thing failed, he told Graham that Rose had been his mistress. This shocked and depressed Graham but his friend Clara Hartfield exposed Dirk's lie. Rose herself was so angry with Dirk that she accepted Graham's proposal though earlier she had no such intention. Dirk then insisted that Graham should change his name from van Groenwegel. Graham was ready to do that and he and Rose became Mr and Mrs Greenfield.

The white colonial Guyanese society had become snobbish by then though the early pioneers were not so rigid. Very few people called on the Greenfields

because they were coloured. In the end it was Dirk who suggested that his uncle Edward should visit Graham and Rose. Edward, Luise and their son Pelham and family visited Graham but Willem, the elder son and his wife preferred to keep away. Clara Hartfield had always been friendly to Rose and Graham. Rose's marriage however proved a failure eventhough she had two children by Graham. When Graham realized that she still loved Dirk, he turned away from her and became a homosexual. Dirk was agonized to hear this.

Dirk's character is depicted as a mixture of opposites. Dirk's refusal to marry Rose did not lessen his affection for her. When he saw her in agony, he drifted into an adulterous relationship with her eventhough he had declared earlier that he would never touch a coloured or a black woman. When she was on the verge of dying after losing Dirk's baby, Dirk instilled in her the will to continue living. Though Dirk's judgements about the future economy of Guyana were proved true, his judgements about people were often proved wrong. For example, his favourite nephew, Pelham's son Francis, turned out to be the most

notorious of the van Groenwegels. He had judged Jacob, as a lazy unambitious fellow when he married Millicent but Jacob proved to be a very shrewd businessman. His valuable advice helped Dirk in the days to come. Jacob's marriage was successful and he was able to send his sons abroad for higher studies. Two of his sons returned home with white wives. Only one of his daughters proved a disappointment. Jasmine, his youngest, got involved with Dirk's youngest son Adrian who was several years younger than her and committed suicide after becoming pregnant. Her death prompted Adrian to commit suicide too. Though Dirk had objected to Graham marrying Rose, thinking of social ostracism, Graham's children were able to get a decent education abroad. Graham's son was knighted by the King of England many years later. Dirk was sad to think that if he had not insisted on the change of name, honour would have come to the name of van Groenwegel. Rose's own life had ended in tragic circumstances. She had died along with Pelham with whom she was having an illicit affair, in a fire that broke out in the building where they were staying. Yet another instance was Dirk's judgement of Graham as weak on account of his interest

in religion. One day, seeing a Bible in Huis Kaywana, beneath the portrait of Hubertus, Dirk commented that Hubertus's ghost must be laughing at Graham. Graham informed him with relish that the Bible in fact belonged to Hubertus who was a deeply religious person. Dirk's sons Peter and Hendrik had only girl children. The number of van Groenwegels had dwindled by the time Dirk died. Those who did survive did not bear the name. They were known by other names like Greenfield, Clackson, Hartfield, Frick, Vangreen and even Boodoo. The last two names were taken by the children of Francis's coloured son Jason who did not even know how to spell his own name and had made it Vangreen on his shop sign. But being a miser, he made a lot of money and attained fame as Miser Van. He also fathered illegitimate children by women of different nationalities like Portugese, Chinese and East Indian. Dirk died with regrets: "I have spoiled many lives by the words I have uttered. Between myself and that canister I wonder which has brought more unhappiness to the van Groenwegels this past half century" (1978, 477).

Mittelholzer's chief concern is the psychological and cultural ambivalence that is the heritage of mixed ancestry. He also evolves a new attitude to people of the 'coloured' class, an attitude that is at variance with the stereotypes common in Caribbean fiction. In Kaywana Blood the coloured couple Jacob and Milicent are decent folk who are horrified by the coarse behaviour of their white daughter-in-law from England who had been a barmaid before her marriage. If Rose, the coloured offspring of Hubertus and Sarah, is promiscuous, so is Clara Hartfield, whose heridity is free of Negro strain. In the case of Francis, his coloured wife's parents are as much against the marriage as the van Groenwegels themselves. They accept Francis only because their daughter is pregnant. The girl's father, a Negro, is much more decent in behaviour than Francis. The novel also depicts the attitude of the Negroes to the Portugese labourers who are called "Pottageese" by them. Though pure white, the blacks looked down upon them as dirty and uncouth. To sum up, Michael Gilkes's comments on the Trilogy seem relevant:

The novels' historical framework serves mainly as a vehicle for the author's real concern with what is in effect a personal and psychological malaise and Mittelholzer projects on to the events of the Guyanese past with its burden of violence and sexual guilt, his own sense of an inner conflict of allegiances. Part African slave, part white slave owner, Mittelholzer deliberately fragments his personality as it were, allowing these two conflicting elements of his psyche to act out their opposition to each other in terms of strength versus weakness or in Hubertus's case spirit versus flesh. (82)

In the Quartet, the protagonists range from the most ignorant to the intellectual representative of the technological civilization. The scenes of action also change to different locales within Guyana and there is variety in race and experience as well. This diversification helps to provide a comprehensive picture of a complicated inheritance. The second novel, entitled The Far Journey of Oudin is a tale of treachery, cunning and exploitation which are the legacies of indentureship. The protagonist, Oudin, is a man entirely without roots, for, no one knows who he is or where he is from. It is the crafty money-lender Ram who gives him a name Oudin and an identity as an East Indian Mussulman. This suits Ram's purpose, for, his intention is to use Oudin to cheat another East Indian,

Mohammed by stealing his unbranded cattle. Oudin is thus "indentured" by Ram symbolizing the East Indians who were indentured to replace the Negro slaves. The novel also elucidates the futility of hankering after a distant land to which one has become a stranger. This peculiar dilemma of the East Indians is elucidated through the character of Hassan, who is not even sure of the rituals of his own religion. The story also involves a plot to steal Oudin's child from Beti, his wife, and how she manages to escape from Ram by swallowing the contract and later vomiting the scraps into the river.

The story mirrors both Oudin and his double. If Oudin is the slave of Ram, his double had been the half-brother of Mohammed, who had been murdered by him and his brothers to steal his inheritance. This use of double identity helps to weave a pattern going backwards and forwards in history. Oudin appears out of nowhere and Ram employs him to work for Mohammed with the ulterior motive of cheating him. His eager willingness to fall in with his plans surprises Ram himself:

Oudin consented to stake his life on the initial mission and to capture Mohammed's unbranded cattle if it meant chasing them down into the sea. Ram could hardly believe his ears. He despised Oudin and yet he admired him all at once. He had never expected such capitulation and consent. Oudin was a dream, a fantasy, and an obedient servant who had come to him at last across an incredible divide of time and reality. (1985, 140-141)

The East Indians are by nature clannish and inclined to give importance to family loyalties. This code gets broken when they plot murder. Mohammed's father had migrated to the Caribbean along with his own father and had worked on land all his life. Mohammed and his brothers were shocked when their father disinherited them in favour of their half-brother. So they plotted and murdered him. Therefore they were pursued by the curse that fell upon them. Hassan was the first one to die. Before he died of stroke, he told his brothers to cremate him. Hassan had a hankering for India but he knew little about India or its religious diversities. He was a Muslim but he had heard that cremation was an East Indian custom. So his body was burnt. The next person to die was Rajah, the cousin of Mohammed who had also been party to the conspiracy. He was struck down by lightning and his daughter Beti who

had been orphaned, was taken custody of by Mohammed. The next person to die was another brother of Mohammed, Kaiser. He died when the building he was in caught fire. His death thus became the replica of his brother's. Mohammed alone remained. When Oudin appears in the guise of a coolie, both Muhra, Mohammed's wife and Beti, Rajah's daughter, are struck by his similarity to the dead half-brother: "Mohammed brought Oudin in and Beti's heart rose into her mouth. She felt sick with horror imagining his shout of address as the echo of some-almost forgotten-urgent call. The event and call had occurred a long time ago and their echo struck a faint response within her" (147). Muhra actually reminded Mohammed of the murder and how it brought but ill-luck to them. Mohammed himself was affected by their uneasiness though Ram had told him that the man was called Oudin.

Oudin managed to steal Mohammed's unbranded cattle as Mohammed had grown careless but the next mission was more serious. Oudin had to abduct Beti for the old man Ram as he wanted to beget a child to carry on his name. Earlier he had approached her father when

he was alive and had been turned down. Beti and Oudin run away together and Beti becomes Oudin's wife through the law of nature. They are pursued by the agents of Ram and the agents of Mohammed. The journey that Oudin takes with Beti becomes the metaphor for a journey from the past into the present and future:

He felt in a stumbling intuition of self, that the pattern of a lifetime of migrating from province to province, was now being set and the coming journey was a crucial rehearsal, a rehearsal that would be repeated once again over thirteen dreaming years of his marriage to Beti. He foresaw in the fire and smoke of fantasy, the running abduction and the dim uncomprehending married years that would follow ushering in on the midnight morning that he died, the far journey outward, into the land that was nowhere. This dark intuitive thought sun was both an opportunity and a stumbling block. (206)

Oudin, a slave of Ram, labourer of Mohammed, becomes Beti's husband and the father of her one living child as well as the other still to be born by the time he dies. Oudin himself is aware of his dual identity. But when he marries the daughter of one of his murderers, the idea seems to mock him. During their flight together they come across different characters, each a ghost from the past history of Guyana. One of

them is a fisherman whose basket reminds him of his identity as the disinherited heir. Another is a woodman who claims that Oudin had earlier cheated him, and imprisons the two of them. Their fugitive existence is precarious as they are being chased by both Ram and Mohammed. Ram feels that Oudin, his slave has cheated him whereas Mohammed is on the warpath for Oudin's violation of his family tradition. Mohammed finally tracks down the two of them but he perishes before he can harm Oudin. Ram realizes his folly. His next attempt is to inveigle the still unborn child from Oudin. By this time thirteen years have passed. Ram knows that he is impotent and wishes to claim Oudin's child as his own. He makes Oudin sign a contract but Oudin dies suddenly. Beti snatches the paper on which Oudin has signed and swallows it before Ram appears on the scene. She later vomits the scraps into the river thwarting Ram's schemes.

The immediate historicity of the novel has to do with the East Indian impact on Guyanese history. The East Indians had come as indentured labourers but they had settled in Guyana due to their association with the

land. The hard toil that they put into the soil helped them to grow roots in Guyana. The name Beti, which means daughter is significant as it is associated with the land of Guyana. Mohammed and his brothers are passed over by their father because they neglect the land in favour of new fangled ideas like buses and lorries. They plot murder to get the money but the money brings no succour to any of them. Oudin claims Beti though Ram had tried to cheat Mohammed both of his cattle and his niece. It is only after Mohammed's death that Ram realizes his impotence. Oudin's marriage to Beti becomes the symbol of the East Indian acceptance of the land of Guyana as home. All outside attempts by Ram or Mohammed to claim the descendants of Oudin are thwarted by Beti herself. The process of identification thus becomes complete.

The Whole Armour, which is the third novel of the Quartet makes use of a pre-Columbian myth to show the relevance of the past in the shaping of the present and the future. The prominent motif is the jaguar or tiger of South America whose flayed hide becomes 'the whole armour' for Cristo's son, who is his resurrection.

The myth runs parallel to Biblical archetypes that Harris blends to give a complete picture. To quote from Gregory Shaw's article, "Time of the Tiger" published in Wilson Harris; The Uncompromising Imagination edited by Hena - Maes Jelinek:

The notion of a psychic wound, some deep malaise which has its roots in the misty origins and arrivals, conquests and diasporas, inform the quest for healing, unity and authentic community which is the inner dynamic of The Whole Armour and The Guyana Quartet of which it is part. Both the part and the larger whole are constructed as a series or cycles of explorations of buried layers of consciousness, buried layers of time and a mysterious hinterland of experience. In challenging the cultural and historical myopia and amnesia which root our existence in the shallow soil of a sterile economic enterprise, the Quartet explores not only the mythic hinterland of the Columbian Americas but also the primitive and ancient hinterland of the old world. In the process Harris resurrects a whole array of fabulous and mythic beasts, chief of them being the ancient and mysterious tiger which achieves its fantastic epiphany in The Whole Armour. (1991, 106)

Amerindian folklore presents the tiger as one of the chief presences of the forest invoking fear and anxiety. In Christian myths it partakes of demoniac energy like the Blakean concept of experience. It is also the representation of the dark shadow of self that

lurks beyond the frontier of consciousness. At the end of the novel, Sharon partakes of the totality of the heartland through the body of the resurrected Cristo: "Her fingers travelled across the map of Cristo's skin, stroking the veins in every ancestor's body, it sought to establish the encounter with the lost soul of all generations, the tiger roaming through the trackless paths, rapping at every jungle door, calling to the sweet meat belonging to the dead sleeping flesh of the night, passing by every pool part of meditation." (1985, 308)

The names of the characters, Cristo, Magda, Abram, are Christian but they partake of other symbolic associations as well. Magda, the mother of Cristo is the toughest whore in the Pomeroon. Abram is her friend who lives a lonely existence in Jigsaw Island, whom she seeks when she needs somebody to keep Cristo out of the eyes of the authorities. Magda is also associated with the dual aspects of the earth: it is the mother who succours her children as well as the devouring monster who eats them up. She is the man-devouring she-jaguar under whose tutelage her son Cristo becomes a trickster.

When Cristo is accused of murdering the fiancée of the belle of Pomeroon, the much sought after "white" Sharon, Magda goes to Abram. She asks him to hide Cristo till he escapes out of the country. She also declares that Cristo is Abram's son though both of them know it to be untrue. For one thing, Abram is too white and Cristo too dark in complexion but as a patriarch he is dutybound to acknowledge and help his son. Cristo is innocent of the crime he is accused of, but he is forced to go into exile. When Abram dies of natural causes, Cristo returns to his mother who refuses to believe that he has not killed Abram. But she decides to change the event into the faked death of Cristo himself so that he can escape the police. So she accompanies Cristo to Jigsaw Island where they encounter the presence of the tiger. Abram's body had been taken away by the tiger. Cristo points out the nail marks of the tiger but Magda refuses to believe in his innocence. Cristo thus becomes identified with the tiger. Magda forces Cristo to put his clothes on the half-eaten body of Abram to give credence to the story that Cristo has been devoured by the tiger. A wake is celebrated by Magda to honour the memory of her dead son. Both Sharon and her father

Peet are invited to the wake. Peet, or earth, is the spokesman of the Pomeroon. A few years before the main action of the novel, when his daughter Sharon was just eight, Peet had led an expedition upriver in pursuit of the tiger that had carried off a neighbour's child. Peet failed in his attempt, his impotence reinforced by the death of his wife and the stillbirth of his son. The claw marks on him become a psychic wound "that a whore had scratched on him." On the night of the wake, Peet confronts Magda, the whore in her upper chamber offering her money. His overtures are repelled by Magda who becomes a tigress tearing his coat into rags and throwing away his money. The manhood of Pomeroon admits defeat in front of the tiger and returns trying to fix his superstitious dread on Mathias, Sharon's new fiancée. The two of them start quarrelling over a tiger story and as the argument develops Peet gets identified with Abram and Mathias with Cristo duplicating Cristo's earlier argument with Abram. The quarrel ends with Mathias dying of a knife wound and Peet lying unconscious with his arm over Mathias. As far as Peet is concerned, he has killed his illusory Tiger. Mathias absolves Peet of the crime of killing him just before he breathes his last.

In the meanwhile Sharon meets Magda in her chamber where she has been summoned for a private conversation. A contrast is offered between the two women: one, the toughest whore in the Pomeroon and the other the fair Virgin coveted by all the young men of the district. Magda reveals the truth about Cristo to Sharon giving her Cristo's letter saying that Cristo wants to tell her about his situation. When Sharon suggests that she should show the letter to Mathias to prove Cristo's innocence, Magda becomes annoyed. She thinks that Sharon wants to hand Cristo over to the police and exposes Peet's earlier overtures to her to prove that her father is no better than Cristo. Thus Sharon too is trapped by "the tiger."

Sharon joins Cristo in a fugitive existence. Her relationship with Cristo makes her realize her identity. She envisages the day when Cristo's adventure would become legend; how Cristo had killed Arbam's tiger and the lovely striped feminine skin of the devil was the coat that he wore wherever he went. In a dream like sequence, Cristo tells her of how he had been taken by a group of Caribs to be one of themselves. They had

painted stripes all over their bodies whereas Cristo was wearing his tiger skin. He joined them in their running but he got scratched all over by sharp blades of grass. It was then that he realized that he was a black man from Africa but the running continued through the history of the runaway slaves. Within himself he had all the different strands of history. "Vanquished as well as slave, rapist, Carib, monster anything you want to think" (345). The medicine-men declared that Cristo had killed the jaguar and attained the greatest victory. Telling Sharon to wrap his yet unborn son in the tiger skin Cristo hands himself over to the authorities. Peet however escapes the murder charge. People refer to Sharon as the white witch drawing her men to the gallows. Cristo dies at the gallows twelve months later leaving his child who becomes his resurrection. Before that Magda makes one last attempt to save Cristo from the gallows by applying to Peet but sees him dead when she opens the door. She then realizes that Cristo would be free in death "in an armour superior to the elements of self-division and coercion" (332).

In the Quetzalcoatl myth of South America, the god dies voluntarily by fire to atone for the sin of the flesh. His spirit rises and becomes the planet Venus. Quetzalcoatl is also the god of the dual phenomena-the plumed serpent. Cristo gets identified with the myth by his voluntary surrender to the authorities for a crime he did not commit. In the legends, the hero undertakes a heroic quest into the underworld and slays the mythic beast to cure the malaise of the land. Cristo's encounter with the tiger and his victory over it raises him to the level of the legendary hero. Blake and Eliot use the symbol of the tiger to denote "the terrible beauty" of crucifixion. By slaying the tiger, Cristo becomes identified with it completing the symbol through his death at the gallows. The society of the Pomeroon is a veritable wasteland where a tiger has to appear to bring about sacrifice and resurrection. Harris builds a bridge between Quetzalcoatl and Christ to show the strange linkage of a dual inheritance.

The Secret Ladder is set in the twentieth century but resonates with the history of conquistadorial incursion. This last novel of the

Quartet seems to have much in common with the first. The setting is the Canje River and a mixed team of surveyors encounter here the descendants of the Bush Negroes who had once fled slavery to settle in the wilderness. They are a group of people leading a marginalized existence and their leader is an old man who has ironically enough a Greek name, Poseidon. Fenwick, the leader of the team, evolves, like Donne in the first novel, from indifference to understanding. All the events happen within a seven day period just like Palace of the Peacock. In fact, Fenwick's dinghy is named "Palace of the Peacock" after the city of God, "The city of God set somewhere in the heart of Brazil and Guyana" (1985, 367).

Fenwick and his crew arrive on the Canje on a routine job of surveying. They use ladder like gauges to measure the variations in the levels of water. To Fenwick the rivers of Guyana are rungs in a ladder. "On which one sets one's musing foot again and again, to climb into both the past and the future of the continent of mystery" (367). At first Fenwick is the technocrat, keeping his distance from the other members of the crew.

His cook, Jordan, is his chief adviser and he advises Fenwick to keep discipline through firmness. The crew consists of Wang, the Amerindian, Chiung the Chinese, Perez the Portugese, Bryant the African, Stoll the mulatto and van Brock whose grand mother claims Dutch ancestry. Fenwick himself has African, Amerindian and European ancestors. The intricate network of relations between the crew members is reminiscent of Palace of the Peacock. Fenwick's impersonal attitude changes after meeting Poseidon. Poseidon's way of speaking is significantly ironic: the shapes and movements of his lips as he speaks do not correspond to the words he utters. He looks curiously like a movie star whose words have been dubbed into another language. Harris deliberately leaves out the actual words but the message itself is clear: he does not want to be uprooted from the place where his ancestors had found refuge after fleeing slavery. Fenwick is now faced with a problem which has historical, sociological and psychological implications. Gauging the river, the men are suspected of preparing for the construction of a dam that will flood the whole basin and rob the bush Negroes of the meagre land that they had made their own. For the

technocrats in Georgetown, this relatively infertile area will not be a great loss once it is flooded. Yet the land symbolizes the hard-won freedom which the rebellious Africans had gained in the face of slavery and repeated attacks by the armed forces. In the struggle between roots and science, the gauges become symbols of tyranny for Poseidon who burns them as the idols of "the Other." The novel also raises questions about progress. The dams and reservoirs would regulate the rivers and prevent the brackish waters from going too far inland during droughts. But their advantage would imply the loss of a valuable component of Guyanese civilization by destroying the homes of the Bush Negroes. Fenwick becomes aware of these larger implications after meeting Poseidon. Though he becomes more humane and understanding, he continues to do his work. But his kindness makes him less authoritative. Quarrels develop among the members of the crew. Bryant, who looks upon Poseidon as a grand father tells Fenwick that Perez has decided to bring his wife Catalena to stay with Poseidon. Poseidon's is the only house with a spare room. This news surprises Fenwinck. Both Jordan and Weng warn Fenwick when he goes with Bryant to set

the gauge. On the way they encounter Poseidon and Bryant is so startled that he falls into the water. Though Fenwick tries to plead with Poseidon, he refuses to listen. The gauges continue to be destroyed. On one occasion Chiung, who is put in charge of the gauge is assaulted by two people who think that he is Fenwick. Fenwick had earlier lent him his coat and helmet. Trouble also comes in the form of Catalena. When Jordan and Fenwick arrive at Poseidon's place, after a hazardous journey they find Catalena hysterical; she mistakes them to be the men who have come to claim her as her husband had gambled her away at the poker table. Fenwick is shocked at her story and decides to fire her husband Perez. This invites criticism. Stoll the mulatto is prejudiced against Fenwick because Fenwick has not taken him in as an official apprentice. Weng quarrels with Chiung when Chiung is unable to recollect who has hit him on the head and nearly killed him. Bryant is sympathetic towards Poseidon but is attracted towards Catalena as well. After the attack on Chiung Fenwick tries to get to the bottom of it by questioning the others. Van Brock who is in a feverish state tells him a tale from his childhood. His grandmother had lost

the gold ring that was the only memory she had of her husband, a Dutch planter. She feared that it had fallen into the chamberpot that her grandson had emptied early in the morning in the quagmire. Beset by sorrow and anxiety the old lady started raving eventhough her grandson promised to buy her another. She would not listen to his words of consolation as the ring symbolized her claim to respectability. In the end, van Brock got fed up and started to abuse her. She gave up protesting and died. The boy then got into the filth and restored the ring to her finger like a high priest at the wedding of memory. He now recalls the story to Fenwick. Soon after this Bryant and Catalena arrive with the news that Poseidon is dead.

Bryant feels responsible for bringing about the death of the man whom he had revered as a grand father. Early in the morning Bryant had met Catalena close to Poseidon's place. Perez had beaten her up the previous night holding her responsbile for the loss of his job. He had declared that he would take her back only if she could plead with Fenwick on his behalf. In the morning Catalena had sought the help of Poseidon who refused to

help her. When Bryant arrived in search of Poseidon the two of them formed a partnership and set off in search of Poseidon. They met him in a clearing of the forest sitting amidst his men. Poseidon was extremely angry with Catalena for following him and bringing one of the surveyor's men with her. He started advancing on her in rage while she turned and ran. Bryant also started running to stop Poseidon from beating Catalena with the stick he carried in his hand. Poseidon tripped and fell over the trough placed before one of the horses. He hurt himself splattering Catalena's dress with his blood. The god died at the feet of Andromeda with whom Catalena is identified (The boat which brings her to Canje is named "Andromeda"). Bryant is filled with sorrow and remorse for bringing about the death of the man whom he had loved. After his death, his followers surrender their precious possession, the land for which they had fought and attacked the survey team. On the morning of the seventh day, Fenwick dreams a strange dream of a new beginning starting from the end.

The myth of Perseus and Andromeda is made use of in the tragedy of Poseidon to give universality to a problem that pertains to a small group of people in the

interior of Guyana. The seven day pattern of Genesis is made use of to focus on Biblical parallels. The books are entitled, "The Day Readers," "The Night Readers" and "The Reading." These titles speak about the apprehension of history in all its complexity. The crew is disrupted by internal quarrels which eventually produce positive effects; they force the men to face the brutality and ruthlessness within themselves and also to discover the possibility of a true bond of community. Harris suggests that no solution of ethnic oppression is possible in the Caribbean unless each group recognizes the needs of the others. It is not a uniformity introduced through force that would solve the issue but an understanding of the paradoxes of history, that would ultimately lead to harmony of cultures.

In comparison to Harris, Mittelholzer provides historical events and surface realities. Harris uncovers deeper layers of experience by cutting across time barriers. Moreover, Harris's technique helps him encompass all the racial strains within the Guyanese psyche whereas Mittelholzer's treatment tends to marginalize certain communities and their contribution

to Guyanese history. The conventional framework of the historical novel that Mittelholzer follows, makes it difficult to incorporate East Indian and Chinese communities into the saga of van Groenwegels. Though an attempt has been made in the last novel, Kaywana Blood, these characters do not play vital roles in the action. The Amerindian component that is presented in the first novel, Children of Kaywana tends to be exotic rather than realistic.

Wilson Harris's fiction is relatively free from such lapses but it should be borne in mind that Mittelholzer preceded Harris by less than a decade-and these years were crucial in the development of Caribbean fiction, which is essentially a twentieth century phenomenon.

CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

In this critical overview, I have considered nine Caribbean novelists and seventeen novels. In making the selection, I have given preference to diversity in terms of ethnicity, region and gender. Most of the novels have protagonists drawn from the author's own ethnic group, Jane's Career by De Lisser being an exception, which was included as a pioneering work in Caribbean fiction. The novels selected range from works published in the early part of the twentieth century to those in the nineteen sixties. The purpose was to survey the development of the genre in terms of style, technique and theme. Another significant question that has to be answered pertains to the identity of Caribbean fiction in the world of literature in the present day. This is of special relevance as the genre of fiction forms an integral part of Caribbean cultural identity.

Though the novels are classified on an ethnic basis, there are many questions that transcend mere ethnicity. These common features are related to the historical and social background of the Caribbean and

may be classified as facets of the Caribbean experience. Though the concerns of the individual are universal, the ways in which they are appraised and apprehended are flavoured by the Caribbean experience. The ramifications of a multicultural and multiracial inheritance make the struggle of attaining selfhood a complicated one with dialectical opposites striking against each other both within the psyche and in the outer world. Both Antoinette Cosway in Wide Sargasso Sea and Mohun Biswas of A House for Mr Biswas get caught up in situations beyond their control in childhood. Both of them develop feelings of insecurity in later life though their experiences are vastly different. The struggles of Tiger to come up in the world are similar to the struggles of Jane to gain respectability, though Tiger is an East Indian and Jane, a Negro girl. Both have to survive in the Caribbean milieu where the social hierarchy is dependent upon race and colour. At the same time, there is little resemblance between Antoinette Cosway and Rosalind Maybury of The Harrowing of Hubertus though both are white women belonging to the planter class. Neither their economic circumstances nor their attitudes match. But Hendrickje of Children of Kaywana

shares her lust for power and grim ruthlessness with Annie Palmer of The White Witch of Rosehall. Of the two, Annie is a white woman and Hendrickje is coloured but both belong to the planter class. The struggles of Bitá in Banana Bottom present a different picture when compared to Jane's in Jane's Career. In both cases the ethnicity of the authors influence their portrayal. In the case of the Indian woman Kaywana portrayed by Mittelholzer, there is little resemblance to the old Arawak woman who appears in Palace of the Peacock. The Chinese characters portrayed by Selvon have little in common with Chiung in The Secret Ladder. But Beti in The Far Journey of Oudin shares her grit and resilience with Urmilla in the Tiger novels. Both of them act as counterparts to their men providing them with strength and comfort. The man-woman relationships also share certain similarities that are determined by the social set up. For example, the Negro couples do not seem to give much importance to weddings solemnized in the church. In the cases of Brother Man and Minette and Girlie and Papacita, there is no mention of a wedding ceremony at all. Even Bitá Plant postpones the wedding for a convenient date though she starts living with

Jubban earlier. In the case of Jane, in Jane's Career the wedding comes after she has given birth to a son and is looked upon as the symbol of social acceptance. The Kaywana novels depict how the earlier loose structure of society gets replaced by rigidity as time passes. Adriansen van Groenwegel was not married to Kaywana, the half-caste Indian woman but his children inherited his name and estate and he himself became the Governor. But later on, through approximation to white values, Rose in Kaywana Blood came to grief because she could not marry Dirk on account of her black blood. But the loose structure had its disadvantage too. In Lamming's novel G's mother is his sole guardian, the father not being mentioned at all. In the Papacita-Girlie relationship, Girlie had to work and provide for Papacita but when he got tired of her, he left her without any qualms. Financial aspects also influence marriage as is depicted in some novels. Rochester marries Antoinette for her money in Wide Sargasso Sea but Jane seeks financial stability through Vincent in Jane's Career. In Tiger's case, Urmilla brings him a dowry but that does not make Tiger subservient to her. In contrast, Mohun Biswas gets incorporated into the Tulsi work-force after his

marriage to Shama. Yet both of them belong to the same ethnic group. Annie Palmer in The White Witch of Rosehall marries three men and murders them when she tires of them. Sharon in The Whole Armour is identified with the white witch as she brings death to the men who love her. Catalena in The Secret Ladder becomes the cause of Poseidon's death and Mariella kills Donne in Palace of the Peacock. The institution of marriage gets satirized through the inset tales of In the Castle of My Skin. The same novel also treats the preachers of Christianity with irony, a characteristic that seems to be common to most of the novels discussed, with the exception of Brother Man. At the same time, the simple, sincere faith of the people is treated with sympathy. The functionaries of ritualistic Hinduism are criticized by V.S. Naipaul. As for obeah, even though it is of African origin, the white writers seem to be more interested in it than the black writers. The obeahman is a symbol of greed and evil in Brother Man and a figure of ridicule in Banana Bottom. In Wide Sargasso Sea, Christophine is pictured as a dignified person by the white author. Similarly Takoo, the black obeahman, is picturized as a better, more humane person than Annie

Palmer in The White Witch of Rosehall. At the same time there is a difference between De Lisser and Jean Rhys in attitude. De Lisser uses witchcraft and obeah as the exotic phenomena of the Caribbean that startle the visitor from England. The incident at the end, where the white people run to rescue Annie Palmer despite her misdeeds, shows his sense of identification. In sharp contrast, Rhys uses obeah not as a negative value but as a positive one. She internalizes the cultural aspects of it and identifies herself as "the white witch," an alien among the inhabitants of England. Claude McKay also presents a white man, Squire Gensir, who defends obeah as part of the racial culture of the blacks, like their folk songs and digging jammas. At the same time he does not believe in spending money either on Christianity or on obeah as money could be more usefully spent on other activities.

The political angle of the novels tend to be general rather than partisan. Petty politicians are ridiculed by one and all, the one who stands out, being Mr Slime in Lamming's novel. The black writers adopt an anticolonial stance as the blacks have to suffer the

most under the 'colour' hierarchy. In contrast, De Lisser who is white, adopts an obviously reactionary stand against trade unionism in Jane's Career. But Jean Rhys presents white people who are as oppressed as the blacks. The Harrowing of Hubertus outlines the need to widen one's horizon of thinking by transcending barriers of nations and races. Wilson Harris in his novels underlines the need to study the present by imbibing the past, accepting the dual inheritance of guilt and protest, a viewpoint that narrow politicians seldom take.

From a chronological vantage point, De Lisser's novels precede the rest. Jane's Career was published in 1914 and The White Witch of Rosehall in 1929. The next in line are McKay's Banana Bottom (1933) and Jean Rhys's Voyage in the Dark (1934). Jean Rhys and De Lisser are white while McKay's novel is considered the first West Indian classic to be written by a West Indian Negro. The narrative styles of all these novels tend to be similar, reminiscent of the novels of the Victorian age rather than of the twentieth century. But Jean Rhys surprises us by the singularly modern concerns of her

novel. McKay too differs from De Lisser in attitude, presenting an anti-colonial stand in the language of the colonial masters. De Lisser and McKay follow the orthodox method of omniscient narration. In Jean Rhys's case, Francis Wyndham's introduction to the Penguin edition of Wide Sargasso Sea sheds light on the relative modernity of her concerns: "One has only to compare Miss Rhys's early books written during the 1920s, with contemporary work by Katherine Mansfield, Aldous Huxley, Jean Cocteau and other celebrated writers of the period, to be struck by how little the actual text has 'dated': the style belongs to today. More important, the novels of the 1930s are much closer in feeling to life as it is lived and understood in the 1960s than to the accepted attitudes of their time. The elegant surface, and the paranoid content, the brutal honesty of the feminine psychology and the muted nostalgia for lost beauty, all create an effect which is peculiarly modern" (1968, 9-10). Unfortunately however, recognition was slow in coming to Jean Rhys and it was Wide Sargasso Sea (1966) that established her as a Caribbean writer of eminence rather than a British writer of obscurity. Both the novels present protagonists who are close to

the author and the nostalgia for the warmth and colour of the tropical islands establish Jean Rhys's identification with the Caribbean. Wide Sargasso Sea is incidentally the most recent of the novels covered under this survey.

The years between 1914 and 1966 were crucial years in the development of the genre. The early fifties form a significant stage of development with many expatriate writers coming on the scene. Mittelholzer's Children of Kaywana and Selvon's A Brighter Sun were published in 1952, followed by In the Castle of My Skin by Lamming in 1953. Brother Man by Roger Mais and The Harrowing of Hubertus were published in 1954. Of these, both Lamming and Roger Mais experiment with style incorporating the rhythms of Negro speech into the narrative. Mais makes use of the "Chorus of People in the Lane" to provide the general commentary, followed by a narrative and an almost dramatic presentation of characters. The chorus itself is divided into two phases: the first one with the author describing in picturesque detail, the setting and the characters and the second one with the people

talking. Two language styles are thus used, the first one in an elevated style rich in musicality, augmented by the second one in the rhythm of ordinary speech, and that too the speech of the illiterate slum dwellers. Edward Brathwaite comments that the language has to be studied in relation to urbanized black folk music in his introduction to the novel (xiv). As the narrative proceeds the choice of words, images and metaphors create an authentic picture of Kingston and its people. Lamming too shifts from one kind of narrative to another - first person, omniscient narrator, dialogue between characters and back again to first person. Often the characters are nameless called just First Boy, Second Boy etc., and the conversation between Ma and Pa act as the chorus, providing general information about the changes taking place in society. The unorthodox style deconstructs the restraints imposed by colonial education as the novel itself is aimed at satirizing the colonial set up. About Selvon, Bruce Macdonald makes the following comments in his article, "Language and Consciousness in Samuel Selvon's A Brighter Sun", published in Critical Perspectives on Sam Selvon edited by Susheila Nasta: "In colonial society, where the use

of language, vocabulary, accent, emphasis and rhythm were often an index of social standing, ambition, emotion or the measure of alienation or conformity, the artist with an ear for subtleties of language was at a great advantage. A short dialogue between characters in a novel could establish a great many facets of their personalities. Selvon is writing with full consciousness of the potential of dialect especially in A Brighter Sun (1952). By playing on the different registers of speech he is able to differentiate his characters and also to give an idea of the structure of society and the sort of tensions and changes which develop in the relations and ambitions of his major characters" (1985, 176). In the Kaywana novels Mittelholzer is more traditional than in his Morning at the Office for example. Mittelholzer uses dialect sparingly, just in conversation. He allows omniscient narration throughout the novels though psychological probing is done through introspective analysis of the characters. This method limits the scope of enquiry as no alternative viewpoints are provided. For example, the Kaywana novels depict history solely from the viewpoint of the planter class. Though Mittelholzer is

scrupulously accurate about historical details and handles them with great vividness of imagination, he lacks innovativeness in matters of style.

Selvon's Turn Again Tiger and the last novel of Mittelholzer's trilogy, Kaywana Blood were published in 1958. The style of these two novels tend to follow the trends set by their authors in their preceding works. The next stage of development comes with the 1960s. Harris's Palace of the Peacock, published in 1960, establishes a unique style of narration. Harris exhorts his readers to study both the text and texture of his novels. Usually people get carried away by the ideas and ignore the narrative completely. Harris criticizes the conventional adherence to realism by pointing out that it ignores the deeper reality by concentrating on surface realities. His style is rich in poetry, interlaced with metaphors and paradoxes built upon the framework of myth. Amerindian, European, African and Oriental myths are made use of by Harris to recreate the rich, multicultural heritage of Guyana. The landscape also becomes a living presence in his novels as it contributes to the history of individual and nation.

The narrative travels from the past into the present and blurs sharp definitions of character. The crew in Palace of the Peacock are dead even before they set off on their mission. Oudin in The Far Journey of Oudin is both the nameless wanderer without home and the murdered half-brother of Mohammed. Cristo's flight through the forest identifies him with the mythic hero who slays the tiger. In Palace of the Peacock, the first person narrator is the double of the cruel taskmaster Donne. Later on the omniscient narrator takes over. At the end, Donne merges completely with the visionary 'I' narrator. In sharp contrast to Harris, Naipaul's A House for Mr Biswas published in 1961 makes use of conventional methods of narration. Michael Thorpe's work on Naipaul describes A House of Mr Biswas as a work of rare distinction in spite of its conventional narrative:

Though Naipaul's raw material is new, the plot structure of Mr Biswas has behind it a long British novelistic tradition, as English readers must quickly have recognized: the tracing of a common hero's fortunes from birth to death or some climactic event, the hero rising from low status or obscurity through many reverses to some degree of success, often moving in the social spectrum from the stagnant country to the city (symbolizing life)

searching always for self-fulfilment and a marked place in the eyes of his fellows. From Dickens and Thackeray on, through Hardy, Wells, Bennett to Lawrence and our contemporary regional novelists, this has been a recurring, seemingly inexhaustible pattern. In the long course of English literature such patterns have built up a complex, many-sided series of impressions, moving with the times, of the individual's relation to society, of that connexion between literature and life which in his essay 'Jasmine' Naipaul states is vital to him. For West Indian literature A House for Mr Biswas forged this connexion with unbreakable strength and set up a model for emulation which no other 'Third World' literature in English has yet equalled. (1976,15)

Naipaul also adopts an allusive style making references to a wide variety of subjects ranging from European literature and Hindu culture to cinema and calypso. This aspect has been pointed out by John Thieme in The Web of Tradition: Uses of Allusion in V.S. Naipaul's Fiction (1987). These allusions tend to universalize the theme of rootlessness. Though vastly different from each other Naipaul and Harris mark significant stages of development in the genre.

Kenneth Ramchand states that more than hundred and fifty novels were published in the years 1903-1967 (The West Indian Novel and Its Background,3). I have not examined in detail any novel published after 1967

but the current trends seem to be a continuation of the pattern elucidated so far. This, I would try to establish with reference to a few works published since then.

Thematically, social and historical concerns continue to be the most popular but significant advances have been made in select areas. One such area is that of women's writing. Since the advent of Jean Rhys, more women writers have emerged on the scene. Merle Hodge's Crick Crack Monkey (1970) Erna Brodber's Jane and Louisa Will Soon Come Home (1980) and Zee Edgell's Beka Lamb (1982) mark significant advances in fiction by presenting social and individual concerns from the woman's point of view. Beka Lamb for example focusses on the emergence of selfhood of the black heroine by portraying the influences of home, school, church and the political world on the mind of the growing girl in the twentieth century. Folklore and folk traditions mark another area of interest. Earl Lovelace's novel, The Dragon Can't Dance (1979) presents a calypsonian in a lead role and depicts the degeneration he is forced to accept under hostile circumstances. The novel also

explores the meaning of Carnival to the deprived masses of the city. Calypso is a folk art, in the tradition of verbal arts, and offers biting commentary on the general situation. It is characterized by frequent asides and humorous interpolations. Its emergence was linked with the celebration of Carnival. The freed slaves celebrated Carnival with songs and steel bands, street dancing and stick fighting creating a general street theatre. The masked dancers would use the opportunity to abuse rival groups. The lead singer of the Carnival became the calypsonian who constantly monitored what was happening around him and offered satirical commentary. The pose of the calypsonian is that of the bystander. Calypso features in Caribbean fiction both as theme and as form. The Calypsonian style of writing uses dialect with all its oral rhythms and combines the asides of 'old talk' and 'popular joke' in the manner of the singer. Earl Lovelace's novel is calypsonian in form and content. His sentences recreate the rhythms and movements of the song and dance that is part of calypso. His tale is that of the calypsonian protagonist. Another area of interest in Caribbean fiction is sports, especially cricket. Selvon's short story, "The Cricket Match" is one among many stories that explore the theme.

Of the recent novelists, Orlando Patterson, Ismith Khan, Austin Clarke, Andrew Salkey, Shiva Naipaul, Garth St. Omer and Caryl Phillips are men of promise. Some of them started writing in the early sixties and continue to be creative even now. The two novels of Ismith Khan, The Jumbie Bird (1961) and The Obeah Man (1964) have been reprinted in 1985. Orlando Patterson's An Absence of Ruins, Austin Clarke's The Meeting Point and Andrew Salkey's Riot were published in 1967. Garth St. Omer's novels, Room on the Hill (1968) and J.Black Bam and the Masqueradors (1972) make use of the sin-guilt-punishment syndrome in the tradition of Catholic novelists like Graham Greene. Shiva Naipul's novel, Fireflies (1970) offers a vividly detailed portrait of Trinidad society. Caryl Phillips's A State of Independence (1986) offers a critique of social problems through the protagonist Bertram Francis who comes back to his native island after twenty years to celebrate its independence. By and large, the concerns of fiction continue to be the individual's dilemma in a multicultural society in the aftermath of colonialism. It is the style and technique that show marked individual differences.

Some of the writers considered under this survey have published novels in the recent past. Jean Rhys's Tigers are Better Looking (1972) is a collection of stories depicting experiences in different parts of Europe. Sam Selvon's novel, Moses Ascending (1975) is a sequel to The Lonely Londoners (1956) and focusses on immigrant life in London. Selvon makes use of literary burlesque to poke fun at snobbery, racism and deceit and satirizes the Black Power movement and the illegal Asian immigration into England. Selvon does not approximate to white values but his style subverts them by indulging in pun, parody and allusion creating a hilarious effect. George Lamming's Water with Berries (1971) returns to the themes of two earlier works, The Emigrants (1954) and The Pleasures of Exile (1960), of colonization, emigration and exile. Water with Berries uses Shakespeare's The Tempest as a frame of reference and explores the problem of the West Indian artist in exile. Lamming's next novel, Natives of My Person (1972) gives a fictional account of a sixteenth century voyage to the Americas via Africa. It offers a fictional history of Europe and the West Indies in terms of colonialism. V.S. Naipaul and Wilson Harris are prolific writers and

continue to contribute to the genre. Naipaul has been singularly lucky in getting awards and recognition from the very beginning of his career. The Mimic Men (1967) was awarded the W.H. Smith Award in 1968 and In A Free State (1971) won the Booker Prize. Both The Mimic Men and Guerrillas (1975) are political satires. In A Free State is a sequence of episodes set in a free state in Africa bound together by a prologue and epilogue. The loose structure makes its claim as a novel questionable. The Mimic Men makes use of the confessional narrative, the protagonist being a failed politician and visionary. Guerrillas is set in an unnamed Caribbean island resembling Jamaica and Trinidad. Through Jimmy Leung, the half-Negro half-Chinese protagonist, who assumes the name James Ahamed, Naipaul satirizes the Black Muslim movement. The multiplicity of viewpoints and lives presented in this novel mark a significant development in V.S. Naipaul's fictional career. Wilson Harris has contributed numerous novels since 1966. The Waiting Room (1967), Tumatumari (1968), Ascent to Omai (1971), Black Marsden (1971) and Da Silva da Silva's Cultivated Wilderness and Genesis of the Clowns (1977) are some of his works. In Tumatumari, Prudence, the prevailing

consciousness of the novel, makes an imaginative journey into the past through the labyrinth of memory. She is identified with Mnemosyne, the Greek Muse of memory. In Black Marsden, the hero, Clive Goodrich sees the landscape of Scotland as inextricably interwoven with that of his native South America. This becomes possible because he has gained freedom from his own imprisoning "I." Harris's next novel, Da Silva da Silva's Cultivated Wilderness, makes use of his favourite theme of interior journey with great technical skill. The hero lives in a Holland Park flat in Kensington. Born in Brazil of Spanish, Portugese and African stock, he survives cyclone and flood to be adopted by the British Ambassador. Growing up in England with access to his rich benefactor's library, he gradually becomes convinced that his 'parentless' condition obliges him to create, to paint himself and his world anew. His canvases and his awareness multiply in proportion. Da Silva cultivates the static wildernesses of identity, historical fact and urban existence. Genesis of the Clowns presents Wellington who lives in London but who had earlier been a surveyor in British Guyana. One day in the 1970s, he receives news of the death of Hope, who

had been a member of his survey team thirty years ago. At the same time, a letter arrives from Hope Street that he has been left a small inheritance by a relative in Scotland. This marks the beginning of a number of coincidences. As the novel moves from past to present, a critique of contemporary Guyana is offered examining the inter-racial hostilities that are still very much in existence. But the novel proceeds from the concerns of Guyana to the concerns of the human species as a whole in the world of today.

Caribbean fiction has now assumed an identity of its own by the pluralistic nature of its experience. The question that now arises is one of qualitative judgement. Has the Caribbean produced timeless classics in fiction that are of universal significance? Is there a Caribbean novelist of the same calibre as D.H. Lawrence or James Joyce or William Faulkner or Ernest Hemingway? These questions have to be answered with reference to present critical canons. In the post-modern era the concept of literature including fiction is being subjected to radical reconsideration. The earlier concepts of greatness have now given way to opinions

that tend to look upon literature not as an exalted but isolated sphere, but as a cultural medium or more precisely as a semiotic field that articulates the cultural goings-on in a given region or ethnic community. Post-colonial writers have questioned the norms of greatness that prefer to keep a sizeable population of writers outside its pale, by pointing out discrepancies in language and texture. They prefer to use their own idioms and techniques to portray their experiences in an authentic manner. The attractive feature of Caribbean fiction is its basic ethnic orientation. But how long can it survive on the motif of ethnicity alone? Will it not tend to become redundant in the times to come? These questions lead us to speculate on what form Caribbean fiction is likely to take in the future. Michael Gilkes's comments are pertinent in such a context:

Caribbean writing, then is no longer simply caught between two 'styles,' two competing cultures, but has begun to move in the direction of a paradoxical mixture of the oral and the scribal, a non-linear yet representational mode. It is a diverse, reticular movement: a complex, experimental and shamanistic art: an art which must be enacted imaginatively and one in which both writer and reader are involved. And it is in the riddle of the work that the unravelling of the meaning can take place. (The West Indian Novel 1981,157)

He sees the future of the Caribbean novel in the promising trends of Lamming, V.S. Naipaul, Denis Williams and Wilson Harris. Most of the new novelists experiment in form and style partaking of archetypal, post-modernist and deconstructionist techniques. Thematically however, the Caribbean novelist should seek newer pastures as historical and racial preoccupations tend to get repetitive. There is very little science fiction in the Caribbean for example. Reader's Guide to West Indian Literature (1987) talks about the influence of the metropolitan experience on the West Indian literature of the 1980s. This is in sharp contrast to the earlier emphasis on the land and the peasant. The future novel is likely to follow more in the direction of the problems faced by the faceless millions of the metropolis in quest of the meaning of existence.

The novel in the Caribbean has played a key role in creating a sense of pride in their own ethnic cultures among the people of the Caribbean. Its questioning and subverting attitude has helped them to recognize some of the fallacies of colonial education. Though the earlier novelists were expatriates their preoccupation with the social, racial and historical

concerns of the Caribbean attest to their sense of identification. Today with better facilities for education more novelists have emerged from the Caribbean. Side by side with this the novel reading public has also increased. Rex M. Nettleford epitomizes the role of the creative arts in the cultural awakening within the Caribbean:

Despite the clinging colonial biases and constant quest outside ourselves for the promise of liberation, increasing numbers of us are discovering some challenging truths about ourselves through cumulative study, unique insights, and the hard fact of existence. Many of us have discovered that there is no basis in fact for this relegation of ourselves to being a mere footnote to Europe's history and experience, nor for the charge frequently levelled against us that we are the irredeemable victims of primitive innocence and intellectual poverty. None of these myths of Caribbean existence have successfully withstood the test of close and serious examination of our historical experience. For in this experience are to be found a richness of texture, a dialectical complexity and creative dynamic in the resolution of conflict and the forging of definitive forms - all of which are seen by many as the greatest authenticated source of energy summoning us who live in the Caribbean to a determination of the will and a creative urge in continuing what is aptly called "the struggle." For as long as our people have cause to harbour a feeling of having been wronged and deprived, and to be without a sense of place or purpose, so long will that battle be waged for ultimate integrity and identity no less than for social justice and economic freedom. (Caribbean Cultural Identity 1978, 227-223)

The situation in the Third World which includes the Caribbean as well, is hardly promising at present. So the struggle for economic and social justice will have to continue for quite some time. The United States of America exerts a considerable influence on the Caribbean both in terms of economics and in terms of ideas that are perpetrated through films and the media. The advancement in technology also exerts considerable influence on the literature and the life style of the people. These trends indicate that the fictional genre would develop in two directions in the future. The first one would cater to popular taste that is nurtured through the films and the media. Such fiction would get classified as Children's fiction, Sports fiction, Science fiction, Adventure stories, Campus novels, Detective fiction and the like. In contrast to this trend, serious fiction would continue to be written criticizing stagnant attitudes and creating awareness about deprivation and corruption. This would be in keeping with the tradition of Caribbean fiction so far. Its survival would depend upon the innovativeness of the writers.

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(In chronological order)

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