Samuel Selvon's Evolution From A Brighter Sun to Turn Again Tiger: An Expansion of Vision and a Development of Form

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**Abstract**

The terms 'vision' and 'form' are central in this topic, and so it is appropriate to start the discussion with a brief working definition of both terms. A writer's vision is the hope he envisions for his society deduced from his particular interpretation of the life and people that make up the world of his novel. Form, on the other hand, deals with the writer's manner of handling his preoccupations in his work; it is the stylistic choices he makes, to more effectively communicate his views about society and project his vision of that society. Before addressing myself to the issue that constitutes the major concern of this paper, I will briefly place Samuel Selvon in the context of West Indian history and literature, as this is relevant to his preoccupations in *A Brighter Sun* and *Turn Again Tiger*.
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The history of the West Indies has been characterized by a lot of violation and trauma, consequent upon colonization and latifondia which ensured the economic enrichment of the colonialists and the degradation of the slaves and indentured labourers. This has presented the West Indian as a victim, rather than a maker of history. Lamenting this lack of history and its attendant loss of identity which the British historian Anthony Froude orchestrates, V.S. Naipaul, a product of this battered West Indian society, writes: 'history is built on creation and achievement and nothing was created in the West Indies.' This negative conception of history in the West Indies posed a challenge that generated various creative solutions to the problem by West Indian writers. Each writer refused to condemn the West Indies to historical oblivion by addressing himself, in his own unique way, to the problem, and by successfully depicting the West Indian man as a unique creator of history in his own right. Written in the post-emancipation period of the 1950s, A Brighter Sun and Turn Again Tiger are, like Reid's, Lamming's and Harris's novels, Selvon's response to the problem of the Caribbean man and his history. These novelists have variously delineated the Caribbean man as having accepted and transcended the traumas of
history, and as having gone on to create a place for himself in a new West Indian society, while not losing touch with his roots.

In an attempt to contend with this problem of displacement and its consequences on the Caribbean man, Selvon has projected a vision of growth for both the individual and his society in the two novels under study. The idea of growth in man can be perceived at various levels - at the physical, mental, intellectual, moral, and psychological levels. For the society growth can be social, political, economic, cultural, religious etc. Growth implies initial immaturity and naivety. In the process of growth, the individual graduates from his state of inexperience and immaturity, through years of exposure to the vicissitudes of life, to a state of maturity, experience, and awareness. The growth of individuals in a society reflects the growth of the society from an undeveloped, largely circumscribed society, to a civilized, sophisticated one acquired through contact with the outside world. This is the process of growth through which the Caribbean man, in the person of Tiger, and the Trinidadian society which is representative of the West Indian society, undergo in *A Brighter Sun* and *Turn Again Tiger*.

However Selvon’s vision of growth in both novels is defined differently, and so too is the form in which it is explored. To better examine these differences and clearly show how Selvon’s evolution from *A Brighter Sun* to *Turn Again Tiger* represents both an expansion of vision and a development of form, I will examine Selvon’s vision and form in both novels on a comparative basis. In *A Brighter Sun* Selvon shows Tiger, and symbolically the Caribbean man, as undergoing physical, social, mental, and intellectual growth. He grows from a state of innocence, naivety, and irresponsibility, to one of experience, awareness, and acceptance of responsibility that confers on him the mature status that is importantly lacking at the beginning of the novel. Selvon successfully presents this vision of Tiger and the Caribbean man, by carefully plotting his growth along various recognizable landmarks.

The first landmark in this graph of growth, is Tiger’s marriage at the sugar estates of Chaguanas. At the beginning of the novel which opens at the individual level with Tiger’s marriage, he is portrayed as a diffident, naive individual, still very much a boy, who has things done for him in which he has no say. His father arranges his marriage for him and he is so baffled by what is going on that he needs an old experienced man to enlighten him on what marriage is all about and what is expected of him as a man. Overnight Tiger changes from a boy to a man and his life changes from the carefree routine of 'days in the fields, evenings playing with other children, roti and aloo in the night' to a life burdened by responsibilities with a wife to support, a house and a garden to maintain, and a duty to 'haveam plenty boy chile...[and] live good' as Ramlal tells him. Tiger is equipped with only a cow, a hut and two hundred dollars in cash with which to face life in Barataria. He has
to grow into a man, all through his own effort, without the guiding voices of his past society, without parental direction. Thus, Selvon presents Tiger as full of uncertainties and doubts on his arrival at Barataria. It is significant that Selvon sets *A Brighter Sun* in Barataria, a fluid suburban community. Though he is mainly preoccupied with Tiger's growth, Selvon traces this growth through the interaction of both the Tigers and the negro couple, the Martins. To more effectively show the usefulness of a neutral ground like Barataria for the growth of a new Caribbean man, Selvon painstakingly establishes the past of, not only the Tigers, but also that of the Martins, to show how both couples have been shaped by their various pasts. Whereas Tiger's and Urmilla's past strikes us by its innocence and naivity, shaped by the largely homogeneous East Indian community in the sugar estates of Chaguanas, Joe and Rita Martins are products of a battered slum world where violence, brutality, prostitution, and bad language are the norm.

Selvon plots Tiger's growth to manhood in the context of such a society where people from such varied backgrounds with contradictory values, can sever themselves from the past and relate in a new environment shaped by new values. Thus, the Tigers and the Martins forge a new relationship in Barataria that rises above racial considerations. Tiger rejects his father's attempt to import the circumscribed Indian world into Barataria by advising him and Urmilla to '...look for Indian friend...Indian must keep together' (p.47). Tiger questions this advice, reasoning that a man's worth is in his humanity not the colour of his skin or the texture of his hair: 'Why I should only look for Indian friend? What wrong with Joe and Rita? ... Ain't a man is a man, don't mind if he skin not white, or if he hair curl?' (p.48). This liberation from the shackles of tradition and racialism expressed by Tiger, holds out new hope for the West Indian, and suggests the possibility of creating a new creolized society, in which there are no race and colour differences and no inhibitions or barriers.

In his early days in Barataria, as Tiger grapples with the problems of growing up, he naively perceives manhood as residing in the ability to consummate his marriage, to smoke, and drink rum like other men. Tiger strives painfully to establish his manhood to his wife and others in this regard, and is constantly baffled by his failure to impress them:

He wished that he knew more about everything - about planting crops at the right times, about living with a wife, and exactly how to go about the thing. In some way he sensed that unless he did it he would never cease to be a boy, to be treated like a boy (p.15).

As time goes on, Tiger establishes a spiritual affinity with the land which he cultivates and from which he earns a living.

Having contended with the responsibilities of a husband and a farmer,
Tiger takes another step up the ladder of growth. Urmilla is now pregnant and, as a prospective father, Tiger prays for a male child for as Ramlal tells him 'girl chile no good, only bring trouble on you head' (p.7). But when, contrary to his fervent prayers, the child turns out to be a girl, Tiger's reaction shows that he is still very much immature. He is disappointed and, in his selfishness, fails to consider his wife and child. Rather, he seeks solitude and restoration in the land, and wonders if worry is part of growing up. However, Tiger reconciles himself to the fact of having a baby girl and returns to his family, thereby accepting the fact that one does not always get what one wants in life, even if one has prayed to God about it. Despite his social and marital accomplishments, Tiger still feels inadequate - a fact which he contemplates thus '... 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' (p.45).

As Tiger continues to grope towards manhood, he becomes more conscious of the outer world. He does not feel satisfied with his self-assertion in the smaller world of his home and his social extension in Barataria, neither does he feel complacency in his identification with the land. His mind begins to send out sensitive feelers that make him pose existential questions about nature and his environment, about man and life, about God and his own place in the scheme of things. Selvon effectively contrasts Tiger's desire for self-expansion, to the complacency and unambitious life of his associates and friends in Barataria. There is Tall boy, the Chinese shopkeeper, whose world is limited to keeping his business thriving and his wife bearing children every year. There is Sookdeo, the old Indian, whose sole ambition in life is to have enough money to buy a steady supply of rum. There is the carefree Boysie whose only concern is to save enough money to migrate to England or America. And there is Joe who is satisfied with the day to day existence that life has to offer. They all see Tiger as over-ambitious.

As Tiger strives to widen his horizon and acquire more knowledge, life becomes more complicated and confusing. Overwhelmed by his ignorance and his increasing responsibilities as a man, Tiger becomes nostalgic for the easy, uncomplicated, routine life of the canefields of Chaguanas. These frequent flights into the sheltered world of his past, however, offer no solace, for a return will mean accepting defeat, wallowing in perpetual ignorance, and accepting the limitations of the plantation society - a situation which is the basis of all the confusion and embarrassment he is undergoing. Tiger's preoccupation with his problems alienates him from those closest to him - his wife and child whom he blames for his dissatisfaction with life. In his growing desire to know, Tiger sees illiteracy as another hurdle that must be cleared in his path to progress and growth. He envies Sookdeo and little Henry who can read and write. At he end of these questionings and confused gropings, Tiger however finds temporary solace in the land and his
'And when the seeds burst and the shoots peeped at the sun, he felt that at least he could make things grow, if even he didn't have any knowledge' (p.82).

Another stage in Tiger's growth is when he graduates from the questioning stage and takes practical steps to acquire knowledge and widen his intellectual horizon. The first attempt is when he visits the city with Boysie. On this first visit, Tiger learns more about the city than Boysie ever does, through his exposure and his inquisitive nature. He experiences first-hand the topsy-turvy, impersonal world of the city where people work for their own selfish interests, showing little consideration for others, and where the colour of one's skin determines the treatment one gets. He discovers that it is not all beauty and respectability in the city as he had assumed.

As he becomes more fascinated with education, Tiger feels it will answer all his questions about life and the universe. Unlike Sookdeo who can only read the newspaper, Tiger has big plans concerning his literacy. But he finds out soon enough that literacy does not automatically confer maturity on a man, neither does it provide all the answers.

The coming of the Americans and the building of the new road mark a climax in Tiger's growth to self-awareness. Having learnt to read and having grown tired of the land and the routine of daily life, Tiger is poised for the progress and change which the Americans and the road symbolize. The people have to quit the land showing that they have graduated from the stage of an agrarian community. This marks the end of a way of life and the beginning of another. They have to exploit the social and economic advantages the association with the Americans has to offer. It is only people like Sookdeo, who are so deeply rooted in the old order of things, that will not survive the sudden and drastic change. But to Tiger, who is young and ambitious, it is a welcome change that holds out unlimited opportunities for self-betterment. Sookdeo's death makes Tiger take a critical look at his life and contemplate the prospect of death. He resolves to plan for the future and save money. Tiger questions God about the cause of death and rationalizes that '...everything have to dead when it get old' (p.156).

Tiger buys a book on road construction and gets a job with the Americans. As he learns more and gains a new feeling of importance and confidence, he distances his wife and child; communication breaks down between him and Urmilla who is afraid to tell him of her pregnancy. When eventually she does Tiger pours out his frustrations on Urmilla, even accusing her of infidelity. Selvon portrays the education and knowledge Tiger has acquired as destructive of happiness. It is ironical that while seeking the big things of life, Tiger neglects his basic domestic responsibilities to his wife and child. Tiger's association with the alien powers and forces of change precipitates a crisis in him which threatens to destroy his marriage and the relationship he has so
painstakingly built with the Martins. This happens when Tiger decides to bring his American bosses home to dinner, a rash action which ends in his drunken beating of the pregnant Urmilla and the alienation of the Martins.

Despite the attainment of his aspirations - he has been promoted at his job and is financially well off - Tiger moves about in a restless, discontented state. Urmilla is sick; he loses interest in the road, and the wealth he has accumulated means little to him. His discontent is precipitated by the refusal of the Indian and creole doctors to attend to his sick wife in the night. In an angry outburst he declares with finality: 'Black people cud never rise in dis world' (p.18). The promptness with which the white doctor attends to his wife and his refusal to charge extra money, further convinces Tiger that a man's worth is not in his race, but in his personality. Tiger discovers again that wealth and success do not automatically guarantee satisfaction and happiness. Urmilla's stillbirth is the price Tiger has to pay for his sterile quest for importance and wealth.

It is a mature Tiger, who has come a long way and learnt the hard way, who tells Joe 'a man should hold on to what he have...the main thing is to be happy, nothing else don't matter as long as you happy' (p.194). It is the words of a man who has survived crisis after crisis and has grasped the realities of life, and so symbolizes Tiger's growth and maturity which contrast with his previous boyish impatience. His self realization also leads to a sound interpretation of human nature - it is based not on skin colour, but on the inner self '...they have good and bad all about don't matter if you white or black' (p.195). Thus, Tiger's creolization transcends the confines of colour and tribe. This is translated in his political vision of fighting for rights not only for Indians but for everybody.

Tiger, wiser with experience, tells Urmilla: 'You don't start over things in life,...you just have to go on from where you stop. It not as if you born all over again. Is the same life' (p.209). By the end of A Brighter Sun, Tiger has learnt a lot and has come to accept his responsibilities as a man. The new house he builds brick by brick with his own hands signifies this acceptance of the place in which history has placed him and the responsibilities it has conferred on him. Selvon is saying that the Caribbean man in the New World can never find satisfaction and fulfilment in escape. Rather, he must 'reconcile himself to his place in society, and root himself in the land making the best he can out of it. Instead of envying Boysie who is preparing to migrate to America, Tiger in an unperturbed superior manner asks him: 'How you want me to leave my wife and child and house and go away just so?' (p.213). He goes on to tell Boysie, like an experienced adult instructing an impatient child, 'it ain't always a man does be able to do the things he want to do.' (p.213). This is a different Tiger from the impatient young man of the early days in
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Barataria who saw his wife and child as impediments to his progress.

Though Tiger's journey to manhood and self-awareness has been a rigorous and rugged one full of obstacles and puzzles, the experience he has acquired is worth it. At the end of *A Brighter Sun*, Tiger laughs at the thought of returning to the cane fields, showing the extent to which he feels liberated from his past. It is significant, however, that he still retains his hold on the land as is seen in his meaningful observation as he assesses the weather: 'Now is a good time to plant corn' (p.215).

As evidenced in the discussion so far, Selvon's major preoccupation in *A Brighter Sun* is to give a vision of growth for the Caribbean man, armed solely with his own inner resources as is symbolized in Tiger. As an individual, he has many choices at his disposal, and it depends on him whether to be a Tiger, a Boysie, a Joe, a Sookdeo or a Tall Boy. Selvon suggests that development away from the past and away from parental tutelage, requires applying oneself to one's responsibilities and becoming conscious of the larger world, as well as maintaining a hold on the land.

But in *Turn Again Tiger* which is a sequel to *A Brighter Sun* Selvon's preoccupations represent an expansion of vision. In *Turn Again Tiger* Selvon subtly questions the kind of vision he presents in *A Brighter Sun*. He re-examines his definition of the Caribbean man and his place in society. Selvon seems to cast doubt on the adequacy of the achievements of the Caribbean man in his new society - building a home, acquiring education and a greater sense of awareness and becoming an integral part of the new society, are not enough to make the Caribbean man whole; they are not enough to imbue him with a sense of fulfillment and complacency. Selvon is contending that, armed with literacy and awareness gained from his stay in Barataria, Tiger is now well equipped to appraise his situation and articulate his relationship with the past. It is only when this confrontation with the past has taken place that Tiger and, symbolically, the Caribbean man, will be fully liberated from the shackles of a traumatic past, whose psychological scars still lie buried beneath the veneer of civilization he has acquired.

Being a sequel to *A Brighter Sun* *Turn Again Tiger* still has Tiger as its protagonist, and it is through the exploration of Tiger's return to the cane fields of the past, that Selvon undertakes this redefinition of the Caribbean man. Selvon sets this return to the past in Five Rivers which is representative of the cane community with its usual social structure of white overseer and wife, Indian foreman, Chinese shopkeeper, and black and Indian labourers. Tiger is aware of the monotony of his life and his continued inadequacy, seen in his irresoluteness concerning his father's invitation to work with him on the cane-supervising job in Five Rivers. Through the purposeless get-together ('freeness') that Tiger's friends organize for him, Selvon shows the inadequacy of the Barataria ethic, and exposes a pointlessness in the lives of its inhabitants that justifies
Tiger’s statement that ‘...a change always good, it make for progress... You rotten if you stay one place all the time.’

The Tiger that we see at the beginning of Turn Again Tiger is a well-established, successful man by his society’s standards. He accepts to go to Five Rivers only because he thinks his father, Babolal, is the supervisor of the cane project. To him, a return to the past with its distasteful memories of cane and all that it symbolized which he has come to hate and reject, is undesirable.

He hated the cane. Cane had been the destiny of his father, and of 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 (p.1).

But Tiger is armed with the education and civilization he has acquired in Barataria. This not only makes him feel confident and distant, but earns him the respect and admiration of the labourers who look upon him as the elite that will teach their children and write to the government to improve the undeveloped community of Five River by providing amenities like good roads, good drinking water, electricity, schools etc.

But when Tiger learns of the presence of a white supervisor from Soylo and discovers this to be true, his self-confidence and aloofness are shaken. He finds himself in a dilemma - he cannot return to Barataria for this will invite ridicule from his friends. There is no escape; Tiger has to stay and confront this monstrous but concrete apparition from the past. As he inspects the white supervisor’s luxurious residence, memories of the white supervisor lording it over his people in the cane fields of Chaguanas rush through his mind. As Sandra Paquet rightly sums up, these are memories of ‘...defeated manhood, humiliations endured, exploitation suffered, his people victimized and abused because of their indentureship to the cane industry and the hierarchy of the estate village.’ This is the negative ethic that shaped Tiger’s past in Chaguanas and ‘...he grew to link the rebelliousness with cane, and he had been happy to leave Chaguanas and go to live in Barataria, vowing never to return to such labour’ (p.47).

But Tiger finds himself face to face with the very monstrosity he thinks he has successfully escaped from. As Tiger comes upon the white overseer’s wife bathing naked in the river, the complexes of the slave mentality acquired from years of indentureship to cane which his years of freedom in Barataria have hidden, resurface. Despite his education and other achievements, Tiger succumbs to the age-old panic that his life in the cane fields of Chaguanas has drummed into his head concerning the sacredness of the white woman, and he flees. Tiger regrets his panic and flight, but can do nothing to correct the dented image of subservience he has created in the white woman’s sight:
He had run away like a little boy scared, because a white woman had called out to him. He, Tiger, who had his own house, who had a wife and a child, who worked with the Americans during the war, who drank rum with men and discussed big things like life and Death, who could read and write. Better if he had cringed, if he bowed and stooped and blurted out good morning like some ordinary illiterate labourer and asked if there was something he could do. But to run away, to panic as if the devil were at his heels - for that there was no forgiveness. (p.51).

Tiger's feeling of inadequacy and shame precipitates a crisis in his life. His inner turmoil manifests itself in his actions and social relationships - he becomes restless, alienates his family, drinks too much, and humiliates himself by undertaking demeaning jobs as yard boy for the white woman and literally placing himself at Doreen's beck and call. Doreen becomes the symbol of his humiliation and the degradation of his people. Tiger goes on to question the usefulness of education and the essence of reading lots of sophisticated books, when they cannot help him to solve the personal, daily problems he encounters in life. This disillusionment with education, makes Tiger burn all his books and give away his radio to Otto. Tiger symbolically strips himself of the trappings of civilization which are the symbols of his advancement, and this becomes a manifestation of the crisis going on inside him. Tiger goes further to shame himself by abandoning the ethics of civilized behaviour - he deliberately challenges Singh to a fight and everybody, including Soylo, perceives this negative change in Tiger.

It is Urmilla who, as his wife, is closest to him, that feels most the brunt of Tiger's selfishness and alienation. Her pent up bitterness is expressed in her chiding words to Tiger: 'You think you is the only one in the world growing up, that nothing happening to other people, only you' (p.126). Urmilla goes on to assert her presence and maturity which Tiger does not seem to be aware of. She too, like Tiger, has come a long way from a child-bride at the beginning of A Brighter Sun, to a mother and, in fact, the leader of the women's protest march against the men in Turn Again Tiger.

But this self-abasement points at Tiger's realization that psychologically he is still very much tied to the shackles of the cane estates which he had resented in his father and the other cane labourers. At least they make no pretence about their status like he does. This self-torture becomes the necessary psychological sickness which Tiger must experience to be able to successfully seek healing and regeneration and, finally, free himself from the complexes of a servile past and symbolically achieve wholeness.

Tiger resolves the crisis that has built up in him through the weeks by engaging in sex with Doreen. It is violent sex devoid of tenderness except for the urgency for self-restoration and freedom. With this sexual act, Tiger has symbolically vanquished the mystique of the white woman, and exorcised his inner turmoil and the degradation of his past. Tiger's
bathing in the river is both a ritual cleansing of his body and an exorcism of the power of the white woman over him and his people.

Having emerged victorious in this crisis, Tiger achieves tranquility, and a full return to his hitherto neglected responsibilities to his family and the village. He is now truly mature and confident enough to assume the leadership role awaiting him in Barataria.

It is significant that Tiger abandons the job of bookkeeper preferring to participate fully in the cane harvesting at the end of the novel. He is now reconciled to his past and the complexes of cane, and so no longer has that debilitating hatred, which connotes fear, anytime he thinks of cane. At the end of *Turn Again Tiger*, Tiger finds that it has been worthwhile taking a step backward for now he has made two strides forward. At the end of the novel, Tiger significantly declares '...but is almost as if I didn’t take no step backward, and it was forward all the time' (p.181).

From the discussion so far it is obvious that Selvon's evolution from *A Brighter Sun* to *Turn Again Tiger* represents an expansion of vision. The vision of growth that Selvon envisages for the Caribbean man and his society in *A Brighter Sun* though useful in creating a place for the Caribbean man in the New World, is limited and deficient in creating a truly liberated Caribbean man. It is in *Turn Again Tiger* that Selvon expands this vision by taking the Caribbean man back to the past of the sugar estate with its traumas, complexes, and psychological scars, to help him reconcile himself with his peasant roots by boldly confronting those destructive, claustrophobic forces from which he continually but unsuccessfully attempts to flee. It is when this confrontation has been made that the Caribbean man, like Tiger, will be truly liberated psychologically from the negative aspects of his history. And it is when this psychic wholeness has been attained, that the Caribbean man will be ripe enough to rise above his crippling position as a victim of history, and become a maker of history, as is symbolized by Tiger's elevation to a prospective political leader in the new Barataria community. He is now truly a man not only physically and mentally but, more importantly, psychologically, for it is his psyche, that has suffered from the indignities and complexes arising from indentureship to cane.

Selvon's evolution from *A Brighter Sun* to *Turn Again Tiger* also represents a development of form. The seriousness of vision and complexity of Selvon's preoccupations in his two novels, determine the form and stylistic choices he makes. *A Brighter Sun* exhibits a more simple and straightforward form than *Turn Again Tiger*. Apart from the constraints of a first novel, Selvon's vision of growth for the Caribbean man and the New World, demand a linear exploration of events and characters. Thus, Selvon's adoption of a linear chronological form in unfolding the stages of Tiger's growth, effectively serves his visionary purpose. As Tiger's consciousness expands and he learns more, so too the nature of his questions, the pattern of his thoughts and growth
acquire more sophistication and complexity. The naivety and helplessness he exhibits at the beginning of the novel progress through a state of painful awareness of ignorance, to a state of knowledge and boldness symbolized by his loss of shyness and his fearless association with the Americans and the road (alien self-assertive forces), to the final state of tranquil acceptance of his destiny.

The characters are also explored along this linear chronological line. Selvon’s major concern is to plot Tiger’s growth from ignorance to self-awareness, and so he rightly dwells on the social, economic, mental and psychological experiences of Tiger. Other characters are also developed to an extent, but they are flashed in and out as they serve to illuminate and reinforce the character of the protagonist. Thus, the Martins are important in as much as they serve as a creolizing influence on the Tigers, and also as a comment on the process of growth of the inexperienced Tigers. Tall Boy, Sookdeo and Boysie all serve to highlight different aspects of Tiger’s ambitions and growth to awareness. Even Urmilla who is growing up with Tiger, occupies a special place in the novel, for it is through her marital relationship with Tiger that the plotting of the whole cycle of Tiger’s growth is made possible.

By juxtaposing the daily changes and occurrences in Trinidad with the vicissitudes of Tiger’s life, Selvon is symbolically showing the symbiotic relationship that exists between society and the individual. It is the individuals and their collective experiences that construct the society. In the same way, as the society changes with the times socially, economically and politically, so the Caribbean man in the New World feels the need to venture out of the cocoon of the sugar estate, and expand his consciousness in a new fluid society. Significantly, Tiger’s growth has not only been limited to the physical and intellectual aspects of life; it has also been extended to the material, because he has availed himself of the opportunities of his growing society. This is symbolized in his financial achievements in his road job and in his building his own house. By this act, Selvon is also contending that, though Tiger has expanded in all directions, he cannot afford to break away from the land. So, too, the New World cannot risk severing itself from the land that has nurtured it, in the quest for a link with the outer world.

From this, several images and symbols emerge as having been consciously employed by Selvon in *A Brighter Sun* to achieve his purposes. There is the image of land and crops. This image of growing things is constantly associated with Tiger throughout the novel. It is significant that each time he is baffled and overwhelmed by incidents in life, Tiger turns to the land and nature for reassurance and restoration. When Urmilla bears a baby girl instead of the expected ‘boy chile’, it is to his farm that Tiger flees to question the order of things, and finally reconcile himself to the reality of things. When he is embittered by his ignorance and inability to read and write, Tiger plants his crops and is
consoled that '...at least he could make things grow, if even he didn't have any knowledge' (p.82). Tiger makes us feel temporarily that he is tired of the land and can do without it as the more fascinating road work with its promise of wealth and power consumes him, but at the end of his inner crisis, we see him not only building a brick house on the same site as his old hut, but also keeping a garden. It is symbolic that the process of building is couched in the image of a growing plant: 'Everything was past and gone, there was only the house to build now. To watch it grow, like a plant, brick by brick' (p.201). The prodigal, so to say, has returned to the land that engendered him. It is significant that Tiger finds inner peace and is able to mend his broken relationships, only when this return has been made. It is no surprise, then, that the novel ends with Tiger in harmony with nature, and at one with the land and the cycle of growth that is associated with it. 'Now is a good time to plant corn' [Tiger] muttered gazing up at the sky' (p.215).

Another symbol that need be mentioned, is the road which is symbolic both at the personal and societal levels. As Kenneth Ramchand has identified, the road is, an 'ambivalent symbol'. On the one hand, it represents forces of change and progress socially, culturally, and economically. On the other hand, it is a destructive force which not only causes loss of life, but almost destroys Tiger's happiness. So, too, for the Caribbean society it represents both a progressive and a destructive force. Progressive in that it links undeveloped areas of the society with other more developed parts, as well as facilitates the movement of foreigners ensuring foreign influence on Trinidad. On the other hand, it can lead to a cultural violation of the Caribbean society. Selvon's achievements in language in A Brighter Sun are also impressive. He uses various shades of the Trinidadian dialect to delineate the various racial strains and sensibilities in the society. It is a truly creolized society.

Selvon is careful to distinguish between his authorial English which is standard English, used in passages of direct authorial narration and description, from the creole dialects used by the various characters in conversations, discussions, and introspections. At first reading, this may appear heavy and cumbersome, but once one is used to it, the dialect flows smoothly, and even becomes fascinating and captivating.

In treatment of vision and form, Selvon's A Brighter Sun makes for easy and interesting reading. Tiger's growth is explored in a linear and straightforward manner; the language is functional, simple and fluid; the images and symbols are effective and easy to grasp; the descriptive passages are vivid and realistic showing Selvon as a writer with an eye for telling detail; and Selvon displays a sustaining sense of humour that runs through the novel.

Just as Turn Again Tiger represents an expansion of vision, so too it exhibits a development of form when compared to A Brighter Sun. Selvon's preoccupation with taking the Caribbean man back to the past
history of indentureship to cane, is serious and is conceived in symbolical terms. Thus, though the story progresses with a definite sense of time and space, Tiger's experiences in Five Rivers are explored in appropriate suggestive images and symbols.

The relationships forged and characters portrayed are more complex and functional in depicting Selvon's concerns in the novel. Although Selvon is primarily concerned with Tiger's growth, he carefully plots the growth of each character showing how their lives intertwine with Tiger's. The characters are part of the community of Five Rivers, each filling his own vacuum, but this does not diminish their individuality or importance. As Sandra Paquet has rightly identified, Selvon initially casts each character in the stereotypical mould, but deviates from this when convenient. In fact, it is this ability to develop the character as an individual growing from certain expectations, to a new and unpredictable person, that marks Selvon's achievement in characterization in *Turn Again Tiger*. There is Urmilla who grows from the fearful, docile, Indian wife and mother, to a mature self-assertive woman who assumes a leadership role in her community. There is More Lazy who rises above the stereotype of the indolent day-dreamer, to a man struggling like others to work legitimately and earn a decent living. There is Otto who grows from the stereotype of the sleepy, indolent, insensitive shopkeeper, to a hard working man that asserts his manhood. There is Babolal who rises above the stereotype of the grovelling foreman, to a man of authority who commands Tiger's respect. There is also Soylo who grows from the stereotype of the sequestered old Indian detestful of human relationship, to a warm-hearted person who has come to value Tiger's friendship. Selvon takes us into the past of each character, and shows us how this has influenced his outlook on life. This represents a more in-depth character study than is the case in *A Brighter Sun*, where characters like Deen, Tall Boy, Boysie, Sookdeo, are hazy creations with no concretely established backgrounds.

Selvon's artistic achievement in dramatizing Tiger's confrontation with his past is a mark of artistic maturity. Through images and symbols, this confrontation is made. The whole idea of the naked white woman and the negative associations she has for Tiger and the Caribbean society, is at the core of *Turn Again Tiger*. Thus, Tiger's past which his stay in Barataria has made him reject and hate, is personified in Doreen who becomes the concrete symbol of the indignities and complexes of the sugar estate. Tiger's initial reaction to this confrontation with the past is also communicated symbolically. As he flees from Doreen, his foot is entwined by a horse-whip snake which becomes an image of the overseer's humiliating whip and an extended image of the white woman, the sight of whom is enough to rob a man of his confidence and manhood. The whole of Tiger's relationship with Doreen and the crisis that follows it, symbolize Tiger's defeat, his loss of
manhood, and his acceptance of the inferiority complex of his past. It is no wonder, then, that the violent sex with Doreen becomes symbolic of the exorcism of these complexes and the resultant attainment of peace and wholeness. Even after the sex act, Tiger's bathing in the river is a ritual cleansing of his body, and signifies the liberation of his psyche from the fear of the white woman. Tiger's rebirth and regeneration are communicated in the image of the snake changing skins, and that of having walked through fire and emerging very much alive. Selvon writes about the sex act:

There was no pleasure in the memory for him - all the incident had done was to age him, afterwards he had shrugged like a snake changing skins. No triumph, no satisfaction, no extension of desire to make him want to do it again. Just relief, as if he had walked through fire and come out burnt a little, but still very much alive. (p.181).

The image of cane dominates the entire novel. The novel begins with the planting of cane and ends with its harvest, showing the cycle of growth that the characters undergo. Cane is of dual significance having antithetic influences on the characters. At the beginning of the novel, cane is an instrument of destruction which inflicts psychological wounds on the characters, for it is the cane industry that made slavery and migration imperative, and cane caused the indignities the labourers suffered at the hands of the colonizers, and so is responsible for their complexes and psychological scars. Thus, at the beginning of the novel, Tiger hates cane and associates it with suppression and rebelliousness. Soylo hates cane and associates it with the destruction of life, for as he relates to Tiger, his son lost his life in a cane fire and his wife died from the shock. Otto too has cause to despise cane, for it is there that his wife cuckolded him with Singh, one of the Indian labourers.

As the novel progresses and ends, cane becomes an antidote with therapeutic effects, and heals the various psychological wounds of the characters restoring them to psychic wholeness. Tiger who, in the opening page of the novel, establishes his rejection of cane and all it represents by observing the canefields of Five Rivers from the distance of a hill, not only descends into the valley of cane, but actively participates in the cane harvest. This is only possible after his private war with cane, during which he has had a face-to-face confrontation with and reconciliation to the traumas of indentureship to cane. This distance occasioned by a hatred for cane, as is also seen in his bookkeeping job which does not actually involve him with the cane, is closed when he relinquishes his bookkeeping job to Soylo, and applies his energies to actual cane cutting. This shows that Tiger has descended from the aloofness of his education and creolization in Barataria, to a filial identification with his peasant roots and the history of his people. Thus, the step backward that Tiger has taken, has unquestionably resulted in two steps forward. At the
end of the novel, Tiger is, therefore, in a position to appraise the achievements of all the characters. His bitterness arising from his phobia for cane and what it represents, is lost. Tiger comes to respect even Babolal’s confidence and authority in dealing with anything associated with cane, something which hitherto had been a vice in his sight.

Soylo too has been healed of his crippling hatred for cane, and the psychological scars it has inflicted on him. This is seen in his participation in the cane harvest as bookkeeper. Though he cannot go back to reconstruct his life to avoid the inevitable ‘ifs’, it is significant that Soylo accepts this, and reconciles himself to the tragedy which has almost destroyed his entire life.

Otto too asserts his manhood in the canefields during harvest by beating up Singh, his rival. It is significant that the deflation of his manhood and its restoration take place on the same canefield.

Even More Lazy is shown to redefine himself and his life style on the canefields. He leaves his indolence and dreamy life, and participates in the cane harvesting. It is significant that he moves from the feminine job of cane bundling, and assumes cane cutting - as a man he now deserves to drink with the other labourers in Otto’s bar. It is even suggested that More Lazy may lose his love of indolence, and take up a permanent job.

Babolal, one of the most consistent characters in the novel, has proved himself in the context of cane, and, so, has deservedly gained permanent promotion to manage a larger cane estate in Chaguanas at the end of his present assignment in Five Rivers.

Urmilla who is fertile like the earth, is cast in the image of a fertility goddess - she ‘was bearing a child, perhaps the greatest thing of all’ (p.181). Her fecundity seems to be the all-embracing symbol that marks both the cycle of growth and harvest, and the growth of the various characters in the novel. It also marks the hope of the New World man and his society, now that he has reconciled himself to the past. In Turn Again Tiger, Selvon also distinguishes himself in his use of language like Chinua Achebe in his historical African novels, Things Fall Apart, and Arrow Of God, Selvon successfully captures the peasant sensibilities of his characters through their language. He not only suits language to character, but also to environment. As Sandra Paquet has identified, Selvon roots his language in the calypso tradition of his people.

Selvon’s overall achievement in Turn Again Tiger shows a development of form seen in his artistic maturity. His vision is expanded, and is more wholesome and befitting of the new Caribbean man and the New World. This has also been explored through a more artistically mature and sophisticated form. The characters are more complex, and their lives crisscross in a common destiny defined by cane. The images and symbols are culled from the characters’ environment, and have been effectively manipulated to communicate the novelist’s vision for his society. The language of both the author and his characters
are appropriate, and show Selvon as a sensitive artist who knows what is in character and what is not. All these are present in *A Brighter Sun*, but on a much smaller scale than *Turn Again Tiger*. For this reason, as has been substantiated in this paper, I would affirm that Selvon's evolution from *A Brighter Sun* to *Turn Again Tiger* represents both an expansion of vision and a development of form.

NOTES

3. Samuel Selvon, *Turn Again Tiger* (London: Heinemann, 1979), p.5. (Subsequent page references are integrated into the paper and are to this edition).
4. Samuel Selvon, Introduction to *Turn Again Tiger*, p.x.
7. Sandra Paquet, Introduction to *Turn Again Tiger*, p.xxi.