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Student name: Amanda Teneil Zilla  
Student ID no.: 814001757  
Degree Program: Literatures in English  
Supervisor: Dr. Louis Regis

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The Construction of Pathos in Selected West Indian Novels

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this Caribbean Studies Project is to explore how emotions of pity and sympathy are evoked in West Indian Novels and by extension the aspects of the work responsible for this elicitation of an emotional response. The novels explicated within this research include Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Samuel Selvon’s *A Brighter Sun* and V.S. Naipaul’s *A House for Mr Biswas*. This was achieved through the analysis of the aforementioned texts, an examination of existing secondary research for each novel and applying the findings to research done focalised on emotion and reader response. While each author possesses an idiosyncratic writing style, the possibility for emotional response is present within the aforementioned works. Although previous research suggests that this is achieved through characterisation alone, this study aims to illustrate that while characterisation plays an indispensable role in emotional response, the artistic manipulation of other literary elements and techniques such as theme, setting and context, structuring of the narrative, the incorporation of objective correlatives and also narrative perspective, are equally important to the ability of a text to evoke emotions of pity and sympathy.
This project has only been made a reality through the various stakeholders in its creation. Firstly, I would like to thank my project supervisor, Dr. Louis Regis for the contribution of his time, expertise, guidance and assistance throughout the creation of this Caribbean Studies Project. Also, I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Giselle Rampaul (may she rest in peace) with whom this endeavour started. Thank you for your assistance, motivation, kindness and belief in my abilities at the inception of this work.
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to determine how emotions of pity and sympathy, referred to as pathos, are created through the employment and skillful manipulation of literary techniques and elements in seminal West Indian literary works, such as Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea*, V.S Naipaul’s *A House for Mr. Biswas* and Samuel Selvon’s *A Brighter Sun*. Therefore, this project attempts to explore how the crafting of a narrative with respect to elements such as characterisation, theme, spacio-temporal setting, plot, philosophical frameworks, contexts, object correlations and narrative perspectives can affect an emotional response in the intended reader.

The objective of this work, in its totality, is to determine whether the texts themselves evoke emotions of pity and sympathy in the reader or if the emotions are dependent upon the reader’s context. This objective allows for novel ways of exploring regional literature through traditional ways of analysing a literary work since research of the previously stated novels in this focalized area has not been explicitly carried out. Therefore, the value of this research lies not only in its ability to make a significant contribution to academia but also to unite previously existing research with a new perspective.

Each of the three chapters will be focused on a single novel and will consist of an in-depth analysis of literary elements and their inherent ability to develop pathos within a text. The chapters will utilise literary theory as a framework for exploring their power thereby illustrating each writer’s idiosyncratic treatment of the elements as a means of conveying wider messages and inviting an intended reader to emotionally and intellectually respond to the text.
According to Cuddon et al, pathos can be described as “that quality in a work of art which evokes feelings of tenderness, pity or sorrow” (520). Abrams adds that “in modern criticism, however, pathos is applied in a much more limited way to a scene or passage that is designed to evoke the feelings of tenderness, pity, or sympathetic sorrow from the audience. To many modern readers, the greatest passages do not dwell on the details of suffering but achieve the effect of pathos by understatement and suggestion.” (204). Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the Abrams definition will be expanded so as to accommodate the examination of technique and the novel in its entirety as a means of unearthing the qualities of the work which possess the power to move an intended reader.

In determining whether certain techniques and their manipulation by the author’s possess the power to evoke sympathy, gaining an understanding of how sympathy is manifest in an intended reader becomes of utmost importance. Paul Simpson notes that:

Sympathy can never give us direct access to their feelings…as we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation (220).

Sympathy in the intended reader, therefore, becomes evidence of the universality of the text, the aspects of it that appeal to our emotional intelligence and beseech us to share in the emotional moments of the plot and while we do not feel it entirely ourselves, the techniques utilised by the author can aid in the placement of the reader into the situation of the text leading to an emotional response.
Simpson also notes that difficulty in empirically executing a study on such a subject and states that the evocation of sympathy from texts has traditionally been studied by “object-relations theorists” (220). Through Simpson’s statements, it becomes evident that yielding empirical data in this literary area is quite difficult and therefore proves that secondary research paired with existing literary theory is the most appropriate method for the purposes of this project.

One of the foundational literary theorists in reader-response theory, Wolfgang Iser, states that “the reader often feels involved in events which at the time of reading, even though in fact they are very far from his own reality. …The literary text activates out own personal faculties, enabling us to recreate the world it presents” (278-9). Through this, it becomes apparent that the evocation of emotion from the reader lies within the commingling of elements in the creation of a narrative and its effect on the individual’s emotional and intellectual faculties which once again may be reliant upon the universality of the text and the context on the novel and the reader.

Jenefer Robinson’s Deeper than Reason: Emotions and its Role in Literature, Music and Art attempts to explore the importance of emotions to the creation of understanding of any of the aforementioned forms of art. However, specifically with respect to Literature, Robinson notes that:

In reading a novel, we may not be emotionally worked up all the time, but typically there are moments when we do become emotionally engaged. These tend to be occasions when the author is aiming to impress upon us facts or events that are important to the novel, to establish character, to mark significant developments in the plot, to drive home the theme or moral of the story, or—as
often happens—all three. To make my case that emotional responses are often necessary for us to understand a novel (108).

This moves away from the traditional assessment of the evocation of emotion being solely dependent on the reader’s contribution to the meaning making process and focuses on the artistry of the writer and his usage of the aforementioned fundamental elements in the crafting of his narrative. Interestingly, Robinson explores these ideas using canonical texts such as Tolstoy’s Anna Karenina yet such a study has never been doing using texts which are prominent examples of prolific Caribbean writing. Therefore, her extensive study of exemplary literary works provides a platform for the further analysis of other literary genres and individual works from the same perspective.

Apart from the typical literary elements of characterisation, setting, plot, themes, narrative perspective and language, one of the approaches to this project as previously mentioned is through objective correlatives found within the text. Cuddon et al describes this form of criticism as a “a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts which must terminate a sensory experience, are given the emotion is immediately evoked” (485) and is more effective when there exists a balance between “and coalescence of form and matter” (485). Hence, the term is closely related to the concepts of symbols and symbolism which have the power to evoke emotion once strategically utilised by a writer.
METHODOLOGY

The primary research of this study is based in text research. Firstly, the novels were read and the portions of the text which evoke emotion were selected and the various techniques which appeared to influence the power of the writing in emotional evocation were identified. Secondary sources were collected and evaluated based upon their reliability, validity and relevance to the study from a wide range of reputable sources. The findings of these secondary sources were then compared with the portions of texts and analysed to produce the findings within the chapters.

The findings are purely theoretical since this research paradigm did not involve the usage of a focus group due to the difficulty in obtaining a group familiar with all three of the texts utilised. This basis in theory may be seen as a limitation of this research. Another limitation of this research was the lack of existing research focused on reader response and Caribbean novels. Therefore, the existing research was used as a platform from which the connection between reader and text can be established and was used to support the objective of this research, that is, determining the ability of a text to evoke an emotional response through technique versus character and content alone.
CHAPTER ONE: WIDE SARGASSO SEA

Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) is considered a seminal West Indian literary work, not only on account of its existence as a “post-dated prequel to Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*” (Kimmey 113) but also due to its concern with subject matter such as post-colonialism, feminism and personal identity. In Rhys’ novel, pathos is constructed through her artistic usage of literary elements such as the characterisation of Antoinette Cosway and the interaction between her character and the assumed Mr. Rochester, the dynamics of Antoinette’s family, shifts in narrative perspective between Antoinette and the Rochester figure, shifts in and the significance of settings and object correlations.

Rhys’ characterisation of Antoinette Cosway is often perceived as her attempt to “humanize Antoinette [and] to rescue her from Brontë’s effaced character” (Shaffer 112). The qualities that Rhys’ ascribes to her interpretation become a contributing factor to the ability of the literary work to solicit emotions of pity and sympathy from an intended reader. Antoinette Cosway is portrayed as a white creole woman who is insecure and desperate for stability stemming from a tumultuous childhood and the society she inhabits.

In part one of Rhys’ novel, Antoinette, who voices the narration, loses her childhood home: “When they had finished, all that would be nothing left but blackened walls and the mounting stone. That was always left. That could not be burnt or stolen” (Rhys 41), her brother: “he is dead” (Rhys 44) and is sent to a convent school in the absence of her seemingly mentally ill mother: “Your mother is in the country. Resting. Getting well again” (Rhys 42). This indicates the disruption of the family unit and the interruption of a cultivation of self-identity. As a result, the reader develops emotions of pity and sympathy towards Antoinette through these events and
their psychological impact on her since “[a]dversity coupled with misfortune gloomed her totally” (Chen 21).

However, Rhys’ manipulation of the character as a trigger for an emotional response from a reader does not cease with the aforementioned tragic occurrences but rather is extended to her marriage to the supposed Mr. Rochester and their inter-character relationship. One of the most poignant instances of this is when Rochester sheds her of her identity through the changing of her name. Rochester “tries to rob her of her name Antoinette, insisting on her accepting the name “Bertha” instead of her real name, an act of male possessiveness which strips her of her individual essence” (Rubik & Mettinger-Schartmann 68). This shift in her name also begins to affect the intended reader who is able to identify the intertextual link to Jane Eyre: “As readers, we are immediately made nervous by this new name, not only do we sense Rochester’s impending erasure of Antoinette, but we associate the name Bertha with the madwoman he will lock up in the attic of Thornfield Hall” (Chen 22).

Through the removal of all elements of Antoinette’s self-identity, the emotions of instability that is associated with her childhood and from which she momentarily escaped during the early phase of her marriage: “Now, when I am happy”(Rhys 84), emotions of pity and sympathy are evoked from the reader. For the reader, the nuptial bliss which she experienced creates in the intended reader a futile sense of hopefulness that Antoinette’s life will take a positive turn. This hope is diminished as the relationship between Antoinette and her husband begins to disintegrate and the reader becomes fully aware that any love that the Rochester figure has for Antoinette is feigned and that lust is the fore bearer of any emotion he demonstrates towards Antoinette: “I did not love her. I was thirsty for her, but that is not love. I felt very little tenderness for her, she was a stranger to me, a stranger who did not think or feel as I did” (Rhys
85). Therefore through Antoinette’s characterisation and its interaction with the character of Mr. Rochester, the intended reader feels emotions of pity and sympathy through the idea of thwarted opportunity, in her marriage to Mr. Rochester leading to her detriment versus the potential for emotional and psychological betterment that it originally posed. Ergo, Rhys’ manipulation of characterisation and the interactions between characters is a pivotal technique in the construction of pathos within novel.

Throughout Antoinette’s childhood, she and her mother were involved in a "typically weak mother-daughter relationship [which] is mitigated by the mother substitute of Christophine” (Moore 30). This leads to the creation of pity within the text since it is on account of this that the reader acknowledge that Antoinette is ill-equipped to face the trials and tribulations of adulthood on account of the inadequate filial foundations established in her early life. This illustrates that Rhys’ manipulation of dysfunctional family dynamics in the creation of her narrative facilitates the ability of her text to elicit emotions of pity and sympathy from her intended reader.

After the fire which destroys Antoinette’s home, Antoinette seeks the support of her mother. However, Antoinette’s mother, who seems to be plunged into depression and apparent insanity after this incident is unable to function a maternal role and separates herself from Antoinette instead of transforming the tragedy into a unifying force. When Antoinette visits her mother after the fire, she offers her support which she fiercely rejects: “‘But I am here, I am here’ I said, and she said, ‘No ,’ quietly. Then ‘No no no’ very loudly and flung me from her. I fell against the partition and hurt myself” (Rhys 44). This also becomes a rejection that Antoinette carries into her adult life: “She pushed me away and cried when I went to see her” (Rhys 121) and may be partly responsible for Antoinette’s insecurity and fear of being
abandoned and unloved. While some see this disconnection between mother and daughter being the result of the fire and death of Pierre, the reader is aware from the onset of the novel, that she is treated indifferently by her mother: “My mother never asked me where I had been or what I had done” (Rhys 22). Therefore, the lack of familial support occurs throughout Antoinette’s childhood.

The lack of familial support Antoinette experiences becomes most poignant when Antoinette turns to Christophine for help in dealing with the waning interest of her husband. Christophine provides advice urging Antoinette to be an independent entity: “Have spunks and do battle for yourself” (Rhys 105). Through Christophine’s advice, the reader not only sees the function of her as a surrogate mother but also sees the lack of support in Antoinette’s life. She notes that Aunt Cora is “too old and sick and that Mason boy worthless” (Rhys 105). This proves itself to be especially negative since psychological studies have proven that the family unit plays a highly influential role “in a number of positive outcomes, including well-being, emotion regulation and autonomy” (Syed & Seiffge-Krenke 373-4).

Through Christophine’s advice, it becomes most apparent that the differences between herself and Antoinette prove to be a barrier that neither can cross to fully adopt the role of mother, especially when it is considered that Christophine functions in a subservient role to the Cosways and her conduct with Antoinette would be governed by this relationship. Antoinette’s well-being, emotion regulation and autonomy have all been negatively affected by the dynamics of her family illustrated through her reliance on Christophine. While the intended reader may not be able to fully assess the family dynamics with psychological theory, the unmistakable negative impact of Antoinette’s situation becomes a quality of the work that possesses the power to evoke
emotions of pity and sympathy and therefore proves that within Rhys’ text there exists pathos created through her manipulation of literary elements such as thematics.

However, the counterargument exists that the lack of autonomy that Antoinette illustrates is directly related to the patriarchal society within which she exists and not with family dynamics. It is based on the power of the cherished ideals of a society in the development of the individual: “Women’s world is shaped by patriarchal structure and this is the ‘world of the unconscious’. When they wake up from this unconscious world and start to rebel (like Antoinette) against traditional life, they are classified as hysteric and mad in society” (Günenç 211). Hence, while pity would still be evoked on account of Antoinette’s attempt to free herself from a social system that disadvantages her, the aspect of the work responsible for this emotional response in the intended reader would be the context within which the text is situated, that is, a society that is rigidly defined by Victorian patriarchal ideology.

While it is often perceived that pathos can only result in a novel from the events of the plot, the crafting techniques used in creating this becomes equally important to the evocation of an emotional response in the intended reader. In Wide Sargasso Sea, the narrative perspective shifts between Antoinette and Mr. Rochester. Despite the ability of this technique to present both perspectives on the events of the narrative, it is the incongruity in the thoughts between Antoinette and her husband that evokes pity from the intended reader. From the character and narrative perspective of Mr. Rochester, the reader is fully aware that his marriage is merely a task to be completed: “All is well and has gone according to your plans” (Rhys 68) since this “mercenary marriage to Antoinette Cosway Mason will enable Edward to take his ‘proper’ place” (Kendrick 236) in English society. Throughout the narration of the Mr. Rochester figure, it becomes apparent that in spite of Antoinette’s unquestionable beauty, her husband cannot love
her: “she is beautiful. And yet…” (Rhys 84) while she desperately yearned for love and attempts to use sexual intimacy as facilitator for the development of emotional intimacy:

Sex is Antoinette and Rochester’s only form of communication and they are communicating only their lust and desire for each other, not love. Sadly, Antoinette hopes their desire for each other, which is so powerful, will develop over time into love. But Rochester is not interested in loving Antoinette (Chen 22).

Therefore, through the incompatibility in their thoughts expressed through the shifting of narrative perspective, the intended reader begins to feel emotions of pity and sympathy. The reader becomes privy to the thoughts that Antoinette and Mr. Rochester never fully articulate to each other. As a result of the effectiveness of this technique, pathos is created in Rhys’ literary work.

Conversely, critics have seen the shift in narrative perspective as also presenting a Rochester who is placed in a foreign environment, unaware of the local culture, wed to a woman who is ultimately a beautiful stranger and whose “feeling of unease is only intensified when he receives a letter from a disgruntled Daniel Cosway” (Shaffer 111). This serves as the stimulus for his cruelty towards Antoinette resulting in a figure whose thoughts “one should hope, could not elicit anything but a carefully distanced pity on the part of the reader” (Kendrick 236). This also becomes most poignant when Antoinette in her desperation adopts Christophine’s obeah methods of evoking love from Rochester who notes: “She need not have done what she did to me. I will always swear that, she need not have done it” (Rhys 124). Through the aforementioned, it becomes apparent that Rochester’s actions in the Caribbean occur as a result
of unfamiliarity and unsureness. Ergo, when Antoinette uses obeah on him, he becomes a victim and therefore elicits pity from the reader. However, the hesitance from the reader in becoming fully immersed in these emotions stems from his treatment of Antoinette which represents a mishandling of the internal confusion manifest in his thoughts.

Similarly to the power of shifts in narrative perspective, the shifts in setting from the Caribbean to England become pivotal to the construction of pathos in Rhys’ text. The settings contribute to the emotions of pity and sympathy not only on account of the events which occur within each setting but rather through their significance. Voicu notes that Antoinette is “very much entangled with her landscape” (152). This can be attributed to “the vital connections between place, memory and human identity (Rubik & Mettinger- Schartmann 49) which the Caribbean represents for Antoinette. She is one with the vibrant and sensuous landscape: “This is my place and this is where I belong” (Rhys 99) that Rochester finds excessive: “Everything is too much” (Rhys 63). For Antoinette, England is like a “cold dark dream” (Rhys 73).

This idea of the intrinsic link between the individual and their physical landscape becomes even more pitiable when Antoinette moves to England and becomes a shadow of her former self and deemed insane. This transforms her journey between both places, as V.S. Naipual asserts, as “not one from innocence into darkness but from one void to another” (Thieme 85). While one void is emotional and is compensated for, to some extent, through familiarity, the other is marked by a complete loss of self and an absence of any linkage to her physical environment: “What am I doing in this place and who am I?” (Rhys 163). Through her dissociation from herself, marked in the narrative by a change in location, the setting becomes significant to the construction of pathos within the prose since the reader is able to align the experiences of the character to the settings. This makes the physical spaces pivotal to the
meaning-making process in which the intended reader is involved. The emotions of pity and sympathy, that the prose evokes, are only positively enhanced by Rhys’ manipulation of the literary element of setting.

However, the emotions of pity and sympathy and their reliance on landscape can take on historical significance depending on the context of the reader. For the Caribbean reader, the relationship between Antoinette and the figure of Rochester and the landscapes to which their identities are ultimately connected can be seen as representing the power dynamics between the coloniser and the colonised. Hence, her subsequent madness can be seen as the result of “patriarchic and imperialistic oppression” (Swietlik 2). Through this, Rhys presents: “a new perspective of sympathy for the mad woman in the attic… the reader mostly devalues his [Rochester’s] attributes and acts; and instead, favors the pitiful and misfortunate fate of the beautiful Creole heiress, Antoinette” (Şenel 39-40). Hence, a reader’s context and understanding of colonial dynamics can influence the evocation of emotions of pity and sympathy. The reader is able to more poignantly understand Antoinette’s positioning in the socio-historical context of the novel and the implications of the usage of the Caribbean landscape and England as the setting in constructing power relations.

In addition to the symbolism of the landscape, an object correlation previously explicated, there exists other symbols and symbolic events which play an indispensable role in the understanding of and emotional response to the prose. One of these symbols that become of paramount importance to the evocation of pity and sympathy throughout the text is the flying of the moth into the flame: “A large moth…blundered into one of the candles, put it out and fell to the floor” (Rhys 73-4). The image of the moth being attracted to the flame has been used to represent fatal attraction and even the idea of rushing into marriage doomed to failure both of
which come to fruition within the text. Antoinette’s attraction to and desire to be loved by Rochester proves to be “the real” death (Rhys 116) that Antoinette associates with the loss of one’s faculties and sense of self and foreshadows her fate in the attic; burning with desire to be loved, to be Antoinette instead of Bertha and to return to the early days of her marriage in the “sweet honeymoon house” (Rhys 59). Therefore, through the symbolic nature of this event and Rhys’ construction of several object correlations illustrating the eventual demise of Antoinette, such as the crushing of the frangipani wreath: “I stepped on it. The room was full of the scent of crushed flowers’ (Rhys 67), the reader begins to feel a sense of uneasiness.

The reader becomes a witness to the destruction of innocent creatures and objects. As Antoinette begins to undergo her decay into supposed insanity, the symbolism of all the events moves into an area of clarity in the reader’s consciousness, and pity and sympathy are evoked. The reader comes to the realisation that even in moments of bliss, Antoinette’s demise is inevitable. This is made more poignant by the symbolic events occurring throughout the text, often adding moments of keen sadness during plot points of subtle bliss. Therefore, Rhys’ incorporation of object correlations within her prose plays an indispensable role in the creation of pathos within her novel.

Ergo, through Rhys’ artistic and skillful utilisation of literary elements and techniques such as characterisation, inter-character relations, thematics, shifts in narrative perspective and setting and the formation of symbols and by extension object correlations throughout her narrative, there exists myriad opportunities for the reader to become emotionally engaged with the text through the evocation of pity and sympathy. This illustrates that technique is responsible for the construction of pathos within the text.
CHAPTER TWO: A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS

In V.S. Naipaul’s 1960 novel, *A House For Mr. Biswas*, he transforms the pursuit for independence into a “a marvelous prose epic that matches the best nineteenth century novels for richness of cosmic insight and final, tragic power”, according to the Newsweek blurb included in the 2001 republication. The tragic power of this novel, and ultimately the existence of pathos within the narrative, is based upon Naipaul’s skillful manipulation of characterisation of Mohun Biswas, the structuring of the narrative, the employment of philosophical frameworks such as fatalism within the narrative and the incorporation of objective correlatives in the form of the house.

Naipaul’s characterisation of Mr. Biswas allows for pathos to enter the text through the universality of the character. The journey to possessing a home in the novel becomes a representation of the journey to carve out one’s own space in the world. This journey is one that any reader across any context can find relatable. However, it is Naipaul’s construction of the character of Mohun Biswas that makes this journey a poignant one and appeals to the emotional faculties of the reader. Mr. Biswas is characterised throughout the novel as “isolated in the lonely task of self-discovery” (Rohlehr) and ultimately insignificant. Although the reader may feel sympathy towards Mr. Biswas and the various setbacks he faces, it is ultimately in the moments when Mr. Biswas allows the magnitude of his insignificance to consume him that proves to be the most poignant and elicits the greatest emotional response.

Within the text, this is seen leading up to the nervous breakdown that Mr. Biswas experiences. Firstly the reader is posed with Mr. Biswas’ resignation from matters of everyday living, which the reader may recognise as indicators of depression: “And mixed with his fear was a grief for a happy life never enjoyed and now lost…He went to his room, lay down on his bed
and forced himself to cry for all his lost happiness” (Naipaul 256) and an overall brokenness of his spirit: “he no longer expected to wake up and find himself whole again” (Naipaul 261). However, it is when Mr. Biswas tells Anand that “I am just somebody. Nobody at all” (Naipaul 267) that the magnitude of his emotions regarding his insignificance and the impact of his lack of success manifests fully to the reader.

Due to the universality in Mr. Biswas’ journey to autonomy and determining his place within the world, the failures of Mr. Biswas and their emotional toll on him become the stimulus for the reader to experience emotions of pity and sympathy. For the reader, Mr. Biswas’ failures and seemingly impossible to achieve aspiration of owning a home, can be superimposed onto their personal journey to attain lifelong ambitions or to their desire to establish a sense of place. Therefore, the characterisation of Mr. Biswas and his experiences can be seen as Naipaul’s construction of a character whose relatability is not limited to reader context but rather whose journey may be seen as allegorical to the journey of every individual across every cultural context.

The evocation of a reader’s emotions of pity and sympathy also reaches its pinnacle at the death of the titular character concretising the idea that it is the novel’s portrayal of the world as “a stupid, sad place” (Rohlehr) that elicits an emotional response. When Mr. Biswas attempts to own a house, at any expense, and subsequently dies, the unfairness of life and its role in individual outcomes becomes most poignant to the reader. Mr. Biswas dies of a heart condition, however, the malaise and mistreatment he has endured throughout his life are manifest: “he is tired of life, exhausted by the struggle” (Tewarie). In these final days, the darkness within Mr. Biswas moves outward: “A lethargy fell over him…His complexion grew dark…this was a darkness that seemed to come from within as though his skin was a murky but transparent film”
Mr. Biswas not only succumbs to his heart condition but rather succumbs to: “the fact that he did not win his own freedom, nor that he never attained personal fulfillment” (Tewarie). However, the counterargument does exist that Mr. Biswas’ inability to achieve his life’s ambition do not leave him bitter in his final days but rather that he dies with the knowledge that although “fate had been unkind and indifferent to him, it would not be so to his children. The whole world was now their inheritance” (Tewarie).

While character is important to the construction of pathos within this novel, the role of the structuring of the narrative in the evocation of an emotional response should not be ignored. As Rohlehr notes: “We know the outcome beforehand, and as we read the book we are spectators of a particular human’s life…and the whole struggle, the created pain and inevitable defeat” from the Prologue of the novel. The first words that greet the reader are “[t]en weeks before he died” (Naipaul 5) and the section ends with “worse to have lived without even attempting to lay claim to one’s portion of the earth; to have lied and died as one had been born, unnecessary and unaccommodated” (Naipaul 11). Through these words, the reader is not only aware of the impending death of Mr. Biswas but they also become fully cognizant of Mr. Biswas’ failed attempts at achieving a place of his own and fully asserting his independence towards the end. Therefore, as the action unfolds, the reader already knows that Mr. Biswas will die and every disappointment and impediment he encounters adds to the emotions of pity that the reader has already developed for a dying man. Each failure may be perceived as the damage to the resilience, purpose and sense of place for the individual. Therefore, through Naipaul’s strategy of using the Prologue to essentially introduce the outcome of Mr. Biswas’ life to the reader before engaging them as partisans in the journey that culminates in his death, the structuring of the narrative becomes an indispensable tool in the construction of pathos within the novel.
A thematic area of the text through which pathos is constructed is through Mr. Biswas’ inability to construct an identity within his family unit or through material possessions. In an attempt to grapple with the lack of the support from the immediate family unit, Mr. Biswas turns to Tara and Ajodha as surrogate parents. Mr. Biswas’ visits to his mother are met with disappointing welcomes, antagonism and criticism and the reader learns of his father’s death quite early in the narrative. Therefore, the hospitality and kindness that Mr. Biswas feels when visiting his aunt and uncle replace the need for maternal love as he looks to them for emotional support.

This usage of Tara and Ajodha as parents becomes fully actualised within the text when Seth asks Mr. Biswas who his father is and he replies “I am the nephew of Ajodha” (Naipaul 85). Through this assertion Mr. Biswas verbally places Ajodha into the role of father to replace the one which he has lost. Tara becomes surrogate through her nurturing of Mr, Biswas and functioning in the role of mother when she seeks Mr. Biswas’ best interest in the early stages of his marriage and intercedes on his behalf at Hanuman House: “You just leave this to me” (Naipaul 96). Tara also steps into this role by harbouring her own personal ambitions for Mohun: “And I had such nice plans for you” (Naipaul 96). However, Mr. Biswas’ pursuit of support from Tara and her husband are halted by her reaction towards the marriage to Shama and “this hurt Mr. Biswas, for it emphasised his loneliness” (Naipaul 96). Through Mohun’s pursuit for familial support through his dependency upon and inclusion of Tara and Ajodha in his personal affairs, it is in this moment of rejection, that the reader comes to the realisation that although Tara functions as mother on some level, she never fully adopts the role and Mr. Biswas is ultimately left to himself. Hence through family dynamics and Mr. Biswas’ subsequent lack of support, pathos is created within the text.
The incorporation of a philosophical ideology within the prose also becomes pivotal to the construction of pathos within this novel, especially when the ideology utilised is Fatalism. Early in the novel, the reader learns of the Pundit’s forecast for Mohun’s life at his birth which makes Mr. Biswas’ life seem grim from its very beginning. However, it is when Mr. Biswas’ father arrives before the auspicious time prescribed by the Pundit and his mother utters the words: “Go and see your son. He will eat you up. Six-fingered born in the wrong way. Go in and see him. He has an unlucky sneeze as well” (Naipaul 19), the beginning of Mohun’s ominous life is openly expressed.

While readers outside of the Caribbean or Indo-Trinidadian cultural context may deem this incident as merely superstition, when the actions of the prophecy begin to occur, the powers of the universe in the life of the individual and their powerlessness of the individual against these prevailing forces become fully realised. The first instance in the novel where this is seen is in the death of Mohun’s father. When Mohun is believed to be lost along with the neighbour’s calf, it is his father who dives into a pond in an attempt to rescue both. However both are not found and Mohun’s father ultimately drowns in the pond attempting to rescue his son. His death is marked by the unlucky sneeze of the boy: “Someone had sneezed...They turned to see Mr. Biswas…he has eaten up his own father…it was too late” (Naipaul 30). The prophecy also continues to become more tangible as Mohun suddenly feels as though “he had eaten raw white flesh” (Naipaul 31).

Due to this being the first instance in the novel where the role of Fate in the life of the individual is seen, it becomes a starting point for the evocation of pity stemming from this embedded philosophy. This event in the narrative peaks the reader’s ability to identify the events of Mr. Biswas’ life that are beyond his control and which highlight his powerlessness in the
grander scheme of the universe quite early in the narrative. This instance also makes the reader more aware that calamity will continue to befall Mr. Biswas throughout his life and illustrates that “predestination is suggested in the structure of the book” (Rohlehr).

As the title suggests, one of the most important object correlations within the narrative becomes the house that Mr. Biswas spends his life trying to obtain. The house becomes a symbol of “psychological shelter, independence, permanence and identity” (Kelly 165-6). This pursuit for a sense of self becomes the focus of the text with Mr. Biswas’ experiences merely representing the other factors which interplay in the human search for a place in the world. The aforementioned aspects of the self which the house represent for Mr. Biswas are all desired by readers across every context and lends itself to the novel being read as a “metaphor for futility, nothingness, and absurdity” (Cudjoe 74).

This symbol adds to the reader’s emotional response not only through the concepts it represents for Mr. Biswas but rather through his inability to attain it fully. In his dying days, the house becomes a node of stability though not fully possessed by Biswas: “But bigger than them all was the house, his house” (Naipaul 11). Mr. Biswas’ inability to own the house and by extension fulfil his lifelong dream without incurring debt represents the futility of all thrusts made by him throughout the novel to achieve this goal. This enhances the universality of the text and the ability for readers to relate to struggles incurred in human movement towards achieving lifelong ambitions thereby allowing pity and sympathy to be evoked from any and all readers.

While the house Mr. Biswas pursues represents one aspect of the symbolism, it should be noted that other abodes within the narrative take on an equally significant role in the construction of pathos within the text. One such home is Hanuman House. If Mr. Biswas’ own house
represents freedom and independence, Hanuman House represents the complete opposite. Inhabited by Shama’s extended family, it becomes a place where Mr. Biswas is unable to assert his independence and a space where he must negotiate between Tulsi family values, the role of each individual in its actualisation and his own desire to be independent.

Hanuman House can be seen as a representation of “the solidity and continuity of the East Indian community in Trinidad” (Cudjoe 52). However, for Mr. Biswas who enters this “alien white fortress” (Naipaul 77) as Shama’s husband, it becomes an oppressive force on the individual’s will for autonomy and sense of place. He immediately pursues his freedom through rebellion when the reality of the household becomes apparent to him, though he is not financially equipped to do so: “Mr. Biswas had no money or position. He was expected to become a Tulsi. At once, he rebelled” (Naipaul 91). Therefore, through this particular house within the narrative, the pursuit for independence is hindered and Mr. Biswas is relegated to subordination to the Tulsi clan and is unable to begin pursuing his ambitions. This is further see when Mr. Biswas is given the nickname “the paddler” by the Tulsis which is meant to ridicule Mr. Biswas’ desire to be self-sufficient. Hence pity and sympathy are created through the usage of houses as object correlatives. For the reader, the recognition of each house and the phases and aspects of Mr. Biswas’ life that they represent become pivotal in emotionally responding to the discourse.

Another objective correlative that is established throughout the text is the usage of streams as representations of continuity and progress by virtue of their constant movement: “the stream ran over smooth stones of many sizes…The swift movement of the water made him forget its shallowness” (Naipaul 24). Through this symbolism, the stones may be seen as a representation of obstacle through its function as an opposing force to the current. This stream is able to overcome this. However, when the life of Mohun Biswas is observed, the metaphorical
stones in the stream of progress within his life serve as interruption and do not fully allow him to smoothly progress. Therefore when the reader sees that Mr. Biswas has been cremated on the “bank of a muddy stream” (Naipaul 564), the parallel to the murkiness of Mr. Biswas’ life may be identified by the reader. The insignificance and obscurity of Mr. Biswas is fully imbued by the location of his cremation.

Through the recognition of this instance as a reflection of Mr. Biswas’ existence, pity and sympathy are elicited from the reader. For the reader, this image culminates all the moments of pity and sympathy they experienced throughout reading and unites these emotions to produce a final moment of tragedy embedded within the prose. This moment also plays a pivotal role in the meaning-making process that a reader is actively involved in since it highlights the futility of all the attempts made towards Mr. Biswas’ achievement of his own position and place in the world.

Ergo, while *A House for Mr. Biswas* undoubtably possesses a dimension of pathos, this quality of the work is not based solely on the power of characterisation but is also reliant upon elements such as the theme of family dynamics, the usage of houses and streams as object correlations, the structuring of the narrative to enhance reader participation in the events of the plot and the incorporation of fatalism as a philosophical framework. Through these techniques, the deeper meaning embedded within the plot is identified by the reader and their emotional response to the text comes from their interaction with the text in its entirety rather than single episodes throughout the narrative.
CHAPTER THREE: A BRIGHTER SUN

_A Brighter Sun_ (1952) is the debut novel of Samuel Selvon set in 1940s Trinidad. The title portrays a symbol typically associated with optimistic sentiments, and by the end of his novel, it accurately represents the resolution of the plot. However, within the novel’s progress, there exist several techniques which play a pivotal role in evoking sympathy from the intended reader, such as, the characterisation of Tiger, Urmilla and Sookdeo, the context of the novel and its role in depicting social problems such as poverty and racial inequality.

Apart from the acclaim Selvon’s novel has received for his linguistic representation of Trinidadian English Creole, another area highlighting his authorial artistry is his creation of realistic, context relevant characters: “V.S. Naipaul views the realistic Indo-Trinidadian peasant…hence he observes, ‘if a stranger read _A Brighter Sun_ and went to Trinidad expecting to meet people like Tiger and Urmilla, he would not be disappointed’” (Guruprasad 290). Three characters who portray familiar archetypes which readers both within and outside of the Caribbean context can relate to are Tiger and Urmilla based on their performances of gender and inter-character dynamics and Sookdeo, who represents not only the generation before Tiger but also the consequences of change.

From the onset of the novel, the reader is introduced to young Tiger who is being forced into marriage and is not only unaware of the logistics of the ceremony itself, but is afraid of the unknown future that awaits him: “He wished he knew more about what was going to happen to him” (Selvon 5). Tiger attempts to grapple with the magnitude of this change which encompasses the transition from boyhood to manhood: “He felt tremendous responsibility falling on his shoulders. He tried not to think about it” (Selvon 6-7). This concept of the transition between childhood and adulthood makes Tiger a character with a dimension of universality.
Hence, while the Caribbean, or more specifically, the Indo-Trinidadian intended reader may be able to empathise with the detailed problems Tiger encounters during this transition, any reader within any context can relate to the pursuit of self-identity. This makes Tiger’s characterisation one of the primary means through which Selvon’s work can elicit an emotional response.

However, while Tiger’s youthfulness and the confusion he faces as a result of this do provide stimulus for pity from an intended reader, the aspect of his character which possesses greater power are the complications Tiger faces in constructing and performing masculinity as he observes it. As Cools notes, this attempt at discerning what it truly means to be a man proves to be an onerous task as his ideals surrounding manhood come from a variety of sources:

Tiger’s engagement with his culture and traditions, especially through religious customs; through general societal definitions of manhood, about which he is educated by older Indian men, particularly his father; and through Tiger’s internalization of the models of manhood to which he has been exposed, proving destructive not only to Tiger, but also to his wife and child. (127).

This is most poignantly seen through his abuse of Urmilla. Tiger defines masculinity initially as a mixture of negative behaviours: “Men smoked: he would smoke. He would drink rum, curse, swear and bully the life out of her if she did not obey him” (Selvon 11). It is ultimately Tiger’s adoption of these aspects that not only cause pity regarding his misconstrued ideas on being an adult, but it also costs Tiger the thing for which he longed the most, a son: “Tiger, is ah boy child…but de baby born dead” (Selvon 197). Tiger’s response to being dissatisfied with Urmilla’s actions is physical abuse since this is what he perceives to be socially expected of him: “Society has already established how masculinity must be performed if one is considered to be ‘a
man;’ Tiger follows this script and learns how to perform masculinity” (Cools 131) and it is this abuse that denies Tiger the male progeny he so desires: “He kicked her in her stomach, and she doubled up in agony” (Selvon 176). While the reader may feel some emotions of revulsion towards Tiger’s abusive tendencies, emotions of pity and sympathy will be evoked when the intended reader is able to identify that Tiger’s characteristics are as a result of the performances of gender to which he has been exposed. Therefore, due to a lack of guidance, he is doomed to become a product of his environment.

Another aspect of Tiger’s characterisation that evokes pity and sympathy from the reader, is the recognition that Tiger yearns to be an academic but is limited by his financial circumstances:

If his parents were rich, they might have sent him to school in Port-of-Spain…He would have grown up clever. He knew he would have learned all his lessons well… After they might have sent him to study lawyer or doctor…I tell you hmm, if we had money eh (Selvon 96-7).

Through Tiger’s daydreaming of an alternate reality in which he is able to venture into academia and gain vertical social mobility, the reader begins to pity Tiger. Although made to earn a livelihood through agricultural means, Tiger does not lack ambition. These ambitions can only be fueled by educational opportunity which Tiger, and his parents, were never able to finance and which is responsible for Tiger being an illiterate adult until Sookdeo is begins to teach him to read.

If the reader is able to pity Tiger, then pity for Urmilla is inevitable. While Tiger grapples with attempting to make meaning of being an adult, Urmilla suffers the consequences of these
attempts which become the stimulus for the evocation of pity and sympathy from the reader. However, it is Urmilla’s unwavering desire to please Tiger and ultimately her fear of him that evokes sympathy thereby illustrating that characterisation becomes one of the primary techniques for the elicitation of an emotional response and the existence of pathos in a text. As Cools notes, Urmilla’s reaction to Tiger becomes her performance of femininity: “Paula Morgan and Valerie Youssef comment that, although there were some who resisted, the Indian woman in Trinidad and Tobago was traditionally seen as ‘passive, dutiful and subservient,’ while the man, ‘in contrast, was both overlord and master’” (134). Throughout the text, Urmilla is engaged actively in various attempts to fulfill Tiger’s wishes be it through producing a son: “Only a boy child could bring Tiger back... A boy child would change him” (190) and also through fulfilling his expectations regarding the visit of the Americans to their home for dinner: “She only knew she had tried so hard to do everything right” (172).

Through these examples, she effectively becomes the traditional Indo-Trinidadian female stereotype and manifests her own performance of gender. Through her performance, Urmilla’s characterisation becomes a pivotal contributor to the dimension of pathos within the novel, especially to the reader who is aware of the perception of Indo-Trinidadian women within the 1940s. Due to this stereotype, even if Urmilla possesses desires and opinions, the social expectation governs that they remains unexpressed, thereby placing her in a position of subjugation to Tiger. This causes emotions of sympathy to be evoked by readers who are familiar with the social context, possess feminist sympathies or empathise with marginalisation and subservience.

Sookdeo can be seen as a contributor to the pathos of the novel. This is evident through his failed attempts at fulfilling traits which typify being a successful Indo-Trinidadian male in
the 1940’s. These inadequacies include his inability to provide “proper housing, attending to his wife’s needs, and feeling very trapped by the responsibility of providing for his daughter” (Cools 132). However, it is the impact of change on the character and his subsequent death that exponentially increases the depth of pathos within the novel and the emotional response yielded from an intended reader. Sookdeo, like most of the villagers in Barataria, is reliant upon agricultural endeavours for his livelihood. Therefore, when the highway runs through his garden, his only form of livelihood becomes lost and pathos is created: “Everything gone and done for dis old man now…Garden gone nutting to do” (160). Through Sookdeo’s character, the price of progress becomes immediately apparent. While the highway does promise jobs and other opportunities for the younger generation of which Tiger comprises, without the land Sookdeo becomes purposeless.

Pathos is further heightened by the characterisation of Sookdeo, not only on account of his death subsequent to the loss of his land but rather what his death signifies. For Tiger, Sookdeo is not only a drinking partner but rather an individual who fulfills both roles of friend and surrogate parent. Sookdeo is Tiger’s “companion, someone to talk to, to share secrets with…a friend with whom to drink. And above all that, it was Sookdeo who inspired him to read” (Selvon 155). Therefore, when Sookdeo dies, the evocation of pity and sympathy from the reader is yielded. The reader would be aware of the relationship between both men and would therefore recognize Sookdeo’s death, as not only the death of a member of the village to which Tiger belongs, but also a personal loss for Tiger who is once again left without adult direction as he navigates adulthood and furthering his limited education.

Another way in which Selvon constructs pathos within his narrative is through his usage of contemporary events at the beginning of several chapters throughout his work. By allowing
the reader to garner an understanding of the macrosocial events of the time, they are able to more profoundly understand the effect of these occurrences on the individual: “the tentacles of war reached into the country districts as in the shortage of food stuffs and the putting up of bases here and there” (Selvon 63). This historically accurate portrayal of the effects of World War II within the novel play a role in the construction of pathos within the text to a reader who is historically conscious and bears sympathy for social problems such as the poverty: “Trinidad was then a British colony and loyal to the British Crown, so England's war was also our war. We were not bombed, we were short of some foods but had plenty of others. We had few clothes in the shops” (BBC - WW2 People's War - Trinidad's War).

The reader is able to feel greater sympathy for the characters in the novel, as they trust for the things they cannot immediately afford. While Tall Boy’s shop is portrayed as the social hub of the community, it also represents the poverty which plagues the villagers: “In the shops one does not ask for credit, it is ‘trust’ me this or that until payday. In every shop there is a crumpled exercise book in which the names of debtors are kept, and an account of how much money they own” (Selvon 51). The income of the villagers is insufficient to maintain their daily expenses in basic areas such as feeding themselves. Pathos is constructed through poverty within the text due to the universality of the theme allowing readers with a wide range of knowledge and experience to emotionally partake in the plight of the characters and the wider community. Sympathy can be evoked from an intended reader who is historically conscious, empathetic towards social injustices such as poverty and can also relate to the Caribbean or colonial context within which these events occur. Hence, the thematics of the prose plays a pivotal role in the construction of pathos within the novel.
Another social issue recurrent throughout the text and which results in the text possessing a dimension of pathos is racial prejudice. This becomes most poignant to the reader not only through its existence within the society but rather how it directly impacts the individual’s perception of themselves. An episode within the text which highlights not only inter-racial perception but also its impact on the self-esteem of the protagonist, Tiger, happens now when attempts to buy a bonnet for baby Chandra. Tiger strongly believes in human equality regardless of colour, creed or race and it is because of this belief that he makes an attempt to highlight the injustice doled out to him by the sales clerk: “Tiger said quietly ‘I was here first.’ The white woman sniffed the air and cast a surprised look at the Indian… ‘But I was here first…But look it’s only fair I get the bonnet first you know” (Selvon 93).

Tiger lives harmoniously with Afro-Trinidadian neighbours in Barataria and pays little attention to the racial disparity between them which also concretise this innate belief in human equality. However, when placed in an urban environment where there is a greater disparity between whites, the local Indians and Africans, he realises that although he believes in “creolization… and equality for treating every race, Indian, Chinese, Creole or English the same way and same status” (Guruprasad 291), the reality of the city is not as utopic and all qualities which can be used to stratify and segregate individuals are used in the creation of value judgments.

At this point in the narrative, pity and sympathy are evoked regarding this social ill. For the reader, this encounter in the text not only highlights Tiger’s struggle into adulthood once again but concretises the elements of society which serve as a restraint for his vertical social mobility. This barring element which does not coincide with Tiger’s experience thus far in Barataria, which “has people from a number of other countries: Indian, Creole (Negro), Chinese”
Tiger’s seemingly ideal belief system highlights his childlike innocence with which he approaches the racially consciousness urban area of Port- of- Spain.

However, the pity evoked from the reader does not end with their engagement with Tiger’s reaction to the situation but rather the store clerk’s words after Tiger leaves the store: “A stupid coolie just come inside for a bonnet, and he playing he can’t wait while I tending to Mrs. Cuthbert- you know, the white lady living in that big house just opposite the savannah” (Selvon 93). Through the clerk’s diction, the gravity of the situation and its role in the novel’s portrayal of racism in Trinidad and resultant attitudes toward the individual becomes most explicitly expressed to the reader thereby eliciting an emotional response of pity and sympathy. The diction used in the crafting of the store clerk’s speech emphasises the racial disparity through the referring of Tiger as a “coolie”. This term that “emerged worldwide in the era of slave emancipation” (Hardwick 398) is often used derogatorily towards Indo-Trinidadians in the local context. Tiger’s emotions of inadequacy, especially regarding a quality of himself that he bears no control over, that is, his race becomes most poignant to the reader. Therefore pity is evoked within this section of the prose through Selvon’s skillful weaving of characterisation, diction, socio-cultural setting and thematics. Conversely, the counterargument does exist that the store clerk’s treatment of Tiger is not based solely on racial inequality within society but rather socio-economic disparity since she also emphasises the wealthiness of Mrs. Cuthbert. However, the dimension of racism cannot be ignored.

Emotions of pity regarding racism are heightened as the reader realises that there is no formulaic pattern of interaction to guide the racial complexity of Trinidadian society. After the encounter at the store, this issue is once again portrayed within the novel with an alternative outcome. Tiger requires a doctor to pay a house call to very ill and pregnant Urmilla. Naturally,
Tiger would expect individuals of his own racial background and social positioning to be more willing to help this situation. He is ultimately disappointed. Tiger is turned away by both an Indo-Trinidadian and Afro-Trinidadian doctor: “I’m afraid you’ll have to come back in the morning” (Selvon 183). The driver who takes Tiger to meet these doctors points out that although Tiger is positioned within the strata of society below his white counterparts, the other races within the milieu utilise socioeconomic variables to promote further division: “when yuh poor and not in society” (Selvon 182). Whereas the expectation is that one’s own or races which are both oppressed by social structures would prove to be a source of aid in times of difficulty, Tiger finds that the mores which govern these patterns of interaction vary from one individual to another. It is ultimately an upper class white doctor who visits Urmilla in the middle of the night. This becomes a betrayal by his own people for Tiger: “Yuh own people let yuh down, and is a wite man who going to see yuh wife” (Selvon 184).

For the reader, while the procurement of a doctor will serve to relieve some of their tension regarding the outcome of Urmilla’s illness, this episode within the prose also evokes sympathy. Throughout the text, Tiger believes his identity to be a product of the creolization process synonymous of Caribbean plural societies. Tiger not only aligns himself with the Indo-Trinidadian ethnicity that he is exposed to in childhood but also allows for the relationship between himself and Afro-Trinidadian counterparts to influence his creation of self-identity. Therefore, the reader is able to see the depth of betrayal that Tiger experiences.

This betrayal is also further concretised through the observation of it from the taxi driver. While Tiger expected his own people to assist him in his time of need, he is ultimately disappointed and must seek the help from a white doctor who ultimately may be seen as being superior to and detached from the local creole culture. Pathos is therefore created within the
prose through the construction of various scenarios which reflect the complexity of the racial
diversity of Trinidad and Tobago and its effect on the individual both within their own race and
through contact between races.

Ergo, the dimension of pathos within Selvon’s *A Brighter Sun* is established through his
creation of realistic characters, such as Tiger, Urmilla and Sookdeo, as well through the
employment of themes which portray the social issues embedded within the setting of the novel
such as poverty and racism. The power of Selvon’s characters in evoking sympathy from readers
lies within their imbuing of qualities that have become locally synonymous with their cultural
backgrounds while contemporaneously maintaining an element of relatability and universality.
The usage of World War II Trinidad, and the various implications of this tumultuous period for
any British colony, also aids in the development of pathos within the novel since it contributes
themes such as poverty and racism. Therefore, it is through the skillful commingling of the
aforementioned literary elements and techniques that pathos is constructed in Selvon’s text.
CONCLUSION

As illustrated through all three novels, the importance of characterisation to the construction of pathos within the novel is undeniable. All three writers present main characters who not only elicit sympathy through the qualities they possess but rather through their experiences within the progression of the narrative. While for Selvon, pity and sympathy are elicited primarily but not solely through his characters, for Rhys and Naipaul, the evocation of sympathy within their work is as a result of the incorporation of a multitude of techniques and adroitness with respect to the manipulation of necessary literary elements.

For Rhys and Naipaul, the usage of symbols, themes, structuring of the narrative through plot and perspective and the inclusion of object correlations becomes a pivotal part in the creation of pathos within their narratives. For Selvon, pity and sympathy from readers is evoked predominantly through character, theme and setting. This difference in the complexity and quantity of techniques needed to construct pathos within the novels may be attributed to the difference in the resolutions of the plot between the writers. While Selvon’s novel ends with the promise of betterment for his characters, Rhys’ and Naipaul’s work in a manner to further establish an emotional response of pity from the reader. Both novels end with the deaths of main characters.

With respect to universality, all three novels possess elements which appeal to readers across a wide variety of contexts. However, there are also elements within each text that can only be fully appreciated if a reader exists within a Caribbean or postcolonial context. While this does not detract from the meaning-making experience that the reader is actively involved in through their engagement with the text, it does affect the potency of some aspects of pathos that are directly related to the Caribbean experience. Some of these aspects include the portrayal of
World War II Trinidad in Selvon’s novel and its relation to theme and the interplay between human relationships and the dynamics between the coloniser and the colonised in Rhys’ work.

Hence, all three novels construct pathos through the usage of a plethora literary elements and techniques. Though used in an individualistic way by each author to represent their own writing styles and narrative talents, they are all used effectively to elicit an emotional response. These findings coincide with those expressed by Robinson in *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and Its Role in Literature, Music and Art* which state that while characterisation is an important element, it is the function of several techniques working in tandem with each other that is responsible for the evocation of emotion when the text as a whole is analysed.
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