

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the appropriateness of British English and Trinidadian Creole as narrative registers in Samuel Selvon's fiction. Each language has its function and evokes a particular response from the reader. It is argued that Selvon is aware of the effects these language options have on his reader and uses this awareness to generate particular responses to his texts.

There is an identifiable relationship between the type of language used for narration and reader response to Selvon's novels. The code switching in Selvon's fiction is subtle and may easily go unnoticed by the reader, but when there is a close examination of the texts, these codes help determine for the reader how Selvon manipulates language and why the reader may have particular preferences among his fiction and respond in certain ways to these texts.

Selvon's ability to represent adequately characters' thoughts and dialogue is examined and judgement is passed on his competence in these areas. Correspondingly, conclusions about the narrator's competence are reached by examining his choice and use of language codes and registers.

This thesis describes some of the more obvious grammatical features of Trinidadian Creole as these guide an understanding of Selvon's style. Also examined are the traditions of the calypso, carnival and eloquent speech making, which further enhance the reader's appreciation of his work.