

Sam Selvon's The Lonely Londoners

# Language and Structure

1. Why might Selvon have decided to use third person rather than first person narrative?
2. What is Moses' function in the novel?
3. Selvon has been celebrated for forging a literary idiom which captures the nuances, rhythms, sensibilities and ethos of West Indian speech, how might the use of this language be interpreted?

# Characterisation

1. How do Selvon's characters deal with prejudice in the novel?
2. How do the episodic anecdotes of the characters' exploits portray West Indian/Nigerian men to what would have been a largely British readership?
3. Do the characters of the novel embody repetitive colonial stereotypes associated with black men?

# Representations of Women

1. How are white women perceived by the characters in the novel?
2. Is the presentation of West Indian women any different to the image of white women in the novel?
3. Are the gender roles ever reversed or effectively deconstructed in the novel?

# Themes

1. The novel drifts between the tragic and comic, how do you think Selvon would have liked us to read his novel?
2. How does the memory of "imaginary homelands" explored in the novel elucidate the immigrant experience in Britain?
3. What is your impression of the characters' experience of London?