

**UNIVERSITE DU BENIN**

**FACULTE DES LETTRES ET SCIENCES HUMAINES**

**DEPARTEMENT D'ANGLAIS**

**Lomé-Togo**

**LABORATOIRE DE RECHERCHES EN LITTERATURES DE L'AFRIQUE  
NOIRE ET DE LA DIASPORA (LABO-LAND)**

**Thèse pour le Doctorat (NR)  
Option : Littérature Américaine**

**JUSTICE AND SELF-AWARENESS  
IN THE BLACK DIASPORAN NOVEL:  
A STUDY IN THE FICTION OF  
GEORGE LAMMING AND  
PAULE MARSHALL.**

Présentée et soutenue publiquement par :

***Kodjo AFAGLA***

Sous la direction de :

***Monsieur le Professeur Komla Messan NUBUKPO***  
Directeur Scientifique du LABO-LAND

TO THE MEMORY OF :

\*\* MY BELOVED DAUGHTER DANIELLA-FLORA ;

\*\* MY FATHER, DANIEL KOFFI AFAGLA, WHO SET ME ON THE  
RIGHT PATH BEFORE HIS PRECOCIOUS DEATH;

\*\* MY GRANDMOTHERS : NORI ABLA EBOUNOUGNA DOTSE  
AND MAMAN DOVOUNO AFAYOME;

\*\* MY COUSIN, DESIRE EYRAM YAOVI DOTSE, WHO COULD  
NOT SEE THE COMPLETION OF THIS WORK.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   | PAGES   |
|---|---------|
| HEART-FELT THANKS.....  | iv-v    |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....   | vi-viii |
| REFERENCES .....  | ix      |
| ABBREVIATIONS .....   | x       |
| CHAPTER ONE : GENERAL INTRODUCTION .....  | 1       |
| CHAPTER TWO : THE COLONIAL QUESTION IN<br>GEORGE LAMMING'S <u>NATIVES OF MY PERSON</u><br>AND <u>IN THE CASTLE OF MY SKIN</u> ..... | 18      |
| II. 1. LAMMING'S QUARREL WITH HISTORY : THE DRIVING<br>FORCES OF COLONIALISM .....  | 23      |
| II. 2. SOME MYTHS OF COLONIALISM .....  | 48      |
| II. 3. THE COLONIAL SCHOOL AND CHURCH .....   | 61      |
| CHAPTER THREE : THE ISSUE OF EXILE IN<br>GEORGE LAMMING'S <u>THE EMIGRANTS AND</u><br><u>WATER WITH BERRIES</u> . .....             | 83      |
| III. 1. THE THEME OF EXILE IN CARIBBEAN LITERATURE .....  | 84      |
| III. 2. REASONS/CAUSES FOR EXILE .....  | 95      |
| III. 2. 1. FIRST LEVEL OF MOTIVES : MATERIAL,<br>ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL REASONS .....   | 100     |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| III. 2. 2. SECOND LEVEL OF MOTIVES: POLITICAL<br>AND PERSONAL REASONS .....          | 103 |
| III. 2. 3. THIRD LEVEL OF MOTIVES: HISTORICAL<br>AND PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS .....     | 110 |
| III. 3. THE EXILIC EXPERIENCE .....  | 120 |
| III. 4. EXILE AS AN AWARENESS-RAISING PROCESS:<br>SOME POSITIVE SIDES OF EXILE ..... | 135 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| CHAPTER FOUR : THE RETURNEE EMIGRANTS AND THE<br>PROCESS OF NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION: <u>OF AGE AND<br/>INNOCENCE AND SEASON OF ADVENTURE</u> . .... | 147 |
|---|-----|

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| IV. 1. THE SETTING OF BOTH NOVELS : SOME SPECULATIONS<br>ON SAN CRISTOBAL .....                                      | 151 |
| IV. 2. <u>OF AGE AND INNOCENCE</u> AND POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION ....   | 164 |
| IV. 3. CULTURAL POLICY AND NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION:<br>LAMMING'S CULTURAL VISION IN <u>SEASON OF ADVENTURE</u> ..... | 186 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| CHAPTER FIVE : REPOSSESSING THE PAST:<br>THE AFROCENTRIC VISION IN PAULE MARSHALL ..... | 213 |
|---|-----|

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| V. 1. PAULE MARSHALL : A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HER CULTURAL<br>BACKGROUND AND CONCERNS .....  | 214 |
| V. 2. UNDERSTANDING THE PAST .....  | 218 |
| V. 3. THE COLONIZED/ ENSLAVED AND THEIR HISTORY .....   | 232 |
| V. 4. <u>THE CHOSEN PLACE, THE TIMELESS PEOPLE AND<br/>AFRICAN CULTURAL MANIFESTATIONS: CARNIVAL<br/>AND ITS IMPORTANCE</u> ..... | 245 |

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| CHAPTER SIX: PAULE MARSHALL'S FICTION:                   |         |
| A CALL FOR A NEW ORDER .....                             | 261     |
| VI. 1. INFLUENCES ON MARSHALL .....                      | 262     |
| VI. 2. PAULE MARSHALL'S CALL FOR POLITICAL CHANGE:       |         |
| A CRITIQUE OF COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM .....          | 266     |
| VI.3. THE DENUNCIATION OF NEO-COLONIALISM                |         |
| IN PAULE MARSHALL .....                                  | 280     |
| VI.4. CHALLENGING EXISTING SOCIAL NORMS: THE ROLE        |         |
| AND PLACE OF MODERN WOMEN IN MARSHALL'S FICTION ..       | 291     |
| CHAPTER SEVEN: BY WAY OF CONCLUSION:                     |         |
| COMPARATIVELY SPEAKING .....                             | 328     |
| VII.1. SIMILARITIES BETWEEN GEORGE LAMMING AND PAULE     |         |
| MARSHALL: AFRICA, HISTORY, AND POSTCOLONIALITY .....     | 331     |
| VII.2. DIFFERENCE : FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE AND STYLE ..... | 374     |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY .....                                       | 384     |
| A. PRIMARY SOURCES .....                                 | 385     |
| I. WORKS OF GEORGE LAMMING .....                         | 385     |
| I. 1. FICTION .....                                      | 385     |
| I. 2. NON-FICTION .....                                  | 385     |
| I. 3. INTERVIEWS .....                                   | 386     |
| II. WORKS OF PAULE MARSHALL .....                        | 387     |
| II. 1. FICTION .....                                     | 387     |
| II. 2. NON-FICTION .....                                 | 388     |
| II. 3. INTERVIEWS .....                                  | 388     |
| B. SECONDARY SOURCES .....                               | 389-412 |

## ***HEART-FELT THANKS TO TWO MASTERS AND FRIENDS***

Words cannot express the depth of my gratitude to Mr. Komla Messan Nubukpo, Ph. D., and Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw, Ph. D. without whose help this dissertation might never have been completed. I would like to heartily thank both of you for your outstanding contribution to my education.

This dissertation has grown out of my discussions with you, my supervisor, Komla Messan Nubukpo, Ph. D., Professor of African and American Literatures, English Department, Université du Bénin in Lomé, Togo; and Mrs. Elizabeth Shaw, Ph. D., International Students Advisor, Service for International Students and Scholars, University of California, Davis, California, U. S. A.

I am particularly grateful to both of you for your patience and sincerity all through my research work. You deserve my praise and acknowledgments for your reassuring and helpful comments at significant stages of my work. I am indebted to you for your warm encouragements and especially for making available to me your vast knowledge of African, American and Caribbean studies. You deserve my frank and sincere gratitude for your kindness in reading the initial draft of this dissertation, and for your invaluable comments and queries. I am much beholden to both of you for making clear to me a number of issues related to literary theory.

I cannot forget the practical help both of you gave me all through my researches. Professor Nubukpo, you gave me financial and material assistance during the most difficult period of my Post-Master's Advanced Studies; and also during my part-time teaching assistant job at U. B. Have my sincere thanks for this. I am tempted to believe that this document is not only the concrete result of my researches, but also the materialization of your efforts and dream. I could not have made it without your good assistance and commitment.

Dr. Beth Shaw, your material contribution to my progress in this study is invaluable. For financial reasons, I began writing this dissertation without having access to most of the primary materials and critical sources. Once you were informed, in collaboration with Tammy McNiff, you began sending me the necessary materials. As if this was not enough, you gave me a plane ticket for my move from the University of Delaware to the University of Davis, California. As a Visiting Research Scholar with the Department of English and African American Studies from March to July 1998, I largely benefited from library service that enabled me to have access to other critical studies and databases useful in the development of this study. Dr. Shaw, I still have a vivid memory of the four months I spent in your house. This dissertation is what I have done with your materials and all the troubles you took in the course of my researches.

Mr. Evans Shaw, have my sincere gratitude for housing me. Have my sincere thanks and gratitude for everything.

***May the favor of the Lord, our God, rest upon you and establish the work of your hands for you -- yes establish the work of your hands for you.***

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I would like to thank various persons and institutions without whose help this dissertation might never have been completed. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Theodore Boyd and Mr. George Paul Newman, both former Directors of American Cultural Center (U.S.I.S.), Lomé, and Mr. Jean K. Togbé, Cultural Affairs Specialist, American Cultural Center, Lomé. They have enabled me to participate in the 1998 Winter Institute for the Study of the United States focused on American Literature and Sponsored by the United States Information Agency. My thanks also go to Mrs. Clover Afokpa, Ph. D., Director of the English Program, American Cultural Center, Lomé and Rassa Talboussouma, USIS librarian.

My kind gratitude to Dr Lébène Philippe Bolouvi, Professor of Linguistics and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Université du Bénin; Mr. Agbeko Komi Wampah, Lecturer, English Department, Université du Bénin and Mr. David Koffi Ananou, Ph. D., former chair of the English Department, Université du Bénin.

I whole-heartedly express my sincere thanks to Tammy McNiff, Service for International Students and Scholars, University of California, Davis (SISS-UCDAVIS), for her intense collaboration and practical help and assistance. I am also grateful to the following people working in the SISS-UCDAVIS for their kind collaboration: Dr. H. Clay Ballard, Director, Ms. Kath-Ann Gerhardt, Associate Director; Ms. Laurel Rosenberg, Receptionist; Mss. Cheri Branson, and Barbara Smith, both International Scholar Specialists and Ms. Dorothy Hicks, International Student Associate. I also thank Professor Karl F. Zender, Ph. D., Professor of English, Chair, English Department, for sending me an official invitation to come to UCDAVIS, as a Visiting Research Scholar.

I am grateful to Moradewun Abake Adjunmobi, Ph. D., Assistant Professor of African American and African Studies, University of California, Davis, for her kindness in reading the initial draft of "The Returnee Emigrants and the Process of National Reconstruction : **Of Age and Innocence and Season of Adventure**," and for her invaluable comments and queries.



I am much beholden to Deborah Silverton Rosenfelt, Ph. D., Professor of Women's Studies, University of Maryland, College Park for drawing my attention to some aspects of Paule Marshall's fiction in the course of our Winter Institute at Delaware; second for reading the initial draft of : "Paule Marshall's Fiction : A Call for a New Order." I am particularly grateful to you for making clear to me certain issues related to feminism. I am also indebted to the following Lecturers who have immensely contributed to the development of this topic through my discussions with them : Doris Friedensohn, Ph. D., Professor of Women's Studies and American Studies, Chair of Women's Studies, New Jersey City State College, New Jersey City; Jean Pfaelzer, Ph. D, Professor of English and American Studies, University of Delaware; Elaine B. Safer, Ph. D., Professor of English, University of Delaware, for giving me more insight into the concepts of modernism and postmodernism; David Teague, Assistant Professor of English, Parallel Program, Wilmington Campus, Delaware; Baerbel Schumacher, Program Manager, International Program and Special Sessions, University of Delaware.

My Sincere thanks to Michael J. and Ray Cook, my host family in Newark, Delaware, for their warm encouragements; Reverend Kossi Ayédzé and Sylvie in Princeton for giving me a warm support in Newark, and Robert C. DiPrizio, graduate student in Political Sciences, University of Delaware, for his kind assistance.

I have also to thank my Friends of Davis Community Church for their assistance and encouragements : Reverends Jim Kitchens and Mary Lynn ; Ruth and Michael Coleman, John Kleinschmidt and H. Tom. My UCDAVIS friends also deserve thanks for their contribution : John Abiodun Ogunjimi, Daniel Jamu, Malcom Josiah, Astrid Forneck, Li Wang and Sylvaine Coulibaly. Sam Kokou Katamani and Yves Adzouguenou deserve my gratitudes.

More than anyone else, I am very grateful to my relatives : Mamano Rose, Davi Flora, Hapino, Philippe and Guy Lakpo; Maman Sewano Hagno and Seth Dohokou; Ankou Quist and Essi Edeh.

My Friends of Togo, too, deserve my unreserved gratitudes : Djifa Gavi, Akpene Quist, and Abila Nodjo who have spent countless hours with me on computer deserve my hearty thanks. Léo Gbotcho, Bernadette Gouna and Tométy Koessan: have my best thanks for your friendly assistance. Dr. John

Kodjovi Dodji Agbodjavou and Ranti, Mr and Mrs Peter and Marguérite Ségbor; Mr Jean Hadzi, Mr and Mrs François and Constance Sadjo; Roger Yao Edoh and Jeanine; Lucien Kodjo Degbe and his wife; William Aziadéké and Donnée Ami Ablométi; Christine Ayako and Olivier; Tenge Eléabénam and Sheila Pedanou; Jean Claude Amédéka, Woledzi Koffi Segbe, William Sylvestre Gbogan, Saïbou Moussa, René Quist, Mr Corneille Adade, Gérard Gagno, Missikoua Sévérin, Ebénézer Névamé Akpi, Boniface Agbélé, Marie-Pierre and Paul Bassa, Miss Yvette Adekpui, Mrs Ayaovi Dopé Akité, Mr Allotey Kwasi Gaglo, Mr. Kodjo Kudawoo and Mr. Jacques Gavon: you all deserve my gratitude. The same thanks go to Mrs. Anne Pana, Mr. Brice and Miss Jeanine Pana for their encouragements.

My final thanks go to my wife, Thérèse. If this book is worth anything, it is because, apart from much else, she has so graciously forborne my frequent stint of company in her anxiety to see me make good my undertaking. She is the ultimate star.

May any other person who contributed one way or the other to the elaboration of this dissertation find in these lines the expression of my frank and sincere gratitude.

## REFERENCES USED IN THIS DISSERTATION

All quotations from George Lamming's books are taken from:

- \*\* **In the Castle of My Skin.** London, Longman, 1953.
- \*\* **Natives of My Person.** London, Alison and Busby Ltd, 1986.
- \*\* **Water with Berries.** New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.
- \*\* **The Emigrants.** Reprinted, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1997.
- \*\* **Of Age and Innocence.** London, Michael Joseph, 1958.
- \*\* **Season of Adventure.** London, Allison and Busby, 1979.
- \*\* **The Pleasures of Exile.** Reprinted, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1992.

All quotations from Paule Marshall's books are taken from :

- \*\* **Brown Girl, Brownstones.** New York, Feminist Press, 1981; with an Afterword by Mary Helen Washington.
- \*\* **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People.** New York, Avon Books, 1969.
- \*\* **Reena and Other Stories.** New York, Feminist Press, 1983.
- \*\* **Praisesong for the Widow.** New York, E. P. Dutton, 1983.
- \*\* **Merle and Other Stories.** London, Virago Press, Ltd., 1985.
- \*\* **Soul Clap Hands and Sing.** Washington D.C., Howard University Press, 1988; With an Introduction by Darwin T. Turner.
- \*\* **Daughters.** New York, Plume Book, 1992.

## ABBREVIATIONS

In the framework of this dissertation, when the full title is too long to stand, an abbreviation has been used, especially this happens in citing the primary sources of both writers.

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>CS:</b>         | <b>In the Castle of My Skin.</b>              |
| <b>TE:</b>         | <b>The Emigrants.</b>                         |
| <b>OAI:</b>        | <b>Of Age and Innocence.</b>                  |
| <b>SOA:</b>        | <b>Season of Adventure.</b>                   |
| <b>WWB:</b>        | <b>Water with Berries.</b>                    |
| <b>NOP:</b>        | <b>Natives of My Person.</b>                  |
| <b>Pleasures :</b> | <b>The Pleasures of Exile.</b>                |
| <b>BGBS:</b>       | <b>Brown Girl, Brownstones.</b>               |
| <b>CPTP:</b>       | <b>The Chosen Place, the Timeless People.</b> |
| <b>Praisesong:</b> | <b>Praisesong for the Widow.</b>              |
| <b>SCHS:</b>       | <b>Soul Clap Hands and Sing.</b>              |
| <b>Merle:</b>      | <b>Merle and Other Stories</b>                |
| <b>WOE:</b>        | <b>The Wretched of the Earth.</b>             |
| <b>BSWM:</b>       | <b>Black Skin, White Masks.</b>               |

**CHAPTER ONE:  
GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

This dissertation addresses the issue of how the search for justice and self-awareness are given political form and substance in the black diasporan novel. More specifically, this study will highlight the artistic representations of the hostile forces that prevent the collective development of black people, as part of national communities, from materializing. Whenever a wrong is perpetrated against a people or a race, it is an established fact that the oppressed end up becoming aware of the injustices affecting their lives.

Ralph Ellison once wrote:

The blues are not primarily concerned with civil rights and obvious political protest; they are an art form and thus a transcendence of those conditions created within the Negro community (and within the Negro person) by the denial of social justice. As such they are one of the techniques through which Negroes have survived and kept their courage during that long period when many whites assumed, as some still assume, they were afraid. (Ellison, 1972, 245)

Thus African Americans have expressed and transcended oppression in and through their music. Likewise, they have been preoccupied with the issue of justice in their literary productions. As Ellison here implies, Blacks are denied justice in the United States of America. This observation by Ellison can arguably be extended to Blacks all over the world. It is my contention that the quest for various forms of justice has become one of the key characteristics of the novels written by most black writers both in the mother continent and abroad. This quest for justice originated in the fact that Blacks in Africa and the

Diaspora have successively undergone a history which has been ruptured by slavery and colonization which confer on worldwide Blacks a "historical determinism", to paraphrase Barbara Herrnstein Smith (1978,146). There is ample evidence that many black scholars and artists both in Africa and in the Diaspora do see as a major task to be performed by them the denunciation of all forms and/or practices of injustice while at the same time they seek to restore black dignity and pride through the promotion of justice and awareness-raising.<sup>1</sup> As Lorraine Hansberry aptly points out, "one cannot live with sighted eyes and feeling heart" without reacting "to the miseries which afflict this world" (1966, 21-2). On the other hand, their writings aim to vindicate the identity of this race "against all forms of white denunciation and subjection."<sup>2</sup>

Literature is generally said to be an expression of society, for it mirrors and/or sheds critical light on aspects of social reality. It is a fact that a writer depicts his experiences and expresses his own conception of life in his work of art. As a work of art, any creative literary piece enables people to enjoy the freedom to make reality more interesting through the workings of the imagination, examining thoroughly the joys and hopes of individuals as well as their despairs and frustrations. Creative literature therefore depicts the values

---

<sup>1</sup> Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Peter Abrahams and Isidore Ikpewho ed. (1985, 3-4) can be cited among black scholars in Africa who have denounced the practice of injustice and restored black dignity. Scholars and artists of the black Diaspora who have contributed to the same task include, among others : William Edward Burghardt DuBois, Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King, Jr, Imamu Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, Richard Wright, Edward Kamau Brathwaite, Ernest J. Gaines, Paule Marshall ... and George Lamming.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Angmor, "Black Consciousness in the Poetry of Edward Brathwaite," in E. N. Emenyonu ed., *Black Literature and Black Consciousness in Literature* (Ibadan : Heinemann, 1987), 121.

of the people and their period. However imaginative an author may be, the framework of his fictional writing must be a society he is familiar with. It is in this spirit that Abiola Irele declares that before it has any significance, literature "must have a reference to life and consciousness" (Irele, 1981, 1). As a social institution, literature uses language as its medium to show life's "vibration, its color, its form." As a written form of art, literature makes people hear, makes them feel, and most of all, it makes them see through the senses.<sup>3</sup>

Art is functional in the conception of many black people all over the world. In consistency with this observation, Roy Sieber aptly expresses the view that in traditional Africa, "Art for the most part was more closely integrated with the other aspects of life than those which might be purely aesthetic. Art for art's sake - as a governing aesthetic concept - seems not to have existed in Africa."<sup>4</sup>

Although some African literary scholars such as Isidore Okpewho are of a different opinion (Okpewho, 1979, 1-2), there is ample evidence that black writers of ante- and post-independence eras observe this traditional attitude in their creative fiction. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, for instance, says he speaks on behalf of the dispossessed and the "wretched of the earth." To Lorraine Hansberry, art is ultimately social; in her conception, art for art's sake denies

---

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Conrad in his preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897, rpt New York: Doubleday, 1916), vii - viii.

<sup>4</sup> Roy Sieber, "Mask as Agent of Social Control," in *African Studies Bulletin* vol 1, no. 2 (1962), 8.



the integral relationship between society and art. Her literary productions which reveal "painful truths to a society unaccustomed to rigorous self-criticism and still receive its praise"<sup>5</sup> testifies to the close relationship which exists between both concepts of art and society.<sup>6</sup> In the same vein, Nigerian writers have reasserted this traditional attitude toward art as "socially functioning rather than aesthetically pleasing".<sup>7</sup> Wole Soyinka seems to corroborate this thesis. In his conception of art, he regards social conscience as an integral part of African art when he adamantly states :

When the writer in his own society can no longer function as a conscience he must recognize that his choice lies between denying himself totally or withdrawing to the position of chronicler and post-mortem surgeon... The artist has always functioned in African society as the record of mores and experience of his society and as the voice of vision in his own time.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, in the light of his study of Afrocentrism, Kete Molefi Asante concludes that black scholars and artists in America have adopted a discourse of resistance to eradicate the double standard practice for the sake of justice (Asante, 1987, 140-8). In the opinion of black writers, art is a means to combat injustice and to call for social change. Generally speaking, most creative artists of the black world are "deeply concerned with images and myths that have

---

<sup>5</sup> Edde Iji: "African Cross-Current and American Echoes : Ego Identity in Two Plays of L. Hansberry." in Emenyonu ed., op. cit, 134.

<sup>6</sup> I am alluding to her following works : *A Raisin in the Sun* , *To Be Young, Gifted and Black* , *The Sign on Sidney Brunstein's Window* and *Les Blancs*.

<sup>7</sup> Austin Shelton. "Behaviour and Cultural Values in West African Stories," quoted from Pio Zirimu and Andrew Gurr, eds., *Black Aesthetics* (Nairobi : East African Literature Bureau, 1973), 109.

<sup>8</sup> W. Soyinka quoted by Ali A. Mazrui, "The Patriot as an Artist," in G. D. Killam ed., *African Writers on African Writing* (London : Heinemann, 1973), 89.

crippled and degraded black people, and the substitution of new images and myths that will liberate them."<sup>9</sup>

As I mean to show throughout this dissertation, both George Lamming and Paule Marshall have adopted similar vision in their literary production regarding the role of art and the artist in society.

One of the miseries which afflict this world in the view of black writers remains the practice of injustice and its aftermaths. Black intellectuals and artists are therefore unashamedly committed to the cause of justice and freedom. Alice Walker, on this particular issue, makes the point that black writers are involved in a literary struggle for the sake of more freedom and to show an abiding love for justice.<sup>10</sup> James Baldwin calls down the wrath of history on the heads of the white oppressors.<sup>11</sup> It is in this vein that Margaret Wilkerson considers Amiri Baraka's *Dutchman* and *The Slave*, Ed Bullins' *In New England Winter* and *In the Wine Corner*, which are written under the silhouette of injustice as "called forth from the hidden reserves of anger within the black community."<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Gayle, Jr. ed, *The Black Aesthetic* (Garden City, New York : Doubleday and Co. Inc, 1972), 327.

<sup>10</sup> Alice Walker, "Saving the Life that is Your Own," in *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (New York : Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1984 ), 5 & 21.

<sup>11</sup> Robert A. Bone, "The Novels of James Baldwin," in Gross and Harley eds. *Images of the Negro in American Literature* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1966), 267.

<sup>12</sup> Margaret B. Wilkerson : "Introduction" to Robert Nemiriff ed. *L. Hansberry's The Collected Last Plays* (New York: New American Library, 1983), 3.

Stressing particularly the responsibility of Caribbean novelists, Gareth Griffiths once observed that the Caribbean writer had a paramount role to play in shaping the consciousness of his/her countrymen and renewing their "awareness of their unique identity" (Griffiths, 1978, 143). Consequently, the writer has the moral duty to enlighten the consciousness of his people through the medium of creative literature. The novelist, therefore, reacts to society in that he tries to direct society on some value choices in his work of art. To cut short, the list of black spokesmen who are committed to this fight so that "the invisible man" becomes visible is extremely long.<sup>13</sup>

In his encyclopedic book on the African American literary tradition, Bernard W. Bell observes that the network of understanding which defines African American culture and shapes African American consciousness has gradually developed from the unique pattern of experiences of black people in America. These experiences, he claims, are peculiar to the Black of the Diaspora only (Bell, 1987, 3). For African Americans,<sup>14</sup> these experiences comprise slavery, Southern plantation life, Emancipation, Reconstruction, Northern migration ... and racism. They have all conferred on the black people of the Diaspora a special plight in their forced exile. The rigors and difficulties they encountered in their new and hostile environment had forced them to

---

<sup>13</sup> Men like Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, and woman like Sojourner Truth were genuine protest leaders and freedom fighters. DuBois, M. L. King, Jr., Malcom X, Richard Wright,... and Ralph Ellison have vigorously denounced injustice in their writings. One can also read W. H. Burns's *The Voices of Negro Protest in America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963) for ample information.

<sup>14</sup> For a brief detail on the various terms used to mean black descendants in the U.S.A., consult Joseph E. Holloway ed. *Africanism in American Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), xviii -xx.

adopt a particular stand on issues regarding their existence.<sup>15</sup>

Black Africans of the Diaspora are deeply affected by the experience of the Middle Passage. Part of their resentment of injustice is given substance through their written discourses. Knowing that their departure from the ancestral home has caused them a kind of trauma and rupture both psychologically and socially, a particular emphasis is laid, in their different writings, on the ways to recover their historical integrity in order to assert their racial and cultural identities.

In reading the Caribbean novel, one becomes aware of its recurrent and dominant theme of injustice around which it is structured. Ample evidence can be found to sustain this statement.

In his introduction to **West Indian Literature**, Bruce King makes the point that some of its major themes include dispossession, racial difference, social and historical injustice, and the feeling of imprisonment (King ed. 1979, 7). In the same vein, Simon Gikandi in his monumental study of Caribbean literature finds that "silence, fragmentation, and repression mark the life of the Caribbean under colonialism" (Gikandi, 1992, 234). It is, therefore, obvious that an essential factor which plays a key role in this body of black writing remains the quest for justice.

---

<sup>15</sup> For a powerful and unsparing analysis of the black problem in America, consult Charles E. Silberman's *Crisis in Black and White* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964).

Another fact that led many African Americans and African Caribbeans to writing remains the negative portrayals of Blacks that filtered through innumerable books written by so many white authors.<sup>16</sup> In the field of literary production, Blacks are thought to show no craving for knowledge and cultivation of mind (Franklin, 1977, 26). They are only regarded as possessing a "fine ear for rhythm" that is useful to them as far as poetry is concerned. They are also considered to have little capacity for abstract reasoning or rational thought. As for story-telling, they are believed to be endowed with story-telling capability which enables them to know "instinctively how to work a story to a dramatic climax."<sup>17</sup>

In light of the different portrayals of Blacks available in white American literature, John H. Nelson establishes that in white American literary production, the black character is presented under various characterological assumptions with negative aspects. Emphasis is laid on his irresponsibility, whimsicality ...and superstition (Nelson, 1926, 23). On the whole, the image of Blacks as ignorant, indigent, shiftless, and immoral characters permeates most of American literary production until the early twentieth century. No wonder in his anti-stereotype criticism Sterling Brown states that "the Negro has met with as great injustice in America literature as he has in American life" (Brown, 1933, 179-203).

---

<sup>16</sup> The various portrayals of the black character are discussed in Seymour L. Gross and James Edward Harley eds. op. cit.; for additional information, see also Sébastien Joachim, *Le Nègre dans le roman blanc* (Montréal, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1980).

<sup>17</sup> Julie K. Wetherill quoted from Gross and Harley eds. op. cit., 3

European writers also have attributed negative stereotypes to black people. Montesquieu and Balzac, two leading figures in the European literary tradition, have represented Africans as lazy, timid, naive, and docile characters in their writings.<sup>18</sup> As to Blacks in Voltaire's fiction, they are labeled as sex maniac and rapists.<sup>19</sup> It becomes plain that for the most part Westerners have a one-dimensional view on Africans. All these biased and distorted portrayals projected on Blacks in creative literature represent a kind of blatant injustice that must be corrected. Pushed by these false depictions, the Black as an artist felt that his/her duty must consist in correcting the false images promulgated by white writers.

With the help of some critics, a resistance movement is inaugurated in American literature thanks to black people's awareness of this state of affairs. The aim of this resistance movement was to offer a counter-portrayal to the old "unjust stereotype". Since the day of Uncle Tom is over, so Benjamin Brawley urges his contemporaries to project a new image in creative writing. Due to the fact that the types of portrayals that dominated various literary historical epochs showed the black character as savage, strange, comic peasant, scapegoat, bogey, or pariah, Alain Locke announces the necessity for the "new Negro" to emerge in American fiction.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> In *De l'esprit des lois*, Tome I, [(Paris: Garnier Frère, 1966), pp. 239-253], Montesquieu identifies Africans with labels that raise them above the level of animals.

In *Le Père Goriot* [(Paris: Livre de Poche, 1972), 131] Balzac writes: "Blacks, you see, are just children with whom you can do what you like."

<sup>19</sup> Voltaire, *Romans et contes* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1966), 200.

<sup>20</sup> S. L. Gross in his introduction to Gross and Hardy eds., *op. cit.*, 8.

Resulting from the various calls for redress , the black writers have undertaken the task of mirroring the real Black through their own writings. In the States, some pioneers have shown in their writings another portrait of Blacks. Charles Chesnut and Paul Laurence Dunbar in their fiction and poetry, DuBois in **The Soul of Black Folk**, James Weldon Johnson in his **Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man** have restituted to the black character his/her dignity by revising his/her traditional picture. Though the portraits presented by the Harlem Renaissance writers on Blacks in their protest writings retain some of the former characterization, they are all the same better than the traditional images known in white literature.

Ernest Gaines's reason behind his writing is an instance which displays ample evidence that Blacks are motivated to write in order to show their own "truths". In her critical survey of Gaines's novels, Cecilia A. Noss indicates that his writings aim "to give an authentic portrayal of the people he had grown up with."<sup>21</sup> This personal choice is due to the fact that his own people were only portrayed as caricatures, not as the people he had known. Consequently, positive and real portrayals of his people permeate his novels.<sup>22</sup> Definitely, the publishing of Richard Wright's **Native Son**<sup>23</sup> has revolutionized and thrown new light on the different conceptions of black characters. Irving Howe well

---

<sup>21</sup> Cecilia A. Noss: "Ernest Gaines and the Problem of Black Manhood : Giving Positive Models," in Emenyonu ed. op. cit., 155. See also Alice Walker, "The Black Writer and the Southern Experience," in *In Search of Our Mothers' Garden*, op. cit., 19.

<sup>22</sup> *Catherine Carmier*, *Of Love and Dust*, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*, *In My Father's House* , and *A Gathering of Old Men* can be mentioned, among others.

<sup>23</sup> This book reflects Wright's belief in communism as the only existing agency capable of restoring humanitarian value to earth. Its anti-hero Bigger Thomas has committed a murder not out of choice, but as a result of environmental influences beyond his control.

summed up the book's impact when he wrote:

The day **Native Son** appeared, American culture was changed for ever. No matter how much qualifying the book must later need, it made impossible a repetition of old lies. A blow at the white man, the novel forced him to recognize himself as an oppressor. A blow at the black man, the novel forced him to recognize the cost of his submission... He (Wright) told us the one thing even the most liberal whites preferred not to hear : that Negroes were far from patient or forgiving, that they were scarred by fear, that they hated every minute of their suppression even when seeming most acquiescent, and that often enough they hated *us* , the decent and cultivated white men who from complicity or neglect shared in the responsibility for their plight.<sup>24</sup>

In the same vein, the authentic African novelists of the independence era have tried to correct the distorted portrayals of the African personality. African writers have manipulated their colonial stereotypes promulgated in European literature. The terms that form part and parcel of the repertoire with which Blacks are tagged are reversed in genuine African writing. In francophone Africa, the white man's claim to superiority is debunked in Camara Laye's **Le Regard du roi** (1954, 14). Similarly, in Ferdinand Oyono's **House Boy** and Mongo Beti's **Poor Christ of Bomba**, the real savages and barbarians are found within the white community in Africa.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Irving Howe, "Black Boys and Native Sons," quoted in Gross and Hardy eds, op. cit., 18-19.

<sup>25</sup> I am indebted to C. I. Arungwa for providing me with a good view on "The Colonial Stereotype in the Francophone African Fiction," that appears in Emenyonu ed., *Literature and National Consciousness* (Ibadan : Heinemann, 1989), 121-134.



In Anglophone Africa, one can mention an unlimited number of novelists and playwrights who have dealt with the revisionary aspects of former stereotypes. Particularly, Achebe can be presented as one leading figure who opposed the biased portrayals in white literature. On this issue, he bluntly states:

African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry, and, above all, they had dignity. It is this dignity that many African people all but lost during the colonial period, and it is this that they must now regain... The writer's duty is to help regain this by showing them in human terms what happened to them, what they lost.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, he continues:

I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones I set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past -- with all its imperfections -- was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them. Perhaps what I write is applied art as distinct from pure art.<sup>27</sup>

It is worth saying that recent studies have proven that network television news appears to convey more stereotyped impressions -- a narrower range of positive roles -- for Blacks than for Whites. Some social scientists consider this practice as a manifestation of modern racism (Entman, 1994, 509-520).

---

<sup>26</sup> Chinua Achebe, "The Role of the Writer in a New Nation," quoted from G. D. Killam ed. op. cit., 157.

<sup>27</sup> Achebe: "The Novelist As Teacher." in G. D. Killam, op. cit , 4

After all these general statements on the context of the literary production of the black race, it is now useful to have in mind our working definitions of the key terms that are part and parcel of this doctoral dissertation.

It is a well known fact that human beings, by nature, are basically and inherently characterized by the desire to dominate other human beings. In consistency with this observation, historical evidence have proven that ethnic and organized groups have tended, in one way or the other, to impose on the weaker groups their conception and vision of the world. This practice has given birth to the existence of a long list of hegemonies such as patriarchy, slavery, colonialism, capitalism ... and many more.

It is my contention that these hegemonies constitute a real source of injustice and oppression for those belonging to the periphery, that is, those who are excluded from the dominant or the hegemonic order. However, some members of the dominated groups eventually devise ways and means -- artistic or otherwise -- that they use to fulfil themselves both individually and collectively.

Creative literature constitutes one of the powerful means thanks to which black writers and literary scholars have expressed their concerns about the injustice affecting their people. Literary critics and writers, in various ways, have addressed these issues in their writings. Through the medium of creative

literature, therefore, they enlighten a large proportion of the oppressed. Consequently, these oppressed become aware of the unfair situation and react to it. Part of their reaction is materialized in their proposals of suggested alternatives that are sustained by the idea of justice.

In the framework of this paper, justice is taken to mean the philosophy of action that aims at promoting a new order that becomes more sensitive to the concerns and priorities of the formerly oppressed people. In the context of this dissertation it is posited that awareness-raising is a milestone on the way to revisiting one's conditions of existence. The phrase "black diasporan novel" as used in this study refers to any extended prose narrative written by an African American or African Caribbean.

The term Diaspora<sup>28</sup> is coined in reference to the scattering of Jews in various countries outside Palestine after many were sent out of Babylon. Nowadays, this term refers to the dispersal across the world of people originating in a single geographical location. Examples include the Jewish Diaspora resulting from the persecution and pogrom, and the Black Diaspora owing to the African American slave trade. The term Diaspora fits the black people's situation after the deportation of the race to other continents.<sup>29</sup> It is

---

<sup>28</sup> Three adjectives derive from this term. They are diasporan, diasporic, and diasporan. They can be used interchangeably.

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed discussion of the black man's story after his deportation to the United States, consult: F.L. Schoell, *Histoire de la race noire aux Etats-Unis du XVIIe siècle à nos jours* (Paris: Payot, 1959); Michel Fabre, *Les noirs Américains* (Paris: Colin, 1967); Claude Fohlen, *Les Noirs aux Etats-Unis* (Paris: P.U.F., 1975); Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (New York: Pantheon, 1974); John Blassingame, *The Slave Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); B. T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: Airmont Publishing Co., Inc.,

not surprising therefore that black novelists and scholars of the black Diaspora often draw a kind of parallel between both peoples by insisting on the suffering they have undergone.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, black leaders who labor for the freedom of the race are often compared with charismatic figures of the **Bible**.<sup>31</sup> Michael Hanchard defines the African diaspora as "a human necklace strung together by a thread known as the slave trade, a thread which made its way across a path of America with little regard for national boundaries."<sup>32</sup>

This dissertation has six chapters to it, apart from the introduction. Titled "The Colonial Question in George Lamming's **Natives of My Person and In the Castle of My Skin**," chapter two discusses the main motivations behind the colonial enterprise and establishes how colonial school and Christian religion have crippled and fragmented colonial societies. Chapter three, "The Issue of Exile in George Lamming's **The Emigrants and Water with Berries**," argues that the origin of the exilic phenomenon that pervades the West Indian novel as illustrated in **The Emigrants and Water with Berries** can be traced back to colonial inheritance. Situating Lamming himself as a decolonizing

---

1967).

<sup>30</sup> For instance, there are several places in Douglass' *Narrative* where American slavery is compared with the holding of the *Old Testament* Jews in captivity.

<sup>31</sup> Robert O'Meally compares Douglass with Daniel, Moses, and Christ. See his article on Frederick Douglass' *Narrative* in Stepto and Fisher eds. *Afro-American Literature: The Reconstruction of Instruction* (New York: M. L. A., 1978), 192-211. The title of Edmund Cronon's book is striking on this respect: *Black Moses: the Story of Marcus Garvey* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1955), In addition Asante deals with Nat Turner and M. L. King, Jr.'s messianism, consult his book : *The Afrocentric Idea* (Philadelphia :Temple University Press, 1987), 86.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Hanchard, "Identity Meaning and the African American," quoted in Andermahr et. al. eds, *A Glossary of Feminist Theory* (New York and London : Arnold, 1997), 60-1.

writer, chapter four entitled "The Returnee Emigrants and the Process of National Reconstruction: **Of Age and Innocence and Season of Adventure**" establishes that the emigrants' awareness of the myth of the mother country and its debunking is materialized in their massive return for the nation building. While chapter five: "Repossessing the Past: The Afrocentric Vision in Paule Marshall" discusses the place and importance of the past in Paule Marshall's fiction and considers Afrocentricity as central to her literary production, chapter six, " Paule Marshall's Fiction: A Call for a New Order," is structured around Paule Marshall's vision of the social construction of gender and its consequences. Its development shows that patriarchy and colonialism are closely linked; both must be simultaneously opposed for the sake of justice. Chapter seven, "By Way of Conclusion Comparatively Speaking," considers some parallels as well as some differences between both writers' ideas/writings.

Though my approach to the topic could show throughout the paper itself, I would like to clarify my position on it in order to avoid all sorts of confusion on this point. The method of reader-response criticism is adopted in the treatment of this dissertation. However, this option does not mean the strict exclusion of the other methods and theories of criticism, because I am of the opinion that "no theory can adequately account for the diversity of literary experiences we would accept as legitimate" (Krieger, 1976, 4).

**CHAPTER TWO:**

THE COLONIAL QUESTION IN  
GEORGE LAMMING'S  
*NATIVES OF MY PERSON*  
AND *IN THE CASTLE OF MY SKIN*

The colonial experience of my generation was almost wholly without violence. No torture, no concentration camp, no mysterious disappearance of hostile natives, no army encamped with orders to kill. The Caribbean endured a different kind of subjugation. It was a terror of the mind; a daily exercise in self-mutilation. Black versus black in a battle for self-improvement. <sup>1</sup>

The Caribbean novelist George Lamming is well known for his keen interest in the exploration of the colonial experience of the West Indies. In his six novels to date as well as in his book of essays, **The Pleasures of Exile**, he is primarily concerned with the European colonization of the West Indies and its enduring effects on its population. In a conversation with George Kent, Lamming stressed the specificity of colonial experience for the West Indian people when he had this to say:

The colonial experience is a matter of historical record. What I am saying is that the colonial experience is a *live* experience in the *consciousness* of these people. And just because the so-called colonial situation is over and its institutions may have been transferred into something else, it is a fallacy to think that the human-lived content of those situations are automatically transferred into something else, too. The experience is a continuing psychic experience that has to be dealt with long after the actual colonial situation formally 'ends'. (in Paquet, 1982, 1)

As is highlighted in this passage, central to Lamming's fiction is the theme of colonial experience conceived as "a continuing psychic experience" after the actual colonial enterprise has formally ended. Lamming's basic concern with the colonial enterprise dominates all his literary production but his perception of the institution itself is given fullest shape and substance in **In the Castle of My Skin and Natives of My Person**.

---

<sup>1</sup> George Lamming, Introduction to the 1997 edition of *In the Castle of My Skin* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), xxxix.

A classic of modern black writing, described by Sandra Pouchet Paquet as a "highly politicized narrative of childhood and adolescence" (1997, xv), **In the Castle of My Skin** develops a social critique of colonial society while **Natives of My Person** engages the chief question of the colonial mission in the West Indies. Thus, the foci of this chapter are the driving forces of colonialism, its subsequent features and its impacts on the colonized in both novels.

**In the Castle of My Skin** has received the most extensive critical attention among Lamming's novels. The novel has featured in most discussions of West Indian literature. It has deserved the praises of many critics, including Simon Gikandi and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. Thus, Gikandi considers this classic as the "most powerful narrative of the psychology of colonialism" (Gikandi, 1992, 70); the Kenyan novelist and literary critic, Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, sees the novel as "a study of colonial revolt" and "one of the great political novels in modern colonial literature."<sup>2</sup>

A brief summary of the historical events that led to the writing of these novels is helpful to better understand this chapter.

**In the Castle of My Skin** is set in colonial Barbados known as "Little England" during the 1930s and 40s, a period of transformation for the colonial plantation system. Many critics of Lamming's first novel see eye to eye on the basic historical event which constitutes the raw material of **In the Castle of My Skin**. Scholars such as Ian Munro, Sandra Pouchet Paquet, Ambroise Kom, Patrick Taylor, Simon Gikandi and Supriya Nair agree that **In the Castle of My**

---

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Dance ed., *Fifty Caribbean Writers* (New York : Greenwood Press, 1986) , 270.



**Skin** is based on Lamming's "childhood perception of the Barbados riots".<sup>3</sup> According to Sandra Pouchet Paquet, Lamming himself acknowledges in an unpublished interview that numerous aspects of his novel derive from his childhood experience in Creighton's Village, and Saint David's (Paquet, 1982, 13-4). For Patrick Taylor, **In the Castle of My Skin** documents the origin and development of the tragic misadventure of neocolonialism typical of the Caribbean. It also traces the labor movement which emerged in the Caribbean with strikes, and riots. In this general mood of social unrest, he recalls,

A new independent bourgeoisie began to assume a position of influence in this movement as well as in the civil service and professions. Political parties, linked to the labor movement were established and began to work toward the independence that would eventually arrive in the 1960s. (Taylor, 1989, 191-2)

In a nutshell, George Lamming's first novel deals with the major social disturbances which swept across the Caribbean region and which are widely regarded by many historians as the decisive step that ushered in political independence in the area.

It is obvious that the Caribbean subject is marked by the trauma inherent in slavery and colonialism. Of course, the West Indian writers share with the entire Caribbean community the traumatic experience of both institutions as their works reflect it. As Gareth Griffiths has suggested, in a very real sense, the innumerable "accounts of childhood and adolescence, tracing back the individual's journey to consciousness and his struggle to understand himself and the world he lives in" display evidence that the Caribbean writer, in the process of enslavement and colonization, was deprived of his personality, his roots and his cultural identity (1978, 79). Similarly, Daniel Guérin points out

---

<sup>3</sup> Cobham, in King Brice ed., *West Indian Literature* (London : Macmillan Press Ltd., 1979), 17.

the same situation in **Les Antilles décolonisées**, his study devoted to the process of awareness-raising in the Caribbean region (1956, 103-18).

**Natives of My Person** is a reconstruction of a colonial exploration in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries. As a historical novel focused on these early voyages of colonization, **Natives of My Person** describes how a group of European mariners set out in an attempt to reach the Isles of Black Rock, later known as San Cristobal. Set aboard the ship **Reconnaissance**, the novel vividly describes all the passions as well as rivalries among the officers and crew who have come together on an enterprise that will take them to the Americas via Africa. The various motivations behind the efforts of this representative European community that have led the Commandant "to cause this crew of former strangers to break free and loose from the ancient restrictions of the Kingdom of Lime Stone" (NOP, 17) are dealt with. This voyage of exploration is never completed, for it ends in murder a day away from its destination.

But **Natives of My Person** is not only a careful examination of the beginning of colonialism in the New World. As has observed an anonymous critic of the novel, **Natives of My Person** is also a symbolic voyage about freedom, "the struggle against traditional relationships between individual men and women, the struggle of nations to achieve real independence".<sup>4</sup> In this respect the novel is described by its author as "a way of going forward by making a complete return to the beginning" of Caribbean colonization in the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> This view is expressed by the editor on the back cover of the novel, printed by Alison and Busby Ltd, London, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted by Paquet in Lindfors and Sander, eds, *Twentieth-Century Caribbean and Black African Writers* (Detroit and London : Gale Research Inc, 1993), 64.

## II. 1. LAMMING'S QUARREL WITH HISTORY: THE DRIVING FORCES OF COLONIALISM

In *The Castle of My Skin* and *Natives of My Person* focus on Lamming's perception of the colonial enterprise in the New World. In both novels, as has claimed the critic Supriya Nair, history is used in several ways to modify the sense of historilessness of the region. It is in this respect that *In The Castle of My Skin* has been identified by Edward Baugh as "the first piece of fiction in the West Indies that expresses the West Indian writers' quarrel with history" (in Nair, 1996, 80). How does Lamming quarrel with history in his artistic creation? The answer to this question is connected with the way he perceives the colonial mission in the Caribbean situation.

What is colonialism and what are the various motivations that led to European settlements in the New World ?

Colonialism is generally defined as the principle or practice of having or keeping colonies abroad. This concept usually refers to the rule of a group of people by a foreign power. Both the people under the foreign power and their land make up the colony. The concept of colony is defined as a country or a part of a country which is controlled politically and economically by another country. Usually, the colony is an underdeveloped area and remote from the metropolis which develops its agricultural and other resources beneficial to it. Julia V. Emberley encompasses everything when she makes the point that colonialism becomes discernible when a "ruling nation set out to dominate indigenous peoples, politically, economically, culturally, religiously, and legally". According to this critic, the ruling power's domination over the native population is maintained by means of cultural and economic restrictions (Emberley, 1993, 6). The colonizer is the one who helps to found and develop

a colony. In general, the colonial powers are technologically ahead of the colonies.

Historically speaking, the colonial conquests were the consequence of a technological revolution that gave the industrialized nations of Europe an absolute commanding position compared to the rest of the world (Crowder, 1968, 5). William H. McNeill in *The Rise of the West* (1963) as well as Peter Worsley in *The Third World* (1964) give credit to this assumption. Among other factors, thanks to its technological advancement, Europe was equipped with remarkable arsenals -- means of transportation, gunpowder, alcohol -- which were readily used in the historic mission of property acquisition and self-aggrandizement.

Passages from *Natives of My Person* related to the extermination of a native population can illustrate this assertion. Pierre is aware of the Europeans' technological superiority over the native inhabitants. Sample instances of these advantages are displayed in his diary when the latter writes : "*Here is a people which without too great encouragement of words or by the mere threat of swords and the sound of gunshot will prostitute themselves before us, granting free access to command their continent as we wish*" (NOP, 127). In fact, European technological superiority rendered possible the colonial conquests of distant lands. This technological advance enabled European nations to commit the most barbaric deeds in the course of colonial voyages. Specifically, in *Natives of My Person*, these deeds culminated when after a long moment of waiting, the oppressors committed the most horrible act to force them to surrender by shooting women, considered as the most sacred beings to the natives. Consequently, all the men surrendered (NOP, 110).

More important, however, colonization would not have been possible for the Europeans without imperial fictions of conquest. Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin point out in **Decolonizing Fiction** that the energizing myth of English imperialism that charged the English people with the will "to go out into the world and explore, conquer and rule" owed much to the adventure narratives of imperial fiction. Citing Peter Hulme's remark that "the conquest and colonization of much of the world by the European powers was preceded, accompanied, and justified by its own philosophical texts and inscription of 'otherness,'" both postcolonial critics argue that "the very savagery that lay at the heart of the white colonist enterprise was projected through a series of psychological manoeuvres traced in textual shifts, onto that otherness which was the object of European exploitation" (Brydon & Tiffin, 1993, 42 ). In the same vein, Supriya Nair observes that the different colonial texts support, justify and aggrandize the quest for power and glory of the colonial empire (Nair, 1996, 41).

Indeed, imperial fictions have played a role of paramount importance in the European conquest of the much of the world. European constructions of the colonized and their oppression are discernible in the fiction of Empire. The growing number of postcolonial writers who have rewritten particular philosophical texts of European colonization is ample evidence to substantiate this point. The authors of **The Empire Writes Back** provide a long stream of postcolonial writers who have interrogated the philosophical bases on which some canonical English texts are grounded. Though not exhaustive, the list of postcolonial writers who have produced an artistic work of allegorical, allusive and metacritical nature based on European imperial textuality includes Jean Rhys, Margaret Atwood, Chinua Achebe, Patrick White, V. S. Naipaul, George

Lamming, Wilson Harris and J. M. Coetzee.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, as far as the Caribbean Islands and Australia are concerned, Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin have added to the list of postcolonial scholars who have expressed interest in interrogating and re-writing the narrative of European colonization (Brydon and Tiffin, 1993, 51).

In his essay called "Camoë, Haklyut, and the Voyages of Two Nations," Richard Helgerson claims that "...the most important body of self-representations of Europeans in the act of encountering and exploiting those distant regions was the printed voyage."<sup>7</sup> Some of the main classics of imperial fiction that have exerted a powerful influence over the postcolonial writers include **The Tempest**, **Robinson Crusoe**, **Gulliver's Travels**, **The Heart of Darkness** and **Haklyut's Voyages**. As Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan has pointed out, in these narratives of colonial voyages, shipwrecked or exiled Europeans become heroes and "display exceptional virility or technological ingenuity and [...] the superior quality of their nature or culture." Naturally, the natives they encounter in those distant lands are portrayed as "subhuman, semi human, or at least immature people who are easily outwitted, used for advantage, and paternalized" (Bulhan, 1985, 111).

Of particular interest to George Lamming among this list of documents on the colonial voyages are William Shakespeare's **The Tempest** and **Haklyut's Voyages**. Both Sandra Pouchet Paquet and Supriya Nair agree that Richard Haklyut's **Voyage** has greatly influenced Lamming's writing. They have

---

<sup>6</sup> Ashcroft et al. eds. *The Empire Writes Back : Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature* (London and New York : Routledge, 1989), 33 and 53.

<sup>7</sup> In N. B. Dirks, ed., *Colonialism and Culture* (Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press), 1992, 27.

agreed that this book has particularly shaped Lamming's artistic vision in **Native of My Person**.<sup>8</sup>

In his introduction to his book of essays, **The Pleasures of Exile**, George Lamming hints at the importance of **The Tempest** when he chooses to use it "as a way of presenting a certain state of feeling inherited by the exiled and colonial writer from the British Caribbean" (**Pleasures**, 9). In addition, Sandra Pouchet Paquet suggests that **Natives of My Person** is a kind of invitation to a careful rereading of **The Pleasures of Exile** because "it is there that Lamming first identifies Herman Melville's **Moby Dick**, Shakespeare's **The Tempest** and Haklyut's **Voyages** as key to his understanding of the social and psychological forces that shape the course of colonialism in the New World."<sup>9</sup> However, although **The Tempest** itself is extremely important to the development of this chapter, it is enough pointing out here that its importance lies in the postcolonial perspective/interpretation it offers.

To begin with the various motivations leading to colonial undertaking, it is important to note that many scholars have been interested in this question and have come out with many different motivations. Because "the confrontation of 'civilized' and 'primitive' men creates a special situation – the colonial situation and brings about the *emergence* of a mass of illusions and misunderstandings that only a psychological analysis can place and define" (Fanon, **BSWM**, 85), to show how complex and deep these motivations are and the nature of the colonial mission, some psychological findings are worth reporting first before anything else.

---

<sup>8</sup> Paquet, in Lindfors and Sander, eds., op. cit., 62; see also Supriya Nair, *Caliban's Curse : George Lamming and the Revisioning of History* (Ann Arbor : University of Michigan Press, 1996), 40.

<sup>9</sup> Paquet, in Lindfors and Sander, eds., op. cit., 65.

Like Hegel and Dominique O. Mannoni, Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan also expresses the view that domination originates in the quest for self-realization achieved only through conquest of the other. In his **Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression**, Bulhan makes the point that besides economic profits colonizers are looking for psychological satisfactions through colonial undertaking:

The "colonial" is not looking for profit only; he is also greedy for certain other -- psychological -- satisfactions, and that is much more dangerous. Accurate observation of the facts would no doubt show us that he very often sacrifices profit for the sake of these satisfactions. (Bulhan, 1985, 104)

Needless to say that Frantz Fanon is of the opinion that the desire to colonize is always motivated by the colonial's will to put an end to his feeling of dissatisfaction (BSWM, 84).

To specifically deal with **Natives of My Person**, it must be pointed out that Sandra Pouchet Paquet has already identified three main motivations behind the colonial enterprise in **The Novels of George Lamming** : social, economic and moral considerations are behind their will to break free from the failure and disappointment of their lives at home (Paquet, 1982, 100). Though this list surveys the main reasons at stake when it comes to colonialism, it must be noted that it is not an exhaustive one. Consequently, it is the aim of this section to extend this list to some of the mixed motivations that prompted the Commandant, his officers and the crew to found a new settlement in the Isles of Black Rock.



The different motivations become clear as the narrative of this colonial adventure unfolds. Here are some of the basic reasons that have caused these representatives of the European community to flee from their native homes.

First of all, political problems that result in divisions at home account to some extent for this voyage. Any house divided against itself can never resist the test of time. The division within the Kingdom of Lime Stone has rendered possible this voyage. As Ivan says : "The unity of the House will always go hand in hand with the safety of the Kingdom. We are unhappy about such divisions in the Kingdom" (NOP, 149). Political unhappiness has caused these people to flee their home country. Thus, the colonial undertaking is motivated in part by political reasons.

Apparently, there exists a noble idea behind the Commandant's mind in undertaking this voyage. The narrator conveys this sense when he makes the Commandant publicly disclose his intention and deep motivation to the officers and crew members of the ship **Reconnaissance**. He makes it absolutely clear that his determination to found a new society, free of all former mistakes, has led him to undertake this enterprise:

I have determined to cause this crew of former strangers to break free and loose from the ancient restrictions of the Kingdom of Lime Stone....

I would plant some portion of the Kingdom in a soil that is new and freely chosen, namely the Isles of Black Rock, more recently known as San Cristobal. (NOP, 17)

So to speak, in the first place, to free themselves from the ancient restrictions of the Kingdom of Lime Stone, they have chosen to definitely break loose (NOP, 16). Thus, the desire to free oneself from home tyranny, to experience the enjoyment of freedom, liberty and justice has led the leader of

this enterprise to flee from home as he insists over and over again on the necessity for the other participants to rethink and adjust themselves to this new way of life based entirely on freedom. The Commandant conceives of this new freedom as a vocation they "have to learn and plant, now and long after the enterprise is complete". For the Commandant, the whole enterprise will have no "raison d'être" if issues related to wealth only are at stake. For him, the object of the enterprise, the essence of the problem, the heart of the matter is totally different. He harangued them in these terms:

You must feel this journey to be for a purpose beyond the price of gold [... ] The metal is a small matter beside the true heart of my enterprise. The whole enterprise is a waste if you do not feel this purpose. (NOP, 58)

In leading this enterprise, the Commandant's dream to reach and settle the Isles of the Black Rock is rather sustained by his ambition and thirst for glory. Although he is already a well-known national hero of Lime Stone, there are good reasons to think that the settlement of Black Rock will add more prestige to his name. The settlement of the Islands of Black Rock would mean the peak of his career as it represents for him "the only kingdom on earth which my heart yearned to inherit and enjoy" (NOP,16).

The Commandant's announcement prohibiting the admittance of black cargoes aboard the *Reconnaissance* and the utter bewilderment of the crew which follows this announcement establishes the seriousness of the Commandant's honest intentions (NOP, 135-6, 145). However, it is worth stressing that this attitude of his is explicated by his former experiences in the art of conquest. The Commandant's decision to admit no human cargo in the ship is sustained by his remembrances of past sufferings he had inflicted on the native populations of the area:

I was eager and knew what it was to be beast before the prey of good fortune ; second to none in exercising the terrors which forced the Tribes to volunteer their services to us and all men who had brought them no less a reward than a knowledge of true light. (NOP, 17)

Or, to put it another way, the Commandant's foundation of a model settlement on the Island of San Cristobal is a way of atoning for barbaric deeds he perpetrated there earlier on (NOP, 138, 251)). As Sandra Pouchet Paquet observes, the non-commercial purpose of his intention "reflects an acknowledged reversal of the Commandant's earlier ambitions, which placed his right to plunder before every other consideration" (Paquet, 1982, 102).

In effect, the Commandant's will to settle the island of San Cristobal aims to correct former mistakes identified in his native country. Part of this correction has to do with the establishment of democratic principles as a sound basis for his new society. In other words, the object of his voyage is to set up a democratic society in this new colony.

Lime Stone is an autocratic kingdom where there are no cardinal democratic principles. One common source of unhappiness and dissatisfaction in Lime Stone is the fact that the essence of power here is vested in the House of Trade and Justice rather than in the parliament. This makes the Commandant rebel against the political structures of his native country. Here is, at length, a description of the breath of power exercised by the House of Trade and Justice:

This awesome institution was the vital centre of all commercial affairs. Its rules were rigid and elaborate, covering hundreds of clauses that master as well as mariner was expected to know before he went to sea. When ships returned with gold and the reward of glory, it was the House of Trade and Justice that decided on the final distribution of their booty. On arrival or departure

every item of cargo had to be listed with the House; the names and particulars of each crew must first be registered under oath in the voluminous literature of their record. All ships, whatever their business or command, were the national property of the House of Trade and Justice. They decided the value of all currency that circulated in the Kingdom. People might praise the daring and industry of the nation's parliament; but it was the House of Trade and Justice which received their ultimate obedience.

**It was the heart and flesh and conscience of the Kingdom of Lime Stone; the source and agent of every national triumph.** To provision a ship and undertake any voyage without the recorded authority of the House was a crime on the scale of treason. And no court could intervene. (NOP, 12-3, my emphasis)

In addition to this power, the House protects everything, ranging from the men it employs to all merchandise and charts (NOP, 182). Crucial to their decisions to depart is the unjust treatment received by people as a reward for their endeavors. The House has deprived most of them of what they are rightly entitled to. Contrary to what they experienced in Lime Stone, this enterprise will enable them to become rich : "the end of the Voyage that would establish men of skill whom fate had deprived of a chance to realize visions in the native soil of Lime Stone" (NOP, 57). Consequently, the new enterprise aims to combat former unjust acts committed against people in Lime Stone, through the democratic process.

By breaking free and loose from the restrictions of the Kingdom of Lime Stone, the Commandant wanted to correct the previous mistakes, the previous philosophies which had guided their lives (NOP, 250). To make a long story short, in the new land, people can expect decent treatment (NOP, 56-7).

Their secret departure is not only an explicit rebellion against the practices of the House; it also signals their willingness to look for possibilities

to start life afresh. Starting life anew becomes possible thanks to colonialism. Thus, it constitutes another motivation behind the colonial undertaking. Surgeon's situation is a case in point. He is described as a pioneer in the cause of colonies; he is known everywhere as a founder of hospitals in colonies, a pioneer in the art of healing. He who has "a lucid vision of himself established on the Isles of Black Rock" as a medical doctor is eager for the enterprise that will enable him to start life afresh. In San Cristobal, he says, "A man can start from scratch, turn any misfortune into a fact of triumph" (NOP, 119).

Besides this advantage, he sees colonies as a source of new experiments for the colonizers. Talking about health care to his comrades, Surgeon particularly stresses the unique opportunity they are offered in the colonies because mediocrity is not taken into consideration there. He declares that in the art of healing, both "the surgeon and the sick become equal parts of the same learning [...] You can only manage it in virgin lands where you have the chance to start from scratch"(NOP, 119).

This contrasts with what is lawful in their original home. Of course, in the Kingdom of Lime Stone, "there would be no chance to start such a school of healing from scratch. Not back in the Kingdom." He particularly praises "the blessing of virgin lands, where the new man meets the new endeavor. To know there is not a plan to push you out" (NOP, 120).

As claimed by Surgeon, no ordinary greed supports the commandant's intention. But if his main purpose is to explore and settle the island recently known as San Cristobal, the objective of this enterprise for the others is diametrically opposed to the commandant's noble intention. If the Commandant "appears to have little taste for personal fortune" (NOP, 31), greed for riches is

of primary importance to his associates, partners in this enterprise. All were attracted by the possibility of possessing gold. They have known poverty and hunger at home. For many of them, as Surgeon puts it, this enterprise represents "the one chance, the one in a million, that puts every misfortune in reverse" (NOP, 190). The leader of the voyage, the Commandant himself knows only too well about this deep motivation within every one on the **Reconnaissance**. He encompasses everything in the following passage:

They had sprung from every corner of the Kingdom, a fairly typical reflection of the continent of Lime Stone. Unfortunately born, or with appetites out of proportion to their status, they had found in the ship their last chance of rescue from the perils of the land. Some had no memory for the law which ruled their Region, and so regarded the sea as their safest home. Others had to flee from the ancient afflictions deriving from religious contention in the Kingdom. But hunger had recruited most of the men. **And all were driven by a vision of gold.** (NOP, 13, my emphasis)

Actually, calamity at home has caused many people to flee their home country. It is very important that the Commandant refers to this among the causes. In effect, famine has literally driven many people in the kingdom of Lime Stone mad : "Of every age and sex you can see them plundering nature in the countryside ... men made barbarous and bitter by their hunger, eating rats and feeding off the very roots of plants not yet a day in ground" (NOP, 55).

Religious persecution and criminal pasts can be listed among the sources of motivation. However, they do not primarily constitute the basic grounds upon which the colonial mission is laid. In fact, this passage outlines the true mentality of colonizers. Despite every praiseworthy reason the Commandant can claim, it will forever remain true that the colonial mission is first and foremost grounded in economic considerations.

Colonialism mainly results from the colonizers' growing economic needs. In order to gain economic benefits, colonizing powers have sought colonies chiefly to satisfy their economic imperatives. They have wanted land and valuable products for themselves. To expand their industries and trade, colonies represented the inevitable source of raw materials and source of goods that could be exported to other countries.

It is important to note at this stage, that the unfair economic exploitation practised in colonial time has been given both shape and substance in many novels set in Africa or conquered areas and which are concerned with the experience of colonialism. For instance, Joseph Conrad, who had been employed in colonial Congo, experienced his own exploitation as well as the European exploitation of Africans. The bitterness of this experience is said to have informed and shaped his **Heart of Darkness** which is an exposure of colonial exploitation (Mahood, 1977, 5-7).<sup>10</sup>

**In the Castle of My Skin** deals both with economic exploitation and the policy of expropriation and relocation implemented in the colonial context. However, only economic exploitation is given priority in this study.

In his study devoted to colonial society in the Caribbean Islands, Patrick Taylor makes the point that "Colonialism is a form of 'super-exploitation' rather than 'simple-exploitation' because it obtains a surproduct through forced labor" (Taylor, 1989, 62). Here Taylor points out the most fundamental aim of colonialism; colonial powers wanted materials and set out to get them no matter how. For them, it was things that came first, not human beings. For instance, the landlord's most important priority was making enormous profits.

---

<sup>10</sup> Ngugi Wa Thiong'o also deals with this issue in *Weep Not, Child* (London : Heinemann, 1966).

Given its geographical position and natural resources, the colony of Little England, as Lamming sees it in this novel, is an ideal haven for economic prosperity for colonizers. Big England has induced many of its inhabitants to work in the Jones and Creighton Shipping Company Limited. This Company, in which the landlord Creighton is portrayed as a key partner, has an absolute trading position in the colony. This shipping firm is so powerful that it has monopolized the production of sugar cane and the sale of sugar in Little England : the dockers must unload the ships of sugar and load the sugar cane onto the boat to be manufactured in the metropolis (CS, 88-89).

Mr Creighton is described as a wealthy landlord of Little England whose riches cannot be surmised. As a partner in Creighton Shipping Company Limited and a merchant of the area, the sum total of his wealth and possessions would ever remain a mystery. Though rich, the landlord cannot help crying buckets of tears whenever he has to spend any amount of money on repairing the roads damaged by floods. His literal crying over for colonial expenditures is an instance to show colonial greed for riches. This view is expressed by the overseer's brother:

If you ask him for a shilling ... or two or three shillings, he will give freely freely, but if he know that he got to spend a few hundred dollars, which is no more than three shillings compare with what he got, boys, he will cry buckets of tears (CS, 89).

The great wealth of Mr. Creighton can be interpreted in terms of Marxist theory. His wealth is derived from the "surplus value," that is the difference between the bare subsistence wage earned by the dockers and the just unfair price of their labor, which naturally is superior to the subsistence wage (see Baker, 1984, 44). Thus, the origin of his wealth can be traced back to the



ruthless and unfair exploitation of the native labor force offered by Little Englanders.

It is beyond all question that this shipping company is a symbol of oppression and exploitation to the natives. Perhaps their awareness of this has caused them to demand more justice under the leadership of Mr Slime, the school teacher. Perhaps it is also important to highlight George Lamming's point that the economics of colonialism has not only contributed to the impoverishment of the colonial subjects of Little England; it has also reduced these native inhabitants to mere laboring chattel. Indeed, the colonial world is basically dominated by the looting and the exploitation of its inhabitants.

In view of this situation, Frantz Fanon observes that "many Europeans go to the colonies because it is possible for them to grow rich quickly there, that with rare exceptions the colonial is a merchant, or rather a trafficker" (Fanon, BSWM, 108). In *Le portrait du colonisateur*, Albert Memmi makes the same point when he writes: "... on y gagne plus, on y dépense moins. On rejoint la colonie parce que les situations y sont assurées, les traitements élevés, les carrières plus rapides et les affaires plus fructueuses" (Memmi, 1985, 32).<sup>11</sup> Consequently, when Manonni argues that "colonial exploitation is not the same as other forms of exploitation" (Manonni, 1964, 27), it must be borne in mind that the colonizer-colonized relationship is derivative of the master-slave relationship. As Bulhan argues, colonialism itself is another stage of slavery (Bulhan, 1985, 116). On this issue, Frantz Fanon also has this to say:

---

<sup>11</sup> Lamming also expresses this opinion: "The English Civil Servant going to the colonies leaves with the knowledge --- imparted by history, political fact and myth --- that his privileges are already established. This privilege is proved almost in the moment of his arrival; for he discovers --- at first to his astonishment --- that Frank whom he knew at university in Scotland is earning a hundred pounds less for doing the same job. What starts his guilt is the bitter recollection that he was never a match for Frank in problems of gynaecology" (*Pleasures*, 217-8).

All forms of exploitation resemble one another. They all seek the source of their necessity in some edict of Biblical nature. All forms of exploitation are identical because all of them are applied against the same "object" : man. When one tries to examine the structure of this or that form of exploitation from an abstract point of view, one simply turns one's back on the major, basic problem, which is that of restoring man to his proper place. (Fanon, BSWM, 88)

Without any doubt, the **Reconnaissance** team is fully aware of these economic advantages offered by colonies. Of course, the celebration of their escape from the land as well as their speculation on "the fortunes that would reward their labours" are firmly grounded by the author on hope for the economic fruits that this enterprise would soon yield (NOP, 22). More than anyone else among the participants in this mission, Surgeon's economic vision dominates, orients and shapes his hope : "Men will look at you as though you were born again. Even men who knew you soon fail to recognize what they remember, because of the opulence which you blind them with" (NOP, 190).

Actually, Lamming has Surgeon's economic consideration of the enterprise utterly shaped by the common practice observed in Lime Stone where personal and national glory are intimately connected thanks to riches derived from those colonial settlements. In effect, in the Kingdom of Lime Stone, the colonial undertaking and its benefits are daily events:

Everyday you hear of a new adventure. East and west on every corner of the earth men are declaring fortunes that make your head swim. And the arrivals. Ships like *Intrepid* and *Salamon* coming home for the third time with proof of conquests. Men who had no names at all, scavengers, for all you know, now on full parade. Living in national applause and personal fortune that would last many a lifetime... (NOP, 187)

As outlined in this passage by the author, the colonizing powers did encourage their brave sons to venture forth and conquer (NOP, 233). Colonialism is therefore deeply rooted in the individual's search for national praise, because the conquest of new virgin lands also brought some glory to the Kingdom of Lime Stone, the colonial power. A passage from Pierre's diary sustains this assumption:

*And believing, as the Scriptures say, that charity should have first birth in a man's native home, I did reckon it a just cause for Lime Stone to claim unto itself whatever fruitful lands might multiply the wealth and glory of our Kingdom, for in the arts of peace and Christian rule we have no equal. (NOP, 127)*

In addition to the list of the above-mentioned motivations, Baptiste raises another tenet of the colonial undertaking. Generally, colonizing powers believe the native populations they encounter in distant lands to be uncivilized. While en route to San Cristobal, Baptiste reveals his preconceived idea about its original inhabitants. As far as he knows, "civilization" differentiates those aboard the ship from the San Cristobal natives : "Soon you'll be seeing creatures who resemble you in every way except one. Civilization didn't touch their skin at birth. Strange creatures" (NOP, 42).

As is obvious from Baptiste's remark, the colonized are associated with negative traits of character. Whatever is good belongs to the colonizer, e.g. his culture, his country. During the colonial era, most colonizers viewed the native inhabitants as primitive, uncivilized, and "the natural inferior" of Europeans. The colonized are considered to be lazy, shiftless, childlike, carefree, and playful persons.<sup>12</sup> Because of these biased images, the Europeans' occupation of foreign lands began to be talked of in terms of "The White Man's

---

<sup>12</sup> Miller and Smith, eds., *Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery* (New York : Greenwood Press, 1988), 564-65.

Burden" (Crowder, 1968, 5). This assumption forms the core of the conception of colonialism as a civilizing mission. This firm conviction was a guideline to Master Cecil when he launched attacks on the Tribe Boys in order to "civilize" them. Master Cecil is the father of the Lady of the House who funded Commandant's enterprise. Master Cecil was an influential person in the Kingdom of Lime Stone. He is presented as a man of privilege who placed his right to plunder before all else. When confronted with the Tribe Boys' bloody fight and the strong resistance that resulted in his defeat at Constance Creek, or Creek of Deception, he unveiled his intention, and expressed regret for them when he spoke in these terms:

They [the tribes] had no reason to resist. With a little luck he could put the gift of the Kingdom at their service; correct their tongues, which knew no language; introduce them to some style of living. Lunacy, he was warning the sulphur peak of the cliff, it was lunacy to desecrate such gifts with an open insult, to resist [...] Nothing would change except increase of crops, which the natural vegetation now conceals. (NOP, 71)

The narrator's insight here illustrates Frantz Fanon's statement that the Europeans or white colonizers consider themselves as "pioneers of civilization" (BSWM, 97). Indeed, as is observed by Catherine Hall, the task of the Englishmen was to raise those "savage creatures" to a higher state of civilization, educate them, and provide for them.<sup>13</sup> The colonizers are bringers of civilization. With irony, Margaret Atwood had this to say about the same issue of "civilizing the uncivilized":

Before the British Empire there were no railroads or postal services in India, and Africa was full of tribal warfare, with spears, and had no proper clothing. The Indians in Canada

---

<sup>13</sup> In Chamber and Curti eds., *The Post-Colonial Question : Common Sky, Divided Horizons* (London and New York : Routledge, 1996), 67.

did not have the wheel or telephones, and ate the hearts of their enemies in the heathenish belief that it would give them courage. The British Empire changed all that. It brought in electric lights. (Atwood, 1988, 79)

To paraphrase Jenny Sharpe, these images, these vignettes narrate the story of "the civilizing mission, which is primarily about the colonizing culture as an emissary of light."<sup>14</sup>

As is evidenced in Master Cecil's statement, any colonizer represents himself and his culture as the ultimate standard or model and ideal example that nature can offer. The narrator boy G. of *In the Castle of My Skin* expresses his serious reservation about this myth inherent in the colonial system when he comments on this fundamental aspect of colonial ruse as follows : "Like children under the threat of hell fire they accepted instinctively that the others, meaning the white, were superior, yet there was always the fear of realizing that it might be true" (CS, 19).

Moreover, these people that the author ironically refers to as "strange creatures" are not only denied civilization, but are also denied the gifts of soul and reason as well. That blacks or colonized people are not endowed with reason is also Pierre's view. He typically attributes their inferior status to their lack of reason: "...for they be a people not adequate in the powers of reason which is the cause of their doom" (NOP, 111). However, it is quite surprising that Pierre gainsays his own assumption, when he indirectly acknowledges that the colonized have their own civilization. He later on wrote this in his diary:

*Here on the coast at Xavier at latitude thirteen and a half degrees there did live a thrifty band of savages with all the appearance of civilized arrangements like courts where*

---

<sup>14</sup> Sharpe in Ashcroft et al eds., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London and New York : Routledge 1995), 99-100.

*their King held parliament and supervised the laws and punishments of his people. (NOP, 123)*

Notwithstanding this self-contradictory stand which sheds much more light on the lies inherent in the colonial enterprise, this does not prevent colonizers from typically identifying indigenous populations by their "heathen" beliefs. As a result, to succeed in elevating native people above their jungle status, religion is enlisted in the service of the colonial enterprise. Godly, religious, humanitarian and philanthropic justifications for their enslavement and colonization come into play. Pierre whose vision of this is sustained by his poor self-perception wrote:

*This decision to leap was beyond our reason, so that we did not surmise -- and ancient wisdom also confirms -- how this blackness of hide which resembles skin must be nature's way of warning against the absence of any soul within, which is the clear cause of their ignorance, just as a true Christian countenance resembles the color of the sun, thereby giving a power and beauty of light which adorns the skin and supporteth all pious reasons; being yet further proof that there is nothing that appears by accident or indolent chance in the purpose and harmony of our Lord's creation. (NOP, 111)*

Striking as it may seem in content, this passage reflects some propagated ideas behind the enslavement and colonization of "inferior" people. Similarly, Nathaniel Hawthorne, in *Old News*, expressed the view that slaves must not assume the property of their persons (254). In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the author has this same idea strongly shared by a clergy man who sanctioned it with a godly argument:

It is undoubtedly the intention of Providence that the African race should be servants -- kept in a low condition... It pleases Providence, for an inscrutable reason, to doom the race to bondage...and we must not set up our opinion against that. (Stowe, 1982, 151)

There exists a long time collaboration between Church and colonial enterprise. The implication of the Christian Church in the "civilizing" mission and its human trafficking is largely displayed through Priest's life-long career and his active role on the **Reconnaissance**. His file is full of unfamiliar dangers he had faced over ocean seas. As a man of the Church, the good news is a weapon in his hands. Priest's official role consists in "carrying the gospel like a sword among various and forgotten heathens" (NOP, 116). However, this representative of the Christian Church amid the participants of the enterprise acknowledges the involvement of this institution and its decisive role in enslaving "inferior" people. Priest honestly admits that "The black flesh is a terrible temptation. You might find such a cargo' too great a strain for a man of principle" (NOP, 113).

That the Church is never principled against the enslavement of black people is a fundamental truth for Surgeon. In fact, as he commented, the Christian Church has never ruled against such a harvest of black flesh (NOP, 113-4). As evidenced in Priest's paramount role in numerous colonial voyages, he had to instruct the conquistadors, remind them of the rewards of sacrifice, and instill the spirit of bravery in participants by letting them know their death would stand as the token price of an enterprise that would last as a memorial to the Kingdom. More importantly, Priest's duty is to encourage the members of the enterprise for its success. His chief role is to support the flock by schooling them in the discipline of prayer in time of danger, this support is imperative for their courage (NOP, 116, 245).

The hypocritical aspect of the Christian mission is highlighted in Priest's ambiguous stand on the humanity of the black race. In spite of his basic conviction that black people are full human beings, because they "contained a soul" he all the same gave his explicit approval for the Atlantic slave trade: "He

had given his blessing to the traffic in black flesh; but he would always maintain that it contained a soul" (NOP, 116). To justify his stand on this issue, he would quote the **Bible** to claim "some divinity of right over these black cargoes".

All in all, Priest's contribution to the enslavement of the Blacks is enormous and his celebrity and renown owe everything to his active participation in the trade. His triumphs had become a legend from the coast to the Isles of Black Rock. He even caused fear to the authorities of Lime Stone when he was supplying its rival Antarctica with slaves, increasing the fortunes of the enemy. As a result of this betrayal, to save his life, he has to flee Lime Stone. He becomes a sort of "fugitive for Christ" (NOP, 117).

Priest's case is not an isolated example. It is a symbolic case in point, though. This practice might have caused Surgeon's lack of confidence in all priests because he had known many of them who were involved in the traffic of human beings. "He had no special faith in the reliability of Priest's vocation. From the Guinea coast to the Isles of Black Rock there were many priests who had traded as agents of the House" (NOP, 121). One may conclude that the enslavement of the native people in **Natives of My Person** owes much to the concept of civilizing Christian missions (Nair, 1996, 39).

The civilizing mission of the colonial enterprise is subverted by the author and it eventually results in barbaric deeds such as the killing and physical extermination of the native population. For instance, under the leadership of Master Cecil, colonizers have killed thousands of people in their conquests (NOP, 66-7, 86-8). The colonial undertaking goes hand in hand with plundering and native genocide. A case in point is the Isle of San Souci, where the native inhabitants are forced to flee the place and leave the precious mines in the hand of the invaders, who spare no means to achieve their objective



(NOP, 64-5, 67). When necessary, violence is used to force the inhabitants into service. They caused famine for the natives by compelling them to serve, while their crops are rotting. The Commandant confesses this strategic device of theirs after his "conversion" : "We had to drive them like cattle from the fields and pastures, leaving ripe grain to rot, and a mighty famine that would overtake even the unborn..." (NOP, 251).

In the light of the above, it could be said the author has humanized the character by having him acknowledge that colonialism has caused millions of untold woes, sufferings and deaths among the natives. The narrator describes in vivid images the enslavement of the native people with its inevitable accompaniment of horrors and atrocities (NOP, 124). These natives fully meet the criteria used in the identification of oppressed persons all over the world. According to Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan in his **Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression**, anyone who finds his physical and psychological spaces unacknowledged, intruded into, and curtailed is an oppressed person. In the same vein, he notes that "the energy of the oppressed is often depleted, expropriated, and harnessed to advance the oppressor's interest". Likewise, his movement is controlled and curbed. To cut a long story short, he concludes that "All situations of oppression violate one's space, time, energy, mobility, bonding, and identity" (Bulhan, 1985, 124).

The detailed account of the suffering imposed on these "strange creatures" suggests that the European quest for land in distant places has resulted in social oppression as the inevitable consequence. Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan makes the point that social oppression had been known to humankind since time immemorial; yet, he points out that Europe's global conquest had fundamentally intensified and dramatically changed its character and scope : "Europe's greed for land and labor entailed the occupation of continents, the

enslavement of millions [...] leaving victims in every corner of the globe" (Bulhan, 1985, 117).

The different revelations by both the Commandant and Master Cecil on their cruelty to the indigenous populations they had encountered in the course of their exploratory voyages corroborate the theses of historical violence and genocide defended by many scholars of colonialism, particularly, those working on the history of the Caribbean islands.

In effect, according to so many scholars including P. S. Chauhan, historical records show that the Spaniards first destroyed the native institutions in the Caribbean Islands. These records also establish how the English, for the glory of the British arms, dispossessed the Spaniards and introduced slavery.<sup>15</sup> Frank Birbalsingh and Edward K. Brathwaite have expressed similar views on violence in Caribbean history. Both maintain that before Columbus's arrival in the Caribbean Islands, the place was originally inhabited by Amerindian people : Arawaks, Caribs, Taino, Siboney. Before Columbus's intrusion, these people had "a very viable culture and civilization". However, they note that within a matter of twenty-five or thirty years following Christopher Columbus's "discovery," with an average of one million dead each year "this aboriginal population was almost destroyed." In consequence, it was necessary for the new lords to import new labor bodies into the area.<sup>16</sup> The authors of **The Empire Writes Back : Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature** : Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin have reached the same conclusion. They trace the virtual annihilation and extermination of the natives to European's greed for gold (1989, 26 & 145). Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin make a similar point in **Decolonizing Fictions** (1993, 38).

---

<sup>15</sup> P. S. Chauhan in Mohanram and Rajan eds., *English Postcoloniality* (Westport, Connecticut and London : Greenwood Press, 1996), 47.

<sup>16</sup> Birbalsingh, 1996, 2; see also *Pleasures of Exile*, 17.

Resulting from this brutal historical inheritance, at the heart of any Caribbean narrative is "the stamp of historical violence and rupture" as is noted by Catherine Hall who read Stuart Hall.<sup>17</sup> The historical violence of the region prominently figures in the modern West Indian consciousness that keeps the experience of slavery and colonization to the fore. **Natives of My Person** in the West Indian tradition is a novel that "continues to explore the slave past for allegorical leverage on the present" (Brydon and Tiffin, 1993, 40).

Like Aimé Césaire, one of the sharpe-tongued and uncompromising speakers against colonialism, George Lamming does not see the colonial mission as a glorious moment in the history of Europe; he does not consider European imperialism as a civilizing mission. Ambroise Kom is adamant on this when he writes:

Les données sont claires et les conclusions des analystes du phénomène colonial -- Césaire, Memmi, Fanon -- concordent. En dépit de ce que peuvent penser le Commandant, Priest, et Surgeon, la mission culturelle, morale, et religieuse des colonisateurs ne fut qu'un leurre. (Kom, 1986, 139)

On the contrary, to George Lamming and many others, this stage represents a moment of moral as well as spiritual crisis in European history. To paraphrase Supriya Nair, George Lamming, unlike the Commandant of the **Reconnaissance**, does not conceive of this "enterprise as enabling a development of sensibility and nobility, but rather as a dehumanizing, vicious labyrinth that traps both the colonizer and colonized in endless cycles of violence" (Nair, 1996, 49).

---

<sup>17</sup> In Chambers and Curti eds., op. cit. 68.

That the colonial undertaking is neither a humanitarian nor a philanthropic mission but rather deeply motivated by economic and cultural reasons is a basic tenet in **In the Castle of My Skin** as well.

As was indicated earlier on, the reservation expressed by the people of Little England as far as the superiority of the colonizers is concerned displays evidence that the colonial enterprise has its mystical as well as mythical aspects. Therefore, George Lamming launches his attack on the colonial mission by making the corrosive effects of colonial rule perceptible everywhere in the everyday life of this representative West Indian community on the island of Barbados (Paquet, 1982, 13). His depiction of the class of colonial agents that include the overseer, the sanitary inspector, the bath supervisor, the police constable and other civil servants also illustrates his views on the colonial society.

## **II. 2. SOME MYTHS OF COLONIALISM**

After his defeat by the Tribes at Creek of Deception, Master Cecil claimed that if he had been given the chance, he could have changed the lives of the natives. He would do this by putting the gift of Lime Stone at their service, by correcting their tongues and by introducing them "to some style of living". In short, Master Cecil and the colonizers would "civilize" them. In return, he claims, the Kingdom of Lime Stone would ask of these Tribes "no more than a painless subjugation, to a contract that would leave them free" (NOP, 71). To illustrate how the English monarchy has spread the gift of civilization in Little England, Lamming depicts the political, cultural and economic dependence of this representative colonial society in **In the Castle of My Skin**.

Central to the colonial experience in Little England is the imposition of European norms on its native people. In a seminal essay addressing this issue in the literary field, George L. Cornell vigorously criticizes such a form of imperialism whereby definitions of Western literature are imposed on indigenous oral traditions.<sup>18</sup> This Eurocentric and one-dimensional vision of humankind should be corrected. Likewise, in his article titled "Heroic Ethnocentrism : the Idea of Universality in Literature," Charles Larson has suggested the urge to revisit the standard: "When we try to force the concept of universality on someone who is not Western," he writes, " I think we are implying that our culture should be the standard of measurement."<sup>19</sup> In **In the Castle of My Skin**, Boy G. and his countrymen expressed their fear and reservation concerning the White sense of superiority. This claim of superiority expressed by colonizers, first off, constitutes one of the paramount features of the myth of colonialism that can be termed the colonial ruse.

Nowadays, the theories of white superiority or black inferiority formulated by Gobineau, Richard Colfax, George Samuel Morton and Gustave le Bon have been proven scientifically unsound. Biological research to date has established the fact that cells that make up the human body are the same for all people in spite of the external physical characteristics proper to each race. Consequently, "science does not support the claim that some races are biologically superior or inferior to others."<sup>20</sup> Similarly, lack of scientific proof has determined Sir Alan Burns in his refutation of racial inferiority or superiority assumptions. He makes this remark in **Color Prejudice** : "We are unable to accept as scientifically proved theory that the black man is inherently inferior to

---

<sup>18</sup> In Thomas King et. al. eds., *The Native in Literature : Canadian and Comparative Perspective* (Okville : ECW Press, 1987), 178.

<sup>19</sup> In Ashcroft et. al. eds 1995, op. cit., 64.

<sup>20</sup> "Races of Men," in *The World Encyclopedia*. (Chicago, Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, 1971), Vol 16, 60.

white, or that he comes from a different stock".<sup>21</sup> Consequently, these theories of white superiority or black inferiority come purely from an imaginative mind. In this respect, Claude McKay sees this practice as an imaginable "barrier" used by the "sepulchre-white world [...] to damn the universal flow of human feeling by suppressing and denying to another branch of humanity the highest gifts of nature, simply because its epidermis was colored dark" (McKay, 1961, 226).

It is important to know that in direct line with Gobineau's racist theory, Gustave le Bon has gone a step further to make a connection between race and gender. In **Les lois psychologiques de l'évolution des peuples** (1894), he argues that proof of female inferiority and similarities between women and Negroes is provided by "craniology". He considers that "each people possesses [sic] a mental constitution which is not only the product of his parents, but also, and in fact above all, of his race, or, in other words, of his ancestors".<sup>22</sup>

Frantz Fanon has suggested that because "White men consider themselves superior to the black men" (BSWM, 10), the colonizers created an inferiority complex in the Caribbean subject, because they felt deep-rooted in this erroneous belief and reinforced in their conviction of superiority over other human beings. We might further suggest that forcing the colonized to accept their inferior status includes categorizing them as children.

Unlike the highly uniform and centralized system of local administration adopted by the French colonial authorities, it is generally admitted that the

---

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (Trans. Charles Lam Markmann, New York : Grove Press., 1971), 30.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Read ed., *The Fact of Blackness and Visual Representation* ( London and Seattle : Bay Press, 1996), 53.

British colonial administrative policy, the Indirect Rule, imposes less compulsion on "the wretched of the earth."<sup>23</sup> However, it must be noted that the colonized are simply treated as children. This practice, generally, leads to paternalistic behaviors. Indeed, Lámming's portrayal of paternalistic manners in the conception of British administrative policy in *In the Castle of My Skin* is striking in all respects. Suffice it to refer the reader to the landlord who conceived of himself as the caretaker of Little England and consequently its population (CS, 17-18). Through his conversation with Old Ma, in particular, the reader is given the opportunity to really penetrate the landlord's thought on this decisive issue. The old woman is reporting to her husband what she has learned from the landlord:

He says we won't ever understan' the kind o' responsibility he feel for you an' me an' the whole village. He say [sic] it was a real responsibility. There ain't much he can do whatever anybody may say, but he'd always feel that responsibility. We ain't his children he says, but the feeling was something like that. He had to sort o' care o' those who belong to the village.(CS, 177)

The reason behind this paternalistic propensity is quite clear. Just as a child needs his/her parent's care for his growth, so does Little England. It must be "protected" by Big England for its growth and safety. Seen from this angle of vision, Barbados has no right to complain about its state of being a colony. The author ironically expresses this idea by declaring that "Barbados would always be Little England" (CS, 67). In other words, Barbados would remain a British colony and will never mature. The paternalistic attitudes of the colonial authorities of the island will always prevail:

---

<sup>23</sup>A good view on "Indirect Rule" is provided in Michael Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule* (London : Hutchinson and Co, 1968), 163-233 and Peter Llyod, *Africa in Social Change* (Middlessex, U. K : Penguin Books Ltd.,1967), 59-67.

Three hundred years, more than the memory could hold, Big England had met and held Little England and Little England like a sensible child accepted. Three hundred years, and never in all that time did any other nation dare interfere with these two. Barbados or Little England was the oldest and purest of England's children, and may it always be so. (CS, 29)

The second moving force behind the myth of colonialism as a provider of light has to do with the collaboration that exists between both protagonists involved in the system. Of course, "the most widely read West Indian novel"<sup>24</sup> offers a detailed account of the close sense of cooperation between the indigenous inhabitants of Little England and the intruders. A prime example of this is the paramount role played by the overseers, the constables, and the policemen in the management of the colony.

This involvement of some indigenous élites in the colonial administration of Little England aims to achieve two objectives. First and foremost, this policy is sustained by economic and practical reasons. The employment of sufficient Englishmen to administer the colony would have been prohibitively expensive. To keep administrative costs low, the service of these indigenous élites is required to meet the managerial needs of the colony.

Another important point is that the implementation of this strategy aims to divide the indigenous population. The narrator explains clearly how this works :

Patrolling the land at all hours of the day were the village overseers. They were themselves villagers who were granted special favours like attending on the landlady, or owning after twenty years' tenure the spot of land on which their house was built. They were fierce, aggressive and strict. Theft was not unusual, and the landlords depended entirely on the overseers to scare away the more

---

<sup>24</sup> According to Ian Munro, Lamming's most autobiographical work, *In the Castle of My Skin*, is the most popular Caribbean novel. See his article in Bruce King ed. op. cit., 128.



dangerous villagers... Occasionally the landlord would accuse the overseers of conniving, of slackening on the job, and the overseers who never risk defending themselves gave vent to their feelings on the villagers who they thought were envious, jealous and mean. (CS, 18)

In fact, the principle of divide and conquer is highlighted in this extract.<sup>25</sup> It is a key means used by the oppressor to achieve his objective. In effect, Lamming's identification of the important role played by this method has led him to emphasize it in his creative writing, as well as in his interviews. In **Natives of My Person**, he has also dealt with this fundamental aspect of the colonial enterprise. It is termed bribery. Here are some of its specific roles as defined by Lamming:

One aspect of foreign rule -- perhaps the one that was to evolve into a settled tradition -- was the techniques of bribe.

Bribery had acquired the status of a salary. It was the recognition men were paid for honest labour. And it was how they were persuaded from disloyalty. The supreme bribe was to bestow an honour, indigenous to the foreign power, on a native who had displayed some excellence of loyalty and achievement on behalf of the foreign power. He became an object of great attention among his own people. His company was a privilege; his praises were sung. (NOP, 226)

It is worth bearing in mind that the third world countries have yet to get rid of this practice. Indirectly, Lamming is thrashing this manipulation typical of colonial and postcolonial situations. In the narrator's viewpoint, colonialism has promoted a spirit of division which has sown discord among the indigenous inhabitants. No one is spared; even the best educated people of the place have internalized it. The quotation below displays evidence that the people of Little

---

<sup>25</sup> For more detailed information on the implementation of this principle and its consequences for the oppressed, the reader can refer to Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *Petals of Blood* (London : Heinemann, 1977), 262-90.

England have made this set of behaviors a conscious part of themselves as a result of learning or repeated experiences in their society:

Even the better educated who had one way or another gone to the island's best schools and later held responsible posts in the Government service, even these were affected by this image of the enemy which had its origin in a layer from which many had sprung and through accidents of time and experience forgotten. The image of the enemy, and the enemy was My People. My people are low-down nigger people. My people don't like to see their people get on [...] The myth has eaten through their consciousness like moths through the pages of ageing documents. (CS, 18-19)

It is important to acknowledge that this enmity engendered by colonial practices among the colonized prevents the latter from efficiently fighting against their common oppressor, their common enemy, because it prevents them from identifying the real enemy (Achebe, 1990, 7).

Blackmailing is another form of bribery. It is a strategic device which is part and parcel of the colonial strategy. Its use in the colonial context aims to inculcate in the colonized the idea of their worthlessness without the existence of the colonial power. Writing about the colonized children and adolescents at the Queen's birthday, Lamming reflects their thoughts:

...it would be better to belong to the empire and in the end get back to the garden.<sup>26</sup> After all there was nothing to lose by belonging to the empire. They were all poor. And moreover the empire made them put on things like parades. They enjoyed the parades and the flags and the speeches. It made them feel a little more important than they were. (CS, 64)

---

<sup>26</sup> "The garden" in this quote refers to the pre-colonial period. It might be a sort of "Eden" reference to the pre-colonial situation. A reference to the Garden of Eden in literature calls attention to God's grace and true commitment to heavenly, godly, and humane values. It alludes to God-inspired organization of the world that results in the promotion of true brotherhood and solidarity.

This excerpt outlines the true philosophy behind the colonial mission. To what extent can the sense of belonging to the empire make people "feel a little more important"? Can the flags, the pennies and the flowers which are associated with the Queen's birthday truly convey a sense of honor and pride to people who are virtually slaves? In any case, this excerpt calls one's attention to the myth of the system.

It must be underlined that subversion is one key device which serves the purpose of the oppressors. In fact, they make people believe the opposite of the truth. By claiming that the colonized are worthless without the colonizers, colonialism forces the colonized to rather reverse the terms in order to fully grasp the real message. This procedure is what Molefi Kete Asante in a slightly different context calls "indirection" (Asante, 1987, 51). It is a language that wears the mask, as Paul Lawrence Dunbar puts it.

Ample evidence to sustain this statement can be found in the novel under scrutiny. **In the Castle of My Skin** suggests that there has been no real development of Little England as a consequence of its having being colonized. Exception made of the creation of their status of enslavement, "nothing has changed" in Barbados as the narrator keeps on saying over and over again throughout the story (CS, 28-29 ; 137). By contrast, Little England has enormously contributed to the development of Big England in different ways. Worthy of mention is the Barbadians' priceless contribution to the victory of Big England thanks to their effective participation in the war opposing Big England to Germany:

Not a tree in sight within the village [...] The trees had been felled. We didn't know why or where they had really been taken, but the customary explanation was the war. Everything had happened because of the war... When we asked what had happened the answer was the war...The

village was contributing to the victory which would be Big England's as well as Little England's. (CS, 221)

Not only were materials needed but also men to fight the Germans who waged war on Big England. In this connection Barrow is mentioned as one who joined the Royal Air Force for the "good cause" (CS, 214). Barrow has very well assimilated the colonial teaching which consists in assisting the "mother country" in time of danger.

Critical attention should be paid to the concept of "Mother Country" itself, for this name needs complete and thorough revising. The phrase "mother country" belongs to the long list of heritages bequeathed by the colonial system. Although this phrase has enriched the lexicon, it has nonetheless created confusion in the minds of many people. A brief critical analysis of this phrase reveals its self-contradiction. Actually, its meaning, which implies the country of one's birth, one's native land, or the country of origin of a group of settlers in another part of the world is logical enough. What is debatable is the use made of it by colonizers who call on the colonized to consider the colonists' native land as their "mother country," that is, their own country. Literally speaking, the native inhabitants' consideration of the metropolis as their "mother country" is tantamount to their accepting the inexistence of colonized spaces without the intervention of the colonial powers. However, the land and its population did exist before the arrival of the conquistadors. Also, its acquiescence is a tacit acknowledgment of the colonial power's birthright over the colony. So far as it remains true that a child is brought into existence by a single mother, no colonial power can claim the status of "mother" over any colony. Both historical facts and "fiction based on historical events recreated in human terms" (Ikiddeh, 1966, ix) provide evidence to sustain this claim.

Yet, a strict confinement to the novels under scrutiny is preferable for the sake of precision, concision, and relevance. For instance, in **In the Castle of My Skin**, many colonies are said to have experienced new ruling nations in the colonial battle opposing different colonizing powers: "...the other islands had changed hands. Now they were French, now they were Spanish. But Little England remained steadfast and constant to Big England" (CS, 29). Just the way a child could not have been brought to existence by two mothers, it is irrational and heterodoxical to term the colonial country the begetter of the colonies -- to the extent that the islands which had "changed hands" will find it difficult to identify their true mother. As Claude Lévi-Strauss has observed, a myth operates without one's knowledge of it. Definitely the phrase "mother country" is not a neutral one. It is linguistically and culturally charged. Its use efficiently conveys and perpetuates one of the living myths of colonialism today. For all these reasons, the name "mother country" needs a critical and thorough revision. Very recently George Lamming has once more drawn public attention to this myth (Lamming, 1997, xxxviii).

Nevertheless, as a token of respect for this myth, we see in **In the Castle of My Skin** that Little England always gives its support to Big England whenever the latter is confronted with any threat to its existence as a nation-state. As evidence, at the request of all Little Englanders, the Governor of Little England sent the following cable to the Prime Minister of Big England when he was informed about the war: "Go brave Big England for Little England is behind you" (CS, 215).

It is important to note that the narrator formulates a pointed critique of the absurd ties which link Big England and Barbados. It goes without saying that Little England will be the loser in this game totally devoid of any spirit of fair-play, because the colonial power conceives of itself as the commander-in-chief

whereas Little England is the mere executant: "Big England had only to say the word and Little England followed" (CS, 29).

As Jenny Sharpe has observed, in general, colonizers make people believe that thanks to their intervention, native populations are freed from despotic rule, raised from their ignorance and saved from cruel and barbarous practices.<sup>27</sup> To illustrate the invaluable "benefits" drawn by Little Englanders from their encounter with Big England, Lamming ironically makes the point that their condition of slavery has not been improved upon after their encounter with Big England:

They<sup>28</sup> were all slaves. And they made us slaves too [...] The queen did free some of us in a kind of way. We started to think about the empire more than we thought of the garden, and then nothing mattered but the empire [...] The empire and the garden... that's all we have to think now, the empire and the garden. We are slaves. We are still slaves of these two. (CS, 63)

The hypocritical side of the colonial claims is what should be borne in mind about this quotation. Particularly, this excerpt highlights the devious and cunning mentality characteristic of colonialism. In fact, this extract clearly indicates that the final result of the process of colonization is worse than the one in the initial situation. The narrator observes that slavery is worse than imprisonment (CS, 49). Therefore, when one realizes that these subjects of the Crown are "slaves of these two," no wonder their plight is one of the worst

---

<sup>27</sup> In Ashcroft et. al. eds., 1995, op. cit. , 99-100.

<sup>28</sup> This personal pronoun "they" obviously refers to the British colonizers. The sense in which Lamming sees the British colonizers as slaves is, as he demonstrated in *Natives of My Person*, they were/are made slaves to their own myths and ideologies which made/make them behave in ways that are destructive to themselves as well as to slaves. The empire alludes to material wealth, money, and exploitation of man by man. It is also a direct allusion to colonization, an expansion of the West through violent means. Whoever falls from the garden, that is, from the God's grace, is to be pitied as much as he who enslaves fellow humans. The colonizer who goes against the will of God and dehumanizes fellow humans becomes the slave of his own greed. In other words, slavery dehumanizes the slave-holder as much as it does the slaves.

conditions one can imagine. In short, these subjects of Big England have become aware that colonization has imposed more suffering on them, for they have become slaves of two entities: the empire and the garden. They are completely deprived of any basic freedom after the arrival of the colonial power in the area. This state of affairs tells us how deep the gap is between the Commandant's ideal of free society, the one he wanted to establish in **Natives of My Person** and the reality in the colony of Little England, as depicted in **In the Castle of My Skin**. In a few words, duplicity can be classified as one of the dominant features of the colonial undertaking.

The hypocrisy of the colonial mentality stems from the need to hide or disguise the fundamental *opposition* of the worlds of colonist and colonized. This opposition is nowhere more clearly exhibited than in separate and diametrically differentiated living spaces of each. The narrator of **In the Castle of My Skin** clearly shows the opposition and the division between their worlds when he describes Belleville and Creighton's village: "We were now in Belleville where the white people lived, and the streets boarded by palm trees were called avenues. The houses were all bungalows high and wide with open galleries and porticoes..." (CS, 101).

This description is in sharp contrast with Creighton's village where the native population of the island live. This village is described as

a marvel of small heaped houses raised jauntily on groundsels of limestone, and arranged in rows on either side of the multiplying marl roads. Sometimes, the roads disintegrated, the limestone slid back and the houses advanced across their boundaries to meet those on the opposite side in an embrace of board and shingle and cactus fence. (CS, 2)

An obvious observation on these two passages : the two protagonists live in exclusive zones. In the light of both quotations, it becomes easy to understand Frantz Fanon when he claims that the colonial world is divided into compartments, a world divided in two. He conceives of colonialism in its Manichean terms exemplified in exclusive zones and divided worlds. He observes:

The settler's town is a strongly built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly lit town; the street are covered with asphalt, and the garbage cans swallow all the leaving [...] The settler's town is a well-fed town, and easygoing town; its belly is always full of good things. The settler's town is a town of white people, of foreigners. The town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where or how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built one on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light... It is a town of niggers and dirty Arabs. (Fanon, WOE, 39)

Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan shares this view. He goes even further, suggesting that both camps are not simply opposed. Both worlds, he argues, "are also inhabited by two different 'species' in perpetual conflict" (Bulhan, 1985, 116).

The narrator of **In the Castle of My Skin** thus has a point when he sees the colonial world as basically characterized by "big life one side, an' small life a next side, an' you get a kin' o' feelin' of you in your small corner an' I in mine" (CS, 167). There could be no more striking comparison between the colonial undertaking and apartheid.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> A long stream of literary writers have addressed the problem of apartheid in their writings. Peter Abrahams, Ezekiel Mphahlele, James Erote, Alex La Guma... and Can Temba



### II. 3. THE COLONIAL SCHOOL AND CHURCH

The colonial school and Christian religion constitute two of George Lamming's main concerns in **In the Castle of My Skin**. Often described as tools used in the process of colonization, both institutions enable the author to document how both the school and the church have contributed to the alienation of colonized people all over the world, and particularly in the West Indies.

To begin this discussion, it is important to point out that the concept of education comprises the following three trends within its scope: informal education, nonformal education, and formal education.

Informal education is the lifelong process by which every individual acquires and accumulates knowledge, attitudes and skills from his daily contact with his fellows and exposure to the surrounding environment. Nonformal education has to do with any organized, systematic, short-term, and non-degree educational activity outside the framework of any formal school system. It is rather designed to give selective learning to particular (sub)groups of people. Formal education refers to the highly institutionalized, chronologically graded and hierarchically structured education spanning from the lower degree to the highest level, that is, from kindergarten through university.

Among these three areas, formal education is of central interest to this study. In his presentation of educational issues as illustrated in Creighton's

---

can be mentioned among others. For some factual accounts of the system, consult M. Vychinsky, *L'Afrique Australe : Apartheid, colonialisme, agression* (Moscou : Edition du Progres, 1987).

village, Lamming describes the way education is structurally and technically organized. He also puts a heavy emphasis on the methodology used in the transmission of knowledge in these colonial schools. Therefore, it goes without saying that Lamming is basically and earnestly concerned with the impact of this formal education on the children who have been educated in those colonial schools.

Chapter three of **In Castle of My Skin** mainly deals with formal education in colonial Barbados. Lamming is straightforward regarding his opinion about the colonial schools. His authoritative description leaves no room for doubt : there is a striking resemblance between the set up of the school and any slave ship. Both the shape of the buildings and the pupils are a mere replica of what commonly characterized the middle passage. As the narrator puts it : "There were nine squads comprising about a thousand boys. The squads were packed close, and seen from the school porch the spectacle was that of an enormous ship whose cargo had been packed in boxes and set on the deck" (CS, 28.). Figuratively speaking, the school is presented as another slave ship, or an extension of this.

The presentation of the school itself reveals the type of discipline under which the teaching is carried out in those colonial schools : rigor, obedience, respect are their by-words. As a result, its pupils are often exposed to unfair punishments. To be convinced of this, it is enough pointing out that any pupil from these colonial schools can be pitilessly flogged without being proven guilty ( CS, 35). Teachers in colonial schools enjoy an unlimited power over their pupils. Their regular use of the cane can be compared to that of overseers in the time of slavery:

The school was a kind of camp with an intolerable rigidity of discipline. The head teacher and all the assistants carried their canes as though they were in danger of attack from the boys, and they used them on all occasions and for all sorts of reasons. (CS, 208)

The task of educating young men and women in colonial time is mainly left in the hands of schools and churches. Little wonder a hierarchical and sequential linkage is established by Lamming between school and church in the text. The narrator's observation that these two institutions are located in the same enclosure is quite meaningful. Indirectly, the logic he means us to see in this case has to do with the strict spirit and sense of collaboration that exist between missionaries and colonizers as evidenced in **Natives of My Person**. As have noted many critics, the church has always maintained an intimate alliance with the ruling class for the sake of its own safety (Killam, 1980, 8).

The objective and goal assigned to colonial education is clear from Lamming's presentation of the colonial school in Barbados. During the colonial period, school remained an effective tool in the service of colonizers. As is obvious to Paquet, instead of being a source of knowledge and understanding, the colonial school functions to perpetuate confusion, ignorance, and "destructive cultural dependence on the mother country among its pupils" (Paquet, 1982, 19). No wonder the ideologies promoted through this channel are efficiently internalized by the colonized élite. Educational institutions are, without doubt, among the most suitable and appropriate weapons used by colonizers to subdue the colonized. Little wonder, in his account of facts related to educational and religious issues in Creighton's village, Lamming lays such an important emphasis on the effects of both institutions on his countrymen.

To realize the extent to which education in colonial times has broken the colonial society into pieces, let's examine the conception of education in

colonial Barbados, as portrayed by Lamming in **In the Castle of My Skin**. How does Lamming present the basic problem of education? How is the issue of education addressed in this novel? What is its ultimate goal?

According to George Lamming, colonial education is based on lies. Schools in the colonial era did nothing to foster national pride in the educated. The West Indian is not fully exposed to his roots via the colonial education. That through the process of education the Caribbean world is presented to the Caribbean colonial subject as an alien and fictional world can be sensed in the novel.

Like Paule Marshall, George Lamming accuses colonizers of depriving the colonized of their true past, their real history. Herbert W. Edwards and Rod W. Horton once observed : "One of the chief problems in the study of any literature is to understand the relationship existing between that literature and the social milieu in which it was produced". Moreover, they argued that "literature tends to reflect the dominant tendencies of its era and to grow out of the moral, social, and intellectual ferment impinging upon the sensibilities of literary men" (Edwards and Horton, 1974, 1). It is by now a well known fact that writers draw their inspiration and material from real life; and very often, they claim to speak on behalf of their community. Literature is, therefore, a representation of life which puts a particular emphasis, in fiction, on what marks a given society. On this basis, one can reasonably make the point that if both writers insist on the colonizers' will to veil the historical truth, this can reflect their common experience specific to their geographical area. In this context, I do agree with the critic Barbara Herrenstein Smith on the point that the intentions of these authors "can be seen as historically determinate" (Smith, 1978, 146).

Colonized in George Lamming -- and this is valid for Marshall's fiction -- are only exposed to a falsified history. The Caribbean colonial subject is presented as an ahistorical person in the frame of this novel. In ***In the Castle of My Skin***, past events that are part and parcel of the history of Creighton's Village are kept secret. The result is obvious : the Caribbean subjects that people ***In the Castle of My Skin*** have no access to their history, to their true past. Historical falsifications and adulterations are given high priority. Examples to sustain this point are so numerous that only the most sensitive ones are selected to show how the author establishes this deliberate and frank will to hide their past from the people concerned.

For instance, slavery, which is the basic fact of their existence, is not referred to as an integral part of their history. Nothing is said about it in the official curriculum. Supriya Nair also points out this feature typical of the Barbados colonial school curriculum when he expresses the view that "Within the colonial system of education, what one was taught to forget was the arrival from Africa. Thus, the schoolboys in Lamming's ***In the Castle*** are hazy about slavery" (Nair, 1996, 115). In other words, the specifics of slave history were officially denied to the descendants of that history in school.

However, a truth can never be concealed forever. Through their conversation with Old Ma -- one of "the archetypical figures who stand for the past and at the same time function as barometers of different attitudes to change in the village"<sup>30</sup> -- these pupils discover that slavery is one of the vivid remembrances which dominates the repressed consciousness of the Little Englanders. Curiosity makes people discover new things. The schoolboys'

---

<sup>30</sup> Lamming in Sandra Pouchet Paquet, *The Novels of George Lamming* (London : Heinemann, 1982), 24; also in Paquet's foreword to the 1997 edition of *In the Castle of My Skin* ( Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), xxiv.

astonishment has caused them to question their teacher on this issue. Seen by the schoolchildren as an uncontested and incontestable authority who can confirm the validity of this revelation, the latter conveys facts related to slavery when he has this to say:

It was a long, long, long time ago. People talked of slaves a long time ago. It had nothing to do with the old lady. She wouldn't be old enough. And moreover, it had nothing to do with people in Barbados ... It was in another part of the world that those things happened. (CS, 49)'

The Little Englanders are presented their own history as prehistory. Thus, this statement by the schoolteacher reduces their history to a kind of nightmare that cannot be understood. Of course, it cannot be otherwise, because this teacher as well as his colleagues, including the head teacher are products of the same school system. When one keeps in mind that "colonial schooling [is] education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment" as was established by Walter Rodney,<sup>31</sup> then one can better understand this schoolteacher ; he is also a victim, a product of the same colonial school which is basically founded on lies (Griffiths, 1978, 83).

However, in the light of his declaration, some remarks are worth making. First, this statement is made to reinforce the claim that the colonial school professes lies to its pupils. In this vein, Juan Angel Silen's observation about the educational experience in Puerto Rico is illuminating. "As a ruling-class instrument" he notes, school "penalizes students and teachers to make them conform to an authoritarian structure. It aims to brutalize them by psychological manipulation."<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Walter Rodney, quoted in Joyce Pettis, *Toward Wholeness in Paule Marshall's Fiction* (Charlottesville, Virginia : University Press of Virginia, 1995), 65.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem.

Second, this statement that the author prompts to the schoolteacher accurately reflects factual reality in West Indies. This observation is not only available by means of fiction; critical studies and historical facts also credit these practices. For instance, to show the extent to which history is denied or veiled in Barbados, Brydon and Tiffin ironically observe that "The history of England was also Barbados' history" :

Until independence in most West Indian territories, the history of the British slaving was not officially taught in schools, the origin of the black presence in the Caribbean deliberately obscured. West Indians were taught that their history has nothing to do with the "jungle" and "uncivilized" Africa. (Brydon and Tiffin, 1993, 49)

The banning of any Afrocentric idea is not the only wrong done to these pupils. Another important feature is the oppressor's disregard for any native achievement and the exclusion of historical black figures from the curriculum. No black political leader is alluded to in the syllabus. Even any thought which hints at the charismatic and panafricanist figure, Marcus Garvey, is kept secret. The irony in this situation resides in the fact that some adult people are aware of the game. As a result, they laugh at the English manner of educating their subjects: "But 'tis strange the way they give Little England the best education [...] I don't think there's any part of this God's world barring English sheself where the education is to a such high pitch" (CS, 95).

The shoemaker's reply to this observation is quite illustrative of the objective assigned formal education in Barbados : "But if you look good... if you remember good, you'll never remember that they ever tell us 'bout Marcus Garvey. They never even tell us they wus a place where he live call Africa" (CS, 96).

It is important to point out that the literary strategy used by the writer here is twofold. On the one hand, he raises the issue of awareness by showing where the flaw lies. Second, he fills the gap by having one character provide the "right" response to the question raised.

Indeed, the paradox of the colonial school is that it perpetuates ignorance and confusion among its children. The shoemaker's response to the above mentioned remark validates the assumption that all important steps in education come to the village from outside the school system. Trumper's brief emigration to the United States reveals the same truth. It taught him more than he had learned during all his years in colonial schools. Likewise, Pa's dream on the eve of his death -- which "establishes a history of displacement, slavery and colonization as a context in which the present and the past must be viewed" -- conveys the same message : "the ancestral spirit, speaking through the voice of an older man on the eve of his death, provides the kind of history which the village could not have learned from its official school." <sup>33</sup>

Of course, the knowledge of one's history plays a key role in anyone's relation to the world. Although this subject matter has received much attention in Marshall's treatment of the past, perhaps it might be useful to insist on the importance of the past with regard to the issue of education. Many scholars share the view that if the past is not critically evaluated in the light of the present, the future, too, cannot be worth living for. For instance, Françoise Vergès, quoting Michel de Certeau in *Faire de l'histoire* stresses the role of history when she observes that history is always ambivalent, because the "place it gives to the past is equally a means to open the way for the future".<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Lamming, "Introduction" op. cit., xliii.

<sup>34</sup> Vergès in Read ed., op. cit., 64.



Likewise, Ngugi believes in the importance of the past/history when he writes these lines :

History is very important in any people, how we look at our past is very important in determining how we look at and how we evaluate the present. A distorted view of the people's past can very easily distort our views and evaluations of the present as well as the evaluation of our present potentials and the future possibilities as a people. (in Killam, 1980, 10)

Therefore, people who are deprived of any recollection of their past are unable to project any clear vision of their future. Even against one's will the past still plays a leading role in one's projection in the future. As has noted Jenny Sharpe in a very practical way, "None of us escape the legacy of a colonial past and its traces on our academic practices."<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, through the reading and teaching of classic English texts, colonial subjects are trained in such a way that they become very familiar with the realities of the British empire. To borrow the formulation from two postcolonial critics, these "pupils had black/white and empire/colony relations *naturalised* for them" (Brydon & Tiffin, 1993, 49) via colonial education: "They understood the flags. They understood them because they did not use to question them. The flags explained their presence, and the parade and the inspector. All these things were simple. They simple were" (CS, 48).

As Supriya Nair has observed, notwithstanding the fact these schoolchildren "comically misunderstand British history, they are more grounded in the latter than in the former" (Nair, 1996, 115). The educational

---

<sup>35</sup> In Aschroft et. al, eds. 1995, op. cit., 99.

curriculum of the colonial school in Barbados was deliberately designed to highlight evidence that the area was an ahistorical zone before the coming of English settlers. That no historical event happened in the colonized area before the coming of the colonizers is central to the colonial undertaking. In consequence, history begins with the arrival of the Europeans in Barbados.

Another observation which is worthy of notice has to do with the strategic methodology developed in order to efficiently drum into the heads of these pupils the powerful message of attachment to the English empire.

As if daily rehearsal of the British national anthem ["God save our gracious King, Long live our noble King, God save the King" (CS, 30)] is not sufficient per se to convince the Barbadians of the dominant position of the British in the area; as if the visible presence of the British tricolor Union Jack does not evidence *de facto* the reality of British empire and its pressure on the Little Englanders; fearing that the message conveyed by "the small flags and big flags, round flags and square flags" can be ignored by the pupils (CS, 28), some special merrymaking moments are reserved to celebrate the absolute domination of Big England over Little England. Queen Victoria's birthday -- the empire day -- is an instance of these. On this occasion, schoolchildren listen to the general supervisor of the educational system, their inspector. They are afterwards given pennies

Each penny has its message : it powerfully teaches the young generation the greatness, generosity, goodness, and kindness of the colonial power and leaves an imprint upon the heart and head of each pupil; this interpretation is deduced from the nature of the coin itself. The image of the sovereign British king, or queen is printed on each coin. This image is exhibited to the students

as the true image of the person who has freed them from savagery. Through this display, the pupils are more influenced by the power of the metropolis.

A passage from the inspector's speech on one of these occasions demonstrates the brainwashing and naturalization of relation between these pupils and the British Empire:

You are with us and we with you. And together we shall always walk in the will of God. Let me say how impressed I am with the decorations. I hope I shall start no jealousy among the schools in the island under my control if I say that such a display as I see here could not have been bettered by the lads at home. (CS, 30)

In this speech, the praise these pupils are given is a stimulating element which instills the spirit of everlasting attachment to Big England; its desired effect is to determine the Little Englanders to out-Herod Herod. Needless to say the inspector's address goes against the interest and needs of these schoolchildren. This passage also hints at the paramount role played by Christian religion in the colonial undertaking; it preaches the colonial message of the divine mission of British power. School and religion constitute the two faces of the same coin the colonizer has used in order to dominate the colonized. God and school can live side by side, provided they achieve the set goal. In fact colonial education has subdued these subjects and put more emphasis on loyalty to the colonial power than raising any nationalistic spirit among the colonized. Its impact on the old generation is perceptible in the way they believe in the truthfulness of the message conveyed by the colonial authorities (CS, 48).

In his profession of faith, this inspector states that he firmly believes that the historical encounter between Barbados and England is registered in God's

will. Though the children do not quite understand "what all this really means, except as an obscure standard to which they must be loyal" (Paquet, 1982, 19), it remains certain that this message has achieved its effect on them. They are indoctrinated as is exemplified in their reverence of the colonial rule. As is generally the case, "British colonial education system played an important role in the subjectification of the colonized and the maintenance of imperial domination and control" (Brydon and Tiffin, 1993, 47). It must be underlined that by creating confusion in the younger minds, the author tells the reader that these pupils can easily fall prey to the colonial authorities.

This passage related to the inspector's visit further explains George Lamming's hatred for colonial education. The inspector's approval of the "mechanical and meaningless display of discipline and memorization as the acme of achievement within the system he supervises" (Paquet, 1982, 19) is a further proof that most of these schoolboys and girls were trained for examination and tested for how much they could memorize. Seen from this angle of vision, it might be said that he "blames colonial school for the anti-intellectual tradition of the island" (Nair, 1996, 19).

As is obvious from the foregoing argument, the pupils in these colonial schools were forced to learn things which had no relevance to themselves. Many scholars have raised the issue of the irrelevance of the educational system in the Caribbean to its environment. They all agree that the system carries the contours of an English heritage. British literary writers who had very little relevance to the Caribbean reality were dominant in the educational system. All of the scholars, including Lamming, refer to Shakespeare, George Eliot, Jane Austin, Joseph Conrad, Dickens, Kipling... and Wordsworth as models taught in the system. In other words, "they were teaching exactly

whatever the Cambridge Syndicate demanded."<sup>36</sup> To use another formulation by Lamming, "The West Indian's education was imported in much the same way that flour and butter are imported from Canada" (**Pleasures**, 27).

It must be borne in mind that this situation is not specific to the West Indies; it is not an isolated case typical only to the colony of Little England. It is a general practice observed in many, if not in all British colonies. Thus, it shares this colonial practice with the other colonies ruled by Britain and the other colonizing powers. Helen Tiffin and Diana Brydon reinforce this conviction in the quote below regarding education in Australia:

The literary education and material in general was British with a heavy emphasis on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries writings [...] And just as Australian children ... for over half a century began school by singing "God Save the King/Queen" so West Indies schooled like Australians in British values and Empire loyalty through learning by heart that the "Britons, Britons. Never, Never, shall be Slaves. (Brydon and Tiffin, 1993, 47)

A similar situation occurred in Anglophone Africa as is shown in **Petals of Blood**. Students of Siriana high school are exposed to European values, and initiated into Western philosophies. In this school, the standard par excellence is Shakespeare. This English genius cannot be circumvented. That his writings are always quoted by teachers to quell the students' revolutionary attitude demanding the promotion of the African culture and values is of great symbolic importance (Ngugi , 1977, 172 & 331). In the same line of thought, in **L'aventure ambiguë**, Cheikh Hamidou Kane portrays strong brainwashing in the French colonial school.

---

<sup>36</sup> Lamming in an interview with Munro and Sander, *Kas-Kas : African and African American Research Institute* (Austin : University of Texas Press, 1972), 6.

"The repudiation of native narrative, a process of emptying out that caused names, dates, circumstances and truth to vanish" has followed usurpation of native Caribbean land. Therefore, "the disavowal of native history asserted in colonial historiography is manifest" (Nair, 1996, 106). Because it is taken for granted that nothing ever happened in Barbados prior to its settlement by the colonizers, as "aboriginal people had no right to a 'history' and no written records" (Brydon and Tiffin, 1993, 47), schoolchildren are taught about English historical achievements. The evocation of some English figures by these schoolboys is an illustration. "William the Conqueror an' Richard" are well known English historical persons in Little England. There is no historical role model for the area (CS, 40).

The irrelevance of this curriculum, which is principally focused on alien images both unreal and fictional, is obvious. This general remark might have motivated E. K. Brathwaite when he raised the paradox inherent in colonial education:

In the Caribbean (as in many other "cultural disaster" areas) , the people educated in this system came to know more, even today, about English kings and queens than they do about our own national heroes, our own slave rebels, the people who help to build and to destroy our society.<sup>37</sup>

In the framework of **In the Castle of My Skin**, religion is not only used to effect submission to the Empire. It also causes disintegration and difficulties within families. Particular emphasis is laid on its destabilizing effects in **In the Castle of My Skin**. The point is that religion is employed to bring disharmony within marital couples. The narrator seems to laugh at religious matters in his description of the three boys' attitudes towards Christian revivalism and the

---

<sup>37</sup> E. K. Brathwaite, in Aschroft et. al. eds., 1995, op. cit., 310.

troublesome situation which resulted from a white woman's imposition of Christian wedding ritual on old married couples. For instance, the narrator's sharp criticism of the Eurocentric conception of marriage and its imposition on the native inhabitants is expressed in the presentation of Bots, Bambi and Bambina, an ideal polygamous couple:

Everybody says there never know in all the village from top to bottom a set of people who live in love an' harmony like Bots, Bambina an' Bambi, with the children there, not in the same house, but in the same sort feelin' of you belong to me an' I to you. An' it went on like that for donkeys years.  
(CS, 126)

This happy atmosphere which prevailed in this family is short-lived after the involvement of the white missionary woman in their business. Their encounter with this intrusive white missionary woman -- who encourages polygamous couples to adopt monogamy -- has modified the spirit of cohesion within this family by bringing division and psychological disharmony. Because to have two wives is tantamount to living in "two mortal sins" in the Christian way of seeing, Bambi is encouraged to marry either Bots or Bambina (CS, 127). The psychological imbalance which results from his attempt to comply with this new demand has jeopardized his life. This situation is quite illustrative of the destructive effect of Christian religion on the traditional people in the novel.

In view of this situation, one can better understand Ngugi Wa Thiong'o when he states that Christianity means rejection of the values and rituals that held us [Africans] together and forces us to adopt a debased European middle-class mode of existence (Ngugi, 1975, 32). This intrusion of the missionary into the family's privacy evidences a tangible sign of Europe's involvement in every aspect of existence, including even the most sacred processes of naming and

marriage (Asante, 1987, 87). To paraphrase Julia Emberley, one might say that the antagonistic conception of social relations between the dominant majority and the subjugated minority come into play at this point (Emberley, 1993, 134).

The social fragmentation brought about by Christianity is also evidenced in the destruction of the lovely marital life that had characterized the Jon and Susie couple before they joined "the Free for All Brothers," in order to get saved. The so-called wedding ceremony that might consecrate their union -- apart from their two children which are tangible signs of this union -- will never take place, because the church is opposed to polygamy. He is allowed to marry only Susie or Jen, the daughter of Brother Bannister he has "put into trouble" (CS, 114-115). Of course, under the threat of both wives, he promises to wed each of them in two different sanctuaries at the same hour. But as could be expected, because "the poor Jon wus betwix' the devil an' the deep blue sea," he has no choice apart from hiding himself to save his own life (CS, 116-117). The wedding never takes place.

Similarly indoctrinated by Christianity, Old Ma has adopted a this-world-is-not-my-home attitude. Her attitude can be traced back to her religious faith. This old woman is convinced that this world is a distorted image of heaven. As a result, there is nothing gained by amassing worldly riches. To use Sandra Pouchet Paquet's formulation, Old Ma "has been conditioned by a Christian doctrine of trust and acceptance that warns against storing 'riches here on earth.'" (Paquet, 1982, 24). This suggests the effective influence religion has exerted on all generations of people in Little England.

To a great extent, religion has played no positive role in the framework of this novel. With due regard to its negative role, it can be said that religion is



made to sustain the colonial mission in **In the Castle of My Skin**. As Sandra Pouchet Paquet and Supriya Nair see it, Christianity plays a complementary key role in undermining the village's identity in the framework of **In the Castle of My Skin**. Christianity is alien in orientation and emasculating in its effects on the village community. Christianity as is depicted here reinforces the concept of empire promoted by the colonial education:

Religion fails the people by reinforcing their sense of inadequacy and helplessness, and by convincing them of their need of an alien master and guide. It directs the people away from their best interests, in favour of a system which makes it possible for a distant power to foster false loyalties and rule without incurring resentment. (Paquet, 1982, 21)<sup>38</sup>

On the whole, religion fails to meet the needs of the village community. Christianity is therefore a means to reinforce confusion, ignorance, and submission. Like the colonial school, Christian religion also fails to meet the needs of this representative community in Creighton's village.

In **The Pleasures of Exile**, George Lamming makes the point that Prospero's imperialism is sadistic. He writes:

His imperialism is like an illness, not only in his relationships, but in his relation to the external and foreign world. This island belongs to Caliban whom he found there; yet some privilege allows Prospero to assert -- and with authority that is divine -- that he is lord of the island. (**Pleasures**, 113)

Throughout this chapter, we have speculated on the main motivations behind Prospero's imperialist conquest of Caliban's island. His divine claim over Caliban's land has been motivated by so many reasons.

---

<sup>38</sup> See also Supriya Nair, *op. cit.*, 38-9.

Specifically, in **Natives of My Person**, divisions at home, regional jealousies, battles for power, economic improvement and psychological needs have led these men to this enterprise which brings a promise of freedom from the deprivation they suffer in their homeland. It is well understood that the colonial enterprise is neither humanitarian, nor philanthropic mission; instead, it is based wholly on the growing needs of the colonizers. This enterprise is fundamentally based on myths. Though claimed by its defenders to be a civilizing mission, it must rather be argued that colonialism itself illustrates a moment of crisis in Prospero's civilization.

Lanning establishes that individual colonizers also suffer in the hands of their superiors. A perusal of Pitandos' diary (NOP, 12-13, 55) shows some of the humiliations they endure. Similarly, Marcel's diary deals with the horrible treatment they often received after faithful service (NOP, 31)<sup>39</sup>. But above all, the authoritarian attitude of the leader of the enterprise, the Commandant of the ship **Reconnaissance** tells more than anything else about this truth. They are just an instrument in the Commandant's hand. To mention just an instance, though everything was apparently ready for their voyage to San Cristobal, no one dared ask the Commandant why he would not give order to sail:

Every detail of their preparations had been complete. But the Commandant would not give the order to hoist and sail; nor could any of the officers explain why they had been detained. The Commandant kept his silence; and no one dared inquire why he was waiting. (NOP, 10)

His various orders and warnings are a clear indication of the relationship that exists among colonizers : there exist some stratification within that society

---

<sup>39</sup> As a consequence of their ill-treatments, it is reported that escape and desertion by crews on the high seas during the period of slaving and settlement were common. Common sailors were regarded as dregs of humanity and bore the brunt of the rigors of the voyages (Nair, op. cit., 46-7).

too. For instance, to keep his distance from those inferior to him in status, the Commandant avoids direct communication with his officers: "The Commandant didn't leave his cabin. Sasha kept watch at the cabin door, alert to any order the Commandant might have him pass on to the officers" (NOP, 59). In this respect, he is seen by Baptiste as a "hole that lets out orders" (NOP, 137). This image suggests the practical distance that exists among them. They are almost deprived of the enjoyment of their freedom in the course of the voyage : "The Commandant's order was that no one should leave the ship. It increased their eagerness for the pleasures of the land" (NOP, 223).

This chapter also addresses the question of how much the colonial educational curricula emphasized Western values. As is demonstrated in **In the Castle of My Skin**, this practice has greatly contributed to social fragmentation in colonial societies. In other words, this tradition has led to fragmentation at the cultural, psychological, and historical levels in the various colonial societies in general, and particularly the West Indian communities. Its aftermath also remains perceptible in postcolonial societies. Colonial education has a negative influence over the educated subjects. The teaching of the colonial school aims to put an end to the development of any genuine West Indian traditions and values.

As Philip G. Altbach has pointed out, indigenous cultures, though "highly developed, were virtually ignored by colonial educational policy,"<sup>40</sup> in many cases. This situation applies to the Caribbean case. This colonial teaching establishes no recognizable archetypal model for the educated. It is obvious, from the foregoing argument, that colonial teaching is directed against individual fulfillment. It leads to cultural alienation, the destruction of any sense of community connectedness, as well as the suppression of national

---

<sup>40</sup> Philip G. Altbach, in Ashcroft et. al. eds. 1995, op. cit., 453.

consciousness. Both institutions, colonial school and Christianity, serve as a means of brainwashing used by the colonizers. It is not therefore surprising to realize that "brainwashed by the oppressor's values, the [postcolonial] subject, even with self-government, finds cultural independence obscured" (Pettis, 1995, 64). To paraphrase Julia Emberley, it can be said that the educational process depicted in *In the Castle of My Skin* describes the assimilation and alienation produced by an inside/outside figuration of enclosed cultural boundaries (1993, 135). Thus, colonial subjects are educated in such a way to undervalue their genuine tradition. They are made strangers to their immediate environment:

lorsqu'il parle d'aliénation, le romancier antillais s'applique d'abord à décrire le phénomène aberrant qui veut qu'après trois siècles d'histoire, l'Antillais se sente déplacé dans son pays. Au niveau le plus élémentaire, il se donne pour tâche de montrer les difficultés qu'ont ses personnages à discerner et à s'approprier l'espace qui les entoure. (Tarrieu , 1980, 26)

In a nutshell, pupils who are trained in these colonial schools are blind to their own culture and interests. That this kind of education alienates people and blinds them to their own environment is visible in many characters who people the West Indian novel; Paule Marshall's characterization of Primus Mackenzie, a representative of the colonized intellectual and politician, is illustrative. Primus Mackenzie's situation is a complicated one because though his "social conscience makes him one of the community," his "Western education values individuals over the community and independence over interdependency" (Pettis, 1995, 64). In Lamming's *Water with Berries*, Roger's father is presented as a totally alienated person (WWB, 71). Similarly, due to his colonial education, Roger is unable to establish any recognizable link between himself and his home country, San Cristobal, since it has no historical record

and achievement (WWB, 70). In **In the Castle of My Skin**, Mr. Slime's betrayal of his community is another case in point. Little wonder, Philip G. Altbach partly attributes the "Western-oriented" tendency of "emerging élite groups" in many independent nations to their education.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps all these different situations can account for Sandra Pouchet Paquet's view on the colonial school in **In the Castle of My Skin** as a source of division. "By educating individuals to an unthinking reverence for values and symbols that are in conflict with community interest," she thinks "formal education divides society against itself" (Paquet, 1982, 20).

This exposé of the colonial educational system evidences the incompatibility between the curriculum and the needs of the concerned. The basic problem originates in the striking inadequacy of the said curriculum in the given environment. It goes without saying that the author raises the issue of the discrepancy between "social reality" and the school curriculum, on the one hand. It must be noted, however, that the author's use of postcolonial literary strategies has enabled him to promote postcolonial vision in his work.

Lamming mainly achieves the promotion of postcolonial vision in **Natives of My Person** and **In the Castle of My Skin** through the creation of clever characters who are ready to reveal some basic truths inherent in the Caribbean history. In "filling the gap" by creating these characters -- Old Pa, Old Ma, the shoemaker, Trumper -- Lamming corrects the colonial vision through his revising of colonial mentality. The creation of Old Pa and Old Ma is an expression of desire to remain an active participant in debunking the myth of colonialism. He also achieves this postcolonial vision by manipulating the setting. Lamming uses displacement -- physical and symbolic displacements - - as an artistic device to promote postcolonial mentality in his works. By

---

<sup>41</sup> *ibidem*.

enabling Trumper to move to the United States, the latter has gained more insight into the colonial question. Likewise, Old Pa's dream -- which is a symbolic movement -- has enabled the writer to promote the same postcolonial mentality in his fiction.

Notwithstanding his literary strategies, it must be emphasized that when education patterns are imposed that make students strangers to their own culture and mere instruments in the production process, it can be seen that these practices hinder the goals of development and inflict injury on society.<sup>42</sup> A major way in which the injury inflicted by the colonial school on the Caribbean subjects is perceptible in their "natural" tendency to emigrate to the metropolis, the focus of the next chapter.

---

<sup>42</sup> Molar Oguundipe-Leslie, "African Women, Culture and Another Development," in Abena P. A. Busia and S. M. James, eds., *Theorizing Black Feminisms* (London and New York : Routledge, 1993), 102.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

THE ISSUE OF EXILE IN GEORGE LAMMING'S

*THE EMIGRANTS* AND *WATER WITH BERRIES*

The theme of exile is represented in various manners in Caribbean literature. But this study focuses on the various reasons/causes for exile and the exilic experience as described by George Lamming in **The Emigrants and Water with Berries**.

### III. 1. THE THEME OF EXILE IN CARIBBEAN LITERATURE

"A colonialism in reverse" is the phrase used by Gordon Lewis (Lewis 1978, 304) to refer to the influx of large numbers of non-white people from the Caribbean Islands and Africa who, in the period following the Second World War, literally invaded the imperial "centers" : France, England, and the United States, to mention only some major countries where postwar immigration has enormously transformed life.

A close scrutiny of the attitude adopted by protagonists in the West Indian novel has led Mohanram and Rajan to make a fundamental observation regarding the place of exile in Caribbean literature and its significance in the area. In **English Postcoloniality**, they make the point that exile is the most striking element which dominates the plot of Caribbean fiction, including novelists of both sexes. They suggest that the trope of exile in Caribbean literature reflects the instability of the region:

Like the heroes of Lamming and Naipaul, the heroines of Rhys, and Hodge, and Kincaid bring their life story to a closure by embarking upon a journey that takes them away from their island homes. Journeys, in fact, crisscross the varying fabric of West Indian fiction. The journey motif, it



can be said, signifies the instability of existence in the West Indies, whose humanity, haunted by dreams of a better future, must drift toward Europe, the old colonizer, or toward North America, the new equalizer.<sup>1</sup>

As a theme in Caribbean literature, exile has been addressed in a number of critical studies by postcolonial critics. It has been addressed by many eminent literary critics of African, Caribbean and black diasporan literature in general.<sup>2</sup> They all seem to agree on a common fact : exile is a recurrent structural and formal pattern of the postcolonial text.

In his monumental study devoted to Caribbean literature, Simon Gikandi writes that exile is historical and existential. His careful analysis of the theme of exile in Caribbean writing leads him to observe that "Exile and displacement constitute the ground zero of West Indian literature; its radical point of departure" (Gikandi, 1992, 33).

Before dealing with this topic in detail, it is important to define the term "exile". What is exile?

**The Webster's Third New Dictionary of English** defines the term exile as "a forced removal from one's native country". In this sense, exile means

---

<sup>1</sup> Mohanram and Rajan, eds, op. cit., 50.

<sup>2</sup> John P. Matthiews, *Tradition in Exile* (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1962); Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Homecoming : Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics* (London: Heinemann, 1972); W. H. New, *Among Worlds* (Ontario: Press Porcepic); G. Griffiths, *A Double Exile : African and West Indian Writing Between Two Cultures* (London: Marion Bayers, 1978); and Andre Gurr, *Writers in Exile : The Identity of Home in Modern Literature* (Brighton: Harvester, 1981).

expulsion from home, or banishment. Another meaning or a given connotation suggested by the term exile is a "voluntary absence from one's country" or to willingly separate oneself from one's home. Whether one is evicted from one's country by a legal authority or whether one leaves voluntarily because one feels driven away from one's home or country by conditions there, both interpretations of the word "exile" reveal a constant fact : the forced absence of the exile from his native country.

In **The Pleasures of Exile**, George Lamming's pioneering collection of essays on intellectual history and cultural politics, a book which is a forerunner of current postcolonial formulations around identity and cultural hybridity, Lamming describes the exile in the following terms:

The exile is a universal figure. The proximity of our lives to the major issues of our time has demanded of us all some kind of involvement. Some may remain neutral; but all have, at least, to pay attention to what is going on. On the political level, we are often without the right kind of information to make argument effective; on the moral level we have to feel our way through problems for which we have no adequate reference of traditional conduct as guide. Chaos is often, therefore, the result of our thinking and our doing. We are made to feel our sense of exile by our inadequacy and our irrelevance of function in a society whose past we can't alter, and whose future is always beyond us. (**Pleasures**, 1992, 24)

The issue of exile is a general phenomenon in the Caribbean. Ante- and postcolonial Caribbean people were always confronted, in one way or the other, with a crucial problem of exile in the region. Exile was, and as it remains

now a problem of the West Indian people as a whole. It is a well known fact that many prominent figures left the West Indies and settled elsewhere for life.

The problem of exile is so acute and serious in the area that many conferences were held in order to find solution to it. The most important conference of the kind was held in the fall of 1967, at Sir George Williams University, in Montreal, Canada. On that occasion, the case of Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, and Frantz Fanon, three most important prominent and charismatic exiles, was discussed. In their discussion, the participants in the conference asked the essential question : "Why did these men feel that they had to leave?"

The answer to this crucial and relevant question is provided in the "Editorial" of *The West Indian Nation in Exile* which reads:

This is much certain. They left largely because they had no organic link with anything at home. Large scale agriculture, industry, small or large, commercial enterprise of any significance, were all rigorously kept out of their hands. They were within closed walls with no room to move. Either stay or get out.

It is the constant social bruises and wounds inflicted upon a population that must live in such a situation, that is for the most part responsible for the heavy migration of the West Indians from their native land.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> "Editorial: West Indian Nation in Exile," in *West Indian Nation in Exile*, 1967. quoted in Gendzier : *Frantz Fanon : A Critical Study* (New York : Pantheon Books, 1973), 18.

It appears obvious from their discussion that all of them "felt that to make the **first** leap to their free and full development, they had to go abroad" (Gendzier, 1973, 18).

The problem of exile is not only the concern of ordinary people that one can visibly meet in daily life in the Caribbean area. It is also the business of novelists. It is the concern of many characters we meet in reading novels in general; but particularly, as one reads fiction produced by Caribbean writers, one quickly comes to the conclusion that characters in West Indian novels are also determined by their compulsion to emigrate as do people in the region.

Exile is one of the key characteristic features of Caribbean literature. Caribbean writers have abundantly written about exile, migration, emigration or immigration. Heavy emphasis is laid on the issue of travel in their writings. For instance, apart from the writers mentioned by Mohanram and Rajan --- Lamming (**The Emigrant**), Naipaul (**The Mimic Men**), Hodge (**Crick Crack, Monkey**), Kincaid (**A Small Place**), and Rhys (**Wide Sargasso**) --- emigration constitutes the theme of many other Caribbean writers, e.g.: Samuel Selvon's **The Lonely Londoners** (1956), and **Moses Ascending** (1977). In Claude MacKay's **Banana Bottom**, many people have emigrated to Panama as a cheap labor force during the building of its canal (Mackay, 1961, 35).

George Lamming and Paule Marshall, the foci of this dissertation, have also extensively dealt with exile in their novels. At different levels, they are equally preoccupied with the issue of exile in their fiction.

In Marshall's **Brown Girl Brownstones**, to escape the brutal colonial exploitation at home, the Bajan community of the West Indies have emigrated to New York City, "The City of the Almighty Dollar" where they formed a "small fierce band of Barbadians," to use Mary Helen Washington's words (1981, 311). In **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**, Verson's move to the United States is motivated by the same economic preoccupation. In the same vein, in **Soul Clap Hands and Sing** the problem of emigration is touched upon with regard to the main character of "Barbados," Mr. Watford who has returned to his native Barbados after he had spent fifty years in Boston. Moreover, Watford's suggestion that the young boy should go to England instead of spreeing around with a political button is illustrative of the mentality of the majority of the West Indian people and the deep conviction and hope they nurture for exile in the region:

Look that half-foolish boy you does send here to pick the coconut. *Instead of him learning a trade and going to England where he might find work* he's walking about with a political button.. He and all in politics now! But that's the way with these down there. They'll do some of everything but work. They don't want work! ... they too busy spreeing.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> "Barbados" in *Merle*, 58; italics mine.

In his first novel, **In the Castle of My Skin**, George Lamming has already set the tone of his concern with the theme of exile when the reader becomes an eye witness of the young boy G.'s departure for Trinidad in the last lines of the novel: "The earth where I walked was a marvel of blackness and I knew in a sense more deep than simple departure I had said farewell, farewell to the land" (CS, 295). Furthermore, the narrator reminds us in the novel that emigration is the concern of the old generation as well as the younger one. This is what the writer means us to grasp when he evokes the case of Pa who "had been comfortable years ago" with what he had earned in Panama (CS, 244) and when Trumper ends up emigrating to the United States. In **Season of Adventure**, to be able to purchase the "Forest Reserve" so as to make the drums alive, Chiki, the painter and the others had left for America:

The Forest was on Crown lands which would be put up for sale. Where could Gort and the remnants of the Boys collect that money? Or the women who were left behind? This was how America happened : a miracle, ordinary and yet eternal as man's need of bread. (SOA, 62)

In his critical essays, **Homecoming** (1972, 128), Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is right on the mark when he makes the remark that in George Lamming's early pieces of fiction, "exile is both a physical and spiritual state. Emigration becomes the symbol of a struggling West Indian alienated from his past and immediate world."

P .S. Chauhan makes a similar observation on the West Indian novel which is worth remembering. According to this postcolonial critic, the West Indian novelists, irrespective of gender, tend to share a number of features. Their plots are often shaped by "a journey [that] takes them away from their island home." More importantly, Chauhan argues that:

The arrivals and the departures, with which the lives of the characters of the West Indian novel are punctuated, indicate an inescapable desire to flee not only an oppressive past or present but also an oppressing psyche, the need to break out of a choking self that is urgent in most protagonists.<sup>5</sup>

**The Emigrants** and **Water With Berries** can be considered to be companions to **In the Castle of My Skin**, because they picked up where the first left off. Lamming enables the reader to clearly see and understand the effect and importance of exile in the character of the West Indian person.

Because of the priority and importance this theme is given in Caribbean writings in general, and in Lamming's fiction and critical writing in particular, it will be worth reflecting on the question of exile in the context of this dissertation so as to know how the phenomenon of exile affects the material lives of the characters in the novels. It will also be appropriate to evaluate its role and value in the shaping of personal and community identity as it becomes plain that exile has positive as well as negative consequences in the lives of the West Indian people, for in the words of Simon Gikandi, "Exile generates

---

<sup>5</sup> Chauhan in Mohanran and Rajan eds. , op. cit., 50.

nationalism and the desire for decolonized Caribbean space" (Gikandi, 1992, 33).

To reach this goal, the following three stages are observed in this analysis. In the first place the paradoxical reasons behind the West Indian's thirst for exile will be discussed. In the second place, their experience in the course of their exile will be evaluated and finally their awareness-raising which is manifest in their collective will to return home for national reconstruction will be analyzed.

To better understand this phenomenon of exile as is dealt with in Lamming's novels, **The Emigrants** and **Water with Berries**, let us provide a brief summary of both novels in the following paragraphs.

The massive West Indian emigration to England after the second world war is the subject of Lamming's **The Emigrants**. The emigrant ship and the subsequent emigration to England or Britain provide the fictional framework for Lamming's exploration of the theme of alienation and displacement he introduced in **In the Castle of My Skin**. **Water with Berries** is an account of two chaotic weeks in the lives of three artists from San Cristobal (Derek, an actor; Teeton, a painter; and Roger, a musician) in London and who are pursuing an aesthetic existence that they assure themselves has "purity of intention." Actually, in London they have shut up their past and sunk into an



uncreative routine. Derek makes his living by playing a corpse on stage whereas Teeton has sold his work off for almost nothing.

When **The Emigrants** opens, every candidate for emigration is anxious to leave the West Indian coast as soon as possible, without delay. A sample of conversation recorded by the narrator can serve to better illustrate this anxiety which is unanimously displayed by all the candidates for exile who are boarded in the ship. Over and over again, the repetition of sentences such as "We are all waiting for something to happen" (TE, 5, 10-12) lays emphasis on their dread and impatience to see the ship in its movement toward England, the "mother-country."

Best, at the third day of their boarding, most of the candidates for emigration to England seem ready for the move which seems to be delayed since the ship has to stop over many seaports to board other passengers from the region:

The passengers, grouped or scattered here and there, were like men standing aimlessly at crossroads waiting for something to happen, hoping however that nothing would happen except the usual things : a pleasant voyage, a safe arrival. (TE, 25)

Also, the impatience and dread with which they want to leave the area is quite displayed and further accentuated by their feeling of an unhappy event which is foretold by the narrator who is a participant in the story. In fact,

many emigrants are convinced and assured that their choice to leave, to flee from the area is fully reasonable when one takes into consideration the political turmoil the region will soon be confronted with. This idea is expressed in an affirmative tone and sounds like a fortunetelling: «... something big was about to happen during my absence from the islands. Nothing would have persuaded me to leap towards the sea. This voyage was an occasion. This occasion was too propitious» (TE, 7).

To paraphrase George Lamming, because the reading of fiction is regulated by some agreed upon conventions whereby the reader in conspiracy with the narrator agrees to accord every declaration and every act of imagination in the framework of the fiction the status of an absolute truth,<sup>6</sup> we are to accept that something of undesirable nature will happen during their absence from home.

However, this general situation begs a fundamental question of the West Indian person's predisposition to emigrate. One wonders whether there is any particular pleasure in exile. What are the pleasures of exile?<sup>7</sup>

Though the end of **The Emigrants** shows that all the characters involved in the journey are disillusioned, to avoid extrapolation in the present study, we will examine step by step the phenomenon in its various contours, and see the

---

<sup>6</sup> Lamming, "Introduction" op. cit., xxxv.

<sup>7</sup> Lamming is so concerned with the problem of exile in the Caribbean area that his book of essays is entitled *The Pleasures of Exile*.

place it deserves in order to draw relevant conclusions regarding this very crucial issue.

### III.2. REASONS/CAUSES FOR EXILE

First of all, it is important to make the point that "exile" means at least two things, i. e. running away from a place and going to another. And in many cases, what one runs away from is "shaped" by one's perception of what one wants to run to. Therefore, "exile" is not only getting away from something; it is also getting to something else different, or better.

Lanning's concern with the phenomenon of exile has led him to reflect on this issue when he put this question :

How has it come about that a [...] group of men, different in years and temperament and social origins, should leave the respective islands they know best, even exchange life there for circumstances which are almost wholly foreign to them? (*Pleasures*, 23).

In our attempt to know more about the reasons/causes for exile, the what question must logically come first : what are the main reasons which lead many West Indians into exile? What are the fundamental reasons raised by the different characters involved in this movement toward the " mother country"?

The answer to this is plainly given as we carefully scrutinize the novel and listen to the characters themselves revealing the deep motives of their flight. One important strategy used by the writer to efficiently convey his message resides in the technique of dialogue. The close proximity in which the passengers live on board the ship has enabled the participants in the narrative to exchange views on issues affecting them as a group.

The desire to emigrate at all costs is characteristic of the West Indian personality. In this respect, exile is presented by the narrator as a general phenomenon in the region. Every month, people do flee from the region in search for "a better break":

It [exile] happens everyday. That's what the fellow said. And every month they leave the right way, paying a passage in search of what : a better break. That's what the others say. Every man wants a better break .(TE, 50)

Why are they all running away from their respective countries when they acknowledge they are not any criminals? As the aspiring writer Collis aptly puts it, the only common point which binds the group together is their flight from the place:

Now I see more clearly in what way I belong to this group which has one thing certain. Flight! We're all in flight; and yet as Tornado says we haven't killed. We haven't stolen, I never killed, I never stole. Yet I am in flight. (TE, 50)

Why are they fleeing "together," all these emigrants who are of different nationalities of the West Indian region and belong to different professional horizons? Among them can be counted people who come from the French speaking countries in the area, Guadeloupe and Martinique; many are also from the English speaking countries : Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, from Venezuela ...and Jamaica, to mention but few nationalities. As for their occupations, their professional activities include a variety of skills : the group of emigrants is made up of a Royal Air Force (RAF) man Tornado to the aspiring writer who has boarded in Trinidad: Collis, the law student: Philip, the school teacher: Dickson, the ex-seaman, the secretary and many more.

In fact all the characters in this first episode of the novel show likeness with the "boat people,"<sup>8</sup> one can observe. Desertion from the region happens everyday and all means are used to leave the region, regardless of the risks involved. It must be understood that all these emigrants are taking a high risk in undertaking such a voyage if due consideration is paid to their means of transportation. As one character observes in the novel:

Sloop, barge, canoe, call it what you like, ol' man, they scoot off at all hours o' de night for the Venezuela coast. W'at happen to them there ain't nobody business, but if they pass the border, ol' man, nobody ever hear 'bout them gain. (TE, 34)

---

<sup>8</sup> The phrase "boat people" refers to people who take all risks to reach a rich land; particularly, it has been used to designate the people of South America -- regardless of their own safety -- who use canoes and boats in order to achieve their dream : to come to the United States without having anything to do with the American Service of Immigration.

When one considers the risk these "boat people" take, the fight they fight to successfully emigrate from the place, one cannot fail to recall the claims of Frantz Fanon and Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan that freedom requires the risk of life.<sup>9</sup> In the name of freedom, and on the daily basis, these "boat people," the convenient term for emigrants in this particular situation, will use every method and any means available for their escape from the zone.

Enjoying a "better break" remains the basic reason which is vaguely but frequently stated by all of them to justify their massive exodus from the region : once they boarded the ship, they began telling themselves with an obvious conviction they want a better break (TE, 51). Moreover, it becomes obvious as the novel unfolds that one of the most important reasons which sustains the emigration of the West Indian apart from the improvement of one's plight remains the search for more freedom. Back their head they dream about " Liberty, Democracy and above else Liberty," even if they do not dare to mention it (TE, 27). As is stated by another character in the novel:

... every man want a better break, and you know what ah mean by that. 'Tis why every goddam one o' we here on this boat tonight. You says to yusef 'tis no point goin' on as you goin' on back home. You can't live yuh life over two or three times, chum, an' you want to do somethin' for yuhself with the life you got here an' now. (TE, 33-34)

---

<sup>9</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington (Middlesex, U. K. : Penguin, 1967), and Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression* (London and New York : Plenum Press, 1985), 121.

In fact, to convince the reader of the commonness of the feeling expressed by this character, the narrator in an authoritative voice stresses the general concern of the group as a whole when he declares:

They were all in search of the same thing which in a way they couldn't define. A better break. Broadly speaking it was little more than a desire to survive with a greater assurance of safety. They wanted to be happy in the pleasure they had chosen. (TE, 86)

A particular fact which strikes me as a reader of these novels remains the paradoxical attitude of the characters themselves facing their emigration. What are the basic motivations that cause their exile? This rhetorical question will be asked over and over again in our search for the deep motives which lead them to a "voluntary" exile from their different home countries.

The ironical side of the business has to do with their inability to fully define the precise contour of the term "better break." The exploration of their "innocence" and "naivete" regarding their lack of understanding of the element which is part and parcel of the purpose of their visiting England will reveal the deep cause of exile in the region.

They are leaving the Caribbean region for many reasons. Theoretically speaking, three levels of motives can be singled out. These motivations represent the various definitions of the concept of "better break."

### III.2.1. FIRST LEVEL OF MOTIVES : MATERIAL, ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL REASONS

The first level of reasons/motives which appear is the possibility of living a better life in England. In this connection, an important reason usually offered by the emigrants for their voluntary stay in London is the possibility of getting jobs in England so as to improve their plight. A case in point among the people on the ship who are looking for job opportunities is the character who was engaged in a conversation with Higgins. While asked to mention what he plans to do in England, because one "got to want to do something, or there ain't no use going to England," his reply was plain and without detour. He simply says "I just looking for a work" (TE, 85). In Jeremy's words, all the emigrants have chosen to go abroad, to emigrate to London, because "it offers a green pasture in which to graze." He compares the emigrants to goats which do not see their home pasture as green as England's (WWB, 91-2). To use another expression by George Lamming, many West Indians "have been forced by economic necessity to undertake this risk of migration". In short, "they simply wanted *to get out* of the place where they were born" for economic needs (Pleasures, 23 & 41). However, 'no one has taken into serious account the implied or hidden meaning of the Englishwoman's impression who sees that England is less in need of their skills than the Caribbean islands they are leaving behind: "But it's the strangest thing to me such people are leaving their own people to go to England to do what's most needed in their own home" (TE, 73).



When one carefully evaluates every single declaration made by the different emigrants involved in the voyage, one finds a consensus that can be summed up in the words of the narrator who, in the final analysis, claims that "Trinidad ain't no place for a man to live"(TE, 34). To make a long story short, like Hodge's Tee, the main character of **Crick Crack Monkey**, Lamming's emigrants believe they have no choice, no alternative. Through their great deal of talk, similarities rather than differences are established in their motivations and expectations:

Whatever the difference in their past experience they seemed to agree on one thing. *They were taking flight from something they no longer wanted.* It was their last chance to recover what might have been wasted. (TE, 34, italics mine)

What "they no longer wanted" can be interpreted as the living conditions in the Caribbean. Their search for comfortable accommodation and the other facilities that could make life more bearable has motivated their decision to move to London. In fact, London or any other metropolis is viewed by colonial subjects as a land of green pasture that can guarantee some kind of well-being. Reminiscent of Fanon's picture of divided worlds inhabited by the colonizer and the colonized, Ambalavaner Sivanandan vividly draws the contrasting picture between life in the "mother country" and life in the colony as seen by the emigrants. In general, he argues, the former "was a well-fed world, free, healthy, full of good things, of laughter, of children growing straight and strong", while the latter was "stricken with hunger, and disease, and [its]

children wizened at birth."<sup>10</sup> With these images in mind, it becomes absolutely true that only emigration will save the emigrants. Therefore, for these emigrants as well as for Tee, everything in their native country is seen as conspiring against them. Everything in the place seems to be changing, unrecognizable, pushing them away. Though physically present, they no longer belong affectively to their native area (Hodge, 1970, 110-111).

Of course, as Dorothy Hamer Denniston sees it, to secure gainful employment, emigration to England (or the United States of America) constitutes a reference to the poor economic conditions of the islands that forces the people, especially the men, to emigrate to what is ironically called a "mother country" (Denniston, 1995, 41).

Likewise, in Marshall's novella, **Merle** we learn through the reading of "To Da-duh, In Memoriam" that the plot of land on which the old woman owns her plantation was purchased with the "Panama money" sent her by Joseph, her eldest son who died working on the canal (**Merle**, 100). It must be noted, as Denniston reminds us, this specific practice is a common one, a common experience for workers in the West Indies who, of economic necessity, traveled outside their homeland to earn livelihood and support their families.

---

<sup>10</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, op. cit., 39; Sivinandan, *A Different Hunger : Writing on Black Resistance* (London, Pluto, 1982), 64-5.

Thus in **Brown Girl, Brownstones**, the Bajan community have chosen to leave poverty and exploitation behind in the West Indies. Their settlement in New York has proven so successful that they have formed a strong and formidable social economic power of their own. Their escape from the historical effects of slavery and colonialism is highly encouraging.

Coupled with the idea of getting work in England is that of the mother country's educational possibilities. The law student on scholarship, Philips, is moving to England for educational reasons. But the other emigrants believe England offers them the same opportunity for study. Indeed, some of them are dreaming to work part-time jobs and study so as to earn their living easily in future (TE, 85).

### **III.2.2. SECOND LEVEL OF MOTIVES : POLITICAL AND PERSONAL REASONS**

Some people have been driven away from their native places by political, personal or philosophical reasons. Roger, for instance, rebels against his father's upper class mentality. He describes him as "a comparatively wealthy man, whose ambition was to build his name into a monument of statues and impressive family tombs" (WWB, 72). Under the guide of such a father, his life is viewed as "a bailiff [that] kept one step ahead of birth." He abuses his family on this ideological difference (WWB, 92). The narrator's statement that under such circumstances, his move to the anonymous haven

of England seems inevitable is quite justified. For his part, Teeton is said to have been implicated in an aborted revolutionary plan in San Cristobal. To save his life, exile remains his unique option.

Another reason which forces people to separate themselves from the Caribbean area is routine in the Caribbean milieu. In fact, the Caribbean described in **The Emigrants** could not meet to any degree the desire and expectations of the emigrants. It renders life very sour and offers no challenge to the emigrants who are all eager to prove something, to taste something new and different from their day to day experience.

Many emigrants have undertaken such a long journey for the sake of personal freedom. This preoccupation is highlighted in the narrator's statement that upon his arrival in the ship he felt a kind of freedom he never experienced before on the island: "I feel my freedom fresh and precious. It was a child's freedom, the freedom too of some lately emancipated colonials" (TE, 9).

It can be reasonably argued that once he finds himself on the road for exile, his feeling of freedom immediately begins. Unlike home, the ship provides for the kind of freedom they were looking for. That is the main motive which compels everyone to move to England. One can also make the point that moving **out** of the islands is another objective, apart from the first one which consists in moving **to** England; even if both objectives seem to represent the

two sides of the same coin. Therefore, the reader can understand why one of the characters in the book sees the West Indies as a God-forsaken place (TE, 13). This assumption also validates the claim earlier made in **In the Castle of My Skin** when Trumper uses the image of a cage to describe the limitations of island life versus the life in the United States of America : " America make you feel, ... it make you feel that where you been livin' before is a kind of cage" (CS, 276).

Similarly, the restrictions 'imposed on them by life in the island, the deprivation of freedom the emigrants have experienced in the place before their departure make some of the passengers think there is something conducive to discomfort in the region (TE, 26). This idea of freedom is evidenced in the three artists' leaving the place and settling in England. Life at home is far from both encouraging and inspiring for their creativity. They believe that better conditions offered by London will be inspirational for their artistic work. In a nutshell, the Caribbean has little place, or rather no place at all for an artist. As the narrator tells us:

They were young and devoted; the most eager of candidates for adoption, indifferent to the simple demands that nagged the social herd. They had invested all their virtues in the rigorous struggle of being artists. They had discovered a style of difficulty that promised to free them from the insecurity of their regions. More important, they had escaped the cruelties of neglect. (WWB, 68)

Thus, to paraphrase Draper, one might say that connecting these characters in **The Emigrants** to those in **Water with Berries** is the fact that each of them namely Roger, Teeton and Derek, is an artist and the suggestion that the society in San Cristobal has little time for art (Draper, 1992, 1233).

To make a long story short, life in the West Indies, as is presented to the reader, is quite boring. As another character in the novel has pointed out, apart from the carnival, which brings life to the place once a year, there is no activity outside drinking and chasing women:

This Christmas is no different from the one that gone. An' de only thing bring a little life in de place is dat carnival. 'Cause if you take it serious you got to make yuh jump-up look like something. You see me here on dis boat leavin' Trinidad. Well, 'tis simply because ah little tired. Ah sick, bored. Ah doan' care w'at ah do next, but ah can't stan' in Trinidad no more 'cause ah know w'at rum taste like, an' ah know w'at woman taste like, an' if you know dose two you know Trinidad. (TE, 62)

Exile is therefore presented as an alternative to the repression experienced at home. Furthermore, George Lamming's characters see it as a golden opportunity whereby the individual is given the chance to start anew, with all the dignity and privileges attached to a human being. He expresses this viewpoint in **The Pleasures of Exile** when he writes:

The West Indian arrives here [England] as a man reprieved from the humiliation of this arrangement which he has known all his life. He sees this new place as an alternative: open, free with an equal chance for any British citizen. (**Pleasures**, 218)

John Figueroa, in his analysis of the causes of emigration in the West Indies, observes that the movement is caused by a mixture of necessity, adventure, admiration for England the mother country, a seeking after industrial skills and once it gets underway a sort of mimesis. His conclusions are particularly to the point when he writes:

They [the emigrants in Lamming's *The Emigrants*] are looking for "a better break", as one of them tries to explain it. But that "better break" does not mean only more money, it means also going to the place where they actually make the razor blades one has been using for years, where the "reading book" used during the few years of schooling was printed, where the great game of cricket comes from, where one can find work in the day and study at night for one's "paper", i. e. diplomas and certificates which will ensure for one not only a good job, but certain status and prestige when one returns to the West Indies.<sup>11</sup>

Like Figueroa, the narrator does not reveal in explicit and straightforward terms the basic reason and motive leading to this massive move in the region. We would call this natural tendency to experience freedom at first hand a **minor or surface motive**. In our understanding of the problem as a general phenomenon, what is at stake here cannot be explicated ONLY by the enjoyment and feeling of freedom and economic motivations. To know more about the other reasons which sustain this exodus in the area, we are to explore this in the minds of the emigrants themselves. On the other hand, past

---

<sup>11</sup> John Figueroa "British West Indian Immigration to Great Britain," *Caribbean Quarterly*, vol. 5 (1957-1959), 117.

records of the Caribbean also can give the other driving forces behind this general exodus.

The heart of the matter is the emigrants' intention while undertaking the voyage. Apart from Tornado who sees his move to London as a necessity, for he has to further his education there and come back home as soon as possible, many were leaving home without any particular thought to come back. For these people it is an absolute, definite, and eternal exile. They were leaving home with no particular desire to return, though they were sailing to a country which few of them had known at first hand, except Tornado and the Governor (TE, 41). At this point it is worth underlining that Tornado is an exceptional emigrant in that his love for his native country surpasses any other thing. His sacred profession of faith in his native country is highlighted when he expresses his strong will to come back home and more than anything else to be buried there after his death : "I will say this,.. if dere's one place ah want dem to bury my bones, 'tis the Laperouse cimetry. In the heart of Trinidad." Consequently, there is hope that national reconstruction is possible with the coming back to the West Indies of people like Tornado.

The reader is left dismayed when he confronts the excitement of the emigrants with Tornado's inner thought. As a matter of fact, Tornado, in the course of the voyage, becomes "the center of attraction" because he is among the few people in the ship to have lived in the place and from whom many



emigrants are seeking advice for they seemed anxious to hear what he had to say about it (TE, 43). One cannot help saying there is more than economic and personal reasons for exile. In effect, Tornado is portrayed as the spirited person in the group who actually knows what England stands for. He who best knows the place reveals to the reader his inner thoughts about England. He says of England : "This blasted world, is a hell of a place." Moreover, his self-question reveals more about his deep thought and negative impressions of the metropolis:

Why the hell a man got to leave where he born when he ain't thief not' in, nor kill nobody, an' to make it worse to go somewhere where he don't like. ...'Cause I'll tell you somet'ing, if there's one place under de sun I hate like poison, 'tis that said England. (TE, 39)

Does it make any sense that people who see their own home countries as a beautiful area decide to crush somewhere without deep motivation? To paraphrase the narrator, it does not make any sense at all that sane people "leave the sun and the sea where it was summer all the way, abandon the natural relaxation...and to gamble their last coin on a voyage to England. England of all places" (TE, 108).

This contradiction causes us to ponder over the deep motives behind the desire to leave characteristic of the people in the place. As a reader of West Indian novel and specifically of Lamming and Marshall's fiction, a key question which comes to our mind has to do with the deep motives. Our working

definition of the phrase "deep motives" in this study is the subconscious and historical reasons which can reasonably account for the exilic phenomenon typical of the West Indian character.

### **III. 2. 3. THIRD LEVEL OF MOTIVES: HISTORICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS**

It is certainly obvious that the deep motives account best for this general trend observed in the characters' behavior. To begin with, it is useful to mention right away that all the characters involved in the voyage show different degrees of awareness in their understanding and treatment of this movement of massive emigration. Two Trinidadians, Tornado who formerly served in the British Royal Air Force (RAF) and the aspiring writer, Collis can be mentioned among the people who best embody such a critical view regarding the issue of exile.

For Collis, the general flight of West Indians in search of "better break" is hardly a question of conscious choice; their condition derives from an oppressive colonial presence that denies them freedom of choice:

Every man wants a better break. I've heard of others fleeing but it seemed something quite different. Their flight was always a conscious choice, a choice even to suffer. But this isn't. This is a kind of sudden big push from the back; something that happened when you weren't looking. Perhaps we were all leaving without looking. (TE, 50 )

Without any doubt, this statement directly touched upon the heart of the matter. Collis as an aspiring writer is gifted enough to expose the root of the malaise which affects West Indians in general. Once it becomes a well known fact that some of the emigrants do not really see why they are involved in such a perilous adventure, risking physical life as penalty of mother nature in case of accident, one is simply rendered perplexed about the situation. It is also a puzzling situation in that the West Indians who are voyaging in that particular ship cannot tell for certain where they are venturing to : "Everybody is in flight and no one knows what he's fleeing to. A better break. A better break. That is what we say" (TE, 50).

Furthermore, for Tornado, who knows the place he is sailing but hates it for good reason, there is no sense in the impatience of the others to arrive (TE, 49-50). Thus this paradoxical point may suggest that only colonial and psychological motives can reasonably account for their anxiety to reach the place as quickly as possible.

Colonial reasons have certainly many things in common with the type of exile known to the area. Historical reasons can be evoked to sustain this common situation. It has to do with the fact that all colonized share a common colonial history which has shaped them into colonial subjects. More than anything else, the imperial relation forces them to go to England, not to Paris,

not to Spain, but to England, 'a thing which the English woman could not understand:

The Englishwoman who had a vague sense of imperial relations wanted to know why he hadn't thought of going to Spain, since, as far as she could remember, Spain was once nice to those countries.(TE, 27)

Colonialism has taught them the notion of "mother country" and they perfectly seem to have mastered the lesson. Like children who innocently believe in any declaration by their parents, they unquestionably believe and conclude the best life is somewhere, England. Due to educational reasons, the colonial subject has a particular and fixed stand in his consideration of the "mother country." In other words, for the protagonists of **The Emigrants**, "England is the big friend, the educator, the helper. [The colored West Indian wants nothing but understanding and love.] England is their rightful heritage" (Ulli Beier, 1967, 207).

Similarly, in his analysis of the real motives which drive away so many people of the same area to the same place, James P. Draper is pretty close to the mark when he points out the colonial fact. In his interpretation of the exilic sickness which affects the whole area in so large a proportion, he finds that all of the situation from which these men and women flee are in some way connected to the colonial past of San Cristobal (Draper, 1992, 1233).

There is no question of doubting the impact colonial schooling has had on the behavior of the colonial subject. Perhaps we have not sufficiently demonstrated that colonial education is not simply content with imposing alienation and deracination on colonial subjects but it also causes them to consider London, or the "mother country" and its history as genuine parts of themselves. The purpose of the colonial school of Little England<sup>12</sup> is to drum into the heads of schoolchildren that anything related to England is important in their own existence. As Supriya Nair aptly observes:

Celebrating the Empire Day with gusto, saluting the British flag, reading more British history than local history, and being told that a scholarship to a British university or a job in England is the apex of scholastic and economic achievement--all these experiences not surprisingly influence these children... (Nair, 1996, 61)

Therefore, it is of no surprise to the reader when the narrator in **Water with Berries** says that:

From the earliest discovery of ambition, they had realised that their future would have to be found elsewhere. Childhood was a warning; and school was a further proof. *From the beginning they had been educated for escape.* (WWB, 69, italic mine)

Furthermore, the alienation is so perfected in Roger's father that he comfortably feels at home in it. As the narrator puts it:

---

<sup>12</sup> *In the Castle of My Skin* is set in fictional Barbados, known as Little England. The title Little England which is attributed to Barbados sums up the kind of intimate colonial relationship which links Big England, the mother country and Little England, the colony.

He has nothing he could call his own, nothing at all. Everything he had he got from learning. Everything was like law he'd been taught. Even when he was angry you could see he was simply practising what he had learnt. It wasn't really his. And when he smiled it was much the same. (WWB, 71)

This image of a totally alienated father helps very much to explain why Roger's education has made him blind to his environment. Roger's rootlessness and disconnection from his native country exemplified in his utter lack of interest in his immediate environment is explicated as the result of the education he received at school which is in turn emphasized by his father at home. Thus:

Roger could never recognize any links between him and San Cristobal. It seemed that history had amputated his root from some other human soil and deposited him, by chance, in a region of time which was called an island. He had never really experienced the island as a place, a society of people. (WWB, 70)

In the same vein, in his evaluation of colonial schooling in the Caribbean based on George Lamming's fiction, *Ambroise Kom*, in **George Lamming et le destin des Caraïbes**, sees education and colonial reasons as fundamental grounds from which the idea of emigration originates. He accuses colonial education of being responsible for training schoolboys and schoolgirls ready for commercial exportation:

Les enfants fréquentent une école qui ne fait guère cas de leur personnalité propre qui en somme, se garde bien d'attirer leur attention sur les réalités les plus cruciales du

milieu ambiant. On verra qu'une telle interprétation explique l'exode massif des Antillais vers Londres [...]

Furthermore, colonial school unavoidably leads to self-destruction; as Kom continues,

Elle (l'école coloniale) mène irrémédiablement les individus à l'autodestruction. Le départ vers la métropole est une ultime tentative pour échapper à la néantisation qui guette le colonisé. Pour le narrateur-omniscient de **The Emigrants**, l'émigration est une façon de fuir la mort spirituelle qu'aurait constitué pour lui une carrière au sein de la fonction publique locale. (Kom, 1986, 85)

Therefore, literally speaking, education becomes a process by which colonial subjects are alienated, disfigured, and literally readied for exportation from their villages after their graduation. This image of raw material or goods is poignantly felt by boy G when he innocently evaluates the educational value of the colonial system of education (CS, 118-19).

It becomes absolutely plain that having been taught all through school that England was the greatest nation, and that it dominated world history --- ironically enough, the children do not realize that celebrating Empire Day is tantamount to celebrating their world's domination by England --- and that England alone had any culture worthy of name, the next logical step is to visit the place in order to "test" these ideas. The narrator vividly reveals it in images:

... Any man who chose one country rather than another in the illusion that it was only a larger extension of the home which he had left. For it would be a lie to deny that on the ship and even in the hostel, there was a feeling, more conscious in some than others, that England was not only a place, but a heritage. Some of us might have expressed a certain hostility to that heritage, but it remained, nevertheless, a hostility to something that was already a part of us. (TE, 237)

In her critical consideration of the theme of exile in Lamming's **The Emigrants**, Sandra Pouchet Paquet (1982) makes the point that emigration results from alienation. For the West Indian emigrant, exile originates in his colonial status. In fact, the journey away from self begins at home under the colonial framework so finely portrayed in **In the Castle of My Skin** where colonial education in addition to religion are powerfully put into service so as to reinforce a crippling legacy of cultural and economic dependence.

In **The Pleasures of Exile** George Lamming himself clearly speaks of exile in many voices. To use Supriya Nair's words, "He is at once embittered, resigned, militant, critical, and angry," when addressing the issue of exile (Nair, 1996, 125). He considers exile as the fruit of colonization. He bluntly states that the West Indian people's emigration originates in the importation of education from London. As a result of this practice, the whole development of the West Indian "is thwarted by the memory of the accumulated stuff of a childhood and adolescence which has been maintained and fertilised by England's historic ties with the West Indies" (**Pleasures**, 25).



Lamming's preoccupation with the theme of exile as the external sign of West Indian people's alienation and displacement is illustrated in many of his interviews. On many occasions, he has had the chance to throw much more light on the contents of his novels. Thus, in his conversation with George Kent he asserts that exile, due to historical factors, is part and parcel of the West Indian people's psyche:

The Emigrants on that ship can be seen as the extensions of the boys of **In the Castle of My Skin**. This was in a way the logic of development. Society made up with people who always saw their fulfillment elsewhere, outside the society. This aspect of migration is going to be very central to the psychology of that whole generation of people. The question was not so much 'what am I going to do here', but 'when will the opportunity arise for me to leave?' And this is how we see the journey of the men who, in a sense, could be said to be the boys, except that where the boys of **In the Castle of My Skin** are held to one particular territory, the men are drawn from all the territories of the Caribbean.<sup>13</sup>

Lamming's serious warning and insistence that the movement would increase if nothing were done to stop it in the area is particularly striking. One must argue this psyche particular to the West Indian character is mainly shaped by the colonial experience as revealed by some of the characters in **The Emigrants**. The narrator means us to consider the absurdity and nonsense of the movement and the people who blindly venture to "a certain kind of death":

---

<sup>13</sup> George E Kent, "A Conversation with George Lamming," *Black World*, vol. 22, no. 5 (March 1973), 95-6.

It mattered to be in England. Yes. It did matter. Wherever there was life there was something, something other than no-THING. There was also unemployment, a housing shortage. These were not important. Or were they? Starvation. Death. Yes. Even death. These were not important, for what mattered supremely was to be there, in England. To be in England. (TE, 107)

This quote foretells what will happen to them in that unfriendly city which is London. However, before tackling this point, let us say that this attitude displayed by the emigrants in **The Emigrants** seems to be a general inherited value and can be compared, for example, to an attitude that pervades in Hodge's fiction.

In **Crick Crack Monkey** the remotest connection with England, the "mother country" appears to confer a certain kind of dignity on colonial subjects. When Cyntie, the orphaned daughter in the novel learns that her father who had emigrated to England has sent her a plane ticket to join him in London, her attitude and reaction are quite reminiscent of the emigrants' emotion: she confesses that her "standing" was "like that of pariah who has suddenly inherited a title" (Hodge, 1970, 49). If one must give credit to Supriya Nair's observation, even in India nowadays, public announcement of departure to England, including a business trip, are made in the newspaper with congratulations to the lucky traveler (Nair, 1996).

Having shown the various attitudes of the candidates for exile and the various reasons behind their move, it is appropriate to consider next England's "welcome" and the treatment the emigrants receive in the "mother country."

Is the trouble worth taking to go to England at all? How are they welcomed in the country they call "mother"? How was life in England, "England of all places"? The conclusion of our inquiry certainly will show the consequences of sailing to England in search of a "better break".

Apart from Tornado, the Governor and the Jamaican, no one in the group of emigrants has ever visited the place they were going to (TE, 49). Paradoxically, thanks to his previous encounter with and experience of the place, Tornado hates the place. Is there any objective and specific reason why Tornado scornfully hates the city of London, or England as a whole? This question leads to our exploration of the exiles' living conditions in the "mother country."

George Lamming bitterly critiques the method employed by the mother country in its welcome "address" to the emigrants when he presents the living conditions of the emigrants upon their arrival in England. Cognizant with English ideas since childhood, the emigrants thought they would be welcomed in England. To quote George Lamming once more, the emigrants believed that

they were going to the England which had been planted in their "childhood consciousness as a heritage and a place of welcome."<sup>14</sup>

### III. 3. THE EXILIC EXPERIENCE

Before dealing with the main issue at stake here, it is useful to mention that this section discusses the exilic experience from the perspectives of **The Emigrants and Water with Berries**.

Truly speaking, in **The Emigrants** the foretelling of the Strange Man in the course of their voyage seems to better capture the narrator's view in his presentation of life in London. Originally, the Strange Man is fully considered by the emigrants to be a mad man, an outsider, because he has dared to question the concept of success and achievement they are looking for from their exile in England. He has literally driven the rest of the group to anger when he said:

But w'at it is all you call succeed? All I tell you is dat w'at you succeedin' for I see all round me in Port-o'-Spain. W'at all you killin' yuhself to get, no number o' people got already, an' they more blasted miserable now than they ever was before. [...] If you goin' end up just as you begin why all this botheration. *All you like men goin' to dig you own grave.* (TE, 63, italics mine)

---

<sup>14</sup> George Lamming "Introduction," op. cit., xxxviii.

Following their arrival in the "mother country" is their total bewilderment and dismay as predicted by the Strange Man. They are completely rejected, unacknowledged, and unneeded in the city of London. In fact, the Strange Man, being more aware of "the political structures that function to perpetuate their disadvantage in a colonial arrangement" warns them against the danger of the same said colonial education: colonial education, certainly, is referred to as the weapon used by these emigrants to commit "suicide" in London. In other words, the education they have received and that some of them pursue is a "rope they givin' you to hang yuhself wid".

As one could expect, the warning is given substance in that the narrator lays a heavy emphasis on the most disagreeable and unpleasant sides of their new life. In London, the emigrants meet unemployment, housing shortages, racism and the hypocrisy of the Londoners.

As the narrator reveals, in London the emigrants face frequent dismissal from jobs. Colli's situation is a case in point which best illustrates their common experience. He was regularly sacked (TE, 206). Likewise, the three artists in **Water with Berries** who were expecting fame in London are angrily deceived and disappointed. All three give up their artistic dreams. Teeton has decided to stop painting (WWB, 59). In short, as far as getting a job in England is concerned, Jeremy best sums it all up when he says that there is no service for people like Teeton and the rest of the artists in London (WWB, 110).

Jeremy, a native of San Cristobal, is frankly convinced of this after his careful consideration of job opportunities in London. And certainly, the situation of the characters in **Water With Berries** seems to prove him right. In his native country, Roger is highly appreciated for his musical gift. Back in San Cristobal any concert given by Roger, the musician, is attended by many people : "no seat vacant," says the narrator. As for Derek, the actor, he is left with no alternative than playing a corpse to earn his living : "Death is my bank. It brings what little grub I get" (WWB, 67).

On the whole, if there is any fact on which a common agreement is reached among the exiles or emigrés, it is certainly their general and unanimous disappointment in the situation they are offered in England. With due regard to their situation in this foreign land, Lamming himself will say that most of the people among the emigrants "are women without men, some are men without hope. Almost all are permanent strangers in a white land that offers neither rebuff nor welcome."<sup>15</sup> As for Edward Kamau Brathwaite, referring to this situation, he ironically states : " Yes, it is wonderful to be British ... until one comes to Britain."<sup>16</sup>

Their experience is reminiscent of what Peter Abrahams deals with in **Tell Freedom**. As O. R. Dathorne comments on the novel, at one time, the hero Abrahams of **Tell Freedom** believes that Western education could

---

<sup>15</sup> *Maclean's* (November 4, 1961) p. 27; quoted in Kom, *George Lamming et le destin des Caraïbes* (Quebec : Edition Marcel Didier. Inc, 1986), 97.

<sup>16</sup> In "To Sir With Love," quoted in Nair, op. cit., 55.

improve his plight as a colored person. However, his failure to get a newspaper job makes him realize that the Western education he receives has not only alienated him from his own people and environment but also has done nothing to guarantee him a place in white society (Dathorne, 1974, 228).

Shortage of housing is another experience which marks the existence of the emigrants in England. Earlier in the ship, through the newspaper, they were informed about that delicate problem in England. Once in London, they were all confronted with housing problems. Teeton had difficult housing conditions throughout the first year after his arrival in London. The narrator describes his situation regarding his first year of stay in London in the following terms:

... that year of vagrancy when he walked the streets in search of shelter. It felt like an eternity away : that slow, interminable routine of days when living alternated between nervous enquiry and the apologetic reply that he had arrived too late. He was out of luck. He had been exhausted by those journeys. He had often had that curious experience that his feet had gone ahead; his feet would be waiting outside before some door until he arrived. (WWB, 34-35)

To lay more emphasis on the fundamental problem of housing in England, the narrator makes the reader feel the total insecurity linked to housing in the place when he offers a "repetition" of their earlier housing conditions in their final year, the seventh year. This similarity in the first and seventh years suggests the perpetual instability one is confronted with in the metropolis.

Almost at the closure of the novel, after they had lost all their belongings in the burning down of their place, all the artists in exile found themselves homeless. Particularly in that seventh year of stay, after they had abandoned their rooms to the flames, they have become completely demoralized. Homelessness dominates their conversation as a central topic of discussion:

When Roger and Derek spoke again, it was the calamity of homelessness which brought them together. Four nights after Nicole disappeared, their rooming house was burnt down. They had been plunged back into the roots of their previous feeling. Moreover, it seemed that Roger had suddenly lost the capacity to survive. (WWB, 207)

It is the inevitable bankruptcy of the artistic sensitivity outside of the framework of the community. In light of this information, facts prove the Strange Man right when he had foreseen and foretold the fate of the group by asserting that all of them are going to dig their own graves in London (TE, 63).

George Lamming's heavy focus on the shortage of housing and employment in the "mother country" remains a central theme in **The Emigrants** and **Water with Berries**. It remains also unquestionable that by showing the attitude of the imperial center which, irrespective of its status of "mother", deprives its "citizens" of the two most important elementary elements of subsistence, Lamming's narrator is vigorously and critically drawing the attention of the readership to the lies inherent in England's declarations of



principles. England is far from being a genuine and trustworthy mother country as is drummed into the hearts and heads of colonial subjects.

Samuel Selvon, who also has the experience of life in London expresses this same awareness when he observes in **Lonely Londoners** that:

Life [is] really hard for the boys in London. This is a lonely, miserable city, if it was that we didn't get together now and then to talk about things back home where you have friends all about. [...] Nobody in London does really accept you. They tolerate you, yes, but you can't go in their house and eat or sit down and talk.<sup>17</sup>

This attitude is truly reflected in the visit Collis pays to Mr Pearson (TE, 141).

Another harsh and bitter experience which has an indelible and shocking effect on the loneliest emigrants is the xenophobia of the British. The kind of English people described in Lamming's **The Emigrants** are distinguished for and by their racial attitude : the hosts do not at all like their visitors. It must be taken for granted that the narrator in **The Emigrants** specifically seeks to have us see the racially prejudiced nature of the Englishman. It is for this purpose that the narrator has chosen Tornado among the group to reveal this absolute truth to the reader when he advises:

Those limey English people ain't got no good min'. They intention is to squeeze a man like me any day they see

---

<sup>17</sup> Samuel Selvon, *Lonely Londoners* (New York : Saint Martin's Press, 1956), 154 -5.

him, an' you'll find that they doan' like you in they country at all at all. First thing the limey bastards ask you is when you goin' back home, as though they ever stay where they live. An' if you look the sort a person to make good in they country they make a point o' pushin' a spoke in yuh wheel. (TE, 67)

To say few words regarding this excerpt, it is worth pointing out that the English are presented as hostile people vis-a-vis their subjects. It must be observed that Tornado who has spent four years in the Royal Air Force is supposed to perfectly know the English people as one would be familiar with one's own wallet. England is seen by the immigrants as an enemy territory with due regard to the hatred its population displays in their particular way of welcoming the emigrants. Thus Tornado cynically believes in the hatred of the English population and reconfirms his conviction to Higgins when he adamantly says:

What you say 'bout study is true, but you got to keep that in min'. You ain't home, chum. You in the land o' the enemy, an' if you doan' keep yuh eye open for when they ready to stab you in the back you'll end up bad for so. You chaps got to keep the right friends, an' doan' get fool with any sweet talk, an' the way they smile at you. Behin' that smile, boy, the teeth they show does bite. An' they won' live you till they get rid o' you, chase you out of the country, or suck yuh blood like a blasted jumbie. (TE, 67)

As if to confirm and validate the assumption that the English people are racist and xenophobic in the context of the novel, an Englishman, in the person of Mr. Pearson, expresses the same racist stand when he asks Collis the reason why many West Indian people have chosen to emigrate to England :

"Why do so many of your people come here?" (TE, 141). Put this way, without the use of any diplomacy to hide his intention in the slightest degree, Pearson's question calls attention to a number of observations. In the first place, it confirms that Tornado knows what the people he is dealing with are like. The second remark reinforces the reader's sincere belief in his salient trait of character, which is faithfulness. Therefore, when he declares that his presence in England is not by choice but by necessity, as he put it himself:

I ain't going for the sake o' goin' to England. I been a'ready an' I know there ain't nothing wonderful 'bout that country. But they give me a course an' I intend to finish... When I get through with my course they won't see me in that country ever again in this Jesus Christ life. I goin' right back to Trinidad an' by the grace o' God I goin' work till I can build a little parlour an' set up some kind o' business. (TE, 68)

We must take it for granted that he will absolutely go back home upon completion of his studies in the place. Therefore, there is hope for the national reconstruction Lamming is calling for. Even if many on board are not planning to come back to the West Indies after their settling in the mother country (maybe due to their inability to judge and evaluate the real situation prevailing in the metropolis), Tornado is seen as a true patriot. His aim in going back to London is quite praiseworthy. He is planning to get education, to complete his studies in London and come back to help build the nation.

Individualism in London also traumatizes them in the city. The kind of communal life they are used to in San Cristobal is "irrelevant" in England; here the emigrants discover the individualistic aspect of the Eurocentric conception of life. Everyone has to mind his own business. In other words, in London:

If you hungry you keep it to yuhself and if you rich the same thing. Nobody ask questions and nobody give answers. You see this the minute you put foot in London. The way the houses build was that people doan' have nothing to do with one another. You can live an' die in yuh room an' the people next door never say boo to you no matter how long you inhabit that place. (TE, 74-5)

In England, everyone has to see to it that his own needs are first satisfied, not those of the others. There is no community-based stronghold, no solidarity among the people. These things stand in sharp opposition to what the emigrants who have embarked upon this voyage got familiar with, back home. Tornado expresses the idea of selfishness in the city of London when he says:

I know what that country is. Every man got to fend for himself, an' if 'tis your luck things easy, good. The rest got to learn that the sort o' life they livin' back home whatever they say was nothin' compare to what goin' happen. (TE, 76)

Worse than anything else, to give an official seal to hatred in England, the narrator lets us know that the hatred is not only a private affair, but is also an institutional one. State institutions, instead of protecting the population,

make a clear and sharp distinction between "pure" and "colored" people. This part of the business is carried out by the British police.

Forged and false charges are brought against the emigrants in London. Among the suspected people are Dickson and Azi; the latter is believed to be a drug dealer, which in fact he is not (TE, 242). In the same line of thought, Huggins is tracked down by the police. As he says himself, "Since the day I set foot on this soil they follow me without end" (TE, 242). To make an exhaustive list, in **Water with Berries**, all the artists in London are imprisoned on charges ranging from murder to arson and rape. This is the situation to which Errol Francis refers when he suggests that in England, black people have more to fear than the white population, because apart from daily racism, they also have to cope with the harassment from institutions designed to protect and serve the Republic from its colored invaders.<sup>18</sup>

In the light of the foregoing development, it is quite obvious that the point of contact with the "mother country" is destructive for the colonial subject. Due to colonialism, the qualities of the relationships between England and its former colonies are somewhat fixed. Sandra Pouchet Paquet attributes these fixed attitudes to the colonial inheritance. Both the emigrants and the English people, she recalls, "are trapped by inherited colonial attitudes and postures, the result being invariably destructive to the emigrant psyche" (Paquet, 1982,

---

<sup>18</sup> Errol Francis, "Psychiatric Racism and Social Police : Black People and the Psychiatric Service," in *Inside Babylon : The Caribbean Diaspora in Britain*, eds. Winston James and Clive Harris (London : Verso, 1993), 179-205.

40). She symbolically sees in the marriage between Una Salomon and Frederick an entirely negative side of the quality and future of English colonial relations. She predicts that both parties are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Likewise, **Water with Berries** presents a chaotic vision of the relations between the "mother country" and its subjects through the exilic experience of the artists in London. Due to the fact that crucial areas of personal history remain unexplored, attempts at dialogue end up in failure. There is also a liability between wives and husbands, and relatives and friends, as well as between strangers. Although Roger, the musician of Indian descent, is not in favor of any miscegenation, he is unable to tell Nicole, his white American wife of his horror of a racially mixed child : "The child might be white" and Roger "couldn't live with that; couldn't find comfort with Nicole again; because she had given this white impurity" (WWB, 139). Consequently, he invents a lie about her infidelity. Refusing to be complicitous in the lie, Derek undertakes to tell Nicole the truth. The three move closer to disaster with each round of betrayal. Nicole's knowledge of this truth leads her to commit suicide in Teeton's room. The house lady of the latter is a representative of British relationship with its colonies. In fact, Old Dowager, Teeton's house lady gives the latter a kind of false security that is characteristic of British imperial relationship. She gives love and affection to Teeton by selecting his visitors and taking care of his phone calls. Actually, she is the one who regulates his visits. Naturally, Teeton

is trapped by these ties of affection. In **The Pleasures of Exile** George Lamming describes this "colonisation through a process of affection" as "the worst form of colonisation;" a process which he considers "an example of the gift in its most destructive form" (**Pleasures**, 76).

By portraying London as a grave, a tomb, and cemetery with its powerful blaze of fire toward the closure of **Water with Berries**, all of these elements which make London a "huge and foreign mausoleum" to the artists (WWB, 221), the narrator brings us to see in these elements an apocalyptic and pessimistic vision he holds regarding the possibility of any viable relation with the "mother country" based on colonial terms. Fire, in this particular novel, becomes a critical symbol of revolt and destruction. Lamming himself is more optimistic when he declares with regard to the violence which dominates **Water with Berries** that there is better hope for the future:

We can put all this horror, all this brutality behind; we are now equal in a new enterprise of human liberation. That horror and that brutality have a price, which has to be paid by the man who inflicted it --- just as the man who suffered it has to find a way of exorcising that demon. It seems to me that there is almost a therapeutic need for a certain kind of violence in the breaking. There cannot be a parting of the ways. There has to be a smashing.<sup>19</sup>

As far as their personal achievement in England is addressed, failure comes to one's mind. Their disillusionment is complete. The narrator offers a

---

<sup>19</sup> Lamming in George E Kent : "A Conversation with George Lamming," *Black World*, vol. 22, no. 5 (1973), 9; quoted in Paquet, op. cit., 87-88.

total image of disappointment and despair contrary to their expectation that England can do something to remedy their sense of inferior status and self-worth. In **The Emigrants**, though ambitious to get education, after difficult months of struggle in poverty to acquire it, Tornado gives up hope in the emigrant experience and sees the emigrant's quest as an unattainable one. Likewise, the Caribbean women in Lamming's **The Emigrants** succeed no better than the men in London. Contrary to their expectations, the image one gets from the description of their meeting place is of desperation. Their meeting place is the saloon of Miss Dorkins, the hairdresser. However, unlike the barber's shop, this business is run illegally. The dominant images of their conversation are the dungeon and the womb. A specialist of Lamming's writings suggests that these images reflect their confinement and isolation (Paquet, 1982, 39).

The same situation applies to Lamming's fullest fictional exploration of the West Indian artist in exile, **Water with Berries**, where upon completion of a seven-year stay in London, the narrator depicts the talented artists of San Cristobal as bondsmen struggling hopelessly to be free. He sums up for the reader the negative impact of London on their artistic talents : their talents are "severely jeopardized by the terms of a colonial relationship to the metropolis" (Paquet, 1982, 97).



In the light of the foregoing evidence, it becomes obvious that disillusionment naturally follows their early hope in England. For instance, in **Water with Berries**, the disillusionment is shown in Derek's attitude toward the city of London. By the end, he, who used to love that city which he admiringly and lovingly called "a jewel in the night," was so disgusted that it is reported "he had lost all interest in the promises" of London (WWB, 219).

In **The Emigrants**, the "lonely Londoners," during the endless card games and talk they usually have in Tornado's basement which functions as another meeting place for the emigrés of both sexes, they become fully aware themselves of their "second class citizen" status (TE, 191). Tornado's complete disappointment in the promise of England is without limit. His public and proud announcement that he is going to marry Lilian, go back home, and live as they used to live before, is very indicative of his deep disbelief, despair, and disappointment. This decision also shows his awareness of a truth: the promises and profession of faith of any "mother country" can never materialize.

Once one carefully considers in its detail every single element of the exilic experience, from their boarding of the ship to their life in London, as presented in both **The Emigrants** and **Water with Berries**, one cannot help agreeing with Wilfred Cartey that:

Exile is not pleasure, exile leads to disillusionment, degradation and solitude. **The Emigrants** is an ironic statement which shows that to inherit the kingdom of

Prospero does not necessarily lead to a throne [...] The novel constantly moves from high expectation to disillusioning, from laughter and "old talk" to seriousness and serious discussion.<sup>20</sup>

The hard experience of the emigrants in England has brought them to awareness of the unjust treatment they are subjected to. They all begin to see a kind of injustice that is inherent in England's relation with its former subjects. It goes without saying that Lamming, as a decolonizing writer, has formulated without reservation his critique in relation to the treatment England has reserved for its former colonial subjects. Such a voice and vision are given both shape and substance in *Tornado*. He uses sharp criticism to denounce the inhumanity and double standard they fall victim to in England. Critiquing the mother country-colony relationship and laying emphasis on the kind of reward they deserve after faithful service to England, *Tornado* is of the view that:

De sort o' feeling which we as children an' those o' us who never see the light, that feelin' we got is greater than any feelin' France could have for the English or the English for France. The name o' England rouse a remembrance in us that it couldn't have for any war-time ally. An' that's why, if ever there's any fightin' in our parts o' de world, we'd be nastier to the English than to any one, because we'd be remembering that for generations an' generations we'd been offerin' them a love they never even try to return. (TE, 192)

It is worth mentioning that Lamming's resentment toward the "mother country" remains static; he has not changed his opinion. He recently reaffirmed

---

<sup>20</sup> W. Cartey, "Lamming and the Search for Freedom," quoted in Kom, op. cit., 90.

it in his introduction to the 1997 edition of his first novel, **In the Castle of My Skin**:

Today I shudder to think how a country, so foreign to our own instinct, could have achieved the miracle of being called Mother. It had made us pupils to its language and its institutions, baptized us in the same religion; schooled boys in the same game of cricket with its elaborate and meticulous etiquette of rivalry. Empire was not a very dirty word, and seemed to bear little relation to those forms of domination we now call imperialist.<sup>21</sup>

#### **III. 4. EXILE AS AN AWARENESS-RAISING PROCESS: SOME POSITIVE SIDES OF EXILE**

This scrutiny of the exilic experience has shown the negative aspects of the phenomenon. However, when closely considered, it seems evident that exile, as presented in Lamming's fiction has positive sides despite the numerous disadvantages it calls one's attention to. Awareness-raising, solidarity and unity among the emigrants, and above all, national consciousness can be cited among the positive effects of exile.

In **In the Castle of My Skin**, Lamming himself has already hinted to the positive sides of the exilic experience when his narrator presents the numerous benefits and invaluable advantages consecutive to Trumper's temporary exile to the United States. Lamming sees Trumper's emigration to the States as a salutary one in that he returns home with a political consciousness --

---

<sup>21</sup> Lamming, "Introduction," *op. cit.*, xxxviii.

something the subtle force of British imperial administration had never allowed to flourish in the region. The experience he collected from that brief exile has enabled him to become aware of the reality of the racial problem in America. In his most recent introduction to his first novel, **In the Castle of My Skin**, Lamming himself makes this point regarding Trumper's emigration:

After his sojourn in the United States of America as a migrant laborer, Trumper returned home with a new ideology, and the startling discovery that his black presence had a very special meaning in the world. He had learned the cultural and political significance of race.<sup>22</sup>

In other words, according to Sandra Pouchet Paquet, many years after his departure, Trumper comes back from "America" with a new idiom of race consciousness and political activism that is somewhat different from the philosophy acquired by Pa and Ma during a comparable stint of migrant labor in Panama many years previously.<sup>23</sup>

A view very close to the foregoing is held by the Kenyan creative writer and literary critic Ngugi Wa Thiong'o who had this to express regarding Trumper's experience in the United States:

When Trumper comes back, he has a better grasp and appreciation of the situation in Barbados. Exile is both a spiritual and a physical state. Emigration becomes the symbol of a struggling West Indian alienated from his past and immediate world.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, xli.

<sup>23</sup> Sandra Pouchet Paquet, Foreword to the 1997 edition of *In the Castle of My Skin* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), xxxix.

<sup>24</sup> Ngugi, *Homecoming* (London : Heinemann, 1972), 206.

Supriya Nair also expresses a similar view when he mentions that unlike the Creighton villagers, Trumper's emigration to the United States "enables him to be more militantly conscious of the race issue" (Nair, 1996, 87-8).

Not only has his experience from exile deepened his awareness of the black consciousness, but also he is capable of identifying and critically drawing his fellows' attention to the injustice to which they are blind in Little England. His identification of the ill-treatment reserved to the population of Creighton's village has led him to accuse Mr. Slime of committing a crime. Boy G, shocked by Trumper's accusations, confesses to the reader his feeling in the following terms:

We were all involved in the sale of the land, but Trumper was the first person who has given me this feeling of tremendous injustice in the transaction [...] But Trumper spoke with an almost criminal contempt of Mr. Slime, and my mother was puzzled. [...] Trumper had done something to give us a new slant on the sale of the land. (CS, 279)

Likewise, exile is presented as an engine which sparks off light and generates a sense of self-knowledge, or self-awareness in both **The Emigrants** and **Water with Berries**. Lamming's technique which consists of placing all the emigrants aboard one ship, the **Golden Image**, for the same destination, London, has paid off in their unity. Once on board the ship the group of emigrants who were formerly deprived of any common link by their insularity, suddenly discover, through their conversation, their common plights.

The boat provides them with the rare opportunity to become aware of their sameness; this opportunity enables them to shape their regional consciousness. Closeness and tightness of space coupled with dialogue generates common awareness-raising:

They had come together without effort or invitation, exchanging confidences, telling stories about life in their respective islands and asking questions about the passengers whom they weren't likely to encounter. (TE, 33)

It is not only the closeness in the ship which has enabled them to become aware of their sameness. More than anything else, historical experience, or rather, historical suffering has imposed this similarity of views. When they come to view themselves as "vomit up" people (TE, 66), without any single exception within the group, this point shows their prompt awareness of history as their common denominator, a unifying element. It is this common view they had of their historical relation with England which has become the force binding them all together as a unit:

When them stay back home in they little island them forget a little an' them remain vomit; just as them wus vomit up, but when them go 'broad, them remember, or them get tol' w'at is w'at, an' them start to prove, an' them give w'at them provin' a name. A good name. Them is West Indians. Not Jamaicans or Trinidadians. Cause the bigger the better. (TE, 66)

So it can be said that the regional consciousness and unity of the West Indian people is shaped in the course of exile. Exile has opened up their minds

and eyes to the necessity of unification. This behavior or attitude is fully justified. In time of adversity --- and they know that they will soon become prey in the "mother country" --- there is no other way to face enmity than being united : together we can do, divided we cannot. To use Sandra Pouchet Paquet's phrase, this "shared vulnerability [...] prompts a spontaneous sense of community where it scarcely existed before" (Paquet, 1982, 3). This stand seems to be their new motto when undertaking exile. Moreover, their common history has urged them this imperious necessity of union. They come to know through a great deal of discussion their common ground. It is worth pointing out here that the confusion shown in the *Strange Man* exactly reflects the nature of the West Indian people. As the Jamaican eloquently puts it:

But if him take a little look at hist'ry him will understand. All dese people in West Indies, brown skin, black skin, all kind o' skin, dose wid learnin' an dose wid no learnin', them all want to do something. All them want to prove to somebody dat them doin' something or dat them can do something.... West Indies people, whatever islan' you bring them from, them want to prove something. (TE, 64)

As a result of this discovery, a sense of their common identity is firmly established during the fifteen days they spent together in the **Golden Image** before they reach their final destination, the fascinating "mother-country."

Facing the same problem and more importantly being cast in the same role, the candidates for exile see it useless to argue about their privileges, or boast about their regional distinctions. They find it irrelevant to argue on the

basis of their differences. What seems most important to them all -- and they are right in believing so -- is their common plight, what they most share in common; not what divides them. Hence, when a debate is raised by the Grenadian around the issue of education of the Bajan community : "Is only because you Bajans was always under the English you get more education than anybody else" (TE, 37), most of the people in the boat seems to agree on this statement uttered by the Governor:

Education or no education, the whole blasted lot o' you is small islanders... I know Kingston like I know Port-o-Spain, o' man, like the palm o' my hand, an' I say the whole lot o' you is blasted small islanders. (TE, 38)

Thanks to their awareness of sameness, most of them are bitterly opposed to the divisive Grenadian attitude around the issue of education. More importantly, this divisive trend is fought by all of the candidates for exile. It is not surprising therefore that George Lamming selects Governor to urge unity and brotherhood in the ship. He cannot conceive of any difference between these men who are suffering the same fate, from the same historical tragedy. Because they are all victims of a similar situation they did not create, but inherited, as a man of wisdom, the Governor, with his previous experience says: "All you down here is my brothers,... All you ... I tell you to stop this monkey-talk 'bout big island an' small islan'" (TE 39).



Similarly, due to the collective awareness of historical identity which strikes the emigrants most strongly outside of their national boundaries, the Jamaican does not see the necessity of self-division among the members of the community of emigrants:

De wahter separatin' you from him ain't do nothin' to put distance between the views you got on dis life or de next. Different man, different land, but de same outlook. Dat's de meanin' o' West Indies. De water between dem islands doan' separate dem. Many o' man in 'Jamaica would expound de same view, an' dere's a worl' o' sea between me an' you. (TE, 61)

Furthermore, their unity and regional consciousness is highlighted in their conversation where the Caribbean appears as a single and indivisible region. This Caribbean as a whole entity is given shape in this following affirmation made by the narrator: "We never hear so much talk till lately 'bout West Indies. Everybody sayin' me is West Indian. We is West Indians. West Indian this, West Indian that" (TE, 65).

Without doubt, this acknowledgment of regional sameness leads the narrator to lay a strong and particular emphasis on group identity and solidarity during the voyage. With due regard to Tornado's previous experience among the English people the narrator urges the concept of community as of prime importance:

Four years in the R.A.F. had taught him that people needed a group, and he felt that he was throwing in his lot with the

Jamaican. They were a group. Those who had met and spoken belonged to the same situation. It wasn't Jamaica, or Barbados or Trinidad. It was a situation that included all the islands. They were together. (TE, 77)

This piece of advice is echoed in the emigrants' behavior, for as the voyage progresses, a new understanding about self and community begins. The total unity of the emigrants is fully displayed in their talking. One could argue they have formed a community with a strong sense of identity. This remains the basic meaning one can grasp from the Jamaican's following speech: "Each," the Jamaican said, "must fend for himself, but he meant also that each must fend for himself in the name of the group" (TE, 77).

The most interesting element that gives hope in this quotation is the fact that the Jamaican, convinced and faithful in his belief in community strength is warning them against any divisive consideration which will be damaging to the well-being of the group of emigrants as an entity. In other words, the Jamaican's warning is a serious alarm which will keep them from copying the English individualistic way of living. To do so would threaten their survival as a group. It must be noted, however, that this sameness will be used against them in London, when the police, with their racist stands, question some of them (TE, 163).

This unity and group identity, two key concepts "discovered" and strengthened in the course of the voyage are put to practical use during the

whole period of their stay in London. This is exemplified in two main ways. First, their daily meetings both at the barber's place or in Tornado's basement evidence this unity; it is also illustrated in the women's regular meetings at Miss Dorkins' where they comfort themselves, and reinforce protective barriers. Their mutual support in face of the "enemy" remains another illustration of this solidarity binding them together.

Second, the emigrants have positively exploited the huge size of the city of London for their political preparations and plans. History has it that most state revolutions start abroad. London has provided them with the rarest freedom and they make use of it. Thus, politically speaking, their "Secret Gathering" is a symbolic, pivotal and powerful demonstration of their resolve to be regionally united. During those "Secret Gatherings," they discuss political issues regarding the Caribbean as an entity, as home. Because it is an underground organization, each participant in the "Secret Gathering," for the sake of personal security reasons, is given -- or has selected -- a code name. Hence they anonymously operate under the names of Potaro, Santa Clara, Chaca-Chacare, Forest Reserve, San Souci, and many more. Below is the description the narrator leaves to the appraisal of the reader:

The basement is like a cell the Secret Gathering has tunnelled deep underground, shut away from the chuffing of trains, a proof against sound. It's a freedom which the size of the city allows : this secret cover which emerges like a cave under the solitary bulb which lights them from above. Potaro, Santa Clara, Chaca-Chacare, San Souci. They are

waiting for the delegate from the Midland cadres to arrive...  
(WWB, 41)

In the light of their discussion and strategic elaboration, their resolve to go back home and start implementing their revolutionary ideology in San Cristobal is not surprising. The urge to come back for the task of national construction is strongly envisaged while in exile.

A point of capital importance that must be made before the conclusion of this chapter has to do with the central role exile has played in the cultural production of Caribbean writers. Exile is a key reference in the literary history of the Caribbean because the most important cultural documents on the area have been produced outside the region, while their authors were/are in exile : Fantz Fanon's **Back Skin, White Masks**, C. L. R. James's **Black Jacobins**, V. S. Naipaul's **A House for Mr. Biswas**, and George Lamming's **In the Castle of My Skin**. Regarding this issue of West Indian writers in exile, some critics of George Lamming's writings suggest that by making Collis and the artist-narrator the same person of **The Emigrants**, Lamming offers the same hope for the development of the West Indian writer in exile. Conferring linguistic and ideological credentials on the exiled Caribbean writer who seeks for more freedom, exile has enabled him to generate discourse on nationalism and identity.

In **Writing in Limbo**, Simon Gikandi has identified three main objectives in the Caribbean writers' discourse in exile. Firstly, the purpose of this discourse is to resist colonial authorities; secondly, it aims to devalorize the European cultural "shrine"; and thirdly, the Caribbean writer's discourse in exile aims at establishing new semiotic and ideological connections between the colonized-colonizer (Gikandi, 1992, 58).

The concluding remarks here are based on what Tornado, who knows in advance the kind of life that is ahead for the emigrants, confesses to Huggins: "We got to suffer first and then come together. If there is one thing England going teach all o' we is that there ain't no place like home no matter how bad home is" (TE, 76).

Lamming once said, while discussing his works with George Kent, that **Water with Berries** is his attempt to *reverse* the journeys; that is, in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, it was Prospero in the role of visitor to Caliban's island. In **Water with Berries** the situation is reversed.<sup>25</sup> Whether in **Water with Berries** or in **The Emigrants**, Caliban's visit to Prospero's land, as presented in Lamming's novels devoted to the exploration of the exilic experience, has efficiently helped to debunk the myth of metropolis; the sense of the infallibility of the English is demythologized by this visit. Consequently, the massive return to their home country of the emigrants is the inevitable

---

<sup>25</sup> George Lamming in George Kent, *op. cit.*, 8.

result of the explosion of the concept of "mother country." Exile is therefore viewed as a purgatorial experience and certainly a liberating one (Paquet, 1982, 44-5).

The emigrants' experience has paved the way for post-colonial revolution in San Cristobal. As Supriya Nair says about Jeremy, in their exile, they all come to express the conviction that while earlier generations before independence had no alternative but to depart, the younger generation must return to the task of revolution and nation-building (Nair, 1996, 75). But how has the younger generation of the Caribbean Islands devoted itself to the task of national reconstruction? Lamming's stand on this issue is described in two of his novels: **Of Age and Innocence** and **Season of Adventure**. This preoccupation is the central focus of the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

THE RETURNEE EMIGRANTS AND THE  
PROCESS OF NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION:  
OF AGE AND INNOCENCE AND  
SEASON OF ADVENTURE.

Perhaps it will be useful and appropriate to begin this chapter with this basic remark made by Michael Gilkes:

[In **In the Castle of My Skin**, we see the departure of G]. Emigration, exile, is the obvious next step. But in the next novel, **The Emigrants** (1954), there is another disillusionment and the inevitable return, the subject of **Of Age and Innocence** (1958) and, in particular, **Season of Adventure** (1960), which embodies an act of repossession of the native landscape, a reorientation of feeling through the experience of Fola in the *tonelle* during the Ceremony of Souls. But San Cristobal is an imaginary island, where the Haitian vodun Ceremony can effect "a return to roots" alongside the music of the steel band as a measure of the society's indigenous cultural health. (Gilkes, 1981, 87)

Lamming's **Season of Adventure** and **Of Age and Innocence** are very fascinating novels and shed key lights on Lamming's ideological stand on colonial issues. They represent major works by Lamming regarding the issue of decolonization. It can be said that there is a logical development in Lamming's writing/thought as a decolonizing writer to the extent that in **In the Castle of My Skin**, his first novel, he gives us a portrayal of the colonial experience in the West Indies without suggesting any positive alternative or ways out of the system; that is, **In the Castle of My Skin** represents Lamming's diagnosis of colonialism.

As has already been said, one of the positive effects of the exilic experience lies in the fact that outside their national boundaries, in England, the men meet in the barber's shop, or in Tornado's basement to discuss



political and social matters related to their home country, the Caribbean, or West Indies. Hence, consciousness about nation building and reconstruction starts in their exile. Sandra Pouchet Paquet seems to fully capture this view when she writes:

**Of Age and Innocence** describes the role of the returning emigrants in the process of political change. It explores the damage done to the individual psyche by the emigrant experience but it also confirms this experience as an important catalyst in the independence movement. (Paquet, 1982, 48)

As Lamming himself pointed out in his conversation with George Kent, "After the special disillusionments of that voyage, after these men, too, have put the idea of where they're going beside the reality of where they are, the next logical step was for their return" (Lamming in Kent, 1973, 96).

To convince the reader that the postcolonial revolution in San Cristobal originates in the debunking of the myth of "mother country" consecutive to Caliban's visit to Prospero's kingdom, the narrator makes us an eye-witness when Paravecino deals with this aspect of the matter by giving this clarification about Shephard's entry into politics. To Crabbe, a white expatriate who works for the perpetuation of the colonial order in San Cristobal, Paravecino says:

You gave Shephard an image of yourself, and then circumstances provided him with the opportunity to examine that image. If you had never allowed these colonials to flock to your country as they please, Shephard might not have happened. So they went, and you know

better than I what they found. They found you in a state of disorder which was worse than anything they knew in the colonies. And it was their experience of this disorder that suggested to them what could happen when they got back home. In fact, they returned for no other reason. It was you, not the colonials, who started the colonial revolution.... you can't pride yourself on liberty and deny them the experience too. Nor can you go on enjoying the privilege of a lie at the expense of people who have discovered the lie. The image of a superior animal doesn't make sense after these men like Shephard work in a London factory or sleep whenever he pleases with some little progressive slut from the London school of Economics. (OAI, 168)

Truly speaking, colonialism has within itself the germ of its own destruction. Ma Shephard neatly puts her finger on the influence the exilic experience has been exerting on her son Shephard when she points out that his sailing to England started his hate for and rebellion against the established order set in the place by the English colonial administration:

Whatever happen there I cannot in a manner of certainty speak, but he had a bad experience which teach him to rebel ... Whatever they do to him I don't know, but he came back here, full up with a great hate for that England, an' the only way he could work it off was in the great fight he start for the poor workers... (OAI, 332)

To cut a long story short, one may say that on the whole, emigration is a decisive stage or phase of self-discovery which has led the emigrants back to the Caribbean Islands for post-colonial revolution. George Lamming's narrator has already predicted this situation in Tornado's plaintive dream of "some new

land where we can find peace. Not only the ones like me an' you, but the student ones too. They got to find a place where they can be without making up false pictures 'bout other places" (TE, 195).

This chapter addresses how that new community has struggled to establish this "new land." It exposes and analyzes the inevitable return of the emigrants on the political and cultural planes as presented in **Of Age and Innocence** and **Season of Adventure**. Its development shows how the returning emigrants have repossessed their native landscape on the one hand, and stresses the importance of indigenous culture as a binding force for national formation, on the other hand. The political aspect is given priority in the first part of this study and is essentially focused on **Of Age and Innocence**. The cultural dimension is discussed next with regards to **Season of Adventure**. However, before undertaking this, it is important to say a few words regarding the setting of both **Season of Adventure** and **Of Age and Innocence** before exhuming political and cultural rebirths in both novels.

#### IV. 1. THE SETTING OF BOTH NOVELS : SOME SPECULATIONS ON SAN CRISTOBAL.

Generally speaking, the setting of any novel, or narrative, or dramatic work includes the general locale, historical time, and social circumstances in which its action takes place; the setting of an episode or scene within a work is a particular physical location in which it occurs. A third element which is

usually added to both place and time is atmosphere, or the mood in which the story is told. However, our interest in this study is particularly focused on the physical place where and time when the story is set. Perhaps further studies will detail the other remaining component of the setting, that is, its atmosphere.

Both **Season of Adventure** and **Of Age and Innocence** are set on an imaginary island called San Cristobal. In **Of Age and Innocence**, the story takes place in colonial San Cristobal in its "last stage of colonialism" whereas in **Season of Adventure**, the narration is set in a newly independent and federal republic of San Cristobal.

It is all the same important to bear in mind that because of this particular setting of **Of Age and Innocence** and **Season of Adventure**, both novels differ from George Lamming's other pieces of fiction. It is very useful to explore the various aspects of this new place as a setting chosen by Lamming for his two most important resistance novels.

What sort of place is this island which Lamming has created? This reflection is worth undertaking, because the name San Cristobal is not a randomly chosen one. Lamming's conception of this Island as a whole is deeply motivated. Our research into its origins has revealed the deep motives of Lamming's setting the story in this area. In order of priority, its physical and geographical aspects are considered first. Secondly, the genealogy, or the

origin of this particular island receives scrutiny. The third instance deals with our speculation or interpretation of the message Lamming intends to convey through this judicious choice of his.

To begin with, it is important to note that, a few years after the publication of both novels, Lamming himself, in an interview with George Kent, acknowledges that San Cristobal bears many of the characteristic features of the West Indies as a whole. In other words, Lamming's conception of San Cristobal is not modelled on a single West Indian island, or country. In his talking about **Of Age and Innocence** with Kent then, Lamming explicitly stated that the events narrated in **Of Age and Innocence** allude to the society of **In the Castle of My Skin** now extended to the whole area in its last stage of colonialism (Lamming in Kent, 1973, 96).

What is more, all critics of Lamming's work have agreed that Lamming's San Cristobal constitutes a unique island he has created and which incorporates within itself different elements borrowed from various West Indian regions, or the Caribbean area. Thus, for Yannick Tarrieu the presence of the mythical island of San Cristobal is already perceptible in Lamming's **In the Castle of My Skin**. The following quote tells about his identification of that presence : "A vrai dire, San Cristobal est déjà présente dans le village barbadien décrit dans **In the Castle of My Skin**" (Tarrieu, 1980, 35). As far as

Tarrieu can judge, San Cristobal, as it were, can be identified in the description Lamming gives of Creighton's village of **In the Castle of My Skin**.

What are the physical or geographical features of San Cristobal depicted in both novels?

The physical description of San Cristobal provided in **Season of Adventure** and **Of Age and Innocence** shows physical elements that can be identified in the whole Caribbean area. According to Tarrieu, those elements bear similarities with many islands (Tarrieu, 1980, 38). The same observation is made by Draper when he points out that Lamming's San Cristobal bears many of the social and geographic features and even some of the place names of other West Indian Islands (Draper, 1992, 1229).

But the San Cristobal selected by Lamming as a setting for both novels also has its historical interpretation. It is also Tarrieu who fully exposes the historical aspect of this fascinating island. For him, the mythical island of San Cristobal has a long history behind it. His investigations have proven that this island alludes to Christopher Columbus, it is also the name of a city in San Domingo. To give the right message, he will be quoted, at length, once more:

Le nom de San Cristobal évoque bien sûr le souvenir de Christophe Colomb. C'est aussi le nom d'une ville de Saint-Domingue, partie orientale d'Hispaniola, [...] C'est encore le nom, en espagnol, de la première colonie britannique, Saint Christopher (aujourd'hui St Kitts), où, pour l'unique

fois dans l'histoire des Antilles, on vit la coexistence harmonieuse de trois communautés : l'anglaise, après la colonisation par Thomas Warner, en 1624; la française, après l'arrivée de d'Esnambuc, l'année suivante : et surtout, on risque de l'oublier, les indigènes du roi Tegreman. (Tarrieu, 1980, 35-6)

The narrator himself seems to be more interested in its racial and cultural aspects. San Cristobal is presented as resulting from a historical accident. Of its cultural, social, and racial aspects, the narrator says:

San Cristobal which every race has reached and where the sea is silver and the mountains climb the moon. ... San Cristobal coming up by accident one morning from water, the tiny skull of mountain top which was once asleep under the sea. Here Africa and India shake hands with China, and Europe wrinkles like a brow begging every face to promise love. ...I know San Cristobal. It is mine, me, divided in a harmony that still pursues all its separate parts. No new country, but an old old land inhabiting new forms of men who can never resurrect their roots and do not know their nature.... (OAI, 58)

San Cristobal is, therefore, a composite of populations, a real laboratory for the intermingling of races. San Cristobal is a place where all races meet. The narrator reminds us of this when he insists on the provenance or origin of the different kinds of people which inhabit the place:

Twas even in my time I see a new race o' labour voyage in an' come to stay, makin' all kind o' mixture here in San Cristobal. Now it was India, an' later China, an' more too I cannot recollect, from east an' west, whatever nation outside had power to sell or len' mankind, they come, an' time take whatever memory come with them 'cross the sea, an' their habit make home right here, you an' me an'

all who now stay here for good or evil till eternity take them off, one by one or all together (OAI, 60-70)

It must be noted, as emphasized by the narrator, that this encounter is caused by the plague known to history as slavery and colonialism. Though this aspect of the topic will not be considered in this part of the paper, it is worth remembering that the setting of the following three novels : **In the Castle of My Skin**, **Of Age and Innocence** and **Season of Adventure** share a common pattern as far as their historical backgrounds are concerned.

According to Ronda Cobhan the early history of the place is mainly dominated by the pacification and extermination of its native populations before the introduction of the plantation system of sugar cultivation based on black labor. Later, it is reported that Indians and Chinese motivated by economic considerations also settled in San Cristobal, another way to say West Indies.<sup>1</sup>

As regards culture, San Cristobal is also a composite of various cultures. Though allusion has been made to this in **Season of Adventure**, it will be useful to recall it here for purpose of convenience.

The best cultural (in)formation we get on San Cristobal is provided by Gloria Yarde. In her article, "George Lamming - the Historical Imagination,"

---

<sup>1</sup> Cobhan in King ed. op. cit., 9.



Yarde meticulously describes the cultural mixture specific to San Cristobal in the following terms:

Lamming brings together diverse features peculiar to separate West Indian islands [...]. There is voodoo ceremony of Souls from Haiti, Steelband Trinidad, and the "Boys" who resemble the inhabitants of the Jamaican Dungle more clearly than any other group. (Yarde, 1970, 41)

Before dealing with political issues in San Cristobal as presented in **Of Age and Innocence** and **Season of Adventure**, it will be meaningful to speculate on the motivations behind Lamming's creation of this mythical island.

Lamming fully shares without reservation Gareth Griffiths's assumption that the Caribbean writer has a specific function and responsibility in the development of the Caribbean citizen. Griffiths has mentioned the specific challenge facing the West Indian artist, and particularly novelists, when the latter draws their attention to consciousness-raising as their main task:

The Caribbean writer saw that he had an important role to play in shaping the consciousness of his people. His work was designed not to record his experience, but also to renew his countrymen's awareness of their unique identity. (Griffiths, 1978, 143)

Without doubt, Lamming as a decolonizing and postcolonial writer would have many motivations at the back of his mind while creating this mythical island known as San Cristobal.

As a committed artist, Lamming's vision is shaped by the political situation in the whole Caribbean. His preoccupation with politics can easily shed more light on his motivation. On many occasions he has had the opportunity to clarify his standpoint on the role an artist, and particularly a creative writer, has to play in shaping the political consciousness of his people. As he himself reminds us, his artistic purpose is to shape the consciousness and to influence the perspective of both the Caribbean community and the world community at large (Kent, 1982, 90):

Therefore, notwithstanding the fact that the organization of political movements is not the artist's function, Lamming firmly believes that the artist's responsibilities are similar to the politician's:

Although I would make a distinction about *functions*, I do not make distinction about *responsibilities*. I do not think that the responsibility of the professional politician is greater than the responsibility of an artist to his society.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, Lamming defines himself as a writer committed to suggesting ways to rescue his people from an imposed rule consecutive to colonial undertakings. In his interview with George Kent, he bluntly states that the Caribbean writer has a "public task" beyond the "creating of so-called works of art." Even more, he sees the artist as engaged in the "shaping of national consciousness, giving alternative directions to society":

---

<sup>2</sup> Lamming in Munro and Sander. op. cit., 13.

The novelist, the poet, the painter, is very conscious of doing with the imagination something more than creating so-called works of Art. In other words, there is a sense in which he is undertaking a *public* as distinct from the situation in contemporary England where the writer is a law unto himself.

There is not a man who works under the pressure, who works with the immediacy of what Kierkegaard called "that immediate neighbourhood." The society is not for him what Nigeria is to novelist Achebe or the Caribbean is to people concerned with shaping of national consciousness, giving alternative directions to society.<sup>3</sup>

It will be worth recalling here that Lamming is addressing the issue of the black artist's commitment. Chinweizu helps us to better apprehend this concept of "artistic commitment" when he writes the following:

Artistic commitment is a matter of perceiving social realities and of making those perceptions available in works of art in order to help promote understanding and preservation of, or change in, the society's values and norms.<sup>4</sup>

With this concept of artistic commitment in mind, it becomes absolutely obvious that the creation of San Cristobal as a setting is far from being random. The choice of characteristics which compose it derives from political, cultural, social, and economic considerations. In our present state of knowledge, three main reasons can substantiate this judicious choice operated by George Lamming.

---

<sup>3</sup> Lamming in Kent, op. cit., 90.

<sup>4</sup> Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike, eds, *African Fiction and Poetry and their Critics* (Enugu, Nigeria : Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1980), 253-4.

Let us speculate on the various reasons which would have motivated this West Indian novelist who is praised as a "poet of the novel, poet in every honorable sense of the word" and whose secret of craft usually makes each word of his writing "achieve its maximum potential, its maximum suggestibility" as has observed David S. West.<sup>5</sup>

The first motivation has to do with his eagerness to promote and strengthen union within the nation-states of the Caribbean Islands. This idea of union or unity in the region is perceived through the creation of San Cristobal, an island which borrows elements peculiar to the whole West Indian area. Without reservation, Yannick Tarrieu shares this assumption when he points out that San Cristobal symbolizes Lamming's urge for unity in the region:

Nous voulons voir dans cette rencontre historique [that is, the meeting of all Caribbean elements in San Cristobal], le symbole de l'unité que promeut Lamming, en réalisant un conglomérat assez solide pour constituer une constante de son œuvre. (Tarrieu, 1980, 36)

Paquet agrees with that hypothesis and furthermore, she suggests that Lamming's choice to set both novels, **Of Age and Innocence** and **Season of Adventure** in this fictional West Indian island called San Cristobal certainly reflects a deepening concern of Lamming to address himself to the West Indian people as a regional entity, despite the political and geographic divisions that isolate the different territories (Paquet, 1982, 117).

---

<sup>5</sup> David. S. West, "Lamming's Poetic Language in *In the Castle of My Skin*," *Literary Half Yearly*, no 11, 1977, 71.

Ambroise Kom also faithfully shares this view of Lamming's judicious choice of this mythical island of San Cristobal when he brings us to perceive, through this aesthetic practice, Lamming's strong will and wish to see the West Indian region united. Through its creation Kom perceives Lamming's urgent message for international, or regional solidarity for West Indian communities, or nations. In other words, in creating San Cristobal, Lamming is moving away from the Caribbean region self-division perceived by many political practitioners as the most dangerous enemy that can haunt any nation. San Cristobal is therefore a collective space where the realization of the union of all people and nations of every and all Caribbean islands can become possible and a living reality. In this connection Ambroise Kom writes:

Lamming substitue le concept un peu plus anonyme de San Cristobal à celui des îles caraïbes. L'auteur espère sans doute que le nouveau cadre ralliera aisément les micronationalistes de la région et diminuera certaines susceptibilités territoriales. Le lieu d'évolution de l'Antillais nouveau est donc créé. (Kom, 1986, 4)

It therefore goes, without any further comment, that union among the various Caribbean islands is one of Lamming's main purposes in creating San Cristobal. This thesis of unity, as a motive behind Lamming's creation of this fictional island of San Cristobal is shared by many other Caribbean scholars. Daniel Guérin, who addresses the same issue in his book **Les Antilles décolonisées** (1956), can be cited among many other scholars who have

shown keen interest in, and defended the thesis of union between West Indian nations.

It must be noted that behind this creation is the writer's commitment and hope in the future federation of the islands which make up the West Indies. This interpretation is accepted by Ambroise Kom when he expresses the view that "Le concept de San Cristobal traduit chez l'auteur un profond acte de foi dans l'avenir fédéraliste des Caraïbes" (Kom, 1986, 102). Through this creation, Lamming is expressing his faith in the better future of the different Caribbean islands as a whole. Therefore, Lamming's thinking stands in opposition to the force of colonial enterprise which has deprived the area of its best elements. Hence, in this creation he is encouraging the people of his region, and by extension, all the former colonized spaces, to see through this new creation a better future. This is the way Tarrieu expresses this view:

A contre-courant de ce que l'écrivain appelle "la structure coloniale", à rebours du mouvement historique qui porte l'Antillais vers l'étranger, on voit se dessiner, dans l'ombre, les contours d'une terre vieille mais vierge, tenue en réserve pour des jours meilleurs. (Tarrieu, 1980, 37)

The second motivation has to do with Lamming's strong will to restore a kind of particular justice to the Caribbean area after its long nightmarish history. The creation of this island is a real artistic challenge expressed by Lamming vis-a-vis the Western colonial powers that have always dominated or exercised influence in the place. As one of Lamming's critics has pointed out, San Cristobal is:

une île par excellence, parfaite parcequ' abstraite, l'épure qui servira de base à l'édification d'une société neuve. Sous l'oeil visionnaire de Lamming, une île, *différente*, fraîche et fertile, jaillit comme au commencement du monde antillais, au milieu de remous évocateurs des cataclysmes originels : l'île de Caliban avant la venue de Prospero, ou celle de Vendredi avant le naufrage de Robinson, une sorte de paradis perdu et récupéré. (Tarrieu, 1980, 38)

It is very useful to point out here that what is said so far regarding Lamming's motives in creating San Cristobal confirms the hypothesis expressed by Brydon and Tiffin, when both agree that neither literature nor criticism are "pure" objects of study or practice that can be separated from life.<sup>6</sup>

Indeed Lamming is a politically committed writer and his message is directly addressed to the forces shaping politics in the region. He therefore proposes his own reading of the political issues related to the place. His perception of, and elaboration on political issues affecting the region and his suggestion of solutions to the political turmoil in the region constitute the main focus in the next sections.

Lamming himself is a Caribbean political activist. It is reported that he actively participated on every occasion in the independence movements sweeping the Caribbean. About his political activism, Paquet notes that he was equally "involved with the People's National Movement (PNM) in Trinidad, and

---

<sup>6</sup> Brydon and Tiffin, *Decolonizing Fictions* (New South Wales, Australia : Dangaroo Press, 1993), 26.

speaking at a convention, introduced the party's candidate for their first election."<sup>7</sup>

On the international plane, his participation in the "All African People's Conference" in Accra organized to build political solidarity in order to efficiently combat imperialist domination best illustrates this point. It may be useful to state here that his participation in this conference gave birth to **Season of Adventure**. As such, Lamming is really interested in politics as it permeates many of his novels. His literary production reflects his position on the role of artist and politician. Specifically and as mentioned earlier, Lamming envisages no conflict between the responsibility of an artist and that of any professional politician.

#### IV. 2. OF AGE AND INNOCENCE AND POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION

To begin with, it is worth pointing out some important features which characterize both novels. Lamming's **Season of Adventure** and **Of Age and Innocence** give a full description of the West Indian people's struggle to be free of the political, economic, and cultural dominations that characterized their history. While in **Season of Adventure** emphasis is laid on cultural aspects of national struggle, **Of Age and Innocence** stresses the need of organized political action to eradicate colonial inheritance. Therefore, Lamming

---

<sup>7</sup> Sandra Pouchet Paquet, "George Lamming," in Lindfors and Sander eds, op. cit., 58.



suggests in both novels that redemption is possible only through a revitalized and political redefinition of culture, community and race.

**Of Age and Innocence** picks up where **In the Castle of My Skin** leaves off. Lamming himself thinks the situation presented in **Of Age and Innocence** is in direct line with that described in his first novel, an extension of it : "What we see there [in **Of Age and Innocence**] is the society of **In the Castle of My Skin** now extended to the whole area in its last stage of colonialism (in Kent, 1973, 96).

As such, **Of Age and Innocence** deepens and extends the latter's concern with the growing political awareness that pushes this colony painfully and inevitably towards a rejection of British colonial rule (Paquet, 1982, 48). Of course, the political organization which naturally follows the return of the emigrants is the focus of **Of Age and Innocence**.

Earlier on, the political tone is already set in **Of Age and Innocence** by the legend of the Tribe Boys who prefer to commit suicide than to submit to any foreign rule. San Cristobal was reported to be an empty land when the Tribe Boys set foot on it. This land which formerly belonged to these Tribe Boys being taken by the invaders, they are committed to fighting for its recuperation. As a result of this determination, a bloody battle opposes the Tribe Boys and

the Bandit King, the invaders. At the end, the Tribe Boys lose ground but do not surrender (OAI, 94-99).

This legend has set the example for the boys who formed their own political organization called "the secret Society". Like their predecessors, these Boys are determined to oppose resistance to political colonial administration:

Above all, the secret Society was directly connected to what was happening in San Cristobal. Their behaviour was no longer a boy's imitation of his wish to be different, for the Society had achieved the secrecy which each had pledged at the start. Inevitably, it had given them a new sense of power... (OAI, 116)

It is worth saying that this act of rebellion which set the tone of the novel at its beginning inscribes **Of Age and Innocence** in resistance literature.

What is resistance literature about? According to Stephen Selmon, the concept of "resistance" is first put forward in Selwyn Cudjoe's **Resistance and Caribbean Literature** and Barbara Harlow's **Resistance Literature** where both identify "resistance" as an act, or a set of acts, which is designed to rid a people of its oppressors, and it so thoroughly infuses the experience of living under oppression that it becomes an almost autonomous aesthetic principle.

In the light of this definition, recalls Selmon, "resistance literature," can be seen as that "category of literary writing which emerges as an integral part of an organized struggle or resistance for national liberation."<sup>8</sup> It is important to say that the example of the Tribe Boys who are ready to commit suicide rather than submit to any foreign rule announces the determination of the people for independence struggle in San Cristobal. Needless to mention that **Season of Adventure** is registered in this category of literature, for the same situation of resistance is shown in this novel when Gort and Chiki opposed a strong resistance to the newly elected government that is making war on the creative will and expression of the people.

In her study of George Lamming's works, Paquet makes the point that Lamming is a political novelist because his fiction is primarily concerned with the relationship between politics and the social and cultural values that shape the quality of human life in a given historical moment. Moreover, she claims that Lamming's fiction offers no program for social change because of his refusal to commit himself to a political ideology in his fiction, for he is most concerned with the definition of the structure of power in the society and the examination of the individual dilemma in relation to the function of that power (Paquet, 1982, 119-122). However, it remains a fact that a strong desire for political change permeates Lamming's writing. Consequently, I am of the view that Lamming is a political novelist, as is acknowledged by both Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Ambroise Kom. Even if he offers no political program, by

---

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Selmon, in Ashcroft et. al. eds. 1995, op. cit., 107.

enabling some of his characters to play leading political roles, and by creating San Cristobal, Lamming can be regarded as an advocate for social change.

This section aims to critically assess Lamming's examination of the politics in San Cristobal as depicted in **Of Age and Innocence**.

To begin with, one must remember that **Of Age and Innocence** is set in the colonial period. This novel opens with the return of a black leader, Isaac Shephard, to colonial San Cristobal, his native land. Disgruntled by his racist experience in England, he comes back and successfully organizes a multiracial independence movement with East Indian and Chinese leaders. But as the election approaches, the movement is divided along racial lines. In a violent strike that occurs, the black revolutionary leader, Isaac Shephard, is assassinated.

Though conclusions will be drawn by the end of the present chapter, it is worth saying here that the failure of the independence movement is caused by the inability of its leaders to overcome mutual suspicions rooted in their dissimilar experiences of colonialism that each group had.

The political awakening in San Cristobal fundamentally owes much to the return of the emigrants, and particularly to the coming back from England of Isaac Shephard. It is important to note that the complete reliance of the

independence movement on the emigrants has denied the local residents of agency. Lamming's privileging the emigrants reflects a lack of confidence in the political capacity of the local population. As will be demonstrated shortly, the narrator sees in Shephard a true nationalist, and patriot committed to defending the interests of his people, to leading his community to complete independence from the colonial administration.

Who is Isaac Shephard?

Regarding his family background, Shephard is said to be the son of Ma Shephard. Thanks to this widow, we learn that his father died years before Shephard sailed to England (OAI, 144). As far as his training is concerned, it is reported that in England, he attended the London School of Economics (OAI, 168). This is the information we get about him. Shephard is therefore a highly educated person created by the narrator to initiate political activities in the colonial island of San Cristobal. Perhaps it is also important to point out that the name Shephard chosen by the writer is also meaningful. It means pastor/savior/ leader.

How does he carry out the mission he is assigned by the narrator? Does he succeed in satisfying the aspirations and needs of his people? Is he a practical, far-sighted politician? Certainly, the conclusion will shed much more light on this emblematic and charismatic political figure of San Cristobal. Yet,

before tackling this aspect of the topic, it will be interesting to shed more light on Shephard's personal redefinition with due regard to his colonial status.

Shephard has set himself the task of liberating San Cristobal from its tyrannical British rulers. Before developing the various political plans that can enable him to achieve such a goal, it is of paramount importance to state here that Shephard could never have been involved in politics without his own redefinition:

I discovered that until then, until that experience, I had always lived in the shadow of a meaning which others had placed on my presence in the world, and I had played no part at all in making that meaning, like a chair which is wholly at the mercy of the idea guiding the hand of the man who builds it ...

Now take me. I am not a chair, but this meaning placed on my presence in the world possessed me in the same way that the idea of chair is from the start in complete possession of any chair, irrespective of its shape, size, usefulness. Similarly, the meaning I speak of had already made me for the other's regard. A stupid me, a sensible me, a handsome me, any me you can think of always remained me. But like a chair, I have played no part at all in the making of that meaning which others use to define me completely. (OAI, 203)

He elaborates further on this concept of redefinition, or his idea of 'regression':

When I speak of regression I simply mean that my rebellion begins with an acceptance of the very thing I reject, because my condition cannot have the meaning I want to give it, if it does not accept and live through that

conception by which the others now regard it. But I cannot ignore it. (OAI, 205)

Shephard has discovered through his discussion with an Englishwoman that to be a colonial from San Cristobal is to surrender one's identity, a false meaning externally imposed by others on the colonial without his participation. It can even be said that others have deformed him through the meaning they have forced upon him. The narrator means us to see through Shephard's attitude that former colonized people have to redefine their own image, these people need to change their old way of thinking. They have to change their mentality before being successful.

Edward Said makes the point that imagination is the key to any genuine redefinition. In **Orientalism**, he clearly exposes the imperial strategy of control of the conquered through the manipulation of knowledge that constructs the Oriental, or the colonized as other. This strategy of the Anglocentric practice renders some of the colonized invisible. Colonialism has refused Shephard the right to his own identity. Just the way postcolonial literature has fought to isolate itself from the engulfable margins of the imperial center, Shephard has to define his own image.<sup>9</sup>

Shephard understands this necessity to decolonize his own mind, his own image created by colonialism which confers false perceptions on him. His

---

<sup>9</sup> Brydon and Tiffin, op. cit., 15

action powerfully questions that image once taken for granted and placed on him by the powerful Anglocentric discourse.

Shephard's attitude, then, is tantamount to maintaining that before any success in political action, the politician himself has to first undergo this inner revolution, a revolution within himself. To use Bulhan's term, in the psychology of oppression, the "killing" of the intropressor is the first stage toward self-definition (Bulhan, 1985, 125-6). As a result of this discovery, Shephard went into politics to redefine his own image through political actions. He himself states the conditions which caused his entry into politics when he says:

It is too crude an explanation, but quite forgivable, to say that I went into politics because of my experience with that woman. That experience was only a condition which precipitated my decisions. It is truer to say that I went into politics in order to redefine myself through action. And just as it was a certain deception which preceded a certain understanding, it would seem that a certain regression is necessary for any leap I may make, for any other me to emerge. (OAI, 204)

Generally speaking, decolonization is a process through which we show respect for ourselves. Shephard knows that a genuine and true decolonization will show itself through starting things afresh. After decolonizing himself, Shephard proposes alternative ways of seeing and living in the "new land" the advent of which he is fighting for. Colonialism has taught the colonized to reflect in certain ways, but Lamming through the character Shephard is proposing a certain alternative, that is, a redefinition of development and an



elaboration of one's new priorities, and above all, to put one's old ways of reflection into question.

As far as one can analyse, Shephard's political activities are structured around two main points, namely : nationalism and racial unity with their various ramifications.

What is the particular meaning, the connotation of the concept of nationalism in the mind of the returning emigrants who are so imbued with it ?

Mark, an emigrant who came back to San Cristobal on the same flight with Isaac Shephard and who actively participated in the political revival in the place, defines the meaning and importance of nationalism in **Of Age and Innocence** in the following terms:

Nationalism is not only frenzy and struggle with all its necessary demands for the destruction of those forces which condemn you to the status we call colonial. The national spirit is deep and more enduring than that. It is original and necessary as the root to the body of the tree. It is the same source of discovery and creation. It is the private feeling you experience of possessing and being the whole landscape of the place when you were born, the freedom which helps you to recognize the rhythm of the wind, the silence and aroma of the night, rocks, water, pebble and branch, animal and bird noise, the temper of the sea and the morning arousing nature everywhere to the silent and sacred communion between you and the roots you have made on this island. It is the bond between each name and that corner of the earth which his birth and his work have baptized with the name, home. And the freedom you sing ... freedom... (O A I, 174-5)

This definition, which includes almost all aspects of nationalism, will powerfully influence the returning emigrants' view on politics. They would attempt to translate this definition in their daily struggle.

An important point to bear in mind here has to do with the nonexistence of the nation of San Cristobal before the return of its sons and daughters from their exile. It is useful to note that at this stage the creative force that brings the nation into existence rests on the exilic and "foreign" experience of the emigrants, not on "African" tradition. While Ernest Renan's concept of nation relies on a rich heritage, a grand past, and distinguished national heroes and heroines,<sup>10</sup> the emigrants have found upon their return a lack of such a "social capital" in San Cristobal, just the way it was before they left the place : in **Water with Berries**, Roger is unable to regard San Cristobal as human soil because the place seems to have "no antiquity, no trail which led to some prize of ruin that might be waiting for discovery" (WWB, 70).

Therefore, they have to invent this nation. In an illuminating study, Ernest Gellner reminds us that race, geography, tradition, language, size, or some combination of these elements are insufficient for determining national essence, and yet people die for nations, fight wars for them, and write fictions on their behalf. Others have emphasized the creative side of nation-forming, suggesting the cultural importance of what has often been treated as a dry,

---

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Renan, "What is Nationalism?" quoted in Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London : Routledge, 1990), 19.

rancorous political fact. Very importantly, he states that "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness ; *it invents nations where they do not exist* ." <sup>11</sup> Alexander J. Motyl finds, for his part, that "nationalism is a political ideal that views statehood as the optimal form of political organization for each nation" (Motyl, 1991, 53).

Shephard and his group's most imperious priority before creating, or inventing this nation will consist in snatching independence from the British authorities who are still ruling San Cristobal. This will is perceived through the national frenzy he has aroused; it is also displayed in his ambition and determination to get rid of the colonizers. In other words, Shephard sets himself the task of demolishing "the edifice of British influence in San Cristobal" (OAI, 168).

With this objective in mind, upon his return from the mother country, he tackles the political front of the issue by organizing political meetings. These political revivals have started a sort of political awakening in the place. According to the narrator, before the coming back of Isaac Shephard from England, San Cristobal was particularly known for its political immobilism, or at best, its political inactivity and ignorance. Before the coming back of the emigrants, the native people in San Cristobal who have remained there do not

---

<sup>11</sup> Ernest Gellner, quoted in Anderson, *Imagined Communities : Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York : Verso, 1983), 15, italics mine.

know anything about political independence. Their ignorance regarding politics is complete.

Shephard's political meetings prove successful in that many people from different regions of San Cristobal attend these meetings:

The evening was a world of bees murmuring some fearful prophecy through the land. Horse-drawn, by public transport, or on foot, the enormous crowd has journeyed from every corner of San Cristobal to swear their allegiance to Shephard. (OAI, 170-171)

Furthermore, the narrator means us to see through the success of his political rallies when he conveys this information to the reader : "Some of the men had started a lively discussion about San Cristobal and the political meetings which were held every night in the town" (OAI, 76).

Moreover, the reader learns through the discussion held by these men that Shephard is the bringer of good news to all of them; he has awakened political consciousness in the people of San Cristobal. His political meetings are seen as a new light, " a new day o' deliverance" (OAI, 76). His commitment to freedom is more than once illustrated in his different political campaigns attended by the crowd. On such occasions, he will sing his discourse. Reminiscent of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of freedom, Shephard offered the crowd a particularly emotional speech on freedom saying:

*The people that walked in darkness  
Have seen a great light;  
They that dwell in the land of shadow of death,  
Upon them hath the light shined.  
Thou hast multiplied the nation, increased the joy;  
They joy before thee according to the harvest,  
[...]  
Over land and over sea  
Freedom shall prevail,  
Man was born for liberty  
And freedom shall prevail...*  
(OAI, 171- 172; italics in the original)

His political work is praised by the local population who see in him a real redeemer, a true saviour who can rescue his people from colonial tyranny and despotism. As a charismatic leader, his speech can easily move people's hearts and minds. A character in the story confesses during his conversation with his fellow citizen of San Cristobal that Shephard's power of speech is really moving : "He moves my heart" ... "but he choose the right day to make that speech, the mornin' we celebrate San Cristobal. 'Tis a next day of deliverance he goin' bring" (OAI, 77). It is by now obvious that Shephard is growing into a shepherd.

But Shephard's political philosophy is also articulated in his vision of national unity and racial understanding. Because fate has decided to gather together people of different colors in San Cristobal, "'Cause San Cristobal ain't got no history but a people who collect in one place by some strange chance" (OAI, 81), Shephard remains firmly convinced that they are bound by the same fate to be politically and racially united for any bright future. " Friend or foe,

Baboo, we goin' to lie down in the same future" (OAI, 81). Commenting on Shephard's racial politics in San Cristobal, Thief, another character in the novel eventually declares:

Look me straight Baboo, an' see how skin curse the light like judgment evenin' for a soul in sin. But tomorrow comin', tomorrow near here, Baboo, an' we goin' all sing with the same no-color smile. So better get ready, Baboo. Tell your heart to teach your lip the movement when it feel joy come home. (OAI, 80)

Shephard's effective policy as far as racial unity is addressed is successful in that, for the first time, racial stratification loses its earlier significance in the colonial republic of San Cristobal. He portrays himself as a champion and an unashamedly committed person for racial unity. His political action promotes unity despite racial diversity known to the area. He is the promoter of racial unification; in his view, there would be no room for color barriers. This is the most basic interpretation that can be deduced from this conversation between Baboo and Thief when the latter says:

Now we ridin' high, 'cause time call a new tune, an' we both goin' rule San Cristobal, you an' me Baboo... You follow the meetings Baboo? Where you puttin' your vote ? See how Sing led Shephard lead, 'cause the blacks outnumber all, but the numbers don't matter no more, Baboo, an' we goin' to join the same dream that wake with the Chinese too, and any white who is willing. (OAI, 81)

As confirmed in this excerpt, Shephard is presented in the novel as a patriot who seeks the rallying of all the people belonging to the colonial

republic of San Cristobal. In addition to this, he is not a professional liar in politics. As far as the people involved in the novel can judge, Shephard is a devoted and honest politician. In the words of another character : " An' he aint talk no lie" ... "he aint let his tongue slip a single lie when he say that San Cristobal is his an' mine, an' how he goin' make it belong to everybody who born here" (OAI, 77).

Does this attitude reflect, to some extent, the ignorance of these people in politics? An answer to this question cannot be provided with certainty. What remains certain, however, is the fact that the narrator's presentation of Shephard makes him seem so perfect that nothing can be said to his detriment. Because of his political determination, Shephard has "become a frontier which they could follow without fear, a faith which had made their future safe" (OAI, 171).

To prove that these people are not mistaken in their evaluation of his political activities, an assessment of his political declarations and acts can shed more light on this emblematic political figure.

Shephard's political task which consists in demanding independence for San Cristobal leads him to powerfully sensitize each and every single individual for involvement in the political challenge facing the colony of San Cristobal. This conviction is firmly established, for the leaders are fully

aware of its political implication. Their standpoint on politics is that whether we like it or not, no one can ignore politics, because politics is everything:

Everywhere, madam, is politics... even over yonder on that island where nobody lives but the birds, an' even the birds change their tune. An' everywhere politics is all, everything, madam, livin' an' dying is politics. (OAI, 82 and 160)

As such, one's refusal to be involved in political issues affecting one's living will be tantamount to committing a sort of suicide. The leaders of the People's Communal Movement, Shephard, like Paravecino, believe that every citizen must be involved in the national struggle for independence. Not to do so would be to do wrong to oneself. Paravecino discovers this truth after his entry into politics (OAI, 159).

At times, these leaders have radicalized their moderate position when they come to understand that the colonial political administration in place in San Cristobal is resisting their claims. Consequently, the leaders have threatened these same authorities. In a letter to the colonial Governor, the political leaders make it absolutely clear that unless the authorities let San Cristobal decide over the issues affecting this colony, there will be no peace:

... if the authorities were going to risk giving a constitution that would make San Cristobal completely self-governing, they should accept the consequences of their risk. Let San Cristobal decide as the Dutch would in Holland or the British in General Election. (OAI, 222)



Historical experiences have proven that political autonomy, political independence or freedom is always more appreciated and therefore more valued in countries where a real debate, or even bloody battle is fought over it. Frantz Fanon also reminds us of this fundamental political truth in **The Wretched of the Earth**.

With that political truth in mind these leaders have drummed into the minds of their fellow citizens of San Cristobal the necessity for them to participate in the political activities, and particularly in election.

Shepherd, as a committed political leader, gives useful instructions to the masses. In their determination to give San Cristobal political autonomy or total independence, the leaders of the People's Communal Movement see the coming election as a key that will open gates to a better future in the area. Voting is therefore being used as a tool that can operate a radical break in their history. Hence, Penelope's statement:

'Tis is the first time every son o' man goin' vote in San Cristobal [...] Education or no education, property or no property. 'Tis like opening rumshop free for every passer-by.... The vote is a key, madam, use it, an' authority can take any turnin'. (OAI, 82)

It is very useful to bear in mind that Shepherd's movement does not preach political violence as a political strategy that must be used against the colonial force in power in San Cristobal. Instead, this movement encourages

organized political actions to efficiently fight against colonial domination. In consistency with this political philosophy, in the course of the last meeting prior to the election the leaders of this movement have provided their militants with some useful political instructions before the ballots are cast for their political autonomy:

They were asked to remember their polling stations, and they were advised against antagonising the police in any way. There were to be no demonstrations until the results had been announced....[Lee told them] that the new police regulations were an obvious attempt to intimidate them. He wanted the election to take place without incident. It had to be a day San Cristobal displayed impeccable conduct. (OAI, 291)

It is in this general electoral "fever" and mood that the author has allowed the imperial forces, not willing to see the native people of San Cristobal take over the administration, to manipulate some traitors to put an end to Shephard's life. Shephard is assassinated.

This assassination is an "artistic" device that results from the inner division which occurs as a consequence of racial priorities that he himself has vigorously fought in his brief political career. The dream of independence could not be achieved. On this point, one authoritative Lamming scholar has recently attributed the failure of the independence dream to two main causes : the British colonial position and racial division. To use her own words, Paquet

observes that the struggle for independence which is at the heart of **Of Age and Innocence** fails precisely because:

Britain is not ready to relinquish its authority over the region and because the deep-seated mistrust Africans and Indians have toward each other outweighs their shared perception of what is in their mutual interest.<sup>12</sup>

It must be noted that the failure of revolt is a leitmotif in Caribbean novel. The French Caribbean novel is also replete with deaths of 'revolutionaries' -- those who try to reform the system and ensure justice for other black people. For instance, in Maryse Condé's **I Tituba, Black Witch of Salem**, both Tituba and her lover Iphigene are hanged at the end of the novel for planning a rebellion. Her mother, Abena was also hung at the beginning of the novel for killing her master, Darnell Davis, who attempted to rape her. In Jacques Roumain's **Gouverneur de la rosée**, Manuel who tries to organize water supply for an impoverished community is murdered by a member of the same community. Finally, in Simone Schwartz-Bartz's **Bridge Beyond**, Ambroise who is Telumée's lover and leader of the striking workers is killed during a demonstration. Also, Angebert, Telumée's responsible father who tries to care for his family, is killed by a jealous friend, during a time of famine.<sup>13</sup>

To assess Shephard's political importance, it is useful to recall that Shephard is not a stranger to his compatriots : he is well known as a true

---

<sup>12</sup> Paquet, in Lindfors and Sander eds. op. cit., 125.

<sup>13</sup> Originally *I Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* is *Moi Tituba, sorcière ... noire de Salem*; the French title of *Bridge Beyond* is *Pluie et vent sur Telumée Miracle*.

patriot. The trial which follows his assassination is a tangible proof or evidence that he is appreciated. The general mobilization of the people of San Cristobal to see justice done, and if need be, to render justice themselves by killing his murderer is illustrative of the admiration they nurture for this patriot. Their emotion and anger testify to the importance of his person in San Cristobal (OAI, 330, 345, 352, 377).

The last remark, but not the least, about this political figure, has to do with his comparison to the traitor, Mr. Slime whose behavior is presented to the readers in **In the Castle of My Skin**. Contrary to Shephard's name, the character Slime is given a disgusting one. It must be borne in mind that the name characters are given in Lamming's fiction very often reflects the character's behavior.<sup>14</sup> Shephard is characteristically and diametrically opposed to Mr. Slime in the sense that the former is a true defender of his people's cause whereas the latter serves his own interests. Mr Slime's political thought is entirely shaped by neocolonial vision while Shephard is a genuine and true patriot, a decolonizing leader. Had he not been killed, his people could have seen new light and hope for a better future.

The author's killing of this political and charismatic leader poses the fundamental problem of Lamming's vision of independence in a multiracial and multilayered society. This killing serves to warn Lamming's contemporaries about

---

<sup>14</sup> Ambroise Kom has enormously dealt with Lamming's choice of names for his characters. For more information on his treatment of Lamming's creations, consult the section : "Les personnages lammigiens et leur évolution," in op. cit. 215-234.

the dangers ahead if they are not politically and racially united against their common oppressor, the colonizer who will come back, disguised.

Lamming's writing is not separated from life. In consistency with his declaration that an artist could not be "withdrawn from the society,"<sup>15</sup> Lamming makes use of his creative literature to suggest another "way of seeing" life, to offer other alternatives in his literary production in order to better redirect social norms.

In an article written by Ian Munro a decade ago, the latter claimed that through the towering and tragic character of Shephard, Lamming is offering a penetrating critique of the first generation of West Indian political leaders such as Cipriani in Trinidad or Bustamante of Jamaica whose commitment to political independence was seriously undermined by their admiration for Britain and by a demagogic style of leadership.<sup>16</sup> In the last analysis, we can assume that Lamming is using his literary skill to redirect society.

Nothing is certain but presumably Lamming's next novel published after **Of Age and Innocence**, that is, **Season of Adventure** sends another clear message to political leaders of the Caribbean. In this novel, the narrator reveals in detail how the new leaders of the newly independent republic of San Cristobal fail to implement any healthy cultural policy. Their failure to

---

<sup>15</sup> Lamming in Munro and Sander, *op. cit.*, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Munro in Dance ed., *op. cit.*, 267.

implement a coherent cultural policy has resulted in the assassination of Raymond, the vice president, followed by a general situation of revolt and repression of the people, "the down bellow," as Lamming himself used to call them.

#### IV. 3. CULTURAL POLICY AND NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION:

##### LAMMING'S CULTURAL VISION IN SEASON OF ADVENTURE.

But to begin with, it is of paramount importance and useful to note that Lamming's deep interest in the historical roots of West Indian people has led him to pay particular attention to some of the persistent African practices and legends in the Caribbean area. He is therefore very interested in these persistent African traditions in the Caribbean as described in **Season of Adventure**, his novel which embodies an act of repossession of the native landscape, a reorientation of feeling through the experience of Fola in the tonelle during the Ceremony of Souls. Lamming addresses cultural issues in this novel.

To better understand the core of the message gotten across in Lamming's **Season of Adventure**, a brief history of the main elements which give shape and substance to Lamming's cultural philosophy seems very useful.

Lamming's cultural perception is based on his observation of the persistence of certain African cultural traditions in the Caribbean, namely the

Ceremony of Souls and vodu.<sup>17</sup> Though the comparative chapter -- the last chapter -- of the present dissertation shortly deals with this topic, it is useful to bear in mind here some definitions of these concepts which are perceived as the cultural background against which Lamming's whole cultural production is articulated.

From Ian Hamilton Munro we learn this:

All Souls' Day is a recurrent symbol in Lamming's fiction of an inert relationship with the past. Its counterpoint is the Haitian "ceremony of souls," in which the living, in order to make their peace with the dead, must bring to light past misdeeds and accept responsibility for them. For Lamming, both ceremonies have symbolic significance ; one is confining and repetitive; the other is liberating and redemptive.<sup>18</sup>

In fact, Lamming himself defines his concept of vodu and "the ceremony of souls" in both **Season of Adventure** and **Water with Berries**. In **Season of Adventure** he makes the point that:

*Vodum* was an African word for spirit. This ceremony was a religious manifestation based on a serpent cult that originated on the slave coast of West Africa. It had first reached San Cristobal during the dispatch of slaves in the sixteenth century. (SOA, 28)

---

<sup>17</sup> The term "vodu" is an African name and its spelling changes from one scholar to another: vodu, vodun, vodum, vaudou, voodoo and voodoo. But they all basically refer to the same concept and practice. My preference in this dissertation is "vodu".

<sup>18</sup> Munro in Dance ed., op. cit., 265.

Actually, this statement begs the question of the essence of vodu practice. Studies conducted on the concept of vodu are rich enough to help the reader understand Lamming's message conveyed through this choice of vodu and tonelle. Patrick Taylor, in his seminal book on West Indian literature, **The Narrative of Liberation**, confirms this inner feeling of Fola who is still not so sure about vodu. In effect, Taylor's investigation has led him to conclude that vodu consists essentially of different West African religious practices that have been put together, syncretised with elements of the Catholic church to create a uniquely Haitian creole religion. In addition to this, the practice of vodu, Patrick Taylor recalls, is spread in the New World by people of the Black diaspora. Therefore, vodu "is known as *Vaudou* in the Caribbean, *Santeria* in Cuba, *Shango* in Trinidad, *Pocomania* in Jamaica, *Macumba* in Brazil, and *Voodoo* in the United States of America."<sup>19</sup> On the whole, vodu is known as vodu in West Africa. It must be noted that Taylor's quote seems an excessive generalization, because there are differences between the Cuban Santeria and the Haitian vodu. However, it is worth remembering that there are creole religions all over the Caribbean, Brazil and the United States of America which are known by different names.

In the same vein, Jessie Gaston Mulira's documentation on the topic has established that vodu, which is the most dominant and intact sign of African religious survival in the Black diaspora because of its importance in everyday

---

<sup>19</sup> Taylor, *The Narrative of Liberation* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1989), 98; italics mine.



life, "is Dahomean (present Republic of Benin) in origin [and] means "spirit" or "deity" and that its practice is still active in New Orleans as is in West Africa."<sup>20</sup> Though this position hints at the Frazier-Herskovit debate regarding the survival of African traditions in the life of its deported population in the New World, it will not receive much consideration in this discussion. Very recently, Supriya Nair's studies focused on the same topic have revealed that vodu originally takes "its name from *vodun*, the Dahomean word for spirit. The spirit of the corpse temporarily returning to the material enters through the crossroad between times, locations and cultures" (Nair, 1996, 113).

Lamming's second point of focus on African traditions in the New World is the "Ceremony of Souls." This practice has to do with a continuous dialogue between the dead and the living as well. It is useful to point out that the "Ceremony of Souls" is not something Lamming just invents that appears African. It is a lived experience among the Haitian people, as Lamming witnessed it sometimes in the suburbs of Port-au-Prince (**Pleasures**, 9). The reader is introduced to this second practice by means of a conversation between Teeton and Myra, the daughter of the Old Dowager in **Water with Berries**. As far as this ceremony is concerned, the reader learns through that dialogue that this ceremony occurs at a regular interval of eight years when the relatives of any dead person must gather together in one place for it. Teeton describes the "Ceremony of Souls," when he narrates this story to Myra:

---

<sup>20</sup> In Joseph E. Holloway, ed., *op. cit.*, 34-68.

And when the Priest has found his powers, the dead come forward. You don't see them; but they will be there, and you can hear them. They speak about all the things that had never been said when they were alive. They are now free to accuse, and free to pardon. And the living must reply. Always through the Priest. Sometimes they argue all through the night. For hours. The living and the dead. It will go on until they reach a point of reconciliation.... The end of all complaint from the dead; the end of all retribution for the living. The dead depart, and the relatives are free at last to go home. (WWB, 118)

This Ceremony of Souls cannot take place everywhere. It is strictly regulated by norms, the observation of which is rigorously demanded. Therefore, to be in conformity with tradition, Lamming makes this ceremony take place in a special place called a tonelle. To avoid misrepresentation and mistake, an *ab literam* quote of the narrator's definition and description is necessary:

The tonelle was an ordinary meeting place, a clean perimeter of earth partitioned by night. The pole rose from the centre of the yard, climbing through seven feet of shaven joints, dry as bone, to make a funnel through the ceiling : this was the mythical stairs down which the invisible gods would soon descend. A thick, white line of maize marked a circle round the pole, leaving an area of ground untouched by the women who danced around it. No one could trespass within the circle until the gods had arrived. (SOA, 21-22)

In **Divine Horsemen : The Voodoo Gods of Haiti**, Maya Deren provides a more brief description of a "tonelle" as a "thatched canopy, improvised in the absence of a peristyle, under which the ceremonies and dances take place (Deren, 1970, 336).

This ceremony is administered by a special priest called a "Houngan" (SOA, 41). While everything is in place, and once the women finish dancing, there is invocation of water spirits (SOA, 29), followed by libation which will cause the gods to make their presence felt by entering into their chosen priest. Once possessed by them, the latter is endowed with the power which enables him to have a full command over the dead. Next, there is the dialogue between the dead and the living dealt with in the description of the "Ceremony of Souls."

What remains important to bear in mind before fully grasping Lamming's cultural policy illustrated in the new independent and federal republic of San Cristobal is that all this ceremony will never take place without drumming. No wonder, to show the paramount importance of this music in San Cristobal, the narrator has chosen this very music provided by the Steel Band at the *tonelle* to begin his narration in **Season of Adventure**. This drum which provides music at a tonelle has not only power over the living and dead but can also dismantle darkness (SOA, 20). It definitely has the power "to resurrect the dead" (SOA, 11 & 17).

This "Ceremony of Souls" is lifegiver, and provider of cultural health to the "down-bellow" people. In addition, through this ceremony, the formerly colonized individual is given the chance to recover his self that he was deprived of in the process of his colonization. This ceremony is a liberating one for the peasant who is not looking for anything else than being given the

chance to fulfill himself in his culture. It also provides for a genuine reconciliation between the past and present. As Lamming himself puts it, in the context of the Caribbean situation, the symbolic function of that ceremony "is the necessity of reconciling the past with each moment of conscious living."<sup>21</sup>

Studies have shown that vodu played a cohesive and unifying role in slave communities. In addition to this role, its practice was seen and effectively considered by slaveowners to be a powerful engine in the awareness-raising process of slaves. From time immemorial, this religious ceremony observed in San Cristobal has been a fundamental point of conflict between masters and slaves, between colonized and colonizers, precisely because it has always enabled them to promote group organization based on non-Christian and ancestral religious beliefs. Regarding its fundamental role in slave communities, in **Dieu dans le Vaudou Haitain**, Laënnec Hurbon observes that the fight against slavery was launched by slaves within these organized communities on the basis of vodu:

C'est dans ces communautés de résistance qu'allait surgir la conscience d'une autonomie politique et culturelle des esclaves. Le vodou sera précisément à cette époque la religion qui réalisera la cohésion des esclaves et qui les lancera dans leur lutte de libération contre l'esclavage. (Hurbon, 1972, 76)

---

<sup>21</sup> Lamming in Drayton and Andaiye. eds., *Conversations : George Lamming, Essays, Addresses and Interviews, 1953-1990* (London : Kiria Press, 1990), 25.

It is also a well known fact that resistance remains one of the basic roles vodu has played for the African slaves that were brought to the New World. In this connection, C. L. R. James considers that vodu had endowed the slaves with creative, conspirational, organizational, and political strategies to circumvent their masters. He points out that "In spite of all prohibitions, the slaves travelled miles to sing and dance and practise the rite and talk [...] and make their plans" (James, 1989, 86).

With these preliminaries in mind, it becomes absolutely obvious that prohibiting these elements in the life of the population is tantamount to culturally killing them.

Sandra Adell reminds us that black diasporan people feel the need to redefine their African-Americanness, or African-Caribbeanness through those ceremonies which enable them to recover, reconstitute, (re)affirm their history and culture (Adell, 1994, 30). To illustrate how the new authorities of the federal republic of San Cristobal are culturally alienated, and consequently have opted to promote cultural assimilation, or neocolonial values in the place, Lamming has them make a series of decisions. They have outlawed every native cultural practice in San Cristobal.

The first of these unforgivable deeds is the confiscation of Jack o' Lantern's tenor drum (SOA, 20). The federal republic of San Cristobal Police

Department manned by Piggott, the Chief "Commissioner of all Police for all San Cristobal" (SOA, 108) has decided to put an end to "barbarism" by putting a stop to the playing of the drum in the "modern" republic. But still, there is hope, for Gort's tenor drum is not yet confiscated. The second mismanagement is the gravest political error any political leader can make.

The second grave political mistake made by the authorities consists in banishing the Steel Band with all that goes with it, that is, "the Forest Reserve." The second step goes further : the law has taken Jack o' Lantern's life and destroyed Gort's tenor drum. Piggott is the master mind behind this act. In his discussion with his wife Agnes, Fola's mother, we learn this secret from the boss of San Cristobal's Police Department:

Whatever they [the Steel Band Boys] decide this evening,... tell them make it the last time they bring up the bands, 'cause I go clean up the bands and all what go with it. Raymond and I discuss that and I thought it was settled.  
(SOA, 103)

Raymond is the vice president of the nation. Truly speaking, Piggott is resolved to put a final stop to drumming in this republic. When she hears about Piggott's intention, Aunt Jane, an old woman who knows about the importance of that ceremony to the people and the danger its banishment can bring about, goes to Piggott's place to counsel him. Without any further ceremony or respect for her age, Piggott shouts at her:

I goin' lose the whole lot o' you in gaol. You an' your run-away gran'son an' ever loafin' holigan, man, woman an' child in that Forest Reserve. An' all that ceremony you makin' out there at night. It ain't got time these modern days for your kind o' monkey business. Now you got to tell the Forest Boys collect their drums beatin' all that noise at night. Is time to learn new tune. (SOA, 113)

It appears that, for Piggott, the main motivation behind outlawing drumming is its backwardness. Certainly, his thought on this practice exactly reflects the moral attitude of the oppressor where African traditions in the New World are concerned : that they reflect a backward mentality. In his introduction to Melville Herskovit's **Life in a Haitian Valley**, Kamau Brathwaite beautifully sums up this image when he writes:

The darkness of the night of ignorance, of voodoo drums and human sacrifice, of zombies, Congo gutturals, Dagon, Ogun, paingan women carnalized by gods. It was all of a piece, really, with what the Establishment thought of Africa and Africans in the New World; dumb, drumming, demoralized boyoes up to no good...(Quoted in Nair, 1996, 118)

For Piggott and the other authorities, it is not desirable to have traditional drumming in a modern republic. Perhaps the leaders of this republic have forgotten William Edward Burghardt DuBois's argument that traditions -- music, poetry, and dance -- unite a nation's folk heritage and is a bulwark of nationalism. They view the members of this band -- including every single individual who has any interest in the band -- as "idle" persons and

troublemakers (SOA, 103). The band has become public enemy number one that must be fought against.

Undoubtedly, the government's resolve to silence the drum has its historical antecedent in the slaveowner or colonial reaction to drumming. It is a well known fact that drumming was prohibited to slaves and the colonized because it was a potential source of possible revolt.

In consistency with this cultural politics and as it could be expected the decision to outlaw drumming and the "Ceremony of Souls" is enacted and signed into a law. Consequently, the Steel Band and all that goes with it are declared unlawful. This specific type of law is called a "proclamation." It reads:

... from this day forward, day forward, this day forward ...  
and even as long as ever ... as ever ... the playing ...  
playing ... instruments herein referred to ... herein referred  
to as Steel Drums ... as instruments shall end ... as from  
this day ...forward forward forward ... (SOA, 315)

In any case, by waging war on the creative will of the people, it seems obvious that the authorities of San Cristobal are not at all aware of the importance of native culture in the development of the individual. Particularly, African people in the New World are expecting their reconnection to Africa through these practices. The Martiniquean poet Aimé Césaire, one of the chief outspoken spokesmen of the colonized people, heavily stresses the role of African culture in the life of the West Indian population as a whole when he writes in a letter to Maurice Thorez:



Cette Afrique, la mère de notre culture et de notre civilisation antillaise; c'est d'elle que j'attends la régénération des Antilles; pas de l'Europe qui ne peut que parfaire notre aliénation, mais de l'Afrique qui seule peut revitaliser, repersonnaliser les Antilles. (in Kom, 1986, 122)

In fact, by prohibiting drumming and outlawing the "Ceremony of Souls" on behalf of modernization, in their zeal to "clean all what belong to behin' the times like drums an' ceremony for the dead and all that" (SOA, 314), authorities in San Cristobal have endangered the existence of the first republic. Consecutive to this act of prohibition is social unrest which inaugurates sour days for the authorities in power.

If the young American sailors who visited the new federal republic of San Cristobal dance differently in their country with the music produced by means of the highest technological instruments (SOA, 208), the playing of the drums remains the most important and main source of joy to the ordinary people. Furthermore, those drums stand as a token of the people's close ties to their cultural roots; banishing them is tantamount to pronouncing their cultural death. It is a kind of deprivation of personal identity, of the self. For the people of the "Forest Reserve" there could be no substitutes for the drum : "For the drums, like old teeth which had found their ultimate root, cannot be replaced. No substitute will take their place" (SOA, 333). Little wonder their comparison of the "death" of their drum to that of the vice president, Raymond. This explicates their readiness to stand and challenge authorities whenever the issues related to the prohibition of the drum is raised. In addition, this stand

clarifies why there is a conscious violation of this law from their part. Gort who "could not bear the death of his drum any longer" has willingly defied the authorities by playing his tenor drum (OAI, 350). More importantly, to display evidence that his feeling is fully shared by the whole population, the narrator lets us know that Gort has found innumerable supporters on his side (SOA, 352-3). Without any doubt, the fisherman has completely summed up the general feeling of ordinary people when he declares that he does not care who make the country's laws if they let him make the country's music (OAI, 318). In these circumstances, the most important mistake or rather crime the ruling authorities of the first Federal Republic have committed lies in prohibiting drumming by outlawing it in the area. Without surprise, this enactment has led to what is known as "the revolt of the drums" (SOA, 187).

Thus, it is not surprising that some characters in the novel see the prohibition as a blasphemy. The Boys see in the Proclamation Act an insult to the people. Indeed, a real and bloody battle was engaged between the authorities and the Boys over the issue of drumming. The fights opposing the Boys to police and the massive arrest consecutive to their drumming testify to this (SOA, 299).

This inaugurates a general rebellion that was greeted by general mobilization which ended with the playing of the drums on Jack o Lantern's grave. On the other hand, this manifestation is a golden opportunity for an

emerging politician in the person of Dr Kofi-James Williams Baako to make a public speech at the Freedom Square, in the name of freedom and liberty. The narrator presents him as somebody who "had lived near the Forest Reserve during his college days but was never one of the Forest Boys" (SOA, 321) . This leads to the failure of the first republic.

The fall of the first republic is caused by the failure to implement appropriate cultural policy, a fact which leads to resistance and violence in the nation. The fall of the first regime in San Cristobal has to do with its loss of respect for its obscured African and peasant roots and the war it made on both. Thus, in his analysis of the reasons sustaining the fall of that political regime Ambroise Kom is reasonably close to the mark when he elaborates on two main points : the lack of appropriate policy that privileges general interest and the promotion of assimilationist ideology:

La première république de San Cristobal a vécu et laissa la place à la deuxième parce qu'on avait pas élaboré une stratégie qui privilégie l'intérêt général, qui élimine ou réduit la dépendance créée par la colonisation en veillant bien de tenir la culture nationale au centre de la libération. (Kom, 1986, 120-1)

This situation, in a sense, suggests that the authorities who are exercising power in the area are trying to westernize the life of these populations, forgetting the fact that their cultural background is rather grounded in different cultural values. They actually have re-adapted exactly what the

colonial school taught them -- that is, they have moved colonial values into the postcolonial setting.

They have blindly applied a law which is considered unfair by the majority of the population, for it does not take into account the basic cultural needs of the people. This practice is seen by many characters involved in the story as a bare imitation, because the government is just implementing "the of colonial days" policy (SOA, 120). Precisely on this point, Paquet attributes the bankruptcy of the first republic to the fact that it "has duplicated the style of living" inherited from colonial days (Paquet, 1982, 79).

In connection with this idea, that is, to work out a viable solution to this pointed problem of cultural politics, and to put an end to the effects of colonial domination which is perpetuated through the medium of education and which brings about this troublesome situation, Lamming suggests the decolonization of education itself. Otherwise, the problem will remain forever in the former colonized countries.

The character of Doctor Koffi James-Williams Baako expresses this aspiration. This character was educated in his native place in the colonial system of education, went to Cambridge where he attended medical school. But he has never practised this profession. He then went to America to study Science and Technology and returned to San Cristobal "to fill the chair of

Science and Technology at the republic's new university" (OAI, 321-2). To be sure, Doctor Koffi James-Williams Baako's role in the story and his life story are carefully crafted. His position enables him to be really aware of how education must be adapted to the environment because "he, too, was a product of that education" (SOA, 362).

His leitmotif and conviction can be epitomized in this statement : only through a radical change in the syllabus adapted to the former colonial countries could these countries succeed in revising their people's mentalities. Consistent with this belief, Doctor Koffi James-Williams Baako professes that:

universities in a post-colonial country could serve no purpose unless they deserted the ancient notions of an élite; for the twentieth century had destroyed once and for all time the active concept of élite. Dr. Baako wanted the new republic's university to forsake the ritual of cap and gown, to desert the lunacy of mumbling its thanks for food in an ancient and irrelevant Latin tongue; forsake the quiet and obsolete splendour of academy, and assume the burden of the bush. (SOA, 322)

One becomes critically aware that Baako's suggestion addressing revision in education is in direct opposition to the method used in the colonial frame of reference. Without any doubt, the standpoint expressed by this professor is a direct expression of Lamming's conception of and viewpoint on education in postcolonial nations (*Pleasures*, 27). If this policy which consists in decolonizing education is rigorously implemented, the former colonial countries will move toward true freedom and genuine development that will

make useless any help from the former colonizing nation. Only if one follows these lines of thought can one understand George Lamming when he makes his characters, Powell and Chiki recognize that any foreign gift is a means of perpetuating one's enslavement (SOA, 242).

To carry out further his decolonizing thought and policy, Lamming allows doctor Baako to become president of the federal republic of San Cristobal after the first republic gives away. Once elected president of the young state, doctor Baako "made it absolutely clear," in his first informal speech, "that the university will not be the same during his term of office" (SOA, 361). It is, therefore, certain that this spirited person that the writer has chosen as the new president of San Cristobal will lead the country toward a complete and genuine decolonization.

This becomes absolutely transparent when after his election he authorizes the children to learn drumming under Gort's direction and supervision so that the drum will never die (SOA, 366-7). He is a leader who knows the wants and needs of his people.

Doctor Baako, who is assigned the mission to save the republic from the unhealthy values it has inherited from colonial history, is seen close to the point when he declares that though not being personally opposed to democratic ideals, because "the republic has inherited the freedom to oppose" (SOA, 362),

he is all the same opposed to blindly copying Western system of democracy whereby members of opposition party, and especially the Shadow Cabinet often critique the party in power for the sake of criticism. He believes that if this kind of democracy based on ungrounded criticisms is wholly implemented in the new republic of San Cristobal, it will inevitably lead the new nation to disaster, because he views the new independent republic as being under a special kind of state of emergency. In his view, there is a need to eradicate two kinds of illness the new republic has inherited from its past history : illiteracy which is "the burden of the poor" and worse than illiteracy is the danger of "a derivative middle class [which] could easily become an active enemy to the country" (SOA, 362).

Lamming can be criticized at this point for allowing doctor Baako to embrace the roots of demagoguery and dictatorship in his idealism. As is usually the case, in newly independent nations such as San Cristobal -- representative of any Third World country -- the adoption of such a stand leads to political exclusion and violence. To substantiate this point, many political observers agree on the fact that the implementation of this idealism professed by doctor Baako has resulted in the authoritarian exclusion of large segments of the African society from participation in the political process. Consequently, they conclude that departicipation is the most striking feature of political change since Africa became independent.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup>

See Jibrim Ibrahim, "From Political Exclusion to Political Participation : Democratic Transition in Niger Republic," in B. Caron et. al. eds., *Democratic Transition in Africa*

Some facilitative elements have helped to efficiently carry out the revolt, consequence of the unjust proclamation of the government in that the mobilization owed much to Chiki and Fola's painting. "Chiki and Fola worked like plantation slaves all night : Fola with a pair of scissor, and Chiki with his pencil and brush"; they painted no less than two thousand copies of Gort's words and those paints have circulated in every village as a challenge to the authorities who enacted the proclamation forbidding the beating of the drums (SOA, 352).

The success of the revolt in this novel suggests that the masses have the power to overthrow unjust rulers who are there to serve the purpose of neo-colonialism. The constitutional coming to power of Dr Baako also illustrates that the mass has the power and will hand it to individuals who are to serve their interest.

On the whole, it can be said that there is a confrontation between two categories of people in this novel. Some post-colonial élites who are in power in the beginning of the novel have shown their incapacity to invent a new and healthy environment after independence. They imitated the former master's policy by implementing colonial rule, that is, the perpetuation of a new kind of colonialism inherited from history. They did not stay for long in power, because they angered the ruled who are no more willing to be under such a control of

---

(Ibadan : Institute of African Studies, 1982), 51; and Nelson Kasfir, *The Striking Political Arena* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1976), 227.



local colonizers. On the other hand, those who are for positive change have democratically come to power through legal means. They are ready to operate radical changes desired by the most important portion of the population.

Another important point to raise has to do with Lamming's cultural policy in San Cristobal. One must not misunderstand him. It is obvious that the name of this doctor suggests another aspect of Lamming's cultural policy preached in **Season of Adventure** : hybridity. A speculation on this name can easily reveal its African roots in Koffi-Baako while James-Williams suggests something foreign to the African root, say, Western. He is the combination of both. This is what he inherits from the past. Lamming is not suggesting a Manichean separation of the cultural worlds. He knows that given the displacement of African people cultural identity cannot remain static, it must undergo continuous and constant transformation. Dr Baako stands for cultural syncretism, cultural revision, not for cultural domination.

It can be definitely said that Lamming himself is a developing writer in that he does not remain static in his thoughts about colonial issues. After his diagnosis in **In the Castle of My Skin**, he proposes solutions to the problem in **Season of Adventure** and **Of Age and Innocence**. In **In the Castle of My Skin**, inhabitants of Creighton village are shown to be victims of colonial rule, deprived of voice and their culture, ignored and not valued at all. In **Season of**

**Adventure** these same people are restored their dignity and honor attached to human beings.

Through the medium of creative literature, Lamming has fought colonialism and restored to the society its peasant culture that was formerly an object of discrimination. Justice is restored. This judgment obviously motivated Paquet when she said that Lamming's consideration of the peasant community in **Season of Adventure** aims at redeeming the values and creative potential of the West Indian people (Paquet, 1982, 67).

In making the revolt successful and hence validating rural peasantry, Lamming in **Season of Adventure**, like Amilcar Cabral in **Return to the Sources** (1973, 42), believes in the instrumentality of culture in the national liberation struggle. Writing on a similar situation in African countries, Chidi Amuta expresses his firm conviction in the importance of this peasant culture when he firmly declares:

It is only the culture of the rural peasantry, because it represents the authentic culture of African peoples and embraces the interests of the great majority of African, that can inform genuine national liberation.<sup>23</sup>

Lamming's use of the Creative Art -- Chiki's painting, and Gort's drumming --- has freed these people. It becomes therefore plain that through

---

<sup>23</sup> Amuta in Ashcroft et. al. eds. 1995, op. cit., 161.

this, Lamming is addressing the role of an artist in a changing society. Hence in **Season of Adventure**, the readership is turned into a witness when doctor Baako's telling Chiki : "Your relation to that crowd cannot be that of any artist to a similar crowd elsewhere" (SOA, 323). Moreover, echoing Lamming, Baako, with insistence, affirms that politics is the business of the artist as well as the politician. He expresses his deep conviction regarding the role creative imagination should play in shaping national consciousness and destiny when he tells Chiki:

If politics is the art of possible, then your work should be an attempt to show how the individual situation illuminated by all the possibilities which keep pushing it always towards a destiny, a destiny which remains open. (SOA, 324)

What is more, he considers an artist to be a teacher. In **Season of Adventure**, Gort is a teacher in addition to his being a drummer. The same applies to Chiki : he is a teacher and painter. Kom suggests that the writer means us to see in this double role the most important pedagogical, or educational role that is incumbent upon Caribbean artists:

Dans **Season of Adventure**, la formation de l'artiste est inséparable de celle de l'instituteur. Gort est instituteur et artiste tandis que pour Chiki, l'artiste joue le même rôle. Il faut voir dans cette double identité artiste/instituteur le rôle essentiellement didactique que devrait, selon Lamming, être celui de l'artiste des Caraïbes. (Kom, 1986, 221)

Lamming conceives of art not as pleasure but a real means which can be used to effect positive change in society. Thus, he does not conceive of an artist as being "the private person withdrawn from the society"<sup>24</sup> and he seems to agree that "the real function of art is to make revolution through its own medium."<sup>25</sup>

He himself sets the example of instruction and education in his novels. This writer is notably committed to psychologically, culturally, and politically freeing the colonized people of the new federal republic of San Cristobal -- reminiscent of the federation of Caribbean Islands that was first rooted in the colonial period. As stated by Funso Aiyejina, the aim of this federation is to "facilitate a full scale and efficient political and economic exploitation of the region."<sup>26</sup> The federation became effective in 1958 when nine Islands were federated for the purpose of achieving an independence that they could not have on their own individual basis (Eric Williams, 1970, 508).

Because the artist must truly remain the vehicle and transmit the vision and hope of his society, Lamming's choice of this setting is illustrative of the aspiration of the Caribbean people. This confirms his participation in the formation of a regional consciousness. Of course, the decision of the Jamaican authorities to withdraw from the federation in 1962 jeopardized the stability of the Federation and put an end to its existence. Nevertheless, Lamming's

---

<sup>24</sup> In Munro and Sander.op. cit., 13.

<sup>25</sup> Karenga in Gayle Jr. ed., op. cit., 33.

<sup>26</sup> In Ernest Emenyonu,ed. 1987. op. cit., 97.

choice of this setting is illustrative of the aspiration of the Caribbean people. Lamming has articulated this view not only for himself alone but also on behalf of "thousands who'll never see [him] in person" (TE, 101).

It seems Lamming is suggesting that a real and true independence of the area must necessarily go through a federalist phase; for it remains certain the small individual islands are not viable as state entities. The federation will make them into a strong unit. Perhaps it is useful to say here that the Caribbean poet, Derek Walcott, has a similar vision of things in that his main concern -- Federalism -- is the central theme of his poetry.

To conclude this chapter, it is worth reflecting on Lamming's outstanding achievements regarding both novels in the framework of this study.

In both novels, **Season of Adventure** and **Of Age and Innocence**, Lamming suggests key tracks that will lead the colonized to total decolonization; he paves the ways that will enable them to wholly free themselves and be masters of their own fate, politically and culturally speaking, for an autonomous future. In other words, Lamming's **Season of Adventure** and **Of Age and Innocence** make sense and show a positive development in Lamming's thought regarding the issue of decolonization and the restoration of personal and political autonomy.

It can be definitely said in a final analysis that Lamming himself is a developing writer (in the way and sense we apply or use this concept to qualify characters in a piece of literature) in that he does not remain static in his thoughts about colonial problems. After his diagnosis in **In the Castle of My Skin**, he proposes solutions to the problem in **Season of Adventure** and **Of Age and Innocence**.

In both novels, Lamming is suggesting that political independence is nothing unless it is accompanied by one's change in mentality and a sound cultural policy. By selecting these traditions Lamming is urging his countrymen to show strong opposition to leaders who, alienated through colonial mission, (or by their colonial upbringings) could not sort out what is culturally, socially, politically healthy for their people. Since Lamming's main purpose in writing is to free Caliban at all costs from the domination of Prospero (Kom, 1986, 8), both **Season of Adventure** and **Of Age and Innocence** aim at liberating his fellow Caribbeans from colonial captivity by using the subversive strategies and maroonage widely practised by slaves. His emphasis on African culture in the Caribbean is consistent with his belief that reconnection with African culture, even in its syncretised form, will redeem Africans of the diaspora.

It is clearly shown throughout the presentation of this "Ceremony of Souls", that the revolt of the drum has nothing to do with poverty, but it is about what will be the cultural base of the peasant community with its tonelle.

Lamming means us to consider that the power to resist oppressive regimes lies in these roots (Paquet, 1982, 80). In short, Lamming and his fellow West Indian novelists are calling for the adoption of counterhegemonic attitudes toward colonial positions through their urging to invent new beginnings.

In Wilson Harris' view, the adoption of such a position will enable the West Indian to come up with a "new corpus sensibility" and a "new corpus of architecture of culture" that can empower them to free themselves from colonial hegemonies and neocolonial attitudes (Harris, 1970, 10). He himself sets the example by "mixing past, present, future, and imperial and colonial cultures within his own fiction." In so doing, "Harris deliberately strives after a new language and a new way of seeing the world."<sup>27</sup>

Thanks to their writings, Lamming and his contemporaries have played a key role in the formation of West Indian national consciousness by drawing attention to the cultural and political issues affecting the region. Literature has therefore a key role to play in nation building. No wonder in his evaluation of West Indian writers' contribution to national formation, Taylor establishes that:

Lamming and Walcott are among the writers of the former British Caribbean colonies who have most successfully contributed to the formation of a West Indian national culture, Lamming in his novels, Walcott in his drama. Their works are part of a broader literary movement that ushered in political independence in the 1960s. (Taylor, 1989, 187)

---

<sup>27</sup> Ashcroft et. al. 1989, op. cit., 35.

Lamming perceives himself as a soldier for the advent of that new kind of justice. He sees himself as a person "engaged in a global war to liberate their villages, rural and urban, from the old encirclement of poverty, ignorance, and fear." He considers this fight as the most important of all challenges facing postcolonial nations : "This is the most fundamental battle of our time, and I am joyfully lucky to have been made, by my work, a soldier in their ranks."<sup>28</sup>

Finally, it must be noted that on purpose, the character Fola, her relation to the tonelle, and its implications are not developed within the framework of this chapter. This issue receives consideration in the comparative chapter of this dissertation. ✓

---

<sup>28</sup> Lamming, "Introduction," *op. cit.*, xlvi.



**CHAPTER FIVE:**

REPOSSESSING THE PAST:  
THE AFROCENTRIC VISION  
IN PAULE MARSHALL.

To begin this chapter, it is important to have in mind the following statements by and about Paule Marshall. The first statement by Marshall herself throws light on the essential element that shapes her artistic vision : "We [as people of African descent] must accept the task of "reinventing" our own images and the role Africa will play in this process will be essential."<sup>1</sup> The second one has to do with the key issues addressed in Paule Marshall's fiction and essays : "How to represent and understand colonial modernism and its narrative of history is an important focus for Paule Marshall."<sup>2</sup>

## V. 1. PAULE MARSHALL: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HER CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND CONCERNS

Paule Marshall, the author of four acclaimed novels -- **Brown Girl, Brownstones; The Chosen Place, the Timeless People; Praisesong for the Widow; and Daughters** -- was born on April 9, 1929, in Brooklyn, New York City, to Samuel and Ada Burke. Like so many other people who emigrated to the United States just after the Second World War as part of the first major wave of Caribbean migration, Marshall's parents came to the United States of America for economic opportunities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Paule Marshall, quoted by Dorothy Hamer Denniston : *The Fiction of Paule Marshall : The Reconstruction of History, Culture and Gender* (Knoxville : University of Texas Press, 1995), xi.

<sup>2</sup> Simon Gikandi, *Writing in Limbo* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1992), 170.

The daughter of an African American of Barbadian ancestry, Paule Marshall, though born in New York, was nurtured in a Caribbean cultural community, spoke its language, participated in its many rituals, and visited the Caribbean when she was nine. She is very familiar with the Caribbean; particularly, her home country, Barbados. Marshall knows both the United States of America and the West Indies.

She feels as comfortable to set her pieces of fiction in South Carolina or the Caribbean as in New York. Paule Marshall is mainly shaped and claimed by two cultures that she works to synthesize as she confesses in an interview with Sandi Russell : "I am an Afro-Caribbean and Afro-American," she says. "I am embracing both these cultures and I hope that my work reflects what I see as a common bond" (Russell, 1988, 15). But truly speaking, her interpretation of reality is different from this diplopia, this ***double-ness*** she claims.

A close look at her writing reveals that her interpretation of reality rather suggests *three-ness or three levels of consciousness* : African, Caribbean and American. Carole Boyce Davies and Dorothy Hamer Denniston see eye to eye on this basic characteristic of Marshall's vision. They conclude that Marshall's writings challenge geographical boundaries and categories often used in the identification of writers in that she writes from the triangular perspective connecting Africa, the United States of America and the Caribbean. Best, as

one of her critics claims, Marshall's uniqueness as contemporary black female artist lies in her ability to write from her three levels of awareness:

Her cultural identity as both African American and African Caribbean allows her to understand how the two cultures alternately diverge and coalesce. Furthermore, she is aware that both cultures reflect a distinct reality that has no direct equivalent in the Anglo-American way of life. To reconcile this three-part existence in her fiction, Marshall compromises neither her African American nor African Caribbean identity. Rather, she brings both back to their original source in traditional African culture. (Denniston, 1995, xiii)

She developed a sense of rituals thanks to the interaction between Barbadian and American culture in her community. All these elements are carefully interwoven in her fiction in which she elaborately and carefully sculpts the complex form of African cultural heritage.

Paule Marshall has produced a rich body of literary writing that has encompassed a large variety of interests. According to one of her biographers, Barbara T. Christian, Paule Marshall's literary production has deepened in complexity and meaning since the year 1950 and her writing constitutes a "unique contribution" to African American literature because it captures "in a lyrical, powerful language a culturally distinct and expressive world".<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> B. T. Christian in Davis and Harris eds, *Afro-American Fiction Writer After 1955* (Detroit, Gale Research Company, 1984), 161.

Besides her exploration of the multidimensional experiences of African American and African Caribbean as to how they must adjust to the new material environment, as a granddaughter of slaves forcibly brought from Africa to the new continent, her fiction as a whole is concerned with the Africans of the Diaspora.

In her writing, she explores the issues of slavery and racism in the American context. But above all, her interest is keenly focused on the reverberation of past deeds in the present and how one can learn from past actions in order to better orient the future : "How can you forget the past mahn? You does try but it's here today and there waiting for you tomorrow" (BGBS, 145). In his evaluation of her writing, James Draper reached this same conclusion when he declared that Marshall's fiction is developed around her belief that one's past must be known and accepted before personal integrity can be achieved (Draper ed. 1992, 1366).

She is also very much interested in the ways remnants of African cultural tradition can participate in keeping the African Americans and African Caribbeans from succumbing to materialism so as to preserve their wholeness. Though this aspect of the topic will be given preeminence in the final chapter of this study, it is all the same important to underline here the fact that many characters in her fiction go back to their roots to find their wholeness. Merle's behavior is a case in point. By the end of **The Chosen Place, the Timeless**

People, Merle has learnt she must go back to Africa to pick up whatever broken pieces of her life remain ( CPTP, 492-3).

The aim of this chapter is twofold. The first point of focus is the issue and importance of the past in her characters' personal integrity or wholeness. In other words, a speculation on Paule Marshall's conception of the past as articulated in her work will enable us to better apprehend why it remains so important for Paule Marshall to understand one's past if one's life is to be meaningful. The second point of interest which will be dealt with in this chapter has to do with the role and importance of the African cultural traditions and practices in the life of the Black diasporan people.

## V. 2. UNDERSTANDING THE PAST

In her writing to date, Paule Marshall carefully invites her characters to reconsider their pasts. Both personal and historical pasts are quite decisive in Marshall's fiction. Marshall discusses in various interviews her interest in the history of black people and of its role in her fiction. Moreover, Marshall herself once summarized the central idea of her works when she had this to say in an interview about her novel, **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**:

After struggling for sometime, I was finally able in my most recent novel to bring together what I consider to be the two themes most central to my work : the importance of truly confronting the past both in personal and historical terms and the necessity of reversing the present order.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Paule Marshall quoted by Barbara T. Christian, in Davis and Harris, eds, op. cit., 167.

In addition to this, in another interview <sup>5</sup> Marshall throws not only much more light on the past, one of the central themes of her work, but also insists that African descendants of the Black Diaspora must renew their contact with their African cultural practices in order to regain spiritual wholeness. "In order to develop a sense of our collective history," Marshall says:

I think it is absolutely necessary for black people to effect this spiritual return. As the history of people of African descent in the United States and the diaspora is fragmented and interrupted, I consider my task as a writer to initiate readers to the challenges this journey entails.<sup>6</sup>

Why is the past so important for (re)consideration? Is one's personal past worth reviewing? Is it important to assess the historical past as Marshall seems to urge her readers to ? Why is it necessary for the Black diasporan people to renew contact with their obscured African roots? Marshall's views on this issue constitute the core and subject in the development of the following paragraphs.

Like Edward Brathwaite, Marshall believes a dialogue with one's culture and past will be redeeming for the African American and African Caribbean people. Both think the artist's task will consist in sorting out new directions by entering into authentic dialogue with obscured past roots whether African or Amerindian. Edward Brathwaite states his view on this issue when he argues

---

<sup>5</sup> I am alluding to "Return of a Native Daughter," which appeared in the *Scholarly Journal on Black Women* : SAGE. no 3 (1986), 52-53.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Denniston, op. cit., 145.

that whether it be African or Amerindian, any recognition of an ancestral relationship with the folk or aboriginal culture in the Caribbean involves the artist in "a journey into the past and hinterland, which is at the same time a movement of possession into present and future." He believes that "through this movement of possession we become ourselves, truly our own creators, discovering word for object, image for the word."<sup>7</sup>

In accordance with her belief, in all her fiction to date Marshall is obsessed with history, with the need for black people to make the psychological and spiritual journey back through their past. Thus in her afterword to **Brown Girl, Brownstones**, Mary Helen Washington states that the questions Marshall sets before her major characters are always the same; and she sums up these questions in a few sentences : "How do we remember the past so as to transform it and make it usable ? How do we preserve those qualities of survival and endurance that are at the deepest emotional core of one's black identity?"<sup>8</sup>

As can be surmised from this quotation, a prominent theme in Marshall's work is the futility of attempting social and political progress without a full understanding of one's personal and national past. Indeed, due to her insistence on their African past in the life of the diasporan Blacks as a leitmotif

---

<sup>7</sup> Edward Brathwaite expressed this view in *Savacou* (September 1970), 35-44. I quote it from Emenyonu ed., 1987, op. cit., 144; it is also available in Ashcroft et al. eds, 1989, op. cit., 147.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Helen Washington, "Afterword," to *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (New York : Feminist Press, 1981), 319.



of her fiction, Marshall was once accused of romanticizing this African past and its culture. However, many people claim that one must know the past in order to save the future. This contradiction causes one to speculate on the issue of the past in Marshall. What role does the past play in one's life and what is the importance of African culture in the life of the people who inhabit Marshall's fictional world?

To reach this goal the first stage in this chapter will address the nature of the relations that link past acts or past actions to present deeds in order to better apprehend and understand the importance of the past on/in her characters' lives. In other words, reflection on the close link between the three entities that constitute the basic division of time, past-present-future, will enable us to better understand the role and the place of the past in her fiction.

It remains a fact that a people without a relatively thorough knowledge of its history is similar to a tree without roots. In addressing the issue of history in Paule Marshall's writing, Ebelo O. Eko draws our attention to the paramount role history plays in the determination of our fate. In an article titled "Oral Tradition : The Bridge to Africa in Paule Marshall's **Praisesong for the Widow**," Eko, without any reservation, shares Karl Marx's view that "a people without history can be easily persuaded" (Eko, 1986, 145).

In a similar vein, Catherine Hall, addressing the importance of the past in relation to life or fiction, makes the point that our interest in the past is critically necessitated and evokes the reason for this. According to this critic, if we pay attention to the ways in which history is lived, and carefully evaluate how it offers answers to the questions as to who we are and where we come from, if we are interested in knowing how we are produced as modern subjects, what narratives from the past enable us to construct identities, then history is the only answer.<sup>9</sup>

The main message of **Praisesong for the Widow** is that without a visceral understanding of one's past, self-fulfillment cannot be achieved. Likewise, Paule Marshall details how all the major characters in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** are willy nilly confronted with their pasts. Why has Paule Marshall emphasized the point that one's past must be understood before any personal wholeness can be achieved? Particularly in her presentation of Merle, the protagonist of Marshall's third major work and second novel, the black woman from the Caribbean who had studied history in England and returned to her home country, the narrator makes it absolutely clear that Merle must confront her painful past in order to grow. Her move to Uganda, at the end of the novel, in order to visit her now divorced husband, Ketu and her child, a visit that will enable her to "pick up whatever broken piece of her life remains" -- as Lela Kapai puts it -- constitutes an irrefutable proof of the following statement: "I'll never get around to doing anything with

---

<sup>9</sup> In Chamber and Curti eds, op. cit., 66.

what is left of my life until I go and look for my child [...] before I can think of making any kind of start I have to go and see my little girl. That before anything else" (CPTP, 494). In a nutshell, Merle is under the influence of the past and her present state of being reflects this.

Similarly, the three members of the anthropological research team who are working in the "most ambitious project to date in the Bournehills Valley District of the island" (CPTP, 47) namely doctor Saul Amron, his wife Harriet Shippen, and his research assistant Allen Fuso cannot escape their past either. They are respectively haunted in one way or the other by past events in their respective lives.

To efficiently convey her message on the importance of the past, Marshall has set the story in an appropriate place for desired effect : the district of Bournehills in the republic of Bourne Island.

The "place to blame," because of its "bad effects on everyone and everything" according to Harriet Shippen (CPTP, 399), the place which seems to elude Saul and his team (CPTP, 388 & 444), the mystical and mythical Bournehills, a paradoxical place which is described as a "world that was real, inescapable, yet at the same time somehow unreal; of the present but even more so of the past" (CPTP, 233), exerts a kind of power not only over its *native population*, but also on the foreigners as well, in that it reminds one of

one's past; wanted or not. As if to confirm the rule that the past is inescapable in Bourne Island, upon his contact with the place, and for an unknown reason that Saul Amron could neither understand nor explain, all of a sudden, he "found himself recalling the events from his own past" (CPTP, 234). In Bournehills, he found himself thinking a lot about what his life has been like. Specifically, he has been "remembering things from all the way back" when he was a child (CPTP, 403). The narrator describes this backward movement in the following passage:

Walking along the roads he sometimes had the impression he was wandering back over the paths his life had taken. Incidents from his childhood and youth, from his early field-work experiences in Mexico and Peru, from the war, where he had served in Europe, and the journey he had felt compelled to make afterward to see for himself the death camps in Poland; memories from his first marriage and his long uneven career -- all these, fragments from the past, had suddenly for no reason begun to surface to his mind like a flotsam from a submerged wreck. (CPTP, 234)

Like Una Salomon and Frederick who are fleeing from their past in George Lamming's **The Emigrants**, Saul Amron is said be escaping his past especially when it comes to the suffering and the death of his first wife, Sosha : "He was like a man who had fled the scene of some fateful accident for which he was partly to blame, wanting desperately to put time and distance between it and himself" (CPTP, 235).

But he has forgotten -- perhaps he is not aware of -- the fact that one can never escape from one's past. And particularly when one lives in Bournehills, the timeless area in the world, where "events which had taken place long ago and should have passed into history and been forgotten seemed to have occurred only yesterday" (CPTP, 441). Bournehills has the power to resuscitate the past and to remind him of this hard truth. In his will and determination to flee from his past, he continually faces those fragments of past events of his life : his backward glance always reveals them. The more he intends to put distance between himself and his past, the more the image of this past is displayed. As he comes to know it through his experience in Bournehills:

She [the image of Sosha, his first wife] had come to stand in his mind for all those he had failed. And in her death had been summed up all his mistakes, the wrongs he had committed, his defeats... At the end her dead stare had demanded, it seemed to him, that he turn and examine himself, look within. But he had refused; and to spare himself he had simply gone numb. And now here she was back again with the old demand; and worse, with the question of her death which he had closed his mind to. (CPTP, 235-6)

Bournehills has no less effect on Harriet Shippen as far as her past is concerned. Past events which happened when Harriet was in the United States strangely come now to her mind while in Bournehills. In a letter addressed to her acquaintance Chessie, she vividly remembers how Alberta's nephew had gotten "into trouble with white people" and how he had been beaten to death

and "drowned at the bottom of a pond" in Virginia. It is really incomprehensible to her that though so many years have elapsed after the occurrence of these events, such a strange feeling could come to her mind. She confesses:

It's odd I should think of that after all this time. But then I've caught myself here of late recalling any number of things from years ago. It's both puzzling and annoying because as you know I was never one to dwell on the past. I suspect it is this place. I don't know what there is about it, but it seems to have a way of driving you in on yourself and forcing you to remember things you hoped you had forgotten. (CPTP, 255)

Though Harriet cannot understand the significance of the situation, the narrator has endowed her all the same with a superior sense of speculation. This quality has enabled her to attribute the cause of her strange feeling to the mythical and mystical place, Bournehills. As if to prove Harriet right that the place has something to do with those remembrances, the narrator reveals that the night before Harriet's drowning, every single event which happened in the course of her life, and to which Harriet had shut her mind, resurfaced in her mind. She saw long-forgotten family scenes: her mother, that "Southern belle" touching her as well as her father acting with his relatives who were all slave dealers (CPTP, 39-40). But above all, she is presented the image of "The old woman in the dim portrait at the Historical Society which she had been proudly taken to see as a child, the shrewd widow in her frilled cap who had trafficked in moldy flour and human flesh" (CPTP, 487).

"Under the guise of the shadow" that circles Harriet, she is presented, in vivid images, the scenes of her first marriage with Andrew and the fulfillment of her secret desire which consists in divorcing him and moving on to another man. She also recalls her adulterous marital life with Saul when her love affair with Lyle Hutson comes to her mind (CPTP, 488-9). All these scenes, the narrator reports, are disclosed to her and without her being able to control them : "she didn't even bother chasing them away after a time, they circled her chair, re-enacting long-forgotten scenes, pantomiming the past" (CPTP, 487).

The list of the most important individual characters involved with their past in Bournehills would not be exhaustive without Allen Fuso. For his part, Allen Fuso, the research assistant is also critically confronted with fragments of his past life, but to a lesser degree. The narrator reveals his remembrance of his past on a specific occasion in Bournehills.

The scene took place between Allen and Elvita on "Carnival Tuesday night". Traditionally, carnival celebration in Bournehills always ends with lovemaking. Being a close friend to Vereson, Allen found himself caught up in the game arranged by the latter, his girlfriend Milly and her friend Elvita. To be consonant with the spirit of carnival and honor the tradition, Elvita, without any other consideration nor motive, is supposed to have sex with Allen. The latter failed to play the game. Instead, after showing his utter indifference to Elvita's

effort to get him involved in the play, he vividly remembered similar occasions in the past when he had equally failed to satisfy his partners:

.... Allen scarcely felt the mouth against his or the hand against his shoulder. Rather, he was remembering, in the small portion of his mind that was still functioning [...] other encounters such as this, all of which had ended badly, as this one would... (CPTP, 332)

It will be worth saying here that because Saul Amron has literally fallen in love with Bournehills, he has played the game on that "Carnival Tuesday night" with Merle Kimbona (CPTP, 452-60). And as a result of this first encounter, Merle has become his **alter ego** in Bournehills.

Marshall's commentators, particularly Barbara T. Christian, have pointed out that Marshall's characterization in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** shows her insistence on the intersections of the past and present in that this novel is about the reverberation of past actions in the present.<sup>10</sup>

However, it must be noted that to demonstrate with particular emphasis that everything, living as well as non-living, acknowledges and honors the existence of the past in the present, Marshall has symbolically conferred human qualities on objects, on nature. Consequently, the human population of Bournehills is not alone in demonstrating this timeless quality -- the confusion or connection of the past to present in their existence. Nature also seems to comply with this rule. As a result of this phenomenon, though the burning of

---

<sup>10</sup> B. T. Christian, in Davis and Trudier eds, op. cit., 166.



Pyre Hill happened long ago, the blackened hill itself looks as if it would be hot underfoot; one can almost smell the century-old smoke. By its external aspect, it seems Pyre Hill has recently been burned:

The hill appeared to have been almost totally destroyed by some recent fire. It might have just stopped burning. You expect to see the last of the smoke drifting up from its charred sides, from its crest, blurring the air around it; and to feel the heat from it against your cheek. The ground, you were certain, would still be hot underfoot. (CPTP, 109-110)

To be consonant with this general rule which excepts nothing, the sea in Bournehills is not left untouched. The sea in the area, being endowed with human qualities, mourns its dead with its "angry unceasing lament": "What, whom did it mourn? Why did it continue the wake all this time, shamelessly filling the air with indecent wailing of a hired mute? Who were its dead?" (CPTP, 115).

This "aggrieved, outraged, and unappeased" sea has never forgotten the long traumatizing history of the place. And for a long time to come, it seems, this sea will still be remembering and mourning the thousands of slaves -- children, men, and women -- thrown into it in the course of the middle passage. The sea continues "to grieve and rage over the ancient wrong it could neither forget nor forgive" (CPTP, 119).

Overall, it must be borne in mind that Marshall's characterization is always distinguished by the reverberation of past action in the present. This

generalization is possible when one considers the repetition of this same pattern in the lives of many characters in her other novels.

Paule Marshall conveys this same message in **Praisesong for the Widow**. This novel focuses on the character of Avey Johnson, a black, middle-aged, middle-class widow who has forgotten the Harlem of her childhood. Instead, she enjoyed wearing hats, pearls, and gloves. All of a sudden, on a cruise to the Caribbean with two friends, inspired by a troubling dream, she senses her life beginning to unravel; and in a panic, Avey packs her bag in the middle of the night and abandons her friends at the next port of call. She then begins a new adventure which provides her with the link to her history and culture she has so long neglected and disavowed.

Particularly striking in her experience is a keg drum which has been endowed with an exceptional power to convey the long nightmarish history of the black race in the New World through its music. Paule Marshall's use of the keg drum as a cultural signifier lays a heavy emphasis on the history of the black diasporan people. The passage below both shows how that history is communicated through drumming and displays evidence of Paule Marshall's craft:

And the single, dark, plangent note this produced, like that from the deep bowing of a cello, sounded like the distillation of a thousand sorrow songs. For an instant the power of it brought the singing and dancing to a halt -- or so it appeared. The theme of separation and loss the note

embodied, the unacknowledged longing it conveyed summed up feelings that were beyond words, feelings and a host of subliminal memories that over the years had proven more durable and trustworthy than the history with its trauma and pain out of which they had come. After centuries of forgetfulness and even denial, they refused to go away. The note was a lamentation that could hardly come from the rum keg of a drum. Its source had to be the heart, the bruised still-bleeding innermost chamber of the collective heart. (**Praisesong**, 244-245)

At the end of her beautiful and unexpected adventure she becomes Avatara, meaning spirit.

Along the same line of thought, in the four short stories that make up **Soul Clap Hands and Sing**, Marshall specifically explores how the personal past of each of the four aging men is gravely influenced by the history of oppression their people have experienced. For the sake of concision and space, Mr. Watford's case can serve as an illustration to substantiate this assertion.

Mr. Watford, the old man who is the protagonist in "Barbados," spent his entire life making money in the United States of America and eventually returned to Barbados to live like the British colonials who once oppressed him. In Mr. Watford's case, we see that his early experiences of oppression have warped and conditioned his perceptions in/of the present: "But, because of their whiteness and wealth, he had not dared hate them. Instead his rancor, like a boomerang, had rebounded, glancing past him to strike all the dark ones like himself" ("Barbados" in **Merle**, 9).

### V. 3. THE COLONIZED/ ENSLAVED AND THEIR HISTORY

People who inhabit Marshall's novels -- especially the native population of the republic of Bourne Island depicted in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** -- are under the influence of a falsified history, that is to say, officially they are seen as people without a history. Marshall's preoccupation with restoring the correct and authentic version of their history has led her to question canonical views held in the area through her "digging" into the historical events of the place. This preoccupation has also urged her to link the past with the present in her novel, through the presentation of Merle and the celebration of carnival.

A close reading of the official history which permeates **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** shows the extent to which history is misinterpreted, adulterated and falsified in the Caribbean.

How does the official history recorded in the place read? A look at the official syllabus and Merle's teaching of history are particularly helpful in shedding some light on this issue.

There is ample evidence that the history of the black community of Bourne Island is written from various perspectives. The official version, which is written by the established power structure highlights the priorities of the

former slaveholder. Nothing is said about slave revolts in this official version despite the richness of its records in slave rebellions (CPTP, 305). In fact, there exists no official syllabus dealing with historical and national achievements of Bourne Island. There is total silence on the past achievements of the slaves who contributed, in their own ways, to revolutionizing the place.

But there is another version of the same story which is written by the people who have experienced oppression. These oppressed people have an intimate first-hand experience of what it feels like to be in bondage. Consequently, the record they keep on their personal perception of their condition is totally different from what official historians value. They have prioritized the past achievements of the former slaves. Thanks to the oral tradition, Merle is familiar with this version. The narrator, through the presentation of Merle's teaching, means us to see the bare reality and the extent to which history is distorted and falsified by the colonial tradition. Let us examine, on the other hand, Merle's pedagogical method of transmitting her historical knowledge.

Marshall's "voluble, difficult, generous, and weary character," Merle, is said to have emigrated to London where she studied history. As a colonial educated subject, Merle knows the text that truly reflects the Caribbean past is not taught in schools. For instance, nothing is written in the official book about

the extermination of the Caribs, the native population of the area, consecutive to the arrival of the colonizers. Furthermore, there exists no evidence of slavery in the official records of the place. Judging from this silence Merle concludes that "West Indian history is a nightmare ... and we haven't awakened from it yet". (CPTP, 140-1)

Upon her return to Bourne Island, she becomes a history teacher. The crux of her outstanding contribution to the awareness-raising process of her country's students lies in her refusal to stop telling the story of Cuffee Ned that is not officially recorded among the historical achievements of the place. "The headmaster wanted her to teach the history that was down in the books, that told all about the English". But Merle refused to comply. She continues telling the students about Cuffee Ned and the things that took place on the island in olden times, because in her own words, that "official" history she is asked to teach "made it look like black people never fought back" (CPTP, 35).

Before discussing the Cuffee Ned revolt and its impact on the population, it seems useful to say a few words regarding her "retribution" and the reason why the official syllabus of the place is so selective.

Marshall highlights a conflictual relationship which opposes Merle to the teaching authorities of Bourne Island over the issue of her teaching. Merle considered the Cuffee Ned Revolt to be a pivotal historical event in West

Indian history. As a result of her conviction, Cuffee Ned deserves greater attention and must be given consideration in teaching.

The headmaster did not agree, and did not approve of her telling the class about Cuffee Ned and the like. As a result of this divergent point of view on the issue of history teaching, Merle is sacked from her teaching job on the ground that she is inciting students to revolt : "Well, they fired her in no time flat" (CPTP, 35 & 248).

Her teaching the true history of Bourne Island has resulted in her dismissal. The authorities realized that in the long run her teaching will inevitably obstruct the colonial vision and jeopardize their own existence. They are critically aware of the impact such a teaching of "informal" history will exert on the Caribbean subject who is always presented as an ahistorical person.

Each people, each group, and each nation has its own history. It can even be argued that a lived common history brings unity within a community, a nation. In **Nations and States**, Hugh Seton-Watson makes the point that nations and states are mythical, because there exist no scientific proofs or means of establishing what all nations have in common (Seton-Watson, 1977, 5). Therefore what becomes the most critical and decisive element in the formation of any nation remains its historical myths. The memory of any shared event in the existence of any people, an awareness of a historical and common

heritage represents the chief element that brings understanding among its various members.

In much the same vein, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, after Simon During, make the observation that printing remains one of the most important prerequisites for the emergence of nationalism. They argue that nationalism becomes possible only if individuals, or subjects can identify themselves as members of the community of readers implied by the books produced on them when "some languages get into print and are transmitted through books."<sup>11</sup> It goes without saying that the main elements, which enable individuals to identify themselves as implied characters in these books, remain the common shared myths of the past.<sup>12</sup>

As for the place of the written word in nation formation, although the link established by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin between nationalism and writing is grounded and perfectly correct in that the invention of printing has played a decisive role in nation formation, it must be noted that oral tradition has all the same its important share in this. Merle's teaching of "unrecorded" history, through oral communication based on the story she was told by the elders, is ample evidence to substantiate this. Whether written or not, myth orally recorded and transmitted also represents social capital in

---

<sup>11</sup> Ashcroft et. al., op. cit., 126

<sup>12</sup> Pour Malcolm Cowley (1976) la création des mythes par les écrivains américains a pour motif "d'éveiller chez les américains un sens de la communauté et le sentiment d'une destinée commune" (412), car "une nation sans mythes ne serait guère une nation"(409).



nation or community formation. To make a long story short, both community and nation are based on the past and its myths, whether individual or collective, written or oral.

This assumption stands as the most important reason, the first and foremost motivation which substantiates the writer's call for each individual to carefully scrutinize his or her life. Therefore, in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** the role and importance of the past in each individual's life is stressed when Paule Marshall makes the point that:

To go back and understand. It is a good thing you are doing. Most of us should try it. It's usually so painful though: looking back and into yourself; most people run from it ... But sometimes it's necessary to go back before you can go forward, really forward. (CPTP, 385 )

Consequently, to know one's past becomes therefore a task of paramount importance, a supreme and sublime duty not only for each individual, but also for nations as well. To be meaningful and complete, to be "whole" in Marshall's sense, life should not be static, life should not consider only the present state of being. In other words, the sense of our present fragment of life must be completely and differently apprehended if seen from the perspective of past events. To paraphrase Vron Ware, cited by Ian Chambers and Linda Curty in their work, **The Post-colonial Question**, our memory of the past can transform the understanding of current event (1996,

146). Or to put it another way, for the future to be worth struggling for, the past must be critically evaluated in the light of the present (Nubukpo, 1987, 130).

This attitude is widely displayed in the look of the Bournehills people when Cane Vale, the only sugar mill in the district, was closed. This imposed sufferings and hard work on the population:

Their deep-set eyes appeared endowed with a two-fold vision : of not only being able to see backward in time so that, unlike most people, they had a clear memory of events long past, but, by some extraordinary prescience, forward also. They knew, you were certain, what the future held and that, despite all they had undergone and had yet to endure, it was assured. Perhaps this was why standing there before the barred gate they appeared largely unaffected by what had happened. (CPTP, 412)

This observation, that is, to evaluate the present in the light of the past so that the future must be worth living for, applies to individual progress as well as national development. Marshall emphasizes that this "is not only true for people -- individuals -- but for nations as well," simply because "Sometimes they need to stop and take a long hard look back. My country, for example. It's never honestly faced up to its past, never told the story straight, and I don't know as it ever will" (CPTP, 385).

In this excerpt the narrator is complaining about how historical facts are handled in the republic of Bourne Island. To be specific, her country is robbed of its history through the manipulation of it. What can account for this unethical

practice? To better understand Marshall's obsession with the past, one must briefly refer to some historical facts before grasping her message on the issue of the past and her literary articulation of its effects on the present. A speculation on this point may lead to consider a common practice adopted by slave masters.

It is a well known fact that the African slaves in the New World were denied their history as a precondition for enslavement. Many specialists of slavery agree that this principle was a fundamental requirement of the "peculiar institution."

One also notices in reading slave narratives that it was a common practice during the days of slavery to deprive slaves of their individual identity. All matters related to a slave's birth certificate were kept secret. To mention but few instances, Frederick Douglass, in his three autobiographies -- **The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave; My Bondage and My Freedom;** and **Life and Time of Frederick Douglass** -- as well as Booker T. Washington in **Up from Slavery** documented this sad reality of the institution of slavery.

Certainly, the goal of keeping secret this information is to close off the categories and relationships that ordinarily define human identity, and thus to dehumanize slaves. Referring to this practice, David Van Leer declared that

the proof of being formerly a slave resides in the ex-slave's inability to accurately tell the records related to his birth.<sup>13</sup> The aim of this practice, to a large extent, is to render life senseless to them.

In the light of this brief historical flashback, one can better understand Simon Gikandi when he makes the point that to claim subjectivity the African slaves in the New World had to struggle for their essential history (Gikandi, 1992, 5-6), because only through the recognition of their past can the colonized and enslaved people preserve a full human identity.

This analogy, when applied to the case of the colonized countries and particularly to Bourne Island which is patterned in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** after Barbados, helps explain Marshall's point of view. The narrator expresses her disappointment that her country has never been given the chance to honestly face up to its past.

The oppressor knows for certain that introducing these people to their genuine history will critically undermine their presence and jeopardize their profits. To paraphrase Barbara T. Christian, the oppressor is aware that the foundation for a genuine revolutionary process lies in an active confrontation with one's personal and historical past.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Leer, in Sundquist, ed., *Frederick Douglass : New Literary and Historical Essays* (Cambridge, Mass., Cambridge University Press, 1990), 130.

<sup>14</sup> Christian in Davis and Harris eds, op. cit., 169.

In effect, the past history of Bourne Island is very rich in struggles of resistance between the oppressor and the oppressed : the Cuffee Ned revolt is a case in point. Their past is linked with revolutionary figures and ideas. What is revealed about this revolt in the novel and why is the story so important to the people of Bourne Island?

Through Merle's presentation of the story, the past is kept alive in the memory of the people as if past and present were intrinsically united. This feeling is conveyed through their enactment of the slave revolt and the importance of a charismatic man, Cuffee Ned, in their life. "Hurling their massed voices against the sky, the women began the long recitative that told the story of the Pyre Hill Revolt and Cuffee Ned -- his deeds and exploits, his heroism. It was a song celebrating him" (CPTP, 307).

Who is Cuffee Ned? Why do people continue to revere him as the only real hero they have had around Bourne Island?

The history of Bournehills has it that Cuffee Ned, a black slave, a faithful and trusted servant to Percy Bryam (CPTP, 306), successfully organized a slave revolt, the Pyre Hill Slave Revolt. Cuffee Ned was an intelligent slave who spent years carefully planning the revolt. To be successful in his coup, he had patiently waited until the main body of the regiment was out of the Bourne Island, "helping to put down a maroon uprising in Jamaica" before he launched

the rebellion at home (CPTP, 307). For the narrator, there had never been anything like this revolt in Bourne Island. "According to the historical accounts," the narrator says, "the Pyre Hill Revolt had been the largest and the most successful of the many slave rebellions that had taken place on the island" (CPTP, 110).

Under Cuffee Ned's command, the same Cuffee Ned who is presented as "the instigator, organizer and mastermind" behind this revolt, the slaves fired the Pyre Hill and its surrounding sugar cane field and captured Percy Bryam who owned the whole Bourne Island and its entire population. Cuffee Ned personally killed Percy Bryam with a knife after the latter had been tied to a mill wheel at Cane Vale and tortured (CPTP, 110). It will be useful to know that this killing exactly reflects the way Percy Bryam himself used to murder some of his slaves who, he felt, deserved death : "It was a punishment Bryam was known to have meted out regularly to those whom he had considered no more than oxen, and he had soon collapsed and died at the wheel as many of them had also..." (CPTP, 308).

In addition to this, in a violent battle with weapons raided from the government arsenal, the slaves under his leadership had successfully driven back the government forces. In the following quote, Ferguson -- or Fergy, a character in the story -- vividly tells Stinger how Cuffee Ned and his men had

put to rout the government force after raiding the arsenal and how they had held off a full regiment for almost six months:

I say Cuffee held off the whole damn British regiment for upward of six months. Not a jack-man of them could pas' Cleaver's High Wall all that time. And all the guns and ammunitions they had didn't count for a blast. Cuffee still have them lick. You think he was making any rass-sport? Why man, it got so they was afraid to so much as come near Bournehills. (CPTP, 131)

Furthermore, history has it that for over two years, they had lived as a nation apart, free and independent (CPTP, 110-1). But eventually, Cuffee Ned was captured, beheaded and his head was displayed triumphantly on Westminster Low Road (CPTP, 309).

According to Joyce Pettis, the most extensive discussion of Cuffee Ned and his revolt are provided by Beckle (in **Black Rebellion**) and Trudier Harris. Because this revolt reminds one of the Berbice Rebellion which occurred in 1765 under the leadership of Cofee (Kofi-Akan) who is now a national hero of Guiana, Dorothy Hamer Denniston suggests Marshall "may have borrowed facts from this historic event to create something of a subtales within the larger novel" (Denniston, 1995, 101). In her treatment of the same topic, Joyce Pettis also notes that this revolt has historical precedent in the numerous uprisings in the West Indies before concluding that Marshall's portrayal likely reflects a revolt led by a slave of the same name (Pettis, 1995, 54).

It is pointless to argue whether this assertion made by both scholars on the revolt holds. Whatever the assumptions and speculations on this revolt, one thing is for certain : Cuffee Ned's revolt reminds one of other slave revolts in the New World such as Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner in the United States and Toussaint L'Ouverture in Haiti. Hortense Spiller better captures the spirit of Marshall's invention when she writes that:

Cuffee Ned perfectly embodies Bournehill's idea of subversion that is rehearsed in various New World historical narratives -- Haiti's Toussaint L'Ouverture and Nat Turner and Denmark Vesey of the southern United States share the same heroic constellation.<sup>15</sup>

It must be borne in mind that the use of revolt and charismatic leaders is a recurrent pattern in Marshall's fiction. Another instance of a slave revolt is in **Daughters**, Marshall's most outspoken novel about the spread of Western imperialism and its continued effects upon the poor population. Here too, the reader learns through the narrator that Ursa had wanted to write her thesis on Will Cudjoe and Congo Jane who had played major roles in the slave revolt which once swept colonial Triunion. In the novel's account of the revolt, a male and female slave, an enslaved couple, Will Cudjoe and Congo Jane, are said to have broken their yoke of bondage to become "coleaders, coconspirators, lovers, consorts, [and] friends (**Daughters**, 138).

---

<sup>15</sup> Hortense Spiller, "*The Chosen Place, the Timeless People: Some Figurations on the New World*," in Marijorie Pryse and Hortense Spiller eds, 1985, 162; quoted in Denniston, op. cit. 101.



Though the Cuffee Ned revolt happened "sometimes back--back," in colonial time when the English were ruling the place, generations later this story is still alive. The population of Bourne Island is still talking about it as if it happened yesterday. This is rendered possible thanks to a special event which is celebrated in Bourne Island to refresh their memories of the past: carnival.

Every year, the population of Bournehills acts out a pageant at carnival to show Cuffee Ned and the Pyre Hill Slave Revolt (CPTP, 302-311). A careful study of this specific cultural manifestation may shed more light on the cultural patterns articulated in Marshall's fiction.

#### **V.4. THE CHOSEN PLACE, THE TIMELESS PEOPLE AND AFRICAN CULTURAL MANIFESTATIONS : CARNIVAL AND ITS IMPORTANCE.**

**The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** represents the culmination of Marshall's expression of African cultural manifestations. In this novel, as Dorothy Hamer Denniston observes, Marshall has combined and expanded the themes developed in her previous novels to create a kaleidoscopic piece of fiction intricate in design and resonant with meaning (Denniston, 1995, 97).

Marshall reactualizes African culture in her fiction through the use of various techniques which convey her wish and determination to get her characters connected with the mother continent Africa. One of the instruments

she uses for this is carnival and its music. What is carnival and what is its importance to the population of Bournehills?

To successfully establish the place, role, and importance of carnival in the life of the Bournehills population, the narrator, first of all, takes care to place the readers in the characteristic atmosphere proper to Bournehills by drawing their attention to the division of time observed in the area. The division of time/year in Bournehills differs radically from the patterns of time sequences offered by an ecclesiastical calendar.

Although the Western calendar is known in the West Indies, the narrator chooses to downplay its importance in the life of the population in the narration of the carnival story. In lieu of a calendar calculated in mathematical terms, the writer has chosen to use African time, whereby the major divisions of the year follow seasonal activities.

These major divisions of the year in Bournehills are detailed in Book III titled "Carnival" which is a subdivision of **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**. The year is broken into two major divisions in Bournehills. The first section of it is known as "in-crop" season; it runs from January through June. The period of time which extends from July to December is called "out-of-crop" season. Holidays are observed within these two major divisions of the year by the population of Bournehills.

During the "in-crop" season and in chronological order, carnival is first celebration, then Easter, followed by Whitsuntide observed in May and which closes out the list of festivities of the "in-crop" season. Emancipation, which is commemorated on the August First Holiday, heads the list of holidays observed during the "out-of-crop" season. All Souls' Day, a special moment set aside to attend the burial sites of dead relatives comes in November. Christmas closes out the year in December (CPTP, 287-8). Among all these holidays, carnival is the most valued. For this reason, before speculating on issues related to Marshall's division of the years in this novel, its role and importance are briefly surveyed.

The novel does not provide the reader with the definition of carnival. Rather, through the vivid description of clothings and other aspects of the carnival celebration in Bourne Island, the reader is given a good view of the narrator's articulate description of the carnivalesque event.

Though Marshall has not integrated the Sunday prior to the celebration of Carnival in Book Three of the novel, it must be considered part and parcel of carnival celebration in the framework of this dissertation. "The Sunday of pigsticking," as it is called, is a specific day devoted to special preparation (CPTP, 289). The importance of this ceremony, it seems to me, lies in its mythical power to appease the people and alleviate some of the effects of their traumatizing history. They can transfer, communicate and channel their

violence into a pig that is afterward killed for the occasion. This ritual seems to reveal something deep in their common history. Their strange behavior while dehairing the animal suggests an act of cleansing. The anthropologist Saul's reflection on the pigsticking ritual fully conveys this sense:

And in the midst of all the things that had disturbed him about the pigsticking, there had been beneath the violence of the act an affirmation of something aged-old, a sense of renewal...The rum had not only, it seemed, neutralized the queasy bit of pork he had eaten, but had burned away, like a powerful acid, all that was impure in him, leaving him empty but clean inside. (CPTP, 279)

Carnival itself is celebrated after this mystic ceremony is performed. For the two full days set aside for carnival, everything comes to a standstill. Every professional activity ceases on Bourne Island. On the evening of Carnival Monday, which is the opening day of the festivities, a big dance is held in each of the different districts of Bourne Island. The apotheosis of the carnivalesque celebration is reached on the following day, Tuesday, when a magnificent parade traditionally takes place in the main city of New Bristol.

Like the people of the other districts which make up Bourne Island, the children, women, and men of the district of Bournehills also take an active part in the celebration of the "Bacchanal. Big Fete". But here lies the significant difference : instead of wearing new costumes as does anyone else at carnival, the population of Bournehills air out the ones they had worn for years. "The men wore the Onasburg, as it was called, as a kind of overblouse; the women,

in a longer version, as a dress tied loosely at the waist" (CPTP, 289). To exactly reflect the spirit of the rebellion, a group of people is dressed in the "red-coated uniform of the British soldier of the time" (CPTP, 303).

In this attire, the entire population of Bournehills converges on the city of New Bristol. Through her beautiful description of their movement to the main town of New Bristol, Paule Marshall succeeds in uniting the past to the present. Their massive movement itself is reminiscent of the main happening known to the place in its past, the slave trade and enslavement:

It conjures up in the bright afternoon sunshine dark alien images of legions marching bound together over a vast tract, iron fitted into dank stone walls, chains -- like those to an anchor -- rattling in the deep holds of ships, and exile in an unknown inhospitable land -- and exile bitter and irreversible in which all memory of the former life and of the self as it had once been had been destroyed. (CPTP, 303-4 )

Once they reach New Bristol, the members of the Bournehills band enact a pageant which is "solely devoted to the riotous song and dance celebrating Cuffee Ned" (CPTP, 313).

Of paramount importance here is the idea of repetition. Their repeated performance of the masque has enabled the performers to play so well their respective roles in their mimicking of the Cuffee Ned insurrection. Thus the narrator reports that "everything had been done to detail" according to the old

accounts. Stinger enacts the role of Cuffee Ned this year, as he did last year.

Report has it that his:

Normally mild reflective face had taken on Cuffee's expression as described in the accounts and was suddenly shrewd, clenched and coldly purposeful as he crept up the float with the billhook that was like part of his hand flashing in the sun. (CPTP, 305)

Their dress, which is a replica of the costume worn by the slaves during the time of their insurrection, coupled with the pageant suggests the timelessness of the Bournehills.

The careful attention the treatment of carnival is given in Marshall's **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** reflects its important role in the cultural life of the diasporan black people. This has been noted by a number of critics.

Joyce Pettis claims that carnival is among several festive days that help define the sociocultural traditions of Bournehills (Pettis, 1995, 56). And to paraphrase Eugenia Collier, one might say that because Bournehills is described as a mythic focal point of history in the novel, carnival constitutes the ritual which brings that history to life. The carnival has the symbolic power to "suspend time and mask drudgery of everyday life" to use Simon Gikandi's phrase (Gikandi, 1992, 187). Carnival is a vital link between the past and present. Eugenia Collier sees in Marshall's stunning description of carnival the

quintessential meaning of the novel,<sup>16</sup> whereas Simon Gikandi observed that carnival "obscures as well as discloses" (Gikandi, 1992, 187).

Dorothy Hamer Denniston's discussion of the artistic role of carnival in **The Chosen Place the Timeless People** is her primary example in an examination of the life of Diasporan black people. In the framework of the novel, Denniston believes, "carnival serves as a reference point to review the stories of the several characters introduced in the novel". She identifies carnival as "the central climatic episode of the novel when secrets are revealed and resolutions come about" (Denniston, 1995, 100). But above all, Denniston considers carnival celebration as critically important in the life of the Diasporan black people for one main reason. Through the enactment of the pageant at carnival which presents, in synopsis form, Paule Marshall's "uncompromising statement about powerful and weak, about colonialism and subjugation, about confrontation and change," the oppressed are given the chance to challenge the oppressor (Denniston, 1995, 100). It is useful to mention at this point that both Eugenia Collier and Joyce Pettis have reached the same conclusion when writing about carnival in Marshall. "Carnival" says Collier "is both affirmation and assertion of independent selfhood of Black People."<sup>17</sup>

Joyce Pettis (1995, 58) refers to carnival as "a suspended moment in time" whereby "the sons and daughters of peasants become progenitors of

---

<sup>16</sup> Collier, in Evan ed., *Black Women Writers 1950-1980* (New York : Anchor Books/Doubleday, 1984), 309.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem.

power." Carnival provides the Bournehills population with the unique opportunity to assume the righteous position of rebellion. They eject the oppressors, and replace them with jubilant, victorious freedom. Joyce Pettis suggests that the sense of solidarity manifested during carnival is "powerful because it derives from a common sense of purpose and it is self-fulfilling and self-enabling -- not directed against anyone". During carnival communal divisiveness is replaced by unity. What is more, during the celebration of carnival, all superficial and artificial barriers commonly used to make distinctions among people are broken down.

The population of Bourne Island is composed of the following classes : a lower/working class, a lower middle class of minor government workers, shop clerks, primary schoolteachers and a relatively small New Bristol élite: politicians, businessmen, and senior civil servants.

The wall of separation is pulled down when during carnival they all, without any exception, dance in the same place on the final Tuesday night jump-up which usually closes off the festivities. "...even though walking down Queen Street tomorrow they wouldn't so much as let their eye catch that of the clerk or carpenter they were dancing arm in arm with now" (CPTP, 324). The habitual barriers thus fall apart thanks to carnival. One of the most appreciated virtues/effects of carnival lies in its ability to compel and strengthen unity among people and make them feel better : "Anyway, one has to be grateful for



holidays like carnival where if only for two days people can behave as though we're truly one" (CPTP, 216).

More than anything else, through the reenactment of the Cuffee Ned revolt at carnival, this myth becomes ritualized. Joyce Pettis, quoting Max Gluckman, has stated the importance of rituals by pointing out its symbolic and transformational nature : "People act out roles normally denied them, [...] and the ceremonies are one example of ritual inversion, by which he means a psychological catharsis" (Pettis, 1995, 57).

In their observation with this practice, as Joyce Pettis continues, the Bournehills peasants, "the immutable underclass, take charge of the future in viewing Cuffee Ned's spirit as the ideal symbol of community through which they might renew themselves"(Pettis, 1995, 57). At the time of Cuffee Ned, communal solidarity is strengthened and lived : "Cuffee Ned had us planting the fields together," says a participant in the story. " Reaping our crop together, sharing whatsoever we had with each other. We was a people then, man; and it was beautiful to see!" (CPTP, 150).

The novel implies that their future lies in the observation of this spirit, for thanks to the inspiration they have drawn from the revolt coupled with Saul's help, they are rendered capable of efficiently working hand in hand to transport their sugar cane when Cane Vale, the only sugar mill factory in the place is

closed down (CPTP, 382 & 445). Indeed, the Bournehills population's response to the present is still shaped by the memory of that revolt. Thus, one can understand the narrator when she claims that these people are still waiting for the second coming of Cuffee Ned, their redeemer (CPTP, 145). To solve their present problems by drawing appropriate lessons from the past revolt is tantamount to Cuffee Ned's second coming.

The description and role of carnival are inextricably mixed in Gikandi's discussion of this issue in Paule Marshall. Writing about carnival in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**, Gikandi states that "for outside observers, the carnivalesque is obscure; for the peasants of Bourneville [*sic*], it discloses a collective genealogy and perpetuates their 'national spirit'" (Gikandi, 1992, 187).

In the light of their behavior, one fully agrees with Eugenia Collier that the populations of Bourne Island are out of time. Moreover, she sees them as being really "linked by place and circumstance with the past and holding the key, it would seem, to the future."<sup>18</sup>

In much the same way, Joyce Pettis argues that by re-creating the Cuffee Ned revolt as the annual masque for carnival, a practice which earns them the opprobrium of the spectators even as the tense action compels their visceral participation, the Bournehills community revitalizes history while at the

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, 307.

same time this act cleanses the present. It seems important to highlight here that this standpoint on traditional festivities exactly reflects the view Abena Busia held on the traditional feasts. She adamantly states that "traditional festivals and art forms must not remain redundant celebrations of a dead past, but must be transformed to give substance to a living and changing present."<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, psychologically speaking, through their recontextualization of Cuffee Ned's revolt and by exhuming the ancestral blow against oppression and rejoicing in its unity, the marchers "infuse their own resistance against the imposition of Western modeling on their economy and lives" (Pettis, 1995, 56).

It must be borne in mind that the population of Bourne Island is representative of all the dispossessed of the earth. Therefore, it makes sense when they generalize their particular situation. Their enactment of the Cuffee Ned Revolt is done on behalf of the millions of dispossessed everywhere.

The observation of Marshall's division of the ecclesiastical calendar, which is carefully interwoven with the African agricultural year, certainly brings about the question of the African vision on time. The conception of time in African culture, mind, or environment is cyclical; this circular time in the African sense logically goes against the linear one in the Western conception. This cyclical time of Bournehills allows the recovery of the past; this attribute of time

---

<sup>19</sup> Abena P. B. Busia, in Pettis, *op. cit.*, 125.

enables one to understand "the animated immediacy of Cuffee Ned in the conscience" of the populations of Bournehills (Pettis, 1995, 50).

To this end, Victor Turner points out that carnival, as a feature of the cosmological calendar, is differentiated from ordinary historical time. He writes: "Truly carnival is the denizen of a place that is no place, and a time that is no time, even when that place is a city's main plaza, and that time can be found on an ecclesiastical calendar" (Turner, 1987, 76). The mythic power of carnival lies in its ability to "suspend time," comments Simon Gikandi (Gikandi, 1992, 187). In addition, it provides "a constant source of new beginnings, of ontological renewal," as Benjamin C. Ray puts it (Ray, 1976, 41).

Her presentation of the time division unquestionably illustrates the manifestation of diplopia in Marshall. In other words, her careful and elaborate structuring which enables her to bring together both conceptions in a meaningful way in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** is an excellent example of Marshall's double vision. This suggests Marshall's synthesis of both cultures, Western and African. It highlights how both cultures interact; it shows her preoccupation with cultural collusion and conflict, and fully displays how "the two cultures alternately diverge and coalesce," to use Dorothy Hamer Denniston's phrase (Denniston, 1995, xiii).

Marshall's handling of both cultures in her writing constitutes in itself a strong denial of the assumption that African slaves in the New World were stripped of their original culture. Instead, this careful manipulation of African culture which infuses her work reinforces our conviction that the rich and diverse assortment of traditional myths, songs, and religious practices and beliefs the African slaves brought with them in their exile was passed on to their children, who incorporated into these traditions features of the European culture they encountered. The pouring of libations on the sacred ground for the spirit of Cuffee Ned and his men (CPTP, 300) is a prime example of the existence of some Afrocentric elements in the New World. Rhonda Cobham is of this opinion when she observes that the vitality and flexibility of this folk tradition has ensured its survival perceptible in the present time through "the religious cult in Jamaica and Trinidad [...] and in Steelband and Carnival of Southern Caribbean."<sup>20</sup>

What is more, this conviction is reinforced in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** by Paule Marshall's use of the well known Anancy story. Merle narrates this story to her audience, the children:

She was recounting another episode in the life of Spider, [...] who, though small and weak, always managed to outwit the larger and stronger creatures in the world, including man, by his wit and cunning. (CPTP, 242)

---

<sup>20</sup> Cobham, in Bruce King, ed. op. cit., 10.

By pointing out that this Anancy story is widespread in Bourne Island, the narrator means to remind us of the scattering of black culture in the Caribbean. The spider stories, well known stories in Africa, are another instance which displays tangible evidence of black cultural survival in the New World.

All things considered, it makes sense to say that Marshall could never have consciously drawn from her knowledge of African cultural remnants as they function in contemporary African American and African Caribbean areas if her forefathers who were brought as slaves to the Americas had been totally stripped of their original culture. In other words, there has never been a **tabula rasa** in the minds of the unwilling emigrants, as is often claimed.

Before concluding, it must be said that those who have accused Marshall of romanticizing African culture should bear in mind that Marshall is not the first African American or African Caribbean who has focused her interest on the African past. Her keen interest in the African past and its culture aims at symbolically redeeming the diasporan Black after centuries of lies. Césaire is adamant when he writes:

[La] démarche qui semble hésitation et embarras entre le passé et l'avenir est au contraire des plus naturelles, inspirée qu'elle est de cette idée que la voie la plus courte vers l'avenir est celle qui passe toujours par l'approfondissement du passé.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> "Culture et Colonisation" in *Presence Africaine*, 1956, 193.

It is also worth saying that in the tradition of African American writing, Paule Marshall is not the first novelist to ever use history for the purpose of change. Arna Wendell Bontemps (1902-1973) uses history to express his imaginative vision of the nature and function of revolution. Through his wonderful manipulation of the facts of the Gabriel Prosser revolt, he "reveals the timeless problems man has in overpowering color and class oppression to achieve freedom and social equality" (Well, 1987, 104).

Paule Marshall considers all foreign cultural practices that have been imposed on the enslaved and colonized people as inappropriate, unhealthy and false. Yet, at the same time, it is obvious that many of these practices and their associated values have, to a large degree, been assimilated. Marshall is not so much interested in how or why this happened in the first place. She is more concerned about the negative consequences of this happening and what to do about them; that is, how to culturally decolonize the minds of the colonized. She is preoccupied with how African Americans and African Caribbeans can regain spiritual wholeness. This basic concern is the leitmotif of her literary production.

In her fiction, the particular medium she has chosen in her fight against injustice, Marshall's combat consists in freeing the enslaved and colonized people from these inappropriate values by restoring for them their true past

and culture through the "re-seeing," and "re-valuing," of cultural values and practices of the past.

In all her novels to date, Marshall has insisted on the imperious necessity incumbent on every individual as well as nation to know their past. In her construction of the community of Bournehills she has used what she considers to be the most important element of any society-- the contours of individual human beings as they form and are formed by their land and their culture, and the relationship between the past and present. This specific society finds its fulfillment through its concepts of time and rituals.<sup>22</sup>

I wholeheartedly concur with Eugenia Collier that overall in her work and particularly in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** which is the culmination of her literary production, Marshall meaningfully links African culture in the Western Hemisphere with its past and the promise of the future. Paule Marshall "sees this black culture as different from the Euro-American culture which has been the oppressor, and proposes that the hope for the future lies in honoring this past and using it as the basis for unified action."<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> B. T. Christian in Davis and Harris eds, op. cit., 167.

<sup>23</sup> Collier in Evan ed, op. cit., 310.



## **CHAPTER SIX:**

PAULE MARSHALL'S FICTION:  
A CALL FOR A NEW ORDER

## VI. 1. INFLUENCES ON MARSHALL

In *African American Writers*, Lea Baechler and Walton Litz make the point that prior to Marshall's generation, most writers who ventured to approach the historical processes of slavery, immigration, exploitation, racism, and colonialism did so from a male perspective (1991, 289). It is therefore very useful to speculate in this dissertation on Paule Marshall as a forerunner in African American literary production.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. In the first place, it seeks to show Marshall's literary articulation of her view on the new political order she is calling for. In the second place, it addresses Marshall's revisionist vision of social established norms.

As a matter of fact, this chapter will begin with some basic remarks that will better locate Marshall's fiction in a specific way. First, a consideration of some of the main events and sources of influence which shape her life will be helpful in understanding Marshall's political and feminist standpoints in her writing. Secondly, a quick overview of the writer's own statements about her fiction will shed much more light on her writing regarding issues addressed in this chapter.

A fundamental point that always helps readers in apprehending a piece of fiction has to do with the writer's personal background. As a matter of fact, to

understand the deep motivation behind any literary production, an awareness of the writer's selected life story is essential. Why is Marshall so articulate when it comes to political and feminist issues in her novels? An answer to this question can be found in her personal life story and statement on her work.

Her literary production reveals that the regular conversations between her mother and the other Barbadian women in the former's kitchen had a decisive influence on Marshall's writing. In her short story, "The Making of a Writer : From the Poets in the Kitchen," where she deals with these women's talk, Marshall reports they talk about anything, ranging from domestic problems to world politics. Marcus Garvey, the founder of the United Negro Improvement Association, was literally considered as their "God" (In **Merle**, 5).

Later, in her interview "Shaping the World of My Art" where she deals with her artistic production, Marshall consistently evokes the name of this prominent and charismatic political figure of the West Indies, Marcus Garvey, and describes him as a "Black radical and freedom fighter whose life and example had more than a little to do with moving me toward what I see as an essentially political perspective in my work".<sup>1</sup> Therefore, as Alexis DeVeaux commented, "this strong image of the women in her mother's kitchen, an image of women concerned not only with household chores but with the politics of world affairs [...] was later to be the impetus of Paule Marshall's life-work."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Carole Boyce Davies, in Davis and Harris eds., op. cit., 193.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Baechler and Litz, eds., *African American Writers* (New York : Charles Scribner's Son, 1991), 290.

Marshall's key declarations on her writing constitute a fundamental statement that can better enable one to fully understand her fiction.

As stated in the previous chapter, in designing **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**, Marshall brought together what she considers to be the most central two themes to her work : "the importance of truly confronting the past [...] and the necessity of reversing the present order." What is meant by the second important theme to her work, that is, "the necessity of reversing the present order"? One is much more enlightened on the meanings and implications of this statement when it is read against another statement by Paule Marshall on her large scale novel, **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** which traces, at one level, the history of black-white relations.

In effect, because Marshall's African Caribbean ancestry has given her insight into another important dimension of the diaspora, i. e. the traumatic awareness of colonialism, one of her motivations is to closely consider the kind of relationship that exists between the dominant West and the Third World. In this respect, Marshall declared in an interview that in writing **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**, she wanted:

to have a kind of vehicle that looked at the relationship of the West to the rest of us. So I hoped that the novel would not solely be seen as a novel about the West Indies, even though it's set there, but a novel that reflects what is happening to all of us in the Diaspora in our encounter with these metropolitan powers, the power of Europe and the power of America. (Marshall in Pettis, 1995, 3)

As a descendant of black ancestry, she has experienced this feeling of imbalance of power between the oppressed and the oppressor. However, Paule Marshall, as a female novelist has another insight into social issues : she shares female as well as colonial experiences and both are closely linked in her artistic production. In other words, patriarchy, a concept defined by Juliet Mitchell as "the omnipresent system of male domination and female subjugation which is achieved through socialization, perpetuated through ideological means, and maintained by institutional methods" is a heavy focus in Paule Marshall (Mitchell, 1973, 65). Therefore, in many, if not in all her novels, the place accorded to women in society is another central concern of her work. Marshall's feminist stand and her concern with the politics of women's liberation in her artistic work derive from her personal experiences.

In effect, Marshall discovered the sexist attitude of American society when she was looking for a job. Actually, she did not consider writing as a profession when she finished her college education in 1953. On the contrary, she was looking for a job with a newspaper or magazine. Her first surprise came from her discovery that even black newspapers were not interested in hiring women, as the prescribed professions for women of color at that time were teaching or social work. However, in her determination, she got a position in **Our World**, a small black magazine. Being the only woman on the staff, Marshall confesses later that she had the feeling that "the men were waiting for

her to fall."<sup>3</sup> This information regarding Marshall's personal background as well as her statements on her fiction will enhance understanding of the development of Marshall's career as a radical reformer of social norms.

## VI. 2. PAULE MARSHALL'S CALL FOR POLITICAL CHANGE: A CRITIQUE OF COLONIALISM AND IMPERIALISM.

Marshall's early fictional writings are mostly concerned with feminist issues, as her biographer Barbara T. Christian has pointed out. However, Marshall's stance gradually shifts from a more personal one in her first, autobiographical novel, to a broader, more directly or overtly political, anti-imperialist one. This shift, it must be argued, is a continuum, not a real break, because **Brown Girl, Brownstones** contains the seeds of her later ideas and visions.

There exists a difference between the two concepts of colonialism and imperialism. In **Culture and Imperialism** (1993, 8), Edward Said defines the concept of imperialism as "the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory." Though colonialism, which usually involves settlement, has largely ended, Edward Said considers that imperialism is still perceptible in international affairs. He observes that imperialism still "lingers where [colonialism ] always has been, in a kind of

---

<sup>3</sup> See Lea Baechler and A. Waton Litz, eds. op. cit., 291 and Thadious Davis and Trudier Harris eds. op. cit., 163.

general cultural sphere as well as in specific political, ideological, economic and social practice."

Marshall's political commitment emerges in a vigorous critique of colonialism and its impacts on the character of the colonized and their land and on the practices of the newly independent nations. Whether in **Soul Clap Hands and Sing**, in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**, or in **Daughters**, Marshall's criticism of the colonial enterprise remains consistently the same.

In her early writings, she directly tackles the issue of Western colonialism and imperialism in her characterization of the four aging men, the main characters in the short stories of **Soul Clap Hands and Sing**. The four short stories which make up **Soul Clap Hands and Sing** are named after their geographical settings. In chronological order, after "Barbados," comes "Brooklyn" which is followed by "British Guiana;" "Brazil" closes out the list. Of particular interest in this section are "Barbados" and "British Guiana," where she explicitly formulates her critical stand on the issue of colonialism and its aftermaths on people and places.

With chilling details, Paule Marshall elaborates on Mr. Watford's character to evidence colonial impact on the colonized. In effect, as a Barbadian, Mr. Watford was formerly colonized by Britain. To show that formal

independence does not necessarily mean that people have gotten rid of the influence of colonial thinking, Marshall makes Mr. Watford adopt colonial stands vis-a-vis his own people: he has learnt so well by heart the twisted lesson of colonialism. Thus, instead of hating the oppressor, he insidiously nurtures hate for the oppressed, his fellow colonized. Mr. Watford adopts an oppressive stand; he rejects his identity and is rather pleased to be treated as an oppressor. To substantiate this assertion, the narrator describes his reaction to the servant boy whose gesture gives him respect and honor in the story:

He [the boy] stood outside the back door, his hand and lowered head performing the small, subtle rites of deference.

Mr. Watford's pleasure was full, for the gestures were those given only to a white man in his time.[...] He remembered, staring at him, the time when he had worked as a yard boy for a white family, and had to assume the same respectful pose while their flat, raw, Barbadian voices assailed him with orders. ("Barbados," in **Merle**, 55)

It is worth saying once more that in Mr. Watford's case, the colonial past of Barbados, helps one to understand the present. It goes without saying that Mr. Watford oppresses the boy the very way he was oppressed by the former colonizers of Barbados. Dorothy Hamer Denniston identifies Mr. Watford as someone who is subconsciously longing to embrace his community. However, his internalization of colonial rules prevents him from achieving this goal and makes him an oppressor of his own community. "Having suffered the indignities of racism and neocolonialism, he has learned well the haughty



condescension of powerful whites and takes a similar stance toward his own people" (Denniston, 1995, 38).

In much the same way, Paule Marshall reveals her political commitment when she gives her blessing to the new political awareness in the area; she applauds the political wind of change in Barbados. She launches a call for this new political order through the character of Mr. Goodman. Notwithstanding his former acquiescence to colonization, Marshall has Mr. Goodman explain to Mr. Watford, in clear and explicit terms, the meaning of the new order:

Things is different to before. I mean to say, the young people nowadays is different to how we was. They not so frightened of the white people as we was. No man. Now take that said same boy, for example. I don't say he don't like spree, but he's serious, you see him there. He's a member of this new Barbados People's Party. He wants to see his own color running the government. He wants to be able to make living right here in Barbados instead of going to any cold England. And he is right. ("Barbados" in **Merle**, 58)

To use Denniston's phrase, through the character of Mr. Goodman, Marshall "applauds the endurance and resistance" of the West Indian people "as well as their developing political awareness" (Denniston, 1995, 46).

This straightforward explanation of the new order highlights another fact about Caribbean society : the phenomenon of exile, which is considered as a social and psychological ill that is part and parcel of the West Indian society.

Mr. Goodman is suggesting that if things change at home, that is, if the political ruling of Barbados is truly handled fairly by the natives themselves without any foreign interference, then there will be no need for the population to seek freedom or fulfillment elsewhere.

The motto of the Barbadian People's Party is "The Old Order Shall Pass." What is "The Old Order" referred to in this motto and which "Shall Pass"? Certainly, this motto best sums up and reflects the political situation of Barbados. The story is set in Barbados, where recently a political party system was allowed. This suggests that either people have just begun organizing themselves for an independence struggle, or they are already in the postindependent era. If the second assumption applies, then the motto suggests that Barbadians are still highly influenced by the mother country. Therefore the political objective of this party lies in its fight against the last embers of colonialism. Thus, as Leila Kapaï has observed, though **Soul Clap Hands and Sing** is primarily concerned with the identity crisis of its protagonists, the alienated men, it also represents the passing away of the old order and the time for the new one.<sup>4</sup> Dorothy Hamer Denniston similarly locates the double interpretation of this motto, which "can hardly be missed" she writes, "for we know the old order to be not merely those affected by age, but also those affected by the political states of colonialism and neocolonialism" (Denniston, 1995, 41).

---

<sup>4</sup> Leila Kapaï in Draper ed., *Black Literature Criticism* (Detroit and London : Gale Research Inc, 1992), 1367.

Marshall also criticizes the way colonialism blocks things in colonial countries. A case in point is described in "British Guiana." In this story, the reader is made an eye witness of the colonial impact on British Guiana when Sybil makes the obvious remark about the standstill of the place. In fact, after twenty years spent elsewhere, Sybil comes back to British Guiana only to notice that everything remains static : "B. G. is the only place on God's earth you could leave for a century and come back to find nothing's changed" (SCHS, 116). This basic observation by Sybil expresses her shock, as well as Marshall's bitter criticism of the Western powers regarding their imperial undertaking. The inevitable result from colonialism is underdevelopment, Sybil seems to say.

What is more, Marshall focuses her attention on the destructive lust of Western powers through the process of imperialism and colonialism by her use of the apocalyptic imagery of destruction which dominates the story:

The glare offered even the blind of Georgetown a vision of the apocalypse and the weighted stillness mushrooming over the city was the same which must follow a bombing, final and filled with the broken voices of the dying. Georgetown at noon was another Hiroshima at the moment of the bombing. (SCHS, 96)

In this excerpt, the narrator is suggesting that the Western powers are not content with simply blocking and causing underdevelopment in their colonies. They are also prepared to provoke ecological catastrophe in the

colonized countries, as they literally occupy the land, as well as the sky of the Third World nations for the sake of their internal security. "In controlling national territories from a distance and in fighting among themselves," Dorothy Hamer Denniston argues, "Western powers destroy countries they deem worthless and insignificant." Without surprise, in so doing, they reduce the effectiveness of the government and "dehumanize the people who are governed" in the former colony (Denniston 1995, 62). However, Marshall has only sketched colonial problems in her second novel, **Soul Clap Hand and Sing**. She develops her political themes more broadly in the next two novels, **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** and **Daughters**.

Marshall's most powerful critique of colonialism, the colonized minds, Western materialism, and imperialism is formulated in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**. Through a team of American anthropologists who come to the Caribbean to work on a development project sponsored by the CASR (the Center for Social Applied Research), this novel traces the American imperialistic connection with Third World Countries, and in this case, the Caribbean.<sup>5</sup>

Although the action of the novel encompasses the entire Bourne Island, Bournehills stands out as a Third World community and its description unmistakably makes it representative of any Third World Country. Through

---

<sup>5</sup> See Carole Boyce Davies, in Davis and Harris, op. cit., 196.

Saul Amron's perception of the place, the narrator describes Bournehills, the symbol of a Third World nation, as follows:

Bournehills, this place he had never seen before, was suddenly the wind-scoured Peruvian Andes. The highland of Guatemala, Chile. Bolivia, where he had once worked briefly among the tin miners. Honduras, which had proved so fatal. Southern Mexico. And the spent cotton land of the Southern United States through which he had traveled many times as a young graduate student on his way to field work among the Indians in Chiapas. It was suddenly, to his mind, **every place that had been wantonly used, its substance stripped away, and then abandoned.** He was shaken and angered by the abandonment he sensed here, the abuse. (CPTP, 108, my emphasis)

Because it is representative of Third World Countries, Peter Nazareth views Bournehills as "a paradigm of the whole Third World."<sup>6</sup> It can be argued that Marshall is not only addressing the colonialist issue in her home country, Barbados -- as many critics acknowledge Bourne Island is patterned after Barbados -- but is concerned with all patterns of colonization around the world.

Paule Marshall's own declaration of her judicious choice of island setting in her fiction further clarifies this assumption. In "Shaping the World of My Art," Marshall comments on her interest in setting her novels on an island. "The islands," she says, "provide me, from a technical point of view, with a microcosm in which can be seen in sharp relief many of the basic problems and conflicts which beset oppressed peoples everywhere."<sup>7</sup> Marshall's

---

<sup>6</sup> In Davis and Harris, *op. cit.*, 195.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*, 196.

preoccupation with colonial problems is broadened to all the places which have undergone the same colonial experience as her own country.

Paule Marshall's critic, Joyce Pettis, observes that the image of exploitation of a place calls attention to the impact of colonization on a people. She writes : "What happens to the natural resources exerts a proportional impact on the psyche of the population" (Pettis, 1995, 50). Marshall's imagery of the pitiless exploitation of Bournehills' land makes one become more aware of the extent to which people are dehumanized through the process of colonization. The text reveals the appropriateness of Aimé Césaire's equation in **Discours sur le colonialisme**, where he describes the concept of colonialism as the process through which human beings are "reified" or animalized.<sup>8</sup>

Marshall's call for change is expanded in this novel. By laying a heavy emphasis on the peasants' resistance to self-help schemes offered by Western governments and philanthropic groups in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**, Marshall insists on alternatives that will lead to a genuine new order in the Third World Countries, the former colonized nations of the planet.

In fact, Marshall's insistence on the peasants' resistance to the so-called modernization of their lives is highlighted in the framework of the novel. In

---

<sup>8</sup> He writes in *Discours sur le colonialisme* : "colonisation égale chosification" (1955, 19). By this neologism "chosification," he means colonial subjects become objects or things in the colonial system.

effect, to avoid confusion in the minds of the readership as to how the peasants' resistance to self-help program offered by the advanced countries is not just an accident, one is shown a long list of different projects the implementation of which has led to the same results: failure.

Some of the projects which failed in the area before Saul's team comes to Bournehills can be cited : the housing scheme the Bourne Island government built with the help of a Canadian company; the crop diversification scheme to help the peasants grow banana instead of sugar cane alone. The irrigation system in the place once installed by a farming group from America; the soil conservation program which generates nothing; a family planning program which proves of no avail. The peasants even refuse to work in the pottery factory built in Bournehills. This long list of unsuccessful projects in the place accounts more than anything else for the peasants' resolve to be radically opposed to any foreign projects of development (CPTP, 59-62).

Why don't they seem to want anything that will "brighten up life a little for them," as the narrator puts it? Why are the peasants so decided to show opposition to development projects by sabotaging them?

A response to this key question, the reason for their strong opposition to foreign projects, will reveal not only their intent but also will shed much more light on Marshall's conception of the desired new order.

The peasants of Bournehills are not opposed to change; or to put it another way, they do not refuse change. They can change, but on one condition. The implementation of the development scheme project must not function in a vacuum. The people who carry out all the previous programs -- which fail to reach their goals in the area -- did not see the necessity of involving the concerned population in the implementation of the various projects. This results in a lack of collaboration between the population and the development managers -- this collaboration is required more than anything else before any project can be successful. Its lack inevitably leads to the failure of so many development plans in the independent republic of Bourne Island.

By failing to involve the people of Bournehills in the implementation of the various programs, the people in charge of the programs are indirectly facilitating the failure of their undertakings. To the extent that all the projects carried out to date in the area always come from the so-called developed countries -- the United States of America, Canada, and Great Britain -- the risk of considering those initiatives as a way of recolonizing the place is still big. The peasants believe any economic assistance from outside in whatever shape will contribute to a new form of colonization. In **Toward Wholeness in Paule Marshall's Fiction**, Joyce Pettis corroborates this thesis. In her analysis of the peasants' resistance to self-help schemes offered by Western governments and philanthropic groups, she finds that this attitude underlies a legacy of armed resistance to political invasion (Pettis, 1995, 30). Furthermore,



Joyce Pettis observes that the continuity of the structures of British colonialism which persist in spite of formal independence, may have forced the natives to oppose collaboration as they do, "biding their time until solutions evolve from within their own cultures" (Pettis, 1995, 86).

Saul points out some of the basic reasons that account for the failure of the previous projects. After a careful study of the place, Saul concludes that apart from "generally poor planning" and "the condescending attitude of the people in charge" of the different programs, "the failure to include the villagers directly in the project from the beginning -- the failure to prepare the way, in other words" is a fundamental lapse leading to defeat (CPTP, 168). Consequently, any development program which does not involve its target population is doomed to failure.

This situation explains why Saul's working method and agenda are absolutely clear in relation to the basic issues regarding the participation of the peasants in any development scheme. To succeed in doing this, his past experience in field work among poor people and his strict working methodology come into play. In the first place, he would devote "a preliminary study of six months to a year to obtain a general picture of life in the district as well as to discover why a number of other projects previously attempted here had all failed" (CPTP, 54). It is only after the completion of this study that the second stage of the project will materialize.

Through his wife Harriet's manipulation of the Center for Applied Social Research, the sponsor of Saul's project in Bournehills, in calling him back to Philadelphia for other duties, the writer puts an early end to Saul Amron's development project in Bournehills, causing Saul a great deal of anger. Although he does not bring the project to completion, Paule Marshall suggests that if Saul had been given the chance to tackle the second phase of the project, it would have succeeded. If the sponsor had not suspended it and replaced Saul, Saul's project would have been the first successful development scheme brought to fruition in Bourne Island (CPTP, 473).

Saul has succeeded, in the first phase of his study, in getting the population involved in his development scheme. He succeeds, where the others failed, by organizing the peasants in such a way that they all seem involved in the project. In effect, Saul's deep involvement in daily life in Bournehills accounts for his success. He feels more at home in Bournehills than in his native country; Saul has literally fallen in love with the place. He does not consider himself an outsider. As Delbert tells Saul, before achieving any significant result, the people in charge of the projects must first come and "live in the place and speak directly with the people and find out firsthand what's what" (CPTP, 170). Saul's involvement in every ordinary activity in Bournehills -- including his participation in rituals -- pigsticking comes to one's mind -- accounts for his success. Lyle Hutson's acknowledgment of his success is a tangible proof of the good qualities in the man. Even if Saul's

colleagues hate him for this tendency to be totally and deeply involved with others, it remains one of his dominant characteristics:

They had always felt I became too involved with the people in the places I worked. Their approach to field work was to rush in a place, collect their precious data and rush out without stopping to realize it was flesh-and-blood people they were dealing with and not so many statistics for their charts and tables. (CPTP, 43-4)

Saul's attitude calls for imitation. His association of human qualities with his scientific knowledge makes him an admirable person. His unconditional involvement in Bournehills has benefited the population in many ways. He has helped them plan their transportation of sugar cane. He has guided them to set up their own council, a tool which will be effectively useful for development at a grassroots level:

Second, and of greater importance than the report, as far as he was concerned, was the village council which he, with Delbert's support, managed to organize during the weeks leading to Whitsun. The council, composed of those men who were unofficial leaders in Spiretown [...] but most important, this core group of men would be the means by which he would be able to enlist the co-operation of the rest of the village. The council might well prove the final small step toward people in Bournehills taking charge of their own lives. (CPTP, 379-380)

Perhaps because of his painful experience as a Jew, coupled with his anthropological research, Saul is more receptive to the sufferings of other people, as his people has gone through similar sufferings. He really values

human beings, who must be at the heart/center of any genuine developmental preoccupation.

Paule Marshall is expressing her view on the new order through her characterization of the anthropologist Saul Amron and her presentation of the peasants' resistance to foreign development. Even if the peasants' inspiration for rejecting outsiders' philanthropic assistance schemes derives from the veneration of their heroes and heroines and is grounded on their apparent belief that salvation will again emerge from within their own ranks, as Joyce Pettis argues (1995, 30), people like Saul Amron and Allen Fuso can generate new hopes in the hopeless population.

Marshall insists that only these qualities (resistance of the peasants and the human quality of the people implementing the program) can operate the advent of the new order she is calling for and make it become a living reality. Maybe a new race of active men like Saul Amron and sympathetic honest people like Allen Fuso will create better understanding between races. Sadly enough, these figures who can promote the new order are crucially rare, as is demonstrated in **Daughters**, which mainly deals with neocolonial attitudes in the newly independent countries.

### **VI. 3. THE DENUNCIATION OF NEO-COLONIALISM IN PAULE MARSHALL.**

Marshall has broadened the scope of her vision regarding neocolonial problems in newly independent countries in **Daughters**, her most recent novel.

To use Dorothy Hamer Denniston's formulation, **Daughters** expresses and better displays:

Marshall's previous concern with the spread of Western imperialism to newly formed nations, the continuing destructive effects of capitalism upon the poor and disempowered, and the responsibility incumbent on the black middle class. (Denniston, 1995, 146)

As she usually does, Paule Marshall has divided this thick novel, **Daughters**, into four books. Before tackling the main concern of this novel, it is useful to have in mind a broad view of this novel by briefly exposing the main content of the four subdivisions of its component parts.

In Book One, titled "Little Girl of All the Daughters"(3-112), Marshall introduces not only the adult Ursa-Bea, the daughter of Primus Mackenzie and Estelle, but also through her reflection, the major protagonists in the novel as well. New York city, Ursa's second home, is its geographical setting. However, thanks to her stream of consciousness, we travel through Ursa-Bea's thoughts to the place of her early childhood, the island of Triunion, so named because of its three former colonizers : Spain, France and England. Book Two, "Constellation" (113--246) is set in Triunion with a specific focus on Primus Mackenzie's career as a leading politician in his home country, Triunion. This book also intensively deals with "several women who make up the galaxy" of his life as well as Ursa's. The corruption and power of Western politics in both the Caribbean and the United States constitutes the main concern of Book

Three, "Polestar" (247-342). Novelists often try to solve the main issue raised in the development of the story toward the end of their novels. **Daughters** observes this rule. As a consequence, some of the major political, social and personal problems raised in **Daughters** are resolved in Book Four : "Tin Cans and Graveyard Bones" (343-408).

On these divisions, Dorothy Hamer Denniston expresses the view that these divisions are not "truncated or artificial," but rather "radiate and resonate upon each other." She believes they extend the "reflexive and meandering approach" which Marshall has employed in earlier novels. For this critic, this writing strategy enables Marshall "to open up again a larger historical, political, and cultural panorama to illustrate how the past is reinscribed in the present" (Denniston, 1995, 149).

How does Marshall perceive neocolonial manifestations in the newly independent nations? The following paragraphs briefly survey some of the characteristic features which she identifies as expressions of neocolonialism.

Marshall's critiques of neocolonial attitudes in newly independent nations are meant especially for two arenas : political affairs and economic development.

To show the extent to which neocolonial mentality is still operating in the political field in Triunion, Marshall mainly relies on the characterization of politicians and the depiction of electoral issues.

First, to acknowledge the heroic deeds of their ancestors, Will Cudjoe and Congo Jane, an enslaved couple who fought against the oppressors in the past, the new black middle class builds a monument in their honor (**Daughters**, 138). But one has a hint at the persistence of foreign domination in the place when it comes to the geographical location of this monument. Surprisingly enough, because the Democratic National Party (D.N.P) -- [the Do-Nothing Party (DNP) as Primus Mackenzie used to call them] -- in power in Triunion which has this monument built is not willing "to offend the white people in town" (**Daughters**, 140), the spot of this monument is the District of Morlands, far away from the capital city, far from many people's sight . This suggests the dependence of the government on the outside; foreign "whites" dictate how its policy must be implemented.

The puppet nature of this government is further evidenced when it comes to electoral issues. Though it has been independent for years, the republic of Triunion is still under the political supervision of the United States. At least, this is the implication of Estelle's description of electoral business in the place. In a long letter to her homefolks in the United States, Estelle, the politically astute and energetic wife of Primus Mackenzie, meticulously describes step by step how the DNP, a party linked to Western interests, stole the previous election three years ago, how they terrorized the population and manipulated the final result, in short, how they lied to the population. More importantly the wife of Primus Mackenzie, the leader of the most influential opposition party in

Triunion, insists on the political violence typical of the electoral campaign in Triunion:

...Worse, we found out that the so-and-sos had been secretly organizing an army of thugs before they even called the elections. When the campaign started going in our favor, suddenly there were all these hired thugs all over the town harassing and even beating up anyone they saw wearing one of our buttons or T-shirts. The DNP even sent them to the countryside to burn down the houses and crops of the people they knew to be our supporters. (*Daughters*, 220)

As if this home intimidation in order to win the election at all cost is not enough, the puppet nature of the government is once more displayed when Estelle draws the reader's attention to the involvement of Americans in the home affairs of Triunion. The fright of the population reaches its peak when the United States Navy is invited into the bay on election day by the Triunionian government. Estelle's report to her homefolks clearly indicates not only Primus Mackenzie's shock but also the state of mind of the population as well:

... what he can't get over was the sight of the US Navy sitting armed to the teeth out in the harbor. *Sent for by the government!* With permission from said government to turn the guns and bombs on us, if necessary. Its own people! And there wasn't a thing he or the NPP could do about it. I don't think he would recover from it. (*Daughters*, 222)

The NPP is the main opposition party headed by Primus Mackenzie. As a result of this political interference and intimidation from the leading super power in the world in the domestic affairs of Triunion, this opposition party



could never come to power, as the supporters of the NPP stayed home on Election Day. Of course, they still remembered what happened to their neighbor just a couple of islands away when they received the same visit a couple of years ago at the invitation of the do-nothing government there (221). For the narrator, this intimidation is less surprising, because the puppet government in Triunion is protecting the interests of "the Big Brothers."

This attitude is already prefigured when the novel opens. The young professionals from the countries that might soon be independent are given the chance to visit the United States of America, those who might be high-level civil servants, development planners, government officials, even prime ministers and presidents. Why is it so necessary that Carnegie Endowment on International Relations give them this chance?

Of course, Marshall shows how they are trained in economic dependency through their entry into markets controlled by Western capital. Nevertheless, it also remains true that these young and future leaders, visitors from the West Indies and Africa will sell out their countries in these relations (**Daughters**, 27). The development of politics in Triunion evidences this assertion.

Primus Mackenzie's disappointment in the reliability of the electoral process in his home country makes him disgruntled. His initial belief in effecting political and economic changes and terminate the stasis of political

objectification gradually fades away. He becomes, in his turn, corrupted. Eventually he endorses economic schemes not designed for the advantage of most Triunionians, but for the benefit of foreigners and a small élite, including himself.

The economic image of Triunion is disagreeable. Marshall suggests that the politicians in charge of Triunion are selling out the country's economy. Their interest lies in satisfying their "Big Brothers" instead of considering the real needs of the nationals. There are many instances of this in the novel. For example, the waste of a significant amount of national money for so called official receptions. As a matter of fact, a huge part of the country's tight budget is unwisely used for receptions which regularly take place in Triunion. Estelle discloses this practice when she makes the remark to Primus Mackenzie, followed by her vigorous protest:

The P and D Board must spend nearly half the national budget wining and dining visiting firemen. And I have to ask myself if it's paying off. With all the money spent entertaining them and the really big money spent building a new main road, new airport, big new industrial park and what all to entice them, I still don't see that many of them are rushing in to do business here, not even the small fish, which are the only kind we seem to attract. And the few who do come, try to make as big a killing as fast as they can move on somewhere else...(Daughters, 226-7)

Presented at the beginning as a visible opponent of neocolonialism, Primus is finally subjected and transformed in attitude, unconsciously

acquiescing to power inequities. By the conclusion of the novel, Primus's corruption is complete, and he has lost sight of his initial goals of bettering the plight of his community. Estelle in **Daughters**, like Saul Amron, suggests an alternative vision. The economic planning in Triunion does not prioritize the primary and immediate needs of the population just the way the different development schemes have neglected the basic aspirations of the population in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**. Authorities in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** have adopted the same attitude as Primus regarding the issues related to the economic development of the country.

The common agreement between the government and the opposition party in Triunion (**Daughters**, 222) to support an "investment scheme that will transform the best ocean front property on the island into a tourist/business complex with its own airport and other Western amenities" (Pettis, 1995, 64) is not surprising to the reader, because it cannot be otherwise. Who are the technical and economic advisers in these newly independent nations?

In **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** the reader learns the importance of these advisers in the Third World countries. When members of the home government are "drinking imported whisky, scorning as a matter of status the local rum, which was excellent;" when all of them are "wearing dark-toned, conservative, heavy English suits in spite of the hot night," (CPTP, 56)

their preference for guidance from foreign economic advisers is also necessary to complete the whole picture of their total dependence.

Importantly, Marshall mentions that these foreign advisers often come to these countries at the request of respective governments of newly "independent" nations. Thus, Mr Waterford, a specialist in economic planning was "sent down [to Bourne Island] at the request of Bourne Island government to advise it on its new five-year development plan" (CPTP, 56).

The result of his advice is displayed in the manner the government handles economic development in the area: economic waste. The writer bitterly critiques this state of affairs, because there is no way out of this vicious circle unless the ruling class decides to decolonize its own mind, to change its colonial mentality, to revise colonial ways of seeing that this very class has deeply internalized:

... the pack of advisers, experts, and the like from England who are still beating a track to our door even though we're supposed to be on our own these days -- free and independent. But's our fault since in most cases we ask them to come. We might have a local chap who can do the job ten times better, but he's not considered quite good enough in our eyes. Take the new development plan. With all the young bright economists we've got about the place, we still had to send for Waterford, who couldn't care less about us, and knows little or nothing about conditions on the island. But we don't as yet really trust our own; we don't really believe deep inside us that we can plan and do for ourselves. I tell you, they colonized our minds but good in this place. (CPTP, 138)

It is extremely important to stress the fact that this quote highlights a crucial aspect of both political and economic issues. Although Karl Marx would talk about issues of consciousness, perhaps this has to do more with the psychological level of colonialism. With the help of foreign advisers, the economic waste in Triunion is successful while at the same time, hopeless peasants are left to themselves. A quick glance at their living conditions in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** may convey this sense.

In **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**, failure to properly determine economic priorities in the new nation results in the preeminence of the British presence in economic activity. This field is dominated by Kinsley and Sons. Its power over the peasant community is kept palpably present : a word from the Kinsley and Sons is enough "to hold off grinding the peasant canes" (CPTP, 264). Industry in Bourne Island is therefore largely controlled by absentee owners. This image shows the most effective symbol of European neocolonial and economic dominance in the area. If the government has privileged the inputs of agricultural economy in the nation's development, it would have thought to solve the sugar cane mill problem in the area. Failure to do so often results in the arbitrary closing down of Cane Vale, the only sugar-processing plant, after the estate crops were processed but before the small crops of the Bournehills farmers are harvested.

At any rate, the way peasants are treated in Bournehills suggests the notion of internal colonialism. Paul Tennant defines this notion as:

The continued subjugation of an indigenous people in a post-colonial independent nation state. Subjugation will in every case involve restriction of land and resources as well as varying degrees of administrative supervision, social discrimination, suppression of culture and denial of political and other rights and freedom. (Tennant, 1982, 3-4)

Marshall is suggesting it is high time we corrected all these inherited values in order to hasten real development in the Third World countries. It is worth stressing here that Saul's plan to set up a program that will recruit and train young social scientists from overseas goes along the same line of thought. He believes genuine development is possible if only native scientists could work in their own countries. He confesses to Merle:

I'm more than ever convinced now that that's the best way : to have people from the country itself carry out their own development programs whatever possible. Outsiders just complicate the picture -- as you and I know only too well... (CPTP, 497)

Marshall's message on the new order is quite simple. If only the colonized can begin acting by themselves, if they can cease behaving "more British than the British" themselves (CPTP, 144), if they stop colonial thinking, if governments in the Third World countries can stop playing "puppy-show" -- meaning playing puppet government --, if former colonial subjects can change and become their own person, then this new mentality would command respect even from the former colonial powers:

*If only we could throw off all that, come together and start thinking "get up and do," you wouldn't recognize Triunion. The place would actually begin to live up to its name. And what that would mean for the rest of these little islands! We might all finally come together -- French, Dutch, English, Spanish -- all o' we one! so that even Big Brothers would have to respect us. It's the dream that keeps me going, Estelle.<sup>9</sup>*

Let us not despair : this dream will materialize one day. With this hope for political direction, it is now possible to tackle another important battle addressed by Marshall.

#### **VI. 4. CHALLENGING EXISTING SOCIAL NORMS: THE ROLE AND PLACE OF MODERN WOMEN IN MARSHALL'S FICTION**

Another equally important attribute of Paule Marshall's artistic production lies in the writer's ability to question formerly accepted social norms. Paule Marshall was among the first African American female writers to have called for revising social norms as they operate in daily relationships. Because she devotes an important part of her fictional writing to those who are "born the wrong color, the wrong sex, the wrong class" (*Daughters*, 143), her attacks on sexual and racial stereotypes in her fiction are legion. It is therefore of paramount interest to ponder the feminist as well as the racial issues in her literary production.

---

<sup>9</sup> *Daughters*, 144-5, Italicized in the original.

Before reaching the heart of the matter, it is important to point out that Marshall is known as a black feminist writer or a womanist writer; she readily identifies herself with other womanist writers, among whom Alice Walker. Generally speaking, black feminism refers to a variety of feminisms which are identified by their opposition to the blend of racism and sexism encountered by Black women. According to the authors of **A Glossary of Feminist Theory**, in its various forms, black feminism "undertakes a sustained critique of racism and ethnocentrism of white-dominated systems and practices including feminism." <sup>10</sup>

Many scholars have defined the goals of the womanist writers. According to Valerie Smith:

Black feminists seek not only to dismantle the assumptions of dominant cultures, and to recover and reclaim the lives of black women, but also to develop methods of analysis for interpreting the ways in which race and gender are inscribed. (Smith, 1990, 271)

Alice Walker, who coined the term "womanism," defines her thematic concern stating that as a womanist, she is preoccupied with the survival of the whole of her people. Beyond that, "I am committed to exploring the oppression, the insanities, the loyalties, and the triumphs, of black women... For me the black women are the most fascinating creation in the world." <sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Andermahr et. al., *A Glossary of Feminist Theory* (London and New York : Arnold, 1997), 23.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Bell, *The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition* (Amherst : University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), 259-60.



Ketu H. Katrak, in a seminal study, points out the distinguishing features of womanist writing as well as post-colonial women's texts. Central to these texts is the concern with and challenge of their dual oppression. They deal with:

patriarchy that preceded and continues after colonialism and that inscribes the concepts of womanhood, motherhood, traditions such as dowry, bride-price, polygamy, and a worsened predicament within a capitalist economic system introduced by the colonizers. Women writers deal with the burden of female role in urban environments [...] women's marginalization in actual political participation.<sup>12</sup>

This part of the dissertation analyses how Marshall has articulated her feminist perception through her fiction; how in Darwin Turner's words, "without militant proclamation or fiery denunciation, Marshall has infused her works with [...] feminism."<sup>13</sup>

Paule Marshall's stand on feminist and racial issues in her fiction is surveyed by her biographer Barbara T. Christian. In **Afro-American Fiction Writers After 1955** Christian has this to say about Marshall's vision regarding racism and sexism:

Marshall's novel at the end of the 1950s shared some certain elements with James Baldwin's psychological

---

<sup>12</sup> Ketu H. Katrak in Ashcroft et al., 1995, op. cit. , 257.

<sup>13</sup> D. T. Turner, "Introduction" to *Soul Clap Hands and Sing* (Washington D.C. : Howard University Press, 1988), xv.

probing of that decade and with LeRoi Jones's [Amiri Baraka] early political poetry of the 1960s for in her first novel Marshall attacked, head-on, sexual and racial stereotypes, from the mummies and Uncle Toms of the early twentieth century to the Amos n' Andys and Sapphyres of the 1940s to Moynihan's black matriarchs and weak black boys of the 1950.<sup>14</sup>

As can be surmised from this quotation Marshall's fight against racism and sexism is already suggested in her first novel, situating her both as a convinced feminist as well as an advocate for racial commitment. To better understand her feminist perspective, it is important to consider her own declaration on this issue.

As mentioned, the Barbadian women's endless talk in her mother's kitchen exerted a powerful influence on Marshall's literary production : "I was always so intimidated as a little girl by the awesome verbal powers of these women. That might be one of the reasons I started writing. To see if, on paper, I couldn't have some of that power," Marshall commented later. Marshall says that women figure prominently in her writing, because the memory of their power shapes her work. Marshall once expressed the feminist vision central to her fiction in an interview which appeared in **Essence Magazine** (May 1979):

I am concerned about letting them speak their pieces, letting them be central figures, actors, *activists* in fiction rather than just backdrop or background figures. I want them to be central characters. Women in fiction seldom are. Traditionally in most fiction men are the wheelers and dealers. They are the ones in whom power is invested. I wanted to turn that around. I wanted women to be the

---

<sup>14</sup> B. T. Christian in Davis and Harris eds. op. cit., 162.

centers of power. My feminism takes its expression through my work. Women are central for me. They can as easily embody the power principles as a man.<sup>15</sup>

Consequently, to establish how she challenges social norms and conventions, it is useful to speculate on her various portrayals of female characters, in order to determine the type of woman who emerges in her fiction, the new roles they are assigned to play, and how they carry out the mission they are given. An analysis of this dimension of her fiction will decipher Marshall's message concerning the new order she is promoting in the social domain.

Marshall's exploration of the distinctly sexist character of some social institutions and processes, such as slavery, immigration, exploitation, racism, and colonialism has made her a forerunner of the unprecedented explosion of women of color's literature in the 1970s.

The uniqueness of her work lies in her depiction of how women are made "significant actors in the making of history" in her fiction. According to Lea Baechler and Walton Litz, all these distinctive features of her work situated her writing in a symbolic "position that would become pivotal in the second wave of American feminism" (1991, 289).

---

<sup>15</sup> Quoted by Mary Helen Washington "Afterword," *op. cit.*, 324.

In fact, feminism has been a central focus in Marshall's fiction. From her early short stories through her large scale novels, Marshall's vision remains consistent: a feminist perspective shapes her long literary career. Hence Marshall's earlier works were rediscovered during the decade of feminism.

In **Toward Wholeness in Paule Marshall's Fiction**, where she evaluates Paule Marshall's work and its place in the tradition of African American women's fiction, Joyce Pettis makes the observation that Marshall's writing deals with the obstructions in black women's lives and offers a way to transcend them. Moreover, she expresses the view that this Panafricanist advocate distinguishes herself from her literary sisters by her careful attention to a worldwide black community (Pettis, 1995, 107-8).

Paule Marshall conveys her message of change throughout her fiction. Both her short stories and her novels are concerned with her promotion of change in social norms. Her vision is surveyed in this brief analysis of some of her stories which follow. Equally, this study also considers her feminist concerns as expressed in her novels, specifically in **Brown Girl, Brownstones** and **Daughters**.

In **The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature**, three post-colonial theorists -- Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin -- make the point that women share with colonized peoples a

common "experience of the politics of oppression and repression," and consequently, "they have been forced to articulate their experiences in the language of their oppressors" like colonized people. Perhaps Marshall's intimate conviction that worldwide women have been relegated to the position of "Other," marginalized and metaphorically "colonized," has enabled her to so finely articulate her view on female oppression in social relation in her early short stories.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, in "The Valley Between,"<sup>17</sup> Marshall attacks, head-on, sexual and patriarchal roles and rules that determine woman's place in America. In the headnote to "Reena" in *Merle*, Marshall affirms that the black American woman is always in "the face of the triple-headed hydra of racism, sexism, and class bias" (71). Her acknowledgment of this reality in society has allowed her to address early this social problem in her fiction.

To fully understand the extent to which patriarchal rule has imposed restrictions on (black) women's lives, a succinct summary of this short story is useful. "The Valley Between" presents a conflict between a husband who is opposed to her wife's will to pursue education. To be specific, "The Valley Between" depicts the frustration of Cassie, a college-trained female character whose only fulfillments are expected to be motherhood and marriage. This

---

<sup>16</sup> Ashcroft et. al. eds. 1989, op. cit., 174-5.

<sup>17</sup> It is her first story published in August 1954 in the now defunct *The Contemporary Reader* and which later appeared in different literary magazines. It is now available in her collection of short stories published with her novella under the title of *Merle*.

story echoes the difficulties women face when it comes to choosing between self-fulfilment or serving the interest of their husbands and family. Step by step, Marshall describes in this story, with chilling details, the nature of marriage and gender oppression which, at best, discourages female personhood.

When the story closes, Cassie is left defeated. Because when her husband Abe asks her to choose between staying home or leaving altogether, she is convinced she has no alternative, that the decision is already made for her : "I only pity both of us for having lost much simply because you want me to be happy on your terms. I haven't got the strength to defy you anymore – you and your male strength. Let's not talk" (24).

Considering the end of this short story one might accept the view expressed by Firestone that "The heart of woman's oppression is in her childbearing and childrearing" (Firestone, 1972, 72).

It should be recalled here that "The Valley Between," the first of her short stories, deals with one of the central themes of feminist discourse. In the headnote to the story, Marshall gives her motivation in writing it. She writes to express her dismay about the future of bright college girls who are doomed to become housewives, because patriarchal regulations strongly encourage it. Abe's strong opposition to Cassie's will and effort to return to school, in other words, his firm opposition to her "desire to realize herself apart from her role as

mother and wife" (15) is a case in point. Because Paule Marshall was able to identify and address, in a synopsis form, the most important theme of the feminist discourse of the 1970s in her 1954 short story, this story deserves the editor's description of a "[19]50s story twenty years ahead of its time" (15).

If the theme of "The Valley Between" anticipated by some twenty years a major concern of American women's literature and situates Paule Marshall as a forerunner of a future trend in American womanist writing, it must be borne in mind that Marshall's personal experience as wife and mother also accounts for her being able to address these issues in her first piece of fiction. She comments:

That the characters are white also serve to camouflage my own predicament because by the time I wrote "Valley" I was married also -- an early, unwise first marriage. I wasn't brave enough back then to deal directly with my unhappiness, or perhaps instinct told me that as a fiction writer I should try to transform the raw stuff of personal experience into art. Whatever, Cassie who couldn't possibly be me with her gray eyes and fair hair was a convenient device behind which to mask my pain. (15-6)

Notwithstanding Marshall's deliberate choice to select white characters as protagonists of this piece of fiction, this story remains nonetheless an autobiographical one. It bears many resemblances with Paule Marshall's own experiences. Like Cassie in "The Valley Between," Marshall experienced the same difficulties in her marital life. In effect, she completed **Brown Girl, Brownstones** after she was wedded to her first husband, Kenneth E. Marshall.

She became a mother while she began writing **Soul Clap Hands and Sing**. In an interview with Alexis DeVeaux, she commented on her husband's firm opposition to letting her hire a baby-sitter for a time during the day so that she could write. But unlike Cassie, Marshall is not defeated. To the objection of her husband, Marshall shows her determination to carry on the writing process of **Soul Clap Hands and Sing**:

I went ahead and did it. There were, he sensed it, I knew it, my need and my determination to be my own woman. To do my own thing. I think this is something women have to acknowledge about themselves — their right to fulfill themselves. (in Denniston, 1995, 37)

Of course, the husband's opposition to her professional fulfillment as writer is grounded on some social considerations. Patriarchal norms tend to define and limit women's creativity to childbearing and childrearing. Traditionally speaking, the role of parenthood has been more valued for women than any other consideration. This belief made it difficult for professional artist-women to fulfill themselves. To add to this record, historical reports indicate "there was a strongly held view in American society that mothers damage their children if they attempt any other serious form of self-fulfillment."<sup>18</sup>

To make women's subordination complete in American patriarchal society, women -- especially in the 1950s -- were indoctrinated to believe that

---

<sup>18</sup> Baechler and Litz, *op. cit.*, 296



females do not become professional, instead, they got married. As Marshall put it, women were actively encouraged to believe that their place was in the home and that their fulfillment in life lay in finding the right person to marry and producing a family. In an interview given on May 21, 1990, in Richmond, Virginia, Marshall identifies the dilemma she once faced in her life as a result of this socialization:

I was caught in a kind of dilemma : on the one hand, wanting to pursue whatever I wanted to pursue professionally ; on the other hand, feeling the pressure from the community, from my mother, to find someone to marry — that no matter what you accomplished professionally, it really was not enough if you were not also married. (in Denniston, 1995, 2)

This quote clearly illustrates how individuals are socialized through cultural processes. Despite her belief in professionally fulfilling herself, societal pressures have exerted their influence on her. However, her determination to be her own woman, to fight for her own fulfillment has paid off. Her awareness of women's situation has enabled her to determine her fate, to demand her right to fulfill herself. Thus, in 1963 she divorced Kenneth Marshall, instead of depriving herself of her career. In 1970, she was remarried to a Haitian businessman, Nourry Menard, a union she describes as "an open and innovative marriage." This is different from Cassie's case.

Cassie reflects Paule Marshall's thirst for bookish knowledge. Though the official curriculum of her time does not include many (black) women writers

when she was attending college, it is reported that Paule Marshall was drawn to books at school and in the library. She read Joseph Conrad, Thomas Mann, Jean-Paul Sartre, and John Updike; some African American writers she read include Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin. As a college trained-girl, Cassie, like Paule Marshall, knows the power of literature. Best, since her childhood, she has been interested in learning.

It must be argued therefore that Cassie's decision to go back to school is motivated by Marshall's awareness that the act of reading is empowering to the self. She has experienced this particular power of literature on her life when she says that as a child:

The library has been her sanctuary, not only against the raving world, against all that was incomprehensible and ugly in life... Although with joy of reading had come, with the years, the desire to learn -- to have all muddled ideas made clear, defined in words and images, and thus made part of her. It was a never-ending search, giving sustained pleasure, making her life, for that moment at least, meaningful. (20)

The writer is pointing out in this quote one of the fundamental cornerstones of feminist discourse. In effect, as have noted Sonya Andermahr, Terry Lovell and Carol Wolkowitz (1997, 27) both feminist and Foucauldian epistemologies have foregrounded the link between knowledge and power. For these three feminist theorists, Foucault has established the interdependence between power and knowledge when he says that : "power produces

knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it ... or applying it because it seems useful ...) [but] power and knowledge directly imply each other." Therefore, Cassie's "will to knowledge," viewed as a primary passion of the inquisitor, will generate power. Paradoxically enough, however, this act of learning genuinely kindled in this young woman is not enough in itself. It must be approved by her husband; it "needs validation from a man", to use critic Dorothy Hamer Denniston's formulation (Denniston, 1995, 4). Therefore, Cassie's defeat comes from her husband's refusal to validate her act. She bitterly expresses her disappointment after she has been defeated:

Yes, I am selfish and self-centered, just as you are bull-headed and blind [...] I should have finished up one phase of my life before starting another. I wasn't ready for the kind of life you have to offer me, and I couldn't give you much [...] It is strange, the strong always win somehow. All the cards fall their way – they're the victors even though they're wrong. (23-4)

Because "the motivation for male domination over female is intimately connected with the idea of paternity," it can be taken for granted that in this excerpt, Cassie's anger is not only directed at her husband, but also to patriarchal rules (Figes, 1971, 35). As can be surmised from this quote, male oppression in domestic affairs is so insidiously pervasive as to convince women themselves that they are somehow selfish, deficient, unworthy of love and respect. Like many other women worldwide, Cassie is confronted with the functioning of that male-created and male-dominated system. She is forcefully denouncing in this quote some of its evils.

The ultimate goal of Abe's opposition to Cassie's learning is to marginalize this female character. In fact, the concept of marginalization is a key one used by feminists to refer to the process whereby a subject is rendered marginal to the center through the exercise of power. Thus, Abe's opposition to Cassie's will to acquire knowledge suggests the insidious ways women are marginalized within patriarchal cultures, despite their numerical majority. This strong female character is expressing her regret at this marginalization. What is at stake here is Cassie's right to challenge and reject social constructions made for her by a patriarchal culture. She is disappointed as a female, yet she cannot or will not defy conventions.

In **Theorizing Patriarchy** Sylvia Walby, a feminist sociologist, defines the concept as "a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby, 1990, 214). This definition applies to Cassie's situation, for the end of the story shows that Abe possesses power over her. As critic Dorothy Hamer Denniston has pointed out, in "The Valley Between," Marshall is suggesting that traditionally in American society, it has been the woman who has had to sacrifice that part of herself which craves fulfillment, and that traditionally the woman has accepted that fate. Consequently, Cassie's "resignation to a status secondary to that of the male has not only been expected, but demanded by all social patterns of acceptance" (Denniston, 1995, 6).

As Sally Miller has argued in *Women in Search of Utopia*, Cassie's story proves right many women who "locate the seat of violence within the male psyche." In effect, the story shares in some of the old arguments between socialist-feminists and radical or cultural feminists. Socialist-feminists consider male violence as "one of many ills which will disappear with restructuring of economic principles and power." For radical or cultural feminists, male violence is posited as "the heart of society's ills and its elimination is the essential factor in establishing a revolutionary society."<sup>19</sup> The expression of her anger implicitly gives credit to these feminist assumptions.<sup>20</sup>

The problem of the North American construction of gender, with its traditional view on female subordination, is also the focus in "Reena," the most anthologized of Marshall's short stories. But here, Marshall moves a step further to show the determination and radicalism of her female character. In addition, by employing a college-educated, politically active black woman as protagonist, this "technically mixed-bag" story -- as the writer called it -- provides her with the opportunity to address political as well as domestic violences as they affect life in American society. Barbara Christian best sums

---

<sup>19</sup> Sally Miller in Baruch ed., *Women in Search of Utopia* (New York : Schocken Books, 1984), 302.

<sup>20</sup> The oversimplification of these two different feminist positions makes it difficult to clearly identify Marshall's trend. She is regarded by many critics as a socialist-feminist. For more information on differences between the two trends of feminisms, see Newton and Rosenfelt, eds., *Feminist Criticism and Social Change : Sex, Class, and Race in Literature and Culture* (New York : Methuen, 1985), xviii.

up both the political and domestic aspects of this story when she makes the point that "Reena" deals with:

the illusory freedom of college, the immersion into left-wing politics that both helps to shape her yet finally does not deal with her problems, the frustrations of an interracial relationship, the restrictions of a black middle-class marriage. (B. T. Christian, 1984, 165)

Here Paule Marshall's representation of male domination takes center stage. Like Abe in "The Valley Between," Dave, Reena's husband is threatened by his wife's interest in things outside home. He considers Reena's behavior, that is, her interest in things outside home as "a way of pointing up his deficiencies." The point is that Reena is highly educated and has professional advantages. Black women who want education and better jobs were at a disadvantage, because their professional peers were afraid of them in private life. Instead, they preferred to marry "younger women without the degrees and the fat jobs, who are no threat" (Reena, 85).

Very often, women who are consciously determined to professionally fulfill themselves, or to get educated -- as in the cases of Cassie, and Reena -- are regularly accused of being too threatening, too castrating, too independent and too impatient with their husbands for not being more ambitious. They are also labelled as contemptuous, not supportive, unwilling to submerge their interests to those of men. They are often blamed for their "lacking in the subtle art of getting and keeping a man" (Reena, 86). In fact they are confronted with

the issue of being persons in their own right on the one hand, and fully woman and wife, on the other hand (Reena, 86-87). Divorce results from this conflict. As Reena puts it : "I couldn't bear the pain of living with him -- the insults, our mutual despair, his mocking, the silence. I couldn't subject the children to it any longer. The divorce didn't take long" (88). Indeed, as Marshall has observed in the headnote to the story, divorce is the price of Reena's accomplishment and independence (71).

Through the character of Reena, Paule Marshall intends to show how social and marital relations can be seriously jeopardized if one does not revise those patriarchal conceptions of life. By allowing Reena to marry Dave, Marshall enables us to see the inevitable breakdown in their marital life. Reena's resolve to divorce is ample evidence of how patriarchal assumptions make marital life unbearable.

In a nutshell, Marshall seems to say in both short stories that if gender roles remain unquestioned, they will poison male-female relationships. She is therefore calling for a redefinition of gender role as they operate in contemporary American society, and by extension, in all patriarchal societies in the world. In "The Valley Between," writes Denniston:

Marshall searches for new values, new modes of thought that enhance gender distinctions by extending priority to individual human needs. She urges in "The Valley Between," that we must first define gender roles as they

are operative in contemporary American society.  
(Denniston, 1995, 6)

The discourse of woman as victim has been invaluable to feminism in pointing to the systematic character of gender domination. One of the goals of feminism being to see to it that women become "agents," that is, to incite them to self-determination so they can become "actors in the word on their own terms" (Andermahr et.al, 1997, 13), Marshall's theorization of male domination endemic in American society in her early woman-centered stories anticipates an analysis of the later feminist movement. This practice is inscribed in the framework of a feminist agenda, whereby theorization and interpretation of male domination within specific societies is viewed as the most appropriate approach that will enable feminists not only to better understand patriarchy, but also to effectively organize to change it.<sup>21</sup>

"The Valley Between" and "Reena" represent Marshall's early portrayals of female determination to fight against imposed social norms. They foreshadow her further treatment of the possibilities for women to combat imposed economic, social, political, and cultural constraints (Denniston, 1995, 3) as they permeate her three large scale novels : **Brown Girl, Brownstones, The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** and **Daughters**. Critics of her work agree that Paule Marshall has inaugurated and propelled the women in her fiction toward renewed levels of feminist consciousness in these three novels.

---

<sup>21</sup> Chandra T . Mohanti in Ashcroft et. al. eds., 1995, op. cit., 262.



This section focuses on the treatment of black woman's economic independence in **Brown Girl, Brownstones**.

Set in New York City during the years of Depression and World War Two, Marshall's first novel relates the enduring story of a most extraordinary young woman, Selina Boyce, daughter of Silla and Deighton Boyce. This daughter of Barbadian immigrants is caught between the struggles of her hard-ambitious mother, who wants to buy a brownstone house at any cost and educate her two daughters, and her father, who longs to return to Barbados. Selina, the teenage girl, seeks to define her own identity and values as she struggles to overcome the racism and poverty that surround her.

Considered as a passionate champion of the individual search for personal identity, Marshall has been praised by critics as one of the first authors to explore the psychological trials and concerns of black American women (Draper ed. 1992, 1363). Marshall deserves these praises. Prior to her writing of **Brown Girl, Brownstones**, books focused on the process of black women growing in strength as they develop consciousness of themselves are scarce pearls to find. Of course, occasional books such as Gwendolyn Brooks's novel, **Maud Martha** are available. In her afterword to the novel, Mary Helen Washington reports Marshall's statement on the scarcity of these novels:

Marshall says that until Gwendolyn Brooks' novel **Maud Martha**, it was rare to see a black woman in literature with a conscious, interior life. We have seldom seen black

women characters struggling over such questions as suicide, or racial violence as a means to freedom, or feminism in conflict with racism, or their call to public ministry, or their need to transform their lives into art, and that is because the women who raised these issues have been silenced, omitted, patronized, made invisible.<sup>22</sup>

Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, the growing up of black boys had received literary attention in African American literature. The theme of black manhood is a primary focus in Richard Wright's autobiographical novel, **Black Boy** (1945), and James Baldwin's **Go Tell It on the Mountain** (1953). Furthermore, more attention was paid to the precarious journey of black boys as they become men in the 1950s, the years of the Civil Rights Movement. On the other hand, except when it related to men, little emphasis was laid on black womanhood and consequently how black girls became women.

Marshall's choice to devote her first novel to the exploration of a brown girl as the protagonist of a novel was practically unheard of in 1959. Her deliberate artistic decision to focus on Selina's adolescent years for an entire novel -- a thing that had not been attempted even by Brooks -- is a clear indication of Marshall's seeking to reinstate the marginalized in the face of the dominant. In fact, as Baechler and Litz have pointed out, before the publishing of **Brown Girl, Brownstones**, a common view popularly propagated in contemporary American literatures is that black women "jes grew," like Topsy in **Uncle Tom's Cabin**. Therefore, "with its intense focus on Selina's journey

---

<sup>22</sup> M. H. Washington, "Afterword," *op. cit.*, 319

from budding adolescence to questioning womanhood," by placing a particular emphasis on the development of an intelligent, complex woman, **Brown Girl, Brownstones** represents a strong and virtually unique denial, at that time, to that assumption (1991, 292).

In **Brown Girl, Brownstones** power is vested in the female characters. Through her characterization of the female characters in this novel, and particularly her depiction of "the mother," Silla Boyce, Marshall clearly indicates her artistic and feminist preference to make women the center of power in her fiction.

In effect, Barbadian women are portrayed as pioneers in this hostile world. As such, they are quite prepared to chastise people, to make war with their mouths : "Talk yuh talk, Silla! Be-Jees, in this white-man world, you got to take yuh mouth and make a gun" (BGBS, 70). They draw power from their use of language. To generalize their sense of community, the narrator lets us know that Selina could not dissociate the mother from the other Barbadian women : "She could not think of the mother alone. It was always the mother and the others, for they were alike -- those watchful, wrathful, women whose eyes seared and searched and laid bare, whose tongues lashed the world in unremitting distrust" (BGBS, 10-11).

They are also described as working women familiar with the machines of Western factories. Silla is presented as one whose strength can show indifference to the negative effects of machines on her. She cannot be intimidated by anyone, because her "own formidable force could match that of the machine." She is the only one who "could remain indifferent to the brutal noise" of the machines (BGBS, 100). This specific disposition in her character, her strength and determination to pave the way for the future generation, sustain all her dreams and efforts. Her ambitious nature and her understanding of the powers of money have determined her to fight whatever battle necessary to earn her life in America, "this man country". She says:

If you let little noise and dirt 'pon your hand keep you from making a dollar you should starve. I tell yuh, to make your way in this world you got to dirty more than yuh hand handsome [...] I read some place that this is the machine age and it's the God truth. You got to learn to run these machines to live. But some of these Bajan here still don understand it. (BGBS, 102-3)

This quote directly alludes to Deighton Boyce, her husband, who cannot assert such a mastery over the machines. Silla's husband, is the first among those who could not "learn to run these machines to live," for by nature, he cannot seriously devote his attention to acquire any trade learning. He is characterized as someone who neglects things, a careless person. This typical trait in Deighton's character is highlighted when Silla narrates his accident which occurred while he was carrying out his work in factory. After the white people had started up some new machine, Silla reports to Ina and Selina, their

two daughters, they told Deighton Boyce "not to work the machine till he had learned it good but he wun hear." And she continues : "But that's his way. He does only half-learn a thing. The same with the blasted trumpet and the course he was taking for all those years..."(BGBS, 155).

Deighton Boyce is portrayed as somebody without any ambition, a disgrace to her daughters (BGBS, 55). However, the narrator's presentation of him is somewhat ambiguous. The paradoxical nature of this description resides in the fact that the man is first and foremost determined to learn a trade. But his disillusioning experience in racist American society has forced him to give up searching for any job that will not satisfy his expectation. The writer has not allowed him to work; but has enabled the women in the story to own brownstone houses, to be "house-hungry Bajan" women, because they are women with "a good war job pulling down this good war money" (BGBS, 131). All the men are disfavored as far as ownership of the brownstone house is concerned. They cannot fulfill the American Dream. Hence, Deighton Boyce's case is symbolic of all the men involved in the story, except Percy Challenor, the only successful man among the Barbadian immigrants in New York. Particularly, Deighton Boyce seems to be someone with a certain sensitivity, too. His attachment to land in industrial America partly explicates his condition. There is no place for somebody like him America.

Above all, the domineering power of these women is heavily emphasized in the story -- a domineerance that arises from their fierce determination to make a better life for themselves and their families. This particular tendency of the women makes them despise their fellows who seem to be docile to their husbands. Gert Challenor, the wife of Percy Challenor, is a case in point (BGBS, 54). In her afterword to this novel, Mary Helen Washington describes Silla Boyce as a someone who

Like the other Barbadians in her community [...] has staked out a claim to power with this carefully conceived plan: work night and day to buy house; rent out every room, overcharge if necessary; sacrifice every penny to maintain property; keep strict vigilance on the children so they will enter high-paying professions...<sup>23</sup>

Significantly enough, Mary Helen Washington sees through Selina's calling her mother simply "the mother" instead of "my mother" as a reinforcement of Silla's degree of dominance and power : "Silla is **the** mother much as someone might be called the president" (313). To add to this record, it is important to bear in mind that Selina goes a step further when she calls her mother "Hitler," (BGBS, 183-4) to refer to her totalitarian nature, alluding to the role she plays in the deportation of her husband and his suicide which ensues.

To some extent, Silla's inclination to acquire material wealth and exercise economic power is related to feminist conceptions of women's freedom. On this issue, the Nigerian writer, Flora Nwapa has this to say:

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibidem, 311-2.

I am quite concerned about the fate of the black woman, whether she is in Africa, North America or the Caribbean. She faces many problems. I think the crux of these problems is economic. If the black woman is economically independent she and her children will suffer less.<sup>24</sup>

By enabling Silla to exercise economic power in the community and by showing her strength in creating more security for her family, the writer has symbolically restored voice to those without voice, to all the millions of silenced women who are oppressed and discriminated against within the patriarchal system.

Some critics consider Marshall's characterization in **Brown Girl, Brownstones** as a replica of racial stereotypes, a simple portrayal of those false images of black people promoted since slavery. They object that by making the mother appear formidable and domineering and the father delightful but ineffectual, as hedonistic coon or dumb bucksboy unable to participate in the hard business of America, Marshall is simply recalling the images which reverberate throughout the history of slavery in America. These images are exemplified by the popular radio show "Amos 'n' Andy," which featured Sapphire dominating her weak, lazy, husband with her lashing tongue."<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Flora Nwapa, in Adeola James : *In Their Own Voices* (London : Heinemann, 1990),

113.

<sup>25</sup> Baechler and Litz, op. cit., 293-4.

Whether Marshall's characterization of Silla in **Brown Girl, Brownstones** reflects distortions of black (wo)men or not, two things remains certain. These images arise from Marshall's experience growing up in the Barbadian community in American society. On the other hand, this portrayal has enabled the writer to reach her goal : Silla Boyce has fully demonstrated how women are centers of power in her fiction. She not only had the power in hand, but also used it. The question of her husband's suicide is another issue linked to her exercise of power. Perhaps Marshall's treatment of Silla shows that there was not a really satisfactory option or model for the black (woman) of her day. The creation of this model was the work of Selina's (and Marshall's) generation.

In its emphasis on the integrity of women and their roles in the black community, **Brown Girl, Brownstones** prefigured the major themes of black women's fiction in the 1970s. To paraphrase Barbara T Christian, one might say that because of its heavy emphasis on feminist issues, **Brown Girl, Brownstones** ushers in a new period of female characters in the development of African American literature (Christian, 1984, 161).

Marshall herself has augured new roles for modern twentieth-century women in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** and **Daughters**, where politically astute and committed women serve the cause of their community. In an Interview with DeVaux, Marshall makes the point that she "wanted the



women in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** to embody the whole power struggle of the world."<sup>26</sup>

Marshall's portrayal of Harriet makes her one of the powerful characters in the novel: she is a wealthy, and white lady. As critic Dorothy Hamer Denniston aptly writes," Marshall reveals the true nature of Harriet's need to control symbolically. Harriet represents colonial and neocolonial powers attempting to assert authority and domination over the lives of others" (Denniston, 1995, 117). In fact, Harriet is the symbol of the West itself. She exercises power and control not only over her husband but also over the people of the place. Her inclination to display her domination and hegemony over the population of Bournehills is shown on many occasions, the last being her directive to the revelers at carnival where they refuse to heed her efforts to redirect their passage and literally throw her "from their midst against the warehouse door" (CPTP, 316-8). As a black feminist, Marshall understands that not *all* women are equally oppressed; Harriet's urge to dominate is not unlike Silla Boyce's, but her alliance with the colonial power structure gives her greater amplitude for harm and for self-destruction.

Marshall's most beloved character and by far her favorite creation, Merle, "the Third World revolutionary spirit" as she called her, is a key center of power in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**. In the same vein, Ursa-Bea and her mother Estelle successfully play a leading role in political issues affecting

---

<sup>26</sup> Quoted by Baechler and Litz, op. cit., 300.

Triunion, while other female characters are equally committed to the improvement of their community through their deep involvement in social and political issues confronting their existence in the United States of America.

Merle is described in the novel as a "hopelessly muddled, mildly psychotic, middle-aged colored woman who talked incessantly" (CPTP, 20). Verbal outpouring is her powerful weapon that she regularly uses to politically and socially participate in matters affecting the well-being of the people of Bourne Island (CPTP, 69, 104). On different occasions, she has either offered advice, or challenged authorities with her "arm".

Her involvement in the governance of Bourne Island is already signalled at the beginning of the novel when she advises Saul Amron to seize the opportunity to effect change in the place:

See to it that the so-called expert who's here from England helping you people in government cook up the new development plan comes. I am sure they'll want to talk to him. And I suppose you'll have to ask the Honorable Member for Bournehills, even though as far as I'm concerned we could do without him. And you had best invite one or two chaps from the Opposition, as hopeless as that is, so that they can at least have their say. (CPTP, 12)

Moreover, Merle has vigorously criticized the government in place at Bourne Island, because of their mismanagement. It has not taken her long to understand that officials are preoccupied with other issues than favoring the

well-being of the population, the development of the country. She has come to know that the different economic development schemes are not centered on the well being of the community; instead, their central foci is the facilities offered to outsiders. To avoid circumlocution, they are simply selling out the country. Merle reveals this sad aspect of government strategy to Lyle Hutson, her former boyfriend, now government official when she lectures him about their economic plan:

Signed, sealed and delivered, I said. The whole place. Is that what we threw out the white pack who ruled us for years and put you chaps in office for? For you to give away the island? For you to literally pay people to come and make money off us? Fifteen years without having to pay a penny in taxes! All their profit out of the island! A whole factory for ten dollars a year! Why, man, Bourne Island comes like a freeness to them [ ...] Is that all that's possible for us in these small islands? Is that the only way we can exist? Well, if so, it's no different now than when they were around here selling us for thirty pounds sterling... And the Little Fella still bleeding his life in cane field. Come up to Bournehills some day and see him on those hills. Things are no different. The chains are still on...(CPTP, 225-6)

Merle's acerbic criticism of the government is meaningful and grounded when one is familiar with the latest development plan cooked up by Waterford, the British economic expert and approved by the government. Its main foci are listed below. For instance, under the new development plan, "the tax-free period for new business was being extended from five to fifteen years, and all customs duties for them were also being waived for the same period." Furthermore, the Bourne Island government's planning "to build at its own

expense a huge industrial park, so that when an investor arrived he would find a plant awaiting him" is a clear indication that foreigners are encouraged to take advantage over Bourne Island.

It appears clearly that under the various development schemes the Bourne Island government is inciting developed countries to exploit the riches of its country. This conviction is reinforced when one knows that the final disposition of the current development plan has it that anyone who sets up a business in Bourne Island is not only allowed to send all his profits out of the country but also to "repatriate his capital in full should the business fail" (CPTP, 222-3).

Like Silla in **Brown Girl, Brownstones**, Merle not only imagines her own point of view, but she speaks her mind; as a woman she will not be silent, she expresses her view on politics. As she has told Saul Amron, she belongs to the category of talkers : "Some people act, some think, some feel, but I talk, and if I was to ever stop that'd be the end of me. And worse, I say whatever comes to my mind and the devil with it" (CPTP, 69).

In enabling Merle to use her talk "to divert, subvert, and mystify, to conceal her self or to attack her enemies, and to mask her fragility and vulnerability" (Pettis, 1995, 97), Marshall has gone a step further in reinforcing this role for women in literature. One very important predecessor here is Zora

Neale Hurston, with Janie's talk in **Their Eyes Were Watching God**. Even if Janie is silenced by her husband before she publicly takes the floor, it nevertheless remains obvious that she also subsequently silences Joe permanently. Symbolically making Merle's talk a defensive weapon constitutes in itself a reinforcement of this trend in African American literary production, for traditionally, black women in fiction consent. Merle's awareness of this power has determined her to carefully use it to effect political changes in the place. Moreover, as a woman, talk has enabled her to verbally assault colonial structures that have inflicted wounds on her as well as on the place: "Because part of Merle's fragmentation may be attributed to her recognition of active colonialism, her talk often becomes a calculated public weapon with which she flogs individuals and a world that thinks reductively of Bournehills residents" says Joyce Pettis (Pettis, 1995, 100).

Marshall moves a step further in **Daughters**, where she outlines new roles for modern women and further integrates the theme of women's personal growth and the theme of anti-colonialism. Women are not only "flogging" with their talk but actively participate in affairs affecting the whole of the community. In **Daughters**, Estelle and her daughter Ursa-Bea are portrayed as "stars in the politically and culturally changing universe" (Denniston, 1995, 165). They therefore carry out the pivotal role she augurs for women in Triunion. Mae Ryland or Miz Ryland is their counterpart in the black community of the United States of America. She shows up herself in the United States by the active role

she plays and the effective part she takes in the mayoral campaign of the African-American Sandy Lawson (**Daughters**, 281). But here, as well as in Triunion, the mayor fails to implement a sound politics that could give satisfaction to his constituency, his community. Women work to elect reformist men who then betray their principles.

The following paragraphs show how these "spiritually whole women envision and work for sociopolitical and economic improvement for their communities," despite the restrictions of gender, race and class which continue to affect the lives of most women in **Daughters** (Pettis, 1995, 137).

Estelle, an African American woman, the politically astute and energetic wife of Primus Mackenzie, is supportive of her husband's initially progressive political goals. Primus's political objective is to effect political and economic change and terminate the stasis of political subjection in Triunion. This praiseworthy political platform has inspired Estelle to do whatever she can to be supportive of her husband's plans. She believes that Primus's legal coming to power will enable the latter to implement his political program.

Therefore, she is always on his side, campaigning with him. They even spend their honeymoon campaigning (**Daughters**, 132). Particularly, at re-election time, Ursa-Bea, their beloved and only offspring, an educated, politically astute, professional woman returns to Triunion, importantly at

Estelle's written request, and "silently offered herself for whatever would be required of her" (**Daughters**, 363).

But once the elections are stolen, Primus Mackenzie becomes very disappointed and hopeless. He later becomes a corrupt opposition leader. By the time he is finally elected as a government official, he has completely lost sight of his initial political goal : the Triunionians are still poverty-stricken, there is no improvement in the place. Instead, he becomes active on the Planning and Development Board (**Daughters**, 363) and is a defender of the government project to make a resort on public land, adjacent to land he owns. Estelle tells this to Ursa:

... No experimental farm, Ursa-Bea. No agricultural station. No small farmer's cooperative such as your father and I talked about for years. No model village, housing scheme or hospital. No cannery or sisal plant or any other kind of factory or plant. Instead, Government Lands is to be playground for the Fortune 500 and his friends. (**Daughters**, 357)

Primus's endorsement of this project that will divest the islanders of prime beach property forces Estelle and Ursa-Bea to adopt strategic methods to subvert the project in order to preserve the cultural integrity of the community and to prevent their exploitation by Western investors.

But earlier, Estelle's conviction of Primus Mackenzie's corruption has led her to protest. She simply refuses to accompany Primus to their give-away

parties often organized by the P and D Board to entertain visiting firemen :  
"You hear me, Primus? I said I'm not going to the P and D's little affairs this evening for the visiting firemen" (CPTP, 226). Overall, she is fed up with the political management of Triunion when she strongly lets her husband know the motivations sustaining her refusal to take part in those parties:

And I said I'm not going. Not tonight, or any other night. I've had it with the board's brand of planning and development. She was thinking of the new section of the main road they had recently built to bypass Armory Hill. To spare the firemen and the tourists the sight of that eyesore. It had cost hundreds of thousands dollars to cut through the far side of the hill. (**Daughters**, 228)

When Estelle realizes that she cannot face alone the huge task of convincing her husband, Primus Mackenzie, to return to his good initial intention, she invites Ursa to come back home so that both can rescue him from his political blindness. She writes to Ursa:

It's just that this Government Lands thing has really hit me hard. It is the worse to have happened since the elections were stolen that time. It's gotten so I'm afraid of my own thoughts when it comes to the P and D Board and your father. I feel positively murderous some days. That's why I wrote you. I needed you here...

Because something has to be done to stop these people on the board and to bring your father to his senses. I don't know what exactly. Worse, I am not sure I could do it, even if I did know.

... I don't think I can manage this one on my own. You have to come down here, Ursa-Bea. Maybe you can think of something. And you have to come right away!.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> *Daughters*, 363, double underline in the original.



In order to sabotage the plan, Ursa must deliver to Primus Mackenzie's opponents the previously uncirculated prospectus that outlines the development of resort public lands in the Morlands District. This scheme, as Denniston observes, would potentially give personal gain to Primus Mackenzie, but would bring no benefit to his constituents. Because Ursa-Bea is politically instructed, she is able to politicize the personal and in so doing to mobilize against her father to assist the Caribbean community. Though her decision is not easy, because Primus Mackenzie has "practiced fatherhood with all the seriousness that the role deserves," her social conscience can no longer allow her to "ignore the deterioration that plagues the island in spite of her father's political office and his rhetoric about change" (Pettis, 1995, 146-7). Dorothy H. Denniston suggests that Ursa's decisive move to abort her father's plan would fulfill her destiny to become useful to her community (Denniston, 1995, 165). For her part, critic Joyce Pettis observes that both Ursa-Bea and her mother Estelle perpetuate the legacy of Congo Jane and Will Cudjoe in privileging the community and resisting oppression in the attractive disguise of a resort (Pettis, 1995, 70).

Ursa and Estelle's plan will rescue Primus Mackenzie, will offer him a chance for rebirth, as he can be persuaded to "resign his seat in the House, quit the P and D Board, and join what's left of the NPP with him and the Independents." He could therefore become "the honorary head of the party and their principal adviser" because people feel "he still has a lot to offer the

country" (*Daughters*, 361). The women in the novel become the revolutionaries who ultimately must lead their men in the right direction.

This chapter shows Marshall's revolutionary and radical stand as central to her literary production. It lays emphasis on Marshall's perceptions of the social construction of gender and its consequences. It also shows how for Marshall patriarchy and neocolonialism are linked and must be simultaneously opposed.

Through her description of political life in Triunion, Marshall is urging a need for mutual support between both sexes, a strong collaboration between men and women for the political building and social well-being of community. The collaboration between Will Cudjoe and Congo Jane who fought against the oppressor in the past, the political commitment of Primus Mackenzie and Estelle and the strong determination of Mr. Beaufils and his wife, who are working as a team all over Triunion, giving out the flyers of their new political party and holding meetings, are key instances to exemplify her vision. To quote Denniston, Marshall "insists upon a strong moral imperative : that for the sake of communal progress, black men and women must stand together in mutual support" (Denniston, 1995, 155).

Though the women are not in positions of power in **Daughters** but rather shown as being at point of transition, they all the same recognize that the "sons" in the novel cannot be trusted to liberate the people. Consequently:

The daughters may well have to sabotage destructive activities and politics in order to move to a more positive world. The revolutionary couple of Cuffee Ned and Congo Jane ... may be an ideal worth struggling for, but it is not the only revolutionary possibility.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, the political continuum between **Daughters** and **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** reflects Tejasuwini Niranjana's observation that:

The postcolonial subject, nation, context is therefore still scored through by an absentee colonialism. In economic and political terms, the former colony continue to be dependent on the ex-rulers or the 'West.' In the cultural sphere (using *cultural* to encompass not only art and literature but other practices of subjectification as well), in spite of widely employed nationalistic rhetoric, decolonization is slowest in making impact. (Niranjana, 1992, 8)

For Marshall, the new order consists in effectively taking into hand by the native people themselves -- men and women -- political, economic and socio-cultural management of the former colonies. Only through this process can they truly speak of independence.

---

<sup>28</sup> Carole B. Davies, in Davis and Harris, eds., op. cit., 198.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN:**

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION:  
COMPARATIVELY SPEAKING

Let us begin this comparative chapter with two basic observations.

In **Writing in Limbo**, his study devoted to the West Indian novel, Simon Gikandi makes the following remark about the fiction of Paule Marshall and George Lamming:

Marshall's critique of a nationalist ideology that betrays its own aspirations and logic is already prefigured in Lamming, who, at the end of **Castle** details the rise to power of a native ruling class, symbolized by Slime, the school teacher. (Gikandi, 1992, 29-30)

This remark by Gikandi suggests that Paule Marshall and George Lamming have at least something in common in their writings. As a matter of fact, reading Paule Marshall and George Lamming reveals that they have much in common in addition to the outlook suggested in this quote.

The second observation has to do with a basic difference that sometimes exists between men and women when it comes to their writings. Daryl Pinckney, paraphrasing Virginia Woolf, makes the point that:

When women come to write novels, they probably find themselves wanting to alter established values, to make important what is insignificant to men and to make trivial that men think essential. Marshall shares this subversive inclination and sometimes it brings satisfying results.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Daryl Pinckney in Draper ed., op. cit., 1370.

The foregoing passage also suggests that although there are similarities between the writings of George Lamming and Paule Marshall, there are some differences as well. In view of both quotations, I am of the opinion that they have a common sky but divided horizons. This chapter aims to speculate on their common concerns and their similarities as well as on their differences.

Actually, there are many parallels between the ideas/images of George Lamming and those of Paule Marshall. Particular examples of this include the idea of vomiting up the colonial experience and the reverse middle passage. Furthermore, their common views on the importance of African cultural tradition and the key role history is assigned in their fiction are other cases in point. Their common interests in postcolonial situations; that is, the new challenges facing former colonized people and places, their common stands regarding the postcolonial question, Western imperialism and hegemony are striking. Their suggestions regarding the achievement of true independence by former colonized countries are similar in nearly all respects.

One can rightly wonder whether there isn't a lot more than just a parallel between some of their ideas, and whether Paule Marshall is not, somehow, directly influenced by George Lamming through intertextuality and literary influence. This could serve as an interesting theory. However, although there exists no supporting statement by Paule Marshall herself [at least to the best of my knowledge] indicating that she has read and/or was influenced by George

Lamming, it would not be risky to assume such an influence. To sustain this assertion, one can rightly point out the fact that Paule Marshall taught Black literature in a Community College for some time, and one cannot think that she has not read George Lamming. Furthermore, her biographer, Carole Boyce Davies says that as a Panafricanist, Paule Marshall is comfortable with various designations : she easily identifies herself with her fellow Barbadian writers among whom George Lamming.<sup>2</sup> It is certainly useful to note parallels in their emphasis on history and their common views on the role Africa has to play in the (re)invention of self for diasporan Blacks.

#### **VII.1. SIMILARITIES BETWEEN GEORGE LAMMING AND PAULE MARSHALL: AFRICA, HISTORY, AND POSTCOLONIALITY.**

That George Lamming and Paule Marshall have much in common, philosophically speaking, should by now be apparent. They both seem to feel that the oppression of enslaved and colonized people results in their thinking and behaving in certain ways. Both expose the evils of the domineering aspect of Western hegemonies and are concerned with proposing certain alternatives to those colonial ways of thinking. To put it another way, both put into question colonial ways of thinking and are suggesting a redefinition and development of new perspectives and priorities. They are calling for mental decolonization. A real, genuine and true decolonization will show itself through starting things afresh, they seem to think.

---

<sup>2</sup> Carole Boyce Davies, in Davis and Harris, eds., *op. cit.*, 193.

Colonialism and its aftermath, that is, its effects on the individual psyches and on the history and culture of the peoples involved, is central in the works of both writers. Both are concerned in their works, not only with defining and describing these effects, but with exploring solutions to the postcolonial dilemma; of looking at ways to achieve decolonization, the reclamation of history and culture, and psychological health or wholeness.

Both George Lamming and Paule Marshall give paramount importance to the issue of history in their fiction. In various interviews including "Shaping the World of My Art" and "Return of a Native Daughter," Marshall deals with her interest in the history of black people and its role in her fiction. She once stressed the role Africa and its past have to play in the life of the Diasporan Blacks when she declared that as people of African descent, "We must accept the task of 'reinventing' our own image and the role which Africa will play in this process will be essential" (Denniston, 1995, xi). They both emphasize the place and role traditional African culture has to play in the identity quest and the liberation of the former colonized and enslaved people.

Both George Lamming and Paule Marshall accuse colonizers of depriving the colonized of their true past, of adulterating their real history. They therefore present the Caribbean colonial subject as an ahistorical person. Because literature is a recreation of life whereby novelists draw their inspirations and materials from the real world, their choice to present



Caribbean people as an ahistorical person is dictated, I contend here, by the Caribbean social environment from which they draw inspiration.

In **In the Castle of My Skin**, past events which are part of their history are kept secret. For instance, the representative community of Creighton's village has no access to its history, to its true past. Historical falsification is privileged. Both writers establish the oppressor's deliberate will to hide their past from the concerned populations.

As was indicated in previous chapters, both writers -- Paule Marshall in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** and George Lamming in **In the Castle of My Skin** -- demonstrate how colonial schools were intended to train pupils ignorant of their own history. As evidence, nothing is said about slavery, which is the basic fact of their existence and history, in the official curriculum of the colonial school in Barbados as presented in **In the Castle of My Skin**. In **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** this practice remains true for Bournehills as well. Furthermore, the fact that Merle Kimbona's mention of the unwritten history of the island results in her dismissal from her teaching job reinforces the view that the oppressors deliberately chose to obscure the past as well as the future of the Caribbean subject. It is now an established fact that without any clear understanding of the past, there would be no way any meaningful project for the future could be elaborated. Perhaps it might be important to emphasize once more that in Allan Nevins's view, history enables

communities "to grasp their relationship with the past, and to chart on general lines their immediate forward course."<sup>3</sup>

It is important to note that George Lamming and Paule Marshall -- notwithstanding the deliberate will of the oppressor to veil the past of the oppressed -- are able to reverse this situation in their fiction. In other words, though the ultimate goal assigned to colonial teaching consists in veiling the true past from the concerned, in the novels of George Lamming and Paule Marshall the colonized always come to know their true past.

In *In the Castle of My Skin*, for instance, the schoolchildren have come to know the essentials of that past through the character of Old Ma. This knowledge is a key factor in their understanding of themselves and their orientation to the future. Likewise, Ursa-Bea comes to a moment of epiphany when she realizes that colonial history is grounded on lies.

We learn through the reading of *Daughters* that the island of Triunion was highly coveted by France, England, and Spain (*Daughters*, 180). As a result, they were engaged in a battle over Triunion. Besides the wars between the colonizing powers, Cuffee Ned and Congo Jane and their associates also fought for freedom. Colonial teaching authorities never mentioned the reason why Triunion had been divided into three once; they have not even mentioned

---

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Hamerow, *Reflection on History and Historians* (Madison : University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 209.

the achievements of Cuffee Ned and Congo Jane. Ursa-Bea's understanding of the memory of Cuffee Ned and Congo Jane as fighters for freedom and justice in the past has enabled her to become aware of these colonial lies. Also, her decision to write a thesis on slave revolt and its implications is another proof of this.

It can definitely be said that both writers feature history prominently in their fiction. In both, history is used in a subversive way. They both suggest that formal education is used to veil the true history from the concerned people. Also true of both is their belief that oral tradition is where the true history is preserved. Presumably George Lamming and Paule Marshall are telling that history (of the horrors and atrocities) in their **written** works for the benefit of future generations.

Simon Gikandi understandably notes the specific role of Paule Marshall's use of history in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**. This critic points out that the way history is treated in this novel hurts not only because the experience of the Middle Passage is painful, but also because the culture and values brought from Africa cannot be holistically recovered after their landing in the new and hostile environment (Gikandi, 1992, 180).

Critic Supriya Nair has claimed that George Lamming's reconstruction of Caribbean history "reverses the moment of forgetting and remembering" (1996, 126). It can be said that each of his novels is a militant intervention in a given

moment of colonial history. For instance, *In the Castle of My Skin* is an attempt to exorcize the colonial alienation inherited through colonial rule. This novel marks George Lamming's initial effort as an artist to describe and influence the inherited values that distort and inhabit social relations in former British colonies, and to create a new climate for the cultural and economic independence of the West Indies. In fact, as Supriya Nair has suggested, George Lamming reverses terms in his use of history. Ambroise Kom clearly shares this view when he writes the following:

Si Lamming renverse donc la démarche shakespérienne et remonte le cours de l'histoire c'est pour montrer précisément que Prospero et sa descendance qui se targuent d'incarner le modèle social, économique, culturel, et philosophique, pratiquent en réalité des valeurs fort peu recommandables. Il appartient à Caliban d'ouvrir l'oeil et de tirer de ses tribulations au pays de son "maître" des leçons qui s'imposent. (Kom, 1986, 96)

He seems to call the reader's attention to the horrors and atrocities inherent in "the colonial experience and its corrosive effects on the self-esteem of the natives".<sup>4</sup> He also considers fiction as liberating from the constraints of history that have been imposed on the West Indies. Therefore, in his reworking of master narratives, he suggests a new "way of seeing". Nair writes:

The master narrative is entangled in Lamming's reworking, and it emerges not as a univocal truth but as "a way of seeing" that is underwritten by a convoluted discourse and practice of power and knowledge...

---

<sup>4</sup> Elisabeth Harrell-Nunez, "Lamming and Naipaul: Some Criteria for Evaluating the Third-World Novel," *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 19, no. 1 (1978), 33.

Lamming writes, on the surface, from the point of view of the early imperialist but he manipulates the deeper levels of meaning to bring the ironies of imperialist vision to the surface. (Nair, 1996, 52)

Thus, it can be argued that like the writing of Gayatri Spivak, Lamming also shows in his work that

The way to counteract Western history and Western historicism is not simply to produce alternative or counter-histories, but to contest and inflect the more far-reaching implications of the system of which they form a part. (Young, 1990, 172)

The most important message of George Lamming's literary production can be summed up in few words. The abstract of his literary career, according to Ambroise Kom, is to free the oppressed people at all cost : "L'essentiel de son message peut se résumer en peu de mots : libérer Caliban à tout prix" (Kom, 1986, 8).

Supriya Nair says that Edwards Said calls George Lamming a "key figure in the transition from colonialism to decolonization" -- "a writer whose work belong[s] to an important body of "resistance culture" (Nair 1996, 19). Supriya Nair himself considers Lamming's **Season of Adventure** as a central novel where "Lamming uses creative art [Gort's drumming, Chiki's painting] and culture [the tonelle] as politically and pedagogically useful interventions in the dominance of colonial vision.

According to critic Dorothy Hamer Denniston, all of Paule Marshall's biographers agree that her fiction as a whole is concerned with the experience of African people throughout the diaspora, and the impact of colonization on the psyche of American and Caribbean Blacks. Barbara T. Christian, Hortense Spillers, Eugenia Collier, John McCluskey, Joyce Pettis, and many others agree that Marshall's "fiction represents an attempt to identify, analyze, and resolve the conflict between cultural loss/displacement and cultural domination/hegemony" (Denniston, 1995, xi-xii). Furthermore, Joyce Pettis argues that Paule Marshall's perception of cultural displacement is central to her works:

What sets Marshall's vision apart is her perception of the consequences of cultural displacement for people of African descent, consequences that may significantly exacerbate the oppressions of gender, race, and class. [...] She links problems such as identity, insecurity, and spiritual malaise to psychic fragmentation and moves toward acquiring wholeness through identification with African origins. (Pettis, 1995, 10-11)

Needless to say, the Afrocentric idea is a dominant thread in Paule Marshall's fiction, as she consciously begins to draw more from her knowledge of remnants of African cultural traditions as they function in contemporary African-American and African-Caribbean worlds. For example, it is striking in all respect that in **Praisesong for the Widow**, the novel's stories and its legends are typically African and Afro-American. Furthermore, Darwin T. Turner notes that even "the dances and the songs during the excursion to

Carriacou are Afro-Caribbean and African."<sup>5</sup> This Afrocentric idea also pervades George Lamming's cultural production.

Eugenia Collier also sees the recognition of self within a community and cultural tradition as the key to psychological decolonization in Paule Marshall's work when she makes the point that:

Paule Marshall's major works point toward a truth of the most profound significance in the reclamation of a people [...] That truth is both simple and obvious, yet it is the key to freeing the colonized mind, to unraveling centuries of lies and discovering finally the essential collective Black self.<sup>6</sup>

As can be surmised from Supriya Nair, Eugenia Collier, and Ambroise Kom, neither Paule Marshall nor George Lamming is primarily concerned with the oppressor; they are addressing their own people, in the first place. This practice is what Hoyt Fuller calls "literature of affirmation". Citing Larry Neal, Hoyt Fuller makes the point that "Neal emphasizes that the new black literature, which is 'primarily directed at the consciences of black people,' is not 'essentially a literature of protest.' It is, to be sure, a literature of affirmation" (in Kom, 1986, 121).

This affirmative literature, Ambroise Kom recalls, is primarily focused on the usefulness of African traditions in the lives of the diasporan Blacks. Both Paule Marshall and George Lamming seem to share the view that African

---

<sup>5</sup> D. T. Turner, "Introduction," *op. cit.*, xxxiii.

<sup>6</sup> Collier in Evans ed. *op. cit.*, 295.

culture has a key role in the shaping of African people in the New World. That both give a paramount role to Africa and its culture is of prime interest in the following paragraphs.

To begin with, it is important to bear in mind that the origin of affirmative literature can be traced back to Aimé Césaire. For this Martiniquean poet, African civilization and its traditions must exert influence on worldwide black people. Ambroise Kom establishes Césaire's conception of African traditions and its role in the following quotation:

La littérature nègre d'affirmation avait commencé avec le **Cahier d'un retour au pays natal** (1947) de Aimé Césaire. Dans ce poème, Césaire revalorise le passé culturel africain et montre comment les ressources du patrimoine culturel des Noirs peuvent leur permettre d'assumer leur être dans le monde moderne. (Kom, 1986, 122)

Both George Lamming and Paule Marshall seem to be convinced by this vanguard point. Consequently, their literary production is replete with frequent evocations of Africa and the important role devoted to its culture in the lives of their characters. How is Africa and its culture reflected in their works?

As Simon Gikandi has observed, since entry into the European terrain of modernism requires that the colonized be denied their being, history, and language, it is tempting to believe that both George Lamming and Paule Marshall -- representatives of Caribbean novelists -- have rejected the



European mode of representation. Instead, they have sought new modes of expression which are given shape and substance in their revaluing of ancestral sources from Africa (Gikandi, 1992, 2). Therefore, there is frequent evocation and interconnectedness with African culture and past in George Lamming and Paule Marshall's writings.

In his research on the African presence in the New World, Bourguignon comes to the conclusion that Haitian Vodou is one of the key indicators that makes this presence perceptible in the Americas. He writes:

In some parts of the Afro-American area, there exist religious beliefs and practices that appear to be strikingly African, involving as they do spirits that have recognizably African names, spirits of whom it is believed that they take possession of the faithful during the rituals. Haitian *vodu* [...] is perhaps the famous case in point.<sup>7</sup>

The most common references to Africa include Haitian vodu, the frequent reference to myths and legends in their narratives, and the presence of ancestors in their novels.

George Lamming deals extensively with the African presence in the New World as is expressed through his use of Haitian vodu in **Season of Adventure**. In this connection, Ambroise Kom believes that "La recherche des racines historiques de l'antillais amène Lamming à porter une attention aux

---

<sup>7</sup> Bourguignon, in Szwed, ed., *Black Americans* (Washington D.C. : United States Information Agency, 1970), 208.

légendes et surtout aux rituels vaudou dans **Season of Adventure**" (Kom, 1986, 14). Lamming believes this vodu ritual called "Ceremony of Souls" can enable black diasporan people to recover their history. On this issue, he says : "The symbolic function of the ceremony for me, as an artist within the Caribbean situation, is the necessity of reconciling the past with each moment of conscious living."<sup>8</sup>

Supriya Nair also believes this ceremony can revolutionize the lives of oppressed Blacks in the New World since the ceremony itself is designed for activism:

Since the ceremony of soul demands the intervention of the past for future direction, the ceremony itself is a historical conduit for activist performance. In other words, history comes alive both in narrative and performance through the folkloristic traditions of vodun, which serve as an educational and directive role. (Nair, 1996, 123)

Ian Munro shares in this when he argues that Lamming's fiction is structured around his conception of All Soul's Day as an inert relationship with the past and its counterpart, the Haitian ceremony of soul in which "the living, in order to make their peace with the dead, must bring to light past misdeeds and accept responsibilities." Like George Lamming, he believes both ceremonies have symbolic significance; the former is continuing and repetitive; the latter is liberating and redemptive.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Lamming "A Visit to Carriacou." in Drayton and Andaiye. eds., op. cit., 25.

<sup>9</sup> Ian H. Munro, "George Lamming," in Daryl C. Dance ed., op. cit., 265.

In **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**, Paule Marshall also evokes a ceremony that has to do with dead persons but in a different perspective. She calls this ceremony "All Souls" (CPTP, 288). On All Souls' night the people of Bournehills used to sing on the graves of their deceased relatives all night long.

Paule Marshall's belief that African myths and legends are critical to black people's understanding of themselves is central to her writing process and permeates her literary production. She relies extensively on Igbo myth and the Cuffee Ned legend in her fiction. In a seminal article by Carole Boyce Davies, the latter illustrates how this novelist's structural use of mythology is evident in **Praisesong for the Widow** and her other works. She also notes that Paule Marshall employs many references and epigraphs from Haitian vodu in **Praisesong for the Widow** when she points out that the title of the section dealing with Avey's ritual cleansing -- "Lave Tete," -- French creole for cleansing the head.-- is a reflection of this. She also makes the point that another important articulation of the African Caribbean belief system is illustrated in "The vodun introit 'Papa Legba, ouvri barriere pou' mwe'" -- meaning Papa Legba, open the door for me. On the whole, Carole Boyce Davies evaluates the African presence and influence in Paule Marshall's fiction when she had this to say:

But more important is the influence of myth on Marshall's language, which resonates with African references and demands what Veve Clark calls "diaspora literacy."

Epigraphs, proverbs, sayings, rhymes, similes, metaphors, and an entire range of her figurative language scaffolding are African or African-based.<sup>10</sup>

Like Simon Gikandi, she is suggesting that folklore and popular culture must play "a central role in the transplanted Africans' quest for an indigenous language that could help them transcend reified history" (Gikandi, 1992, 171). As the term "reified" itself well indicates the situation, due to their inmost conviction that the particular conditions of the oppressed are caused by people, they consequently believe that these conditions can be changed by people.

Needless to say George Lamming and Paule Marshall are, in many respects, displaced people, and consequently have experienced the loss of cultural tradition in their new worlds. However, both seem to view African culture as the sound basis upon which diasporan black people must ground themselves. Perhaps their realization that cultural traditions remain the only means which can provide meaningful patterns through which members of a community can understand themselves and their world has led both to adopt such similar views on the importance of African culture in their fiction (Taylor, 1989, xi). To paraphrase critic Dorothy Hamer Denniston, both Paule Marshall and George Lamming reclaim African culture for black diasporan peoples (Denniston, 1995, xiv). To better understand their common stand on cultural

---

<sup>10</sup> Carole Boyce Davies in Davis and Harris, eds., *op. cit.*, 194.

issues, it is important to consider the important place of culture itself in relation to history and its paramount role for human beings.

Amilcar Cabral once emphasized that culture is the most fundamental element in the life of any community and expressed his belief in a reciprocal relationship between history and culture when he said:

Whatever may be the ideology or idealist characteristics of cultural expression, culture is an essential element of the history of a people. Culture is, perhaps, the product of this history just as the flower is the product of a plant. (Cabral, 1973, 42 )

As is outlined in the above quote, it remains a fact that given the displacement and dispersal of African peoples, cultural identity cannot remain static. In this respect, Stuart Hall in "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" notes the ever-changing characteristic of culture when he makes the point that

... cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialist past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture, and power.<sup>11</sup>

It is true that African tradition has undergone many transformations following its contact with the dominant Western culture in the Western Hemisphere. This contact and interaction of cultures has led some scholars to

---

<sup>11</sup> Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in J. Rutherford ed., *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference* (London : Lawrence and Wishard, 1990), 225.

assume that given their particular history in the New World, Blacks are deprived of the emotional, philosophical, and cultural characteristics that usually characterize "black self." Objections have been raised that this assumption is unsound. As Joyce A. Landner puts it, it should be acknowledged that "black Americans were never stripped of emotional, philosophical, and cultural characteristics of Africa."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, it must be observed that this remark can be extended to all diasporan Blacks. Therefore, Patrick Taylor's observation that "African tradition, however transformed and creolized, remains as the primary spiritual sustenance that guides actions and makes survival possible" is grounded (Taylor, 1989, 109).

There are good reasons to think that both writers credit the various views expressed above. As a result of this acknowledgment, the importance of African culture to black diasporan people is illustrated in almost all their works. In **Twentieth Century Caribbean and Black African Writers**, Bernth Lindfors and Reinhard Sander make the observation that Marshall's insistence on "the reality of black culture as a birthright of a people who supposedly had lost their history as a result of their enslavement by dominant white culture" is perceptible in **Brown Girl, Brownstones**. Of course, Paule Marshall shows the lasting power of black culture in the Diaspora through her portrayal of the rituals, mores, and values of the African-Barbadian community in New York in its attempt to situate itself in the United States. Even the type of language that her characters speak is a reflection of that culture (1993, 292).

---

<sup>12</sup> Joyce A. Landner in Szved, ed., op. cit., 231.

Similarly, it is established that George Lamming's search for cultural roots led him to visit the mother continent -- Ghana and Nigeria in West Africa. He extensively elaborates on this visit in **The Pleasures of Exile** in the section titled "The African Presence," (160-210), where he explains the challenges facing the West Indian of African descent who sets out to visit Africa. This visit also constitutes an important part of the raw material he has transformed into art in **Season of Adventure**. The West Indian of African origin who undertakes to visit Africa is less secure compared to the white American who pays a similar visit to Europe, because the latter's response is already shaped by his previous reading about monuments and cathedrals and other aspects of European culture:

The Americans took pleasure in their past because they were descended from men whose migration was a freely chosen act. They were descended from a history that was recorded, a history which was wholly contained in their own way of looking at the world. (SOA, 93)

Lamming, nonetheless, regards this experience as a kind of pilgrimage to Africa, just the way a white American would make a pilgrimage to Europe.

Furthermore, because both novelists acknowledge the birthright status of African culture in the lives of their characters, its use may bring either satisfying results or catastrophic ends, depending upon the use diasporan Blacks put it to. Although the results are of the same nature whether for a nation or an

individual, it is fitting to focus attention on Paule Marshall's treatment of this subject matter, in the first place.

In her study devoted to the fiction of Paule Marshall, critic Dorothy Hamer Denniston writes the following lines about the ambivalence of her characters' cultural standpoint:

Marshall plays upon the interchange of deities by portraying characters who, while adopting Western religion, remain faithful to indigenous beliefs and suffer no disintegration of personality. (Denniston, 1995, xix)

In the light of this quote, it becomes important to evaluate the function and impact of African cultural tradition on Paule Marshall's characters.

It is obvious that neglecting indigenous beliefs will result in the personality disintegration of the black self in Paule Marshall's fiction. It must be acknowledged, Paule Marshall has spent a good deal of her artistic time demonstrating either disintegration of personality, or integration/wholeness of personality in her fiction. The following paragraphs are structured around the assumption that her main concern is to show the reflection of cultural considerations in the lives of the various characters in her pieces of fiction.

If there is any general statement that can be applied to Paule Marshall's characters with due regard to their cultural belief, it will be this: neglecting



African culture will lead to alienation, crisis of identity, and fragmentation. For instance, all four aging men at the center of each novella that makes up **Soul Clap Hands and Sing** had achieved some form of success. However, because this success is reached to the detriment of some social values, they all are forced to experience alienation. Perhaps it is in this vein that Darwin T. Turner sees these four aging men as symbols of "the weaknesses of tragic modern man."<sup>13</sup> It must be borne in mind that the denial of their respective cultures has led these four main characters in **Soul Clap Hands and Sing** to live fragmented lives, because no individual progress is possible without a clear sense of who one is within a given community (Denniston, 1995, 35-6). Moreover, it might be of interest to deepen these speculations on what might happen to characters who adopt Western religion -- or Eurocentric practices in general -- without remaining faithful to indigenous beliefs in Paule Marshall.

Some key expressions used by different critics of Paule Marshall's fiction to describe their state of being include : disintegration, culturally disconnected person, splintered, fractured, broken, or ruptured person.

Paule Marshall seems to share psychological findings on the African psyche and the concept of spirituality specific to the African view with Joseph A. Baldwin and Linda James Meyer. According to Joyce Pettis, both psychologists have shown the specifics of African psychological dispositions to be different from the European ones. In addition, their studies evidence proofs

---

<sup>13</sup> D. T. Turner, "Introduction," *op. cit.*, *xivi*.

of sharp differences that exist between European cosmological systems and the African ones. Citing both psychologists, Joyce Pettis argues that the literature of African American psychology acknowledges spirituality as a viable part of the African psyche. Defined by Joseph A. Baldwin as "a dynamic energy that allows the self to emerge into the totality of phenomenal experience," and considered by Linda James Meyer as the "first construct of traditional African philosophical thought,"<sup>14</sup> spirituality is posited as a key element, the paramount role of which in the social construction of black people is decisive. It holds a crucial position in the African worldview.

Paule Marshall's creative writing is illustrative of her belief in these definitions of African psychology. The literary treatment her characters receive is in keeping with these definitions. For instance, Joyce Pettis considers the literary painting of her characters as a true reflection of an Afrocentric vision as defined by Molefi Kete Asante.<sup>15</sup> She writes:

Marshall's synthesis of the fractured psyche with identification of one's cultural ties to Africa marks her vision as assertively and progressively Afrocentric. Asante's discussion of the necessity for culturally based judgments that take into account the centrality of African ideals and behaviors is reflected in Marshall's texts. (Pettis, 1995, 19-20)

---

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Pettis, *op. cit.*, 19.

<sup>15</sup> For more information on Molefi Kete Asante's vision on Afrocentricity, consult his book, *The Afrocentric Idea* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

Avey Johnson, the main character of **Praisesong for the Widow** is illustrative of the importance of the presence of African tradition and beliefs in the lives of her characters. Paule Marshall is said to be a firm believer in tradition since she considers "that without tradition one has no real existence."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, there are good reasons to think that by showing two diametrically opposed phases in the lives of the Johnsons -- in order to enable readers to evaluate their two different ways of living and draw useful conclusions regarding the importance of an African cultural basis as a sound element that would guarantee wholeness for African American descents -- Paule Marshall establishes the important role of this African tradition in their existence (**Praisesong**, 136-7).

It is important to stress the fact that the impact of American materialism on Avey is illustrative of its destructive effects: her life is torn after her accepting of Euro-American values; in their struggle to get ahead, to succeed by American standards they drastically changed. They are seeking affirmation of their identity through material possessions, rather than through community values. In so doing, they have become sealed away from themselves. The point is that their middle class lives, jobs, and house full of crystal and silver can only provide false security to their African psyches. **Praisesong for the Widow** illustrates the fact that two different stages are gone through in the life of the Johnson couple. Of course, the story credits Dorothy Hamer Denniston's

---

<sup>16</sup> Leela Kapai in Draper ed., *op. cit.*, 1365

suggestion that "without an active acknowledgment and appreciation of African cultural roots, blacks fall prey to spiritual barrenness leading to personal disintegration and disconnectedness" in the New World (Denniston, 1995, 136).

In an interview with Alexis DeVeaux while in the writing process of **Praisesong for the Widow**, Marshall states her main motivation in designing this novel. She says her concern in **Praisesong for the Widow** has to do with a theme that has always been her main preoccupation : American materialism. Therefore, in this novel, she addresses the issue of "the materialism of this country and how it often spells the death of love and feeling, and how do we, as black people, fend it off."<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, in **Brown Girl, Brownstones**, the Boyce family's problematic relationship to American materialism is personified through Silla Boyce, the mother, whose strong quest to purchase a house alienates her from the others. To paraphrase Joyce Pettis (1995, 11), the ownership of house, a key indicator of economic success and prosperity to the Barbadian community in New York, has become a crucial parameter in Silla's determination to adopt the Western philosophy which elevates the individual over the group (BGBS, 224-5). Even as a teenager, Selina is disgusted by some of the unethical practices used by the members of her community in New York in order to achieve this goal. For Selina, the Barbadian Association of homeowners is "a band of small

---

<sup>17</sup> In Baechler and Litz, eds, *op. cit.*, 302; also in Davis and Harris, eds., *op. cit.*, 168.

frightened [and] selfish" people who live by "the most shameful codes possible -- dog eat dog, exploitation, the strong over the weak, the end justifies the means -- the whole kit and carboodle" (BGBS, 227). Moreover, the quote below reflects their materialistic propensity:

They doing it some of every kind of way. Some working morning, noon and night for this big war money. Some going to the loan shark out there on Fulton Street. Some hitting the number for good money. Some working strong-strong obeah. Some even picking fares. (BGBS, 74)

Here Paule Marshall is questioning the value of the American dream defined as material acquisition when it leads to ruthless exploitation and the destruction of other human beings.<sup>18</sup> For instance, Silla's determination to acquire property has inevitably caused her to become a real instrument in her husband's death. What is more, in the end, Selina could only see "wreckage," "vast waste," and "ravaged brownstones". The writer means the reader to see through these images that a belief in spiritual values is important for "the individual personal development within the context of creativity and positive relations to community."<sup>19</sup> Life, it must be argued, is more than acquiring material things. Unlike his wife Silla, Deighton believes he would have to sacrifice much of himself before achieving success in America if he were to meet Silla's expectations.<sup>20</sup> This is true in Avey's case. Before achieving her American dream -- materialized in her possessions: her "White Plains" home

---

<sup>18</sup> D. T. Turner, "Introduction," *op. cit.*, xxviii.

<sup>19</sup> Carole Boyce Davies in Davis and Harris, eds., 1996, *op. cit.*, 195.

<sup>20</sup> Barbara T. Christian, in Davis and Harris, eds., 1984, *op. cit.*, 163.

and its furnishings -- she has almost sacrificed her being. By privileging pursuit of material success, Avey exposes her **self** to distortion. By completely adopting the materialist philosophy specific to America, she has become a culturally empty being -- a culturally unmoored person.

It is by now obvious that another persistent and central motif in Paule Marshall's fiction is the delicate situation posed by the materialistic values of America and the adjustment of immigrants to this new environment and culture and their attempt to retain the spirit and integrity of the "old country," to paraphrase Lea Baechler and A. Walton Litz.<sup>21</sup> In view of both situations, some remarks are worth making.

First, through the presentation of the Boyces' and Johnsons' stories -- that is, Silla and Deighton Boyce, and Jerome and Avey Johnson respectively dealt with in **Brown Girl, Brownstones** and **Praisesong for the Widow** -- Paule Marshall is questioning the real value of material success achieved by the diasporan blacks of America at the expense of their own beings. Dealing specifically with **Brown Girl, Brownstones** in **African American Writers**, Lea Baechler and Walton Litz have this to say regarding material greed and its implication for the Barbadian community:

Whatever material gains West Indians may have made in the United States, the question of what they may have lost and need to recover looms large in **Brown Girl, Brownstones**. In carefully analyzing the characters of Deighton and Clive ... as well as their virtual ostracism

---

<sup>21</sup> Baechler and Litz, eds, *op. cit.*, 289.

from the community, Marshall asks hard questions about the values adopted by her immigrant community in its quest for material success.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, at the same time, she is suggesting some key methods and useful tips that will enable diasporan Blacks who are involved in the materialistic battle of America to become balanced, to achieve wholeness, to avoid fractured psyches. To paraphrase Joyce Pettis, the question Paule Marshall implicitly tries to answer in **Praisesong for the Widow** can be formulated in these terms : how can an African American remain culturally moored and psychologically whole while participating in the American economic enterprise that assuredly guarantees his/her disintegration? (Pettis, 1995, 115).

Under some conditions, it is possible for an African American to live in America, participate in its materialistic life, remain culturally moored, and retain his/her wholeness. To achieve this, Marshall suggests four key words : awareness, vigilance, strength, and distance.

First, African Americans must be **aware** of the specificity of their culture in the New World. Second, they need **vigilance** for safeguarding. Third, to resist the temptations and glamour of American materialism, they need **strength** "to withstand the glitter and excess" in that world. The last point, but not the least : they also need to observe a certain **distance** which is absolutely necessary to achieve wholeness. These four steps, in the writer's viewpoint,

---

22 Ibidem, 295-6.

can enable them to preserve, safeguard, and treasure their cultural tradition, "those things that had come down to them over the generations, which had defined them in a particular way. The most vivid, valuable part of themselves!" (*Praisesong*, 139). In a different perspective, it might be said that just the way Ursa-Bea, the mature heroine in *Daughters* -- unlike Selina whose journey to the Caribbean is a continuation of her search, a sign that her cultural identity has not yet been firmly established (Denniston, 1995, 32) -- is reasonably comfortable with her multicultural background as she has been firmly grounded in both her African Caribbean and African American cultures, it is also possible for other African Americans to participate in American life without their destruction.

Paule Marshall is also optimistic about those who have already reached their last degree of fragmentation. She seems to believe that even the most desperate African American can attain "the desirable end of a splintered psyche," an ideal postfractured state and successfully achieve spiritual wholeness, regeneration, reintegration, and reclamation. Fragmentation results from the traumatic cultural displacement of black people of the diaspora. It is evidenced in "the rendering and mutilation of human spirit". Characters lose their selves as a result of their complete adoption of the dream; distortion in their psyche occurs when priorities are displaced in pursuit of materialistic success. Theoretically speaking, this is the cause of their trouble. African culture is partly different from Euro-American culture. Healing -- or restoration



of wholeness -- is therefore possible once one comes back to one's culture as evidence of fracturing and alienation can be linked to the basic opposition between Eurocentric and African-derived cultures (Pettis, 1995, 3-4).

Avey Johnson's case illustrates how spiritual wholeness can be achieved even if one's psyche is in its most extreme degree of fracturing. Once the character inhabited by the mutilated spirit consciously redefines priorities by privileging cultural connectedness whereby myths and legends become central to his/her belief; when s/he chooses to withhold his/her being, his/her black "self from the killing impulse of capitalism -- materialism," then his/her fractured psyche may be healed (Pettis, 1995, 8, 28).

Avey is presented as someone who is deeply immersed in Euro-American values: her excess baggage, the cruise ship with its "dazzling white steel," her "White Plains" home and its furnishings are material symbols of a Western culture she had internalized. "In her dream struggle with Great Aunt Cunny, the fur that is the immediate source of contention suggests Euro-American values," writes critic Carole Boyce Davies.<sup>23</sup>

In her case, cleansing is necessary to restore her wholeness. Without any doubt, to find peace, Avey has to wash herself clean of Western culture and return to her African identity. For this purpose, Avey is bathed, massaged, and renewed by Lebert Joseph's daughter, Rosalie Parvay. As critic Dorothy

---

<sup>23</sup> Carole Boyce Davies in Davis and Harris, eds., 1996, op. cit., 197-8.

Hamer Denniston observes, in Carriacou, "We see that Avey is really involved in a subconscious search to regain her lost reality" (1995, 127). To see her experience from Carole Boyce Davies's perspective, in Carriacou, this black, middle-aged, middle-class widow is literally and metaphorically "purged of her negativity during this reliving of the meaning of the 'middle passage,'" her journey being "climaxed when she joins the 'Nation Dance' and executes the steps that mark her African identity."<sup>24</sup> Avey, short for Avatara, finds her roots as a member of the Arada community of Carriacou. From tourist-like disengagement she moves to complete involvement and integration into the African community in the West Indies. After Avey had explored her own past and grieved on it, she is restored her wholeness; she becomes a new creature:

... Or that her mind, like her pocketbook outside, had been emptied of the contents of the past thirty years during the night, so that she had awakened with it like a slate that had been wiped clean, a *tabula rasa* upon which a whole new story could be written when she woke up. (Praisesong, 151)

To paraphrase Joyce Pettis, Avatara rediscovers her essential spiritual self by reconnecting with her African cultural origins on the Caribbean island of Carriacou which is said to be a place where remnants of African culture survive in ritual, family names, dance, myth, legend, and orality ( Pettis, 1995, 38). Needless to say the "new story" that Avey will privilege after her healing is African-based elements in her life. She can no longer stomach those symbols of Western culture. Her experience in Carriacou is a turning point in her life in

---

24 Ibidem.

that it shapes the remaining of her existence. The life-long moral lesson she has drawn from Carriacou prompts her plan for selling her house in North White Plains and moving to her girlhood home in Tatem for at least part of the year, so that she, like her aunt before her, could instill in her grandchildren the history and truths of their people and their past : "she would be as tyrannical in demanding that they be sent as her great-aunt had been with her" (**Praisesong**, 256).

Furthermore, considering every African descendant of the diaspora as a member of the same community, she vows to advise every young person on the oppressive relationship between conspicuous materialism and empty lives so that they might avoid self-entrapment in American ethics : "whenever she spotted one of them amid the crowd, those young, bright, fiercely articulate token few for whom her generation had worked the two and three jobs, she would stop them" (**Praisesong** 255). As Litz and Baechler have pointed out, "in referring to the novel as "praisesong" [...] Marshall recalls an ancestral worldview that might act as an antidote, as a source of healing for the disease of materialism so rampant in this modern world."<sup>25</sup>

In narrating the story, the narrator makes it clear through its telling that Avey Johnson will encourage every young African American to return to African identity, for keeping in touch with one's culture and community can always guarantee wholeness as exemplified in the character of Mr. Goodman, an

---

<sup>25</sup> In Baechler and Litz, eds, *op. cit.*, 302.

exemplary of full life. In "Barbados," the name Goodman is obviously symbolic of his character. Mr. Goodman, the local shopkeeper does not only smell of salt fish and rum, the common diet of the villagers; his face with its "loose folds of flesh, the skin slick with sweat as if oiled, the eyes scribbled with veins and mottled" (SCHS, 56) proves that his involvement with life and with people has been complete.

Responsive to the plight of his fellow villagers, he is the owner of the one shop in the area which "gave credit and booth which sold coconuts at the race track." Without any doubt, Marshall is inviting black diasporan people to imitate Mr. Goodman's attitude as she lays a heavy emphasis on the fact that materialism will eventually lead them to their own regret. Both Mr. Watford's expression of remorse and lust toward the end of the story substantiate this. Moreover, the lesson he receives from the servant girl -- which is a real condemnation -- is another clear indicator of the writer's standpoint:

You best move and don't come holding on to me, you nasty, pissy old man. That 's all you is, despite yuh big house and fancy furnitures and yuh newspapers from America. You ain't people, Mr Watford, you ain't people!" (SCHS, 67).

Indeed, "Barbados" suggests the potential pathetic fate of a man who surrenders his humanity to the materialism of the American Dream.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, return to African sources is strongly advised.

---

26 D. T. Turner, "Introduction," *op. cit.*, xxiv.

As was suggested earlier on, this return to African identity is also the leitmotif of George Lamming's writings. He is particularly concerned with the outcomes of cultural negligence in **Season of Adventure**, both at individual and state levels. In **In the Castle of My Skin**, we see how Lamming establishes the functioning of cultural hegemony in the colonial framework. The white landlord, for instance, is portrayed as the dominant cultural influence which shapes the village's customs; also the fact that the children mimic his tea party visible to them from the roof of his brick house on a hill is a further evidence of his cultural domination . Sandra Pouchet Paquet asserts:

The child's world is linked to the world of colonial culture and politics and the linkage adds to our understanding of both worlds and mechanics of cultural production in Creighton's Village.<sup>27</sup>

But Lamming's artistic purpose is not to privilege the dominant imperial culture over people's traditions. Therefore, like Paule Marshall, he also upgrades African culture in his fiction through the use of various techniques which convey his wish and determination to get his characters connected with the mother continent Africa. Lamming achieves this both through the techniques of telling and showing the story. Like Avey in **Praisesong for the Widow**, the character of Fola in **Season of Adventure** is influenced by the

---

<sup>27</sup> Paquet, "Foreword," op. cit., xvii.

remnants of African culture in San Cristobal. Moreover, the negligence of cultural identity has caused the fall of the first republic of San Cristobal.

An experience such as Avey's is known in George Lamming as a "backward glance." George Lamming's treatment of the backward glance is achieved through one's participation in the tonelle, the tonelle being the home of the Ceremony of Souls and the music of the steel drums. "There wouldn't be any music without the ceremonies," (SOA, 27) Charlot tells Fola. This Ceremony of Souls is a mystic commemoration of the past whereby one becomes aware of one's past through the intermediary of African priest and priestess. Several of the characters are linked in their eagerness for, or the fear of, any backward glance into their past in **Season of Adventure**. However, Fola's backward glance which occurred at the *tonelle* -- where she witnesses the Ceremony of Souls -- and the consequences of her visit into her cultural past, are of prime concern in this section.

The experience of the "backward glance" is somewhat mystical. Fola, an intelligent and privileged girl who has recently left school, is taken by Charlot, her history teacher, an Englishman, to witness a ceremony of Souls at the *tonelle*. The girl is shaken by the ceremony. As she watches the female servitors -- the *hounsi* -- dance to the music of the drums, her "fearful encounter with her forgotten self" occurs, her link with her past is established. Though she comes to the *tonelle* under the tutelage of Charlot, Fola discovers

in her backward glance a relationship to the *tonelle* that has nothing to do with Charlot's history : the essential history of all Charlot's world (SOA, 94), "the world and history on which she has been nurtured so far" (Paquet, 1982, 70,). This involves a new relationship to the past that is beyond the fixed relationship of Americans to Europe (**Pleasures**, 160). However, there are good reasons to believe that Fola's shame proves she has absorbed the history of the man who introduced her to the ritual and shares his educational background (Nair, 1996,115).

The *tonelle* is also an educational process in itself, because the backward glance has enabled Fola, an illegitimate girl, to develop an obsessive need to learn who her father is. It must be borne in mind that her state of being an illegitimate girl is concealed from her by her mother, Agnes, now wedded to Piggott, the Commissioner of police of San Cristobal.<sup>28</sup>

But the process of rediscovering origins is not an easy task for Fola, because as has observed critic Supriya Nair, Fola's process of returning to an immediate as well as historical past involves wilderness and cacophony, disconnection and confusion (Nair, 1995, 115). Critic Ambroise Kom shares this view when he declares that "Fola souffre des problèmes complexes que lui posent ses origines. Dans **Seasons of Adventure**, elle essaie désespérément de retrouver son identité" (Kom, 1986, 124-125). In this

---

<sup>28</sup> For more information on Fola's conception, the reader should refer to Ambroise Kom, op. cit., 41, footnote 9 on page 126 and Supriya Nair, op. cit., 118.

connection, James Draper also believes that "Fola seems symbolically to be proto-West Indian in her search for identity : who really is she, who is her father?" (Draper ed, 1992, 1230). Though Fola's awareness of the past in **Season of Adventure** is traumatic, her acceptance of the folk tradition on the Forest Reserve makes her aware of the ties she has with the illiterate, lower class, black women, in spite of her attraction to her white history teacher. Like Avey Johnson, Fola is reborn to the peasant community in the spiritual center of Forest Reserve, the *tonelle*. To paraphrase Supriya Nair once more (1996, 118), Fola's visit to the tonelle ultimately has revolutionized her sense of her individual and collective history:

It was because their relation to the *tonelle* was far more personal than any monument could ever be to an American in his mad pursuit of origin. *Personal and near*. Nearer than any famous grave that lay before Charlot's eye. Her relation to the *tonelle* was *near* and more personal since the conditions of her life today, the conditions of Liza's life in this very moment, could recall a departure that was near and tangible : the departure of those slaves who had started the serpent cult which the drum in their dumb eloquence had sought to resurrect. (SOA, 93, emphasis in original)

Her experience in the *tonelle* has led her to new discoveries. It has shed much more light on her cultural tradition and consequently, she establishes a complete connection between the dancing woman at the *tonelle*, Liza, and herself.



Just the way there exists a stark opposition between Western cosmological systems and the African ones, the *tonelle* stands in direct opposition to the "civilized honor of the whole republic" (SOA, 28) as this is characterized by Federal Drive, where the powerful families of the independent republic of San Cristobal reside. But Fola's encounter with, and acceptance of its folklore has sustained "her later participation in the revolt because it has enabled her to reconstitute herself in relation to a particular history" (Nair, 1996, 124).

It should be noted that folklore functions pedagogically in **Season of Adventure** since its result is perceived through Fola's change in attitude and her reaction to society. The consequences of Fola's participation in the *tonelle* are numerous. Personally, her life has undergone a drastic change. For instance, after this experience in the *tonelle* Fola's very language begins to change from "the rules of college speech" to the "private dialect" that unites her and Liza, Crim, and Powell (SOA, 91).

It has directed Fola's active bid to save the drums from extinction. This act, it must be argued, places her as a first class opponent of the patriarchal and neocolonial élite embodied in the Chief Commissioner of Police and head of a committee in charge of "raising the moral tone of the country's name abroad" (SOA, 102), that is, Piggott, her stepfather.

It is a well known fact that authorities condone folk or local culture only when it seems free of the risk of economic or political threat and when it can serve to invent a homogeneous nation (Nair, 1996,119). This view on folk culture has led Piggott and his associates in their determination to silence the drum because drumming can likely provide a communal framework for possible revolt. Needless to say that their resolution to put an end to the *tonelle* (and its drumming) has its historical antecedent in the colonial reaction to slave drumming. However, by making the revolt successful that caused the fall of the first republic, Lamming means the reader to see the consequences of the negligence of cultural tradition at the state level too:

The revolt of the drum is not over poverty or joblessness, but over what will be the cultural base of the peasant community with its *tonelle* and drums. Lamming asserts that the power to resist an oppressive regime lies in these roots. (Paquet, 1982, 80)

Just the way Paule Marshall in **Praisesong for the Widow** is encouraging a spiritual return to African roots for those of African Diaspora descent, regardless of one's age and geographical position/limitation, because every single human being feels the need to find his/her personal identity and to establish his /her cultural affiliation and allegiance, in **Season of Adventure** George Lamming preaches a return to the source, to Africa. As Crim says to the background of the drum: "perhaps contradiction help ... but is the way you forget. Is not simple forget, is forget to remember" ( SOA, 16).

As could be realized from both writers' insistence on a return to the African source, this connection to the past involves either the character's spiritual or physical journey to the mother continent. It therefore makes sense to say that the journey motif is another key characteristic of both Paule Marshall and George Lamming's writings. Daryl Pinckney, writing about Paule Marshall's fiction in general, and in particular about **Praisesong for the Widow** highlights this theme in Marshall when he writes the following lines:

The journey into the past, moving closer to one's cultural background, is a recurring theme in Marshall's fiction. Discovering the Caribbean or Africa has, for her, the properties of psychic healing. In her latest novel, **Praisesong for the Widow**, this pilgrimage serves an almost exorcistic function. It is a quest for purity and release.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, **Brown Girl, Brownstones** ends with Selina on the threshold of departure, ready to make the journey from Brooklyn to the Caribbean, a conscious, political choice to visit her homeland. Returning to her home country in order to search out the lost meaning of her homeland, to discover what went wrong for her people in America is a matter of conscious personal and political choice:

In making the choice to return to Barbados, to begin again, Selina symbolizes the community's need to reorder itself, to recognize the destruction of human values in a community devoted to money, ownership and power. **Brown Girl** is thus one of the most optimistic texts in Afro-American literature, for it assigns even to an oppressed people the power of conscious political choice: they are not victims.<sup>30</sup>

---

29 In Draper ed. op. cit., 1368.

30 Mary Helen Washington, "Afterword," op. cit., 322.

It is by now obvious that many of Marshall's characters make journeys that are a kind of reverse Middle Passage. It is extremely important to note that reversing the Middle Passage is a key characteristic of Paule Marshall's fiction. This movement is necessary, because before they can go forward they must first go back. Joyce Pettis notes that Marshall always "uses the journey motif to communicate the necessity of movement away from the debilitation caused by fracturing". Overall, she concludes that the journey motif in Paule Marshall serves to establish "cultural connections among people of the African diaspora and advances the traveler from spiritual moribondity to spiritual reclamation" (Pettis, 1995, 1). Denniston has expressed a similar view when she claims that Paule Marshall's insistence that "African people take a journey back through history and time to retrieve those traditional values which have sustained black peoples throughout the diaspora" is manifest in all her fiction to date (Denniston, 1995, 165).

The themes of exile and journey are linked in George Lamming's fiction. Exile, for instance, cannot be evoked in George Lamming without mentioning the theme of physical journey. A general observation which applies to Caribbean literature has to do with the frequent evocation of the sea as setting. Water as a location reminds one of the long wet hell of the Middle Passage, the historical slave past, dissemination from one coast to another (**Pleasures**, 12). It is worth emphasizing that the originality of Lamming here is the fact that **Natives of My Person** is thoroughly set on sea; the most important part of **The**

**Emigrants** also takes place on the sea. As regards Paule Marshall, she only evokes sea as setting in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** while referring to the drowning of Harriet.

Both ships, the **Golden Image (The Emigrants)** and the **Reconnaissance (Natives of My Person)** are reminiscent of the middle passage. Although there exist differences between the emigrant journey and the circumstances of the slave ship, the emigrants on board the **Golden Image** are crowded together in a dormitory arrangement that recalls the middle passage. This journey also features the "middle passage," in its theme of displacement in an alien and hostile environment (Paquet, 1982, 32). Equally, the long section entitled "The Middle Passage" in **Natives of My Person** [pages 155 through 330] is another reference to journey in Lamming. This section explores the psychological middle passage of the Europeans who operated the slave trade. It must be stated that both black slave and white master suffered a "middle passage," the white going through a period of spiritual brutality in their own lives, a kind of inner penalty for their outer actions of rapine and plunder. According to Lamming himself the Europeans who were slave dealers "had a middle passage, too, one that is now going to be seen on the *interior* of their lives."<sup>31</sup> The section "Middle Passage" aims to demonstrate the middle passage of the Europeans who were engaged in the trade of humans.

---

<sup>31</sup> In Kent, op. cit., 10.

If their preoccupation with an African cultural past is illustrated through their use of the journey motif, they also suggest new directions for its cultural future. To use Denniston's expression, they both seem "to call for the creation of a new, transformative identity, which, while culturally focused, is self-defined and ever-evolving" (Denniston, 1995, 148).

The use of ancestral figures in both also denotes a strong African presence. Ancestors in the black diasporan novel always function as a symbol of tradition (**Pleasures**, 229).

In George Lamming this ancestral figure is embodied in the characters of Old Ma and Old Pa in **In the Castle of My Skin**; and Old Ma Shephard in **Of Age and Innocence**.

It is extremely important to underline here that another distinguishing characteristic of Paule Marshall's writing lies in her focus on (female) ancestors as subjects and preservers of African cultural practices. Ancestors in her fiction seem to have a negative view on modernism. In "To Da-duh, In Memoriam," while the grandmother sticks to "the beauty and pain of the land, the sustenance of tradition," the values of much of the "underdeveloped" third world, we see her grandchild who celebrates the superiority of Western civilization, with its Empire State Building and bright lights. According to Carole

Boyce Davies, this short story "neatly dramatizes the tensions between ancestry and youth, tradition and modernity, and African and Western civilizations."<sup>32</sup> It must be noted that the granddaughter appears to win the contest of values because the grandmother dies but the granddaughter lives. However, years later this girl comes to realize the wisdom of her ancestors as she paints scenes of natural environment in the midst of her machine-plagued world.<sup>33</sup>

In the same vein, as a preserver of traditional values, Leesy Walkes in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** cannot understand the magnetism of American glamour and technology that seduces her grandchild, Vere. Vere (short for Vereson) wants to assert his manhood through the possession of a car. He is destroyed by the machine : "The promise of the Western technology is a promise that kills."<sup>34</sup>

According to Joyce Pettis, ancestors portrayed in Paule Marshall are generally "mythical, timeless, sage, androgynous, and futuristic visionaries". Her most elaborated characterized ancestors are Aunt Cunny and Joseph Lebert. Their assistance to Avey in her process of achieving wholeness is enormous. For instance, Avey's journey, which becomes a metaphor for her search for self, is propelled by lessons she had learned as a child, about the mythology of the African return her great-aunt had infused into her

---

<sup>32</sup> Carole Boyce Davies in Davis and Harris, eds., 1996, op. cit., 197.

<sup>33</sup> "To Da-duh, in Memoriam" in *Merle*, 105-6.

<sup>34</sup> Collier in Evans ed, op. cit., 309.

consciousness.<sup>35</sup> Under Joseph Lebert's direction, she was healed. It might be agreed that both ancestors are Avey's directors, "in both her literal and spiritual journey" (Pettis, 1995, 121).

Likewise, in order to shape the Caribbean heritage in the growing Ursa-Bea's consciousness, Celeste, the ancestral figure in **Daughters** exerts a considerable influence on Primus Mackenzie's daughter. She did this by educating Ursa-Bea about the island's history of resistance and by visiting the monument of Cuffee Ned and Congo Jane who stand as local cultural heroes.

By making the ancestors in her novels essential to the lives of modern black women and by conflating African cultural beliefs with African-American women's reverence for their female ancestors, Marshall pays homage to her own grandmother (Pettis, 1995, 118). Like Alice Walker and Toni Morrison<sup>36</sup>, Marshall believes in the significance of the ancestors and celebrates them in her fiction, because they are the ground on which she stands.

Before closing this discussion of the ancestral figure in Paule Marshall, it must be underlined that the character of Da-duh in Paule Marshall's most autobiographical short story "To Da-duh, In Memoriam," bears similarities with other matriarchal figures that appear in her fiction. Da-duh is the old Mrs Thompson in **Brown Girl, Brownstones** who instructs Selina; she is also part

---

<sup>35</sup> Carole Boyce Davies in Davis and Harris, eds., 1996, op. cit., 197.

<sup>36</sup> For more information on the prevalence of ancestors in African American fiction, see her article : "Rootedness : The Ancestor as Foundation," in Evans ed , op. cit., 343.



of Aunt Vi in "Reena" and Medford in "British Guiana". She also embodies features of Aunt Leesy, the prophetess in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** and the character of Aunt Cunny, Avey Johnson's great-aunt in **Praisesong for the Widow**. In Marshall's own words, Da-duh turns up everywhere:

She is an ancestor figure, symbolic for me of the long line of black women and men -- African and New World -- who made my being possible, and whose spirit I believe continues to animate my life and work. I wish to acknowledge and celebrate them. I am, in a word, an unabashed ancestor worshipper.<sup>37</sup>

In their article on Paule Marshall, Walton Litz and Lea Baechler share this view when they argue that the true autobiographical nature of this short story has enabled Paule Marshall to achieve such a contrasting figure in Da-duh : "By situating the story in Barbados and by portraying her grandmother," they write, "Marshall [...] carves out the crevices of a character who would be a forerunner of Leesy Walkes, who in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People** represents the tenacity of history in the third world."<sup>38</sup>

The point of this chapter is that they have much in common. However, there are some significant differences.

---

<sup>37</sup> Headnote to "To Da-duh, In Memoriam," in *Merle*, 95 .  
<sup>38</sup> Baechler and Litz, eds, *op. cit.*, 298-9.

## VII.2. DIFFERENCE: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE AND STYLE.

There is an artistic difference between George Lamming and Paule Marshall. The difference lies not in their ideologies or their central themes, but in their perspectives, in their literary styles. George Lamming's perspective is not essentially feminist, though he moves somewhat in this direction in his later works, whereas Paule Marshall's perspective is thoroughly feminist. One indication of this difference is Lamming's relatively heavier focus on social and historical issues and events versus Marshall's relative preoccupation with personal lives. For instance, **Season of Adventure**, **In the Castle of My Skin** and **Of Age and Innocence** describe the struggle of the West Indian people to be free of the political, economic and cultural dominations that have characterized their history. George Lamming is more concerned with state-level whereas Paule Marshall limits her preoccupation to community level. It could be said, to some extent, that Paule Marshall raises awareness in the individual in order to have him/her play a better and positive role within the community. Whether in **Brown Girl, Brownstones**, in **Daughters**, or in **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**, Paule Marshall's focus is consistently and constantly on community development. Many critics of Paule Marshall's work acknowledge her concern with individual and community in her fiction. Eugenia Collier makes this point when she writes that Paule Marshall's fiction traces "a progression from the divided individual self to the self made whole

through merging with the community."<sup>39</sup> Carole Boyce Davies, for her part, points out that Paule Marshall "always skillfully evokes the African cultural presence in any setting, reclaiming both individual and group identity."<sup>40</sup> As for Lea Baechler and Walton Litz, they express the view that Paule Marshall's work mainly develops the theme of "the black diasporic woman's quest for wholeness and the integration of the various parts of one's self -- race, ethnicity, gender, historical process, and the specific individual in the context of community."<sup>41</sup> However, the relationship that exists between state and community indicates that both are concerned with essentially the same issue.

That Paule Marshall's perspective is thoroughly feminist is shown in the portrayal of her female characters. The simple fact that her writing became a reference in the second wave of American feminism testifies to this assumption. Therefore, it is needless to emphasize this aspect in this section. It must simply be acknowledged that in all her literary production to date Paule Marshall can be described as a true feminist. "My feminism takes its expression through my work," Paule Marshall said in an interview. Women figure prominently in Paule Marshall's writing for her literary production is entirely shaped by their power. Because women are central for her, she lets them "speak their pieces." They are central figures, actors, activists in her fiction rather than just background figures. Even her first short stories are entirely feminist-oriented. In **Soul Clap Hands and Sing**, for instance, each of

---

39 Collier in Evans ed , op. cit., 295.

40 Carole Boyce Davies, in Davis and Harris, eds., 1996, op. cit., 192.

41 Baechler and Litz, eds, op. cit., 289.

the stories deals with an elderly man who suffers the final and fatal defeat of his life at the hands of a contemptuous woman; the female character is presented here as a life force, a source of salvation. Without them, no life is possible for the men. To make a long story short, women are the centers of power in Paule Marshall's writing.<sup>42</sup> Once more, it should be underlined that this pattern is a central feature of Paule Marshall's fiction.

The semi-feminist perspective of George Lamming, on the other hand, needs more elaboration in this section. As far as the place of women in society is concerned, it might be argued that George Lamming holds the same conception on this issue as does Paule Marshall; but here lies the difference : George Lamming only addresses this issue later in his writing -- by giving more positive roles to women -- whereas in her first steps of literary apprenticeship, Paule Marshall tackled, head-on, this phenomenon.

George Lamming's view regarding the place of women in his writing has undergone a self-conscious shift. The place women are given in George Lamming's fiction indicates a revision in George Lamming's vision of society. The writer himself adopts a self-critical attitude to his first novel, **In the Castle of My Skin**, when he later acknowledges that this novel is basically characterized by the omnipresence of boys and absence of female actors. In his conversation with Drayton and Andaye he said: "**In the Castle of My Skin**

---

<sup>42</sup> See Paule Marshall's interview quoted by Mary Helen Washington in her "Afterword," *op. cit.*, 324.

[is] dominated by boys, there is no reference at all to girls. And it has taken critics a long time to notice this absence."<sup>43</sup> Critic Sandra Pouchet Paquet also notes that in **In the Castle of My Skin**, girls are rarely mentioned and, except for the prostitute, women are associated with domesticity and socialization.<sup>44</sup> Though George Lamming praises the maternal figure in this novel, it must be observed that these women just provide for their children, and raise them. They are not described in a more activist position; their contribution to the nationalist struggle is totally ignored in **In the Castle of My Skin**.

George Lamming's revision of the female presence in his writing can be traced back to the publication of his second piece of fiction, **The Emigrants**. In this novel, the novelist suggests that both sexes are equally involved in the process of the exilic experience. By presenting Miss Dorskins's work-place as the meeting place of the Caribbean women in London and by describing their confinement and isolation in "the mother country", the writer has taken a first significant step toward the inclusion of women in his literary production to come.

He has achieved the second important step in his third novel, **Season of Adventure**. In this novel more than any other one by George Lamming, Fola, a strong female character, is allowed to emerge as distinct subject. This is a tangible proof that women also actively participated in the nationalist struggle.

---

<sup>43</sup> George Lamming in R. Drayton and Andaye ed. op. cit., 13; quoted in Nair, op. cit., 141.

<sup>44</sup> Paquet, "Foreword," op. cit., xiv.

Fola's revolutionary role in **Season of Adventure** is partly explained by the fact that for the first time in George Lamming's fiction, the feminine principle in Caribbean society is seen as "an active agent of self-transformation, with the emphasis on the regenerative power of the womb."<sup>45</sup>

The revolutionary role is extended to other women in **Season of Adventure**. As Lamming puts it, women in this novel have initiated a revolutionary break. Sandra Pouchet Paquet comments on the important role played by women in this piece of fiction when she writes the following lines:

First it was Agnes at war with the mother, and then Fola at war with Agnes over the values that organize her life. For the first time a woman is the "initiator of a revolutionary break" rather than the repressive and inhibiting principle in the society. In Fola, the women in Lamming's fiction recover from a consistently uncreative response to life. This is a new and positive thrust in Lamming's evaluation of the Caribbean experience, for Fola proves a sensitive and intelligent character with a powerful inner life. She is a romantic figure who, at seventeen, successfully challenges the bias of her education and class to make the revolt of the drums a reality. (Paquet, 1982, 72)

Supriya Nair says this shift in George Lamming's artistic consideration of the female principle owes much to the active role women have played in redirecting his attention, or Caribbean writers' focus, in general. Reporting an interview that he had with George Lamming on July 6, 1992, Supriya Nair writes : "he told me that women had forced the writers to change their

---

<sup>45</sup> Lamming reading and discussing his own work at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, June 22, 1973, quoted in Paquet, 1982, op. cit., 72.

discourse and recommended **Out of the Kumbbla** for readings of women writers in the Caribbean."<sup>46</sup>

Moreover, George Lamming's conviction of women's role and place in society must have caused him to explore this subject-matter in **Natives of My Person**, where he deeply analyses women's influence in everyday life. Commenting on the absolute commanding position of women in **Natives of My Person**, Sandra Pouchet Paquet observes that "women dominate the novel as both the inspiration and the doom of the enterprise. They represent a past and a future their men cannot co-ordinate" (Paquet, 1982, 107). George Lamming's further step in this novel lies in his suggestion to revise the male/female relationship as it functions in our contemporary world. As many critics claim, **Natives of My Person** provides a context for evaluating the sexual politics of our time which call for a complete reorganization of traditional roles. One interpretation of the last line of **Natives of My Persons** conveys this meaning. It reads : "We are a future they must learn" (NOP, 351). This sentence implies not just the value of instrumental process, but the dire necessity of educating oneself in the perspectives outside of one's inherited privileges. This is to suggest that the men on the **Reconnaissance** cannot work productively with their current attitude to women; unless they give up their patriarchal privileges, they cannot succeed in their new settlement in San Cristobal. The author of **Natives of My Person** believes that « If the man/woman relationship is

---

<sup>46</sup> Supriya Nair op. cit., 157 (see footnote 12)

aborted, is perverted, there will be a corresponding perversion in the relation between man and what he calls his work or his conception of fulfillment."<sup>47</sup> Consequently, any achievement of theirs must first rely on their revising the role and acknowledging women as full participants in the development of their enterprise. Pitandos describes the dilemma of the leaders of the enterprise in the following terms:

To be within the orbit of power was their total ambition. But real power frightened them. To shine on the inside, within the orbit of power ! There they were at home. But they had to avoid the touch of power, itself. To feel authority over the women ! That was enough for them. But to commit themselves fully to what they felt such authority over. That they could never master. Such power they were afraid of. (NOP, 325)

In another interview with Daryl Cumber Dance, George Lamming reconfirms this view expressed earlier, that the men's inability to include the women in their plan dramatizes a conflict in their world and leads to the termination of the enterprise. While asked the question whether it can be said that the ideal society that the men envision in **Natives of My Person** can be realized only when they learn from the women how to love, George Lamming answers in the following terms:

Yes... the society that they wanted to shape, yes, is a society which I think would be made with women, yes, the dominant influence in that society. It certainly couldn't be made on the basis that produced their earlier relationships.<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Lamming in Kent, *op. cit.*, 6.

<sup>48</sup> Lamming in Dance, *ed.*, *op. cit.*, 14.



This view expressed by the novelist is credited by one of his critics who considers that the women are the key to any liberation from a destructive past in **Natives of My Person** in that "their revolt demands the most radical change of all, since unlike the mutiny of the crew, it requires a restructuring of the balance of power that determines the quality of human relation in society" (Paquet, 1982, 101). Actually, by making their bid for a share in what has been strictly masculine endeavor, they are pursuing a radical change in status.

Another difference lies in their stand on the issue of justice or wholeness. Paule Marshall's writing is described as a literature of reconnection. Her main characters are often reconnected to the mother continent Africa and gain psychological and/or spiritual balance(s). Through their journeys, Paule Marshall establishes "cultural connections among people of the African diaspora and advances the traveler from spiritual moribondity to spiritual reclamation" (Pettis, 1995, 1). What is more, she insists that black people of the diaspora must first recognize and acknowledge their own responsibility in their assimilation of the false values that have been imposed on them.

George Lamming's writing is described as a work that belongs to a resistance body of literature. Contrary to Paule Marshall, resistance and violence are more pronounced in his work. His use of the legend of the Tribe Boys and the "Ceremony of Souls" suggests this trend in George Lamming. It

is a fact that slaves are induced to believe that under the possession and protection of vodu, "they could not be harmed by bullets or that they would return to Africa if they died on the battlefield" (Taylor, 1989, 109). By describing these ceremonies in his novel, George Lamming suggests this as a way to resist oppression. Ambroise Kom is of this opinion when he expresses the view that:

De la même manière que le vodou niait l'ordre blanc et esclavagiste, Lamming suggère à ses congénères de recourir aux loas s'il le faut pour reconquérir leur dignité et leur indépendance. Le petit peuple refusera l'exile intérieur que l'opresseur lui impose avec d'autant plus de force et de conviction que les signifiants culturels qui déterminent son action pré-existent au phénomène colonial ou néocolonial. (Kom, 1986, 5)

Paule Marshall's aim is to restore wholeness. This aim, restoring wholeness is one of the qualities of the new kind of justice that she wants to promote. Even if the term "wholeness" moves one away from the opposition one is aware of with the term "justice," that is, its opposite "injustice," and away from any conception of "revenge" which is part of some particularly "old" concept of justice. The term justice for George Lamming and wholeness for Paule Marshall may seem a bit risky, but we may assume that there is somewhat a "masculine" and "feminine" difference between George Lamming and Paule Marshall, as evidenced by a more natural application of the term "justice" to Lamming's aim and of "wholeness" to Marshall's.

It can be said, in the last analysis, that George Lamming and Paule Marshall are basically dealing with the same situation and are suggesting the same solution. However, though they deal with essentially the same problems and believe in essentially the same solutions, their novels are obviously different. This is due to the fact that George Lamming is a man, a West Indian with experience in cultural ties to Britain and Paule Marshall is a woman, an American with experience in cultural ties to the West Indies. Another factor that can explicate the differences in their novels has to do with their literary style. George Lamming is more of a modernist in his style whereas Paule Marshall is more of a realist. The implications of these differences in perspective and style resonate throughout the works of both writers.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## I. PRIMARY SOURCES.

### 1. WORKS OF GEORGE LAMMING.

#### 1.1. FICTION.

(1) - (1953), **In the Castle of My Skin**. London, Longman and Michael Joseph. New York, McGraw-Hill. Reprinted (1997), Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.

(2) - (1954), **The Emigrants**. London, Michael Joseph. (1980), London and New York, Allison and Busby. Reprinted (1997), Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.

(3) - (1958), **Of Age and Innocence**. London, Michael Joseph. (1981), London and New York, Allison and Busby.

(4) - (1960), **Season of Adventure**. London, Michael Joseph. (1979), London and New York, Allison and Busby.

(5) - (1971), **Water with Berries**. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston. (1972), London, Longman. (1973), London, Longman. (1974), London, Picador Press.

(6) - (1971), **Natives of My Person**. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston. (1971), New York and London, Alison and Busby. (1974), London, Picador Press. Reprinted (1986), London, Alison and Busby.

#### 1. 2. NON-FICTION.

(7) - (1955), "An Introduction" to [Bim], **Bim**, no. 22 (1955), pp. 66-67.

(8) - (1955), "The Negro Writer and His World," **Caribbean Quarterly**, vol. 5, no. 2 (1956), pp. 109-115; also in **Présence Africaine** Nos 8, 9, 10 (June-November 1956), pp. 324-332.

(9) - (1957), "Tribute to a Tragic Jamaican," **Bim**, no. 27 (1957), pp. 214-217.

- (10) - (1960), **The Pleasures of Exile**. London, Michael Joseph. Reprinted (1992), Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.
- (11) - (1961), "The West Indians : Our Loneliness Immigrants," **MacClean's** (Nov. 4, 1961), pp. 27, 52-56.
- (12) - (1966), "Caribbean Literature : The Black Rock of Africa," **Africa Forum**, vol. 1, no. 4 (1966), pp. 32-52.
- (13) - (1966), "The West Indian People," **New World Quarterly**, vol. 2, no. 2 (1966), pp. 63-74.
- (14) - (1975), "On West Indian Writing," **Revista/Review Interamericana**, no. 5 (1975), pp. 149-162.
- (15) - (1986), "Politics and Culture," **Sargasso**, no. 3 (1986), pp. 61-68.
- (16) - (1997), "Introduction" to **In the Castle of My Skin**. Reprinted (1997) Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, pp. xxxv-xlvi.

### 1. 3. INTERVIEWS.

- (17) Munro, Ian and Sander, Reinhard (1972), "Interview with George Lamming ," **Kas-Kas**. African and African American Research Institute, The University of Texas at Austin, pp. 5-22.
- (18) Kent, George E. (1973), "A Conversation with George Lamming," **Black World**, vol. 22, no. 5 (1973), pp. 4-14, 88-97.
- (19) Riwa, Masanga (1975), "An Interview with Mr. George Lamming," **Umma: A Literary Magazine from the University of Dar-es Salaam**. vol. 5 (1975), pp. 100-103.
- (20) Kemoli, Arthur M. (1976), "On Interviewing George Lamming," **Umma**, vol. 3 (1976), pp. 20-22, 24-25, 30.
- (21) Lee, Robert (1978), "Caribbean Politics from 1930's to Tense 70's : A Contact Interview with the Author of **Natives of My Person**," **Caribbean Contact**, no. 5 (March 1978), pp. 10-11.

- (22) Fiet, Lowell (1986), "Intersection and Divergence : Interview [with Lamming and Gordon K. Lewis]," **Sargasso**, no. 3 (1986), pp. 3-30.
- (23) Tarrieu, Yannick (1988), "Caribbean Politics and Psyche : A Conversation with George Lamming," **Commonwealth Essays and Studies**, no. 10 (Spring 1988), pp. 14-25.
- (24) Birbalsingh, Frank (1988), "George Lamming in Conversation with Frank Birbalsingh," **Journal of Commonwealth Literature**, vol. 23, no. 1 (1988), pp. 182-188.
- (25) Drayton, Richard and Andaiye. eds. (1990), **Conversations : George Lamming, Essays, Addresses and Interviews, 1953-1990**. London, Kiria Press.

## 2. WORKS OF PAULE MARSHALL.

### 2. 1. FICTION.

- (26) - (1959), **Brown Girl, Brownstones**. New York, Feminist Press. (1981), New York, Feminist Press, With an Afterword by Mary Helen Washington.
- (27) - (1969), **The Chosen Place, the Timeless People**. New York, Avon Books, Vintage, Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich. (1970), London, Longman. (1984), New York, Vintage Books.
- (28) - (1983), **Reena and Other Stories**. New York, Feminist Press.
- (29) - (1983), **Praisesong for the Widow**. New York, E. P. Dutton.
- (30) - (1985) , **Merle and Other Stories**. London, Virago Press, Ltd.
- (31) - (1988), **Soul Clap Hands and Sing**, With an Introduction by Darwin T. Turner. Washington D.C., Howard University Press.
- (32) - (1992), **Daughters**. New York, Plume Book.

## 2. 2. NON-FICTION.

- (33) - (1966), "The Image of Negro Woman in Literature," **Freedomways**,  
(Winter 1966), pp. 8-25.
- (34) - (1970), "Some Get Wasted," in John Henrik Clarke ed. (1970), **Harlem:  
Voices From the Soul of Black America**. New York,  
American Library, pp. 136-145.
- (35) - (1973), "Shaping the World of My Art," **New Letters**, no. 40 (Autumn  
1973), pp. 97-112 .
- (36) - (1974), "Shadow and Act," in **Mademoiselle** (June 1974), pp. 82-83.
- (37) - (1983), "The Making of a Writer : From the Poet in the Kitchen,"  
**New York Times Book Review** (January 9, 1983), p.3.

## 2. 3. INTERVIEWS.

- (38) DeVeaux, Alexis (1980), "Paule Marshall -- In Celebration of Our  
Triumph," **Essence**, no. 11 (May 1980), pp. 96, 98,  
123-134.
- (39) Bröck, Sabine (1984), "'Talk as a Form of Action': An Interview with  
Paule Marshall, September 1982," in Gunter H. Lenz ed.  
(1984), **History and Tradition in Afro-American Culture**,  
Frankfurt, Campus, pp. 194-206.
- (40) William, John (1986), "Return of a Native Daughter : An Interview with  
Paule Marshall and Maryse Condé," Trans. John William,  
**Sage**, vol. 3, no. 3 (1986), pp. 52-53.
- (41) Russell, Sandi (1988), "Interview with Paule Marshall," **Wasafari**, no. 8  
(Spring 1988), pp. 14-16.
- (42) - (1988), "Paule Marshall Talking with Mary Helen Washington," in Mary  
Chamberlain ed. (1988), **Writing Lives: Conversation  
Between Women Writers**. London, Virago, pp. 161-167.
- (43) - (1989), Ogundipe-Leslie, Omolara, "'Re-Creating Ourselves All Over the  
World': An Interview with Paule Marshall," based on an



interview with Marshall in Ibadan, Nigeria, January 28, 1977. **Matatu**, vol. 3, no. 6 (1989), pp. 25-38.

- (44) Pettis, Joyce (1991-1992), "A **Melus** Interview : Paule Marshall," **Melus**, vol. 17, no. 4 (1991-1992), pp. 117-129.
- (45) Graulich, Melody and Sisco, Lisa (1992), "Meditation on Language and the Self : A Conversation with Paule Marshall," **NWSA Journal**, no. 4 (Fall 1992), pp. 282-302.
- (46) Dance, Daryl Cumber (1992), "An Interview with Paule Marshall," **Southern Review**, no. 28 (Winter 1992), pp. 1-20.
- (47) Scott, Della (1993), "An Interview with Paule Marshall," **Abafazi** (Spring/Summer 1993), pp. 34-38.
- (48) Elam, Angela (1996), "To Be in the World : An Interview with Paule Marshall," **New Letters**, vol. 62, no. 4 (1996), pp. 96-105.

## II. SECONDARY SOURCES.

- (49) Abrahams, Peter (1954), **Tell Freedom : Memories of Africa**. New York, Alfred Knopf.
- (50) ----- (1970), **Mine Boy**. New York, Collier Books.
- (51) Achebe, Chinua (1975), **Morning Yet on Creation Day**. Garden City, New York, Doubleday.
- (52) ----- (1990), "Spelling Our Proper Names," in Jules Chamtzky ed. **Black Writers Redefine the Struggle**. Amherst, Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities, pp. 5-12.
- (53) Adell, Sandra (1994), **Double Consciousness, Double Bind**. Chicago, University of Illinois Press.
- (54) Aiyejina, Funso (1984), "The Backward Glance : Lamming's **Season of Adventure** and William's **Other Leopards**," **African Literature Today**, no. 14 (1984), pp. 118-126.
- (55) ----- (1987), "Dereck Walcott : the Poet as a Federate Consciousness," in Ernest Emenyonu, ed. (1987), **Black Literature and**

**Black Consciousness in Literature.** Ibadan, Heinemann, pp. 97-112.

- (56) Amos, Valerie, and Parmar, Pratibha (1984), "Challenging Imperial Feminism," **Feminist Review**, no. 17 (July 1984), pp. 3-19.
- (57) Andermahr, Sonya; Lovel, Terry and Wolkowitz, Carol (1997), **A Glossary of Feminist Theory.** London and New York, Arnold.
- (58) Anderson, Benedict (1983), **Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.** London and New York, Verso.
- (59) Asante, Molefi Kete (1987), **The Afrocentric Idea.** Philadelphia, Temple University Press.
- (60) Ashcroft, Bill ; Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen (1989), **The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literature.** London and New York, Routledge.
- (61) ----- (1995), **The Post-Colonial Studies Reader.** London and New York, Routledge.
- (62) Atwood, Margaret (1988), **Cat's Eye.** Toronto, McClelland and Stewart.
- (63) Baechler, Lea and Litz, A. Walton (1991), "Paule Marshall" in Baechler and Litz, eds (1991), **African American Writers.** New York, Charles Scribner's Son, pp. 289-303.
- (64) Baker, Jr., Houston A. (1980), **The Journey Back : Issues in Black Literature and Criticism.** Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- (65) ----- (1984), **Blues, Ideology and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory.** Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- (66) Bakhtin, M. M. (1986), **Speech Genre and Other Late Essays.** Ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist ; translated by Vern McGree. Austin, University of Texas Press.
- (67) Baldwin, James (1962), **Fire Next Time.** New York, Dell Publishing Group.

- (68) ----- (1974), **If Beale Street Could Talk**. London, Michael Joseph.
- (69) Baldwin, Joseph A. (1984), "African Self-Consciousness and the Mental Health of African American" **Journal of Black Studies** no. 15 (1984), pp. 177-194.
- (70) ----- (1985), "Psychological Aspects of European Cosmology in American Society," **Western Journal of Black Studies** no. 9 (1985), pp. 216-223.
- (71) Balzac, Honoré de (1972), **Le Père Goriot**. Paris, Livre de Poche.
- (72) Baraka, Imamu Amiri (LeRoi Jones) (1969), **Black Magic Poetry: Collected Poetry, 1961-1967**. New York, Boobbs-Merril Company.
- (73) Baruch, Elaine Hoffman, ed (1984), **Women in Search of Utopia**. New York, Schocken Books.
- (74) Beier, Ulli (1967), **Introduction to African Literature. An Anthology of Cultural Writing from "Black Orpheus"**. Evanston, Northwestern University Press.
- (75) Bell, Bernard W. (1987), **The Afro-American Novel and Its Tradition**. Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press.
- (76) Benston, Kimberley W. ed (1978), **Imamu Amiri Baraka: A Collection of Critical Essays**. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- (77) Bhabha, Homi K. ed. (1990), **Nation and Narration**. London, Routledge.
- (78) Birbalsingh, Frank ed. (1996), **Frontiers of Caribbean Literature in English**. London and Basingstoke, Macmillan Education Ltd.
- (79) Blassingame, John (1972), **The Slave Community**. New York, Oxford University Press.
- (80) Blunt, Alison and Rose, Gillian eds (1994), **Writing Women and Space**. New York and London, Guilford Press.

- (81) Brathwaite, Kamau Edward (1970), "West Indian History and Society in the Art of Paule Marshall's Novel," **Journal of Black Studies** no. 1 (Dec 1970), p. 227.
- (82) ----- (1973), **The Arrivants**. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- (83) ----- (1984), **The History of the Voice : the Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry**. London, New Beacon.
- (84) ----- (1993), **Roots**. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.
- (85) Brown, Carolyn T. (1983), "The Myth of the Fall and the Dawning of Consciousness in George Lamming's **In the Castle of My Skin**," **African Literature Today**, no. 57 (Winter 1983), pp. 38-43.
- (86) Brown, Sterling (1933), "The Negro Character as Seen by White Authors," **Journal of Negro Education**, no. 2 (1933), pp. 179-203.
- (87) Brydon, Diana and Tiffin, Helen (1993), **Decolonizing Fictions**. New South Wales, Australia, Dangaroo Press .
- (88) Bulhan, Hussein Abdilahi (1985), **Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression**. London and New York, Plenum Press.
- (89) Burns, W. H. (1963), **The Voices of Negro Protest in America**. London, Oxford University Press.
- (90) Busia, Abena (1989), "What is Your Nation? Reconnecting Africa and Her Diaspora Through Paule Marshall's **Praisesong for the Widow**," in Cheryl A. Wall, ed. (1989), **Changing Our Own World**. New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, pp. 196-211.
- (91) Busia, Abena P. A. and Stanlie, James S. M. eds. (1993), **Theorizing Black Feminisms**. London and New York, Routledge.
- (92) Cabral, Amilcar (1973), **Return to the Sources: Selected Speeches**. London and New York, Monthly Review Press.

- (93) Campbell, Joseph (1968), **The Hero with a Thousand Faces**. 2nd edition, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press.
- (94) Carlos, José (1971), **Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality**. Austin, University of Texas Press.
- (95) Cartey, Wilfred (1966-1967), "George Lamming and the Search for Freedom," **New World Quarterly : Barbados Independent Issue** (1966-1967), pp. 121-128.
- (96) Césaire, Aimé (1947), **Cahier d'un retour au Pays natal**. Paris, Présence Africaine.
- (97) ----- (1956), "La culture et la civilisation," **Présence Africaine**, Nos. 8, 9, 10 (June-Nov. 1956), pp. 190-205.
- (98) ----- (1956), **Discours sur le colonialisme**. Paris, Présence Africaine.
- (99) ----- (1969), **Une Tempête**. Paris, Seuil.
- (100) Chamber, Ian and Curti, Linda. eds. (1996), **The Post-Colonial Question : Common Sky, Divided Horizons**. London and New York, Routledge.
- (101) Charras, Françoise (1992), "Rites et célébrations dans deux œuvres de Paule Marshall : "To Dah-Du In Memoriam" et **Praisesong for the Widow**," **Revue Française d'Etudes Américaines (RFEA)**, vol. 51 (Feb. 1992), pp. 35-43.
- (102) Chauhan, P. S. (1996), "Caribbean Writing in English: Intimations of a Historical Nightmare, " in Mohanram and Rajan eds. (1996), pp. 43-51.
- (103) Chiwenzu, Jemie and Madubuike eds. (1980), **African Fiction and Poetry and their Critics**. Enugu, Nigeria, Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- (104) Christian, Barbara T. (1984), **Black Women Novelists: the Development of a Tradition, 1892-1976**. Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press.

- (105) ----- (1984), "Paule Marshall," in Davis, Thadious M. and Harris, Trudier eds. **Afro-American Fiction Writer After 1955**. Detroit, Gale Research Company, pp. 161-171.
- (106) ----- (1983), "Ritualistic Process and the Structure of Paule Marshall's **Praisesong for the Widow**," **Callaloo**, no. 6 (Spring/Summer 1983), pp. 74-84.
- (107) Clarke, John Henrik ed. (1970), **Harlem : Voices From the Soul of Black America**. New York, American Library.
- (108) Cobham, Rondha (1979), "Background of West Indian Literature," in King, Bruce ed. (1979), **West Indian Literature**. London, Macmillan Press Ltd., pp. 9-29.
- (109) Collier, Eugenia (1982), "Selina's Journey Home : From Alienation to Unity in Paule Marshall's **Brown Girl, Brownstones**," **Obsidian**, no. 8 (1982), pp. 6-19.
- (110) ----- (1982), "Dimensions of Alienation in Two Black-American and Caribbean Novels," **Phylon**, no. 43 (March 1982), pp. 46-56.
- (111) ----- (1984), "Closing the Circle : the Movement from Division to Wholeness in Paule Marshall's Fiction," in Mari Evans ed. **Black Women Writers (1950-1980)**. New York, Anchor Books/Doubleday, pp. 295-315.
- (112) Collins, Patricia Hill (1989), "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought. **Sign** no. 14 (1989), pp. 875-884.
- (113) ---- (1990), **Black Feminist Thought : Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment**. New York, Routledge.
- (114) Coombes, Orde ed. (1974), **Is Massa Day Dead? Black Moods in the Caribbean**. New York, Doubleday.
- (115) Condé, Maryse (1994), **I Tituba, Black Witch of Salem**. New York, Ballantine Books.
- (116) Conrad, Joseph (1897), **The Nigger of the Narcissus**. Reprinted (1916), New York, Doubleday.

- (117) Cornell, George (1987), "The Imposition of Western Definitions of Literature," in Thomas King et al. eds., **The Native in Literature : Canadian and Comparative Perspective**. Okville, ECW Press, pp. 174-187.
- (118) Coser, Stelamaris (1984), **Bridging the Americas : The Literature of Paule Marshall, Toni Morrison, and Gayle Jones**. Philadelphia, Temple University Press.
- (119) Cowley, Malcolm (1976), **Poésie, Roman, Théâtre Américains: par les chemins de la critique**. Trans. Antoinette Roubichou. Paris, Nouveaux Horizons.
- (120) Crane, Michael (1982), **Testing the Chains : Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies**. Ithaca, New York, Cornell University Press.
- (121) Cronon, Edmund (1955), **Black Moses: the Story of Marcus Garvey**. Madison, University of Wisconsin Press.
- (122) Crowder, Michael (1968), **West Africa Under Colonial Rule**. London, Hutchinson and Co.
- (123) Cudjoe, Selwyn R. (1980), **Resistance and Caribbean Literature**. Athens, Ohio University Press.
- (124) Dance, Daryl Cumber ed. (1986), **Fifty Caribbean Writers**. New York, Greenwood Press.
- (125) ----- (1992), **Conversations with Contemporary West Indian Writers**. Leeds, Peepal Tree Books.
- (126) Dathorne, O. R. (1974), **The Black Mind : A History of African Literature**. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- (127) Davies, Carole Boyce (1987), "Black Woman's Journey Into Self: A Womanist Reading of Paule Marshall's **Praisesong for the Widow**," **Matatu**, vol. 1, no. 1 (1987), pp. 19-34.
- (128) ----- (1996), "Paule Marshall," in Davis, Thadious M. and Harris, Trudier eds. **Afro-American Fiction Writer After 1955**. Detroit, Gale Research Company, pp. 192-202.

- (129) Davies, Miranda ed, (1983), **Third World / Second Sex: Women's Struggles and National Liberation**. London, Zed Press.
- (130) Davis, John P. (1966), **The American Negro Reference Book**. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prince Hall Inc.
- (131) Deane, Seamus (1990), **Introduction to Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature**. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- (132) DeLamotte, Eugenia (1993), "Women, Silence, and History in **The Chosen Place, The Timeless People**," *Callaloo*, no. 6 (Winter 1993), pp. 227-242.
- (133) Denniston, Dorothy Hamer (1995), **The Fiction of Paule Marshall : The Reconstruction of History, Culture and Gender**. Knoxville, University of Texas Press.
- (134) Deren, Maya (1970), **Divine Horsemen : The Voodoo Gods of Haiti**. New York, Dell Publishing Company, Inc.
- (135) Derrida, Jacques (1978), **Writing and Difference**. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- (136) Dirks, Nicholas B. ed. (1992), **Colonialism and Culture**. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.
- (137) Dorfman, Ariel (1983), **The Empire's Old Clothes : What the Lone Ranger, Babar and Other Innocent Heroes Do to Our Minds**. New York, Pantheon.
- (138) Dorsinville, Max (1974), **Caliban without Prospero, Essays on Quebec and Black Literature**. Erin, Ontario, Press Porcepic.
- (139) Douglass, Frederick (1982), **The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself**. New York, Viking Penguin Inc.
- (140) ----- (1969), **My Bondage and My Freedom**. New York, Dover Publications.
- (141) ----- (1962), **Life and Time of Frederick Douglass**. New York, Macmillan Publishing Company.



- (142) ----- (1972), "Oration Delivered in Corinthian Hall, Rochester, July 5, 1852," in R. Barksdale and K. Kinnamon, eds. **Black Writers of America : A Comprehensive Anthology**. New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, pp. 89-101.
- (143) Draper, James P. ed. (1992), **Black Literature Criticism**. Detroit and London, Gale Research Inc.
- (144) DuBois, William Edward Burghardt (1969), **The Souls of Black Folk**. New York, Nal Penguin Inc.
- (145) Eagleton, Terry (1987), **Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory**. London, Verso.
- (146) Edwards, Herbert W. and Horton, Rod W. (1974), **Background of American Literary Thought**. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prince-Hall, Inc.
- (147) Eisenstein, Zillah (1979), **Capitalist Patriarchy**. New York, Monthly Review Press.
- (148) Eko, Ebelo O. (1986), "Oral Tradition : The Bridge to Africa in Paule Marshall's **Praisesong for the Widow**," **Western Journal of Black Studies**, no. 10 (1986), pp. 143-147.
- (149) Ellison, Ralph (1952), **Invisible Man**. New York, Random House.
- (150) ----- (1972), **Shadow and Act** . New York, Vintage Books.
- (151) Emberley, Julia V. (1993), **Thresholds of Difference: Feminist Critique, Native Women's Writing, Postcolonial Theory**. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, Inc.
- (152) Emenyonu, Ernest ed. (1987), **Black Literature and Black Consciousness in Literature**. Ibadan, Heinemann.
- (153) ----- (1989), **Literature and National Consciousness**. Ibadan, Heinemann.
- (154) Entman, Robert M. : "Representation and Reality in the Portrayal of Blacks on Network Television News," **Journalism Quaterly**, vol. 71, no. 3 (Autumn 1994), pp. 509-520.

- (155) Evans, Mari ed. (1984), **Black Women Writers (1950-1980)**. New York, Anchor Books/Doubleday.
- (156) Fabre, Michel (1967), **Les noirs Américains**. Paris, Colin.
- (157) Fanon, Frantz (1961), **Les damnés de la terre**. Paris, Maspero.
- (158) ----- (1967), **The Wretched of the Earth**. Trans. Constance Farrington. Middlesex, Penguin.
- (159) ----- (1971), **Black Skin, White Masks**. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann, New York, Grove Press.
- (160) ----- (1967), **Toward the African Revolution**. New York, Grove Press.
- (161) ----- (1967), **A Dying Colonialism**. New York, Grove Press.
- (162) Figes, Eva (1971), **Patriachal Attitudes**. Greenwich, Connecticut, A Fawcett Premier Book.
- (163) Figueroa, John. (1957-1959), "British West Indian Immigration to Great Britain," **Caribbean Quaterly**, vol. 5 (1957-1959), pp. 116-120.
- (164) Firestone, Shulamith (1972), **The Dialectic of Sex**. New York, A Bantam Book.
- (165) Fisher, Dexter and Stepto, Robert (1978), **The Afro-American Literature: the Reconstruction of Instruction**. New York, Modern Language Association.
- (166) Flower, Linda (1994), **The Construction of Negotiated Meaning: A Social Cognitive Theory of Writing**. Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press.
- (167) Fohlen, Claude (1975), **Les Noirs aux Etats-Unis**. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.
- (168) Fox, William T. R. (1984), "Colonialism," **The World Book Encyclopedia**. Chicago, World Book Inc., vol 3, pp. 657-659.
- (169) Francis, Errol (1993), "Psychiatric Racism and Social Police: Black People and the Psychiatric Service," in Clive Harris and Winston James eds (1993), **Inside Babylon: The**

**Caribbean Diaspora in Britain.** London, Verso,  
pp. 179-205.

- (170) Franklin, H. Bruce (1970), "Animal Farm Unbound," **New Letters**, no. 43  
(1970), pp. 25-46.
- (171) Frazier, E. Franklin. (1964), **The Negro Church in America.** New York,  
Schoken Books.
- (172) Freire, Paulo (1970), **Pedagogy of the Oppressed.** New York, Seabury.
- (173) Gaines, Enerst J. (1981), **Catherine Carmier.** San Francisco, North  
Point Press.
- (174) ----- (1979), **Of Love and Dust.** London and New York, W. W. Norton  
and Company, Inc.
- (175) ----- (1972), **The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman.** London and  
New York, Batan Books
- (176) ----- (1983), **In My Father's House.** London and New York, W. W.  
Norton and Company, Inc.
- (177) ----- (1984), **A Gathering of Old Men.** New York, Random House.
- (178) Gates, Jr., Henry Louis (1988), **The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of  
Afro-American Literary Criticism.** New York, Oxford  
University Press.
- (179) Gayle, Addison ed. (1972), **The Black Aesthetic.** Garden City, New  
York, Doubleday and Co. Inc.
- (180) Gendzier, Rene L. (1973), **Frantz Fanon : A Critical Study.** New York,  
Pantheon Books.
- (181) Genovese, Eugene (1974), **Roll, Jordan, Roll.** New York, Pantheon.
- (182) Gikandi, Simon (1992), **Writing in Limbo.** Ithaca, Cornell University  
Press.
- (183) Gilkes, Michael (1981), **The West Indian Novel.** Boston, Twayne  
Publishers.
- (184) Greene, Gayle (1991), **Changing the Story : Feminist Fiction and the  
Tradition.** Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University  
Press.

- (185) Greene, Martin (1980), **Dreams of Adventure, Deeds of Empire**.  
London, Routledge.
- (186) Griffiths, Gareth (1978), **A Double Exile : African and West Indian Writing Between Two Cultures**. London, Marion Boyers Publishers Ltd.
- (187) Gross, Seymour L. and Harley, James Edwards eds. (1966), **Images of the Negro in American Literature**. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- (188) Guérin, Daniel (1956), **Les Antilles décolonisées**. Paris, Présence Africaine.
- (189) Gurr, Andre (1981), **Writers in Exile : The Identity of Home in Modern Literature**. Brighton, Harvester.
- (190) Gurr, Andrew and Zirimu, Pio eds. (1973), **Black Aesthetics**. Nairobi, East African Literature Bureau.
- (191) Hamerow, Theodore S. (1987), **Reflection on History and Historians**. Madison, University of Wisconsin Press.
- (192) Hansberry, Lorraine (1966), **A Raisin in the Sun**. New York, A Signet Book.
- (193) Harlow, Barbara (1987), **Resistance Literature**. London and New York, Methuen.
- (194) Harrell-Nunez, Elisabeth "Lamming and Naipaul : Some Criteria for Evaluating the Third-World Novel," **Contemporary Literature**, vol. 19, no. 1 (1978), pp. 26-47..
- (195) Harris, Leonie B. (1984), "Myth and West Indian Consciousness: An Examination of George Lamming's **Natives of My Person**," in Knowles and Smilowitz eds. (1984), **Critical Issues in West Indian Literature**. Parkersburg, Iowa, Caribbean, pp. 46-53.
- (196) Harris, Trudier (1981), " Three Black Women Writers and Humanism : A Folk Perspective," in R. Baxter Miller ed. **Black American**

**Literature and Humanism.** Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, pp. 50-74.

- (197) Harris, Wilson (1970), **Sleepers of Roraima.** London, Faber and Faber.
- (198) ----- (1970), **History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean.** Georgetown, Ministry of Information and Culture.
- (199) ----- (1973), **Tradition, the Writer and Society.** London and Port of Spain, New Beacon.
- (200) Hawthorne, Nathaniel (1982), **Old News.** New York, Library of America.
- (201) Herdeck, Donald ed. (1979), **Caribbean Writers. A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Encyclopedia.** Washington D.C., Three Continents Press Inc.
- (202) Hobsbawn, Eric and Ranger, Terence eds. (1983), **The Invention of Tradition.** Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- (203) Hodge, Merle (1970), **Crick Crack, Monkey.** London, Heinemann.
- (204) Holloway, Joseph E. ed. (1990), **Africanisms in America.** Indianapolis, Indiana University Press.
- (205) Hooks, Bell (1981), **Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism.** Boston, South End Press.
- (206) Hull, Gloria T. (1978), "To Be a Black Woman in America: A Rereading of Paule Marshall's Reena," **Obsidian**, vol. 4, no. 3 (1978), pp. 5-15.
- (207) Hulme, Peter (1986), **Colonial Encounters : Europe and the Native Caribbean 1492-1787.** London, Methuen.
- (208) Hurbon, Laënnec (1972), **Dieu dans le Vaudou Haitien.** Paris, Payot.
- (209) Hurston, Zora Neal (1990), **Their Eyes Were Watching God.** New York, Harper and Row, Inc.
- (210) Ibrahim, Jibril (1982), "From Political Exclusion to Political Participation: Democratic Transition in Niger Republic," in B. Caron, A. Gboyega and E. Osaghae, eds. (1982), **Democratic Transition in Africa.** Ibadan, Institute of African Studies, pp. 51-68.

- (211) Ikiddeh, Ime (1966), "Introduction" to **Weep Not, Child**. London, Heinemann, pp. vii-xiii.
- (212) Irele, Abiola (1981), **The African Experience in Literature and Ideology**. London, Heinemann.
- (213) James, Adeola (1990), **In Their Own Voices**. London, Heinemann.
- (214) James, C. L. R. (1938), **The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution**. Reprinted (1963), New York, Vintage.
- (215) James, Louis ed. (1968), **The Islands in Between, Essays on West Indian Literature**. London, Oxford University Press.
- (216) Joachim, Sébastien (1980), **Le Nègre dans le roman blanc**. Montréal, Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- (217) Kane, Cheikh Hamidou (1961), **L'aventure ambiguë**. Paris, Juilliard.
- (218) Kapai, Leela (1972), "Dominant Themes and Techniques in Paule Marshall's Fiction," **College Language Association Journal**, no. 16 (September 1972), pp. 49-59.
- (219) Kasfir, Nelson (1976), **The Striking Political Arena**. Berkeley, University of California Press.
- (220) Keiza, Marcia (1975), "Themes and Style in the Works of Paule Marshall," **Negro American Literature Forum**, no. 9 (Fall 1975), pp. 67-76.
- (221) Kesteloot, Lilyan and Kotchy, Barthelemy (1973) **Aimé Césaire, l'homme et son œuvre**. Paris, Présence Africaine.
- (222) Killam, G. D. ed. (1973), **African Writers on African Writing**. London, Heinemann.
- (223) ----- (1980), **Introduction to the Writing of Ngugi**. London, Heinemann.
- (224) Kincaid, Jamaica (1985), **Annie John**. New York, Plume.
- (225) King, Bruce ed. (1979), **West Indian Literature**. London, Macmillan Press Ltd.
- (226) King, Jr., Martin Luther (1960), **Stride Toward Freedom**. New York, Ballantine Books, Inc.

- (227) ----- (1986), **A Testimonial of Hopes**. San Francisco, Harper and Row.
- (228) Kinnamon, Kenneth ed. (1974), **James Baldwin, : A Collection of Critical Essays, Twentieth Century Views**. Englewood Cliff, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, Inc.
- (229) Kom, Ambroise (1979), "In the Castle of My Skin : George Lamming and the Colonial Caribbean," **World Literature Written in English**, no. 18 (November 1979), pp. 406-420.
- (230) ----- (1984), "George Lamming et la conscience historique," **Komparatistische Hefte**, no. 9-10 (1984), pp. 115-121.
- (231) ----- (1986), **George Lamming et le destin des Caraïbes**. Quebec, Edition Marcel Didier. Inc.
- (232) Krieger, Murray (1976), **Theory of Criticism : A Tradition and Its System**. Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press.
- (233) Kubitschek, Missy Dehn (1987), "Paule Marshall's Women on Quest," **Black American Literature Forum**, no. 21 (Spring/Summer 1987), pp. 43-60.
- (234) Kubayanda, Josephat B. (1987), "Minority Discourse and the African Collective : Some Examples from Latin American and Caribbean Literature," **Cultural Critique** no. 6 (Spring 1987), pp. 112-130.
- (235) Laye, Camara (1954), **Le Regard du roi**. Paris, Plon.
- (236) Lewis, K. Gordon (1968), **The Growth of the Modern West Indies**. London and New York, Modern Reader Paperback.
- (237) ----- (1978), **Slavery, Imperialism, and Freedom : Studies in English Radical Thought**. London and New York, Monthly Review Press.
- (238) Lindfors, Bernth and Sander, Reinhard, eds (1993), **Twentieth-Century Caribbean and Black African Writers**. Detroit and London, Gale Research Inc.
- (239) Lloyd, Peter C. (1967), **Africa in Social Change**. Middlessex, U.K. Penguin Books Ltd.

- (240) Lowenthal, David (1972), **West Indian Societies**. London, Oxford University Press.
- (241) Lower, Lisa (1991), **Critical Terrains**. Ithaca, Cornell University Press.
- (242) Lukàcs, George (1963), **La Théorie du roman**. Paris, Editions Gonthier.
- (243) ----- (1965), **Le Roman historique**. Paris, Payot.
- (244) Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (1988), "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse," in **Feminist Review**, no.30 (1988), pp. 61-88.
- (245) Mahood, M. M. (1977), **The Colonial Encounter**. London, Rex Collings.
- (246) Mannoni, Dominique O. (1964), **Prospero and Caliban: The Psychology of Colonialism**. Trans. by Pamela Powesland, with a foreword by Philip Mason. New York, Praeger.
- (247) Mbiti, John S. (1970), **African Religions and Philosophies**. New York, Anchor Books.
- (248) McCluskey, Jr., John (1984), "And Call Every Generation Blessed : Theme, Setting, and Ritual in the Works of Paule Marshall" in Mari Evans ed. (1984), **Black Women Writers 1950-1980**. New York, Anchor Books/Doubleday, pp. 316-334.
- (249) McKay, Claude (1961), **Banana Bottom**. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich.
- (250) Memmi, Albert (1968), **L'homme dominé**. Paris, Gallimard.
- (251) ----- (1985), **Le Portrait du colonisé**. Paris, Gallimard.
- (252) ----- (1985), **Le Portrait du colonisateur**. Paris, Gallimard.
- (253) Michell, Juliet (1973), **Women's Estate**. New York, Vintage Books.
- (254) Miller, Randall M. and Smith, John David eds. (1988), **Dictionary of Afro-American Slavery**. New York, Greenwood Press.
- (255) Millets, Kate (1969), **Sexual Politics**. New York, Random House, Inc.
- (256) Mohanram, Radhika and Gita, Rajan eds. (1996), **English Postcoloniality**. Westport, Connecticut and London, Greenwood Press.



- (257) Montesquieu, Charles de Secondat (1966), **De l'esprit des lois**, Tome I. Paris, Garnier Frère.
- (258) Moore, Gerald (1969), **The Chosen Tongue, English Writing in the Tropical World**. London, Longman.
- (259) Morris, Mervyn (1968), "The Poet as Novelist, The Novels of George Lamming," in Louis James ed (1968), **The Islands In Between, Essays on West Indian Literature**. London, Oxford University Press, pp. 73-85.
- (260) Morrison, Toni (1977), **Song of Solomon**. London, Pan Books Ltd.
- (261) ----- (1981), **Tar Baby**. New York, New American Library.
- (262) Motyll, Alexander J. (1991), **Sovietology, Rationality, Nationality: Coming to Grips with Nationalism in USSR**. New York, Columbia University Press.
- (263) Munro, Ian Hamilton (1971), "The Theme of Exile in George Lamming's **In the Castle of My Skin**," **World Literature Written in English**, no. 20 ( Nov. 1971), pp. 51-60.
- (264) ----- (1986), "George Lamming," in Dance ed. (1986), **Fifty Caribbean Writers**. New York, Greenwood Press, pp. 264-275.
- (265) Nair, Supriya (1996), **Caliban's Curse : George Lamming and the Revisioning of History**. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.
- (266) Nelson, John H. (1926), **The Negro Character in American Literature**. Kansas, University of Kansas Press.
- (267) Nemiroff, Robert ed. (1983), **Lorraine Hansberry's the Collected Last Plays**. New York, New American Library.
- (268) Newton, Judith; and Rosenfelt, Deborah, eds., (1985), **Feminst Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class, and Race in Literature and Culture**. New York, Methuen.
- (269) Ngugi, Wa Thiong'o (1966), **Weep Not, Child**. London, Heinemann.

- (270) ----- (1972), **Homecoming**. New York, Lawrence Hill and Co. London, Heinemann. Reprinted (1975), London, Heinemann.
- (271) ----- (1977), **Petals of Blood**. London, Heinemann.
- (272) Niranjana, Tejaswini (1992), **Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism and the Colonial Context**. Berkeley, University of California Press.
- (273) Nixon, Rob (1987), "Caribbean and African Reappropriations of **The Tempest**," **Critical Inquiry**, no. 13 (Spring 1987), pp.557-578.
- (274) N'krumah, Kwame (1964), **Le Consciencisme**. Trans. (1976) by Starrand Matthieu Howlett. Paris, Présence Africaine.
- (275) Nubukpo, Komla Messan (1987), **Through Their Sisters' Eyes: the Representation of Black Men in the Novels of Toni Morrison, Alice Walker and Toni Cade Bambara**. Ph. Dissertation, Boston University.
- (276) ----- (1990), "Pourquoi enseigner la littérature?," in **Les Actes des Journées scientifiques**. Lomé, les Presses de l'Université du Bénin, vol.1, pp. 9-19.
- (277) Numez-Harrell, Elisabeth (1978), "Lamming and Naipaul: Some Criteria for Evaluating the Third World Novel," **Contemporary Literature**, vol. 19 (Winter 1978), pp. 26-47.
- (278) Nwapa, Flora (1984), **Wives at War and other Stories**. Enugu, Nigeria, Tana Press.
- (279) Odhiambo, Christopher J. (1994), "Outside the Eyes of the Other: George Lamming and Definition in **Of Age and Innocence**," in **Research in African Literatures (RAL)**, vol. 25, no. 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 121-130.
- (280) Okpewho, Isidore (1979), **The Epic in Africa: Toward a Poetics of the Oral Performance**. New York, Cornell University Press.
- (281) ----- ed. (1985), **The Heritage of African Poetry**. Essex, U. K., Longman.

- (282) Omi, Michael and Winant, Howard (1987), **Racial Formation in the United States**. New York, Routledge.
- (283) Ortner, Sherry (1989-90), "Gender Hegemonies," **Cultural Critique**, no. 14 (Winter 1989-90), pp. 35-80.
- (284) Paquet, Sandra Pouchet (1973), "The Politics of George Lamming's **Natives of My Person**," **College Language Association Journal**, vol. 17 (September 1973), pp. 109-116.
- (285) ----- (1982), **The Novels of George Lamming**. London, Heinemann.
- (286) ----- (1992), Foreword to Lamming's **The Pleasures of Exile**. Reprinted Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, pp. vii-xxvii.
- (287) ----- (1993), "George Lamming," in Bernth Lindfors and Reinhard Sander eds. (1993), **Twentieth-Century Caribbean and Black African Writers**. London and Detroit, Gale Research Inc., pp. 54-69.
- (288) ----- (1997), Foreword to Lamming's **In the Castle of My Skin**. Reprinted Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, pp. ix-xxxiii.
- (289) Pettis, Joyce Owen (1990), "Self-Redefinition in Paule Marshall's **Praisesong for the Widow**," in Harry B. Shaw ed. (1990), **Perspective of Black Popular Culture**. Bowling Green, Ohio, Bowling Green University Press, pp. 93-100.
- (290) ----- (1995), **Toward Wholeness in Paule Marshall's Fiction**. Charlottesville, Virginia, University Press of Virginia.
- (291) Ramchand, Kenneth (1970), **The West Indian Novel and Its Background**. London, Faber & Faber.
- (292) Retamar, Roberto Fernández (1975), "Caliban : Note Toward a Discussion of Culture in Our America," Trans. Lynn Garafola et. al. **The Massachusetts Review**, vol. 15, nos. 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1974), pp. 7-72.
- (293) ----- (1989), **Caliban and Other Essays**. Trans. Edward Baker. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

- (294) Ray, Benjamin C. (1976), **African Religions : Symbols, Ritual and Community**. Englewood Cliff, New Jersey, Printice Hall Inc.
- (295) Read, Alan ed. (1996), **The Fact of Blackness and Visual Representation**. London and Seattle, Bay Press.
- (296) Roumain, Jacques (1946), **Gouverneur de la rosée**. Paris, Les Editeurs français.
- (297) Rutherford, J. ed. (1990), **Identity, Community, Culture, Difference**. London, Lawrence and Wishard.
- (298) Said, Edwards (1993), **Culture and Imperialism**. New York, Alfred A. Knopf.
- (299) Salkey, Andrew ed. (1973), **Caribbean Essays. An Anthology**. London, Evans Brothers.
- (300) Scarboro, Ann Armstrong (1989), "The Healing Process: A Paradigm for Self-Renewal in Paule Marshall's **Praisesong for the Widow** and Camara Laye's **Le Regard du roi**," **Modern Language Studies**, no. 19 (Winter 1989), pp. 28-36.
- (301) Schlutz, Elisabeth A. (1979), "The Insistence Upon Community in the Contemporary Afro-American Novel," **College English** no. 41(1979), pp. 170-184.
- (302) Schoell, Franck. L. (1959), **Histoire de la race noire aux Etats-Unis du XVIIe siècle à nos jours**. Paris, Payot.
- (303) Schwartz-Bartz, Simone (1982), **Bridge Beyond**. London, Heinemann Educational Books.
- (304) Scott, James C. (1990), **Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts**. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- (305) Seidel, Michael (1986), **Exile and the Narrative Imagination**. New Haven, Yale University Press.
- (306) Selvon, Samuel (1956), **The Lonely Londoners**. New York, Saint Martin's Press.
- (307) Senghor, Léopold (1977), **Liberté 3 : Négritude et civilisation de l'universel**. Paris, Seuil.

- (308) Seton-Watson, Hugh (1977), **Nations and States: An Inquiry into the Origin of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism**. Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press.
- (309) Shakespeare, William (1969), **The Tempest**, in Alfred Harbage ed. (1969), **William Shakespeare. The Complete Works**. Baltimore, Penguin Books, pp. 1369-1395.
- (310) Sherlock, Philip (1966), **West Indies**. London, Thames and Hudson.
- (311) Silberman, Charles E. (1964), **Crisis in Black and White**. New York, Alfred A. Knopf.
- (312) Sivanandan, Ambalavaner (1982), **A Different Hunger: Writing on Black Resistance**. London, Pluto.
- (313) Slemon, Stephen (1988), "Post-Colonial Allegory and the Transformation of History," **Journal of Commonwealth Literature**, vol. 23, no. 1 (1988), pp. 157-168.
- (314) Smith, Barbara ed. (1983), **Home Girls: A Feminist Anthology**. New York, Women of Color Press.
- (315) Smith, Barbara Herrnstein (1978), **On the Margins of Discourse : the Relation of Literature to Language**. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- (316) Smith, Valerie (1990), "Split Affinities: The Case of Internal Rape," in Mariame Hirsh and Evelyn Fox Keller, eds. (1990), **Conflict in Feminism**. New York and London, Routledge.
- (317) Smith, Michael G. (1962), **Kinship and Community in Carriacou**. New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press.
- (318) Stoelting, Winifred L. (1972), "Time Past and Time Present: The Search for Viable Links in **The Chosen Place, The Timeless People** by Paule Marshall," **College Language Association Journal**, vol. 16 (1972), pp. 60-71.
- (319) Stowe, Harriet B. (1982), **Uncle Tom's Cabin**. New York, Library of America.

- (320) Sundquist, Eric J. ed. (1990), **Frederick Douglass: New Literary and Historical Essays**. Cambridge, Mass., Cambridge University Press.
- (321) Szwed, John F. ed. (1970), **Black Americans**. Washington D.C., United States Information Agency.
- (322) Tarrieu, Yannick (1978-1980), "Deux visions de l'espace Antillais: Isabella de Vidia S. Naipaul et San Cristobal de George Lamming," in **Espace Créole**, no. 4. Paris, Editions Caribbéennes, pp. 25-44.
- (323) Taylor, Patrick (1989), **The Narrative of Liberation**. Ithaca, Cornell University Press.
- (324) Tennant, Paul (1982), "Native Indian Political Organization in British Columbia, 1900-1969 : A Response to Internal Colonialism," **BC Studies** no. 55 (Autumn 1982), pp. 3-49.
- (325) Theodore S. (1987), **Reflection on History and Historians**. Madison, University of Wisconsin Press.
- (326) Tiffin, Helen (1979), "The Tyranny of History: George Lamming's **Natives of My Person and Water with Berries**," **Ariel**, no. 10 (October 1979), pp. 37-52.
- (327) ----- (1988), "Post-Colonialism, Post-Modernism and the Rehabilitation of Post-Colonial History," **Journal of Commonwealth Literature**, vol. 23, no. 1 (1988), pp. 169-181.
- (328) ----- (1989), "Rites of Resistance: Counter-Discourse and West Indian Autobiography," **Journal of West Indian Literature**, vol. 3, no. 1 (January 1989), pp. 28-46.
- (329) Trilling, Lionel (1967), **Beyond Culture, Essays on Literature and Learning**. London, Penguin Books.
- (330) Turner, Darwin T. (1988), "Introduction" to **Soul Clap Hands and Sing**. Washington D.C., Howard University Press, pp. xi-xliii.
- (331) Turner, Victor (1987), "Carnival, Ritual and Play in Rio de Janeiro," in Alessandra Falassi ed. (1987), **In Time Out Time. Essays**

on the Festival. Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, pp. 74-90.

- (332) Voltaire, François M. A. (1966), **Romans et contes**. Paris, Garnier-Flammarion.
- (333) Vychinsky, M. (1987), **L'Afrique Australe : Apartheid, colonialisme, agression**. Moscou, Edition du Progrès.
- (334) Walby, Sylvia (1990), **Theorizing Patriarchy**. Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- (335) Walker, Alice (1984 a), **In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens**. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich.
- (336) ----- (1984 b), **The Color Purple**. New York, Pocket Book.
- (337) ----- (1970), **The Third Life of Grange Copeland**. London, Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich.
- (338) Washington, Booker T. (1967), **Up From Slavery**. New York, Airmont Publishing Co., Inc.
- (339) Washington, Mary Helen (1981), "Afterword" to **Brown Girl, Brownstones**. New York, Feminist Press, pp. 311-324.
- (340) Waxman, Barbara Ferry (1987), "The Widow's Journey to Self and Roots: Aging and Society in Paule Marshall's **Praisesong for the Widow**," **Frontiers**, vol. 9, no. 3 (1987), pp. 94-99.
- (341) West, David S. (1977), "Lamming's Poetic Language in **In the Castle of My Skin**," **Literary Half-Yearly**, vol. 18, no. 11 (1977), pp. 71-83.
- (342) Williams, Eric (1970), **De Christophe Colombe à Fidel Castro: l'histoire des Caraïbes 1492-1969**. First English edition: 1970; trans. Maryse Condé. Paris, Présence Africaine.
- (343) Willis, Susan (1982), "Caliban As Poet : Reversing the Maps of Domination," **Massachusetts Review**, no. 23 (Winter 1982), pp. 615-630.
- (344) ----- (1987), "Describing Arcs of Recovery : Paule Marshall's Relationship to Afro-American Culture," in **Specifying:**

**Black Women Writing in the American Experience.**

Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 53-82.

- (345) Wright, Richard (1964), **White Man, Listen!**. New York, Anchor Press.
- (346) ----- (1989), **Black Boy**. New York, Harper and Row.
- (347) ----- (1993), **Native Son and How Bigger Thomas Was Born**. With an Introduction by Arnold Rampersad. New York, Harper Perennial.
- (348) Yarde, Gloria (1970), " George Lamming -- the Historical Imagination," **The Literary Half-Yearly**, vol. 11, no.2 (July 1970), pp. 35-45.
- (349) Young, Robert (1990), **White Mythologies: Writing History and the West**. London and New York, Routledge.
- (350) Zahan, Dominique (1979), **The Religion, Spirituality, and Thought of Traditional Africa**. Trans. Kate Ezra Martin and Lawrence M. Martin. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.