CARIBBEAN DEFINITION:

ITS EFFECT ON VISION AND FORM IN GEORGE LAMMING'S NOVELS.

BY

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D E C L A R A T I O N

This is to certify that this thesis is original research and has never been presented for examination in any other university.

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A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

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A B S T R A C T

This thesis explores Caribbean definition and its effects on vision and form in each of George Lamming's novels. It attempts to delineate the various ways in which Lamming characterises and defines the Caribbean through the experiences of its people.

Chapter one, the introduction discusses Lamming's perspective on the problematic definition of the Caribbean from the point of view of his different perception and conception of the region's history and experience. It also critically examines the various theories that have informed the study.

Chapter two explores the nature of definition in In The Castle of My Skin as informed by Lamming's conception of history and experience, showing how this has influenced vision and form in the novel.

Chapter three examines The Emigrants and explores the theme of exile as a means for Caribbean definition.

Chapter four delineates personal freedom and political freedom as possibilities for definition. It examines the role of the ceremony of souls and the "backward glance" in the process of self definition and in addition explores

how this delineation affects the author's vision and form in Of Age and Innocence and Season of Adventure.

Chapter five examines Water with Berries and Natives of My Person as Lamming's attempt to reconstruct the relationships between coloniser and colonised from his re-reading and re-working of Shakespeare's classic play, The Tempest. The chapter also explores how this delineation affects the vision and form in the two novels.

Chapter six is a summary of the thesis findings and a general conclusion of the argument.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The subject of Caribbean definition has occupied and engaged almost every writer of the Caribbean region. This is natural because writing in so many respects is a form of self-definition within a certain defined society and culture. Writers write from experiences within particular societies and their work necessarily defines both the experience and the society. As Ngugi wa Thiong'o has noted, commenting on the relationship between a writer and his society,

> A writer responds with his total personality to a social environment which changes all the time. Being a kind of sensitive needle he registers with varying degrees of accuracy and success, the conflicts and tensions in his changing society... For the writer himself lives in, and is shaped by history. [Ngugi; 1972:47].

As such a writer defines his society through his portrayal of experiences within it. At the same time the experiences of the society shape his art; and it is in these senses that writing becomes a process of defining.

To define is to characterise, to describe the nature of something, making it clear, stating precisely its meaning and as such making it become vivid. But defining the Caribbean in such terms has been particularly problematic for the writer in the Caribbean. This is because the problems of definition have to do with the problems of a broken history and a

discontinuity in culture. The history of the Caribbean has been perpetually marked by displacement, the after-effects of conquest, slavery and colonialism. European conquest of the region resulted in the decimation of the aboriginal population in most areas of the region thus hindering historical and cultural continuity. The uprooting and importation of African slaves to toil in plantations, the introduction of Indian indentured labourers to replace African slaves after the abolition of slavery as well as the presence of European settlers led to the creation of a society of immigrants, all with broken cultures and history. For European conquest not only led to the decimation of aborigines but also to the arrivance of new immigrants and a melting pot situation which brought people together without the real cohesion that would unify them: "people who as Naipaul's protagonist says in The Mimic Men, would have found fulfilment in the landscapes hymned by their ancestors": The lack of relationship with past history and landscape estranged peoples of the region from ancestral pasts and cultures, robbing them of mythology, tradition and a sense of origin .

In nineteenth century historical writings this condition gave rise to the idea of the Caribbean championed by Froude and Trollope which saw the region as a non-man's-land where People lacked a common purpose and identity: "There are no people there in the true sense of the word with a character and a purpose of their own" the British historian Antony

Froude had said in 1888. [Froude: 1888:306]. Impressions like Froude's presented a negative view of the region, denying it a character and a sense of achievement. In twentieth century historical writings this idea of Caribbean definition is still problematic, giving rise to various interpretations even among historians. A historian like M.G. Smith for instance, championed the idea of a plural society in the region, whereas the historian Brathwaite identified a certain cohesion in the creolising processes in the region in The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica.

In the Literature of the Caribbean the subject of definition has been equally problematic. V.S Naipaul echoes Eurocentric historians when he asserts that "history is built around achievement and creation, and nothing was created in the West Indies". [V.S. Naipaul; 1962:29]. His view gives a desolate impression of the West Indies as a derelict and uncreative place. Such a view of the region, determined by historical circumstances and largely advanced by the outsider's vision, is what most West Indian writers struggle to counteract as they struggle to create new and alternative interpretations of the region's past and its peoples.

Lamming like most Caribbean artists, confronts this negative definition of the region and attempts through the imaginative possibilities offered by the novel to explore new visions and meanings of experience in the Caribbean. From a close study of the content

and form of Lamming's novels as they have progressed through his career, it is easy to see how the novelist interprets and injects new meanings into man's experience in the region. In Lamming's view, the Caribbean artist is compelled to move beyond the confines of history and experience, to explore new alernatives and possible meanings even in a history of displacement, slavery and subjugation. He asserts that:

> ... the mystery of the colonial is this: while he remains alive, his instinct, always and forever creative, must choose a way to change the meaning and perspective of this ancient tyranny. [Lamming:1984:299].

For Lamming, this ancient tyranny is the whole colonial structure of awareness which is the self-perception and personality created by the colonial experience. All Lamming's novels are preoccupied with the dramatisation of this colonial structure of awareness while at the same time they explore new and counteracting interpretations of these experiences, enabling the Caribbean man to transcend the history of subjugation and displacement. In doing this Lamming lays bare the psychological damage, the cultural and economic dependence while at the same time exploring new ways of overcoming these.

In exploring the damaged psychology of the colonial, Lamming dramatises how the personal lives of his individual characters reveal their frustrations, inadequacies and feelings

of abandonment. But at the same time he shows how his characters can overcome such feelings. More than this Lamming also explores new ways of changing the relationships between the coloniser and the colonised by creating new levels of understanding which will liberate them both. This preoccupation is what I would call Lamming's "way of seeing", his vision as delineated in his literary and creative explorations.

Lamming's attempt to characterise and define the Caribbean has had an effect on his vision and form. Vision in literary terms goes beyond the implications of the ordinary meaning. Ordinarily vision can be defined as the power of seeing or imagining, of looking ahead and grasping the truth that underlies the fact. Vision is also what is seen especially by the mind's eye or through the power of the imagination. It is the usual ability to think or plan ahead, and perceive the future. In critical terms, vision encompasses those possibilities that the artists through conscious imagination and creativity, offers to the society. As such it is the imaginative anticipation of the future based on the past and present realities of society. It is the vision of the artist that determines the structuring of the work of art. It affects the narrative pattern and the presentation of characters because the artist's world view, will be reflected in the artistic structure, in the form of the narrative pattern and in the nature of character presentation. A

writer's vision ties together the string of narration as well as the direction in which characters develop and is what determines his perspective and the manner of presenting reality and experience in artistic form.

Form as we regard it in criticism designates the organization of the elements or features of a work of art in relation to its total effect. It is thus the pattern, structure or organization which a writer employs to give expression to his content. The pattern is always shaped by the way a writer sees his material and is as such inseparable from his vision. In considering Lamming's definition of the Caribbean and his vision and form I am assuming similar correspondences between subject matter, vision and form.

Because this study is an exploration of the relationship between socio-historical and cultural interpretation and their impact on the novel form, it has adopted a broad theoretical framework in which the written text is [a social situation] influenced by the socio-historical or cultural perspectives from which a novelist writes. Arnold Kettle has observed that.

> 'Form' is important only in so far as it enhances significance; and it will enhance significance just in so far as it bears a real relation to, that is to say, symbolises or clarifies, the aspect of life that is being conveyed [Kettle, A. 1967:15].

In Kettle's view, form is only significant in so far as it clarifies the reality and experience being portrayed. What this means is that any stylistic analysis of the novel should pay attention to it as an artistic whole and respond to stylistic features [such as language, verbal manipulation and structure] not for their effectiveness as rhetoric but as they relate effectively to the novelist's socio-cultural and historical perspective. David Lodge expresses a similar point of view when he says: "form and content are inseparable, that style is not a decorative embellishment upon subject matter, but the very medium in which the subject is turned into art". [Lodge, D. 1966:29].

In adopting a stylistic approach to Lamming's novel I will be guided by these two critical assumptions. Given that this study is also an examination of the impact of vision on the novel form, it will adopt two other related theories of the novel both of which deal with the manner of registering experience in the novel. Lukacs's theory of the novel as explored in Theory of the Novel, The Historical Novel, Studies in European Realism and The Meaning of Contemporary Realism conceives of the novel as a depiction of man in society and therefore pins the novel down to the portrayal of illusions of reality, within which the novelist consolidates his characters by persuading us to believe in their life-like portrayal. Thus in Lukacs's theory the novel presents an illusion of time in which there is a chronology as well as linear development of character and vision.

The theory of the novel advanced by Lukacs's is useful to this study because it provides a methodological approach which will help me to determine the extent to which Lamming's novels conform to or deviate from the pattern of the realistic novel. The theory is also important to the study because it shows that the artist's method of presenting experiences in a novel is heavily influenced by historical, social and economic conditions, and this is an important aspect of Lamming's art.

While this theory does conform to a vision of the novel as a representation of life, it does not necessarily accommodate all the explorations which a novelist like Lamming engages with as he tries to interpret his disintegrated world and his broken history. He may want to consider experiences which may be outside the orbit of realism, but which he finds relevant. Indeed Wilson Harris, in Tradition, The Writer and Society, has highlighted the problems which a West Indian novelist may face when he solely conforms to the pattern of the nineteenth century realistic novel:

> Although West Indian novelists are aware of the main pattern of the nineteenth century novel - an analysis of character in relation to manners, and morals operative in a given period - it followed from the formlessness of West Indian society, and the existential position of the individual in it, that such a pattern is not one that seems relevant or comes spontaneously to the writer from the West Indies [Harris: 1967:33].

In developing this idea, Harris goes on to note that

> The exploration of the 'dead past', the exploration of a bridge across the divided conception of humanity, is still in its infancy and the thawing effect this may have sooner or later on the derivatives of history - on the structure and language of the novel, for example - waits to be perceived and understood. [Harris: 1967:24].

In Harris' view, the novelist's grappling with the broken and submerged History of the Caribbean can be seen as a new phase in the development of the novel as a genre. In exploring such experiences in the novel and finding new ways of artistically representing them, the Caribbean artist would create new and original forms of the novel genre which may be unique to itself. In this sense Harris's perspective provides this study with a complementary theoretical framework for interpreting those reconstructions of myth, rituals, legends and mystical presences in the Caribbean which form part of Lamming's interpretation of experience and [therefore] his definition of the Caribbean.

Lamming's preoccupation with Caribbean definition becomes of utmost importance not only to the Caribbean but to the post-colonial world as a whole. This is because of the very obvious links between Caribbean literature and African literature. Both the Caribbean and Africa have had a background of colonial conquest and subjugation and have been

forced into re-assessments and definitions in the post-colonial era. As such, this thesis on Lamming can sharpen any African critic's sense of the links and differences in the two literatures. In addition to this, the literature of cultural re-definition presents any critic with the chance to explore the relationship between socio-cultural experiences and artistic expression. In Lamming's case the kind of relationship the critic finds between content and form reveals one aspect of this relationship.

Of all the Caribbean novelists, Lamming is the novelist most pre-occupied with self-definition and the one most anxious to explore African cultural continuities in the Caribbean . As such he gives the Caribbean man a sense of history that is larger than the Caribbean region itself. In addition Lamming also provides artistic models and a rectifying ideology that give a new perspective on the colonial experience and on post-colonial writing in general.

Although the study focuses on the Anglophone West Indies, it is significant for the whole West Indian and Caribbean region because of the very similar geographical and historical realities in the Caribbean region as a whole.

In exploring this topic, I have had to review the general literature of the area as well as literature that specifically refers to Lamming. The following literature has been useful to the study;

Van Sertima [1968], Walsh [1973], Gilkes [1981], Paquet [1982], Ramchand [1983], Aiyejina in Jones [1984], Fritz in Jones [1984], Dabydeen and Tagoe [1988]. These are all general studies on West Indian literature where Lamming's novels have appeared as either case studies or as illustrations of critical insights.

Van Sertima [1968] in his critical studies of Caribbean literature has devoted a very short essay to Lamming which reads more like a synopsis. Walsh [1973] has followed the same trend. In his general study of themes found in Commonwealth literature, he makes a general thematic study of Lamming's text which turns out to be mostly summative accounts of Lamming's novels. Gilkes [1981] has employed Lamming's first novel In The Castle of My Skin as a case study in his examination of exile and childhood as dominant themes in Caribbean literature. This study though not exhaustive on Lamming's art, provides informative introductory background to West Indian literature. A similar study undertaken by Ramchand [1988] and focused on the West Indian novel and its background, examines the effects of the region's history on the development of themes in the novel. The study examines Season of Adventure and In the Castle of my Skin as novels that explore the themes of African continuity and childhood in the Caribbean region. Ramchand's study is quite important especially in the way it highlights the historical conditions that have informed themes in the West

Indian novel.

Dabydeen and Tagoe [1988] have done similar studies exploring the major themes in West Indian and Black British Literature using Lamming's novels as case studies. Fritz in Jones [1984] has carried out a comparative study of Laye, Lamming and Wright, attempting a comparative but general examination of mother-son relationships in three novels of different backgrounds. Paquet [1982] is the first critic to focus attention on Lamming as a novelist. But though her book focuses on all Lamming's novels and analyses themes and their development in Lamming's novels it is not focused on a particular literary idea for exploration.

Wilson-Tagoe [1984] has done a more specific study of West Indian literature, exploring a historical sense in West Indian literature and relating it to modes of artistic representation. The study covers a wide spectrum of West Indian writers and their response to history and art, and Lamming's novels are explored as part of the critical delineations in the thesis. This is a very important study as it provides very useful critical insights on how history and historical perceptions have informed the literature of the Caribbean region. In yet two other articles, Wilson-Tagoe revisits the novels of Lamming. The paper entitled "African continuities and Caribbean definitions in Caribbean literature: The Literary exploratrions of Harris, Lamming and Brathwaite" is a comparative study of how the three writers have handled the theme of Afican continuities in their works. Aiyejina

in Jones [1984] is also a study of the same theme from a different perspective, comparing and constrasting Season of Adventure with Denis William's Other Leopards as West Indian responses to Africa.

In particularised studies of Lamming's novels, Ngugi [1972] and Cudjoe [1979] have read Lamming's novels as forms of resistance and rebellion. In a similar study Nyoike [1976], explores the theme of alienation in Caribbean literature with special reference to Lamming's novels and examines how the theme develops from one novel to the next.

Lamming]1968] in a collection of critical essays has himself given us what looks like the framework that has informed his novels. His essay, "A monster, A child, A Slave", derived from his reading of Shakespeare's play, The Tempest, gives both a philosophical and theoretical perspective to his understanding of colonial relations. It depicts how he perceives the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized and gives an insight into the roots of this relationship.

My thesis, in exploring vision and form in Lamming's novels, adds another dimension to these critical studies. It reveals how Lamming's definition of the experience in the Caribbean corresponds with the vision and form of each of his novels. As Lamming's vision changes from one novel to the next, this development in vision demands a different form of presentation from the previous one. A study of this process is therefore a new contribution to all the studies mentioned.

CHAPTER TWO

IN THE CASTLE OF MY SKIN:

CARIBBEAN EXPERIENCE AND HISTORY AS SOURCE FOR DEFINITION

For Lamming, defining a new self outside the categories of colonial relationships and the colonial structure of awareness involves a re-assessment of the colonial experience with a view to putting new meanings on it that would extricate the West Indian from the prison of that history and help him shape a future. Thus in a Lamming novel, definition is always a search for freedom, and freedom implies the West Indian's ability to overcome those aspects of the colonial experience that deny political sovereignity, cultural authenticity and personal fulfilment. For Lamming both public and personal freedom are crucial for definition and in a Lamming novel the drama of the colonial experience is a drama at both levels.

In The Castle of my Skin, Lamming's first novel, assesses the impact of the colonial experience at both levels by dramatising the political, psychological and cultural impact of the experience and showing at the same time various possibilities for transcending the negative aspects of this experience. Lamming attempts such an exploration by setting his focus on a small village community whose feudal set-up and colonial structure of awareness enact the experience of the West Indies under slavery and colonialism. This village

community seems to be undergoing a subtle transition physically, socially, psychologically, politically and economically. But the irony of the situation is that the village still reveals the psychological and social impact of slavery and colonial relations.

Colonialism as delineated in In The Castle of My Skin can therefore be argued to be just a new phase of slavery and can be seen in the very physical and social conditions of the village community. The estate referred to as "Where fields of sugar had once crept" is a clear reminder of the former slave plantations which the West Indians have accepted as their village but which hides the past of slavery. The very contrast in the landlord's mansion and the tenants' houses shows relics of the relationship between slaves and masters on the slave plantations. Lamming describes the estate in great detail:

> An estate where fields of sugar had once crept like an open secret across the land had been converted into a village that absorbed some three thousand people. An English land owner, Mr. Creighton had died, and the estate fell to his son through whom it had passed to another son who in his turn died, surrendering it yet to another ... To the east where the land rose gently to a hill, there was a large brick building surrounded by a wood and a high stone wall that bore bits of bottle along the top. The landlord lived there amidst the trees within the wall. Below and around it the land spread out into a flat unbroken monotony of small houses and white marl roads. From any point of the land one could see on a clear day the large brick house hoisted on the hill. [Lamming: 1953:25].

The graphic description of the village community shows that physically nothing has changed in the conditions of slavery or in the social relations between master and slave. The master is still cut off, isolated and unreachable, and the slaves are sprawled around him in their lowly position.

At the social level too nothing seems to have changed. The overseer still fulfils his intermediary role between the landlord and the tenants by ensuring that the villagers are kept in their lowly position and the landlord in his high position. The landlord-tenant relationships delineated in the novel also dramatise the colonial situation and its consequent repercussions on the colonial. The landlord is the colonizer, the great, the master, and the tenants are the colonized, the slaves. This kind of arrangement adversely affects the perception and personality of the tenants in such a way that they accept a negative sense of themselves and develop an inferiority complex which makes them perceive their own lives and experiences as irrelevant and unimportant. They accept the master's experience and life style as the standard and yardstick with which to measure their own lives. Consequently they define themselves through the master's eye.

> The world ended somewhere along the bridge, and beyond was the Great, which the landlord and the large brick house on the hill represented. At night the light poured down through the wood, and the house looking down from the hill seemed to hold a quality of benevolent protection. It was a castle around which the land like a shabby back

> garden stretched. When the lights went out, and the woods was dark, the villagers took note. The landlord's light had been put out. The landlord had gone to bed. It was time they did the same. A custom had been established, and later a value which through continual application and a hardened habit of feeling became an absolute standard of feeling. I don't feel the landlord would like this. If the overseer, sees; the landlord is bound to know. It operated in every activity. The obedient lived in the hope that the Great might not be offended, the uncertain in the fear it might have been [Lamming: 1953:29].

This kind of attitude towards their own experience and lives is a direct result of the colonial experience that estranges them from their past and denies them a sense of origin and history. As a result most characters in the novel look at themselves and their past with regret, contempt and cynicism. As Lamming reveals to us this negative attitude towards self is ironically much more manifest in the younger generation who appear to be ashamed of the very idea of being black.

> Every child in the village had a stock response for the colour, black... No black boy wanted to be white, but it was also true no black boy liked the idea of being black. Brown skin was a satisfactory compromise, and brown skin meant a mixture of white and black. [Lamming: 1953:127].

To be born black for them was an unfortunate accident of nature, a misfortune and a fate that should be avoided at

all costs. The colour black becomes a castle in which the people feel that they are caged. Being black leads to a feeling of guilt and inferiority which makes them aspire for darkness as a form of invisibility and a psychological escape from the shame and guilt associated with the colour black.

> The eye of another was a kind of a cage. When it saw you the lid came down, and you were trapped... sometimes when you stood alone in the public square where the buses parked, and the people went to and fro buying nuts, looking around, you got the feeling sometimes that they were looking at you, and if you were too sensitive you wanted to hide. Or in a cinema before the light were dimmed, you walked down the carpeted path with all those people sitting above and around you... it seemed the whole cinema like the public square had turned into one enormous eye that saw you. A big cage whose lid came down and caught you... There was something absolutely wonderful about not being seen ... The darkness brought a strange kind of release, and you wished secretly in your heart that darkness would descend on the whole earth so that you could get a chance to see how much energy there was stored in your little self. You could get a chance to leave the cage. You could be free. [Lamming: 1953:74].

Lamming's delineations of character and situation in the novel show that such self hatred and self effacement lead to a split personality in the colonial, which makes him resort to wearing a mask as a means of survival against fear, distrust and suspicion. In addition, the mask enables the colonial to fill the void and overcome his sense of

worthlessness. As in the case of Boy G., the black skin hides the real personality which as Lamming reveals, is also a damaged and terrified personality. Boy G. himself confirms this alienation from self when he admits to wearing such a mask.

> ... when I reach Trinidad where no one knows me I may be able to strike identity with the other person. But it was never possible here. I am always feeling terrified of being known; not because they really know you: but simply their claim to that knowledge is a concealed attempt to destroy you. That is what knowing means. As soon as they know you they will kill you. They can never know you... They won't know the you that's hidden somewhere in the castle of your skin. [Lamming; 1953:261].

In his delineation of character and situation Lamming also reveals the ways in which the colonial's psyche is impaired through the ambiguous processes of colonial education. He shows that though the colonial has a very positive attitude towards education, "[Education is the thing. I always say a man is a dog if he ain't got little education]" [Lamming: 1953:96], it is this very process of education that damages his psychology most. Indeed throughout the novel colonial education is dramatised as a model for the larger colonial system that alienates both the pupils and their teachers from their past and community. In fact the dramatisation of the school situation especially on the empire day is

a reminiscence of the slaves' conditions in the Middle Passage.

> The squads were packed, 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. [Lamming: 1953:36].

The image of the slave ship aptly shows that colonial education in the Creighton village is just another form of slavery. As in other areas of colonial relations, education and religion distort historical facts so as to make the colonial accept his inferior position in relation to the master. He is taught to accept that his experience cannot be a subject of history and that he will always be an object, defined by the colonizer. Thus, in time, the colonial begins to believe that he is a slave because he sinned against God and the garden and must be grateful to the Queen of England for freeing him from bondage. "The queen had made them free. They must have been locked once in a kind of goal ... most of them were locked up in a goal at sometime in the past". [Lamming; 1953:56]. This attitude gives the colonial illusions about the colonizer's history, making him regard his own as unimportant.

> They had read about the Battle of Hastings and William the Conqueror. That happened so many hundred years ago. And slavery was thousands of years before that. It was too far back for anyone to worry about as history. That's really why it wasn't taught... History had to begin somewhere

> but not so far back. And nobody knew where this slavery business took place. [Lamming; 1953:58].

This apparent amnesia in the colonial is as Lamming proves, a real hindrance to self-knowledge and self-assessment. The pupils' attempt to understand the history of slavery distils into wildfire confusion.

> ... But he wouldn't understand how one man could buy another man. He told the teacher what the old woman had said. She was a slave. And he said she was getting dotish. It was a long, long time ago, and it had nothing to do with the people in Barbados. No one there was ever a slave, the teacher said. [Lamming; 1953:57].

The feeling of inferiority which makes the villagers perceive their lives and experience as unimportant is further manifested in other social relations. Such an attitude is for instance depicted in the reticence of Miss Foster and old Ma after they come into contact with the landlord. Their experience with Mr. Creighton the landlord, gives them a certain false and illusionary sense of being accepted and cherished by him. They feel that by being acknowledged by the landlord they have overcome the void that has always existed in their lives as a result of slavery and colonialism.

> When I cam out and see the bad minded black son-of-a bitch we call the overseer I shake my backside [God forgive me] at him, just to let him know that I was people too. [Lamming; 1953:34].

This attitude develops into antagonism between the upcoming middle class colonials comprising the overseer, civil servants, policemen and water inspectors on one side and the villagers on the other. The upcoming middle class colonials feel that the whites look at them as inferior because of their poor folks in the villages. This makes them hate and look down upon the villagers as their enemies and the villagers too retaliate in the same way. It is the kind of treatment that the villagers receive from their own people, such as the overseer, that gives them a low self esteem, promotes self-distrust and suspicion and makes them look upon the landlord for approval and definition. Thus as manifested in Miss Foster's utterances, the hatred and bitterness that should have been directed towards the landlord is diverted to this upcoming middle class: overseer, policemen, civil servant and water inspector. This emerging middle class looks down upon the villagers as "lowdown niggers and enemies", an attitude that prevents the villagers from perceiving their own lives and experiences as worthy of regard. Consequently they disregard their own history and experience and aspire to be like the landlord, accepting to be defined by his history and experience. Thus as has been demonstrated, Lamming's

delineations reveal the ways in which displacement, slavery and colonialism create a historical limbo in the colonial, leaving him in a vacuum, unable to create a sense of self.

But at the same time as he shows these negative social and psychological effects of colonial relations, Lamming also creates a contrasting picture of a community of villagers whose experiences, memories, and interpersonal relationships are represented as valid. Lamming builds the community on a certain pattern that links the villagers not only in the poverty of colonial conditions but also in the creation of a supportive community. At the beginning of the novel, Boy G's mother breaks into a song which the whole village community joins in singing. This spontaneous communal activity shows a certain sense of shared experience that reflects a sense of community. Their joint song reminds us of work songs sang by slaves in the plantation that led to the creation of certain affinities among slaves.

The respect and understanding that is seen among the women also show a certain pattern in the village which is healthy for the creation of a supportive community. The women engage in gossips and discussions which reflect the Caribbean humour. They discuss their relationships with their children:- 'T's true; Miss Foster said. When all is said and done they is ours and we love them. Whatever we mothers say or do, nobody love them like we'. [Lamming; 1953:23].

This kind of pattern is also exhibited in the village men who meet at the shoemaker's shop during the day and under the lamp post at night to talk about issues that concern them. They discuss their growing political attitudes, the changes taking place in the island, the colonial education as well as their relation to history. In these discussions they reveal a positive consciousness, a sense of community and a new consciousness of their past and their shared experiences. They attempt to understand how education should have helped them to develop their own history and authentic culture as a way of defining themselves.

> 'But if you look good', said the shoemaker, 'if you remember good, you'll never remember that they ever tell us about Marcus Garvey. They never tell us that they wus a place where he live call Africa. An' the night he speak there in Queen's park an' tell us that we were his brothers who for some reason or next went elsewhere, I see a certain teacher in that said high school walk out from that meeting.'
>
> 'Why he walk out for?' Bob's father asked.
> 'Cause he didn't like Garvey tellin' him about he's any brother', the overseer's brother said. They laughed.
> 'Taint no joke', the shoemaker said.
> 'If you tell half of them that work in those places they have something to do with Africa they 'd piss straight in your face.'
> 'But why you going tell men that for;' said Mr. Foster. "Why tell a man he's somebody brother when he ain't?"
> 'That's what I mean;' said the shoemaker; 'you say it ain't true too an' that's what they say only in a different way.'
> 'Tis true', said Bob's father, 'no man like to know he black'
> 'That's what I mean', the shoemaker said, that just what I mean.' [Lamming: 1953:104].

The conversation of the four men reflects a sense of community which exists because of a shared political and social sense. A sense in which this is a supportive community comes out clearly in the novel when they emphasise and sympathise with each other's situation during the eviction. Their reaction to the eviction shows their affinity to the village community. Despite their poverty and dereliction they have accepted the village as their home and community; they all identify with it and cannot imagine a home elsewhere. In fact, Lamming delineates the disintegration of this community with a lot of nostalgia and regret. He shows his characters as rooted in their land and attached to their houses. A clear evidence of this is seen in the ordeal of Mr. Foster during the floods when he clings to his house.

> "I not leaving my house"... He climb up and he and the house went sailing down the river while the people shout out, "Look Noah on the Ark!" Some thought it was a revelation, a sort of first step to the second coming, and they just went on shouting, "Look, Noah on the the Ark!" [Lamming; 1953:33].

The relationship between the young and the old based on mutual understanding and respect also shows a positive consciousness in the creation of a community. The old man and old woman in the village are given the respect due to them, and everybody refers to them as 'pa' and 'ma'. Such a possibility is also reflected in the relationship between

mothers and their children. The conversation between Boy G and Bob aptly summarises this possibility:

> 'But I won't ever hit her back,' he (Bob) said, 'whatever she do me, I won't ever hit her back.' 'You ain't to do that,' I said. 'They say you'll be cursed if you hit a mother.' [Lamming: 1953:21]

The nuances of this conversation are enough to show that a community has been created with taboos to instil discipline, social control and moral conduct in the younger generation. Thus, even within the squalid conditions, Lamming feels that a supportive community has been created which enables the children to create their own play songs and games to express their happiness, anxieties, curiosities and inner fears. Such a supportive community is also illustrated in the open air prayer meetings and in the market place.

In the novel the old man's visionary dream holds yet another possibility for creating a sense of self through an awareness of origin. This becomes another way of creating a supportive community based on the people's past relation with Africa and the shared experience of slavery. Such a sense of the past shows that this is a community with its roots in Africa, and this sense of connection can create identity. The anecdotes such as the ones of Bambi, Bot and Bambina also show a sense in which a community was created through a shared experience. This sense of community which

is special and unique to Lamming's world, makes it possible for the novelist to identify and define a community and its lifestyle and to present these as valid and important.

The political movement initiated by Mr. Slime holds another potential; the possibility for a political transformation which could lead to change and political sovereignty . The villagers' reaction to Mr. Slime's political movement is a clear manifestation of the people's sharpened consciousness and readiness to challenge and counteract the colonial situation. The people readily accepted Mr. Slime's political movement with lots of excitement and enthusiasm. They join the projects that he initiates with a belief that they will enable them to acquire the land and thus become independent of the landlord. The conversation between old man and old woman portrays the people's attitude towards Mr. Slime and the need for change through political action:

> You know full well I ain't that sort O' man, Ma I ain't that sort of man or ever was, but I seessometimes how a thing change there in front of yuh eyes, an' I wonder to myself if tis a change for better or worse. Ever since we get the news 'bout the school master Mr. Slime I feel a sort O' change happen, an' though I ain't got the words to repeat what's in my mouth I feel it all the same... Now look what he go an' do. He open a friendly society and penny bank... an' now there ain't a single soul in all Creighton's village who ain't in society an' penny bank all two at the same time. [Lamming; 1953:76-77].

Slime's movement thus becomes a form of self-development for the villagers, showing their eagerness for change. The political movement provides them with a new way of looking at their own history and experience. For instance, people like Old Pa become very critical and philosophical in their manner of interpreting the bible vis-a-vis their own colonial situation. Old Pa can now draw an analogy between the biblical Moses who liberated the Jews from Egypt and Slime who has provided them with a new avenue for change against colonialism.

The same attitude is evident in the perception and consciousness of the shoemaker, Mr. Foster, Bob's father and the overseer's brother who all become politically aware of their rights and ready to accept new visions. Also the fact that the villagers join in the strike for better terms of employment shows the positive effect that Slime's movement has on their consciousness. Though the 'strike' against the colonial economic interests fail, and Slime's own political movement betrays the villagers; both failures act as catalysts in the growing political awareness and self-consciousness in the villagers. This is dramatised in their reaction to the new bourgeoisies who buy the land from Mr. Creighton and intend to evict them. The anger and bitterness that the villagers show is a clear manifestation of their new level of awareness and consciousness as far as political and economic matters are concerned. This in

a sense, is a possibility for future transcendence over the history of slavery and colonialism and also shows that they are overcoming their inferiority complex.

Though the political movement and its consequences are possibilities for change and transcendence over colonialism, Lamming does not romanticise them or simplify them. As his analogy of the crab's slow movement symbolises; he sees change as a gradual process because it would take time to prepare the people for the politics of decolonization. This is as it is becasue many factors militate against change. People like old Ma, because of their religion, are still conservative and immune to change. Her type aspires for heavenly fulfilment rather than fulfilment in the mundane world. Her death is infact, a premonition of the collapse of the conservative and the feudal system. The people's own inner fear and insecurity of the future also militate against political change. For instance people feared that a change would lead to their displacement from the land though ironically, they are displaced when Slime and his cronies buy the land from Mr. Creighton. In addition Slime himself hinders the potentiality for change when he sets the preparation for change into motion but betrays the people when they are ready for that change. This is clearly revealed when he prevails upon the rioters not to attack Mr. Creighton and in doing so frustrates them and throws them into confusion; bringing the riot to an abrupt end. In the end, Lamming's

overall judgement is that the politics of decolonization fails because the people have not reached that level of political consciousness that would enable them to transform their experience into political drama and action,which would lead to independence and political sovereignity.

Though the politics of decolonization fails in Lamming's realistic portrayal, the novelist's exploration reveals visions of possibility for transcending the history of slavery and colonialism. Such possibilities are delineated in the contrast shown between the consciousness of the young generation and the older generation. The younger generation acts as a foil to the older generation, confronting the colonizer with more personal courage and action than the older generation. Indeed, it proves difficult for the old ones to understand how "small Gordon" could confront the white gentleman and humiliate him by attempting to sell a cock to him. The adults do not perceive this as a new irreverent and rebellious consciousness in the young generation and rather sharply reprove and condemn Gordon's action. Trumper, Boy G and Bob show a similar irreverence when they confront and challenge the colonizer's world by intruding into the landlord's compound. The older people especially Old Ma and Miss Foster, cannot perceive this action as another level of consciousness which is ready for change. Yet it is through the younger generation and in people like Trumper that a contrasting vision of possibility resides.

Another possibility which contrasts with the political and economic failure is the vision offered by Trumper. Trumper's vision becomes a new possibility for political and economic readjustment. His vision implies that the villagers can only change the trend of the new exploitative political and economic order by uniting and creating a force for political action.

> You think they dare move all these houses?... if everyone o' you refuse to pay a cent on that land, and all o' you decide to sleep in the street or let the Government find room for you in the prison house, you think they dare go through with this business o' selling land? [Lamming; 1953:286].

Indeed it is through Trumper's vision that Boy G and his mother realizes the implications of the new economic and political order created by Slime and his cronies. It is Trumper who makes them see it as a form of injustice and corruption, and it seems that Lamming, through Trumper's vision, insists on the need for the villagers to be sensitised on matters pertaining to justice and rights so that they can control their own economic and political destiny and be able to define themselves.

The dramatisation of Trumper's emigration to America and his return seems to be Lamming's major portrayal of the possibility of self definition for the West Indians. For Trumper's emigration becomes a symbolic journey of purgation,

discovery and self-realization, as well as symbolic victory over the confining cage of the island, whose isolation and confinement denies mobility and opportunity. Emigration enables Trumper to break away from the temporary cage of slavery and colonialism, so that on his return from America, he, in a mood and tone of victory and celebration proclaims that, "America make you feel... It makes you feel that where you been living before is a kind of cage". [Lamming; 1953:284]. The personal freedom that Trumper encounters in America makes him aware of his race and identity. As such he creates an identity for himself by accepting his black colour. The new definition and race identity enable him to fill the void that had been created by his colonial inferiority complex. With the new identity and definition his life and experience become worthy and relevant to him.

> He was negro and he was proud. Now he could walk in the sun or stand in the highest hill and proclaim himself the blackest evidence of the whiteman's denial of conscience. And if there was God in heaven or any possibility of justice on earth the revelation of this new difference would have been a justification for this existence. To be a different kind of creature [Lamming; 1953:299].

The discovery of a larger identity and roots enables Trumper to define himself outside the colonizer's perception. This new identity and definition give him a sense of personal freedom, a new consciousness and a sharpened sensibility

to his experience, history and the whole colonial situation. As is evident in his conversation with Boy G and his mother, Trumper exhibits a deeper understanding and awareness that affect the villagers' political and economic views, giving their experiences new interpretations and meanings that would prick their consciousness and change their perceptions. Emigration also enables Trumper to understand the irrelevance of the colonial education given in Creighton village.

> Trumper was right when , he said certain things weren't mentioned at school... they couldn't teach how to belong to this thing which Trumper called race and people. [Lamming; 1953:296].

Though Trumper's vision is portrayed sympathetically here, Lamming deliberately and clearly shows that though a possibility for definition and identity, it is inadequate as a potentiality for cultural authenticity, political sovereignty and personal fulfilment. This is so because Trumper's discovery of racial identity as a self-sufficient entity in itself alienates him from other important problems like alienation and cultural confusion which Lamming considers important for definition.

The inadequacy of Trumper's vision seems to explain the novel's inconclusive ending. The novel ends abruptly with the collapse of the village community, the emergence of the new bourgeois order, and the narrator preparing to

leave Barbados for Trinidad to begin a new process of emigration and alienation.

In the Castle of my Skin, can therefore be perceived as the beginning of Lamming's exploration of Caribbean definition. The delineation of experience and characters in the novel shows that definition encompasses not only racial identity and personal freedom but also personal wholeness. In dramatising the political movement and personal alienation of characters like Boy G, he is in fact also showing that it is possible to transcend all such colonial problems. It seems that this first novel is a reaction which refutes the claims of Froude and Naipaul about the nothingness and futility in the region. Through his creative explorations Lamming attempts to re-interpret the region's history and experience as a way of defining it.

Lamming defines the Caribbean through his personal interpretations of its history and experience. The interpretation includes not only the experience but also the way he shapes it. As I mentioned in Chapter One quoting Arnold Kettle, form is only significant in so far as it clarifies the reality and experience being portrayed. In Lamming's novels, form always reflects and clarifies the experience interpreted. In In the Castle of My Skin, the way Lamming organises experience and the way he structures the novel are determined by the kind of interpretation he gives to the past and present. For instance,

in The Pleasures of Exile Lamming himself explains his interpretation and offers ample elaboration of his perspective on historical events and experience.

> A more important consideration is what the West Indian novelist has brought to the West Indies. This is the real question; and its answer can be the beginning of an attempt to grapple with the colonial structure of awareness which has determined West Indian values. There are for me, just three important events in British Caribbean History. I am using the term history, in an active sense. Not a succession of episodes which can easily be given some causal connection. What I mean by historical events is the creation of a situation which offers antagonistic opposition and a challenge of survival that had to be met by all involved. [Lamming: 1984:36]

Thus in his organisation of this novel Lamming's preoccupation with history in an "active" sense enables him to structure his novel in relation to certain patterns in the community he creates in the novel. The pattern shows how the individual's experience is reflected in the experiences of others and becomes part of the shared experiences of the community.

> It seemed they were three pieces in a pattern which remained constant. The flow of its history was undisturbed by any differences in the pieces, nor was its evenness affected by any likeness. There was a difference and there was no difference. [Lamming: 1953:24].

This idea of patterning, can be seen in the manner in which the novel begins with the rain which disturbs the narrator during his birth day, and which later on enlarges to the floods that affect the whole village. The pattern is again repeated when Lamming gives a vivid description of the physical nature of the estate, showing how the pattern of an individual's situation is repeated in the situation of every other character. The women form one pattern depicting ignorance and unawareness as well as a docile acceptance of their impoverished condition. The men folk too as shown in the bathhouse form another pattern that shows a humiliated and impotent lot of people incapable of standing up to protect their dignity. The children also form another pattern of a confused group that does not understand its situation and history. They grope into the history of the colonizer in an attempt to give meaning to their own lives.

Lamming shows through such pattern how the entire village and the whole of Barbados are involved in a pattern of life which he calls "the colonial structure of awareness". Within this pattern Lamming delineates the events which spark off attempt at change and which must be seen in the context of the pattern. Thus the beginnings of Slime's movement is part of an awakening which affects most members

of the "pattern". This is revealed in the growing politicised consciousness of the old generation, for instance, the shoemaker, Mr. Foster and Bob's father. This change is also made manifest in the enquiring and questioning attitude of the children when they grapple with matters that concern the slave past as well as their relationship with the coloniser.

In delineating this growing consciousness Lamming seems to suggest that a new kind of awareness is disturbing the colonial structure. This is the awareness which the political movement could capitalise on. It is within this growing consciousness that Lamming presents the strike which is the climax of the political movement. In this structuring, the strike is not presented in the novel as a rebellion in which every body is involved as is the case in Of Age And Innocence. The disturbance which breaks out during the strike is merely reported. Most people in the community do not understand what happens. Lamming presents this climax in such way because he wants to show that it fails to awaken the consciousness of the people, which the political movement should have capitalised on.

After the failure of the strike Lamming presents other possible interpretations as a way of moving beyond the failure. He delineates Old Pa's vision and dream as another perception which could have been used towards a new political awareness by the movement. In addition, he presents Trumper's vision as another alternative which could lead to new levels of

meanings within the "pattern" of the colonial's life. Trumper's vision is balanced against the village's inadequacy and lack of understanding thus pointing a way towards an understanding of how the new consciousness can be manipulated for change. It is because so many possibilities and interpretations criss cross and contrast with the historical events that the novelist's structure in In The Castle of My Skin cannot follow the conventional linear development of plot and time.

The contrasting viewpoints and interpretations that Lamming offers account for the shifting narrative points of view. The first person point of view given to the narrator is on some occasions varied with other points of view as well as the novelist's own omniscient view point. This happens because Lamming interprets the experience of the community from so many view points. For instance the novel begins with the point of view of Boy G because he sees more than the villagers see. His interpretation of the rain and the social conditions of the community is more penetrating because his point of view is the truthful one and more objective.

At another point Lamming turns over the point of view to the boys and opens each boys' mind. This is so because he is concerned with how each individual boy responds to his world and interprets it. It is as if he wants to show the difference between what they learn at school and what honestly goes on in their minds. When Lamming gives the point of view

to the older generation in the novel he is probably presenting a prelude to the political changes that would come to the village. The various points of view given to the older generation focus on the various attitudes they adopt in relation to their own lives and the changes being brought about by Slime. For instance, the points of view show how Ma's attitude is shaped by religion unlike the points of view of the others such as the shoemaker and Mr. Foster.

The omniscient narrator's point of view is employed in the reporting of the strike because none of the people involved understand it well enough. It seems that only the omniscient author can present it adequately with ironies. After the strike the points of view shift from Pa to Trumper and to Boy G as a way of presenting other interpretations and meanings that Lamming is concerned with. In addition to the shifting narratives in the novel, the changes in points of view demonstrate what Lamming himself says that the Caribbean novelist can provide other meanings to the experience and history in the Caribbean.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EMIGRANTS: LOST ILLUSIONS: THE BEGINNINGS OF RETHINKING

The Emigrants, Lamming's second novel, is logically a development from perspectives of the first novel In The Castle of My Skin, which initiated and delineated the search for definition. In this second novel the search for definition and identity is magnified and developed to capture the whole West Indian reality. All the possibilities that the antagonistic situations and constrasting consciousness revealed in the first novel are re-considered and re-explored. Thus, such questions as the requisite for political freedom and racial identity as well as the importance of counteracting alienation, are all questions raised and re-examined in The Emigrants. In addition the repercussions of the colonial legacy which were dramatised in In The Castle of My Skin in the lingering effects of slavery and in the psychological problems of the characters, are the same problems raised in The Emigrants.

Lamming uses his own authorial ironies to suggest the illusionary nature of the exiles' expectations by simulating the conditions of slavery even in the emigrants' ship. So that, in effect, the journey becomes another Middle passage though it is supposedly meant to lead to a better break. The effects of those past historical relationships between master and slave, coloniser and colonized, are evident in the

dramatisation of the relationships that exist between the emigrants and the whites in the ship. The whites live in the upper deck whereas the emigrants sleep in the lower decks packed in the dormitories. This is meant to be reminiscent of the situation of slaves and masters during the days of slavery. The difference here is that the present journey is voluntary while the conditions are similar to those of slavery which was involuntary. The image of the emigrants' dormitory as a cage depicts this evidence quite aptly:

> For in the dormitory it was as though they were in a cage with the doors flung open, but they couldn't release themselves. Beyond their enclosure was no-THING, so they remained within the cage unaware of what was beyond... It was unnatural and impossible to escape into something that didn't matter. [Lamming; 1954:105].

The same "slave" conditions that the emigrants face in the ship are further manifested when they reach England. England becomes yet another cage. This image of the cage is at another level a manifestation of the dark future and doom that awaits them in England. It seems that for Lamming, the emigrants coming to England has not changed the nature of colonial relations, and the history of displacement, slavery and colonialism still remains. The emigrants come, still operating within that sphere of colonial psychology which has marred their personality.

In these circumstances their voyage becomes an ironical journey of expectations which ends in disillusionment and disappointment. The emigrants as a result of that very colonial psychology, accept their own islands as inhibiting, derelict, desolate and exhausted of possibilities for ambition and prosperity. This perception towards their history, landscape and past acts as a negative motivating factor that makes them escape from their own islands to England. They have high expectations and illusions of prosperity in England but England does not open its doors of opportunity to them. It denies them access to mainstream English society, and they end up invisible, hanging on the periphery of British society.

England not only denies the emigrants a sense of place and belonging but also destroys them psychologically, physically, spiritually and morally. The disfigured face of Miss Dorking is a clear testimony of how England mutilates and ruins the emigrants. Apart from these individual mutilations, England also destroys the identity and the community the emigrants had created in the ship. The closure of the emigrants' hostel and the break up of their community creates great loneliness that leads to all kinds of psychological maladies and moral degenerations.

The illusions about England that the emigrants had all long nurtured are finally frustrated. In the end they realize that their relationship with England is only superficial. They discover that the very nature of the English culture and society excludes their experience and past, and in such a situation they are unable to develop or extend their personalities. Indeed the emigrants find themselves closed out as symbolised by the image of the smoke which also symbolises the relation of doom for their future in England.

> Tell me Tornado, tell me.
>
> What, man, what?
>
> When we get Outta this smoke, what
>
> happen next?
>
> More smoke. [Lamming; 1954:124].

The strained relationship between the emigrants and England is well dramatised in the contact between Collis and the Englishman, Pearson. The dramatisation symbolises the general attitude of the English people towards the emigrants.

> There was a coarse certainty about Mr. Pearson. He was one who quickly defined the other, calculated the responses which he should present, and having done that, proceeded to make social intercourse and encounter between definition and response. [Lamming; 1954 :139].

This attitude whereby the colonizer defines the colonial as an object leads to suspicion and hostility between the two parties, making the colonial plot murder against the colonizer, out of a deep sense of betrayal. From this sense of betrayal the emigrants become bitter and resentful of the English people because their friendship is not reciprocated. As the Jamaican observes: 'Tis almost like w'at children might feel for parents who never treat them right... What you say about the hate disappearin' only if there was a sign of friendship.' [Lamming; 1954:186].

However the realization that they have never been part of the English people's heritage and dream leads to new levels of consciousness in the emigrants and they are able to define themselves outside the colonizer's perception of them. They see themselves now as a people separate from the mother country and they realise that the myth about "small England" and "Big England" was merely a fallacy. In Lamming's view this recognition is an important episode in the lives of the colonials since it helps them to understand and define themselves.

Though their story is one of failures, frustrations, disintegration and disillusionment, there is a sense in which it is also a story of optimism and a realisation of the self. The experience of exile sharpens their sensibilities and consciousness leading to new levels of self-realization

through suffering. For instance, in the course of the ship's voyage to England the emigrants realize that though their islands look derelict, desolate and exhausted of possibilities they are still much better than the conditions they face in exile. As Tornado observes, expressing this grim hope, "If there is one thing England goin' teach all o' we is that there ain't no place like home no matter how bad home is". [Lamming; 1954:77].

It seems as if Lamming believes that emigration is necessary because it helps the colonials to re-assess and re-examine themselves vi-a-vis their relationships with the colonizer. The whole process of emigration and the experiences associated with it become a symbolic journey of psychological and spiritual re-evaluation. It is during the journey that the West Indians attempt to create a sense of community among themselves. In their observations and questionings they come to understand the causes of the cultural confusion in their islands. They learn of the discontinuity in their history caused by the Middle Passage and it seems that at least some of the emigrants think of reconstructing and rebuilding their lives and communities. The narrator refers to this possibility when he says;

> It seemed possible that the habit which informed a man of the object he had been trained to encounter might be replaced by some other habit new and different in its nature and therefore creating

> a new meaning and function for those objects. It seemed that this could happen even in a man's waking life: that change which deprived the object of its history, making it a new thing, almost unknown, since all attributes of presence would be destroyed, leaving what once a thing was with certain fixed references, a kind of blank. This seemed possible. [Lamming; 1954:83].

On another level, the hostile and harsh conditions of exile, the rejection of the emigrants by the mainstream English society, lead to a positive supportive community as seen in the ship, the hostel, the barber's shop and Mozamba's club. The emigrants come to realize that they belong to a West Indian community and have certain links with Africa and as such must form a fraternity if they have to confront the frustrations and disappointments in this hostile ambience.

> They had kept their positions strengthening this fraternity by an awareness of their predicament... They could stand together and fight. The world was against them and from this awareness they had taken a strength more terrible than the sun. [Lamming; 1954:91].

Although in exile the uncompromising conditions in England militate against the strengthening of such bonds, Lamming feels that the fraternity holds a small possibility for the establishment of a West Indian supportive community with certain shared experiences. As Dickson reveals when he searches frantically for his colleagues.

> He would like to find the governor, or Tornado or Higgins. He needed to be assured he was still there under his clothes, inside his skin, and these were possibly the only people who could probably restore the life, the identity which the others had drained away. [Lamming; 1954:258].

Lamming also seems to imply that emigration and exile can be a requisite for political action in the colonial situation. This possibility is suggested in the relationship between the politically conscious Yugoslav and Collis, the poet. The Yugoslav attempts to influence Collis to use his poetry in a more practical way to rally the emigrants towards political action. This possibility however is never fulfilled in the novel because Collis rejects any association with the Yugoslav and remains aloof and detached from his colleagues. But for Lamming this attempt still remains a possibility for definition.

Although emigration as a process is dramatised as rather tragic and self-defeating in nature, it is in another sense delineated as an important process of purgation, catharsis, self-evaluation and self-knowledge. It enables the emigrants to re-evaluate their landscape and history as well as their very relation with the colonizer. It provides the colonial with the occasion and opportunity to define himself from his own perception and perspective rather than from the eye of the "other", that is, the colonizer.

> But you go' pay to learn, an believe me. I may not see it but those comin' up here an' seen themselves what is what! [Lamming; 1954:77].

However it is not every emigrant who goes through this rethinking. Most of the emigrants fail to come to terms with their situation. The Jamaican, for instance, still suffers from the effects of a split personality, a symptom of colonialism and its psychological repercussions when he says:

> It seem we go to find a place one day. Some new land where we can find peace. Not only the ones like me and you, but the students' ones too. They go to find a place where they can be without making up false pictures about other places. [Lamming; 1954:190].

He is clearly disillusioned with his emigrant life in England but still has illusions for other romantic places. He still subscribes to the colonial psychology that the islands of the Caribbean are derelict, desolate and exhausted of all possibilities. This ambivalence towards emigrant life is also seen in the character of Tornado who expresses feelings of hate towards England but at the same time flees from his island to seek for a better break in England. Strangeman also manifests this divided personality. He gives pessimistic pictures both of his island and England, and at the same time make very frantic efforts to get to England.

By giving these two interpretations of exile and emigration, Lamming is giving us the two sides of their effects and repercussions on the emigrants' psychology and attitudes. Emigration on the one hand helps in demystifying the aura of England making the colonial realise his separateness from the colonizer and also making him think more about who he is. On the other hand the conditions of their lives in exile are sometimes so demoralizing that the situation destroys their personalities. It seems that by delineating the experiences of the emigrants in this paradoxical manner, Lamming is in fact moving beyond Trumper's simplistic vision in In The Castle of My Skin that only conceived of exile as a way of realising a racial identity.

In The Emigrants Lamming uses the theme of exile and emigration to explore the ways in which a West Indian can be defined. He does this by removing his characters from the islands and transporting them to the land of the colonizer. In doing this he is showing the various ways in which emigration can both destroy and help the emigrant to realize himself. He is therefore using this aspect of the West Indian man's history to make statements and comments about who the West Indian is.

Because this point is a major one in the novel, the structure demonstrates it in several ways. Lamming is interested in what happens to the minds of the character,

how they respond to their new environment and situation, how they change as people, how they grow and how they develop relationships, and the novel is structured to illustrate this development.

Structurally, the novel is divided into three main parts. Part One is entitled "A Voyage", the second part "Rooms and Residents" and the third part "Another Time". The first part as the title implies, deals with the process of emigration in the ship and the subsequent train journey in England. In the ship's journey Lamming penetrates the minds of the emigrants bringing out their expectations, desires, ambitions and fears. The conclusion we arrive at is that all of them would love to transcend the island situation they had left. At the same time they also attempt to create a certain West Indian identity and community in their reactions to each other. The plot of the novel in this section corresponds with the growing expectations of the emigrants as well as the new developments in perception and relationships. Thus the plot takes a linear and chronological order as the ship moves closer to its destination and the expectations of the emigrants grow high.

In the second part of the novel and in the section entitled "Train", Lamming once more explores the psychology of the individual emigrants and their reactions to the new environment. He brings out their inner fears, curiosities and anxieties which later seem to converge into a collective

voice. This might be an implication that their destiny and fate in England will take the same pattern; moving from individual consciousness to collective consciousness. To reflect this movement the style of writing changes from ordinary prose into lyrical prose poetry. The pattern and structure of the prose poetry correspond with the movement of the train as well as the shifting thought processes of the emigrants. Their thoughts, like the movement of the train, move and shift from one issue to another and from one emotional outburst to another. The very pattern of this lyrical prose poetry also reflects the confusion in the minds of the emigrants as they encounter the metropolis. At another level this pattern reflects the imminent fragmentation and disintegration that come on the emigrants because their journey leads nowhere. This is aptly captured by the continuous and consistent evocation of images associated with darkness which form part of the prose of this section. "The train journey leads to darkness. More smoke". [Lamming; 1954:124].

The second part of the novel entitled "Rooms and Residents" is paradoxical and depicts the situation of the emigrants in England. The emigrants appear to have settled in England, yet they remain on the periphery and are ironically referred to as 'the residents'. In this part of the novel the image of darkness is further developed. The emigrants live in basement rooms which are dark. The community that they had developed in the ship disintegrates and fragments with the

closure of their hostel. This disintegration and fragmentation in their community is reflected in the very plot of the novel in this section. The plot is marked by rapid shifts and numerous movements as Lamming attempts to capture the different situations and predicaments of the emigrants. As such the plot becomes fragmented and disjointed to depict their disjointed lives. This disjointed and fragmented structuring of the plot of necessity demands that Lamming employs a multiplicity of narrative points of view in an attempt to penetrate and reveal the psychology of the emigrants through experiences which are different but belong to the same pattern.

The last part of the novel entitled "Another Time" further explores the continuing disintegration in the lives of the emigrants, though it also becomes an appraisal of their frantic struggle to rebuild their lives and personalities. As such this part is narrated under headings that illustrate the passage of time. For instance, one section is entitled "Today" and another section entitled "Day Before". The section marked "Day Before" implies the past of the emigrants and the section marked "Today" portrays the final stages of degeneration in the emigrants' lives. Thus the title "Another Time" becomes ironical because even though it promises hope we know that there is no hope either in the present or the future for the emigrants in England.

The story of the emigrants therefore seems to be a more complex continuation of the emigration of Trumper and the narrator previously explored in In The Castle of my Skin. In The Emigrants this process is developed in both vision and form. At one level it is seen as an essential ingredient for the realisation of the self while at another level it becomes demoralising and destructive especially when those involved fail to appropriate the possibilities available in their own islands, and move beyond the psychological effects of colonialism. It is therefore correct to say that for Lamming, though exile is tragic and paradoxical in nature, it is very necessary if the colonials have to define themselves and their experiences outside the coloniser's definition of them.

CHAPTER FOUR

OF AGE AND INNOCENCE AND SEASON OF ADVENTURE: THE NATURE OF POLITICAL DEFINITION

This chapter will explore Of Age and Innocence and Season of Adventure together since they both focus on Lamming's preoccupation with political and personal freedom as possibilities for transcending history and for defining a new self. For Lamming the struggle for political and personal freedom involves a repair of the colonial's damaged psyche as well as his political freedom. The two novels dramatise political action and the implications of the "backward glance" as ways of defining the Caribbean man. In this sense they explore the colonial's potentiality for both political and personal freedom as essential ingredients for his ability to break out of the confining cage of colonialism and its psychological repercussions. Both novels are set in the hypothetical and imaginary island of San Cristobal which is a microcosm of the entire Caribbean region. From this wide perspective the chapter will begin with an exploration of Of Age and Innocence since in terms of the progression of vision, it appears to be a logical sequel to the novels discussed earlier.

Of Age and Innocence seems to explore with more intensity and complexity the political drama that had been initiated in In the Castle of My Skin through the efforts of Mr. Slime but which were never fulfilled because the participants had

not transcended their personal history and colonial relations. As it appears, Lamming is still grappling with the nature of political freedom and its implications for Caribbean definition. At the same time he is also re-exploring, those possibilities of exile which he had initiated through Trumper in In The Castle of My Skin and relentlessly explored in The Emigrants. The novel also dramatises the role of the returning emigrants in the struggle for political freedom. Thus, presumably, the emigrants in Of Age and Innocence can be assumed to be the very same emigrants who had left the Caribbean island in search of a better break and fulfilment and now seem to be returning home with new visions but still alienated.

The returning emigrants are symbolised by Shephard and Mark, and their return is significantly dramatised in the section entitled "Flight". It can be argued that after their failure to make a better break and enter mainstream English society, these emigrants return home, intending to redefine themselves through political action. The returning emigrants believe that through political action they will achieve political freedom which eventually will lead to new definitions. Shephard, the returning emigrant who subsequently becomes the leader of the political movement explains his relation to politics in these terms:

> It is true to say 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 [Lamming; 1960 a:204].

After the discovery that England [like the white woman who deceived him] was not part of his reality, Shephard decided to return home to San Cristobal having now realized that San Cristobal, not England, was his promised land. As he declares to the other passengers in the plane.

> 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 land inhabiting new forms of men who can never resurrect their roots and do not know their nature. Colour is their old and only alphabet. Whites are turning whiter, and the blacks are like instinct which some voice, my voice, shall exercise. San Cristobal so old and so new, no place, this land, but a promise. My promise, and perhaps yours too... [Lamming; 1960 a:58].

The experience of exile in England though it disillusioned and crushed the emigrants gave them a new appreciation and identity with their island. It seems that for Lamming, emigration is on one level a form of self-exploration, a process of re-assessing and evaluating one's identity as well as a process of self-knowledge which the emigrants must acquire in order to overcome that colonial syndrome

which makes them hanker after other landscapes. The detachment and self-searching afforded by emigration enables them to have a better perception of themselves as well as their landscape, and as an experience, it provides them with a certain impetus and drive for political action. Shephard seems aware of this possibility when he confesses to Penelope.

> you may not be of a turn of mind to understand my feelings. This is private, and perhaps, I have given the matter an unnatural attention. That is what you will say. But I would never escape, and I do not see how you can call such an awareness my fault. This is the truth. Of all the senses, our knowledge of those around, it is the eye which I could not encounter in peace. It is as though my body defined all of me, and then played the role of the traitor for those who watched. So that the eye of the other became for me a kind of public prosecutor. I felt surrounded by a perpetual act of prosecution. I was judged finally by the evidence which my body, a kind of professional spy, always offered. And there are times when I have felt my presence utterly burnt up by the glance which another had given me. I wanted to disappear or die. I don't think I have always had this feeling, but I was aware of it for the first time in England, and then a certain relationship helped to put it beyond my control. It became an obsession which possessed me completely... [Lamming; 1960 a:112-3].

Shephard's experience in England as an emigrant made him realize that the eye of the "other", the colonizer, defined him because of his colour; that his skin became a determinant of his existence and his colour prevented him from entering the mainstream English society. There is a double

edged perception of exile here. On one hand, it creates negative feelings in the colonial but on the other it is a spur to political action. The colonial forced by exclusion and irrelevancy to reassess himself, is spurred to action. This is clearly portrayed in Penelope's insight into the difference between her condition and Shephard's

> But she wanted to let him know that those he called the enemy were equally torn by a similar contradiction which had made him a hero in San Cristobal. There was only this difference, she thought: his enemy was without the energy which had urged him seek some release in action. They could not recapture this turbulent peace which would always haunt his life with anguish and promise of reward [Lamming; 1960a:206].

Penelope cannot do anything to change her condition whereas Shephard at least, can be stirred into politics as a release and a means of definition. Thus in the end, it is the colonizer's attitude towards him that propels Shephard into political action in order to define himself outside his eyes. He envisages that the struggle for political freedom will inevitably lead to a new identity and he offers a new political vision to the whole island.

As a leader of the political movement he stands above the other leaders in the movement because of the self knowledge he derives from exile. It is the same kind of self knowledge that we had earlier encountered in Trumper in In The Castle

of my Skin. It is a knowledge that provides both characters with a new way of seeing. For instance, that image of the chair which Shephard aptly evokes, shows his level of political awareness as a result of his new knowledge.

> Most people do not discover anything... 'They learn things or they hear about them, but that is different from seeing, really seeing something. I discovered that until then, until that experience, I had always lived in the shadow of a meeting which others had placed on my presence in the world of meaning, like a chair which is wholly at the mercy of the idea, guiding the hand of the man who builds it... it is impossible for a chair to object to the way it is being made, to say I prefer to look this. A chair could never object to being a chair... 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 start in complete possession of any chair, irrespective of its shape, size, usefulness. Any chair, is a chair. Similarly, the meaning I speak of had already made me for the other's regard. A stupid me, any me you can think of always remained me. But like the chair, I have played no part at all in the making of that meaning which others use to define me completely. [Lamming; 1960 a:203].

The colonial, according to Shephard,has never participated in the making of his definition because he has never had political freedom. This is what has pushed him to live in the shadow of "the other", accepting other people's definition of him. For Shephard, this relationship where the colonial is seen as an object, can be reversed through political action. It is political action that will inevitably

create a new order in which the colonial can define himself outside the colonizer and his values. As he himself explains, he had attacked Penelope in the plane because he had seen her as a symbol of that which had defined him without his consent. Now, through political action, he wanted to be seen as a subject rather than an object. As he points out to Penelope, "when I attacked you in the plane I was attacking the meaning which had made me and to which I was exposed utterly by the woman who looked like you in every detail". [Lamming; 1960 a:203]. Indeed, Shephard believes that through revolution in the form of political action, he will eventually change the meaning that has been bestowed on him by the colonizer:

> Take the chair again. I begin by behaving like a chair. Now I have reached the stage of behaving like an extraordinary chair. I am like a chair which understands and which revolts by saying, fine I accept that I am a chair, for all practical purposes of human regard, I am a chair, but I shall behave on occasions as though I were not a chair. For example, I will only let you sit on me when I feel like it. Similarly I accept me as the meaning I speak of has fashioned me. I accept. For all purposes of simple understanding, I agree that I am that me. But from now on, I deny that meaning its authority. When it suits my purpose I shall use it, when it doesn't, I shall be hostile. In fact, I am at war... But neither the whites who get scared, nor the native who are glad, quite know my real meaning. And the whites are terrified because I say that if I win power, and there is no doubt about that, I shall begin my business by changing the whole curriculum of privilege in San Cristobal. [Lamming; 1960 a:204].

On the other hand Shephard discovers that for political action to become a reality he must first accept the self that he had been made to reject and hate. For it is through accepting this submerged self that he can re-define himself:

> I am just a particular brand of man who, in certain circumstances which are old but may remain with us for a long time, refuse to be that man. When I speak of regression I simply mean that my rebellion begins with an acceptance of the very thing I reject because my conduct 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. What I may succeed in doing is changing that conception of me. But I cannot ignore it. [Lamming: 1960 a:205].

It seems that through Shephard, Lamming suggests that political freedom should entail a deeper psychological adjustment than the mere "re-ordering and re-arrangement of the curriculum of privilege on the island".

However, as Lamming demonstrates later on in the novel, Shephard's political vision has certain loopholes. As an exile his disillusion and detachment initiate introspection, self assessment and political action but the very alienation which leads him into exile remains a disability which he must overcome. Lamming shows that Shephard, as a leader of the political movement, exhibits a form of split personality because of the very alienation fostered by exile. He is unable to transcend his personal history, and as Thief recognises, 'Tis like Shephard ... 'something split a man right down the middle in two, an' one half never make a

meeting with the next'. [Lamming; 1960 a:393]. Because of this alienation Shephard fails as a leader. For the same reason his motive is clothed in selfishness, personal desires and ambition. He participates in the political drama largely as a revenge against the deceptions and frustrations he encountered in England as an exile at the hand of the woman who deceived him. This is clearly dramatised through his character and actions in the plane as well as the apt observation made by Ma Shephard.

> He is not out of his head... but a new ambition hold in bondage, an' all because o' that England, an' some woman who wear him out all night with worry in his sleep. It is a war, it is a war he would like to purge his feelin' with. An' that is bad... A man must clap his feelin' like a shirt, fit it right an' move on clear as the sun an in courage. [Lamming; 1960 a:144].

Lamming seems to believe that political leaders as well as the collective folk must transcend their personal histories if they have to transform political action into real freedom. This view seems to explain the reason for his elimination of Shephard even when victory seemed so obvious and inevitable Mark, the other returned exile in the novel also suffers from a split personality which hinders his participation in the political movement. Like Shephard, Mark also fails to overcome the alienation which is the result of exile. As a result, he is unable to use the insights he acquires

through his "backward glance" to recover his submerged self and history. His speech moves the crowd into drama, frenzy and possession, but because of his personal fears he fails to connect with the crowd and unite with them to translate this insight into political action. In the end he remains alienated both on his island and in England. Indeed as both Marcia and Bill observe "He has lived away from San Cristobal for twenty years and he has never really been at home in England". [Lamming; 1960 a:46].

The failure of Mark and Shephard is therefore in Lamming's view, a problem of an alienation fostered on them by their situation of exile. In their political coalition and agenda, Singh, their Indian-descended colleague, also fails because as a direct victim of colonialism, he does not transcend his personal history. Having suffered as a cane-cutter in the sugar plantation, he acts emotionally, exhibiting feelings of bitterness and hatred, not caring much about the future as long as there is a rearrangement of privileges when the political movement claims power.

Because the returned exiles fail as political leaders, the movement they lead does not achieve its goal. The leaders cannot inspire the collective folk to comprehend the real meaning of freedom and nationalism. Their response to politics is marked by drama, frenzy, religion and possession which are not true manifestations of a mature political awareness. As Mark reminds them in his very

elaborate and moving speech, nationalism, the source of political struggle

> ... is not only frenzy and struggle with its necessary demand for the destruction of those forces which condemn you to the status we call colonial. The national spirit is deeper and more enduring than that. It is original and necessary as the root to the body of the tree. It is the source of discovery and creation. It is the private feeling you experience of possessing and being possessed by the whole landscape of the place where you were born, the freedom which helps you to recognise the rhythm of the winds, the scheme and aroma of the night, rocks, water, pebble and branch, animal and bird noise, the temper of the sea and the mornings arousing nature everywhere to the silent and sacred communication between you and the roots you made on this island. It is the bond between each man and that corner of the earth which his birth and his work have baptised with the name, home. And the freedom you sing... freedom ..., [Lamming: 1960 174-175]

For Lamming nationalism is a prerequisite to political freedom because it gives the colonial identity and definition which enables him to discard his desires and illusion for other landscapes.

Apart from the drama and frenzy which characterise the people's response to politics, Lamming shows racial and self interest working against the possibility for political freedom. Baboo, an Indian, because of his own greed and selfishness, kills Shephard so that Singh, a fellow Indian, could get the occasion and opportunity

to lead San Cristobal. As he confesses later on to Singh,

> Was only for you Singh, was only for you
> I did it... from infancy I dream to see
> someone like myself, some Indian with
> your achievement rule San Cristobal.
> My only mistake was to wish it for you
> Singh, was only for you I do what I do...
> [Lamming, 1960 a:389].

In the end the murder of Shephard totally changes the trend and pace of the political action. Shephard's death demoralises the spirit and enthusiasm of the people. They feel frustrated and cheated. The illusions and hopes that they had nurtured in the quest for political freedom are shattered; all the excitement and drama brought about by the political action come to an abrupt end. The situation becomes tense as the society seems to revert to the 'status quo'.

It seems that Lamming dramatises a political possibility which ends in failure. However, his vision does not end here. To counteract this failure he explores a contrasting possibility in the political alliance created on a small scale by the youngsters. This alliance, both in personal relationships, and commitment, becomes a foil to the bigger alliance. The bigger alliance failed because its leaders had not transcended their personal histories. All of them continue to harbour feelings of distrust, suspicion and fear against each other because of their varied racial backgrounds. In constrast the boys of the

secret society do not suffer from alienation but rather appreciate their land and its history. Indeed it is the island's legends and myths which give them courage and enable them to transcend their personal histories. By upholding this attitude to the land and its past, Lamming is showing that a sense of the past is important for political freedom. In his descriptive account of San Cristobal, Lamming himself suggests a background that encompasses the perception, appreciation and appropriation of a past, different from the coloniser's from which the colonial would draw inspiration and authenticity. The statues celebrating colonial rulers as history makers are in fact, overshadowed by the legends and myths representing the island's history. Lamming shows that the island had a pre-colonial history, which is embodied in Ma Shephard's oral history and in the rituals and legends of the island. In his view, the boys' genuine and total response to this aspect of the land is what saves them from the alienation of the grown ups.

Thus the boys' secret society, is Lamming's vision for the future, a future where there are possibilities for harmony, love and trust, and where political action cannot be stalled by alienation and personal crisis.

As in the previous novels, Lamming's exploration of political freedom as a means of self-definition

influences the form of Of Age and Innocence. The novel is structured to reflect the theme of political awareness and political action; and the plot develops with this theme. Thus in thematic terms, the novel is divided into three books. Book one - "Flight", deals with the returning emigrants, Shephard and Mark. In this section Lamming reveals the psychology of the returning emigrant and shows how exile has marred his personality. We are shown that he takes the idea of definition too lightly and that he is unaware of how his split - personality and his alienation can hamper him. Book two, - entitled "San Cristobal" deals with the emigrants political influence on the collective folk in the island. It shows how the growing political consciousness becomes another ritual in the island, marked by possession, religion and frenzy. The two sections are therefore linked together to reflect the nature of the political struggle.

As happens in In The Castle of My Skin the structure of Of Age and Innocence reflects Lamming's conception of history as an active rather than a static phenomenon. The novel is structured in such a way that it presents "antagonistic opposition and contrasting situations" which become a challenge to the colonizer's history and at the same time offer possibilities for transcending the colonial situation. The contrasting versions of history and contrasting possibilities one

used to move history towards a collective endeavour. Colonial history as manifested in the statues assumes that history began with the colonizers but such implications are challenged by Ma Shephard, the repository of another history embodied in myths, legends and rituals. The legends, myths and rituals of the collective folk become a catalyst for the political action against the colonizer. More than that they are also images of self perception through which the people can see themselves in history and therefore pit themselves against the colonizer. Through the use of oral tradition the section celebrates that other version of history which is outside recorded history and which the statues of the colonizers seem to deflate. The myth associated with the origin of the island gives the island a distinctive character and also marks the struggle for freedom. To enhance this kind of history Lamming also employs the legend of "The Tribe boys and the Bandit Kings" to show that there has always been a struggle for freedom and dignity on the island. Indeed it is this very legend that inspired Mark when he addresses the political rally. The legend is for him a form of a "backward glance", which unfortunately he does not utilise fully into political action.

> It was the legend of the Tribe Boys which had aroused the feeling which made the theme of his speech. He could hear his voice like the echo of the crowd pursuing him across the garden. Freedom and Death. He had spoken the language they understood. [Lamming 1960 a:179].

The legend of the "Tribe Boys and the Bandit Kings" becomes a form of shared experience for the collective folk. It is this same legend that spurred the boys [secret society] into action when the troops came.

The other contrasting situations can be seen in the delineation of the political drama. Contrasting situations such as the contribution of the white liberals, as well as the miniature secret society of the boys, are all given as possibilities which might have been utilised by the political movement in its quest for political freedom and definition, possiblities that could have moved the movement beyond frenzy and the arrangement of privileges. It is because of these intertwined possibilities envisaged by Lamming that the story of the political drama is not given in a linear manner.

The perception and conception of history as active rather than static appears to move Lamming's novel from the kind of characterisation in which a character is in conflict with his society. Instead, it portrays a multitude of characters with antagonising and contrasting visions of the political drama. This preoccupation with the exploration of possibilities also accounts for the variety of narrative points of view. In delineating the public history, Lamming employs the third person narrative point of view, observing the society from an omniscient point of view, whereas, in

dealing with the private and personal history of the character, he employs the first person narrative point of view, using the diaries of Mark and Penelope. The diaries act as a form of introspection, revealing the hidden lives of the characters as well as their past. We are introduced to the past life of Shephard through Mark's diary and we also get a better perception of Penelope and her inadequacies through her dairy. The use of the two different narrative points of view show the contradictions in characters like Mark and Shephard as well as the contradictions in their society. The introspection afforded by the diary is an important aspect of the thematic structure because Lamming is also concerned with the link between inner life, personal history and the quality of political freedom.

Lamming's vision for political freedom and personal freedom also explains the significance of the kinds of imagery he employs. The images of destruction and construction such as fire and water, life and death are evoked to show people's attitude towards change and questions concerning freedom. As such the images of destruction and construction are balanced against each other to show the pains and rewards that are associated with the search for both personal and public freedom.

In Of Age and Innocence, Lamming envisaged political freedom as a possibility for identity and definition. The search for political freedom fails not because such

possibilities are exhausted but because those involved in the drama fail to transcend their personal histories. Thus Lamming has made us change our way of seeing and made us see histor as more than what the records say. He has made us see history as the collective experience of people. In this way history becomes active and dynamic rather than an account of cause and effect.

Whereas Of Age and Innocence dramatises the search for political freedom as a preamble to self definition, Season of Adventure explores the search for personal freedom as a prerequisite for discovering both identity and definition. Personal freedom is delineated here as a catalyst for the political action and freedom which had been Lamming's major preoccupation in In the Castle of My Skin and Of Age and Innocence.

In Season of Adventure, we recognise that San Cristobal has now become an independent colony and has established its first Republic, though the independence and freedom associated with it seem to be highly cosmetic. This first Republic as seen through the social and psychological depiction of its leaders, seems to have failed to transcend the confining cage of colonialism. Powell, one of its greatest critics comments bitterly about the change that has taken place:

> 'Change my arse... is independence what it is? One day in July you say you want to be that there thing: an' one day in a next July the law say all right, from now

> you's what you askin' for! What change that can change? Might as well call your dog a cat an' hope to hear him mew. Is only words an' names what don't signify nothin' [Lamming; 1960 b:17].

Powell is bitter because the new leaders still cling to the values of the former colonizer in terms of culture and education, and in terms of their entire life. The new leaders have obviously not transcended the psychological repercussions of colonialism, and are still alienated from their past and culture. They aspire for and desire the style and standards of the former colonizer and as such still live in a "borrowed world". Their kind of life style alienates them from the rest of the society especially the community in the forest reserve. The leaders project a negative attitude towards the forest reserve community which they feel is shaming them. This attitude in turn creates a wedge between the two factions in the society. The Forest Reserve feels that the new leaders, like the colonizers have betrayed them by shutting the door of opportunity to their faces. For them, this first republic is only a new phase of colonialism.

In their negative attitude to the Forest Reserve the new leaders also attempt to destroy the culture and creative potentialities of the common folks, since they remind them of a past they want to forget. Colonialism, it seems, has alienated them, making them regard their past, and culture

as primitive and barbaric. In these circumstances independence becomes simply a new form of enslavement as Powell is to note at the beginning of the novel.

However in Lamming's view, independence and freedom must mean a transcendence over such colonial attitudes, and this is possible only through a backward glance, a form of recovery which can help colonials to retrieve their submerged self and history. The backward glance provides characters with a new perception of history that transcends alienation and leads to a new political awareness and action as well as a new sense of self.

The backward glance therefore becomes a form of psychotherapy on the colonials' damaged psyche. Lamming implies that personal wholeness can only be achieved after such an experience. He had implied this way back in Of Age and Innocence when he made his character, Mark, gain insight and vision after his momentary possession. In Season of Adventure his character, Fola, goes through a similar possession in the tonelle, though unlike Mark she is able to translate her experience into political action. Because she recovers and accepts her submerged history and self, Fola transcends her personal crisis of cultural alienation. Unlike Mark she is able to connect with the community and to use her vision to spur them to political action.

The ceremony of souls in the tonelle enables Fola to undergo a process of self-exploration which helps her to

assess and give new meanings and definitions to her life. The ceremony helps her to discover not only her split-personality, but also the submerged past that needed to be retrieved. In addition, the experience helps to reconnect her to a way of seeing and feeling different from her alienated middle class family. Fola's new vision of herself makes it impossible for her to fit within her middle class community, and accordingly she not only rejects it but rebels against it by choosing her own mode of action, future and destiny. Unlike Mark in Of Age and Innocence she is able to use the insights of her experience to energize people and move them into political action. Lamming seems to suggest that the backward glance would be meaningful only when Fola shares her insight with others. Accordingly, her vision becomes a possibility only when she associates with Chiki and the boys of the reserve. The alliance between Chiki, the artist, and Fola, the teacher, becomes very important as far as the future of San Cristobal is concerned. For as Chiki himself realises, there is a connection between the artist and the teacher, since both have an obligation to create new meanings in a situation where history has left a void. Lamming believes that the new meanings created by the artist through the possibilities of the creative imagination will in effect, enable the colonial to define himself outside the history of the colonizer. For instance, the portrait that Chiki creates to represent the forgotten

face of Fola's father, helps the society symbolically, to recollect the reality of their past. The face, with its dual images brings out not only reality of colonial history but also points to that dual Caribbean identity which the leaders suppress in their rejection of their other self, the self symbolised by the forest reserve.

> The painter's hand had preserved the naked outline of a murder and a man; a face which had been caught in every line and movement of its features. A narrow precipice of forehead was sliding softly into the hollow arches of two curious and tormented eyes. The eyes looked suspicious and alert in different ways. The left eye seemed more nervous, more reluctnat to open up as though it were afraid of what it saw, glancing backward from the corner of its socket. But the right eye was wide and fierce, a triumphant glance glare of certainty dazzling its surface. The eyes seemed to compete for an exclusive vision of what confronted them; fixed, hard and determined, as though they were in private agreement about two different ways of seeing. Shadows came natural over the face which seemed to change its glance according to the direction of the sun. [Lamming; 1960 b:292].

Season of Adventure can therefore be said to be a story of definition achieved through a meaningful correlation between personal freedom and political freedom. Fola's 'backward glance' and her relationship with Chiki, as well as the political action initiated by Great Gort, the traditional artist, leads to the collapse of the first republic and the establishment of the second republic, one

which seems to be more practical and more in tune with the expectations and aspiration of the common folk. Lamming believes that politics can become "the art of the possible", and the individual situation can be illuminated by all the possibilities which keep pushing it always towards a destiny which remains open" [Lamming; 1960 b:324]. Politics, as the art of the possible, fails for the first republic because leaders do not give new meanings to their history and experience. By despising their own past and culture, and craving for other standards and values, they allow themselves to be defined by the experience and eyes of the "other", thus failing to interpret their colonial experience in subjective and positive ways.

It was the revolt of the drums started by Gort and Fola that led to the political drama thus leading to the collapse of this First Republic. It is because of this that Fola has more affinity to Gort's vision and commitment than Chiki's. Gort is closer to the community because he is a traditional artist - the drummer. Thus, while Chiki on the other hand remains alienated and is unable to connect with the society, it is Fola and Gort who must in the end translate vision into political realisation. In Lamming's view, the realisation is also a process of definition, and as the leader of the second republic observes, no political freedom would be complete and meaningful without a language of definition. In the case of San Cristobal, this language is the language of drums, symbol

of religion, ritual and communication.

Lamming's exploration of personal freedom through the process of the backward glance shapes the form of Season of Adventure in a unique way. The delineation demands that Lamming communicates through the symbolic implications of myth, and the ceremony of souls [vodum], which as a ritual of possession and descent into the hidden self, provides a medium for the exploration. As used in the novel, this ceremony marks the continuity between the West Indies and Africa, and in spite of distance in time and space, the drum seems to preserve its ritual significnace. It is for instance, Fola's participation in this ritual that builds up both the plot and the themes of personal freedom, cultural authenticity and political freedom. The use of this ritual makes the novel highly symbolic. Fola's backward glance become a symbolic journey in search of a submerged self. All the "journeys" that Fola makes are reflections on her past and indeed, become an attempt to retrieve the hidden past. Fola makes a journey to the Tonelle, the maternity home and the Forest Reserve, and all these journeys help her to re-assess her perception and history, finally leading her to new perceptions of her past, present and future.

Lamming's way of structuring the novel to reflect a vision of definition, the symbolic journeys into the hidden past are in turn, collaborated by images which lead to the pasts of individuals and the society. The images

communicate through certain associations with the hidden past and the hidden self. They burrow into the submerged history and self of the individual and the society and work to activate memory and transform perception. For instance, the image of the hand that continually appears to Fola, communicates relationship with a certain forgotten kingdom of time past. This hidden hand, emerging from her memory, enables her to retrieve aspects of the submerged past. This retrieval of the past helps her to perceive herself in a new way, different from her middle class family. On another level the image of the face that Chiki creates in his painting communicates a certain reality to the society: a part of their history which they have always suppressed. The duality of the face activates their memory and enables them to perceive the duality of their heritage and the awareness enables them to perceive their history and culture afresh outside the colonizer's eyes. The image of the sandflies also enables the society to relate with its hidden past. For Agnes, the image of the sandflies takes her back to her forgotten past and helps her to evaluate her self, her relationship with Piggot and the middle class society as well as her past history. The image transforms her perception and enables her to realise that she need not be guilty of her hidden past and self. On the other hand for the middle class people such as Lady Carol and Mrs Raymond the image of the sandflies brings with it a lot of anxiety

and fear because it activates the memories of the past corruption and evils they committed. It reminds them of a past that they would like to remain entombed. The image of the sandflies therefore becomes a revelation of the hidden past and it forces the individuals to evaluate their lives. It spells doom for those who have not undergone the ceremony. On yet another level, the forest reserve becomes a powerful image, an image of authentic culture symbolised by the drums, rituals and religion of the people. Fola's symbolic journey to the reserve therefore becomes a symbolic journey of the alienated to her roots and to authentic culture.

The structure of this novel and the narrative point of view reflects the vision that Lamming is preoccupied with. The division of the novel into two distinct parts reflects Lamming's dual view of political freedom and the correlation he makes between inner freedom and public freedom. Part one, "Arriving and Returning", deals with Fola's quest for personal freedom. This part focusses on Fola's personal crisis and her conflict with the middle class values of her society. The second part, "The Revolt of the Drums", deals with the conflict between the new leaders and the common folks who live in the Forest Reserve. This second part, unlike the first which concentrated on the personal history of Fola, deals with both public history and personal freedom. The division in the novel into two parts is in itself, a reflection of the division in the society and the division in

the personalities of the characters most of whom suffer from problems of alienation. From this structuring, Season of Adventure becomes a celebration of self knowledge, new identity and definition through the retrieval of the past by means of the "backward glance". It is indeed, a portrait of a society that struggles to overcome the problems of colonialism and alienation both at a personal and public level and leading in the end, to a new identity and definition.

CHAPTER FIVE

WATER WITH BERRIES AND NATIVES OF MY PERSON: RECONSTRUCTIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS: POSSIBILITIES FOR THE LIBERATION OF CALIBAN AND PROSPERO

Lamming's exploration of Caribbean definition takes into account not only the nature of cultural, political and personal freedom but also the re-ordering of the relationship between colonizer and colonized. The focus springs from Lamming's realisation that both have been engaged in a particular relationship that has shaped their lives. Lamming feels that there must be a dialogue between the master [Prospero] and the slave [Caliban] not as a way of cursing their meeting [as Caliban does in The Tempest] but as a means of bringing it to a level of mutual and sympathetic understanding. As Lamming argues in The Pleasures of Exile.

> This gift of language is the deepest and most delicate bond of involvement. It has a certain finality. Caliban will never be the same again. Nor, for that matter, will Prospero. Prospero has given Caliban a language; and with it an unstated history of future intentions. This gift of language meant not English, in particular, but speech and concept as a way, a method, a necessary avenue towards areas of the self which could not be reached in any other way. It is this way entirely Prospero's enterprise, which makes Caliban aware of possibilities. Therefore, all of Caliban's future - for future is the very name for possibilities - must derive from Prospero's experiment which is also his risk. [Lamming; 1960:109].

Thus in the two novels, Water with Berries and Natives of My Person, Lamming is preoccupied with re-examining both the meeting and the historical voyage from several angles.

For Lamming, the very reconstruction of the relationship between colonizer and colonised in the past, present and future, reveals how new attitudes to history can bring about new levels of relationships and consciousness which would liberate both colonizer and colonised. He finds The Tempest a successful framework for his exploration because it is a classic enactment of the meeting from the point of view and perspective of Prospero. Lamming's re-reading and re-working in Water with Berries presents a chance for exploring it from a Caribbean perspective. In the same way Lamming focuses attention on Prospero's own psyche when he attempts to rework Prospero's voyage on the various levels he does in Native of My Person.

This chapter will therefore focus on Lamming's exploration of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised in Water with Berries and Natives of My Person. Water with Berries as earlier noted, seems to be Lamming's imaginative interpretation of The Tempest the play in which Shakespeare celebrates Prospero's victory over Caliban. For Lamming, Water with Berries becomes an attempt to reverse such a relationship at all levels and as such, it is not accident that the title of the novel, Water with Berries, is derived from one of the most defiant statements made by Caliban in

The Tempest as he reviles Prospero for the inhuman and exploitative way he has treated him.

> Caliban: I must eat my dinner.
> This island is mine by a sycorax my mother,
> which thou tak'st from me. When thou
> cam'st first, thou strok'st me,
> and made much of me,
> Would'st give me water with berries in'it;
> and teach me how
> To name the bigger light, and how the less,
> That born by day and night. And then I loved thee,
> And showed thee all the qualities on'th isles,
> The fresh springs, brine pits, barren place and fertile.
> Cursed be I that did so! All the charms of
> Sycorax-toads, bettles, bats, light on you!
> For I am all, the subject that you have,
> which first was mine king; and here
> you sty me
> In this hard rock, whiles you do keep from me
> the rest o'th' island.
>
> Prospero: Thou most lying slave,
> Whom stripes may move, not kindness!
> I have used thee,
> Filth as thou art, with human care, and
> lodged thee In Mine own cell, till thou
> didst seek to violate
> The honour of my child.
>
> Caliban: Oho,O ho! would't had been done!
> thou didst prevent me. I had people else
> This isle with Calibans. [Shakespeare, W.
> 1968: 76 Act 1, Scene 2].

It is within the framework of this classic relationship that Lamming explores and interprets the twentieth century relationship between the descendants of Prospero and those of Caliban, and attempts to give the relationship new meanings.

Here, Caliban curses Prospero for tricking him to trust, love and depend on him and eventually betraying, exploiting and subjugating him. By giving him the gift of language,

Prospero controls all of Caliban's thoughts. Caliban responds to this betrayal and control with abuse and curses, and his response appears not to extend beyond these. In Water with Berries Lamming attempts to move beyond Caliban's curse and to push both Caliban and Prospero into a dialogue that would change their historical relationship and liberate them both.

Thus in Water with Berries Lamming dramatises a variety of West Indian artists in exile in the mother-country, that is, the land of the coloniser. The three artists - Teeton [painter], Roger [a musician and composer] and Derek [an actor] are in self-exile in England because they feel that their own island has rejected them and because as artists they need to be recognized so as to grow and develop their creativity. As artists they feel they need a sensitive society that can appreciate their skills, and believe only the metropolis can give them this appreciation. Ironically, however, they are unable to find this in England. They remain on the periphery of English society; and their art degenerates just as their own personalities disintegrate.

> They were young and devoted, the most eager of candidates for adoption, indifferent to simple demands that nagged the social herd. They had discovered a style of difficulty that promised to free them from the insecurities of their origins. More important, they had escaped the cruelties of neglect. Whatever indignities, the foreign city might impose, it had achieved a most vital claim to their affection. [Lamming; 1971: 68].

The three artists represent the colonials who emigrate to the metropolis to seek new meanings and definition in the mother country. Lamming's delineation proves that such meanings and definitions cannot be achieved until the Caliban-Prospero relationships dramatised in The Tempest and enacted in this novel, have been changed. The three artists, like the emigrants in The Emigrants, are frustrated, humiliated, crushed and disillusioned. More than this, the nature of the relationships that they encounter in England continue to reflect the old Caliban-Prospero relationships, so that even Teeton, who had been politically conscious and actively involved in the liberation struggle, accepts his position, as child and pet in his relationship with the old Dowager. This state of affairs is succinctly delineated in the symbolic relationship between Teeton's room and the Old Dowager's main house, a reminder of the master's mansion and the slave's house and signifying at the same time, the dependence syndrome in the colonial's relationship with the coloniser.

> He had almost come to think of the room as a separate and independent province of the house. The house was the Old Dowager's but the room was his; and house and room were in some way their joint creation; some unspoken partnership in interest they had never spoken about. [Lamming; 1971:14].

This kind of relationship signifies colonial relations in their most destructive form, and becomes possibly, the

worst form of colonisation: "colonisation through a process of affection" [Lamming; 1960 :76]. It is this kind of relationship that hinders Teeton's call to the cause of liberty both as an individual and as a member of the Secret Gathering. For although he has very strong feelings and desires to return to San Cristobal, the Old Dowager's affection and generous gestures make it difficult for him to leave. The mother-child relationship, that grows so intimate, arouses feelings of guilt and betrayal when he plans to announce his departure to the Old Dowager. Thus, in time, the relationship between him and the Old Dowager becomes a trap, the very same trap in which the colonial Caliban entangled in his relationship with Prospero. This relationship between Teeton and the Old Dowager becomes stronger with the favours the Old Dowager provides and the acts she performs on behalf of Teeton. All these favours make Teeton dependent on her thus repeating rather than changing the colonial syndrome.

Teeton's association with the Old Dowager, Derek's relationship with the theatre agent and Roger's relationship with Nicole are all aspects of the dependent syndrome, and all these relationships are challenges which the artists must struggle against. Thus, between Teeton and the Old Dowager, the relationship presents this challenge when Teeton begins to assert some independence by deciding to leave. The crisis of Nicole's death and the whole drama on the island shows that the colonial relationship is far more complicated than the simplistic way in which Teeton and the Dowager had played it out in England. The Old

Dowager reveals herself as far more selfish and sinister than Teeton had imagined. The relationship between him and Dowager which had hitherto been intimate, deteriorates after Teeton's revelation that he knew her personal history. She completely changes her attitude to him and becomes the coloniser she really is, looking at Teeton as a "child, a slave and a monster".

> She was shattered by the conviction that he knew; that he must always have known; and she discovered some animal treachery in his sensitive ways. She saw the ancestral beast which possessed his kind, a miracle of cunning and deceit, forever hiding, dark and dangerous as night. [Lamming; 1975:243].

In the acting out of this new turn in their relationship Teeton appears at first, to be still naively attached to the Dowager. He still clings to her and expects some form of reconciliation and compromise which he believes would lead to a harmonious relationship between them so that his departure would not be marked by hostility and tension. But the Old Dowager rebuffs his efforts for reconciliation and rapport, and it is as if Lamming is insisting that the colonised cannot liberate himself until he breaks away completely from the coloniser's hold.

In the drama of colonial relations between Teeton and the Old Dowager, a chance for confrontation reveals itself when Teeton confronts Fernando. The presence of Fernando in the drama provides Teeton with a new consciousness

and perception of his position as a colonised person. Thus, he realizes that his future lies in his own island of San Cristobal and in his relationship with the Secret Gathering. This new perception makes him defiant enough to break the emasculating relationship that has existed between him and the Old Dowager. By killing the Dowager in a violent and bloody manner, and burning her body, Teeton symbolically breaks her hold and defines an independent self in colonial relation. Teeton's act becomes a psychological victory over the domineering coloniser. Indeed as Lamming says in an interview with Arthur Kemoli,

> If one were to overcome the psychological meanings of the former historical relations of colonial experience, it would have to be as it were, complete disengagement, that one would have to kill the white imperialist force within the psyche, that it would have to be exorcised; this is the meaning of the murder of the old woman, although the boy recognised her generosity and her affection. These are seen as obstacles in the way to his liberation; he has to overlook that kind of aid if he is going to free himself. [Umma; Vol. 3 1976:20].

Teeton's psychic liberation becomes therefore a symbolic ritual of freedom, rebirth, redemption and salvation which gives him the opportunity to define himself on his own terms.

> He had made arson on the Old Dowager's body. She was burning away, burning away his memory. He had burnt her free, burnt her losses, burnt her husbands, burnt her lover; he was burning her into eternity [Lamming; 1971:247].

Like Teeton, Derek also realizes that the agent, like Prospero, was using him as a property, and he therefore decides to rebel against subjugation and exploitation. "Tomorrow night will be the last time", he says, "I don't think I'll play another corpse again. I have been dead too long. Somebody else can have a turn". [Lamming; 1971:219]. Thus, stirred by his pentecostal childhood, Derek confronts and challenges the coloniser by sexually defiling the heroine of the play, A Summer's Error in Albion, rebelling against his colonial status.

In similar acts of rebellion, the servant's burning of Gore-Britain's plantation in San Cristobal, their violation of Myra and Roger's act of violence, are all acts of revolution in that they are calculated to destroy the terms of the colonial relationship in the world in which the colonials live. Water with Berries therefore bears witness to the collapse of that naive idea that assumes "compatible" and harmonious relations between the descendants of Caliban and Prospero.

Yet, even though Lamming's vision for re-ordering the colonial situation lies in the complete break of the colonised from the coloniser's grip, there is a sense in which possibilities for rapport and reconciliation between the coloniser and the colonised can be achieved so as to liberate both from the negative effects of the colonial experience. These possibilities are explored in the relationships that develop between men and women in the

novel. The women, "the Miranda figures", explored from different dimensions of Shakespeare's "Miranda" in The Tempest; are symbols of reconciliation, communication, forgiveness, understanding, sacrifice and protection. Randa, Myra and Nicole are the Miranda figures in Water with Berries. Randa as a figure of sacrifice and understanding offered herself to the American ambassador, so that Teeton would be given freedom. Nicole similarly gives her life to save Roger when he is at the verge of self-destruction. Roger had become extremely irresponsible, and it is the love that she offers that saved him from imminent destruction. This relationship is reminiscent of the special relationship between Penelope and Shephard in Of Age and Innocence; that which provided both of them with a chance and occasion to communicate and acquire a better understanding of each other.

Thus, for Lamming, the possibilities for creating new levels of association for both coloniser and colonised lies in the ability to create a rapport and communication which would lead to reconciliation. The ceremony of the souls, where the dead forgive the living and the living forgive the dead, as enacted in the encounter between Teeton [descendant of Caliban] and Myra [descendant of Prospero] in the heath, is an allegory for such communication and rapport, one which is meant to reconstruct the past relationships in a way that would lead to new levels of meaning and understanding between them. The communication that takes place between Teeton and Myra uplifts the spirit

of the already violated and degraded Myra, giving her some self worth and psychological salvation.

> Now she could feel the winter temperature of her body subside. The frost had cracked and sweat was coursing freely over her shoulders. For a moment she felt she had made some escape from the dungeons her memory had built around her. Teeton's attention had come to her rescue [Lamming; 1971:151].

However, communication between Myra and Teeton can only take place in the literal and symbolic cover of darkness where colour, the determinant of prejudice in the coloniser's world, is neutralized. "She felt she had outraged his hearing; and she knew it was the night which had given her this courage. Would she have taken the same liberty if she could see him? Now she felt a little fearful of the consequences". [Lamming; 1971:151]. As such, communication, rapport and reconciliation between the coloniser and the colonised can only be possible where the negative attitudes of both have been overcome.

> Here, on this heath, under cover of night, they would meet like a legend of Spirits, indifferent to the visible frivolities of daylight. The dark was their bond; the word their only necessary bridge. [Lamming; 1971:154].

As with the structuring of all Lamming's novels, Water with Berries is structured to reflect the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. The novel is

built on two parallel plots concerned with the exiles' relationship with their past, and the mother-country. The main plot depicts the relationship between Teeton and the Old Dowager as well as Teeton's past life in San Cristobal. The Teeton - Old Dowager relationship is an allegory of the relationship between the coloniser [Prospero] and the colonised [Caliban]. The second plot portrays similar experiences of Roger and Derek. The two plots run parallel to each other without overlapping, right up to the last chapter when the three emigrant artists have been arrested and are awaiting trial for the violence they have committed. This seems to be Lamming's assumption that though the exiles lived differently, their fate and destiny in England had already been pre-determined. The two plots of the novel do not follow a chronological order because Lamming is concerned with the exploration of the different experiences of these emigrants in England. The shifts and movements of the plot from one scene to the other reflects the fragmented and disjointed lives of the emigrants.

In addition the plot of the novel does not follow a linear pattern. For instance, the story begins on a September morning with a clearly indicated season and time, "The fall". But gradually, time as a progression, loses meaning because the past and present become submerged into each other. Yet for most of these characters the present can only be explained with reference to actions and events already concluded in the past. Besides, the progression

of time in the novel seems to be irrelevant as most of the time, characters are trapped in a kind of existential life, where existence has lost meaning, and life has become useless, and futile, as we see in the situation of a character like Roger. Thus, time as a means of progression and development of the self, becomes irrelevant for Roger and Derek who are unable either to extend their personalities or develop meaningful relationships. However, Teeton develops supporting relationships, first with the Secret Gathering and later with the Old Dowager. But even for him, the relationship with the Old Dowager becomes inhibiting in the development of his personality so that in the end he has to kill her in order to liberate himself. Under circumstances where relationships cannot develop and personalities cannot grow, the novel cannot follow a chronological or linear order of development.

In addition to the disjointed structuring of the novel, it seems that the images of fire and death used extensively in the novel are images of disintegration and destruction which collaborate the disjointed nature of the plot as well as the disembodied and fragmented psyches of the characters. Roger's acts of arson are for instance, a manifestation of his disembodied and fragmented psyche, whereas Teeton's murder of the Old Dowager shows the disintegration of the relationship between the colonisers and the colonised. This kind of delineation justifies the fragmented plot and structure in Water with Berries.

While Water with Berries dramatises the kind of relationship that exists between descendants of Prospero and those of Caliban in the home of Prospero, Natives of My Person delineates the experience of the descendants of Prospero in their adventurous voyage to establish a new settlement in the land of Caliban. These explorers expect to make a better break in the new world after having been disappointed, humiliated, frustrated and disillusioned in their own home. In this novel , Lamming attempts to show that the vision of a promising new world existed in the consciousness of these men as they set out on their adventure. Unlike the previous voyage that had been inspired by greed, this voyage is geared towards creating new meanings in the relations with colonial people.

> They had sprung from every corner of the kingdom, a fairly typical reflection of the continent of Limestone. Unfortunately born, or with appetite out of all proportions to their status, they had found in the ship their last chance of resource from the perils of the land. Some had no money for the laws which ruled their region. Others had to flee from the ancient affliction deriving from religious contention in the kingdom. But hunger had recruited most of them. And all were driven by a vision of gold. [Lamming: 1973:13].

However, though the voyage of "Reconnaisance" is meant to be a voyage of expiation and a ceremony of souls for Prospero, it fails because the motives of pillage and greed

associated with the previous voyages have not been overcome. There is still, greed, division and rivalry among the members of the crew, as observed in the commandants's warning

> 'you rival each other for a pride of Region even where the claims are about supremacy in vice, or nothing but scandal. I suppose it be natural that habits learnt on land may travel with you when you put to sea. But there must be a limit to the power of every inheritance; and if you inherit nothing but division and discord from the kingdom, I declare it to be an order that you abandon these legacies to the sea... We have broken from the restrictions of the kingdom... your loyalties must now be wedded to this ship and the future we are preparing for the isles of the Black rock. I order therefore an end to division and discord on this ship [Lamming; 1973: 54-5].

Lamming implies that to put new meanings on the past, the voyages would have to recognise, accept and confront the motives of greed and weaknesses of character that generate their rivalries and ambitions. Thus Lamming proves that their actions are not different from the previous atrocities and plunders committed by Master Cecil and the Commandant in the earlier voyages. This is clearly suggested in the way Lamming delineates Pierre's diary and the details about how slaves were captured during this voyage. His account reads like the experiences of the previous voyages of greed and pillage, and it is as if Lamming is suggesting that with the same attitudes and expectations they cannot establish a settlement of honour. This seems to be one reason why the voyage must fail. Thus the motives of expiation fail.

because the participants in this voyage have not transcended their past weaknesses and still show signs of contradictions in their personalities and characters. For instance, the commandants's aim in the voyage was to break loose from the ancient restrictions of the kingdom of Limestone and to establish a settlement of honour. But his expectations seem to be ironical in that he intends to plant a portion of the kingdom in the new and freely chosen isles of the Black Rock, while at the same time he is fleeing from the very restrictions of the kingdom.

Lamming shows that there are other contradictions. Inspite of past history of strife with their women, the men are making this voyage with them so that they too could experience and participate in the making of the new settlement of honour. As the commandant claims.

> I do not accept the old order that such a plantation as ours must first be built by men; and seen to be safely established before women may honourably join them in daily living. You see the importance of the penalty's cargo or do you not? [Lamming; 1973:250].

But this vision is not possible because the men have not changed their perception and attitudes towards the women. Ironically, the men travel on a different ship, "Reconnaissance", rather than travelling with their women. On the other hand, the women sail in the ship christened "penalty" implying that they have not yet been forgiven. The fact that the women are travelling in a different ship

shows that the men are not not yet ready to relate and reconcile with them, and we are made to see that the creation of a settlement of honour may be impossible under these circumstances. At the end of the novel, nothing has changed for the women because though they reach the destination where they are meant to meet and reconcile with the men, the men never arrive. Thus, this journey becomes a repetition of the previous journey, and a failure. Thus, what seems to have been an opportunity for them to confront and overcome personal weaknesses and create new relationships fail when the voyage itself fails, because they do not have enough courage to meet their women.

Having failed with their women, these explorers and colonisers are bound to fail with the men they colonise since Lamming suggests that they still harbour their weaknesses. Yet, though the European coloniser fails to put new meanings on his relations with his women and the colonised people, Lamming seems to suggest that there are still subtle possibilities for creating such meanings. This is implied in the presence of the women who had earlier anchored in the ship, "penalty", in the island. Their presence in San Cristobal holds possibilities for new relations between the coloniser and the colonised, since they seem to mirror the "Miranda" figures explored in Water With Berries. Such possibilities exist because both the women and the tribes have been victims of abuse and degradation by the explorers.

The structure of Natives of My Person corresponds with the way Lamming explores the experiences of the explorers in their past and present voyages. The novel is structured to show clearly, how their past history of greed, pillage and weakness determines their present voyage. The characters seem to be trapped in their cage of history, and they fail to achieve the purpose of this latest voyage. The development of the plot in this novel is tied up with the expectations, experiences and actions of the characters in this voyage. Accordingly, the novel is divided into three movements. Movement one, "Breaking loose", deals with the preparations and subsequent sailing of the ship, "Reconnaisance". "Breaking loose" delineates the revolt of the crew members against the restrictions of the Limestone Kingdom as well as the efforts of the explorers to break free of the failures and disappointments of their lives at home. In addition it dramatises the attempt of the commandant and his officers to make a break with their past so as to set up a new world and a new order in San Cristobal.

The second movement, the "Middle passage", deals with the psychological exploration of the commandant and his officers. It is in this movement that we come to realize the main reason for the voyage. The inner lives of the characters, especially the officers, are exposed, depicting the reason for their participation in the voyage. We learn that they are fleeing from the Kingdom

because they fail in their responsibilities and as such, expect to start afresh in the new world. This movement thus becomes an introspection, a journey into their past. It is as if Lamming is carefully juxtaposing their past lives with their present aspirations as a way of testing the intentions of the present voyage. From the juxtapositions of their past and present lives, it seems as if Lamming is suggesting that the present voyage cannot achieve the purpose that it is intended for, because the participants still have the inadequacies of their past which led to the present voyage. Thus, though the voyage was meant to be a ceremony of souls for the participants, they fail to go through a complete ceremony because they fail to reconcile with their destructive past and their women.

The last movement entitled "Women" is a re-appraisal of the past relationships between the men and the women. The women have accepted to be reconciled with the men so as to establish a new settlement, but this does not happen because the men fail to turn up. The structure of this section corresponds with Lamming's vision. This section of the novel seems to be detached from the rest of the movements. Most probably, it implies that reconciliation can not take place between these men and women before the men accept their past mistakes and ask for forgiveness. In symbolic terms, this suggests that no meaningful relationships can exist between the coloniser and the colonised before the coloniser completes his own "ceremony

of souls", his descent into self.

Lamming also employs both the omniscient narrative point of view, and the diary form in his narration and in the extracts of the commandant's, the officers and some members of the crew. He does this in order to delineate the ambivalence and contraditions in the characters. From the diaries the inner desires and aspirations of the characters are exposed because these are in most cases, in contrast to the group's ambitions and aspirations. It is the contradictions in characters that lead to the failure of the voyage. Thus, from the omniscient narration, the purpose of the voyage and the general lives of the members of the crew are explored. It is through the omniscient narration that Lamming captures the conflicts between the officers and the members of the crew as well as their attitude towards the women. This is because from an omniscient point of view, he can assess the characters and their situation more objectively.

The characterization in Natives of my Person is highly symbolic and representative. The men in the novel represent for Lamming, the "Prospero" figure who must make a journey to reconcile with Caliban. The women on the other hand, represent for Lamming, the future which Prospero must also confront and accept so as to overcome his past weaknesses as well as the history of plunder, pillage and greed. The names of the characters are also symbolic because they are associated with their designations and roles in the ship.

These are the roles they played in the previous voyages showing that even in this voyage, meant for expiation, they have not changed. We have the commandant and the officers, that is, boatswain, steward, surgeon and priest and the other members of the crew such as, carpenter, cook and fisherman. This kind of characterization reflects a social structure which is reminiscent of the social structure found in the kingdom. It is ironical that these people are breaking loose from the restrictions of the kingdom but carry with them the values and traditions of the very same kingdom. Thus the ship simply becomes an extension of the kingdom and it seems that this is the reason for the failure of the enterprise.

Natives of my Person, this highly allegorical and symbolic novel like Water with Berries, is Lamming's attempt at reconstructing relations between the coloniser and the colonised. The reconstruction of this relationship fails because the coloniser fails to overcome his past weaknesses and negative attitude towards the colonised. Therefore there is a need for a psychological catharsis in the coloniser if a meaningful relationship between him and the coloniser has to succeed. Thus in the two novels Water with Berries and Natives of My Person Lamming seems to suggest that possibilities for harmonious co-existence and relationship between the coloniser and the colonised can only take place after new meanings have been put in the colonial and racial relations.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

My analysis of Lamming's novels has revealed the nature and complexity of definition. To define Caribbean man you would have to define Caribbean society and in doing this, Lamming has tied definition to history, but he has not tied it negatively to a history of subjugation. This is so because Lamming attempts to show that there are possibilities in which the colonial can transcend this very history of subjugation. The history of the Caribbean, marked by displacement, slavery and subjugation, has given rise to a perspective ideology and an art form that provides the colonised [victim] with a new way of seeing which enables him re-interpret a history of subjugation and diminishment, and give face to the faceless and diminished personality. It is the challenge of confronting a diminished history that inspires new visions and meanings on history and leads to new definitions. Lamming's vision of definition has thus offered "a new way of seeing" in which the colonised refuses to be defined by the coloniser.

The new way of seeing has also created new fictional representations which challenge the Caribbean man to confront new apsects of reality and new kinds of experiences which he can now classify as history. This process of knowing is delineated in all Lamming's novels as an odyssey that runs from the very first novel The Castle of My Skin to the last novel, Natives of My Person. To reflect this odyssey, each

novel ends in an open-ended manner, making the next novel a logical development from its predecessor. In every great writer, writing is a process of development in thought and vision, and great writers expand, revisit and develop particular ideas from all kinds of subtle and complete perspectives.

Thus, in Lamming, the colonial relationship in history and its particular psychology are presented as susceptible to re-assessment and transformation, and as liable to new meanings and interpretations. Each Lamming's novel is therefore an investigation of the colonial situation and its repercussions, as well as an attempt to give new meanings to the experience so as to liberate the colonial from its destructive effects. For Lamming, definition means breaking off totally the diminishing effects of colonial relations leading to independent thinking which is the potentiality of the West Indian to overcome "those aspects of the colonial experience that militate against political sovereignity, cultural authenticity and true personal fulfilment".

For him a critical look into the past both real and legendary, provides the Caribbean people with that sense of identity and self-definition which is necessary if they have to come to terms with the problems of freedom and independence that make up the psychological traumas associated with colonialism. Throughout his exploration from <u>In The Castle of My Skin</u> to <u>Natives of My Person,</u>

Lamming gropes for the vision of definition that would enable the Caribbean man to come to terms with the past.

In The Castle of My Skin Lamming's first novel explores the colonial situation, offering contrasting visions and possibilities for the Caribbean man and region to transcend the history of displacement, slavery and subjugation. In this novel, Lamming evokes landscape and community as catalyst for change. Migration also becomes a catalyst for change as depicted in the character of Trumper on his return from America. He comes back with a new consciousness which sharpens his awareness of the colonial situation. Though Trumper's vision seems to be simplistic, it is infact, the springboard for this long odyssey on Caribbean definition.

The Emigrants, the second novel also explores the migration of West Indians to the mother-country and at the same time is also a re-assessment of assumptions about the colonial experience and definition. The migration to the mother-country becomes a spur to a vision of definition in so far as it sharpens the colonial's sensibility and consciousness towards his relationship with the coloniser, and his own landscape. But the experience is much more complex in that they suffer rejection and disintegration. Though they fail to make a better break in England they undergo to some degree, a process of self-discovery and realization which enables them to debunk the fallacies, myths and deceptions that have been imbued in them by slavery and the colonial experience. Though they do not make anything out of this

discovery it enables them to become aware that as West Indians, England will never be part of their heritage and reality.

Of Age and Innocence and Season of Adventure delineate Caribbean definition in terms of political and personal freedom which for Lamming can only be possible after the Caribbean man has made a backward glance. The backward glance as a process of return, enables the Caribbean man to retrieve the hidden self and history. The process enables him to relate with his submerged history and as such acquire a sense of identity and definition.

Water with Berries and Natives of My Person are Lamming's closing statements on the quest for Caribbean definition. In these two allegorical and symbolic novels, Lamming dramatises the relationship between the coloniser [Prospero] and the colonised [Caliban], clearly showing that there is need for reconstructing such relationship. In Water With Berries, Lamming shows that liberation is not just a matter of complete severance in the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. He in fact suggests that three hundred years of relationship, however cruel, has linked them in a certain destiny which has stuck. So personal liberation is crucial. Teeton must burn the Old Dowager, Derek must rebel against subjugation. But at the same time, Lamming shows that there are other humane and creative levels of relationships that they can have as can be seen in the possibilities offered in the "Miranda

figures". This then becomes part of the complexity in the exploration of the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. Natives of My Person on the other hand, becomes the attempt of the descendants of Prospero to reconcile with the descendants of Caliban. The voyage they make to San Cristobal is meant to be a voyage of expiation and amelioration. They hope to make a settlement of honour in the land of Caliban, but this fails because they have not transcended their past greed and pillage, as well as the weaknesses of character which led them to brutalise the new world. At the same time they have not extricated themselves from the past historical relations that have given rise to their negative attitudes towards the descendants of Caliban.

Since in the novel, the nature of experience determines the form of structuring a novel, Lamming structures his novel in relation to the particular vision he is exploring. The novel's nature as an art form allows this flexibility. Thus, Lamming's novels, unlike the nineteenth century European realistic novels, do not necessarily focus on the development of character and relationships, but rather, concentrates on a character's fulfilment, that is, a character's search for self-realisation. This is because consolidation of characters and extension of relationships imply and assume some stability in society, and this is not always possible in the Caribbean because of its dislocated history. Nevertheless Lamming's characters fulfil themselves by responding in different ways to the

disclocations in their history and experience. Wilson Harris has remarked on this peculiar response and its effects on the nature of character in the West Indian novel.

> What in my view is remarkable about the West Indian in depth, is a sense of subtle links, the series of subtle and nebulous links which are latent within him, the latent ground of old and new personalities. This is a very difficult view to hold... because it is not a view which consolidates, which invests in any way in the consolidation of popular characters. Something which is more extra-ordinary than one can easily imagine. And it is this possible revolution in the novel - fulfilment rather than consolidation ... the depth of inarticulate feeling and unrealized wells of emotion belonging to the whole West Indies. [Harris; 1967:29].

Lamming's preoccupation with presenting experience and history concurs with Harris's observation and of necessity hinders him from focusing solely on character consolidation and the development of relationships. He is thus concerned with providing other important ways in which a character may find fulfilment. It is within this perspective and framework that we can comprehend the structure of Lamming's novel. The vision for definition does not always submit to a vision of chronology and linearity in time and plot because Lamming continually shifts and reorganises experience in the Caribbean, seeing them as active and dynamic rather than static. As he notes in the essay, "The occasion for speaking",

> A more important consideration is what the West Indian novelist has brought to the West Indies. That is the real question, and its answer can be the beginning of an attempt to grapple with the colonial structure of awareness which has determined West Indian values. There are for me, just three important events in British Caribbean history. I am using the term history in an active sense. Not a succession of episodes which can easily be given some causal connection. What I mean by historical event is the creation of a situation which offers antagonistic opposition and a challenge of survival that had to be met by all involved. [Lamming; 1986:36].

Thus exploring society and experience in this way, Lamming creates a "new way of seeing" that re-explores the whole colonial structure of awareness, creates new relationships to the past and new ways of presenting fiction.

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