

# **The Melancholy of Colonial Displacement and Loss of National Identity in George Lamming's *in the Castle of My Skin***

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## **Abstract**

George Lamming (1927-2022), one of the most popular and trend breaking Caribbean writers, offered significant insights into nationalism, especially within the context of Caribbean societies. His works often explore the complexities of identity, colonialism, and postcolonial state-building. In his seminal work, *In the Castle of My Skin*, Lamming delves into the struggles of postcolonial identity and the quest for self-definition in the Caribbean. He suggests that nationalism, while essential for achieving political independence, must also navigate the legacies of colonialism and the complexities of cultural identity.

This paper is an attempt to highlight different aspects of colonial discourse, where colonialism was constructed as a civilizing mission in which a superior culture of the

metropolitan west comes in contact with the so called “inferior” culture of the colonized periphery. Further, this forceful imposition of the language of the colonizer which led to a greater sense of loss of national identity and individualism made the colonized hollow and rootless. This concept of forceful imposition of one’s culture, language, manners, style, etc. known as ‘Hegemony’, has been extensively discussed.

**Keywords:** Slavery, National Identity, Hybridity, Hegemony, Discourse.

*In the Castle of My Skin* provides a nuanced exploration of the social, political, and cultural changes occurring in the British colonies of Caribbean Islands called Barbados, moving towards independence. The novel begins with a scene of flood on protagonist G.’s ninth birthday. The villagers considered the rain a blessing of God while G. was crestfallen. On the other hand, his mother talks to an unnamed person through a window, and they tell how the rain on a birthday is so auspicious: “and they flattered me with the consolation that my birthday had brought showers of blessing” (*In the Castle of My Skin*, 9). This opening scene subtly captures the emotional dissonance between the child’s inner world and the community’s collective belief system. While the villagers interpret the flood as a divine blessing, their insistence on calling it a “shower of blessing” dismisses G.’s personal disappointment and emotional pain on his birthday. The child’s crestfallen state reveals an early sense of alienation, as his genuine feelings are overridden by imposed cultural meanings.

The novel traces the life of the protagonist, G., when he was 9 years old to the time when he turned 17. The novel chronicles G’s growth in a village that has undergone the dramatic changes of colonialism and how he tries to transcend the social hierarchy enforced through those in power. He attended high school and obtained scholarship for higher education. He also prepares to take up a job in Trinidad, leaving his island. His friend Trumper returns from America, and tells him that in order to attain their identity, and

understand their cultural heritage, they should leave their homeland and enter into the bigger picture of the world. Leaving the homeland in search of identity is a major theme that resonates deeply in literature and personal narratives, reflecting both the physical and psychological journey of self-discovery. It often triggers a process of self-discovery and in unfamiliar environments, individuals confront their identity more deeply as they navigate new cultural contexts and reflect on their origins. This journey can lead to a more nuanced understanding of oneself and one's place in the world.

The understanding of physical and psychological journey of self-discovery is also discussed in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *No Longer at Ease*, where the author explores the themes of cultural collision and the impact of migration on personal and collective identity. Also, in James Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son*, there is an exploration of the complexities of identity and belonging through the experience of migration and the African American diaspora. Similarly, in George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*, the protagonist's journey reflects the broader experience of colonial subjects grappling with their identity amidst socio-political changes. The narrative portrays how leaving the familiar and confronting colonial legacies shapes the protagonist's understanding of himself and his culture.

Throughout the novel, G. is on a quest to understand himself and his place in a changing world. This search is influenced by the shifting social landscape as Barbados was moving towards independence. His experiences reflect the broader struggle of Caribbean people to reclaim and redefine their identities in the wake of colonial rule. His relationship with family, friends, and the broader community also plays a crucial role in his development. The novel depicts the close-knit community of his village, highlighting how collective experiences and social dynamics influence his sense of self and his aspirations. His village in Barbados, Creighton Village was densely populated, with so many houses

sharing tight quarters. The roads in Creighton mostly had English names, and the villagers took so much pride in the English names of their streets that they quarrelled with people from other streets. Creighton Village was a central setting that embodied many of the novel's themes and served as a microcosm of Barbados during the colonial era. The village played a significant role in shaping the protagonist G.'s experiences and reflections. Creighton Village symbolized the broader colonial society of Barbados. It reflected the social, economic, and cultural dynamics of the time, providing a backdrop for exploring the impacts of colonial rule on everyday life.

Creighton was an estate having fields of sugarcane once crept like an open secret and eventually transformed into a village that absorbed some three thousand people. Mr. Creighton was an English landowner who died and passed on the estate to his son, through whom it passed to another son, passing it to yet another. In this way, generations had lived and died in the remote corner of this British Colony: Barbados or Little England. It was referred to as "Little England" in the local school textbooks. People of Barbados enjoyed their village being referred to as "Little England" and they became a victim of fractured consciousness in a deeper sense losing their national identity. For G., Creighton Village was both a nurturing and confining environment. His experiences in the village shaped his understanding of himself and his community. The village served as the backdrop against which he grows up and began to question his identity and the future of his country. The village can be seen as a metaphor for the island nation itself, reflecting the struggles between tradition and change, colonizer and colonized. It represented the complex relationship between personal identity and broader societal forces.

This idea can also be established from Frantz Fanon's writings about racist culture which influenced the natives or the black men to wear white masks of the so-called civilised culture and traditions which England in turn gave them. Fanon used the idea of the

"mask" to describe how black individuals often adopt behaviours and attitudes that align with white expectations to gain acceptance or avoid discrimination. This "mask" is a form of psychological defence but also a source of internal conflict and alienation: "All colonized people... position themselves in relation to the civilizing language." (*Black Skin, White Masks*, 45). According to Fanon, language is a subject of central importance, be it the language of the colonisers who projected it as a transformative and civilising tool or the language of the colonised who embraced their own language and chose to pose resistance against the mental predicaments impelled upon them. Fanon discusses how language acts as a key tool in the colonization process, with colonial languages often becoming a means of asserting dominance and shaping cultural perceptions. The imposition of the colonizer's language further alienates the colonized from their own culture and the promotion of the colonizer's language often leads to the marginalization or even suppression of indigenous languages. This marginalization contributes to the erosion of local cultures and traditions. Language was a means of cultural assimilation, and adopting the colonizer's language often required adopting their values, norms, and worldview, which contributed to the erosion of indigenous cultural identities. This erosion of culture often generates deliberate forms of resistance through which colonized subjects seek to reclaim silenced identities and reassert indigenous ways of knowing. Choosing to write in native languages thus becomes an act of cultural preservation, allowing writers to retain collective memory, affirm selfhood, and challenge the dominance of colonial linguistic frameworks.

For instance, Kenyan author Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, as a symbol of protest, ceased writing in English and started writing in his mother tongue Kiyuku. In his book *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngũgĩ discusses how colonial languages contribute to the internalization of inferiority among colonized people and the marginalization of indigenous languages and cultures. Ngũgĩ's choice to write in an indigenous language can be seen as a form of

resistance against the colonial and neo-colonial forces that continue to exert influence over African societies. Moreover, the famous Caribbean writer Derek Walcott, in his celebrated poem “A Far Cry from Africa” remarks on his love for “English” tongue which is the language of the colonisers now being used to lament the deaths of the people suffering from the atrocities of colonialism. As a legacy bearer of both the colonisers and the colonised, Walcott feels his identity to be in conflict. Therefore, he writes in his poem that “he is divided to the vein.” Walcott's use of a reflective and detached voice allows him to explore complex emotions and perspectives. His dual identity, both as a Caribbean poet and as someone reflecting on African struggles, adds a layer of complexity to the poem.

In the similar manner, G. in the novel *In the Castle of my Skin* produces the fact that, inevitably, one of the first acts of any colonizing power on the colonized is the imposition of language. The colonizers usually forbid the use of native language by the people, fearing the possibility of plotting against them. For instance, the American Slaves or the Kurdish people of Turkey were being punished by the colonizers if they used an unofficial language. In the novel, G. also studied colonizer’s language in the school and was in turn rewarded, and got a scholarship and a job. This is a testimony to the above argument, lines spoken by G.’s friend Trumper: “Language can be Power. If you were really educated, and you could command the language like the captain of the ship, if you could make the language do what you wanted it to do, say what you wanted it to say, then you wouldn’t have to feel at all. You could do away with feeling. That’s why everybody wanted to be educated.” (*In the Castle of My Skin*. 198)

Thus, the forcefully imposed language of the colonizers was posed as an enlightening tool to take the natives out of the darkness of barbarism. In Colonial discourse analysis, colonialism was constructed as a civilizing mission in which a superior culture of the metropolitan west came in contact with the so called “inferior” culture of the colonized

periphery. The supposed goal of civilization often masked economic motivations. Colonizers sought to exploit the resources and labour of colonized lands, with the civilizing rhetoric serving to justify economic exploitation. The notion of racial and cultural superiority reinforced the hierarchical structures that justified the control and domination of colonized territories. By dehumanizing colonized peoples, colonizers could maintain political and social control more easily and suppress resistance to their rule. Further, this forceful imposition of the language of the colonizer which led to a greater sense of loss of national identity and individualism made the colonized hollow and rootless.

This concept of forceful imposition of one's culture, language, manners, style, etc. can be understood by the term Hegemony, coined by the Italian literary theorist and intellectual Antonio Gramsci. According to Gramsci, Hegemony is a mode of exerting non-coercive authority. In Hegemony, the authority is not merely exercised by the brute physical force but it is exercised by convincing the entire population that the interest of the ruling class is also the interest of the entire population. A statement made by the protagonist, G., in the novel *In the Castle of My Skin* is also evident of the fact that the natives of Barbados, under British rule were not just physically tortured but they underwent mental trauma and a deep sense of loss of individualism: "Indeed, the colonial experience of my generation was almost without violence. No torture, no concentration camp, no mysterious disappearance of hostile natives, no army encamped with orders to kill. The Caribbean endured a different kind of subjugation. It was a terror of the mind; a daily exercise in self-mutilation." (*In the Castle of My Skin*, 7).

According to the Colonizers, the civilizing mission was about making the colonized more and more like the colonizers. This has been clearly stated by Macaulay in his "Minutes on Indian Education" dated 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1835: "The colonial Government should spend more on English education in India so as to create a class of persons; Indian in blood and color, but

English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.” (Minutes by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay, dated the 2nd February 1835, 6).

The idea which Macaulay proposed for Indians, showcased his will to ruin the natives' national identity. Macaulay wished seeing a change in Indians which would metaphorically keep the color of their blood and skin intact but would change rest of their being. Likewise, the Caribbean Islands also underwent this kind of change, and thus suffered a huge loss of national identity. As per the historical facts, the Caribbean islands were transformed into centres for plantation agriculture, primarily growing sugar, coffee, and other cash crops. This shift to an economy based on large-scale, labour-intensive agriculture led to the importation of enslaved Africans, drastically altering the demographic and social landscape. The focus on monoculture and export-oriented agriculture also diminished the diversity of local farming practices. When the decline of the Spanish empire followed by the advent of British, French and Dutch colonizers, they brought to the Caribbean, a million of slaves and bonded laborers from distant parts of the world such as Africa or India. Consequently, European languages, particularly English, Spanish, French, and Dutch, became dominant in the Caribbean. While these languages were adopted for practical reasons, they also contributed to the erosion of indigenous languages and dialects. European-style education systems replaced traditional forms of learning. The blending of indigenous, African, European, and other influences led to the creation of a unique Caribbean identity. However, this hybrid identity reflected upon a history of colonization and cultural disruption.

Therefore, the Caribbean could not retain much of the traces of its original inhabitants and became a huge melting pot of different people from different parts of the world, with different languages and different cultures. Colonization profoundly impacted the Caribbean islands, leading to significant loss of indigenous culture. Despite this, the Caribbean has developed a very rich and diverse cultural heritage, shaped by a complex history of

encounter, blending, and resilience. In the novel, G. often questions himself and asserts: “Occasionally I was asked: ‘Do you belong to us or the French?’ I had been dissolved in the common view of worker and aristocrat. English workers could have seen themselves as architects of Empire.” (*In the Castle of My Skin*, 47).

Here, G.’s confusion reflects how colonial rule disrupts a clear sense of belonging by forcing people into imperial categories. However, the Caribbean’s history shows that identity is not fixed but shaped through cultural mixing and survival. This quote highlights the inner conflict created by colonial thinking within the colonized mind. Then, in episode Three of the novel the narration moves beyond G’s individual consciousness and the chapter begins with the description of the schoolyard, where the boys get assembled for the Celebration of Empire Day on May 24<sup>th</sup>, Queen Victoria’s Birthday.

The novel presents a juxtaposed and thoughtful contrast between the birthday of the protagonist G., who never celebrated it, and the birthday of the glorious Queen Victoria, celebrated as “Empire Day”. In the story, G.’s desire to celebrate his birthday reflects his longing for a sense of normalcy and personal significance amidst the larger changes and challenges faced by his community. His celebration becomes a symbol of the broader struggle for self-expression and recognition in a society undergoing transformation. The event is portrayed with both personal and communal significance, highlighting the interplay between individual desires and collective experiences. This celebration, while seemingly a personal milestone, also serves to illustrate the novel’s exploration of identity and the impact of colonialism on individual lives and community dynamics. Through G.’s experience, Lamming weaves together themes of cultural heritage, the impact of colonial rule, and the resilience of individuals and communities in the face of adversity.

In the novel Queen Victoria’s birthday being celebrated as Empire Day, refers to the colonial context. Empire Day was established in the British Empire to celebrate the

achievements and unity of the empire. For the Caribbean colonies, including Barbados where the novel is set, it served as an occasion to reinforce colonial pride and loyalty to the British Crown. However, beneath the surface of this ostensibly joyous occasion lies a deeper commentary on the effects of colonialism. For the characters in the novel, Empire Day represents a conflicting mix of imposed loyalty and underlying resentment. It underscores the ways in which colonial authorities used celebrations to perpetuate their control and to instil a sense of allegiance among the colonized. The novel reflects on how these celebrations are intertwined with the characters' experiences and their growing awareness of colonial inequalities and their desire for change. It serves as a critique of the colonial system and an exploration of how these imposed celebrations often impact the identity and lives of the people in the colonies:

The inspector stood at the center of the platform and all eyes were fastened on him. He looked round in all directions and then spoke. 'My dear boys and teachers, we are here to pay our respect to the memory of a great queen. She was your queen and my queen and yours no less than mine. We're all subjects and partakers in the great design, the British Empire, and your loyalty to the Empire. (*In the Castle of My Skin*, 35-36).

Towards the end of the novel, G. obtains a scholarship to the High school and after successfully completing the Upper school, and gets a teaching job in Trinidad. Migration from Barbados left G. disillusioned and deprived of his national identity and his culture. Migration indicates a state of living away from one's homeland which also bears a negative connotation of being in exile. Further, the feeling of being in exile evokes within the migrated communities a sense of nostalgic longing for a lost homeland and a desire to return. G.'s migration from Barbados to Trinidad represents a shift from a familiar environment to a new and challenging context. His experience of disillusionment is tied to

the gap between his expectations and the reality he faces. The promised opportunities and idealized vision of success in Trinidad are contrasted with the realities of a complex and often difficult new environment.

Moving to a different Caribbean Island, while still within the Caribbean, creates a sense of estrangement for G. He encounters a different culture, societal norms, and ways of life that, while related, are distinct from what he knew in Barbados. This transition leads to a sense of losing touch with his national identity and the cultural roots he once took for granted. His new environment in Trinidad challenges his sense of self and cultural belonging. He struggles to navigate the nuances of Trinidadian society while trying to retain his Barbadian identity. This cultural displacement highlights the difficulties of maintaining one's cultural heritage while adapting to a new context. The sense of dislocation and the search for belonging are central to his experience. His journey reflects a broader narrative of Caribbean migration and the quest for a place where one can feel truly at home. His internal conflict and his interactions with new surroundings have underscored the struggles faced by many who migrate within the Caribbean. His experiences also serve as an accurate critique of the colonial legacy that has shaped the Caribbean islands. The complexities of migration, identity, and cultural assimilation are intertwined with the historical and ongoing impacts of colonial rule, which have created and perpetuated such challenges.

G. represents his whole village; the novel takes a turn from individual consciousness to collective consciousness. It has been remarked by Sandra Pouchet Paquet: "G. emerges as a figure whose personal experience crystallises the experience of the entire community. In a sense, he is the village; the history of his dislocation echoes the dislocation of the village. He is a collective character." (*In the Castle of My Skin*, 12). Just like the novel's protagonist G., George Lamming also migrated and sailed with other West Indians

to England. He thought that he was going to an England which had been planted in their childhood consciousness as a heritage and a place of welcome. The early teachings and the kind images of England during the childhood of G. also made him believe that English people came to liberate them. These lines are spoken by an Inspector on the occasion of Annual Day celebration in his school which clearly reveals his internalized colonial prejudice and his attempt to glorify the British Empire by justifying its violence as divinely ordained and beyond accountability, thereby provoking unquestioning loyalty among the colonized audience. "The British Empire, you must remember, has always worked for the peace of the world. This was the job assigned to it by God, and if the Empire at any time has failed to bring peace it was due to events and causes beyond its control." (*In the Castle of My Skin*, 111)

Throughout the novel, G. wonders how a colonizing force so brutal and dominating can be referred to as a "mother country". In the Postcolonial discourse, the colonized were often called as "Mother Nation" or the "Mother Country" for which George Lamming writes in the introduction of the novel *In the Castle of My Skin*: "Today I shudder to think how a country, so foreign to our own instincts, could have the miracle of being called another." (*In the Castle of My Skin*, 56).

Lamming addresses the paradoxical and deeply troubling notion of referring to a colonizing power as the "Mother Country" or "Mother Nation." This concept is a central critique in postcolonial discourse, highlighting the complexities and contradictions of colonial relationships. He questions how a colonial power, often brutal and oppressive, can be called a "Mother Country." This term, which evokes ideas of nurturing, care, and protection, stands in stark contrast to the realities of colonial domination and exploitation. The use of such a term reveals the dissonance between the supposed benevolence of the colonizing power and the harshness of its actual practices. The term "Mother Country"

reflects the colonial ideology that justified and rationalized imperial control. Colonizers often framed their rule as a paternalistic mission to civilize and improve the colonized peoples. By calling themselves the "Mother Country," they asserted a sense of moral and cultural superiority, positioning themselves as benevolent rulers. For the colonized, being associated with a "Mother Country" can lead to a profound sense of identity conflict. It creates a situation where the colonized peoples are simultaneously connected to and alienated from the culture and identity imposed upon them. This term can contribute to a sense of confusion and dislocation regarding one's own cultural and national identity.

Overall, the transformation of a foreign country into a motherland is a deeply personal and subjective experience, influenced by a combination of factors such as personal history, relationships, cultural affinity, and legal status. It's a testament to the complexity and richness of human identity and belonging. One may refer to a foreign country as one's "motherland" to express the profound affection, loyalty, and identification with that place. This highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of human attachment to land and culture.

Another significant dimension of colonial displacement in *In the Castle of My Skin* is the role of education as an ideological apparatus of colonial power. Colonial education, rather than liberating the colonized subject, often functioned as a mechanism of discipline and consent. In the novel, the school becomes a space where imperial values are normalized and internalized. The curriculum privileges British history, British heroes, and British moral codes, while local history and indigenous cultural memory remain absent or deliberately silenced. As a result, young minds are trained to admire the Empire and perceive Britain as the centre of civilization. This selective transmission of knowledge reinforces the colonial hierarchy and produces subjects who unconsciously participate in their own marginalization.

G.'s academic success exemplifies the paradox of colonial education. While education allows him social mobility and access to opportunities such as scholarships and employment,

it simultaneously alienates him from his roots. His intellectual growth is achieved through mastery of the colonizer's language and worldview, not through engagement with his own cultural heritage. This process produces what Fanon describes as a divided consciousness, where the colonized subject learns to evaluate himself through the gaze of the colonizer. G.'s advancement thus becomes a form of displacement, not only geographical but psychological, as he moves further away from the lived realities of his community.

The novel also foregrounds class divisions within the colonized society, revealing how colonial power operates by fragmenting the native population. Economic hierarchies inherited from the plantation system continue to structure village life, with land ownership and labour determining social status. The legacy of slavery remains embedded in everyday interactions, shaping attitudes toward work, authority, and self-worth. These internal divisions weaken collective resistance and create conditions where colonial dominance can persist even without overt violence. Lamming presents colonialism as a system that infiltrates the social fabric, producing inequality and competition among the colonized themselves.

Furthermore, Lamming explores masculinity and power within the colonial framework. Colonial authority is associated with rigid discipline, control, and emotional repression. G. learns early that vulnerability and emotional expression are discouraged, particularly in public spaces governed by colonial norms. This suppression of emotional life contributes to what Lamming describes as a terror of the mind. The psychological burden of colonialism thus extends beyond political domination into intimate realms of identity formation and emotional development. Religion also functions as a complex site of colonial influence in the novel. Christianity, introduced as a moral and civilizing force, often reinforces obedience and submission. Biblical narratives are interpreted in ways that legitimize suffering and patience rather than resistance. While religion provides solace to the oppressed, it also discourages critical questioning of authority. This dual role reflects the

broader ambiguity of colonial institutions, which simultaneously sustain and constrain the colonized subject.

Lamming's narrative structure itself mirrors the fragmented consciousness of colonial subjects. The shifting perspectives and episodic structure disrupt linear storytelling, reflecting the instability of identity in a colonial society. The movement from individual to collective consciousness suggests that personal experiences cannot be separated from historical and political realities. G.'s story becomes the story of the Caribbean, emphasizing that colonial displacement is not an isolated experience but a shared condition shaped by systemic forces.

Through these layers, *In the Castle of My Skin* presents colonial displacement as a multifaceted process involving language, education, class, memory, and psychological control. Lamming does not offer simple solutions but insists on the necessity of critical awareness. National identity, in this context, emerges not as a fixed essence but as an ongoing struggle shaped by resistance, remembrance, and self-definition.

## **Conclusion**

The novel presents the white myths, planted by enslavement and conquest that had been internalised and continued to work like litmus on the black rock whose history was not summoned to the rescue. Blacks were divided along lines of complexion, being kept at a social distance from the white world. The thought of glorifying England, admiring their Kings and Queens and believing them to be transforming the whole community of the colonised had been deeply rooted in the natives. People who returned from America had been embracing their new status. George Lamming writes in the introduction: "I was among those writers who took flight from that failure. In the desolate, frozen heart of London, I tried to reconstruct the world of my childhood and early adolescence. It was also the world of a whole Caribbean reality." (*In the Castle of My Skin*, 6). The novel was completed within two years of authors arrival to London and even with the passage of time,

he shared that previous innocence which socialized them into seeing their relations to Empire as a commonwealth of mutual interest and the novel ends with the same note of embracing the blackness.

The protagonist, G. bid farewell to his land, the land which was a marvel of blackness and was completely submerged in his mixed identities and state of rootlessness. G.'s farewell to his homeland encapsulates a profound moment of personal and cultural reflection. This departure symbolizes a deeper journey into identity and rootlessness, reflective of the broader postcolonial experience. His departure from his homeland which was a place rich with cultural and historical significance, marks a poignant moment of emotional and cultural displacement. The land, described as a "marvel of blackness," represents not just physical geography but a deep connection to his heritage and identity. Leaving it behind signifies a loss of this fundamental connection and a step into uncertainty. Throughout the novel, G. grapples with his mixed identities shaped by colonial history, cultural influences, and personal experiences. His farewell to his homeland reflects the complexities of this identity, a blend of indigenous heritage, colonial legacies, and the impact of migration. This mixture leaves him in a state of rootlessness, where traditional cultural anchors are both present and yet shifting. G.'s farewell is imbued with nostalgia for the land and the life he is leaving behind. It also represents a moment of transformation, where he must navigate the new challenges and realities of life away from his familiar environment. This transformation is both a personal journey and a reflection of broader societal changes.

In summary, G.'s farewell to his homeland in *In the Castle of My Skin* serves as a powerful narrative device to explore themes of identity, displacement, and cultural continuity. It reflects the complexities of living in a postcolonial world, where personal and collective histories are deeply intertwined with the legacies of colonialism and migration.

In conclusion, *In the Castle of My Skin* stands as a powerful literary articulation of the melancholy produced by colonial displacement and the loss of national identity. George Lamming presents colonialism not merely as a political system but as a deeply intrusive force that reshapes consciousness, memory, and belonging. The novel reveals how colonial domination operates through subtle mechanisms such as language, education, culture, and ideology, creating a condition where the colonized subject becomes estranged from both self and homeland.

G.'s journey from childhood innocence to adolescent awareness mirrors the historical transition of Caribbean societies moving toward political independence while still grappling with psychological dependence. His migration, education, and emotional alienation reflect the broader postcolonial dilemma of belonging to a land that has been culturally fragmented by centuries of colonial rule. The sense of rootlessness that defines G.'s experience is emblematic of a collective condition, where national identity remains unresolved and continually negotiated.

Lamming's critique extends beyond British colonialism to question the very narratives that justified empire under the guise of civilization and progress. By exposing the contradictions of concepts such as the Mother Country, Empire Day, and civilizing missions, the novel dismantles colonial myths and foregrounds the lived realities of the colonized. The emphasis on collective consciousness suggests that healing and reclamation must also be collective, grounded in shared memory and cultural renewal.

Ultimately, *In the Castle of My Skin* affirms the resilience of Caribbean identity despite historical trauma and displacement. While the novel acknowledges loss, fragmentation, and exile, it also gestures toward the possibility of reconstruction through critical awareness and cultural affirmation. Lamming's work remains deeply relevant in postcolonial discourse, offering insights into how nations and individuals can confront the

lingering shadows of colonialism while striving to reclaim autonomy, dignity, and a sense of belonging.

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