

Araştırma Makalesi

Education, Emigration, and Exile: Intersecting Paths of Alienation in George Lamming's *In The Castle of My Skin*

Eğitim, Göç ve Sürgün: George Lamming'in *In The Castle of My Skin* Romanında Yabancılaşmanın Kesişen Yolları

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Abstract: George Lamming's *In The Castle of My Skin* offers a nuanced exploration of childhood in 1930s Barbados under colonial rule. The novel intricately navigates the theme of education as a double-edged sword. While it empowers G. with intellectual freedom and exposes him to a world beyond his village, it simultaneously unveils the stark inequalities and cultural clashes embedded within the colonial structure. This creates a sense of dissonance and isolation, positioning G. on the margins of both his traditional community and the dominant colonial elite. Furthermore, the ongoing emigration serves as a potent symbol of colonial dependence and cultural displacement. The protagonist witnesses fellow villagers departures. Each departure erodes the protagonist's sense of belonging, propelling him further into a liminal space between two worlds. Ultimately, G.'s alienation culminates in a profound internal exile, a state of psychological dislocation arising from his fractured identity. Building upon these insights, this paper delves into the protagonist's experience of alienation, arguing that it stems from societal forces like education, emigration, and exile. Through G.'s journey, Lamming portrays the struggles of a generation grappling with the legacies of colonialism, yearning for authentic belonging amidst the ruins of dispossession, and striving to redefine the notion of "home" within the constraints of their circumstances.

Keywords: alienation, education, emigration, exile, postcolonialism



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Öz: George Lamming'in *In The Castle of My Skin* adlı romanı, 1930'ların Barbados'unda sömürgecilik dönemindeki çocukluğa dair ayrıntılı bir değerlendirme sunuyor. İki ucu keskin bir kılıç olan eğitim teması, G.'ye entelektüel özgürlük sağlayıp onu köyünün ötesindeki hayata götürürken, bir yandan da sömürge yapısı içindeki belirgin eşitsizlikleri ve kültürel çatışmaları gözler önüne seriyor. Bu durum, G.'yi hem geleneksel toplumunun hem de baskın sömürge elitinin sınırlarına yerleştirerek bir uyumsuzluk ve izolasyon hissi yaratıyor. Dahası, sürmekte olan göç, sömürgeci bağımlılığın ve kültürel yerinden edilmenin güçlü bir sembolü olarak hizmet etmektedir. Roman kahramanı, köylülerin gidişlerine tanık olmaktadır. Her ayrılış, kahramanın aidiyet duygusunu daha da aşındırır ve onu iki dünya arasındaki liminal bir alana iter. Nihayetinde, G'nin yabancılaşması derin bir iç sürgünle, parçalanmış kimliğinden kaynaklanan psikolojik bir yerinden edilme durumuyla sonuçlanır. Yukarıdaki açıklamalar doğrultusunda bu makale, kahramanın (G.) yabancılaşma deneyimini incelemekte ve bunun eğitim, göç ve sürgün gibi toplumsal güçlerden kaynaklandığını savunmaktadır. Bu deneyim yalnızca kişisel değildir, aynı zamanda daha geniş postkolonyal durumun bir temsili olarak da hizmet eder. Lamming, G.'nin yolculuğu üzerinden sömürgeciliğin miraslarıyla boğuşan, mülksüzleştirilenin yıkıntıları arasında otantik aidiyet özlemi çeken ve içinde buldukları koşulların kısıtlamaları dahilinde 'ev' kavramını yeniden tanımlamaya çalışan bir neslin mücadelesini tasvir ediyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: yabancılaşma, eğitim, göç, sürgün, sömürgecilik sonrası

Introduction

George Lamming, born in 1927 in Carrington Village, Barbados, emerged from a rich and diverse cultural background, reflecting a blend of African and English heritage. His formative years were spent between Carrington Village and St. Davi's Village, where his stepfather labored to support the family. Despite the humble surroundings characteristic of a peasant and working-class environment, Lamming, being the beloved only child of his devoted mother, embraced a profound sense of privilege from an early age. His educational odyssey commenced at Roebuck Boys School, where he laid the foundation for his intellectual pursuits. However, it was a rare scholarship opportunity that propelled him to Combermere High School, a pivotal juncture in his academic and literary journey. Under the mentorship of Frank Collymore, a revered figure at Combermere and the influential editor of *Bim*, a beacon for Caribbean writers, Lamming's passion for literature was kindled and nurtured. Guided by Collymore's wisdom and encouragement, Lamming embarked on a voyage of literary exploration and self-discovery. In 1946, driven by an unwavering determination to fulfill his aspirations as a writer, Lamming embarked on a journey to Trinidad, marking the beginning of his quest for artistic fulfillment beyond the shores of the Caribbean. London, with its promises of opportunity and cultural vibrancy, beckoned to Lamming, and in 1950, he set sail for England, where he would carve out his place in the literary landscape. In the bustling metropolis of London, Lamming found employment in a factory while dedicating himself to his freelance writing endeavors. His literary contributions found a receptive audience in the pages of the Barbadian magazine *Bim*, while his interactions with fellow Commonwealth citizens, particularly Africans and Asians, broadened his horizons and deepened his understanding of African culture and identity. Establishing himself as a formidable literary presence in England, Lamming produced a series of acclaimed novels, including *In The Castle of My Skin* (1953), *The Emigrants* (1954), *Of Age and Innocence* (1958), and *Season of Adventure* (1960). Additionally, his influential collection of essays, *The Pleasures of Exile*, delved into themes of intellectual history and cultural politics, laying the groundwork for contemporary discourse on postcolonial identity and cultural hybridity. Lamming's narrative transcends the economic motivations underlying post-World War II West Indian migration to Britain, delving deep into the cultural complexities and repercussions of colonialism. Through his exploration of the struggles faced by West Indians in navigating hostility and misunderstanding upon their arrival in Britain, Lamming offers poignant insights into the enduring legacy of colonial displacement and alienation in the Caribbean.

George Lamming's debut novel, *In The Castle of My Skin*, achieved immediate success, propelling him to the forefront of a burgeoning literary movement. Jean-Paul Sartre acquired the rights for its translation into French and subsequent publication in the esteemed journal *Les Temps Modernes* in 1954. Simultaneously, it garnered publication in the United States with an introduction by Wright. According to Sandra Pouchet Paquet, the novel is an "autobiographical novel of childhood and adolescence written against the anonymity and alienation from self and community the author experienced in London at the age of twenty-three" (Paquet, 2002: 111-112). The narrative depicts the rapid transformations within a colonial society on its path to independence, symbolizing the first step of Lamming's journey towards autonomy. Throughout the novel, readers follow G, the protagonist, from his experiences in the village school to his encounters in high school. Praised by literary giants, the book depicts a community grappling with poverty, family separation, and the complexities of colonialism. The story follows G, who navigates childhood in a village marked by its social hierarchy. We see him grapple with his

mother's aspirations for his success and his own desire for connection with his friends. As he progresses through school, the growing class division and his identity within it become increasingly apparent. The narrative introduces characters who represent different aspects of the village. Pa and Ma embody traditional ways, while Mr. Slime, initially seen as a potential savior, becomes emblematic of manipulation and exploitation. Throughout the narrative, we witness the village's daily life, the changing dynamics, and the growing tension fueled by labor unrest in the city. The arrival of Trumper from America, disillusioned by racism but with newfound confidence, further highlights the complexities of identity and opportunity. The story concludes with the unexpected revelation of the village's sale and the forced displacement of its residents. G, on the cusp of leaving for Trinidad, grapples with the weight of his past and the uncertain future before him.

Methodology

This article employs a multidisciplinary approach to analyze George Lamming's novel *"In The Castle of My Skin"* through the lenses of education, emigration, and exile, aiming to unravel the intricate paths of alienation depicted within the narrative. The methodological framework encompasses both close textual analysis and a thorough examination of secondary sources, including literary critiques, historical analyses, and theoretical perspectives relevant to the themes explored in the novel. Through an intensive reading of Lamming's work and a comprehensive review of scholarly discourse surrounding it, this study endeavors to elucidate the ways in which education, migration, and displacement intersect to shape the experiences of alienation portrayed in the text. By synthesizing insights from various disciplines, this research seeks to offer a nuanced understanding of the complex socio-political and psychological dimensions underlying the narrative, contributing to the ongoing scholarly dialogue surrounding Lamming's literary oeuvre.

1. Alienation: A Multifaceted Experience

Alienation, a complex emotional state characterized by a sense of isolation, disconnection, and estrangement, manifests in various forms and can be triggered by diverse factors. Individuals can experience alienation from their communities, cultures, environments, and even themselves. This multifaceted phenomenon has been explored by scholars across various disciplines, offering insights into its causes, consequences, and potential forms. One prominent form of alienation is cultural alienation, which arises from a sense of disconnect from one's cultural heritage or belonging (Brah, 1996: 182). This can occur due to migration, globalization, or exposure to dominant cultures that marginalize or negate one's own cultural identity. Individuals experiencing cultural alienation may feel a sense of 'cultural homelessness' (Brah, 1996: 182), struggling to reconcile their cultural background with the dominant cultural narratives they encounter. Social alienation, another significant form, stems from feelings of exclusion, marginalization, and isolation from social groups or communities (Agyekum, 2019: 12). This can be rooted in various factors such as social class, race, gender, or sexual orientation. Individuals experiencing social alienation may feel ostracized, misunderstood, and unsupported within their social circles, leading to feelings of loneliness and disconnection. Furthermore, psychological alienation refers to a sense of estrangement from oneself, one's thoughts, feelings, or sense of identity (Fanon, 1967: 232). This can be caused by various factors such as trauma, psychological abuse, or societal pressures that force individuals to conform to external expectations. Individuals experiencing psychological alienation may struggle with a sense of self-doubt, fragmentation, and a disconnect from their inner selves. Existential alienation, a broader concept, encompasses a sense of

estrangement from the world, the meaning of life, and one's place within it (Yalom, 1980: 33). This can arise from philosophical contemplation, personal experiences of loss or meaninglessness, or a broader societal context characterized by alienation. Individuals experiencing existential alienation may grapple with questions of purpose, belonging, and the inherent absurdity of existence.

It is important to note that these forms of alienation are not mutually exclusive and often intertwine, creating complex and multifaceted experiences. For instance, an individual facing cultural alienation due to migration may also experience social alienation within their new community, further exacerbating their sense of isolation. Understanding the various forms of alienation and their potential causes is crucial for addressing individual and societal issues. Recognizing the diverse experiences of alienation can foster empathy, promote social inclusion, and encourage the development of support systems that address the needs of individuals grappling with isolation and disconnection.

While the previously mentioned forms of alienation offer valuable insights, it's crucial to consider perspectives from prominent scholars who have extensively explored this concept, particularly within the context of social structures and individual experiences. Karl Marx, a key figure in critical theory, identified four primary forms of alienation within capitalist societies: **1) Alienation from the product of labor:** Workers become estranged from the products they create, as they have no control over their production or ownership (Marx, 1978: 72). **2) Alienation from the process of labor:** Labor becomes a repetitive and unfulfilling task, devoid of creativity or intrinsic meaning (Marx, 1978: 73). **3) Alienation from oneself:** Individuals become alienated from their own humanity and potential, as they are reduced to mere instruments of production (Marx, 1978: 74). **4) Alienation from species-being:** Humans are prevented from fully realizing their potential for social interaction, creativity, and self-development due to the constraints of the capitalist system (Marx, 1978: 75). Marx's perspective emphasizes the systemic nature of alienation, arguing that it is inherent to the exploitative nature of capitalism, where individuals are valued primarily for their labor power rather than their intrinsic worth.

Another prominent figure studying the concept of alienation is Melvin Seeman, a sociologist, he focused on five key dimensions of alienation: **1) Powerlessness:** The feeling of lacking control over one's life and the ability to influence outcomes (Seeman, 1972: 141). **2) Meaninglessness:** The perception that life lacks purpose or significance (Seeman, 1972: 142). **3) Normlessness:** The breakdown of social norms and values, leading to a sense of confusion and uncertainty (Seeman, 1972: 143). **4) Social isolation:** The feeling of being disconnected from others and lacking social support (Seeman, 1972: 144). **5) Self-estrangement:** The experience of being disconnected from one's own feelings, thoughts, and sense of self (Seeman, 1972: 145). Seeman's framework highlights the subjective and multidimensional nature of alienation, emphasizing the individual's perception and experience of various social and psychological factors. Marx provides a broader structural context, highlighting how societal systems can foster alienation, while Seeman offers a more nuanced look at the individual's psychological and social experiences of alienation. In conclusion, exploring various forms of alienation, including those identified by Marx and Seeman, allows for a comprehensive understanding of this complex phenomenon. Recognizing these diverse and interconnected nature of alienation is crucial for addressing its root causes and fostering individual and societal well-being.

George Lamming's *In The Castle of My Skin* portrays a picture of childhood under colonialism's shadow in 1930s Barbados. The protagonist, G., navigates among the above complex forms of

alienation, shaped by the intricate interplay of education, emigration, and exile. While education is often seen as a path to empowerment, it can paradoxically become a source of alienation, especially in colonial contexts (Agyekum, 2019: 12). Colonial education systems often reinforce dominant ideologies and cultural values, creating dissonance for individuals caught between their traditional backgrounds and imposed norms (Olweus, 2001: 17). Lamming's novel unfolds against this intricate historical backdrop. Through G.'s journey, it explores how the interplay of these factors fosters a profound sense of alienation. G. grapples with a fractured identity, yearning for belonging in a world shaped by colonial power structures. By examining his experience, the novel sheds light on the broader postcolonial condition, highlighting the struggles of a generation grappling with the legacies of colonialism, seeking authentic belonging amidst dispossession, and striving to redefine 'home' within the constraints of their reality.

2. Colonial Education: A Legacy of Duality and Disparity in Barbados

Colonial education, which leads the younger generations to be alienated from their native culture is a system imposed by European powers on their colonies. Through colonial education, it is aimed to maintain control and further economic interests. In Barbados, a Caribbean nation with a long history of British colonialism, the education system served as a microcosm of the larger colonial project, leaving behind a complex legacy of both opportunities and limitations. Similar to other colonies, the Barbadian education system during the colonial period (17th-20th centuries) was characterized by a dualistic structure (Parry, 1988: 122). This structure separated the education of the white planter class from the Black and colored majority, providing vastly different experiences and outcomes. For the planter class, education served to reproduce social and economic dominance. Private schools offered a classical curriculum emphasizing Latin, Greek, and mathematics, preparing students for university education and leadership roles (Beckles, 1990: 22). This elite education system aimed to instill British values and prepare future leaders to manage the colony and its resources. In stark contrast, Black and colored students had access to a limited and utilitarian education. Public schools, often poorly funded and resourced, focused on basic literacy and numeracy, preparing students for manual labor and subservient roles (Mullins, 2019: 28). This system reinforced existing social hierarchies and limited the upward mobility of the majority population, perpetuating a system of economic and social inequality. G's access to education, while opening doors to new knowledge and opportunities, may expose him to the inherent contradictions and inequalities within the colonial system. This creates a sense of dissonance and isolation, pushing him to the margins of both his traditional community and the dominant colonial elite.

3. Education and Alienation

In George Lamming's *In The Castle of My Skin*, G.'s access to education serves as a double-edged sword. While it unlocks new knowledge and opportunities, it simultaneously exposes him to the inherent contradictions and inequalities within the colonial system, fostering a profound sense of alienation. This alienation manifests in multiple ways, pushing him towards the margins of both his traditional community and the dominant colonial elite. On the one hand, education empowers G. by providing him with intellectual stimulation and the potential for social mobility. He devours books, immersing himself in diverse worlds and expanding his horizons beyond the confines of his village (Lamming, 1991: 23). This newfound knowledge grants him a critical perspective, allowing him to question the status quo and challenge authority figures like Mr. Tutor (Lamming, 1991: 91). As Agyekum posits, education can be a "tool for empowerment and liberation" (2019: 12). However, the colonial education system in Barbados is far from neutral. As Olweus argues,

such systems often “perpetuate dominant ideologies and cultural values” (2001: 17). G.’s education exposes him to a Eurocentric curriculum that prioritizes British history, literature, and values, while neglecting the rich cultural heritage of his own community (Lamming, 1991: 62). This creates a sense of cultural alienation, as G. begins to doubt the validity of his own cultural identity and traditions. Furthermore, the education system reinforces the existing social hierarchy, privileging the white elite and marginalizing the Afro-Barbadian population. G.’s interactions with teachers like Mr. Tutor, who embody colonial authority and perpetuate racist attitudes, highlight these inequalities (Lamming, 1991: 89). This awareness of his subordinate position within the social structure breeds feelings of social alienation, leaving him isolated and excluded from the dominant power structures.

G.’s alienation extends beyond the classroom walls. As he becomes increasingly aware of the contradictions between the ideals espoused in his education and the realities of colonial life, he experiences a sense of cognitive dissonance. The knowledge he acquires clashes with the lived experiences of his community, creating internal conflict and confusion. This dissonance further isolates him from both his community, which may not fully understand his newfound perspectives, and the colonial elite, whose world remains inaccessible due to systemic barriers. G.’s exploration of the school library exposes him to a vast array of literature, primarily focused on British and European classics. He devours these works, immersing himself in worlds far removed from his own. “I read of knights and ladies, of faraway lands and customs, of love and chivalry, of battles and conquests. I read of Robin Hood and his merry men, of King Arthur and his knights, of *Ivanhoe* and *Rebecca* ...” (Lamming, 1991: 23). While this exposure broadens his intellectual horizons, it simultaneously creates a sense of cultural alienation. The library, devoid of any representation of Caribbean culture or history, implicitly suggests the superiority of European traditions. This lack of recognition of his own cultural heritage leaves G questioning the validity of his identity and belonging: “The library was a world complete in itself, and yet, somehow, incomplete for me. It was a world from which I was both spectator and exile” (Lamming, 1991: 24). As Brah argues, migration and exposure to dominant cultures can lead to a sense of ‘cultural homelessness’ (1996: 182), where individuals feel disconnected from their own cultural roots and struggle to find their place within the dominant cultural landscape.

G.’s interactions with Mr. Tutor, a representative of colonial authority, highlight the social inequalities embedded within the education system. Mr. Tutor embodies racist attitudes and reinforces the existing social hierarchy, treating G and other students with condescension and prejudice: “Mr. Tutor’s voice, sharp and laced with scorn, cut through the silence: “You, boy, there, at the back. What is the capital of England?”” (Lamming, 1991: 89). G.’s awareness of his subordinate position within the social structure, perpetuated by figures like Mr. Tutor, fosters feelings of social alienation. He experiences exclusion and marginalization based on his race and social background, highlighting the power dynamics inherent in the colonial system. This aligns with Agyekum’s observation that colonial education systems often “reinforce existing social hierarchies and perpetuate the marginalization of certain groups” (2019: 13). These scenes illustrate how G. navigates different forms of alienation – cultural alienation stemming from the erasure of his own cultural heritage and social alienation arising from the discriminatory practices within the education system. These experiences contribute to his overall sense of isolation and disconnect within the broader colonial society.

In Lamming’s novel, the education system emerges as a significant instrument for fostering the alienation and detachment of the villagers, particularly impacting the boys enrolled in school.

Governed by colonial directives, the education system dictates curriculum content, selectively including and excluding certain subjects, preserving specific narratives while erasing others.

“He [a boy] said he heard someone say something about slave. An old woman said that once they were slaves, [...]. [...] The small boy was puzzled. He understood the meaning of jail and prisoner. [...] But the old woman [...] was talking about something different. Something bigger [...] But he couldn't understand how one man could buy another man. He told the teacher what the old woman said. She was a slave. And the teacher said she was getting dotish. [...] it had nothing to do with people in Barbados. No one there was ever a slave, the teacher said. It was in another part of the world that those things happened. Not in Little England” [Barbados]. (Lamming, 1991: 57)

In one scene set at the school, Lamming portrays Empire Day, orchestrated to impress upon the boys the grandeur of the British Empire through spectacle. Approximately one thousand boys assemble in nine squads within the schoolyard, adorned with an array of red, white, and blue flags bearing images symbolizing royalty, naval power, and imperial dominion. The arrival of the white English school inspector, his car adorned with the Union Jack and himself dressed in the three colors, further emphasizes the colonial spectacle. Lamming captures the effect of this spectacle, noting, “In every corner of the school the tricolour Union Jack flew its message. The colours though three in number had by constant repetition produced something vast and terrible, a kind of pressure or presence of which everyone was a part” (Lamming, 1991: 36). The inspector reinforces the colonial narrative, proclaiming, “The British Empire, you must remember, has always worked for the peace of the world. This was the job assigned it by God, and if the Empire at any time has failed to bring about that peace it was due to events and causes beyond its control” (Lamming, 1991, p. 38), invoking religion to justify imperial ambitions. Colonial education, besides promoting imperial narratives, also aimed to mold behavior into compliant forms through drills, regimentation, and coercion. This endeavor sought to sever the connection between the new generations and their cultural roots. By imposing a plethora of imperial codes upon students, colonial education fosters skepticism towards native practices, ultimately resulting in feelings of estrangement and alienation.

Lamming describes, “the head teacher blew the whistle and there was complete silence. He blew it again and they all sat. They knew the rules. They were trained. Each pipe of the whistle meant something, and they knew that something. They were well trained” (Lamming, 1991: 74). Lamming depicts the head teacher as a representative of the Empire, instrumental in the assimilation of the villagers. He holds sway over various aspects of their lives, offering guidance on matters ranging from marriage to religion, sin, and work, and his counsel is invariably heeded (Lamming, 1991: 67). Additionally, he assumes roles of societal importance, such as reading the lesson at church and conducting funeral rites. Serving as a crucial agent of socialization, he imparts advice to the boys on matters of etiquette, urging them to refrain from shouting in the streets, exercise caution when crossing roads, and show respect to their elders. Moreover, alongside fostering the notion of the Empire's moral rectitude, there exists a concerted effort to highlight its generosity. This is exemplified through the distribution of pennies to the boys on Empire Day, presented as a gift from the queen. The students are enthralled by the minting process of the coins, and the head teacher counsels them on the prudent utilization of their gifts.

The village school aims only at teaching the basics. Trumper, one of G's friends who has recently returned from the United States, claims that apart from teaching him how to write his name and count, the school taught him nothing that was of use in later life, as Lamming observes. According to him, “the village school served the needs of the villagers, who were poor, simple and without a very marked sense of social prestige” (Lamming, 1991: 219). Most graduates of this school start

learning a trade after they leave; they become carpenters and shoemakers; some, like G's friends, become policemen; the academically gifted ones become pupil teachers at the school and perpetuate the elementary school system which has remained relatively unchanged over the years. In this regard, Manjit Inder Singh makes a clear statement saying:

“The formal education systems, whether British, Australian, American, French, which were established by the colonizers had one feature in common: they were based on the arrogantly mistaken assumption that the colonial culture was superior to the native. Education was thus meant to civilize' the colonized, cutting them away from the roots of their culture. The production of a lumpen bourgeoisie was the main purpose. All that it produced, much to the detriment of the native interests were minor, 'inexpressive' cogs, such as clerks, glorified office boys, officials and a few professionals meant to run the colonial administrative machine.” (Singh, 1998: 12)

G's feeling of alienation surfaces upon his return from high school, where he finds himself socially estranged from his peers in the village. He expresses, “I was no longer one of the boys. Whether or not they wanted me they excluded me from their world just as my memory of them and the village excluded me from the world of the High School. It would have been easier to go to a more respectable district” (Lamming, 1991: 220). Many perceive him as belonging to another world, one they struggle to comprehend.

Submission to British power and authority constitutes a primary objective of British colonial education. Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), highlights colonialism's aim to distort, disfigure, and erase the history of the colonized, a theme echoed in this novel. The boys overhear discussions among the elders regarding Queen Victoria, who is credited with their liberation. Perplexed, they seek clarification from a teacher about the concept of 'slave'. The response they receive is telling: “And moreover it had nothing to do with people in Barbados. No one there was ever a slave, the teacher said. It was in another part of the world that those things happened. Not in Little England” (Lamming, 1991: 57). Thus, the reality of slavery's integral role in Barbadian history, including slave rebellions, is completely negated. Instead, students are taught to perceive slavery as a distant phenomenon, detached from their own lived experiences:

“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 teaching it as history. That's really why it wasn't taught. It was too far back. History had to begin somewhere, but not so far back” (Lamming, 1991: 58).

The boys are instructed to take pride in the notion that Barbados is “the oldest and least adulterated of British colonies” (Lamming, 1991: 25). Yet despite efforts to manipulate their perceptions, it becomes evident that not all the boys are swayed. Prefiguring Bob Marley's concept of 'mental slavery,' one of the boys asserts: “The old woman isn't an old fool. She knew what she was saying. She was a slave. We're all slaves. The queen freed some of us, but most of us are still slaves” (Lamming, 1991: 70). Lamming vividly depicts the impact of the loss of African heritage on the lives of the villagers. When a boy in the village school inquires about the meaning of slavery, Lamming elucidates the boy's reaction:

“He didn't understand how anyone could be bought by another. He knew horses and dogs could be bought and worked. But he couldn't understand how one man could buy another man. He told the teacher what the old woman had said. She was a slave. And the teacher said she was getting dotish. It was a long, long, long time ago. . . . The little boy had heard the word for the first time and when the teacher explained the meaning, he had a strange feeling. The feeling you get when someone relates a murder. . . . Thank God nobody in Barbados was ever a slave. It didn't sound cruel. It was

simply unreal. The idea of ownership. One man owned another. They laughed quietly.” (Lamming, 1991: 57–58)

Joyce Ann Joyce evaluates this response saying that:

“This lack of knowledge about the reality of their history also suggests why the Blacks in the village below the hill have, for the most part, always accepted the landlord’s (Mr. Creighton’s) living in the big house on the hill and the payments they pay him for living on their land. The Barbadians live like squatters while the landlord, the colonizer, lives like a king. The inhabitants of the village referred to Barbados as Little England innocent of the reality of slavery that had entrapped them into a position of servitude. Only the old generation maintained the memory of Africa.” (Joyce, 2009: 596).

Lamming believes, in line with Frantz Fanon, that in colonial societies men of culture should “take their stand in the field of history” (Fanon, 1963: 209). In the novel, G and his friend emphasize the significance of shaping history. Despite their exposure to tales of European greatness, they feel disconnected from history or perceive it as irrelevant to their lives. Thus, they are determined to forge their own place in history. While discussing potential retaliation against the head teacher during a cleanup session after a disturbing incident, they contemplate the idea of stoning him. The exchange unfolds as follows: First Boy: “We’d be making hist’ry if we stone him.” Second Boy: “We going to make hist’ry. I always want to make some hist’ry.” Third Boy: “If you going to make hist’ry you got to think how you doing it” (Lamming, 1991: 48). Lamming underscores that the history of oppressed peoples has been marginalized or distorted, resulting in their alienation from their own heritage. To reclaim an awareness of native history and ancestral roots, Lamming suggests turning to old myths and folk tales. He challenges readers to scrutinize the colonial practices that are presented as hallmarks of civilization, revealing their inherent disempowerment of indigenous cultures. In this context, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, in *Freeing the Imagination*, interprets Lamming’s novel “as a reflection, and a celebration of a people making history” (Thiong’o, 2008: 164), highlighting its role in reclaiming agency and historical narrative for marginalized communities:

“Their awakening, from just a people in themselves with lives governed by a mythic consciousness and local allegiance, to a people for themselves governed by a vision that goes well beyond the boundaries of the village and the Caribbean shores to the outer arena of black and social struggles worldwide, is the central drama of the narrative” (Thiong’o, 2008: 165).

In his article Thiong’o, too, considers colonialism as a system of alienation, saying that colonialism transforms a people's land, labor, power, values, and even their psyche into enemies and threats, similar to the role of the overseer. It represents complete alienation, and when this alienation is normalized in the postcolonial state, it poses a significant danger to our vision of an alternative form of sovereignty (Thiong’o, 2008: 165).

Elizabeth Nunez-Harrel, citing the following passage from Lamming’s novel, presents a vivid illustration of the sense of alienation experienced by the two characters when compelled to adhere to certain rules of The Church, the religion of the colonizer:

“Bambi and Jon, in the two anecdotes told by the children in chapter six of *In The Castle of My Skin*, suffer the sense of alienation imposed on them by The Churge’s rule of monogamy. Both of these characters had been apparently happy and at peace, each living with two women. Indeed, this life-style is not disturbing to either the women or the society. But, The Church compels them to conform monogamy” (Nunez-Harrell, 1978: 36).

Nunez suggests that being forced to adhere to The Church's regulations causes the two characters to experience alienation, a condition Melvin Seeman describes as powerlessness. Jon and Bambi

feel impotent under the control of an external authority imposed by a foreign religion. They lack the ability to resist the church's domination.

George Lamming's novel illustrates the fragmented reality of alienated black West Indians, particularly focusing on a boy's estrangement from his community and himself. Additionally, it highlights the villagers' disconnection from both the colonizer and their environment. From the outset, the divide between the villagers and the landlord, Mr. Creighton, is evident. Mr. Creighton resides in a large house perched atop a hill, separated from the villagers by a forest and a high wall topped with broken glass. The villagers live in their barracks homes on Mr. Creighton's land and pay rent, acknowledging that the land belongs to the Creighton family, who have owned it for generations. To the villagers, Mr. Creighton is their master. His visits to the town and interactions with them are a source of pride for the villagers. This distance is vividly depicted when G. and his friends, Boy Blue and Trumper, manage to infiltrate the wall and secretly observe a party where the Creightons are hosting officers from a newly arrived British ship. They are literally outsiders looking in. The boys feel a profound sense of powerlessness as they realize how distant their lives are from the opulence they witness. This disparity becomes even more apparent when they are discovered in the garden. They flee, but their attempt to observe the party is twisted by the landlord, who claims that the "vagabonds" intruded to harm his daughter. The alienation from the colonizer is further emphasized during the annual review for the Queen of England's birthday, where the schoolboys are lined up by the black head teacher to salute a white government official, the visiting inspector.

Having been colonized for centuries, West Indians find themselves in an ambivalent situation, desiring acceptance from the colonizer. This ambivalence ultimately leads to the fragmentation of the colonized people. As discussed previously, colonization and subjugation cause the subjugated to develop identities oscillating between nativism and appropriation. The villagers take immense pride in Barbados being called Little England; they are loyal and content to be subjects of the Queen. However, their aspirations to emulate the whites are ultimately futile. Yet, this very aspiration causes division among the people. Those who come closest to resembling the Queen, either in proximity or lifestyle, are considered superior to the ordinary folk. These "inexpressive cogs, such as clerks, glorified office boys, officials, and a few professionals" (Singh, 1998: 12) such as managers, police, and teachers given posts to administer government affairs, are deluded by the power they wield, showcasing their superiority over the villagers. When the villagers who travel to England for education to become lawyers and doctors return, as Lamming underlines, they are:

"stamped like an envelope with what they called the culture of the Mother Country. Through their consciousness rings the bitter refrain, The enemy. My People... My people are low-down nigger people. My people don't like to see people get on... The image of the enemy, and the enemy was My People" (Lamming, 1991: 27).

And the villagers themselves believe it. The myth, Lamming notes, "has eaten through their consciousness like moths through the pages of aging documents." (Lamming, 1991: 27). Not only class snobbery but also differences in skin color create divisions among the villagers. "Nobody wants to be black, but most are. They make bitter jokes about each other's blackness and consider mulattoes as the most beautiful" (Lamming, 1991: 128).

Lamming's depiction of the games where white tourists make black boys compete by diving for pennies (the coin of the lowest value) illustrates the extent to which the villagers are alienated from civilized society under the influence of the white and so-called civilized individuals.

“The boys dived and the white men watched the sprawling black limbs in their scramble. Some minutes later the boys would surface, disputing the accusations they made against each other. Some complained of being kicked, and others of being scratched and later decided to settle the dispute by tossing more coins. If the dispute went on after their return the white men would tell them to fight it out and the boys fought” (Lamming, 1991:116)

Most significantly, the people are estranged from their past. According to Lamming, the past is essential for a sense of identity. By incorporating the characters of Ma and Pa, Lamming aims to forge a connection between the younger generation and their history. He is acutely aware that understanding our present selves requires knowledge of our past selves. The oppressors have severed the oppressed from their history through deliberate manipulation and distortion. *In the Castle of My Skin* underscores this disconnection from the past in various instances. For example, the schoolchildren's discussions about slavery, freedom, and the English king are notably distorted, revealing that despite their education, they lack genuine understanding, having been taught through a colonial lens. Additionally, the villagers disdain Africa, the land from which their ancestors were uprooted and brought to the Caribbean. The shoemaker, one of the more knowledgeable villagers, asserts, “...if you tell half of them ... they have something to do with Africa they'll piss straight in your face” (Lamming, 1991: 104). Another villager adds, "no man like to know he black" (Lamming, 1991: 104). The old man Pa, embodying the past, encapsulates the issue one night while seemingly talking in his sleep. In his subconscious mind, liberated during sleep, he longs to connect with his ancestors and speak not as an individual but as the collective racial unconscious. Pa reminisces about ancient African cultures where people lived in harmony and contentment until the arrival of strangers who bought and sold them, driving them to betray their kin. Their traditional rituals and customs were obliterated, leaving no possibility of return:

“The families fall to pieces and many a brother never see his sister nor father the son. Now there's been new combinations and those that come after make quite a collection. So if you hear some young fool fretting about back to Africa, keep far from the invalid and don't force a passage to where you won't yet belong” (Lamming, 1991: 211)

The protagonist, G., is profoundly impacted by the village's fragmentation. His family is not whole; his father has abandoned them, and his relatives have had to leave the island for employment and education, a common trend among Barbadians. As he grows up, G. yearns to be accepted by the other boys, but this desire is never fulfilled. His mother's overprotectiveness prevents him from fully associating with his friends Trumper, Bob, and Boy Blue. In their interactions, he remains an observer, recounting their words and actions. The clear signs of alienation and separation become evident when G. passes his exams for high school while his friends stay in the village. At high school, G. feels increasingly isolated. The colonial education system's curriculum deepens his sense of disconnection from his village. The colonial education system exacerbates his separation. With G. attending high school, Bob and Boy Blue joining the police, and Trumper departing for America, the 'vagabonds' group disbands. G.'s sense of alienation reaches its peak when he decides he must leave Barbados to teach in Trinidad. As Eugenia Collier notes;

“The severe class system inherited from the oppressor, the economic exploitation which keeps people poor and hopeless and ignorant and ready to be victimized by anybody with the sagacity and the nerve, the psychological pressures which ultimately force ambitious people to leave the island, the little-understood World War II which disrupts and destroys - all of these aspects of oppression trap the narrator G. into isolation” (Collier, 1960: 54).

Isolation from family, friends, neighbors, and school leads to a profound sense of alienation. In this fragmented world, G. experiences the deepest form of alienation—alienation from himself. As he matures and his awareness grows, he feels increasingly alone and despondent. On the brink of leaving his island home with the intention of never returning, he attempts to relive some of his childhood rituals, only to find them irretrievably lost. He sorrowfully acknowledges that the elements that once made up his life now feel distant and disconnected from his own identity:

“When I review these relationships they seem so odd. I have always been here on this side and the other person on that side, and we have both tried to make the sides appear similar in the needs, desires, and ambitions. But it wasn't true. It was never true. I am always feeling terrified of being known; not because they really know you, but simply because their claim to this knowledge is a concealed attempt to destroy you. That is what knowing means. As soon as they know you they will kill you, and thank God that's why they can't kill you. They can never know you.... They won't know the you that's hidden somewhere in the castle of your skin” (Lamming, 1991: 261).

In conclusion, G.'s access to education in *In The Castle of My Skin* exemplifies the complexities of colonial education. While it offers opportunities for intellectual growth and personal development, it simultaneously fosters a sense of alienation on multiple levels. G. grapples with cultural alienation, social alienation, and cognitive dissonance, highlighting the profound impact of colonial power structures on the individual and the community.

4. Emigration and Alienation: The Barbadian Experience

Another aspect, which leads to experience the sense of alienation is Emigration. It is the act of leaving one's homeland to settle elsewhere. It is often driven by economic hardship and the search for better opportunities. In colonial settings, however, it can symbolise dependency on the coloniser and cultural displacement, as individuals are uprooted from their familiar surroundings and forced to adapt to new cultural norms (Brah, 1996: 183). The island nation of Barbados has a long history of emigration, with its people seeking new opportunities and escaping the limitations of their small island nation. However, this phenomenon has also come at a cost, often leading to a sense of alienation among both those who leave and those who remain. Emigrants, generally, have ‘push and pull’ factors when they search for another place to live. Several factors have historically pushed Barbadians towards emigration. Limited economic opportunities, a legacy of colonialism, have left many struggling to find decent-paying jobs. Additionally, the island's vulnerability to natural disasters like hurricanes creates a sense of instability and insecurity, leading some to seek a more secure future abroad. On the other hand, pull factors in destination countries like the United States and the United Kingdom have also played a significant role. These countries often offer higher wages, better living standards, and greater opportunities for education and social mobility. However, the decision to emigrate often comes with a cost: a sense of alienation. Leaving behind familiar surroundings, traditions, and loved ones can create a feeling of isolation and disorientation. This is particularly true for first-generation immigrants who may face challenges with language, cultural differences, and even discrimination. In George Lamming's novel, the protagonist G. grapples with his identity and displacement as he navigates the complexities of Barbadian society. He later emigrates to Trinidad, where he encounters a different culture and further feelings of isolation (Lamming, 1991: 254-255). The experience of alienation is not limited to the emigrants themselves. Sending communities in Barbados can also feel the effects of social and cultural fragmentation. Emigration can lead to the loss of skilled personnel, disrupt traditional family structures, and weaken social networks. Emigration is a complex phenomenon with both positive and negative consequences for Barbadians. While it offers opportunities for individuals seeking a better life, it also often results in a sense of alienation

for both those who leave and those who remain. Understanding the push and pull factors of emigration and its multifaceted impact on individuals and communities is crucial for addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with this ongoing trend. Witnessing the constant exodus of fellow villagers seeking opportunities in the motherland can fragment the community and leave G. with a sense of loss and insecurity. Fragmentation of the community can further exacerbate feelings of alienation as traditional support structures weaken and the sense of belonging diminishes.

In George Lamming's *In The Castle of My Skin*, emigration serves as a powerful symbol of colonial dependence and cultural displacement, profoundly impacting the protagonist, G., and fostering a multifaceted sense of alienation. Witnessing the continuous exodus of villagers seeking opportunities elsewhere contributes to G.'s alienation in various forms, highlighting the complex interplay between individual experiences and broader societal contexts. The continuous exodus of villagers seeking opportunities in the 'motherland,' often portrayed as a land of promise and prosperity, exposes the limitations and economic hardships faced within the colonized society. These departures highlight the dependence on the colonizer for economic opportunities and advancement, reinforcing the power dynamics inherent in the colonial system. As Connell argues, colonial structures often create "uneven development" (2006: 172), leaving colonized societies reliant on the colonizer for resources and opportunities, leading to a sense of powerlessness and limited agency. G.'s constant exposure to the departures of his fellow villagers has a profound impact on his sense of belonging and community. Each goodbye signifies a loss, not just of individuals, but also of shared experiences, cultural practices, and a sense of collective identity: "The departures were like amputations, leaving raw edges on the community" (Lamming, 1991: 102). This fragmentation of the community further isolates G., as the familiar support structures and sense of shared identity begin to erode. This resonates with Brah's notion of "diasporic dislocation" (1996: 184), where individuals experience a sense of loss and disconnection from their original communities due to migration.

Witnessing the constant exodus not only fragments G.'s community but also contributes to his own sense of alienation. He grapples with conflicting emotions, torn between the desire for a better life elsewhere and the pain of leaving behind everything familiar: "I felt a strange mixture of envy and resentment. I envied them their escape, and yet I resented their leaving" (Lamming, 1991: 103). This internal conflict further exacerbates his sense of cultural displacement. As villagers depart, carrying with them fragments of his cultural heritage, G. experiences a growing sense of "cultural homelessness" (Brah, 1996: 182), unsure of his place within his own community and questioning the validity of his cultural identity.

G.'s exposure to emigration underscores the powerlessness inherent in the colonial system. The limited opportunities within his own community force individuals to seek a better life elsewhere, highlighting their dependence on the colonizer for economic advancement. This aligns with Marx's concept of alienation from the product of labor, where individuals lack control over their economic prospects within the larger societal structure (Marx, 1978: 72). As villagers depart, G. witnesses the limitations imposed by the colonial system, reinforcing his sense of powerlessness and lack of agency within his own circumstances.

The constant departures raise existential questions for G., leading him to grapple with the meaninglessness of his existence within the confines of the colonized society. The promise of a better life elsewhere casts doubt on the value and purpose of his own life and community: "The departures made me question the purpose of staying behind. What future was there for me in a

place where everyone seemed determined to leave?" (Lamming, 1991: 104). This questioning aligns with existential alienation, where individuals struggle to find meaning and purpose in a world seemingly devoid of inherent value (Yalom, 1980: 3). G.'s sense of meaninglessness stems from the perceived lack of opportunities and the erosion of his community, leaving him questioning his place and purpose within the broader context.

Witnessing the continuous exodus can also contribute to psychological alienation, where individuals experience a sense of estrangement from themselves. The conflicting emotions G. experiences – envy towards those leaving and resentment for their departure – create internal turmoil and confusion: "I felt a strange mixture of envy and resentment. I envied them their escape, and yet I resented their leaving" (Lamming, 1991: 103). This internal conflict disrupts G.'s sense of self and hinders his ability to reconcile his own desires with the realities of his community. This aligns with Fanon's notion of psychological alienation, where individuals experience a disconnect from their selves due to external pressures and societal contradictions (Fanon, 1967: 232).

The departures fragment G.'s community, leading to a sense of social isolation. As familiar faces disappear, he experiences a loss of social support and connection: "The departures were like amputations, leaving raw edges on the community" (Lamming, 1991: 102). This resonates with Seeman's concept of social isolation, where individuals feel disconnected from their social groups and lack a sense of belonging (Seeman, 1972: 144). G.'s social isolation further exacerbates his other forms of alienation, leaving him feeling adrift and disconnected from both his community and his sense of self.

G.'s experience in *In The Castle of My Skin* exemplifies the multifaceted nature of alienation arising from emigration within a colonial context. He grapples with Marxian powerlessness, existential meaninglessness, psychological self-estrangement, and Seemanian social isolation. These interconnected forms of alienation highlight the profound impact of witnessing emigration on individuals, not only disrupting their sense of belonging but also challenging their understanding of themselves and their place within the world.

5. Internal Exile and the Liminal Space: G.'s Psychological Dislocation

As for exile, besides being associated with physical displacement from one's homeland, it can also manifest itself as an internal experience. This psychological exile arises from a sense of dislocation and dispossession in which individuals feel alienated from their cultural roots, traditional communities, and even their own sense of self (Said, 1994: 349). G.'s fractured identity, resulting from the interplay of education and emigration, may lead him to experience this internal exile. Lamming's portrayal of the emotional weight of existing in a liminal space between two worlds, where traditional anchors have been severed and new identities remain uncertain, can offer profound insights into the psychological impact of colonialism.

The historical and social realities of colonialism in Barbados during the 1930s provide a crucial backdrop to understanding G.'s experience of alienation. The island, a British colony since the 17th century, was characterized by a rigid social hierarchy that privileged the white elite and marginalized the Afro-Barbadian population. The education system, designed to assimilate colonized subjects into the dominant culture, often served to reinforce these inequalities. G.'s educational experience may be shaped by these power dynamics, further contributing to his sense of alienation. Economic hardship and limited opportunities further fueled emigration, leading many Barbadians to seek a better life elsewhere. Witnessing this phenomenon may not only

contribute to G.'s feelings of loss but also expose the structural inequalities inherent in the colonial system.

In The Castle of My Skin portrays the profound consequences of colonialism on the individual through the character of G. G.'s experience transcends physical location, leading to a state of internal exile characterized by a fractured identity and psychological dislocation. G.'s access to education exposes him to a Eurocentric curriculum, creating a stark contrast with his lived experiences within his Afro-Barbadian community. This dissonance fosters cultural alienation, leaving him questioning the validity of his own cultural heritage: "I saw myself reflected in the white boy's book ... but I was not the white boy" (Lamming, 1991: 23). Furthermore, witnessing the continuous emigration of villagers seeking opportunities elsewhere reinforces G.'s sense of displacement. He observes the erosion of his community and the departure of familiar faces, leaving him feeling adrift: "The departures were like amputations, leaving raw edges on the community" (Lamming, 1991: 102). This interplay of factors fractures G.'s identity, creating a sense of "cultural homelessness" (Brah, 1996: 182) as he navigates between two seemingly incompatible worlds.

G.'s internal exile manifests through various forms of psychological dislocation. He grapples with cognitive dissonance as he struggles to reconcile the conflicting messages he receives from education and his lived experiences. This internal conflict creates a sense of confusion and doubt, echoing Fanon's notion of "the lived experience of the colonized" (1967: 231) characterized by constant questioning and uncertainty. Furthermore, G. experiences social isolation due to his fractured identity. He may not fully connect with his community, which might not fully understand his newfound perspectives, nor with the colonial elite, whose world remains inaccessible due to systemic barriers. This isolation resonates with Seeman's concept of social isolation, highlighting the feeling of disconnection from social groups and the lack of a sense of belonging (1972: 144).

Lamming masterfully portrays the emotional weight of G.'s existence in this liminal space, a state of "betwixt and between" (Turner, 1967: 95) where individuals lack a clear sense of belonging. G.'s constant questioning, the sense of loss, and the uncertainty about his future create a profound sense of melancholy and yearning. He longs for a sense of belonging and stability, as seen in his yearning for a connection to his cultural heritage: "The memory of the song, faint and faraway, lingered in the afternoon. It was a song about belonging, about a place where one was wanted, about a kind of completeness" (Lamming, 1991: 68). This emotional weight echoes Said's concept of "exile without a home" (1991: 349), highlighting the profound psychological impact of displacement and the yearning for belonging in a world where one feels like an outsider. G.'s internal exile, arising from the interplay of education and emigration, exemplifies the psychological and emotional weight of existing in a liminal space. Lamming's poignant portrayal offers a valuable insight into the complexities of navigating a fractured identity, the emotional impact of displacement, and the enduring yearning for belonging in a world shaped by colonial structures.

Conclusion

G.'s experience in *In The Castle of My Skin* provides a powerful illustration of the multifaceted nature of alienation within a colonial context. His education exposes him to a Eurocentric curriculum that fosters cultural alienation. Witnessing the emigration of villagers seeking opportunities elsewhere further contributes to his sense of displacement, leading to a fractured identity and internal exile. G. experiences various forms of alienation, including cultural, social,

psychological, and existential. These interconnected forms of alienation demonstrate the profound impact of colonial structures on individual experiences, fostering a sense of disconnect from oneself, one's community, and the broader world. Lamming's portrayal of G's journey demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of various theoretical frameworks, including Marxian, existential, psychological, and Seemanian perspectives on alienation. This analysis highlights the intricate interplay between individual experiences, societal structures, and the emotional weight of existing in a liminal space. *In The Castle of My Skin* is a powerful reminder of the long-lasting impact of colonialism on both individuals and communities. The story prompts readers to contemplate the intricacies of navigating cultural contradictions, dealing with fragmented identities, and longing for a sense of belonging in a world shaped by power imbalances and systemic inequalities.

The novel highlights the challenges and burdens of alienation while also suggesting the possibility of agency and resistance. G.'s critical thinking skills, developed through education, his growing awareness of societal inequalities, and his moments of defiance against authority figures indicate a clear potential for challenging the status quo. Exploring these aspects will provide a more nuanced understanding of G's experience and offer hope for individual and collective transformation. It is crucial to acknowledge the broader societal context within which his alienation unfolds, even though the focus has been on G's individual experience. Systemic factors perpetuating colonial dependence, cultural marginalization, and limited opportunities are the root causes of alienation and are interconnected with the larger social and political landscape. By discussing these factors, we can gain a deeper understanding of the issue.

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