

Rewriting The Tempest, George Lamming's Water with Berries

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ABSTRACT:

George Lamming's Water with Berries (1971) is representative of resistance works that proliferated in the 1970s. Lamming's preoccupations were defined and honed in the context of the anti-colonial movement of the 1950s, and while his vision is more sharpened and complicated in his later works, one can argue that Water with Berries, simply extends the themes developed in his earlier work. It is representative of post-colonial narratives that attempted at reworking Shakespeare's The Tempest, thus marking the endeavor of post-colonial writers to retaliate and write back...

As a re-writing of The Tempest and a reworking of the Myth of Caliban and Prospero, Water with Berries is illustrative of textual resistance, in relation to a canonical text. Lamming's attempt to retaliate against dominant discourses by inverting roles and imposing other meanings as seen from

the vantage point of the colonial subject is much in concordance with a rising interest in the play incorporated in the cultural forces against colonialism which was in full swing in the 1950s.

This essay is an attempt at showing how George Lamming uses the Caliban- Prospero model as a paradigm of resistance in view of recapturing their own cultural heritage and show that it has its own internal validity and ethos.

Keywords: resistance, culture, post-colonial studies, paradigm, language

Introduction

The construction of national culture was a major concern of the Caribbean writers of the 1930s and 1940s. The quest for the creation of a national culture and a distinct Caribbean identity knew its apogee in the burgeoning literature of the 1950s, a period marked by a great wave of migration to London, which intensified the exiled writers' sense of 'West Indianness' and their contribution in the project of forging a 'nation' and building national identity. Caribbean works of art were thus engaged in the project of national consolidation and national liberation, emphasising the centrality of culture in the nationalist project. The "native intellectual", Fanon states, "should be engaged in the search for the truths of a nation [which] are in the first place its realities. He must go on until he has

found the seething pot out of which the learning of the future will emerge” (224).

Fanon’s stance on the role of the intelligentsia underscores that narratives are liberating; a means whereby culture is recovered and national consciousness forged. This is achieved not only through the return to the past but also through the representation and interrogation of the ‘colonial drama’. As such, the Caribbean novel is engaged in the production and construction of the nation as “an imagined community”, a key concept in Benedict Anderson’s understanding of the nation:

The members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow- members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion...all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. (6)

Anderson’s model of nationalism is based on the premise that nation formation is related to the emergence of “print capitalism”, which led to the spread of common ideas and a standard language, thus creating a shared culture. However, Anderson’s model has been challenged by many Post-colonial critics such as Partha Chatterjee whose main premise runs counter to Anderson’s argument that anti-colonial nationalism is a ‘derivative discourse’ built on a mere imitation of the coloniser’s lan-

guage and ideas (qtd. in Loomba 189). Conversely, Chatterjee contends that nationalism among the colonised, emerging out of the struggle against colonialism, is centred on the assertion and articulation of difference achieved through the valuation of its own culture (Chatterjee 6).

Cultural Resistance is hence articulated around the assertion of difference. Many Caribbean writers and critics, such as George Lamming, Kamau Brathwaite, Sylvia Wynter, Aimé Césaire, and Edouard Glissant have shown that language, religion, place and history have become unifying paradigms. The reworking of these paradigms is part of Caribbean poetics organised on the construction of identity, at the centre of the process of cultural resistance.

Central to the issues of subjectivity and agency are the use of the English language to retaliate against Western Eurocentric discourses. The concomitant appropriation and transformation of the English language is aimed at dismantling the Eurocentric discourse's organizing principles and totalizing 'truths' which construct identity around, among other things, the overlapping issues of race, gender and class.

In their endeavour to retaliate against dominant Eurocentric discourses, many Caribbean writers resorted to rewriting canonical texts such as Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. The reworking of the

play marks the endeavor on the part of Caribbean writers and critics to challenge the dominant entities and reiterate the call for decolonization. Using a canonical text, like *The Tempest*, is a strategy of resistance aimed at demystifying the power dynamic on which colonialism is based.

Within the category of Caribbean writers who took up *The Tempest*, one can cite Fernandez Retamar, Edward Kamau Brathwaite and Aimé Césaire. The different reworkings of the play followed the same course of endowing Caliban with a retaliating power, thus illustrating the culture of resistance, yet again. Caliban is indeed elevated to a heroic figure capable of imposing his will over his master, therefore empowered to make history.

In the different rewritings of *The Tempest*, Caliban was endowed with a symbolic dimension. He stands for the Caribbean man caught in a situation of utter dispossession not only of his power to act but of his right to speak. Caliban has hence become a model for post-colonial writers engaged in anti-colonial narratives that seek to dismantle master narratives and imperial discourses based on what Abdul Jan Mohamed calls the 'Manichean allegory' which works through negative representations and a process of 'othering the other'(109).

It is in this context that Lamming's reworking of *The Tempest* should be located. In an attempt to

debunk the myth generated by colonial conquest, Lamming gives the stage to Caliban — through the figure of Teeton, Roger and Dereck, three migrants from different origins — and confers on them the power to speak and change the course of history through different rebellious actions.

By exploring the relationship between the different characters, this paper argues that Lamming uses the Prospero- Caliban model as a paradigm of resistance. It aims to show that by reworking this paradigm, Lamming reenacts the ‘colonial drama’ at the heart of colonial power to explore the predicament of exile of West Indians in the post-independence era caught in the legacy of the colonial myth and the traumas of the past. The encounter between the descendants of Prospero and the descendants of Caliban ends up generating a spiral of violence conditioned by the traumas of the past, thus reiterating the curse of the encounter between both races.

The Poetics of Protest

The Tempest is centred on the dynamics of the master-slave relationship and the way the process of enslavement and entrapment of Caliban is carried out through language. Caliban is determined and constructed by the language of Prospero. Prospero’s words determine and fix the image of Caliban who is situated in and produced by the dominant language of Prospero. The latter achieves full

control over the former not only through imposing his language and all the values it carries but also through Caliban's internalisation of that negative image and the acceptance of his status.

Caliban acknowledges the power of magic of Prospero and voices out his acceptance of his status as inferior: "I must obey, his Art is of such power/ It would control my dam's god Setebos/ and make a vassal of him" (1.2 39). The scene where Caliban proposes to be a slave to Stephano praying him to be his God is a good example of how Caliban reiterates his master's words and identifies himself using the same identity constructions as his master's:

CALIBAN: I'll show thee every fertile inch O' th' island:
and I will kiss thy foot: I prithee to be my
god.

TRINCULO: By this light, a most perfidious, and
drunken monster, when's god's asleep he'll
rob his bottle.

CALIBAN: I'll kiss thy foot. I'll swear myself thy sub-
ject

STEPHANO: Come on then: down and swear (2.2. 60).

At different points in the play, Caliban is referred to in terms such as the "lying slave", "savage", "monster", "vile race", and "filth". This shows that the power of Prospero's language lies in its ability to frame Caliban's representation and self-perception. These terms which define and construct him as the native savage are meant to justify the colonial enterprise and his status as the subjugat-

To name the bigger light, and how the
 less,
 That burn by day and night: and then I
 love'd thee, [...]
 Curs'd be I that did so! [...]
 For I am all the subjects that you have,
 Which first was mine own king: and here
 you sty me
 In this hard rock, whilst you do keep
 from me
 The rest o'the island (1.2. 37-38).

Indeed, Caliban's speech to Prospero underscores the linguistic implications of the colonial enterprise and the way the colonial encounter depends on the assumptions that it is the coloniser who brings and purveys light, civilisation, language and above all culture. Caliban's forceful statement that "This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother" is a bitter cry of his possession and inheritance of the land. His statements to Prospero like "teach me how to name the bigger light" [...], "whilst you do keep from me the rest o'the island" resonate as an avowal of the process whereby Prospero as the prototype of the coloniser snatches Caliban's land, thus exposing the mechanisms by which the colonial power takes over the place, wiping out all that pre-existed colonisation. Caliban's inarticulacy is juxtaposed with the power of Prospero to name the place and to perpetrate the names he attributes, which is a sign of power and a means whereby the coloniser controls reality for these names construct identity and translate a given attitude towards reality.

The core premises of colonial discourse are drawn upon by Miranda whose speech recalls that of Prospero and resonates as a justification of the colonial mission. It is governed by binary oppositions intrinsic to colonial discourse. Miranda's words fix the identity of Caliban as an "abhorred slave" "a savage" "a thing most brutish" and reveal the linguistic authority on which the colonial encounter is based:

MIRANDA: Abhorred slave,
 Which any print of goodness wilt not take,
 Being capable of all ill: I pitied thee,
 Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee
 each hour
 One thing or other: when thou didst not, sav-
 age,
 Know thine own meaning; but wouldst gab-
 ble, like
 A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes
 With words that made them known (1.2.38).

Caliban is constructed and produced by the gift of language. His disempowerment and lack of agency stem from his absence of language. However, this does not impede him from retaliating against Prospero. His speech "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse / The red plague rid you / For learning me your language" (1.2.39) resonates as a bitter shriek for resistance. Caliban's use of Prospero's tongue to curse him implies the use of language as a tool of resistance and retaliation.

His curse translates into an attempt at inverting the power structure that relegates him to the position of the savage and marginalised. It epitomises the potential of turning the mother language to one's advantage and transforming it to fit one's purposes. The dialectics of appropriation and transformation that this model of linguistic resistance purports accounts for its use by writers engaged in anti-colonial narratives. Bill Ashcroft underlines the transformative power of language showing that the power of Caliban's language does not reside in cursing the master but rather in transformation, hence its use as a weapon of resistance in post-colonial writings:

Caliban is not imprisoned in language incontrovertibly because it is by using Prospero's language (or any other) that Caliban can actualize his own possibility for being. This power is the key to the transformative dynamic of post-colonial writing and cultural production. Such a dynamic emerges in Caliban's determination to answer back to one who has such manifest power over him (91).

Yet, the debate about the validity and necessity to embrace and adapt the language of the coloniser as the only route towards resistance hovers between acceptance and total rejection. The perspectives of George Lamming, Edward Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott, for instance, run counter to that of Ngũgĩ Wa Thiongo, one of the fervent advocates of the need to break ties with English and recover

one's language. In *The Pleasures of Exile*, Lamming discusses the post-colonial writers' dilemmas vis-à-vis the use of English to write counter-narratives:

Caliban is his convert, colonized by language, and excluded by language. It is precisely this gift of language, this attempt at transformation which has brought about the pleasure and paradox of exile[...] I am a direct descendent of slaves, too near to the actual enterprise to believe that its echoes are over with the reign of emancipation. Moreover, I am a direct descendant of Prospero[...] using its legacy of the language not to curse our meeting but to push it further, reminding the descendants of both sides that what's done is done, and can only be seen as a soil from which other gifts, or the same gift endowed with different meanings, may grow towards a future[...] which must always remain open (15).

Lamming's perception of the Caliban/Prospero model can be understood in terms of the dialectics of entrapment and empowerment and/or transformation. This accounts for the paradoxical nature of exile where pleasure and bitterness co-exist. Exile is marked by alienation and disillusionment. However, it is this very alienation that paves the way for self-awareness and coming to terms with one's past, a necessary and key step towards a comprehensive understanding of one's present and creating one's future.

Lamming's relation to English is somehow ambivalent. On the one hand, he recognises that Caliban is totally inscribed in English and imprisoned by that language. On the other hand, he states that this "gift of language" is a prerequisite for self-awareness and resistance. It is only by negotiating and producing new meanings that Caliban can mend the fragmented pieces of his identity and move ahead. Indeed, Lamming goes even further by admitting that he is a descendant of both Caliban and Prospero. That is, he takes in the whole history of alienation and displacement related to the drama of the Middle Passage and concurrently declares the English language as his language, a necessary language, and a "necessary avenue towards areas of the self which could not be reached in any other way"(109).

In Search for Lost Origins

Water with Berries is centred on the migratory experience of three artists from the island of San Cristobal. Teeton, Derek and Roger fled their native island seeking liberation and growth. However, their journey to the very seat of colonial power further intensified their sense of entrapment and their failure to liberate themselves from the burdens of their colonial past. Hence, the theme of migration is a backdrop against which Lamming explores the predicament of exile of West Indian Intellectuals in the post-colonial era.

The narrative examines the interracial relationships between Teeton and his landlady, the Old Dowager and that of Derek, Roger and Nicole. These relationships are representative of the complexity of the exile situation which is a surrogate for the 'colonial drama' of the encounter between the former coloniser and colonised. In *The Pleasures of Exile*, Lamming describes the predicament of exile as "a reciprocal process" in which "to be a colonial is to be a man in a certain relation; and this relation is an example of exile" (25).

In a sense, the three protagonists are different facets of Caliban caught in a state of dependence and resignation. Teeton is emotionally entrapped and totally subsumed to the power of Old Dowager feeling like "a puppet that moved at the sound of her voice" (36). Derek seems to be unable to evolve in his career as an actor for the only role he plays is that of the dead corpse. Roger, an East Indian musician, is in a deadlock situation further complicated by the conflictual relationship with his wife Nicole, a white North American woman.

Yet, as the plot unravels, the three protagonists' sense of dislocation becomes more acute as they come to realise that "time had begun to put a strain on their refuge" and that "the islands were no longer behind them" (69). They all start to question their subject positions and their relationships based on dependence. Their awareness of their status leads them to undertake violence in a thirst

for transformation and liberation. As Taylor puts it, their violent acts result from “the leap of consciousness [that] occurs in the revolutionary moment [in which] the call to battle is made” (185).

This marks the change of the relationship between Prospero and Caliban thanks to the gift of language, given to Caliban by Prospero (and/or Miranda), allowing him to come to terms with the real nature of their relationship. As Wilfred Cartey points out, “the gift of language brings about a new way of seeing and informs the backward glance, making Caliban seek and ask the question of identity” (126).

By empowering his protagonists, Lamming transforms the trope of Caliban and adapts it to the post-colonial context. He reverses the situation by giving more credit to Caliban over Prospero, incarnated by Old Dowager whose eagerness for command and impulse for power recalls Prospero’s infatuation with controlling reality. While Lamming aligns with Shakespeare in his portrayal of Prospero, he replaces the male figure of Prospero by a female figure, hence pointing out to the change in the relationship between the descendants of both races in the post-colonial era. As Lamming points out:

Whereas Prospero in *The Tempest* is a male force because the world from which he is operating is aggressive, expansionist and conquer-

ing, by the time we get to *Water With Berries*, that world has now contracted in a way. It has now retreated; it has aged. And what we see in the Old Dowager is the age, the remoteness, in some way the impotence of the earlier Prospero (qtd.in Cudjoe 209).

By the end of the novel, Lamming also transforms the image of Caliban, through the character of Teeton, Roger and Derek, as he endows them with the capacity to retaliate. Contrary to Caliban in *The Tempest* who did not go beyond associating with Trinculo and Stephano, the three protagonists resorted to violence as part of their quest for identity. While *The Tempest* ends on a positive note, *Water with Berries* ends in a spiral of violence, represented as the sole possibility for the protagonists to come to grips with a new sense of self and fulfil the urge to return and take part in the imminent revolution in San Cristobal.

This implies that Lamming adds the dimension of violence in his reimagining of the relationship between the former colonizer and colonized, endowing violence with a therapeutic and liberating force. As M. P Joseph argues, Lamming's stance echoes Fanon's view of violence as a "cleansing force" (69). Indeed, Lamming claims that given the traumatic history and experience of colonialism, the relation cannot end in "a cordial manner" without a "smashing" for "there is almost a therapeutic need for a certain kind of violence in the breaking" (210).

By the end of the novel, Roger wants to burn the house of Old Dowager and put the Mona Bar to fire. He even goes mad and threatens Derek with a knife as Nicole tells him about her pregnancy. His actions, spurred by the prospect of having a white child, reflect the old fears of miscegenation and the anxiety of the mixing of two races. This is another detail that recalls the fear, voiced out by Caliban in *The Tempest*, that the contact will “people the isle with Cannibals” (Loomba 162).

Derek rapes a white woman on stage, following a racial insult from the theatre’s agent which filled him with rage and brought to the surface the racial constructions and the myth of the black savage. The detailed rendering of the rape scene and the representation of Derek as a “dragon of legend [...] released on the stage”, with a “cannibal rage”, a “monstrous shadow [...] spreading through the land” (242) recalls Prospero’s inscription of Caliban within the colonial myth of the Black savage when he accused him of the attempted rape of Miranda and “violat[ing] the honour of [his] child” (1.2.38).

While in *The Tempest*, Caliban ends up by regretting his plot with Stephano and Trinculo saying: “what a thrice-double ass / was I to take this drunkard for a God? / And worship this dull fool?” and decides to be “wise hereafter, and seek for grace” (5.1. 95), the fate of Teeton is thoroughly different. Lamming elevates him to a hero and a rebel. As

Teeton hears the news of an imminent revolt in San Cristobal and of the suicide of his wife Randa, he is filled with guilt. He regrets having deserted her after the San Souci affair, after which he had to escape because he tried with his fellows to overthrow the government in the region of San Souci.

Teeton feels an urge to return and take part in the burgeoning protest movements in his native island. He kills Old Dowager, after the latter kills Ferdinand, her husband's brother who informed her that their daughter Myra is not dead but rather kidnapped by his brother and brought up on a derelict island. Myra's story and her name recall Miranda, yet another detail that makes a strong link with *The Tempest*.

Lamming rewrites Miranda's rape by Caliban through telling the story of Myra's rape, a means to recreate the horrors of the colonial past. The violence of Myra's rape is hence inscribed within the violent legacy of *The Tempest* and can be read as a completion of that act. The detailed description of the rape scene brings to the fore the atrocity of the act itself: "they made a bonfire to celebrate their rape of me [...] they would rest and return, giving the interval over to the animals: father's two hounds [...] I couldn't tell which body was the man's and which belonged to the beasts" (150).

Moreover, the encounter between Teeton and Myra, who appears as a voice spirit in the desert-

ed heath, as Teeton recalls the Voodoo Ceremony voicing his inner wish to soak himself in the realm of ancestors and converse with the dead spirit of Randa, is a way to recreate the encounter between Caliban and Miranda. Lamming uses it to re-establish the connection with the African cultural heritage and hence celebrate Africa. Indeed, Lamming incorporated elements of African cultural remnants in the Caribbean as a way to retrieve a lost heritage, revive the memory of the past and raise an awareness of African connection. Stuart Hall argues that in concordance with the works of Négritude poets Aimé Césaire and Léopold Senghor, and pan-Africanists, Caribbean writers are engaged in the rediscovery of Caribbean 'cultural identity' and in the recovery of the hidden or silenced key instances in the Caribbean history, namely the relation with Africa, the slave experience and the long history of fragmentation and rupture (qtd. in Williams 392-403).

The use of the Voodoo Ceremony in *Water with Berries* shows that the African heritage is present and that to establish a connection with the realm of ancestors is a prerequisite for self-understanding and survival in the midst of an alien space. In *Pleasures of Exile*, Lamming describes the Voodoo Ceremony or the Ceremony of the Souls, a Haitian ceremony, in which spirit possession is a significant moment, as one where:

The celebrants are mainly relatives of the deceased who, ever since their death, have been locked in Water. It is the duty of the dead to return [...] to speak, since their release from that purgatory of Water cannot be realised until they have filled the contract which this ceremony symbolises. The dead need to speak [...] The living demand to hear whether there is any need for forgiveness, for redemption... those alive and those now dead [...] are interested in their future (9).

As Voodoo Ceremony contains elements of African beliefs, its enactment is thus a way to ensure the survival of African cultural heritage. It is endowed with a symbolic dimension clearly hinted at through the overlapping of the present, past and future. The confrontation of the living with the dead represents a conjunction of moments. Laming construes this very conjunction as a medium whereby reconciliation and transformation could be attained. (King et al 64)

Indeed, the Ceremony of the Souls is used in relation to the dialectic of domination and liberation from the legacy of the past. It is invoked in relation to the theme of imprisonment in, and liberation from, the past, thus bringing into play the function of memory in recovering one's roots. At different points in the narrative, the three exiles voice out their tug of war between the desire to forget and leave behind the fragments of the past and their feeling of imprisonment in the shadows of the

past. For Teeton, for instance, exile could wipe neither his attachment to his home country nor his racial memory and the slave experience. As he puts it, “The island [is] a nerve his exile couldn’t kill” (110) and “slave [is] the kind of bait which he want[s] to bite” (94).

Cultural heritage is so important and precious that, though time has passed by, it has been safeguarded from oblivion. It is even present in the minds of those who took the path of immigration. It is deeply rooted in their souls, making them unable to distance or liberate themselves from its imprisoning power. Distance and space could not erase the power of the past which the main characters in *Water With Berries* have striven to detach themselves from. They cannot espouse the former coloniser’s way of life and melt fully in a different culture. They therefore seek to “return” to their country of origin through establishing a connection with the cultural heritage they long left behind. In spite of the coloniser’s endeavour to hybridise them and make them adopt his religion, educational system and way of life, their socio-cultural heritage functions as a shield against planned and forced acculturation. The migratory experience of the three artists in *Berries* turns into a constant struggle to recapture a lost sense of identity and place.

The Ceremony of the Souls is tightly linked to Lamming’s concern to render the experience of exile in London and the West Indian artist’s com-

plex quest for identity and self-comprehension. In one sense, it becomes a sort of voyage and a rite of passage from a state of loss and disorder to one of order and acceptance. It shows that liberation cannot be achieved simply by crossing borders but by achieving a full understanding and acceptance of one's past.

Indeed, through the character of Myra, a silent figure, Lamming sets the actions within the framework of the quest for identity. Myra's encounter with Teeton in the heath and her discovery of the world of the drums can be understood as a moment of liberation and a celebration of African heritage. It implies that the sole route towards harmony is the assembly of the fragmented parts of identity and the excavation of the suppressed elements of one's history, a prerequisite for liberation. Teeton's description of the Ceremony brings to the fore the force of liberation:

It's a family occasion [...] every eight years or so according to custom [...] the dead come forward [...] They speak about all the things that had never been said when they were alive [...] Sometimes they argue all through the night. For hours. The living and the dead. It will go on until they reach a point of reconciliation. Then you know it's the end. The end of all complaint from the dead; the end of all retribution from the living. The dead depart and the relatives are free at last to go home (117-118).

Through Teeton's account of the ceremony, Myra relives the long history of slavery and oppression and seizes the rekindled racial memory. Her experience of spirit possession is hence a site of confrontation with the legacy of her past, translating her desire to comprehend her present situation and envisage her future. Phrases like "slave was a name of a unique predicament. Like time, it signified every kind of moment, grew echoes in every corner of his history" (94) recur throughout the narrative foregrounding the importance of awareness of one's past which Lamming posits as a key step towards liberation.

Conclusion

Lamming's rewriting of *The Tempest*, which this paper attempted to explore through an analysis of the relationship between characters from different races, is to be contextualised within the dialectics of domination and liberation around which the novel is centred. It is closely related to the discourse of national liberation that marked West Indian culture in the neo-colonial and post-colonial era. The latter has had, whether directly or indirectly, a strong impact on Lamming's rendering of the Caliban-Prospero paradigm.

Its use as a paradigm of resistance in the narrative is an example of a wide variety of nationalist narratives in which the quest of identity is carried out and told from the vantage point of West Indian

protagonists. It is deeply anchored in the project of decolonization and is reminiscent of a discourse of liberation and assertion of identity which marked the 1950's- 1970's.

At the level of the narrative, the present, past and future overlap since the very representation of the present takes in the past predicament, in order to spell out an alternative future and articulate the possibility of transformation through the retrieval of culture. The liberating potential of the narrative resides in its success in mapping out the path to liberation and in expressing different models of liberation necessary to build up a culture of resistance.

Retrieving remnants of African culture through the Ceremony of the Souls exemplify the process of writing resistance in which the Caribbean novel is engaged. In this sense, writing becomes a journey, a quest for lost roots carried out at the level of memory. Language, the recovery of the past, the celebration of the community and folk culture are issues around which transformation is envisaged.

Language is used as a tool of resistance. The potential of resistance embedded in language is underlined in the Caliban-Prospero Model. Thus, Lamming falls within the continuum of writers who are engaged in a process of appropriating and transforming the English language to write back to Western Eurocentric discourse and produce anti-colonial narratives.

By celebrating Africa, Lamming attempts to establish a connection between Africa and the Caribbean, thus shaping a new reality that involves acknowledging the presence of Africa in the Caribbean. The very act of remembering the predicament of the past is a way to construct the present out of the traumas of the past. The centrality of the function of memory in the narratives translates Lamming's concern to redefine the community, hence contributing to the project of forging the nation.

The need to re-establish connection with Africa is, for Lamming, an important component of the construction of Caribbean identity. It is through the Ceremony of the Souls that Lamming articulates his main premise that liberation is a construct, a by-product of personal experience gained through the journey into one's past; a necessary act to develop an awareness of one's self and one's present that is key to political action and the anti-colonial struggle.

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