CALIBAN'S WOES: BLACK WRITERS

Chapter IV

CALIBAN'S WOES: BLACK WRITERS

The Negroes were not indigenous to the Caribbean, having been brought there as slaves by the newly established plantocracy in the sixteenth century. After the discovery of the islands by Christopher Columbus, people from different European countries had come there in search of wealth. There followed fierce rivalries between them for domination and a systematic decimation of the native population of Caribs and Arawaks. Most of the Negroes had been contracted from West Africa and transported into the islands in overcrowded ships. A systematic annihilation of their language and culture was resorted to by the white masters who believed in controlling them through fear. Members of the same family were separated from each other and sold in different lots. People speaking the same dialect were also shuffled to prevent the Negroes from banding together. The white owners were a minority compared to the large number of slaves stationed on every plantation. So they were suspicious of any communal activity among the slaves. All cultural activities were therefore discouraged except work songs that helped field work. Colonized and enslaved their
woes became like those of Caliban in *The Tempest* who had to use his master's language even to curse. The languages of the slaves were gradually replaced by those of the masters and this depersonalized them further. Louis James presents their situation thus in his work, *The Islands in Between*:

The attitude held towards the slaves is epitomized in the oppression of the slave owners to the activities of the missionaries. To baptize a Negro would have been to admit that he was a fellow human being and that he held claims on the owner's conscience. In the nineteenth century, the slaves were emancipated. But by then, they had to bear the profound psychic wounds of slavery that Franz Fanon analyses in *The Damned of the Earth* (1961) and the temptation towards self-contempt. At the same time they had to face the already entrenched mulattoes and Europeanised middle classes. The era of colonialism left peoples divided against themselves by culture and by class. (1968, 3)

As has been stated earlier, the missionaries were responsible for emancipation but the Negroes found it difficult to get acclimatized to the new creed and new way of life. On the one hand was the patronising attitude of the "white" preachers committed to rescue the "black" heathens from Hell; on the other, were the responsibilities of freedom that the Negroes had to face
with nothing but deprivation and illiteracy to assist them. As stated earlier they had been deprived of their own traditional values and ways of life under slavery and their dialects had been replaced by the 'creolized' version of the English language. The evolution of creole is elucidated in detail by Kenneth Ramchand in his, *The West Indian Novel and Its Background*. The evolution of creole takes place though several stages. In the first stage, the African dialect predominated with only a mixture of broken English. The masters had to make the slaves understand the orders. To quote, "To make orders and instructions understood, the whites would have had to invent a species of essential English, partly made up of a number of formulaic words and phrases and in general showing fewer inflexional variations than would occur in exchanges between whites. There would, however, be a compensatory increase in the reliance upon the linguistic context, upon word order and upon intonation to make necessary discrimination and to fill out meaning" (83-84).

Though the plantation system restricted intercourse with the upper orders of the plantation...
hierarchy, there were points of contact between the masters and slaves. The language evolved by the slaves was close to English though not grammatically sound. In the next stage this imperfect English became the language of communication amongst the slaves themselves. From this stage onwards, there was a gradual reduction of Africanisms in "Creole English." Ramchand also quotes F.G. Cassidy's *Jamaica Talk* published in 1961:

...There is no real evidence... that any articulate African speech survives in any community in the island today, and it is doubtful whether any has been spoken at all within the twentieth century. A few snatches of African or African-like words are preserved in some songs and some of the revivalist cults keep up a terminology among themselves that has African elements, but these are all vestiges in a structure that is not genuinely African but Jamaican...(86)

Language, or the absence of a native indigenous language, plays a decisive role in the search for identity of the black writers. Writing in the master's tongue tends to be restrictive. Its nuances are unable to carry the weight and flavour of a native tradition especially when the writer has no choice. Rene Depestre sums up the dilemma in an article, "Problems of Creativity for the Black Man in Caribbean Literature."
Originally in French, it was translated by George Irish and published in the *Caribbean Quarterly* in September, 1973.

The West Indian Negro has not been able to reject the master's language, although in some cases, as the existence of creole in Haiti, Guadaloupe and Martinique proves, the linguistic escape has been crowned with success. As is well known, language is an important element in the identity of any man. For us to be fully ourselves, it would be necessary to be able to think, and create languages that are Haitian, Martinician, Jamaican, Barbadian, and so on which would be able to give us a more accurate image of ourselves than that which we have when using instruments such as French, English or Spanish thinking apparatus, which by force of acculturation, we have had to add to our own experience and which we must conquer, to our own advantage and wish to express our identity (53)

By the eighteenth century there were two million slaves imported into the Caribbean. There were frequent rebellions which had to be put down by force. The slaves were treated harshly because the owners feared revolt. There were many landlords who allowed the slaves to buy their freedom by working on the small plots that were allocated to each slave. Some of the white planters helped their coloured children with money
and education but the overall picture was one of trauma and indignity. In 1833, the slaves were freed but by this time there had evolved a hierarchy among them with the educated coloured class on top of the ignorant black slaves. Educational facilities were at a minimum in the Caribbean. Though the Act of Emancipation carried a resolution to provide facilities for education, the meagre funds allocated did not provide much scope. The secondary schools followed a policy of financial and social exclusiveness by denying entry to the illegitimate, which meant the majority of Negro children. Only very bright and fortunate children could gain entry into these schools. Things improved with the passage of time but one of the reasons for the late blossoming of Negro writers in the Caribbean is the lack of educational facilities. With the advent of the twentieth century many Negroes left the islands to work at the site of the Panama Canal. Many migrated to the U.S. and England. These migrations that were necessitated by unemployment proved beneficial in terms of Caribbean fiction. The emigrant experience brought the people into contact with Negro movements that marked the resurgence of black racial pride. One of the first
writers to get involved in such a movement was Claude McKay. McKay's novel *Banana Bottom* is generally regarded as the first West Indian classic.

In the Caribbean, the blacks had to combat both the oppression of colonialism and the trauma of slavery. The wretched and helpless condition of the black man in the Caribbean is vividly portrayed by Rene Depestre in the article mentioned earlier:

Having robbed me of my creative energy, I was robbed of my past, my history, my psychological integrity, my legends and my secret beauties as a humanbeing. Subsequently, when slavery had already been abolished, I was still kept as a West Indian, at the point where it was impossible to work out a synthesis of different African and European components of my culture. By means of a frightening acculturative pressure, everything was done before my very eyes, to make the African substratum of my life appear unworthy of the human race. I was made to have a terrible opinion of myself. I was forced to deny a decisive part of my social being, to detest my face, my colour, the peculiarities of my culture, the specific reactions of my sensibility in the face of life, love, death and art. And all this was also done so that I might idealize the colour, history and culture of my white masters. (52)

All the three novelists chosen, Claude McKay, Roger Mais and George Lamming, are concerned with the helplessness and deprivation of the black people in the
Caribbean. A study of these novelists therefore entails a brief survey of the major black movements of the Caribbean.

An article published in Caribbean Quarterly in December 1962, provides us with information about the Rastafarian movement. In the nineteen twenties there were two men in Jamaica who were reputed to be prophets. One of them was called Bedward who attempted to fly to heaven. He was deemed a lunatic and sent to a mental hospital where he died. The other was a man called Marcus Garvey. He founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association in the United States. He proclaimed black nationalism and preached "Africa for the African at home and abroad," "one God, one aim, one destiny." He wished to form a state in Africa to which Negroes from the western world could be transported. Though he was unable to realize the ambition, his message got across to many Negroes. In 1927, Garvey was deported from the United States to Jamaica where he continued to preach his doctrine. Unfortunately he did not enjoy much popularity among the white people or the coloured folk. Even fellow blacks were put off by his
stress on thrift, hard work and perseverance. He died in England in 1940 but before that he had made a prophecy, "Look to Africa, when a black king shall be crowned, for the day of deliverance is near." When Emperor Haile Sellasie was crowned in Ethiopia some Jamaicans of a Garveyite persuasion consulted their Bibles. Later Ethiopia was invaded by Italians but in 1941, the Emperor returned. They felt that the verses in the Bible justified their belief in the Emperor's divinity. The doctrine that Ras Tafari, known to the world as Emperor Haile Sellasie I was the living God, was developed by several people independently. One of the first was Leonard P. Howell but he was followed by Nathaniel Hibbert and Archibald Dunkley; all these men had experienced white racism abroad. Though they worked independently, they were united in the idea of the divinity of Ras Tafari. Later the movement became suspect in the eyes of the police because Leonard Howell who established a headquarters of the brethren started growing ganja. Many of the followers looked with favour upon the 'weed.' They also grew beards but by and large they were a disorganised and heterogenous group: "From the history which has been presented... the reader may
readily deduce that Rastafari brethren are a very heterogenous group. They hold in common only two beliefs; that Ras Tafari is the living God and that salvation can come to the black man only through repatriation to Africa. On all other matters, the opinions of the brethren vary as widely as the opinion of the rest of the population. Some wear beards, others do not; and only a small minority wear the locks. Some are men of the highest moral fibre, while at the other extreme are men of crime and violence. Some smoke ganja; others abhor it. Some are excellent workmen, while others avoid work. In all matters except two, the divinity of Ras Tafari and the necessity of repatriation, Rastafarians are a random group" (17-18). Though the movement was not an unequivocal success it was able to rejuvenate the black people with a sense of pride in their race. Roger Mais's novel Brother Man (1954) projects a Rasta as the protagonist.

Another movement that influenced the outlook of black writers was the Harlem Renaissance Movement. Harlem, in New York, was a place of refuge for black intellectuals of America. It had a symbolic status as
African America's capital city. It was the goal of many African American migrants in the 1910s and 1920s, increasing to a number of two hundred thousand Negro residents creating a black belt in a dominantly white nation. Most of the writers of the Harlem Renaissance were wanderers who had come there from other places but one and all they were affected by the spirit of the place and a feeling of identification basically racial with it. Collectively they developed a vision of Harlem as an organic place on the one hand and as a cultural aspiration on the other. Though their wanderings took them elsewhere to different parts of the globe, they looked to Harlem as their primary symbolic home. Claude McKay became a prominent member of the Harlem Renaissance Movement after his emigration to the United States. McKay's wanderlust took him to different parts of the globe but he looked to Harlem for a community and a sense of belonging as his book *Home to Harlem* proves. In *Banana Bottom* he tries to recreate a similar sense of belonging to a community within his native Jamaica. The emphasis in both works is on the vitality of a Negro community as opposed to the artificiality of a white colonial set up.
Both these movements created a greater awareness of Africa. In the struggle to find their roots, West Indian intellectuals came to play lead roles in the cultural revival of Africa itself. The Pan-African movement fascinated the black intellectuals of the Caribbean and many of them visited Africa. But they could not find there a complete answer to their quest for identity. The "middle passage" across the Atlantic and the centuries spent in the Caribbean with its racial intermixture had changed them completely. Even though African culture had survived in spite of oppression, it was a selective continuation. Though the Caribbean cultists and the Rastafarians built up bizarre myths of Africa, they had little relevance to reality. At the same time African folk-tales and songs survived. Louis James exemplifies this aspect by mentioning the African folk-tales of the Ashanti spider god, in his work *The Islands in Between*. In the Caribbean, the spider god was called Anancy and the tales about him usually depict him as physically weak but ingenious and cunning. For the slaves he was an expression of the human spirit overcoming great odds, both physical and supernatural.
A study of the backgrounds of the three novelists under consideration helps to elucidate the quest for identity. Of the three, Claude Mckay was the first Negro novelist of the Caribbean and also the first of the exiles. Kenneth Ramchand opines that Mckay being black was obliged to emigrate whereas Redcam and De Lisser, his white predecessors, could survive in the West Indies as writers and journalists (The West India Novel and its Background, 241). Born in 1890, Mckay migrated to the U.S. in 1912 shortly after the publication of his Constab Ballads. He had left Jamaica to study at the Tuskegee Institute but he left it finding it too claustrophobic. He wandered around trying his hand at different jobs but these were also years of preparation. His experience with racism had a deep impact upon him and it was this that made him a spokesman for the blacks by identifying with the Harlem Renaissance. Though he started his career as a poet, he went on to become a novelist of repute. His earlier novels Home to Harlem (1928) and Banjo (1929) are set in locales far away from the Caribbean. But Banana Bottom (1933) is set in his native Jamaica. The protagonist, a black girl returns to Jamaica after spending seven years
in an English university. According to Kenneth Ramchand, Bita Plant is the first achieved West Indian heroine and Banana Bottom is the first classic of West Indian prose (219).

In Roger Mais, one finds a person of uncompromising ideals and principles. Born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1905, he belonged to a middle class background and was also fair skinned. Technically speaking that makes him "coloured" rather than "black." But as an intellectual Mais had always identified with the black people rather than with coloured middle class. He too had tried his hand at different jobs ranging from journalist to a time keeper on a banana estate. He was also involved with West Indian nationalism and was imprisoned for a short spell in 1944 for criticizing Winston Churchill for his policy of denying independence to the island. Edward Brathwaite, the noted Caribbean poet, has the following comments to make on Roger Mais in his Introduction to the novel Brother Man (1974 edn.): "Mais became a 'socialist' that is an intellectual committed to the cause of social justice. There was nothing orthodox and doctrinaire about this
however, just as there was nothing orthodox and doctrinaire in his strong moral sense of Biblical reading. These were all part of his perception of the human animal struggling for equilibrium, the artistic endeavour striving for style and order" (VI). Mais left Jamaica in 1952 taking the manuscript of Brother Man along with him though his first novel, The Hills Were Joyful Together was published in the same year. Brother Man was published in 1954 and the same year saw him return to Jamaica crippled with cancer. He died in 1955 and his novel Black Lightning was published posthumously. He also has a number of short stories, radio plays and prose pieces to his credit in addition to these three novels. The protagonist in Brother Man being a Rastafarian, this novel provides us with the opportunity of tracing the influence of the Rastafarian movement on the emerging black identity.

George Lamming, the third novelist included in this study, was born in Barbados in 1927. He describes himself as belonging to the peasant class and his primary concern is politics. After teaching in Trinidad for a short spell he migrated to London in 1950.
Working in factories, he broadcast and published works in English. His first novel, In the Castle of My Skin is closely related to the facts of his boyhood and was published in 1953. Lamming is known as the most outspoken nationalist of his generation and his novels chronicle the sweep of West Indian history starting with the colonial setting in In the Castle of My Skin, through the achievement of independence in Seasons of Adventure (1960) to a post-independence critique in Water with Berries (1971). It was Lamming's emigration to England that created in him the need to define himself as a black West Indian. The novel In the Castle of My Skin is the best known of his works and it has been chosen for the present study because it traces the changes that happen in the society of Barbados or "Little England" through the story of the boy 'G'. It thus offers a contrast to the Jamaican scenario presented by both Mais and McKay.

Childhood: Childhood experiences in Banana Bottom are rendered as recollections of the protagonist, Bita Plant, after her return to the island. Lamming's novel on the other hand, is a bildungsroman, tracing the
growth of the boy G through a period of nine years starting with his ninth birthday. The novel ends with his leaving Barbados for Trinidad at eighteen. In Brother Man the childhood experiences of slum dwellers are presented to focus attention on the protagonist's milieu. The hero's kindness to children helps to highlight his stature as a messiah.

Banana Bottom starts with Bita's return to her native land after seven years abroad. Childhood experiences are brought in as nostalgic memories of the sophisticated brown beauty she had become at twenty two. These memories of her past help her realize what she is and what she wants to be as opposed to what her benefactors had planned for her.

Bita had been the victim of a tragic event in her past; she had been raped by a crazy man as a girl of thirteen. As a child, Bita had been a tomboy, living a carefree life with her father and her stepmother Aunt Naomi. Crazy Bow belonged to a prominent 'coloured' family whose ancestor was a Scotch landlord who preferred to liberate his slaves. The Adairs were neighbours of the Plants and Bow Adair was a frequent
visitor to Bitas house even though he was considered crazy. Bow had great talent for music and Bita liked to listen to him. The unfortunate incident occurred when Bow was twenty five. The two of them were romping together on the banks of Cane River when all of a sudden Bow lost control over himself. Soon the news spread and the natives made a ditty about it. Bow was arrested, tried and sentenced to the madhouse. When the head of the Jubilee Mission, Reverend Malcolm Craig, heard about it, he was shocked as the Plants were family friends of the Craigs. His wife Priscilla Craig felt great compassion for Bita and had the idea of taking her in to train her as an exhibit to show the community how a girl with social stigma could attain success with careful training. Their own son Patou was mentally retarded but Mrs Craig could never dream of adopting another boy. With Bita she had no problem especially because her warm presence brightened up the family life of the Craigs. Bita's own father was pleased with the idea as he was thinking of sending Bita away to a relative till the whole thing blew over. Her success with Bita made Priscilla Craig decide to send her abroad for higher studies.
When Bita returned to the island, she appeared poised and confident on account of her education but she could not forget her instinctive yearning. Unlike other natives whose education made them despise their own traditions, Bita revelled in pure joy as she recognized the colour and smell of the native market. Her going away had actually given her the opportunity of looking at her native life in perspective. As a girl she had never felt the same. Bita's nostalgia became more pronounced when she visited her native village of Banana Bottom. The very landscape thrilled her as she remembered instances of running barefoot and swimming naked in the pools.

As a visitor of eminence, Bita was asked to preside over a Sunday School ceremony and distribute the prizes to the children. During the ceremony she chanced to look at her father and caught him with tears in his eyes. It was then that she remembered that the rape had occurred right after she had received a Sunday School prize for good conduct. Bita had great affection for her father. After his death she remembered various instances of his kindness and affection including his
emotion after the rape. "Now she thought of the time when she was raped by Crazy Bow, how strange and terrible her father's face had been, yet he had been so kind and more fatherly than ever to her. A fine father. And she had loved him deeply with a love rooted in respect. All the men that she really respected had something of his character. Malcolm Craig, Squire Gensir, Jubban" (1970, 288).

Recollections of childhood help Bita realize the superficiality of her education. She decides that the atmosphere of Jubilee Mission is not for her as she is basically a black Jamaican girl who feels at home only in her native village of Banana Bottom.

In Lamming's novel, the childhood experiences elucidate the mental make-up of the boy G as he looks at the world around him. The novel starts with G's ninth birthday that coincides with heavy floods. His own disappointment is an index of the dismay of the villagers whose houses and crops are damaged by the deluge. Thereafter the two strands of experience, of G's private life and the story of his village, are interwoven. Innovations of style are resorted to by
Lamming especially in the case of narration. After starting off with a first person narrator, Lamming goes on to adopt omniscient narration, and dialogue between characters, and then reverts to first person narration. The characters in the dialogue are given no names but are called First Boy, Second Boy etc. The variety in narrative style helps to underline the multi-faceted nature of experience by presenting the story from different angles.

In contrast to Bita Plant whose father plays a dominant role, the boy G has no father to offer guidance or protection. His mother is his only living relative: "My father who had only fathered the idea of me had left me the sole liability of my mother who really fathered me" (1986, 3). G's condition was similar to millions of Negro children in the Caribbean where the tradition of slavery had destroyed the basic framework of family responsibilities. In spite of the efforts of the missionaries many of the blacks found it difficult to accept the social values of the whites. Their own tribal communities had virtually ceased to exist. In G's case, he also had no other relatives:
"My birth began with an almost total absence of family relations. My parents on almost all sides had been deposited in the bad or uncertain accounts of all my future relationships, and loneliness from which had subsequently grown the consolation of freedom was the legacy with which my first year opened" (4).

The novel presents childhood experiences centred in three spheres - the home, the school and the world outside. At home the dominant influence is that of his mother. A humorous incident is described where the fence comes down as G's mother is bathing him in the yard outside his house. The boys of the neighbourhood who were watching the proceedings with great interest were responsible for the incident but the broken fence filled G's mother with perplexity: "My mother on such occasions looked pitiful beyond words. I had often seen her angry or frustrated or in tears but there were other states of emotion she experienced for which tears were simply inadequate. Seized by the thought of being left alone, she would become filled with an overwhelming ambition for her child, and an even greater defiance of the odds against her. Then she'd be silent as she was
now, or would talk in a way that was mechanical while her meaning seemed to go beyond the words" (10). Her ambition for her son was to help him attain respectability in society. In spite of poverty and deprivation she struggled hard to educate him. At the same time, she also tried to cultivate in him ideas of cleanliness and godliness. Even the deluge that washed down the boy's ninth birthday was referred to by her as "the showers of blessing." Though she punished and scolded her son she had an overwhelming affection for him, and though the entire responsibility of his upkeep fell on her shoulders, she discharged it with faith and love.

The second sphere, that of the school, is illustrated through the description of the Empire Day Celebrations. The description satirizes the educational system imposed under colonialism. The inspector's speech to the students gathered for Empire Day is pregnant with irony:

"My dear boys and teachers, we are met once again to pay our respects to the memory of a great queen. She was your queen and my queen and yours no less than mine. We're all subjects and partakers in the great design, the
British Empire and your loyalty to the Empire is seen in the splendid performance which your school decorations and the discipline of these squads represent. We are living my dear boys, in difficult times. We wait with the greatest anxiety the news of what is happening on the other side of the world. Those of you who read the papers may have read of the war in Abyssinia. You may have seen pictures of the King of Ethiopia and the bigger boys may have wondered what it's all about. 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. But, remember, my dear boys, whatever happens in any part of this world, whatever happens to you in the island of Barbados, the pride and treasure of the Empire, we are always on the side of peace. You are with us and we with you. And together we shall always walk in the will of God." (30)

The inspector deliberately identifies servility to the Empire with obedience to God and injects the boys with a false sense of loyalty to the colonial masters. In addition they are forced to look upon fellow blacks in Ethiopia and Abyssinia with contempt. The colonial authority is reinforced by the severity of its punishments as is exemplified by the incident of beating that occurs immediately after the celebrations. For a minor misdemeanour like giggling, the head teacher pounced upon a likely culprit and beat him till his
trousers were rent and the filth slithered down his legs. After the beating, the boy had to be supported by the other boys as he was carried to the tap to be cleaned. The rest of the story is related through the conversation of the four boys at the water tap. They are given no names, being referred to as First Boy, Second Boy etc., and no hint is given as to whether G is one of them. Discussing the brutality of the beating, they devise various methods of revenge. After dismissing conventional methods like complaining to parents, they decide to "create history" by hiding behind the fence and attacking the head teacher when he is least aware. But when the victim revealed why he was beaten up, the boys were surprised. The boy's mother was the domestic help in the head teacher's household and was therefore in possession of his shameful secrets. The head teacher suspected that the boy was gossipping about them in school. So he had been waiting for an opportunity to beat the boy up. Here Lamming underlines the ineffectiveness of an educational system where punishment is not corrective but is resorted to, to settle private grievances.
In the meanwhile more serious trouble was hatching for the head teacher. This time, the culprit was one of the masters who had in his possession photographs of the head teacher's wife in intimate embrace with him. By accident, the envelope landed in the hands of the head teacher who was totally unnerved by the contents. He could not hush it up nor could be give it publicity. As the head teacher he could not condone immorality. Lamming does not tell us exactly what happened next but the erring subordinate soon left the teaching profession to enter into politics.

Another childhood experience that is described is on the seaside where G goes with Bob, Trumper and Boy Blue. Though the boys relate tales and discuss race and colour, G hardly utters a word. Some of the pronouncements of Boy Blue are precocious and concern problems of self analysis. But immediately afterwards, he has to be rescued from the sea by a surly fisherman. Other areas of experience like playing on the railtracks and waiting at the bath house are also described by Lamming to present a complete picture of community life. The timeless nature of these pursuits is depicted by his reference to:
Three Thirteen Thirty Boys
Three Thirteen Thirty Knives. (23)

Side by side with this, the changes coming over the village are also depicted. Gradually the old landlord Mr Creighton loses his authority and Mr Slime, the politician, gains power. The security enjoyed under Mr Creighton's hegemony is replaced by dispossession and anarchy as numerous new landlords arise in the place of one.

In *Brother Man*, childhood experiences of the protagonist are not portrayed but various instances of his interaction with children are depicted to highlight his status as a messianic hero. Life in the slums was extremely difficult for children with its squalor and poverty and threats by authority. In the first chapter, Roger Mais portrays Corporal Jennings stopping a small boy Joe to find out if he was trafficking in drugs. The boy's reaction ranges from cunning to innocence and ends in real terror. Having ascertained that the parcel that the boy carried had no drugs in it, the policeman started pumping him for information. When information was not forthcoming, he terrorized the boy by telling
him that it was against the law to carry a slingshot. He then made a deal with the boy telling him that in return for letting him go this time, Joe should pass all the information about dope-smugglers back to him.

Mais presents Brother Man as a person of a kind and charitable disposition. One day a nightingale hit the glass pane of his window and died in spite of Brother Man's attempt to save it. He was wondering what to do with it when Joe came there. Seeing the dead bird, the boy wanted to take it home and eat it. Mais here focusses on both the extreme poverty of the boy with his torn shirt and wasted belly and the love and kindness of Brother Man who sees God's hand in the fall of a bird. He also gives him sixpence out of his own meagre store.

In another incident which involves a child, the protagonist's kindness to animals is focussed upon. Brother Man met a small boy carrying a crab which he had "handcuffed" by making it cling to its own claws. Brother Man asked the boy if he would sell the crab to him saying that he would pay sixpence for it. The boy was reluctant to accept it as the crab was a very small
one but Brother Man insisted that he wanted only that particular crab. When the boy agreed, the crab was bought and set free. This led to a discussion between the boy and Brother Man about mercy to all God's creatures. Though the boy could not understand everything that Brother Man told him, the experience opened his eyes to a certain aspect of religion. These incidents highlight Brother Man's significance as a beacon of light in the dark squalor of the slums. They also echo Christ's attitude to children described in the New Testament.

Struggle for Existence: All the three novelists are concerned with social problems and struggle for existence is a motif that is viewed from a communal angle in all three works. In *Banana Bottom* the protagonist Bita Plant is presented as an individual who is fortunate in attaining advantages that are beyond the reach of the peasant community. In *The Castle of My Skin* presents G's difficult circumstances but thanks to G's mother's hard work, G manages a high school education that is denied to his boyhood friends. *Brother Man* presents a protagonist who is a cobbler but
he attains the status of a spiritual healer. He plays a pivotal role in helping the slum dwellers face their difficulties.

In both Banana Bottom and In the Castle of My Skin the struggles of the peasant community in the face of natural calamities are explored. The day to day struggle of slum dwellers that are portrayed by Mais present an even more difficult existence.

The village of Banana Bottom had all the disadvantages of a colonial set up, like other places in Jamaica. The people were hardy peasants with little opportunity for education or betterment as institutions of higher education were too few and extremely expensive. Jaban Plant, Bita's grandfather had been closely associated with Angus Craig, the founder of Jubilee Mission and Malcolm Craig's father. Their friendship had started at the time of the Coffee Pool Scandal. In an effort to help the peasants get the maximum price for their coffee, Angus Craig started a coffee pool. His intention was to collect all the produce during the flush season when the price was slow and to sell it later when the price went up. But the
Free Church Coffee Pool turned a disaster because the price of coffee went down on account of the spread of Brazilian Coffee in the world market. The ignorant peasants started murmuring against Angus Craig and many of them left his church to attend that of his rival called the Ark. Only Jaban Plant and his family continued to attend his service. Angus Craig mortgaged his property to pay back to the peasants the money they had lost by joining the Coffee Pool. But he was thankful to Jaban Plant who alone believed in him when everyone else looked on him with suspicion. When Bita's rape occurred, Malcolm Craig, thought that by adopting Bita he would be repaying an old debt. Things had changed by then with Malcolm marrying a rich woman of good social standing. Jordan Plant too had prospered as a farmer through hard work. It was now left to Malcolm Craig to find a successor as his own son was mentally retarded. He selected the son of Deacon Day to succeed him at the mission and also to fulfil his father's dream of a coloured minister leading his flock. When Bita came back to the island after her education, she was expected to marry Herald Newton Day and become the mainstay of Jubilee Mission as the new minister's wife.
Bita found it difficult to fit into the pattern set for her by her benefactors. She was expected to suppress her natural urges and always think of the Mission as the most important thing. As the days passed by, Bita's actions like talking to Hopping Dick or attending a tea meeting became subjects of controversy. Mrs Craig reiterated that she expected Bita to behave with decorum. When her aunt fell ill, Bita actually felt relieved because it would give her a reason to leave Jubilee and go to her native village of Banana Bottom.

At Banana Bottom, Bita made the acquaintance of Squire Gensir whose influence made her capable of realizing her real self. Squire Gensir was an Englishman who had come to the island to live among the peasants collecting folk-tales and songs. Bita enjoyed her discussions with him just as much as she enjoyed playing on his piano. In one such discussion about freedom, Squire Gensir expressed his admiration for the freedom that the peasants enjoyed. Bita could not agree with him, she felt that the hard lives limited their areas of experience. But Squire Gensir was talking about the unconscious freedom of the peasants which
allowed them to follow their natural instincts without repression. This was denied to the educated. According to Squire Gensir, the system of education produced fixed types and had no room for people who could think and act independently.

The life of the peasants was hardly comfortable as they had to deal with the vagaries of the weather trying to eke out a living from the land. Many of the young men wished to escape this by writing the civil service examination and getting into government service. But the policies of the government favoured the 'coloured' class and made it difficult for the peasant class to achieve a higher status.

McKay describes the yam planting in Banana Bottom in picturesque detail to highlight a group activity rooted in the soil. The spirit of cooperation and camaraderie infects Bita and helps her achieve a true recognition of her self: "Digging yambanks and sweating in the sun. The holes were dug wide enough to take three yamheads in a row, with space enough for the young yams to bulge and swell and grow down into the soil. From two to three feet deep. And then the earth
was broken finely and heaped into a mound. Twenty-five of these for one man were not a bad showing for a day's work" (112). The yam planting also gave her an opportunity of getting to know Jubban, her father's drayman. Though she had seen him earlier, she noticed him only then. Having started as a worker, Jubban had risen to a position of confidence through honesty and hard work. Other incidents that describe the peasants' struggles include the drought and the floods that racked the countryside. In the floods, Bita lost both her father and Malcolm Craig who were drowned. After her father's death, she married Jubban surprising the villagers by her choice. They criticized her for her foolishness as the Craigs had left their property to the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals after Bita's rebellious exit from Jubilee Mission. But Bita inherited Squire Gensir's house and land after his death in England. He had always felt that he had influenced her decision of asserting her independence. Unlike others who had felt alienated from their own kind on account of their education, Bita had settled down in her native peasant milieu. McKay stresses this point by contrasting her with others who in trying to attain respectability negate their own selves:
The great founder of Jubilee had declared that the idea of his work was to help make men free and materially independent, but not in the image of their white masters. But as humanity is prone to be inspired by the imitative rather than the initiative qualities of life, there was a tendency in many who had been freed from the slavery toil and soil to efface the traces of their origin and past servitude from a sense of shame and to approximate, not to the rugged principles of the pioneers of their struggle but rather to the antedated patterns of the vanquished class. (42)

In *Brother Man*, the author's primary concern is sociological. The "Chorus of People in the lane" with which the novel starts, presents the utter poverty of the slums where the people struggle for basic necessities. The condition of the slum dwellers is worse than that of the peasants, for in the city cunning people exploit the poor by leading them into vice. Different forms of corruption ranging from dope smuggling and prostitution to passing counterfeit coins and indulging in obeah are explored in the novel, to show how poverty drives people to commit offence against the law. Authority, in the form of policemen, is dreaded and resented by the slum dwellers. The protagonist achieves messianic status in the midst of such deprivation by helping the people to resist temptation by his example of kindness and uprightness.
Roger Mais starts his tale with the gossip of people in the lane. The description is poetic and musical carrying the nuances of conventional idiom and the rhythm of speech: "The tongues in the lane clack, clack almost continuously going up and down the full scale of human emotions, human folly, ignorance, suffering, viciousness, magnanimity, weakness, greatness littleness, insufficiency, frailty, strength" (1947, 7). The tongues wag about Cordelia, Papacita, Bra'Ambo, Bra'Man and so on and they do not cease even when night falls. It is their own tale that they relate overlaying it with slander, as incidents of beating, obeah and dope-smuggling are related. As the author says, they renew their own wounds which the world has inflicted upon them.

Among the people in the lane, the first to be introduced is the Girlie - Papacita couple. Of the two, Girlie works while Papacita lives the life of a gay dog unwilling to settle down to regular work. In the first scene, Girlie expresses annoyance because Papacita had been absconding the previous night. Papacita had several excuses to offer none of which satisfied Girlie.
as she had heard them all before. Her disbelief angered Papacita and he threatened to walk out on her but she was not afraid as it was she who was supporting him. In spite of her acid tongue, Girlie had a strong passion for Papacita, and it was this that kept them going. Papacita disliked hard work and his search for an easy job made him take up passing counterfeit coins. Though he got plenty of cash, the risk involved was great. Being a man with a flirtatious temperament, he started flirting with other girls, especially with Minette, the girl whom Brother Man had rescued from prostitution. Feeling jealous of Brother Man, he decided to frame him with counterfeit coins. After Brother Man's arrest, he bailed him out thinking that Minette's gratitude could be taken advantage of. In the meanwhile, his relationship with Girlie broke up after a bitter quarrel as Girlie had come to know of his overtures to Minette. The police however were on the trail of the counterfeit coins. Papacita decided to leave town to escape them. Before he could do that, Girlie came to see him eaten up with hatred and jealousy. Asking her to leave him alone, he went to wash his face at the wash basin. Just then, Girlie crept behind him and killed him with a
clasp knife. She was tired of his infidelities. The Girlie-Papacita story interacts with Brother Man's struggles to attain self-hood and also portrays how easily poverty leads people to crime.

Two other characters whose struggles are portrayed in detail are the sisters, Cordelia and Jesmina. Cordelia's husband Jonas had been arrested for peddling ganja leaving her to fend for herself and her little son. When Cordelia fell ill she became absolutely incapable of clear thinking. In desperation she clung to her sister Jesmina making her promise not to leave her. Jesmina had a boyfriend named Shine but Cordelia did not want her sister to have anything to do with men. Her own experience with Jonas had brought her shame and misery and she thought that all men were interested in exploiting women. Cordelia made Jesmina promise to look after her and her son till Jonas returned from gaol. In the days that followed Brother Man came to the aid of the sisters on more than one occasion. Thanks to his healing touch, Cordelia soon became well but when her son Tad fell ill Brother Man could not cure him as easily. Though Cordelia and he
prayed together by the boy's bedside, the fever became worse. Brother Man then gave Cordelia money to take the child to a doctor. The doctor's medicines did not cure the child and Cordelia was so worried that she lost her reason. She started to resent Brother Man feeling that the healer had failed her. She decided to go to his rival, Brother Ambo the obeahman. Brother Ambo fanned the flames of superstition in Cordelia's mind and set her against Brother Man. He also extracted money from her for invoking his powers. Jesmina was surprised to see the change in her sister. When she saw Cordelia meeting Papacita in secret, she became very uneasy: "Then there was the matter of her stealthy meetings with Papacita... They must be transacting some business, otherwise what interest would Papacita have in Cordelia? Her unreasoning intuitive fears went grimacing across the blurred screen of her mind. She thought of herself and Shine, and of the hopelessness of the situation. She could not leave Cordelia in her trouble, she would have to stick to her, even though Cordelia made it more and more difficult to do so. She wanted to be loyal to her sister for whom she had only respect and affection all her life, as far back as she could remember.
Cordelia was many years the elder, she had been almost like a mother to her" (123-123). A dressmaker by profession, Jesmina had no intention of deserting her sister but she realized that her sister was going out of her mind. Cordelia even locked her up in her own room. Jesmina managed to escape and went to Brother Man who soothed her in her stricken fearful state and promised to talk to Cordelia. But Brother Man's talk did not have the desired result. Though Cordelia agreed with him in his presence her attitude changed completely after he left. Cordelia suspected Brother Man of ulterior motives and refused to trust him.

In the meanwhile Jesmina's fears about Cordelia intensified when she discovered counterfeit coins in her sister's possession. She was afraid of a police raid. At the same time she was reluctant about confiding in anyone as it involved her sister. In the end, she decided to remove the coins when Cordelia was away. Unfortunately, she was unable to locate the coins and was caught red-handed by Cordelia who accused her of being a sneak. Later Brother Man was arrested for being in possession of counterfeit coins. Jesmina now
realized that her sister had framed Brother Man. This was the business that she was transacting with Papacita. Refusing to stand by as an onlooker, Jesmina confronted Cordelia and accused her calling her Judas. She then left the house to comfort Minette. The accusation had a terrible impact on Cordelia. She had a hallucination that her son was a monster. After killing the child, Cordelia committed suicide by hanging herself. It was as if she had tried everything for her son and failed.

After Cordelia's death, Jesmina started staying with Minette and Brother Man. Earlier she had related the story of the counterfeit coins to the two of them. Though she was unhappy about her sister, she started helping Minette. When Brother Man was beaten up by a crowd, she and Minette rescued him.

In the case of, Brother Man the struggles were more of a spiritual kind. A cobbler by profession, he always kept a Bible on the stool beside him. Though he worked hard, he always gave away the money he earned to the poor and the needy. The people thought him mad; "Sometimes when they heard other people abusing and traducing Brother Man, they stood up in his defence, the
people whom he had helped in times of trouble and sickness, but at other times they thought better of it, because they feared what their neighbours might have to say about them behind their backs, lacking the courage of their convictions. Sometimes they forgot, some of these people, that he had helped and comforted them, and healed their wounds. Sometimes they secretly despised him that he cared so little for himself and so much for others, that he would give what little he had to succour another whose need he thought greater than his" (23). Brother Man had saved Minette from prostitution. The girl had come to the city from the country seeking a job and had soon gotten enmeshed in its filth. She had accosted Brother Man as a potential customer but he had seen her hunger beyond the lure of the flesh. He offered her food and shelter telling her to describe herself as his sister's child from the country. Thus he had given her self-respect and a purpose for living. All around them people were living in poverty and deprivation. There was a lady called Hortense who had got herself pregnant by a sailor. She had no other means of supporting herself other than prostitution. Out of his meagre resources Brother Man tried to help
one and all, some with money and food, some with his healing touch, yet others with words of comfort. Some of them remembered him with gratitude. After he achieved fame as a healer he had quite a large following. But his popularity did not last. He had his enemies. One of these was Brother Ambo, who worked obeah. On one occasion he came to see Brother Man asking him to keep a few things for him saying that the police were after him. Though kind-hearted by nature, Brother Man refused him firmly as he didn't want to have anything to do with obeah. Papacita was another of his enemies. With Cordelia's help he framed him and made the police arrest him for keeping counterfeit coins in his possession. When Papacita later bailed him out, Brother Man thanked him smiling and Papacita thought that he had fooled Brother Man.

The people started suspecting Rastafarians after a bearded man attacked a couple killing the boy and injuring the girl. The counterfeit coin charge made Brother Man suspect in the eyes of the people. Brother Man was in the habit of going for walks in the night. Earlier, the people used to greet him and talk to him
but their attitude had changed. Minette advised Brother Man to stop going out in the night as she thought it dangerous but he refused to listen. On one occasion the people started jeering at him and abusing him. Brother Man tried to talk to them spreading his message of peace and love but they retaliated with anger. Soon a frenzied crowd collected around him; they started throwing bricks and stones at him accusing Rastafarians of murder. A woman in the crowd tried to come to his aid but she was pushed into the gutter. After the crowd's anger abated, Minette and Jesmina went to get him along with Nathaniel the man whom he had helped in the past. Brother Man was unconscious and bleeding. They put him into Nathaniel's handcart and took him home. The two girls washed his wounds and nursed him; on the third day, he opened his eyes. After this incident the neighbours came to see him. They were thoroughly ashamed of themselves. The incident did not dampen Brother Man, it only made him more determined to continue his work. Minette was also willing to help him in his struggle to attain spiritual fulfilment. "And she went before him, carrying herself proudly, shielding the little flame of the candle with her hand" (191).
In Lamming's novel the struggle for existence becomes inextricably linked up with the criticism of the colonial set up. Sandra Pouchet Paquet opines that the narrative reproduces the historical process whereby a feudal mercantilist economy gave way to a capitalistic economy. In the book *The Novels of George Lamming* she illustrates: "*In the Castle of My Skin* focusses on Creighton's village, a representative West Indian community on the island of Barbados. Lamming depicts the feudal pattern of life in the village and the changes that occur under pressure from a growing labour movement. He makes the structure and development of life in Creighton's village a metaphor for the evolution of colonial society in the West Indies. The corrosive effects of colonial rule are discernible everywhere in the everyday life of this representative community. Lamming is concerned especially with the themes of economic and cultural dependence, the relationship of the child to his environment, and the stress of social and political change" (1982,13). The novel starts by describing the colonial hierarchy of the village with Creighton, the white landlord on top. His house set on the hill has the aura of a castle surrounded by a
stonewall, topped by broken glass bottles. Beneath him were the overseers appointed by him to patrol the land. These men were hated by the villagers though they had respect for the landlord. Their contemptuous attitude to the villagers mingled with their positions of authority made them the objects of hatred. They were always fierce and aggressive to their own race and this feeling was carried on even after they left the land and got into the professional class becoming doctors, lawyers and civil servants. The villagers in turn had no respect for the overseers. The mutual antipathy is thus portrayed:

The overseers carried bunches of keys strung on wire which they chimed continually, partly to warn the villagers of their approach and partly to satisfy themselves with the feel of authority. This seemed necessary since the average villager showed little respect for the overseer unless threatened or actually bullied. Many a day poverty adventure or the threat of boredom would drive them into the woods where the landlord's hens lay and the rabbits nibbled the green weed. They would collect the eggs and set snares for the birds and animals. The landlord made perennial complaint and the overseers were given a full-time job. Occasionally the landlord would accuse the overseers of conniving, of slackening on the job, and the overseers who never risked defending themselves gave vent to their feelings on the villagers who they thought were envious and jealous and mean. Low down Nigger
people was a special phrase the overseers had coined. The villagers were low down Nigger people since they could not bear to see one of their kind get along without feeling envy and hate. (18)

The villagers had no direct contact with the landlord. Once a quarter or after some calamity like the flood, the landlord would come to inspect the damage. The village people would scurry here and there, especially those who were dirty or unkempt and the landlord would look on with an air of patronage. After he left, the children would play games imitating the landlord and his family for, his world was one of make-believe for them. On one occasion Miss Foster went to call on the landlord because her family had suffered the most in the flood. The overseer tried his best to prevent her but the landlord was most gracious and polite. He gave her a cup of tea and listened sympathetically to her woes. When she had finished, he gave her half a crown which made her feel honoured and elated. Such was the subservient attitude of the villagers. Lamming also describes an incident where three boys spy on a party being held at the landlord's place. To the boys, the landlord represented "the
great" other whom they could not understand. The whole thing had a fairy tale appearance to them. Unfortunately however a nest of ants that they disturbed led to their discovery. They had to run for their lives with the overseer in pursuit. Ultimately they managed to escape by taking refuge in a Revivalist meeting. The incident took on another colour when it was related by the landlord to an old woman of the village. He related how hooligans broke into his party trying to molest his daughter shocking the old woman by the extent of disrespect. According to Gloria Lyn, "Lamming is presenting the party as a social ritual, a symbolic act of social cohesion and by connecting the men of the "HMS Goliath" with the landlord and his family in terms of race, class and colour, one sees the further implications when the same ship, significantly named Goliath, arrives in the harbour during the riots and fires some shells, which angers the rioteers because of its interference. The Biblical reference to the conflict between David and Goliath is only too obvious. This may serve as an example of the way in which mythology may be used for the purpose of economy in narrative, among its other uses. The explicit connexion
between Goliath and landlord allows for an identification of the two as symbolic representatives of the imperial power" (Critical Issues in West Indian Literature, 1984, 121-122).

The feudal set up offered protection and security to the subservient but the stable nature did not last. The first change was brought about by Mr Slime's Friendly Society and Penny Savings Bank. After resigning the job of teacher on account of a scandalous photograph, Mr Slime had started the Society and Bank. This social change is recorded through the conversation of an old man and an old woman who are called Pa and Ma and they act as chorus similar to Mais's technique of the "Chorus of the people in the Lane." Speaking about the changes, the old man depicts the feelings of the village:

"Ever since we get the news 'bout the schoolmaster Mr Slime, I feel a sort o' change happen, an' though I ain't got the words to repeat what's in my mind I feel it all the same. They says he was the best teacher in the whole school from top to bottom, an' my heart hurt me to think what might happen to the children. It ain't everyone as got the gift to give a little learnin' and they says all of them that he had it. Now look what he go an'
do, he open a Friendly Society an' a Penny Bank, an' in the twinklin of an eye, Ma, before you says Jack Robinson, he has them all two both flyin. A year before we never hear 'bout such things, an' now there ain't a single soul in all Creighton's village who ain't in Society an' Penny Bank all two at the same time. Everybody puttin' they pennies one by one week after week an' only God knows what sort o' thing'll lead to". (69)

This marks the first appearance of capitalism in the old feudal world. The Friendly Society encouraged a new attitude to wealth and to the land. Neil Ten Kortenaar elucidates this aspect in his article "George Lamming's In the Castle of My Skin: Finding Promise in the Land," published in Ariel, "The empowerment brought by new conceptions of wealth is a double edged sword, however. Some are given power, some find themselves in the power of others. Capitalism brings with it a new attitude to the land. The land is no longer where one lives and what one works. In the feudal system, the land belonged to the owner, but it was worked by villagers and it was inconceivable that Mr Creighton could ever take the land from them. Under the new dispensation, land is a commodity to be bought and sold. Mr Creighton sells to Mr Slime with the result that the shoemaker and Mr Foster are dispossessed and Pa is sent to the almshouse" (1991, 47-48)
These events do not occur all of a sudden. By the time the change occurs the protagonist has grown into an adult. In the meanwhile the struggles of the villagers continued in search of work and wages. Mr Slime had also turned politician and had become the undisputed leader of the ignorant villagers. When the dock workers went on strike they did not know much about the reasons but they trusted Slime's sagacity. The landlord was a partner in the shipping firm and the villagers were afraid of what would happen. So a group consisting of Bob's father, Mr Foster, the overseer's brother and the shoemaker waited anxiously but Mr Slime told them to return to work at mid-day saying that a revision of wages had been promised by the shipping company.

The next significant event that happened was the outbreak of riots. The riots had broken out in the city but the villagers did not know who was fighting whom. Soon the violence spread to the village. The boys who had gone to town were terrified by the violence and ran back to the village with the police in pursuit. The riots saw a great change in the status of the
landlord. He was reduced to a frightened creature with all the uncertainty of the hunted. His greatness had vanished as he walked up the road in soiled clothes. The mob was ready to attack him with sticks and stones but he was saved by the arrival of Mr Slime who thanked them for not attacking Mr Creighton.

As the years passed by, the protagonist managed to pass the public examination and get into high school. None of his friends had made the grade. He himself had managed to do that because of the private lessons he had been made to take by his ambitious mother who struggled hard to provide her son with decent education. G's friends, Trumper, Bob and Boy Blue remained in the village and G felt separated from them. His mother always reminded him of his responsibilities. The end of the novel sees G on the eve of his departure for Trinidad bidding good bye to Pa and talking to Trumper who was annoyed at what had happened to the villagers. He felt that they should have refused to buy the land. His years abroad had taught him many things about the world and had matured him but G was going out in the world for the first time.
Lamming links up the struggle of the village with G's struggles in growing to maturity. The change in social set-up is gradual and coincides with G's growing awareness. As such it has more affinity to Bita's struggles than those of Brother Man. Another significant feature that emerges from the comparison is that the clash/interaction between races is minimal in Brother Man. Both Banana Bottom and In the Castle of My Skin portray the struggle in terms of race as well as in terms of social status. Roger Mais's novel focusses on the social and economic aspects but the protagonist's detractors and defenders are members of his own race. The Rastafarian cult is based on the racial consciousness of the black people but the Rasta hero of the novel in betrayed and abused by his own people rather than by those in authority. But his sufferings help to augment his status as a messianic hero.

Search for Roots: The search for roots is a motif that all the three novelists make use of to unravel the emerging identities of their protagonists. Claude McKay exposes the past in terms of the racial-colonial set up to focus on the search for identity. In the case of
Roger Mais, the motif is centred around the protagonist in order to focus on his emerging identity as a messiah. In Lamming's novel G's growing awareness of his own place in the scheme of things is augmented by exploring the history of the island in terms of slavery and colonialism.

The first chapter of *Banana Bottom* describes the history of the place and the personal history of the protagonist who had been raped by a member of the Adair clan and this information leads to a description of the place's past. Crazy Bow was a descendant of the Scotsman who had bought the vast estate of Banana Bottom in the eighteen twenties. Unlike other white planters, he liberated his slaves and married one of them. He also sold his land in little plots to those who were willing to buy them. His Negress bore him plenty of children of different shades. Crazy Bow who belonged to the third generation was of a light brown complexion and was reputed to be very clever. So people thought that he would achieve success as success on the island was largely dependent on colour:
For the island colony was divided into three main groups in a political and social way. The descendants of the slaves were about three fourths of the population and classified as black or dark brown. The descendants of Europeans and slaves were about one fifth of the population and classified as coloured or light brown. The rest were a five thousand East Indians and Chinese and perhaps the same number of pure European descent.

The demarcations were not as real as they seemed. East Indian and Chinese blood were mingled in the dark brown group and obviously there were thousands who were drawn from European stock. But a strong transfusion of black African blood had determined their pigmentation and group. In the coloured group were many of a light complexion distinguished by Sudanese features and hair, while others of original coloured stock had approximated to and turned white.

But the social life of the colony was finely balanced by the divisions. The coloured group stood between the mass and the wealthy and governing classes and all the white collar jobs of business and government were reserved for it. (4-5)

Crazy Bow, however, did not complete high school. His intuitive understanding of music made the villagers excuse his eccentricities. Moreover, his identity as a member of the Adair clan also worked in his favour. The rape changed everything. Bow was sent to the madhouse and Bita left Banana Bottom for Jubilee as a protege of the Craigs. At fifteen, Bita gained the
unique privilege of going abroad for studies. Mrs Priscilla Craig wanted to redeem her from her past by a long period of separation without any contact with her native place. During the seven years of her education abroad, Bita did not visit the island even once returning only after it was completed. Mrs Craig wanted her to be English in everything except the colour of her skin. But Bita was basically unchanged despite the veneer of sophistication that she had acquired. This created a clash between her and Mrs Craig.

Bita's education had made her aware of new trends by liberating her mind. Mrs Craig who was very tribal underneath had selected an institution famous for sound educational principles. Little did she realize that things had changed since her own days in school. The Victorian attitude had been replaced by Socialist and Feminist schools of thought. As for Bita's classmates in England they had little knowledge of the Caribbean. They were thinking of Negroes in terms of cannibalism and grass skirts; even the term 'West Indies' was understood as India rather than the Caribbean.
McKay offers Squire Gensir as a contrast to the Craigs. Though he did not believe in God, he was more enlightened and liberal than the Craigs. It was he who suggested that Bita should attend a tea meeting when Bita's cousin Bab introduced her to him on her first visit to Banana Bottom after her return. The Squire's impression of Bita is thus portrayed. "Squire Gensir had taken a quick mental inventory of Bita. When Bab told him about his cousin he had assumed that he was going to meet a very affected made-to-order young lady indeed. And he had asked her to go to the meeting out of pure mischief. Her ready decision to go and her manners had been a delightful surprise. He had thought that with her background and her training, she would probably be an impossible if not an intolerable person with mannerisms that would be irritating to him. If there was one thing he detested it was that social quality that has been ridden so hard by moderns and Bohemians: middle-class gentility" (81). Soon Bita and the squire developed a friendship. In one of their discussions Bita expressed hatred for obeah. The squire had another attitude to it. He described it as part of Bita's folklore like the Anancy tales and the digging
jammis. He told her, "And your folklore is the spiritual link between you and your ancestral origin. You ought to learn to appreciate it as I do mine. My mind is richer because I know your folklore. I am sure you believe the fables of La Fontaine and Aesop fine and literary and Anancy stories common and vulgar. Yet many of the Anancy stories are superior. It's because of misdirected education. But Mrs Craig could never see that" (125).

Mrs Craig had only contempt for the culture of the peasants. That was why she was horrified to learn that Bita had attended a tea meeting. But on hearing that she was accompanied by Squire Gensir, she was mollified, because he had a reputation that was impeccable. On another occasion, we see Mrs Craig contemplating the idols that a missionary had brought back from Sudan. She felt that they had no artistry at all, so far removed were they from the Greek and Roman traditions. Yet she was fascinated by them. She felt that they were potent but decadent and immoral:

There she stood in contemplation, convinced that she understood more about them than the missionary exhibitors. There was much more
behind their exhibition than they thought. The objects were so positively real. Surely they possessed some elemental force representing more than mere idol making. She was troubled to think that they might have their origin in some genuine belief, troubled to think that such a belief might have prompted magic-workers to celebrate and preserve its potency. That the night-wrapped creatures of Afria might also have had there in the dim jungles their own vision of life. (198)

The impact of the images was so great that Mrs Craig had a hideous dream where the monsters started dancing all around her. Her own son Patou was among the masks grinning and dancing around her. Incidentally, the natives had called her son Patou or screech owl because of the noises he made in his semi- idiotic state. When her experiment with Bita failed it was Mrs Craig rather than Malcolm Craig who felt crestfallen. Unlike her husband, the tropical island was a strange place to her and she could not understand Bita's motivation. She could not fathom why Bita should choose to repudiate the values of white society that her education had given her. Malcolm Craig was willing to accept the fact that Bita would be happier in her own sphere.

The attitude of a large segment of the white population is shown through Busha Glengley. He felt that Bita, a Negro girl, had been educated above her
station. Squire Gensir, to whom he expressed the view, was annoyed to hear this. The squire believed that real education was an intrinsic thing and not the monopoly of any class. It was useless to express this view to Busha Glengley whose only interest in Negro girls was physical, for he had coloured children by the score. One of them called Arthur actually tried to assault Bita. Being of a healthy pink colour, he had the false notion that black girls would welcome his attentions. He first tried to use charm but when it failed he started to use force. Fortunately for Bita, Jubban arrived in the nick of the moment and saved her. But his phrase, "only a Nigger girl" rankled within her. It made her muse upon the racial problem:

She thought how the finest qualities of mind or brain or heart were the attributes of only the rarest spirits, who may spring like flowers in the commonest as much as the most exclusive places, in the proud domain as well as the peasant's lot and even in hothouses. How then could any class or people or nation or race claim a monopoly of a thing so precious and so erratic in its manifestations? Oh, she marvelled at the imbecilities of a sepulchre white world that has used every barrier imaginable to dam the universal flow of human feelings by suppressing and denying to another branch of humanity the highest gifts of nature, simply because its epidermis was coloured black. (266)
Musing thus, Bita came to the conclusion that she was proud of her Negro identity. "And no sneer, no sarcasm, no banal ridicule of a ridiculous world could destroy her confidence and pride in herself and make her ashamed of that fine body that was the temple of her high spirit. For she knew that she was a worthy human being. She knew that she was beautiful" (266).

Unfortunately however, the coloured people also shared the attitude of the white people. Herald Newton Day, Bita's betrothed, had the same prejudices. He associated purity with a white woman and was inspired because Bita had been trained like one. His ideal was Mrs Craig, who possessed a fine mind and lofty ideals. Bita however did not share his view. She preferred to be herself despite her training and was bold enough to tell him so in the initial stages of courtship. On another occasion Herald expressed great tolerance for the lack of belief of Squire Gensir saying that it was craziness that resulted from too much erudition. In his opinion, it affected the white people only, an attitude that irritated Bita. At their meeting, Herald Newton did not hit it off with Squire Gensir for, Squire Gensir
did not believe in progress. This attitude made him retort. "Really sir! But life without progress is stagnation. Look at us Negroes for example. The savage brutish state we were in both in Africa and in America before civilization aroused us. We owe all we are today to progress" (71). Here we find him completely enslaved by the attitudes of the white colonial masters. Bita, in contrast, benefitted by the influence of Squire Gensir whose outlook on life was completely different from the lives and attitudes of the majority of the white people. It was he who made her examine her own tradition and ancestry with pride, whereas people like Mrs Craig were trying to make her forget it and accept an alien culture as her own.

In Lamming's novel, the search for roots is implicit in G's growing awareness of himself. Other people's experiences and attitudes are also introduced to complete the picture. G's life starts with a total absence of relatives with the exception of his mother. This symbolizes the absence of tradition. To quote Gloria Lyn, "The novel opens as in some romance structures, with the descent theme: the description of
the strict social hierarchy with the landlord at the top reflects the sharp descent in status of the descendants of slaves. Enforced departure from Africa means the struggle to survive, a separation from families, a sense of individual loss and confusion, a break in the continuity of identity, all of which are reflected in the conversation between G and his mother about the absence of his father and all his other relatives. It is clear that Lamming is using the amnesia motif in getting his story started" (114).

In Creighton village, the activities of the villagers are attuned to those of the landlord. When the light inside the landlord's house is put out at night, the villagers would do likewise and go to sleep. Their thoughts and habits were influenced in the same way.

The Empire Day celebrations is used by Lamming to satirize the education offered by the colonial masters. The boys were taught about William the Conqueror but not about slavery. When the older people in the village described Queen Victoria as the queen who had set them free, the boys were puzzled. Slavery
appeared unreal to them: "The idea of ownership. One man owned another they laughed quietly. Imagine any man in any part of the world owning a man or a woman from Barbados. They would forget all about it since it happened too long ago. Moreover, they weren't told anything about that. 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" (50). When the pennies are distributed to them, they contemplate the king's face depicted on them and imagine bizarre things about him.

Among the villagers there was a shoemaker who liked to read books on History. He presented his own concept of imperialism to his friends by describing the Greek empire as owned by Alexander the Great. But even he was critical of the education granted to Barbados that never mentioned Negro leaders like Marcus Garvey. Marcus Garvey had become unpopular because he referred to Negro brotherhood based upon African ancestry. A highschool teacher had walked out of the meeting where
Garvey was speaking because he did not like to be identified with black Africa. This was the prejudice of the coloured folks. In the episode by the sea, we see the boys discussing the colour prejudice:

We had taken in like our daily bread a kind of infectious amusement about the colour, black. There was no extreme comparison. No black boy wanted to be white, but it was also true that no black boy liked the idea of being black. Brown skin was a satisfactory compromise, and brown skin meant a mixture of white and black. The best-looking girls in the village and in the whole island where those whose mothers had consorted with white men. They were brown skin, soft chocolate creamed with long hair that curled and flew in the wind. (119)

Lamming also describes how the word "black" was used in anger to insult the opponent. This did not however mean that all white people earned respect. Apart from gentlemen like Mr Creighton, the other whites who came to the island to work were butts of ridicule. Early in the novel, Miss Foster describes how a boy called Gordon makes a fowlcock dirty a white gentleman's shirt. As the unfortunate gentleman rushed home, the other boys followed him singing a ditty about a fowlcock. In one of the inset tales a white woman is mentioned as coming to the village to propagate the idea
of marriage among the blacks who preferred to live together. Her interference only brought misery and tragedy to Bambi who had married Bots at her suggestion. The people preferred to lead their own lives without being hedged in by the rules of white society:

Miss Foster. My Mother. Bob's mother. It seemed they were three pieces in a pattern which remained constant. The flow of its history was undisturbed by any difference in the pieces nor was its evenness affected by any likeness. There was a difference and there was no difference. Miss Foster had six children, three by a butcher, and two by a baker, and one whose father had never been mentioned. Bob's mother had two, and my mother had one. The difference between six and two and one did not belong to the piece itself... The sun let its light flow down on them as life let itself flow through them. Three. Thirteen. Thirty. Three hundred. (16-17)

According to Gloria Lyn, the colonial experience has analogies to falling asleep and entering the dream world which has images of nightmare (114). Lamming makes use of this on two occasions within the novel. The boy G has dreams where he sees phantoms which laugh at him. This indicates his loss of identity and may be compared to Mrs Craig's nightmare of African masks with her own son Patou among them in Banana Bottom. In Mrs Craig's case the African presence
threatens her identity eventhough she had never given it importance earlier. On another occasion in the novel Lamming uses the dream of the old man as a sort of spiritual revelation that outlines the flow of history. As the old woman testifies, the old man was fluent and coherent in his dream but she could not follow the meaning. The old man becomes the ancestral voice describing the tale of slavery:

And strange was the time that change my neighbour and me, the tribes with gods and the one tribe without. The silver of exchange sailed across the sea and my people scatter like clouds in the sky when the waters come. There was similar buying and selling 'amongst tribe and tribe, but this was the biggest of the bargains for tribes. Each sell his own. A man walked out in the market square and one buyer watch his tooth and another his toe and the parts that was private for the coming of a creature in the intimate night. The silver sail from hand to hand and the purchase was shipped like a box of good fruit. The sale was the best of Africa's produce, and me and my neighbour made the same bargains. I make my peace with the middle passage to settle on that side of the sea the white man call a world that was west of another world. The tribes with gods and the one tribe without we all went the way of the white man's money. (202)

The dream goes on to become a critique of feudalism, colonialism and capitalism. Ironically however, immediately after this sequence, we see the old woman dying leaving the old man all alone in the world.
In G's case, however, his quest for identity goes on beyond the novel. His friend Trumper, who had earlier migrated to the U.S came back to the island on the eve of G's departure for Trinidad. Unlike G Trumper's experience in the outer world had made him realize his identity as a black man. G was bewildered by Trumper's pronouncements.

"Tis a tremendous difference," said Trumper. "One single word make a tremendous difference, that's why you can never be too sure what a word will do. I'm a nigger or a Negro an' all o' us put together is niggers or Negroes. There ain't no "man" an' there ain't no "people." Just nigger an' little as that seem 'tis a tremendous difference. It make a tremendous difference not to the whites but the blacks. 'Tis the blacks who get affected by leavin' out that word "man" or "people." That's how we learn the race. 'Tis what a word can do. No there ain't a black man in all America who won't get up an' say I'm a Negro an' I'm proud of it. We all are proud of it. I'm going to fight for the rights o' the Negroes, and I'll die fighting. That's what any black man in the states will say. He ain't got no time to think 'bout the rights o' Man or People or whatever you choose to call it..."

Trumper also told him that a man who knew his people would never feel alone. In G's case, he was on the threshold of a new life. "When I reach Trinidad where no one knows me I may be able to strike identity
with the other persons. But it was never possible here. 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's 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. Sometimes I think the same thing will be true in Trinidad. The likeness will meet and make merry, but they won't know you. They won't know the you that's hidden somewhere in the castle of your skin" (253).

G's confused state of mind is revealed here and the confusion owes to the absence of knowledge of his true roots. The amnesia of colonialism and its system of education had made him a stranger to himself. In Trumper's case, however, his first hand experience of racial prejudice in the United States had made him identify his own people as opposed to the white "other." In Barbados the majority of people were black or coloured but the educational system was based on the values of white society. As a result, education did not
liberate a person into the realm of free thinking. On the other hand it alienated and isolated him from his own people.

In *Brother Man* the search for roots is centred in the protagonist who is in the process of emerging in the identity of a messiah. John Power had become 'Brother Man' when he joined the Rastafarian group. The movement was based on black pride being linked up with the quest for a black king 'Ras Tafari.' As a Rasta man, the protagonist had to spread the message of 'peace and love.' Side by side with him, another Rastaman is also portrayed who is 'Evil' as opposed to the good of Bra' Man. Though the weed was used by many Rastas, Roger Mais presents his protagonist as opposed to social evils like ganja and obeah. Brother Man is presented as a person doing his very best for his people whereas Brother Ambo practises obeah and extorts money out of them. Yet both the protagonist and his movement are often misunderstood by the very people whom he helps. Brother Man sometimes felt weary:

He felt a sense of physical weariness when he got home. He decided he would go to bed and get some sleep. Some crazy ganja-smoker or
other, trying to get himself a pass'1 of the weed. She would be safe enough with Minette for company. Lord, there was trouble enough in the world. So many people who were led, as though by a ring in the nose, into all the paths of violence. Already too much excitement for one day. Must do something about Miss Ida's Joe, the boy should go to school. Too young to be earning his own money, feeling himself a man, even though it was selling papers. Boys get into no ends of mischief, that way.

He turned over on his other side and tried to will himself to go to sleep.

What a man needed above all was a clear vision. Sometimes what a man wanted to see stood in the way. A man must go down inside himself and search himself earnestly, and after that he should stand and wait. And when the call came he would hear it. What a man needed most was to be quit of himself, and be still, and wait the call. (56-57)

Here we see how his involvement in community life goes parallel to his search for his true self. On another occasion, we find Bra' Man explaining his cult to a little boy. He had bought a live crab from the boy only to let it go explaining how the animal was being hurt. This set them talking and the boy wanted to know why he wore a beard. Brother Man replied that it was the Bible way of John the Baptist and Samson. He then related how the Spirit of the Lord had gone over to Ethiopia when Israel was parted among the nations.
Though the twelve tribes had got scattered, the Queen of Sheba had learnt all the wisdom from Solomon and had taken it back to her land. So it was black men from out of Africa who were the Chosen People of God for they had learnt the way. Here we find Roger Mais making his protagonist explain the tenets of Rastafarianism. In the novel, however, the little boy did not understand everything that was explained to him. After leaving the boy, Brother Man went over to the seaside to watch the waves. He was in search of something:

He closed his eyes, let his thoughts go, his mind a near blank, and felt them wash over him with the rhythm and sound of water.

He saw in a vision a man in shining scales like chain armour stand up out of the water, come striding towards him across the bay.

"What do you want here?" the man said but his voice was gentle, without menace or challenge.

"Nothing........ only looking the way"

"Why come here to look?"

"To be alone, and invite the vision, and listen for the call."

The vision melted before his eyes like mist, but a voice said: "Go, and anoint yourself, and fast for three days!"

And sitting there, a great wave of ineffable peace flowed over him, and he just lay with his eyes closed and fell asleep. (75-76)
The progress to messianic status is slow in the protagonist. His healing powers become manifest at first. People started flocking around him after an incident when he healed a child through prayers. He realized that he was only a channel through which life flowed. Soon his followers increased and many of them touched him with their hands believing that he had miraculous powers. He felt embarrassed but he addressed the people in simple, down-to-earth language showing them the path of righteousness. But when they wanted to become his followers, he told them to fast for three days and come again. He himself went to Warraka Hills to fast for three days and nights. After this, he started writing his testament recording all the facts of his life.

At home, he had a different sort of struggle. His affection for Minette had changed to love but though Minette too was in love with him, Brother Man thought that he should control himself. An incident from his early life had made him wary of physical love. One day he related the whole story to Minette. His real name was John Power and he had been living with a girl called
Velta. The two of them were happy together till his friend Ben became the bone of contention between them. His generosity to Ben was resented by Velta. On one occasion Brother Man bailed Ben out from police custody and took him home. Velta was so annoyed that she created a scene. This affected Ben deeply and he committed suicide. This incident changed the relationship between Brother Man and Velta. His coldness towards her made Velta frustrated, and she boasted that she had other male friends. So Brother Man deserted her. Velta then took revenge on him by planting ganja in his place and informing the police. This led to his arrest and later to imprisonment. Hearing the story Minette declared that she would never betray anyone let alone her benefactor. Ironically however, the very next moment Corporal Jennings arrived there with a search warrant. Thanks to Papacita and Cordelia, Brother Man was arrested though he was innocent. The incident is used by Roger Mais to highlight how the protagonist's experiences in his youth make him more human and understanding. His involvement with Minette becomes a source of strength as the novel proceeds. When Brother Man's popularity suffered on
account of the counterfeit charge and the general animosity towards bearded men, it was Minette who stood by him and helped him.

Man-Woman Relationships: Man-woman relationships are explored in detail in all the three novels. In Brother Man and Banana Bottom the protagonists' relationships with the opposite sex play key roles in determining their identities. In Lamming's novel, the awareness of the protagonist regarding human relationships is that of an adolescent. He surveys the world around him and in the company of his friends draws his own conclusions. Lamming also uses inset tales on the subject of marriage to portray the complexities of the Caribbean milieu where the values of the white colonial society are an interpolation. He comments wryly on people who get entangled emotionally with one another and find themselves unable to be free of the mess. Banana Bottom portrays the hypocrisy of the upper crust of society with humour. Apart from Bita's involvement with several men, other ladies like Belle Black, Yoni Legge and Mrs Priscilla Craig are also portrayed in relation to the opposite sex both for commentary and for contrast.
In *Brother Man* the Papacita-Girlie relationship is offered as a contrast to Brother Man's relationship with Minette. Jesmina's relationship with Shine, and Brother Man's earlier involvement with Velta are touched upon for further contrast. These relationships contribute to the emergence of selfhood in the protagonist as all these characters are associated with him at one point or the other.

In *The Castle of My Skin* projects G as a boy whose only relative is his mother. G's mother cared deeply for him and abstained from promiscuity for his sake. She tried to instil in him good, religious values which played a significant role in determining his identity. Some of her friends, like Miss Foster for example had children by different fathers but G's mother preferred to devote all her time and effort in bringing up the son she had brought into the world.

The old couple Ma and Pa are presented as examples of affection and tenderness. A lifetime of togetherness, even in the midst of poverty and deprivation had made them staunch believers in God and in one another. We see the old woman soothing the old
man after his nightmares. She would hold his hands whenever he was frightened telling him to trust in the Lord. When she died, he was left all alone in the world.

In the village, girls and boys met frequently in the woods close by. An incident is described where a crowd of villagers buying black pudding are surprised by the appearance of a white man who comes to buy the delicacy. The villagers moved back as he arrived smiling and urbane. They did not protest as he made his purchase ahead of the others who had been waiting for a long time. Obviously, the purchase was made for the black girl in his car, his date for the evening. The incident focusses on promiscuity as quite common in the village. On the night of the party at Creighton's house, the boys watched one of the sailors trying to seduce Creighton's daughter. Later on, the story was falsified and the white sailor became a gallant knight who rescued Creighton's daughter from the clutches of black ruffians. The story of Mr Slime's extra-maxital affair is told with wry humour. The head teacher's
discomfiture at the discovery of his wife's infidelity comes immediately after he has beaten up his servant's son for gossiping about him in school.

Two inset tales on the subject of marriage are introduced to show the growing awareness of the boys about man-woman relationships. At the seaside Trumper related the story of Jon, Jen and Susie. Jon had been living with Susie and had fathered two children when he joined a Christian sect called "Free for all Brethren." His decision had been influenced by the preacher Brother Bannister who insisted that his church was the door to salvation. Religion did not quell promiscuity, however; soon Brother Bannister's daughter Jen became pregnant by Jon. This made the preacher angry and he threatened to shoot Jon if he did not marry Jen. When Jon related his story to Susie, she threatened to poison Jon if he did not marry her. So Jon promised to marry her just as he had promised to marry Jen earlier. The same date and time was fixed for both marriages but the churches were different. Each girl was told to be secretive about her plans to prevent the other from knowing. On the appointed day, both the brides waited while Jon hid
himself in a mahogany tree. Soon the secret was out and absolute confusion reigned as Jon watched from the tree. The next day Jon was caught by the villagers in the same state of indecision. Gloria Lyn comments on the situation in the article referred to earlier:

It was not until Jon joined the Free For All Brethren and Brother Bannister asked him to do his duty as "a man and a Christian" (123) that he found himself faced with an impossible task. Not only did he find it impossible to bear his burden as a "man" or as a "Christian" which to him at the moment seemed highly contradictory; but he was threatened by the "Christian" Brother Bannister with a gun if he did not marry Jen and with poison by Susie, if he did. The satirical thrust against this kind of "practice" in Christianity becomes clear when a fight nearly broke out between Brother Bannister and the priest. Lamming underlines the confusion in Jon's mind and his total ignorance of the mystery of marriage ritual when he has him admit he isn't sure what the decision to marry entails. (119)

Here Jon's fear of dying makes him promise marriage to two ladies. At the same time he finds it difficult to make a choice. The boys discuss Jon's split personality. In fact, they think that there are three Jons - one in each church and one in the tree. Trumper felt that it was so, though it made no sense. This story led Boy Blue to relate the next tale about
Bambi, Bots and Bambina. In this case Bambi had been living with two women and had been providing for both of them. All three - Bambi and his women - were satisfied with the arrangement. It was then that a white lady appeared in the village advising marriage as a way of salvation. She had come from England and was bent on redeeming the heathens. She insisted that Bambi should get married to one of the two women - either Bots or Bambina. Without understanding the implications, he tossed a coin and the lot fell to Bots. Bambina had no complaints provided Bambi treated her the same way as before. After a grand wedding where everyone enjoyed themselves, Bambi began to change. He became moody, took to drinking and beating up both his women. Both the ladies realized that something was wrong and started blaming one another. Soon the two ladies became bitter enemies and because of the strain Bambi died of a heart attack in Bambina's house. This led to a quarrel as to who should claim the body, Bots being his legal wife and Bambina being the person with whom he was at the time of his death. The undertakers arranged by the ladies took it upon themselves to worsen the quarrel. Scandalizing events took place with Bots trying to steal Bambi's body
from Bambina's house in the middle of the night and Bambina finding out in the nick of time. In the morning the police arrived and then it was revealed that both the ladies did not have enough money for a funeral. In the end, the poor man was given a pauper's grave. The author stresses the contrast in Bambi's character before and after marriage to focus attention on the effects of a religious ritual imposed from outside by the sinister white lady.

In the light of the two tales, the boys come up with their own thoughts on the subject of marriage. Trumper's version goes thus:

"But I tellin' you I ain't," Trumper said. He spoke with great confidence. "Cause there's so many other things bad about it," he said, "I, you can't sort of get 'bout as you like, an' the woman always seem to think she's got some special kind of claim on you, as if you're a kind of pigeon or fowl. You say you goin' here or there, she want to ask you where, an' sometimes you don't really know wher you goin', you just takin' a walk to stretch yuh legs, but she says you lyin', an' she can't believe a word of what you sayin'. You can't pitch or play bat-an'-ball when you like 'cause there's a chil' to feed, an' this to do an' that to do and when you ask what the bloody hell she was doin' or would 'ave do if you di'nt come along and put yourself in all that, she up an' talk you. You don't trouble trouble trouble
till trouble trouble you. An' you can' tell her to fly in hell 'cause there's the police court ready to land you in gaol an' only God knows what." (134)

Here the attitude of the West Indian man is portrayed on the subject of marriage. In Banana Bottom we get the female perspective through Bita Plant. But even here there is an obvious limitation. Claude McKay makes Bita his mouthpiece, and though his portrayal is sympathetic, an indepth analysis of the feminine psyche is lacking.

Bita's involvement with the opposite sex starts at the tender age of twelve before she is mature enough to understand all the implications. After her rape by Crazy Bow, she gets involved with different men till she finally marries Jubban. These involvements play crucial roles in helping her understand herself and realize her identity. The involvements of other characters like Yoni Legge, Belle Black etc., are also brought in to present the general situation.

Bita was not mature enough when Crazy Bow forced her but the fault was not completely his. Bita was romping with him as he played on his fiddle on the
grass close to the river. It was she who started kissing him. At first he pushed her off but the temptation was too great. He lost control over himself. Her aunt was the first to discover the damage. As Bita's father was away, she called the midwife of Banana Bottom, Sister Phibby Patroll who confirmed the rape. It was she who spread the story in the village and took it to the Craigs in Jubilee. Soon Bita became the subject of gossip. The incident changed her life completely as it did Crazy Bow's.

Bita's next involvement was with her prospective husband, Herald Newton Day whom the Craigs had selected as the successor to Jubilee Mission. Bita was not impressed by Herald Newton but when he proposed to her, she accepted the proposal because the Craigs expected her to. The Craigs had made her what she was and she had to please them. Anyway she would have to marry, then why not marry someone the Craigs would approve of? Thus the decision was made for convenience rather than for love and the days that followed found Bita devising ways and means to escape the company of her fiancee who was extremely pompous and boring. She
found him physically and mentally unattractive. Even the local lad, Hopping Dick, was better than he! So she was thankful when she had to return to Banana Bottom on account of her aunt's illness. At Banana Bottom, Bita mentioned her coming marriage to Squire Gensir saying that it was an arranged one. Surprisingly he came out with the following statement: "Lots of marriages are arranged and turn out all right. Perhaps better than the falling-in-love ones. Nearly all marriages are arranged among Eastern peoples. That is for the greater majority of mankind" (126). While leaving Squire Gensir's house, she was seen by Busha Glengley, a white man who looked at her in a purely animal way. Squire Gensir was repelled by his attitudes.

In Banana Bottom, Bita had an experience with a disreputable young man called Tack Tally who spied on her while she was bathing in a pool and hid her clothes. Bita was annoyed and shouted threateningly at him. He ran away but a few days later she got a letter from him suggesting that they be friends. Bita found the letter extremely funny and presumptuous and showed it to Yoni Legge, the seamstress of Banana Bottom. Yoni was
infatuated with Tack Tally and Bita thought that this letter would show him up for what he was. Yoni, however, became jealous of Bita and went to consult Wumba, the obeahman, to devise ways and means to make Tack Tally hers. Unfortunately for Yoni, she was caught red-handed by the minister while enjoying herself with Tack Tally. This led to her dismissal from service. Yoni's stepfather in anger turned her out of his house and went to shout at Tack Tally. When the old man started abusing him, Tack Tally collared him but the old man collapsed in his hands and died. In fright Tack Tally ran away to Wumba, the obeahman to whom he had paid a good sum of money to be protected from evil. When he reached there, Wumba was away. In sheer desperation Tack Tally hanged himself. When Wumba returned, the sight of the half-eaten corpse terrified him. He ran through the village shouting about Jesus's judgement making the people think that he had gone mad. Later on they discovered the corpse through the gathering and flapping of buzzards over the trees.

In the meanwhile Bita's aunt had recovered from her illness. During the Harvest Festival, Herald Newton arrived and Bita had to devise clever ways of evading
him. Belle Black was of great help to Bita in this regard for, she arrived in Banana Bottom with Hopping Dick. Herald Newton was supposed to deliver a sermon but as the congregation waited, Herald Newton defiled himself with a nanny goat. This sexual aberration discovered by the owner of the nanny goat, finished his clerical career and his engagement. The Craigs were terribly disappointed but Bita was relieved. About this particular incident, Kenneth Ramchand has the following comment to make in his *The West Indian Novel and Its Background*: "The plot demands that Herald Newton should be removed from the scene but one cannot help feeling that the author is indulging a spiteful impulse. The spite in this account may be compared with the humour and tolerance with which in a later section, McKay presents the scandal discovered by Sister Phibby Patroll, at the height of a religious revival, that sister-in-Christ Yoni Legge is pregnant by a fellow convert Hopping Dick" (270). The point is that Herald Newton is thus got rid of as the protagonist seeks a better man.
Back in Jubilee, Bita started frequenting dances and parties horrifying the Craigs. She enjoyed the company of Hopping Dick who was a very good dancer. At first she practised secrecy but this was a strain upon her because she was basically honest. She even considered telling Mrs Craig about her outing with Hopping Dick but she was put off when Rosyanna, the maid, related an example of Mrs Craig's hypocrisy. Rosyanna was indignant when Mrs Craig ran off with her slippers that were beneath her husband's bed. She wanted to hide the fact that she had matrimonial relations with her own husband! So Bita decided not to tell Mrs Craig. But in time however, she found out. Mrs Craig objected to Hopping Dick escorting Bita to parties and challenged her with the question as to whether she would marry Hopping Dick. To her amazement, Bita replied that she would. Bita realized that she would have to leave Jubilee Mission as sensational scenes became common between her and Mrs Craig. When Bita in anger slapped Rosyanna's face for not serving her food on Mr Craig's instructions, Mrs Craig was horrified. Her people were summoned and an irate Mrs Craig described her as a nymphomaniac to the
ignorant Aunt Nommy. Hopping Dick too was summoned as Bita insisted that she loved him. Unfortunately however, Hopping Dick was not willing to undertake the terrible responsibility of marriage. His reaction to the proposal is presented thus:

Hopping Dick had never thought that his little philandering would have carried to such a crisis. He had been prancing proud of the opportunity of going about in the company of the most cultivated Negro girl in Jubilee. How it had enhanced his prestige among his associates of the Saturday-night dances and card parties and in the grog shops!

But for all his vanity he had never entertained the slightest possibility of Bita becoming his wife. Bita was piquant to him as the young lady of the Jubilee Mission. He had never thought of her out of that setting, much less that he would be called upon to remove her thence - to what other? Yet there he was faced with the necessity of that.

How could one in his station dream of marrying a girl like Bita who had been brought up to refinement and accustomed to large comforts and nice things. He couldn't take her to live with his mother in their little two roomed house. And how would be provide for her? He who was still indirectly supported by his father. (223-224)

The incident ended Bita's stay at the Mission. She went back to Banana Bottom. Bita had several suitors but she did not like any of them. Some of them,
especially the "coloured" men, felt indignant at her refusal. She also had an unhappy experience with Busha Glengley's mulatto offspring who tried to force his attention on her.

Bita's interest in Jubban was slow to develop but after the incident with Arthur Glengley, Bita started paying him more attention. She made the servant clean out his room and presented him with a bouquet of flowers. Earlier, Jubban had picked her up in his arms after she had fainted at a fetish dance. She observed that Jubban was a responsible person and started treating him with affection. Unlike Hopping Dick, Jubban was no dandy but Bita found him attractive. She started attending tea-meetings with him. His quiet strength made her feel secure and the way in which he declared his love revealed his character. He did it by kissing her at a tea meeting: "She was touched by the manner he had chosen to reveal his feeling for her. He had taken his kiss without a word. But no word was necessary, for the kiss itself had spoken warmly telling her more than speech could tell. And now she was struck again by the attractiveness of him, how although he was
always working in the sun and rain, day and night, his skin possessed a velvety indigo-black tone like an eggplant and that among all the men gathered there at that tea-meeting he was the most appealing" (278-279). When her father died, it was with Jubban that she went to fetch his body home. The journey together established a new intimacy between them. Though her father's body was in the carriage, they made love feeling sure that the soul of Jordan Plant would approve. Once the decision was made, Bita wanted an early marriage but Aunt Nanny insisted that they should wait a decent interval for the sake of her father's memory. After the marriage Bita settled down to contented domesticity. Though Jubban did not excel in many things he accepted it with grace because Bita was educated.

Bita no longer had romantic illusions about love. In fact she felt that the idea of romance itself was not intrinsic to her race. Here we find McKay using the protagonist as his mouthpiece to summarily dismiss the western idea of romance. But one wonders how realistic Bita's contentment with Jubban was. In the
idyllic setting of Banana Bottom, with even financial constraints cleared through Squire Gensir's legacy, did Bita lack intellectual companionship? One is inclined to think that she did when one remembers her sessions with Squire Gensir and how they motivated her. But one can easily understand Bita's preferring Jubban to the sanctimonious Herald Newton Day even without his sexual aberration.

In the case of Yoni Legge, she recovered from the Tack Tally episode by joining the Religious Revival. In due time however she was discovered to be pregnant by Hopping Dick, another religious enthusiast. Both of them were dismissed from churchly fellowship but Dick decided to marry Yoni Legge and settle down. The two had a double wedding with Jubban and Bita. Dick and Yoni were suited to each other but the villagers were surprised because Bita chose to marry her own father's drayman after all her education.

In Brother Man, the protagonist's involvement with Minette is explored as growing in proportion to his messianic status. According to Brathwaite, Minette presents as an aspect of 'eros' or sensual love while
Brother Man presents as an aspect of 'caritas' or impersonal love (Introduction xvi). Later on however, the dualistic divisions are laid aside as their love deepens into beauty and permanence. The relationship of Papacita and Girlie in contrast is based purely on carnal love. It progresses to boredom, irritation, hatred and violence. Papacita's lack of responsibility, dislike of hard work and flirtatious nature spoil the relationship and bring about his own doom.

In the first chapter Papacita and Girlie are seen engaged in a game of cat and mouse. After arguments about Papacita's absence the previous night, the mood changed to passion. Their love-making is compared to a pair of wrestlers engaged in mutual combat. Girlie liked to be overcome by Papacita's sheer strength as the fight usually acted as an aphrodisiac for the two of them. After their fierce love-making, they lay side by side, spent. After a while, Girlie tried to reawaken his passion. This irritated Papacita who considered it a taunt to his manhood to indicate that she was still unfulfilled. This was a sore point
between them as their love was based only on sex. Talking about the previous night, the two started to quarrel, Papacita threatening to quit. This made Girlie furious and she slashed at him with a knife. Papacita was wounded but he retaliated by twisting Girlie's hand. He then left the house after bandaging his wound with a towel. In spite of this, Papacita felt great love for Girlie when he returned that night and found her sleeping looking helpless and lost. "She looked so helpless lying in the bed, something reached out and touched him with a sense of pity and loss. He saw her in that moment as something out of himself, but he didn't use that word" (44-45). Nevertheless he could not escape from his identity as a woman-chaser. He started flirting with Minette and when Girlie came to know about his outing with her, a bitter quarrel ensued. Papacita kicked and beat Girlie while she reacted by scratching him and biting his throat. He had to hold her by her own throat to force her jaws loose. Girlie swooned in his arms and Papacita felt nauseated as he carried her to the washstand in an effort to revive her.
After this incident he stopped living with Girlie and moved into another apartment. Though he missed her little attentions, he did not like her possessive nature. He did not want to give up his freedom for her sake. Girlie felt hurt and resentful by Papacita's attitude because she really loved him. As the days passed by, the love turned to hatred. She realized that she had made a fool of herself with Papacita. Her resentment grew till she became insane. Finding Papacita's new apartment, she went there but Papacita was irritated to see her. He told her to leave him in peace. As he was washing his hands, with his back to her, Girlie struck him from behind and killed him.

In the case of Brother Man and Minette, it was Minette who started loving Brother Man on a physical level. She had been taken off the streets by him and had started living with him. But she was disappointed because he established no physical intimacy with her. In their society, the girls usually provided every comfort to the man who gave them bread and board.
Brother Man made no such demand. As the days passed by, her affection deepened into love and she felt frustrated because Brother Man seemed to disregard it:

But she was young, and things were stirring inside her, and she couldn't make him understand or aware of her in that way at all. She wanted more than anything in the world that she should be able to give him something in return for all that he had done for her, that she should share his life with him, as she shared his home; in short, become his mistress, since she never thought of asking him to marry her. And in her simple way of looking at things there was nothing at all the matter with that; man and woman lived like that all over the place, in the country and the city alike. It didn't matter the least, it was nothing. (32)

So Minette tried to get close to him, talking about love and standing close to him. She was happy to note that her closeness had its effect on Brother Man, for, he moved away instinctively. In the meanwhile Papacita started chasing her but Minette did not like it very much as she knew about Girlie's jealousy. Papacita's pursuit of her made her impatient with Brother Man: "How come he didn't look at her as a man might look at a woman at all? He was a holy man? Yes, so what did that matter? Only among the Roman Catholics a thing like that mattered. And Bra' Man wasn't like
that at all. He was like other people—all the people who lived in the lane for instance; only he saw things a little different from them. And he was better than them, yes. But all the same a man, and in his prime. And it didn't make sense to her at all, and she wondered in what way had she come short" (33). One day while having dinner she asked him why he had not married. He replied that the time had not come for him. She also came to know that his real name was John Power, that Brother Man was his Rastafarian identity.

Finally Minette decided to go out with Papacita. The latter entertained her well at the Rockney Club and she enjoyed herself. But when he started making jibes at Brother Man she got annoyed and Papacita had to apologize. The arrival of the police at the club made Papacita scared and the sight of his ashen face was a surprise to Minette. Though Papacita was attracted towards Minette, Minette was getting more and more absorbed in Brother Man. She often found him acting strangely. One day, in the middle of the night, she woke up to find him staring down at her with a candle in his hand. Sitting on a stool close to her
bed, he started reading the Bible. When she started asking questions about man-woman relationships, his answers became evasive. The sudden appearance of a cockroach made Minette scream and run into Brother Man's arms. But he disappointed her by disentangling her hands and leaving the room without killing the cockroach.

Though Brother Man came to know about Papacita's involvement with Minette, he did not sit in judgment of her. He only thought of her as "a poor unhappy little girl with a bad conscience." One night, feeling restless and unable to sleep he decided to make himself some cocoa. In the midst of his activities Minette woke up and remonstrated with him for not waking her up. Coming close to him, she tried to make him aware of her presence. Her close proximity disturbed him and he moved away suddenly. This, however made Minette sob in grief and noticing this he reacted in an hitherto unforeseen manner:

Something like an animal cry went from him. He blundered back across the distance that separated them, went down on his knees beside her on the floor.
He took her by the wrists, pulled her hands down from her face. No words passed between them; but something did, something that went without words.

Slowly his arms went around her, pulling her towards him. She opened her eyes, as in a dream, and felt his hot, panting breath upon her face (136-137).

Here we find the protagonist trying hard to fight the temptation of sexual attraction and failing at it. An incident from his past had made him wary of emotional attachments with the opposite sex. It was this more than a religious understanding of sex as sin, that had made him reluctant to establish the bond of physical intimacy with Minette. When Minette heard the whole story of his betrayal by Velta she told him that she could never betray anyone, let alone Brother Man. Brother Man had taken her in his arms when he was rudely interrupted by the arrival of Corporal Jennings. Papacita had been behind the scheme, and he had done it to take Minette away from Brother Man. The scheme did not work, for Minette and Brother Man became even closer after his arrest and release. When the people started shunning him, Minette's love sustained him. After the
brutal assault on him, Minette and Jesmina nursed him back to health. It was Minette's confidence in him that made him sure of his success in the days to come.

Side by side with this, Cordelia's relationship with Jonas and Jesmina's relationship with Shine are explored as contrastive relationships. Jonas had been arrested for passing ganja and had made Cordelia embittered with the entire male population. In Jesmina's case, her love for Shine was beautiful and fulfilling but she was forced to forego it at her sister's insistence. We find her seeking Brother Man's consoling words at her moments of crisis as she struggles hard to keep sisterly affection from obliterating her deep love for Shine. Cordelia's warped mind brings her to a tragic end but Jesmina is sustained by the kindness of Brother Man. She repays him both by relating her sister's involvement with Papacita's scheme and by nursing him after the brutal attack of the mob. Brother Man, proves to be a true brother to her and to many others in the lane, spreading the message of "peace and love."
The man-woman relationships in *Brother Man* are convincingly portrayed and the "Chorus of people in the Lane" completes the picture by providing the common gossip. The rhythmic nature of the utterance provides a structure similar to New Orleans Jazz, according to Edward Brathwaite (XV). When the novel is contrasted with the other two, what we miss the most is the wry, sardonic humour that tinges Lamming's inset tales and McKay's satire of genteel hypocrisy. This however owes to the serious role of the protagonist of Roger Mais's novel.

Religion: The motif of religion is made use of by all three novelists to shed light on the influence of religion in the emergence of 'self.' Both the Christian religion as well as obeah are treated in the novels but it is of significance to note that obeah is not given much importance. When you contrast these three novels with the novels of the white writers treated in the first chapter, we see that the white writers give more importance to obeah than the black novelists. Though the focus is on African ancestry and the sense of pride in Negritude, all the three novels under scrutiny,
relegate obeah or the worship of the African deity Obi to the side. In the case of McKay's *Banana Bottom* both the Christian religion as well as African obeah are treated with sarcasm and humour. In fact, the latter is treated with disrespect, and ridiculed through the character of Wumba, the obeahman. Though Squire Gensir, speaks about it with tolerance, Bita the protagonist does not give it any credence. In *Brother Man* religion is treated with respect and the Rastafarian hero upholds the Christian faith. The evil Brother Ambo is the practitioner of obeah. In Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*, no importance at all is given to obeah but the Christian religion is treated in a light vein.

Roger Mais's *Brother Man* portrays a Christ-like figure through the protagonist. There are many points of similarity between the two. But Mais redeems an otherwise monotonous development of character by focussing on Brother Man's involvement with Minette on a physical level. The novel also helps to dispel many misconceptions regarding the Rastafarian cult. Though the authorities suspected the Rastafarians, the movement itself was based on 'Peace and Love.' 'Brother Man' is
a Rasta name for the members had the habit of addressing one another as 'I-re brother' 'I-re man' etc... John Creary expresses the following opinion in an article included in *The Islands in Between* edited by Louis James: "Mais insists on Brother Man's basic humanity when he shows Power finally taking Minette in total, unashamed love. Yet Mais uses his portrait of a Rastafarian cultist - the Rastafarian greeting, 'Peace and Love, Brother Man' comes at once to mind - only as a fulcrum between the human and the ideal. We learn something of John Power's thoughts but very little of his motivation, because as his name implies, he unites in himself Everyman - hence the common name John - with the ultimate motivation, Power. In him the humanity that gleams fitfully, fragmented, in the various characters of *The Hills* comes together. And his significance moves beyond that of John Power, the Healer and the Leader, to that he assumes in his final confrontation with the hysterical, violent mob that cannot endure his goodness. He is Mais's vision of the reincarnate Christ. There is no escape into sentimental mysticism from the political realities. Mais's conviction of spiritual values was too absolute" (1968, 57).
As the novel proceeds, the protagonist's stature as a messiah grows. Starting with the incident of the nightingale that he gives to a hungry boy he goes on to become a healer to the sick and a comforter for those in sorrow. As the people flock around him, he becomes more and more introspective and goes in search of truth. The vision by the seaside and the incident with 'Old Mag' are instances of his being different from other people. Old Mag was supposed to be the ghost of a lady who had lived and died alone. The people believed that if her ghost stopped and blessed anyone the person would be blessed. On the other hand if she cursed any person the person would be cursed. One night while out on a walk, Brother Man met a bent-over old woman who blessed him. As he was preoccupied he did not hear her. All of a sudden he realized that he had not answered her salutation. So he retraced his steps to find her but was unable to. Soon the story spread that old Mag had blessed him. Mais makes use of Biblical language to describe the many blessings that he brought the people as a healer. This is evident in 'Chapter Three' where the author describes his rising fame:
But the crowd of people who followed him became so great that it was an embarrassment to him, so he turned east and then north until he came to the Race Course ground in the centre of the city, and he climbed up on to the grand stand, and from there he addressed them.

He spoke to them in simple, down-to-earth language, telling them that they were to turn away from evil and to follow righteousness and many, realizing that was all he had to say, turned away in disappointment and some turned aside to mock, but even when they had gone there was still a great crowd left who listened to him and they would not let him go until late in the afternoon when he was spent and could scarcely lift himself up from the ground.

And even after the crowd had dispersed, and had gone to their homes, or to their business, a few still remained, and they called him 'master' and asked him diligently what things they should do to become his followers, swearing that they would follow him, even unto death. (109)

Here the parallel to Christ is obvious, and it also prepares us for the inevitable 'crucifixion.' The man who comes to help him after the beating is a person called Nathaniel whom he had helped in the past and who was one of the first to reaffirm his belief in him after the arrest. Minette and Jesmina accompany him. Brother Man recovers or is 'resurrected' on the third day and is fully determined to go ahead with his mission. The only difference from Christ is that the protagonist has a female counterpart in Minette.
Brother Ambo is the antithesis of Brother Man. Where Brother Man helps people in distress, Ambo extracts money from the poor people to work obeah. He boasted that he was 'a higher scientist' than Brother Man, for, he knew the science of the dead. When the people came and quoted these words to Brother Man, the latter replied that he preferred the Book of Life to the Book of the Dead. In her demented state Cordelia started imagining that her son was like a monster. So she went to consult Brother Ambo who took all her savings and told her how to work the obeah spells to dispel the ghosts on her son Jesmina was nauseated to see her sister boiling something in an iron pot in the middle of the night. She was horrified when she saw her killing a cock and collecting its blood, an obeah ritual. The obeah did not cure her son but her own mental state became worse. She started hating Brother Man and this hatred made her become an accomplice of Papacita. Papacita himself is compared to an Anancy spider early in the novel. Anancy is a deity of African origin and is looked upon as a trickster. To quote, "The wind came in and fluttered the calendar on the wall. The noises of people came up to them from the
lane below. A spider on the ceiling spun his web in silence, and they were as unconscious of him as he was of them. And the spider spun away, carrying out the design, the pattern of which lay concealed somewhere inside him, and he might have been the instrument of some spider deity working out and perfecting his narrow intention in the wide world" (34). Papacita's tricks brought about Cordelia's and his own doom though they were levelled against Brother Man. The novelist seems to underline the Christian idea of death being the wages of sin.

Claude McKay's treatment of religion is pregnant with irony. The author satirizes both the Christian missionaries and the obeah man, Wumba. Squire Gensir, the non-believer, is presented as a superior character to Priscilla Craig, Vaughan and others. Malcolm Craig is presented as a more understanding and humane person than his wife and Herald Newton Day becomes a source of comedy rather than pity.

At the beginning of the novel, the omniscient narrator describes the pioneering work of the Non-Conformist churches in the Caribbean:
In the glorious epoch that marks the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century a band of zealous non-conformists went forth to the famous and fertile slave belt of the New World to preach the Word to the Quashees. To bring to the jungle creatures light. But they were soon aware that to preach the light it was also necessary to teach. But the men who waxed rich upon black folk in the dark were opposed to the light. That started the great crusade for Freedom and Light for jungle folk. While some assailed the strongholds of non-conformists of religious and social slavocracy in Europe, others set forth to labour in the fields. Generally they were called missionaries. But upon examination the best of them will be found to be very different in spirit from the popular idea of missionaries prevailing today (11-12).

He then goes on to describe the Craigs as a family with a long history of service to the church. Though the Craigs served the community, they felt superior to the flock they led. Mrs Craig in particular is presented as fussy, patronising and hypocritical. She believed that black people were more prone to the snares of the flesh than other races. When Bita rebelled and announced that she wanted to marry Hopping Dick, she was horrified at the girl's lack of gratitude. In her anger she described Bita as a "nymphomaniac" to the ignorant Aunt Nommy who didn't know the meaning of the word.
Another preacher who is satirized in Evan Vaughan. He cashed in on a drought to usher in a religious revival in the village. The gullible villagers were taken in by him just as their ancestors had been taken in by Jacob Brown during the Coffee Pool scandal. Vaughan had the ability to raise the congregation to the level of frenzy making them wail and weep confessing their sins. On one occasion Squire Gensir and Bita attended one of their meetings. The nastiness of Vaughan made Squire Gensir extremely annoyed. Vaughan thought that the occasion was befitting to single the non-believer out and make him the butt of sanctimonious preaching. Squire Gensir put on an air of indifference eventhough he was irritated. Something funny happened to break up the meeting. A black woman started beating on a drum and singing. This set off a number of people in the crowd who began to prance and howl. Vaughan lost control over the congregation. Bita got caught up in the crowd of fetish dancers who started beating with supple-jacks. The whole atmosphere was pagan rather than Christian. Bita was mesmerized and was more affected by the fetish spirit than by the Penitent's Forum of Vaughan. Her reaction is thus captured:
In the midst of them Bita seemed to be mesmerized by the common fetish spirit. It was a stranger, stronger thing than that of the Great Revival. Those bodies poised straight in religious ecstasy and dancing vertically up and down, whole shapes, seemed filled with an ancient nearly forgotten spirit, something ancestral recaptured in the emotional fervour, evoking in her memories of pictures of savage rites, tribal dancing with splendid swaying plumes and the brandishing of the supple-jacks struck her symbolic of raised and clashing triumphant spears. (250)

The author seems to suggest that Bita's nature is closer to the African cult than the Christian. Even Squire Gensir affirmed that the supple-jacks had more authentic power in them than a thousand Vaughans.

Though Squire Gensir expresses an opinion about obeah as part of their tradition, the author does not have a good opinion about the practitioner as he screams through the village about the judgment of Jesus after he comes across the corpse of Tack Tally outside his cave. He is similar to Roger Mais's Brother Ambo who exploits the gullibility of the blacks for his own benefit. The author expresses his opinion through Squire Gensir who tells Bita that it is foolish to waste money on either Christianity or obeah as money could be put to good material purposes. This seems to be the general message of the novel.
Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin* presents two aspects of religion. One is the deep-rooted faith in God's providence that helps the peasants go through the hardship of life without complaint. This is manifested through G's mother, the old couple Ma and Pa, and other minor characters. The second aspect presents the zeal of the missionaries who are outsiders, but who are bent on saving the infidel blacks. This category includes people like Brother Bannister, and "the white missis" of the inset tales. They are treated satirically. Another significant aspect about this novel in that there is no mention at all of obeah.

G's mother was a deeply religious woman bound to see God's showers of blessing even when G's ninth birthday was washed out in floods. The novel starts with the floods similar to the deluge of Noah but the prayers of the poor, innocent villagers were not heeded by God. The boy's skeptical attitude is thus portrayed:

"As if in serious imitation of the waters that raced outside, our lives - meaning our fears and their corresponding ideals - seemed to escape down an imaginary drain that was our future. Our capacity for
feeling had grown as huge as the flood, but the prayers of a simple village seemed as precariously adequate as the houses hoisted on water" (2).

Throughout the novel G's skepticism is contrasted with his mother's deep faith. She punished her son often because she wanted him to grow into a good, God-fearing individual. On the eve of his departure for Trinidad we see G reassuring her that he would keep a copy of the Gospel in his pocket. She was pleased. She then recited a passage from John: "Let not your heart be troubled, Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (271). Even as she read she was overcome with emotion thinking of parting from her son who was the centre of her existence.

The old couple, Ma and Pa, were also deep believers in God. When Pa in his enthusiasm compared Mr Slime to Moses, Ma was prompted to say that it bordered on blasphemy whatever be his achievements. But
she herself became enthusiastic over Mr Creighton when the latter singled her out and talked to her in a friendly way. Ironically both Creighton and Slime proved to be idols with feet of clay. Ma died suddenly comforting Pa after his nightmare about slavery. Her last words to him were to put his life into the Master's hand. The end of the novel sees Pa on the threshold of the almshouse, in the hands of the Master!

The boys were more critical of religion than the elders. The inset tales narrated by the boys at the seaside satirize the imposition of religious ritual from outside. Both "the white missis" in the Bambi story and Brother Bannister in the Jon story assume sinister roles. Another scene presents the Revivalist meeting that helps the boys escape from the overseer who was pursuing them. The meeting itself is satirized with its members getting into the spirit and confessing their sins. The author adds the wry comment that spectators flocked to these meetings mainly to hear the embarrassingly intimate testimonies of those "who got saved." Earlier in the novel, we find the boys on Empire Day wondering about the idea of servility to the
Empire as equivalent to subservience to God. This idea was perpetrated by the Inspector in his speech. The author's comment is ironic. "Nobody wants to be a prisoner. You aren't free when you're a prisoner. But it is different when you are a slave. When you are a slave of the Empire and the Garden at the same time, you can be free to belong to both" (63). It is obvious that Lamming disapproves of slavery in any form.

Politics: Of the three novels, the political aspect assumes maximum significance in Lamming's novel whereas Brother Man gives it very little importance. McKay's politics is mainly racial. To quote Michael G. Cooke from his article, "Claude McKay and V.S. Reid: The Simple Way to Magical form" published in Claude McKay: Centennial studies edited by A.L. McLeod: "Both Claude McKay and V.S. Reid (1913-1987) may be viewed as political writers; not in the sense of articulating a political vision, but on the strength of having a political mission in their work. In both writers a key impetus comes from having a group to defend, a wrong to rectify, a figure to save from rejection and/or to raise to heroic status" (1992, 41). The group referred to is
the Negro race. *In the Castle of My Skin* goes beyond racial politics to show the emergence of trade unionism and capitalism in the feudal set-up of Barbados.

*Brother Man* is not a political novel. By the time Mais wrote it, he had lost the keen sense of political protest that had made him write the article against British imperialism. *Brother Man* offers Rastafarianism as a way out of poverty and deprivation but surprisingly the protagonist expresses no plans of taking the people to Africa. Nor does he express an intention of leaving the people who had "crucified" him, to go to Africa. He is determined to stay there and work among them. At the same time he seems not to link poverty to colonial underdevelopment. The only political aspect in the novel is the animosity towards Rastafarians generated by a violent incident involving a bearded man. "Chapter five" focusses attention on the public's suspicion of bearded men gathering momentum as political opportunists fan the flames of hatred: "About three days after the Palisadoes incident, a wave of resentment swept through the city. It was directed against all bearded men. The leading newspapers played
up the angle that a community of bearded men in their midst, formed together into a secret cult, was a menace to public safety" (173). Soon the people were in a state of frenzy hounding out people with beards. In the end, the innocent Brother Man became the victim of mob violence while scoundrels like Brother Ambo went free. By portraying this aspect Roger Mais tries to dispel the misconceptions about Rastafarians. His viewpoint is one of hope as opposed to the one of despair that is portrayed in Orlando Patterson's novel, *Children of Sisyphus*, where the author presents the futility of the Rastafarian dream.

In *Banana Bottom*, the author comments upon the politics of the island rooted in race. Even the economic aspect was subservient to 'colour' as all the well-paid jobs were reserved for those with a light coloured skin. For example, Bita's cousin Bab wanted to get into Civil Service. Though he worked hard to succeed in the examination, a change in the mode of selection shattered his hopes. This change made at the suggestion of people in responsible positions, ensured that the civil service would be restricted to 'whites'
and the 'coloured' folk only. The Eurafrican snobbery based on colour is elucidated through an incident in the novel where Bita and her friends are denied rooms in a hostel by a light complexioned manager on account of their colour. In the end, Squire Gensir, a white man from England, had to intervene to see the Negroes get their rights in their own country.

The novel also focusses attention on the problems created by indenture. The East Indian and Chinese coolies were forcing more and more of the Negroes to migrate to the canal zone in search of work as unemployment became acute. Yet the people did not really hate them. The Chinese became creolized and mixed freely with the Negroes, marrying black girls. The East Indians were more reserved but they were admired for their different features and their neat way of walking. Whenever there was a debate about coolie immigration, the villagers were more favourable towards the Chinese than towards the East Indians. Bita developed her sense of politics through her discussions with Squire Gensir and Teacher Fearon. Both Squire Gensir and Bita were in favour of free immigration but they were against the method of importing coolie labour.
When natural calamities hit the island, the prejudice against immigrants became redoubled. Meetings of protest were organized against the yellow and brown foreigners and the legislature was summoned to prohibit a further influx of them. But in spite of all the difficulties, the peasants survived because they were bonded to their land. Three years after marrying Jubban, we find Bita happy because the land had prospered under Jubban's hand. They had also managed to buy more land.

Lamming uses characters as both individuals and symbols. This aspect becomes clear when one looks at the novel from the angle of politics. Mr Creighton, the landlord assumes a paternal role in the feudalist set-up but it is a role that he relinquishes when he sells his land. He is thus exposed as an idol that has feet of clay. The old man Pa in contrast, is also a father figure for he and Ma provide the social commentary. The first indication of change is signalled by Mr Slime's Penny Bank. Mr Slime, as his name suggests is the trickster politician who is both a trade unionist and a capitalist. He enters politics after cuckolding the head teacher and ends up by cheating the entire village
of their houses. He forces the patriarch Pa into the almshouse. The villagers had looked upon him as an undisputed leader, and at the time of the strike had joined it at his suggestion without knowing any of the details. The situation is thus portrayed: "The year after he left the school, he won his seat in the general election with a great majority. It had seemed to everyone that he had resigned from the school with the intention of doing bigger and in a way better work in another field. He had been responsible for the education of the children but he had extended that work to include the education of the workers. They had never meddled in politics and they were never easy prey to promises, but Mr Slime had won their sympathy completely. No one questioned why he had resigned, since the reason seemed clearly demonstrated in the new role he was playing. He was their chief and the chief of many others who lived beyond the village" (90).

At the time of the riots Mr Slime's sudden appearance helped to save Mr Creighton from assault. Though the shoemaker had read articles about riots breaking out in Trinidad, he could never imagine the peaceful inhabitants of Creighton's village marching to
the governor's house with sticks and stones. But the riots did break out in the town and spread to the village. The villagers did not understand the political intricacies of the situation. Their state of ignorance is thus portrayed: "They were trying to understand what the fighting really meant. They understood certain things about it. They knew that the strike had started on the waterfront the night before. There was a mass meeting in the city which Mr Slime had attended. Three men had spoken to the people but they hadn't said anything about fighting. They had reminded their listeners of what had been happening in Trinidad, and they were warning certain people in the audience that if steps weren't taken to remedy the situation it was possible a similar thing would happen in Barbados" (188-189).

Nothing significant happened immediately after the riots but gradually the society underwent a change. Mr Creighton started selling his land to Mr Slime and his syndicate of coloured bigshots. The Penny Bank and Friendly Society that the villagers had fostered started to play prominent roles in evicting the villagers from their houses. They had either to buy their plots or
relinquish the places they had called home for years and years. Mr Slime, the leader of the workers, had become the capitalist.

The boys in contrast to the older people did not have much of an opinion about politicians in general and Mr Slime in particular. After spending a day at the seaside G related the story he would tell his mother to explain his absence. The boys commented that he would make a good lawyer or politician. In their opinion both these professions were equivalent to that of a blasted liar. On another occasion, they were discussing the increasing importance of Mr Slime who had promised to make the villagers the owners of the land. "Seems to me there be only two great men round here," said Boy Blue, "Mr Slime an' the landlord. An' if you don't watch out there goin' soon be one, Mr Slime only. The landlord will sort o' stay where he is in the big house, but Mr Slime will be sort o' captain o' this ship. 'cause, a day don't pass here when somebody din't got something to say 'bout him an' the Penny Bank an' the Friendly Society. He get in a short space o' time a kind o' black Jesus" (159).
According to Sandra Pouchet Paquet, "Lamming relies heavily on what he calls "collective character."
Such characters are representative of a group or class or value system within the society. Characters such as Ma and Pa in the novel are collective characters in the sense that they express the cumulative experience of the village community. The different responses to social and political change which they articulate reflect a division in the village to which they belong. The dilemma of the village in turn articulates the dilemma of the island, and the frame of reference broadens indefinitely" (The Novels of George Lamming 1982, 5).
Viewed from such a perspective, the political aspect of the novel contributes to the search for racial and national identity.

Narrative Styles and Techniques: Of the three novelists, McKay's style is the most traditional. A pioneer among black writers of the Caribbean, McKay is forced to follow the models set by the colonizers. Like Caliban, he has to use Prospero's language and syntax to expose his humbug. His theme of a black girl liberating herself from the superficial gloss of European education, to revert to her real identity as a peasant
working on the soil, is revolutionary. But the tale is told in the tradition of story-telling set by the nineteenth century English novelists, making use of an omniscient narrator. Moreover, at certain points in the novel, the reader is prompted to ask if Bita is just the mouthpiece of the author. Roger Mais and Lamming experiment with narrative styles and techniques. In *Brother Man*, the style partakes of the rhythm of black folk music in certain places while in others it echoes the New Testament. The "Chorus of People in the Lane" which starts the novel describes the Kingston slum in picturesque detail to continue with snippets of conversation in creole. The description is taken up again in the form of a refrain, creating a musical effect. The chorus also provides us with a commentary on the events that befall the protagonist and the people he comes in contact with. These people are then introduced like scenes in a play, Girlie-Papacita, Joe-Jennings, Cordelia-Jesmina and so on. The narration likewise swings from solos to duos and back to the chorus, though the omniscient narrator tells the tale. The style is reminiscent of the New Testament, in the places where the author describes *Brother Man's*
activities as a messiah. The Chorus, however, comes at regular intervals to remind the reader of Brother Man's frailties and the feeling of people towards him. George Lamming, like Mais, uses inter-related perceptions of the entire community to highlight the search for identity. A chorus consisting of an old man and woman called Pa and Ma, is used to provide information about social change. The novel *In the Castle of My Skin* is anticolonial in form and content. Lamming subverts pre-conceived notions of excellence in story-telling by shifting from one form of narration to the other. For pages on end, the protagonist G, who is also the first person narrator in the beginning of the novel, disappears or if present hardly utters a word. He then comes back with first person narration. Many of the characters are given no names, for example the boys at the water tap are given numbers. Some characters are identified by profession - the shoemaker, the overseer's brother etc. Some names assume symbolic overtones - Mr Slime, the trickster politician and "HMS Goliath," the ship that sets off the riots by firing a few shots. G's friends are Bob, Boy Blue and Trumper, but G's mother is given no name. Social changes are made the subject of discussion by the old man and woman.
The Empire Day celebrations and the beating that follows trigger off discussions among the boys about colonialism, slavery, education and social justice. The boys at the seaside discuss race, marriage and religion. The comments and perceptions are tinged with irony and social criticism. When the old man has his nightmare of the middle passage that brought his ancestors to the islands, the style becomes solemn. It becomes mocking when it describes the Revivalist meeting. The overall effect is multi-dimensional.

All the three novelists are concerned with Negro identity. In Banana Bottom and In the Castle of My Skin this concern surfaces through interaction with the white and coloured population. McKay also refers to the dimension added by the indentured labourers. In Brother Man no such contrast is used with other ethnic groups but the pride in African ancestry is underlined. Mais identifies with the poor people of the Kingston slums through his protagonist. This is all the more significant because Mais belonged to the educated middle class and was fair-skinned in complexion. By depicting a Rastafarian protagonist in the role of a messiah, Mais makes his allegiance clear.