



## Postcolonial Interpretation of G. Lamming's The Pleasures of Exile: The Caribbean Identity

By Md. Abdul Karim Ruman

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George Lamming (born 8 June 1927) is a Barbadian novelist, essayist and poet and an important figure in Caribbean literature. In 1951 he became a broadcaster for the BBC Colonial Service. His collection of essays, *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960), is a pioneering non-fiction that attempts to define the place of the West Indian in the post-colonial world, re-interpreting Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and the characters of Prospero and Caliban in terms of personal identity and the history of the Caribbean. In fact, this literary work is a postcolonialist, postrealist and postnationalist counter-discourse because it gives us Lamming's glimpse of the complex issues of identity contained within the Caribbean island-states that were largely shaped by the European colonial practice from the late-fifteenth century up to the late twentieth century. My research questions in this critical study are—"How are the nations of the Caribbean and/or the West Indies originated? How are they represented by canonical discourses and how is their identity constructed? What about its impact throughout different times and spaces? Is it possible to deconstruct and reconstruct their identity through counter-discourse?"—with a view to exploring George Lamming's endeavor in *The Pleasures of Exile* from postcolonial perspective to answer these questions with fact and fiction. In fact, the uprooting of the natives and importation of the African slaves to toil in sugar plantations, the introduction of the Indian and the Chinese indentured laborers to replace the African slaves after the abolition of slavery, as well as the presence of the European colonizers led to the creation of hybrid Caribbean communities of immigrants or exiled people, all with broken cultures and history. I have tried to establish that as the canonical discourses like *The Tempest*, the then media BBC etc. construct the Caribbean's mythologized identities negatively with biased perspectives for their colonial 'civilizing mission', Lamming has tried to deconstruct or decentralize their canonical position counter-discursively to reconstruct his national identity. I have also focused on the problems of the Caribbean hyphenated identities that imply double heredity. So, the region seems to be a no man's land where people lack an autonomous and homogenous identity. At the end of my interpretation, I have tried to establish that—by reviewing colonial history, dismantling the textual unconscious of *The Tempest* as a poststructuralist critic and rejecting the

stereotype identities created by other legitimizing Western discourses, Lamming's *The Pleasures of Exile* functions as a counter-discursive signifier of the post-colonial Caribbean's metamorphosis into some cross-cultural identities, identities that are experienced between the Caribbean and the West.

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*By Md. Abdul Karim Ruman*

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### **Editorial Review**

#### About the Author

Md. Abdul Karim Ruman was born on 15 April 1983 in Narsingdi, Bangladesh. He believes in Islam. He is the son of Haji Md. Ruhul Amin and Mrs. Ranuara Amin. He studied at Hasnabad No.1 Government Primary School until 1992. He got Junior Scholarship (Talent Pool) in 1995 and the SSC Board Merit Scholarship in 1998 while studying at Hasnabad High School. He passed the HSC Examination with 1st Division in 2000 from Narsingdi Government College. He graduated with 1st Class 1st position in English Literature from Jahangirnagar University in 2006. During his student life, he volunteered in Bangladesh Red-Crescent Society. He was also a member of UNESCO Club of Bangladesh. He worked as a journalist in different national print media like The News Fair, The Daily Alor Diganto, The Monthly Parwana, The Monthly Grameen khobor etc. He was involved in writing column in The Daily Star as well as other local magazines. He also composed some poems. He led "Renaissance Language Society" as the President at M.M.H.Hall of Jahangirnagar University. Further, he participated in a national debate of Bangladesh Television. He also became runner-up as a team member in the Inter-University General Knowledge Competition. He achieved many awards in Extempore & Set Speeches, Essay Writing, Poetry Recitation Competitions etc. He translated a Bangla novel into English which was published by Bangladesh Cultural Forum in the Ekushey Book Fair' 2011. He also contributed to writing HSC English (Paper I) published by Study Publications and Jahangirnagar University admission guide book titled "Englishlink". He worked as a lecturer in English in 3 universities of Bangladesh. He was the Editor of "Green university Review" (ISSN 2218-5283), and "Dhaka Commerce College Journal" (ISSN 2220-3303). So far he has published 13 research articles in 3 different international journals and 10 in Articlesbase.com. He also participated in 3 international conferences organized by King Khalid University in KSA where he had been working as a Lecturer in English from 2011 up to 2015. Currently he is a faculty member in the Department of English at the University of Bisha in KSA. Besides, as the President of Bangladesh Research Foundation, he plays the role of Editor-in-Chief of "Bangladesh Research Foundation Journal" (Print ISSN 2224-8404, Online ISSN 2305-1566). After all, he is a PhD (in Applied Linguistics & ELT) Research Fellow at the Institute of Modern Languages under the University of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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