Mediating Imagination:
The Figure of the Masses in C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins* and George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*

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In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Franz Fanon captures the minimum demand of the peasantry as he analyses the fatal misunderstandings which occur in the process of decolonization among colonialist bourgeoisie, colonized bourgeoisie, and peasants: “For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity” (34).

As the West Indian intellectuals must critically illustrate the failure of decolonization, the point of concern is to mediate this dignity that tends to be forgotten in the midst of, and after, the anti-colonial struggles. In the context of anti-globalization, Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt reject the mediation for the multitude to overthrow Empire: “it [Empire] presents us, alongside the machine of command, with an alternative: the set of all the exploited and the subjugated, a multitude that is directly opposed to Empire, with no mediation between them” (393). Their renunciation of mediation is double-edged. As long as they keep presupposing an alternative that a globalizing force would provide us with, it may result in a false promise that is as much irresponsible as were the promises made by colonial elites.

In view of this, the texts of C.L.R. James and George Lamming should be reexamined. They have responsibly elaborated on the concept of mediation to overcome colonial dominations, often as a critique of leadership.¹ James keeps attention to the masses and to their tragic relation to the leader Toussaint whereas Lamming foretastes the peasantry’s dislocation from their land by a neocolonial leader Mr. Slime. Through the tragic sense,² they adumbrate a form of mediation to come,

¹ A comparative study of the two authors has been scarcely written. In “C.L.R. James and George Lamming,” Bill Schwarz brilliantly connects Lamming with James via their elaborations of historical consciousness, but his analysis lacks their concern for mediation.

² David Scott links James’s dramatization of Toussaint’s down and fall in *The Black Jacobins* with
engaging with different but crucial stages in the political movement of the Caribbean. I argue that the two authors not just articulate their own historicity vis-à-vis European historiography, but also cultivate mediation, critically engaging themselves with regional concern.

1. Mediation and the masses in C. L. R. James’s *The Black Jacobins*

That the masses are undercurrent references in *The Black Jacobins* has been evaluated as a kernel of James’s thought. Later in an interview James himself admits this, stating that “[h]istory begins with the great mass of the population” (Abelove, *Visions* 266). E. San Juan Jr. suggests that the foregrounding of the masses in James cannot be incorporated into the postcolonial theories by the authors of *The Empire Writes Back* or *The Black Atlantic*, theories that are recaptured by the master discourse it aims to dislocate (“Beyond” 25-6). Rather, it is intended, insists San Juan Jr., as “the praxis of universality” for freedom (“Beyond” 33). When James’s articulation of the masses is cognized as an attempt to make them enter into universality, it is irreconcilable with a postcolonial criticism that denounces such a concept that centers Europe in the world history. James’s admiration for the masses that is often unabashedly exhibited, however, cannot be categorized into the dichotomy of a European provenance and a hybrid identity, of Marxism and postcolonialism. Neither are the masses in James’s writings, as Paul Miller observes, “too monolithic and idealized” (1090).

For James, the masses are both a descriptive existence and a transformative concept, dynamically intertwined. The distinction between the “descriptive” and the “transformative” is that which Spivak uses to read the subtle difference of the class formation in Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, a distinction at which the trick of representation – *Darstellen* and *Vertretung* – comes in (*Critique* 257-260). Yet it is because of the significance of race in the Haitian revolution that James employs the word “masses” rather than class which is central in (Spivak’s reading of) Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire*.⁵ In other words, James articulates the masses into

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Hegel’s idea on tragedy rather than that of Aristotle, although the scholarship has allocated the latter’s influence on the central dramaturgy of the book (148-169).

⁵ James cautions that the “race question is subsidiary to the class question in politics, and to think of imperialism in terms of race is disastrous. But to neglect the racial factor as merely incidental is an error only less grave than to make it fundamental” (*Black* 230).
a specific existence inseparable from the regions that they inhabit, on the one hand, and a generalized, if not universal, concept that links those who move history, on the other. I would argue that James recognizes the force of the masses without idolizing or universalizing them, highlighting their regional perspectives critical of the emergent global power.

First of all, what James tries to devise in this book is no less about the masses than about a theoretical formula of history that enacts the masses to make their own history. This formula is composed of mediating history with the colonial situation of the Caribbean islands and the African continent on the one hand, and with the lesson of Marxism, on the other. Edward Said points out that James articulated "the central pattern of politics and history in liner terms" (248), but this linearity also encompasses halts and disparities at which "the historical work and the foregrounded political events" are sutured as "part of a kind of seamless web" (Hall, "Breaking" 20-1). In other words, the masses in the Caribbean islands and Africa around 1938 are linked to the historical condition those in San Domingo are subjugated in, whereas its relation, not yet transformative, is invigorated by reflective thoughts his dialogue with Marxism brought about.

The historical account of the Haitian revolution is connected to both the post-independent situation of the Caribbean islands and the nascent move of anti-colonialism in Africa. As the lessons of the revolution are projected onto the places where James carefully chooses, the descriptive masses of Africa are generalized as a historical actor. According to James, the slight difference in colors of skin exacerbated the system of exploitation and racial antagonism around late-eighteenth century San Domingo, but "these distinctions still exercise their influence in the West Indies today [in 1961]" (Black 35). In another move, the achievement of Toussaint is overlapped with that of the African leaders which had not been emergent as yet: "But for the revolution, this extraordinary man and his band of gifted associates would have lived their lives as slaves, [...] as many a talented African stands in Africa today [in 1938]" (Black 215). Elsewhere, the author sees in the blacks of Rhodesia represented by G. Loveway, a future autonomy of African people as well as "the fire that burnt in Toussaint L'Ouverture" (Black 333). A revolution qua decolonization is plotted as the observation of the past events seen from the eye of the present is projected onto the future.

This temporality of James's historiography is not anachronism. It is, for James, a
guiding principle of writing history almost equal to that of studying literature. James later notes in his study on Melville that when the readers “inject the social problem of 1952 into the social problem of 1851 [...] it becomes impossible to understand either literature or society” (Mariners 53). Rather, “if something new in personality [such as Ahab] has really come into the world, if the writer observes closely enough, and his creative power is great enough, then future generations will be able actually to see and recognize the type in a manner the author himself was not able to do” (Mariners 69). In the same manner, James as historian reads gaps and unstated moments in Toussaint’s life against the grain of his intention.

The masses as a transformative concept are centralized in James’s historiography as he negotiates with Leon Trotsky⁴ and anti-Stalinism. Here the question of mediation is crucial in terms of the relation of the masses to a leader. Trotsky’s History of the Russian Revolution (1932-3) marks the masses’ entry into history as the “most indubitable feature of a revolution” (17), an intervention of the masses that James highlights in The Black Jacobins. Nevertheless, Trotsky’s adherence to the party is incompatible with James’s opinion. “Only on the basis of a study of political process in the masses themselves,” writes Trotsky, “can we understand the role of parties and leaders, whom we least of all are inclined to ignore” (19). As Stuart Hall puts it, the masses are, for James, “the agents of history” who are “at some remove from organized parties, movements and bureaucracies” (“Breaking” 26, emphasis original).

Furthermore, it was necessary for the black to be recognized as a revolutionary when The Black Jacobins was published in 1938, and thus, according to Scott, for James “to figure him or her as a historical hero” (242). With the party historically absent, the masses had to be represented in relation to the leader whose image conformed to their own identities.

Despite this, James recognizes that even the best leader fails to distill their potential. Historically, this recognition reflects a controversial issue within Marxism at the time when James wrote The Black Jacobins: “the critique of Stalinism” (Scott 74). Illustrating the inception of the Haitian revolution, James notes: “It is the tragedy of mass movements that they need and can only too rarely find adequate leadership”

⁴ Kent Worcester notes that after the early 1940s James became critical of Trotsky. He thought that the “role of Trotskyists would be to link the war against fascism to the struggle against capitalism”, which the clique of the latter could not (C.L.R. James 64).
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(Black 20). Rather than promoting an ideal image of leadership, James believes that without explaining the movements from below which bring about leaders, writing about revolution ends in a very partial view. James accordingly contrasts the masses with Toussaint’s action by tracing what they must have thought. He insinuates the mistrust of the masses towards Toussaint, who valued the white ex-slave owners even after he superseded the power. According to James, whereas Lenin gave the masses careful explanations for the line of action to be followed, “Toussaint explained nothing, and allowed the masses to think that their old enemies were being favoured at their expense” (Black 230). Despite the voice of the masses being unrecorded in historical documents, it is mediated by James’s imagination. Not locating pure consciousness in the masses but critically describing their situation prefigures the concept of the transformative masses.5

However, such mutation of the masses is not necessarily conditioned by their dislocation or migration. It is mediated by their critical concern with where they live as well as by the author’s imagination. Certainly, “international socialism” was on the horizon as he wrote this book (Black 304). For all the universal intention of James, the masses that move the author are regionally based. In an article written for a Trinidadian paper in 1932, James notes of a mass strike in the small town of Lancashire, Nelson. Hearing of it, he was encouraged, even “thrilled to the bone” by “the magnificent spirit of these north country working people” (Letters 124). Another instance can be found in an appendix added in 1963, “From Toussaint L’Ouverture to Fidel Castro.” At the culminating moment in this Caribbean historiography of the masses, James locates the “Chaguaramas Affair”, an event that split James’s long friendship with Eric Williams. Stuart Hall and Kent Worcester respectively document the issue: in 1960 the lease of the military base for the US marine was not supposed to be renewed, but Williams imperiously decided to extend the contract. Exasperated by this, James criticized Williams in his articles in the Nation (“C.L.R. James” 13; “Question” 213). In the appendix, James narrates the mass movement without emphasizing the radical nature of the people. According to James, their rejection of the military base had “not the slightest trace of anti-American feeling”, “equally no

5 If the rise of the revolutionary class around the eighteenth of Brumaire was, as Marx analyzes, blocked by “the Napoleonic Code,” which “prohibits the search for the natural father” (Spivak 262), the recognition of the black masses has been obstructed by the thinkers of the Enlightenment such as Rousseau because of “Le Code Noir” (Buck-Morss 830-1).
trace of anti-British feeling,” and “not even [...] anti-imperialism” (Black 322).

The masses of the people of Trinidad and Tobago looked upon the return of the base as the first and primary stage in their quest for national identity. That they were prepared to suffer for, if need be (of this I am as certain as one can be of such things) to fight and die for. But in the usual accompaniments of a struggle against a foreign base, they were not in any way concerned. Not that they did not know. They most certainly knew. (Black 322-3)

Elsewhere James explains why in Trinidad an antagonistic sentiment against imperialism did not develop: “we are all expatriates, even the Negro ex-slaves. The country has never belonged to us” (Rendezvous 152). Witnessing the masses reclaiming military bases, James acknowledges the transformative masses not as a concept but as a concrete existence: “Though the British flag still blew above them, in their demands and demonstrations for Chaguaramas they were free, freer than they might be for a long time” (Black 323). Surely, James’s articulation of the mass movement here seems to have only a symbolic meaning in his historiography of Caribbean revolutions, but it adumbrates an ideal case of the Caribbean mass movement from below.

2. Shame and Language in George Lamming

Whereas the masses are foregrounded by James as historical agency, Lamming approaches to them by articulating an affectivity of shame. Phillip Nanton rightly indicates the “technique of shaming” in Lamming’s novels (58). However, Nanton’s insight seems to overemphasize Sartre’s influence. Lamming’s use of shame is not intended to teach his society “a guilty conscience” which as Nanton suggests, the author learnt from the philosopher (Nanton 58). With shame, Lamming anatomizes not just the matrix of power by which the people are bound in the colonial situation but the way they excavate, and link themselves with, the colonial memory. The mediation of the people is, for Lamming, a responsibility on which a writer has to elaborate. In the appendix, James mentions that Lamming’s “generation accepts complete responsibility for the West Indies” (Black 324). Yet this does not mean that as A.J. Simoes da Silva suggests, “without the novelist’s [Lamming’s] written text Caribbean people would lack the ability to resist” (57). Instead, the affect of shame
in Lamming’s text, I argue, serves to identify a complicity of the colonizer and the colonized and turn it into responsibility. Later, I would show that Lamming’s use of shame consequently makes this novel an enduring critique of colonialism in that the affect of shame becomes a conduit for the people to mediate themselves.

In his essay, “The Negro Writer and His World,” Lamming opens his argument, setting up a problem of self-definition with which a Negro writer confronts: he has to “encounter himself, so to speak, in a category of men called Negro” (109). This recognition comes from the situation that a framework, not of his, but of the other’s must be used in order for the self to be itself. Shame ensues after this uneasy encounter with the self: “He is a little ashamed, not in the crude sense of not wanting to be this or that, but in the more resonant sense of shame, the shame that touches every consciousness which feels that it has been seen” (109). He is forced to take recourse to the category of the Other without being able to complete his total self. Shame in Lamming’s writing is to be contrasted with the typical interpretations of shame in Sartre’s existential philosophy and Freudian psychoanalysis, both of which Lamming read (“The Sovereignty” 112, 126).

Sartre categorizes shame in *Being and Nothingness* into the existential and the phenomenological. First, one feels shame about one’s own existence: “I am ashamed of what I am. Shame therefore realizes an intimate relation of myself to myself” (245, emphasis original). Second, one feels shame, seeing oneself reflected in the Other: “I am ashamed of myself as I appear to the Other” (246, emphasis original). Shame that Lamming articulates is, however, not simply aroused by the fact that as Sartre formulates, one’s relation to self has to make a detour through the Other. The self of a Negro writer is judged by the gaze of the Other in order for the Other to dialectically complement its totality. As to a general consensus on shame in the psychoanalytic field, Jacqueline Rose schematizes that “[guilt [...] always arises in relation to others; whereas with shame it is your narcissism” (4). Compared to guilt, shame is regressive since it makes the self to reject its relation to others. On the contrary, it is the very relation to the Other that shame is summoned up in Lamming’s writing.

The emergence of shame in Lamming’s writing is of import since it directs one to acknowledge what one wants to deny and might intervene the system of foreclosure.  

6 Shame is recently reevaluated as a political affect that might turn denial into acknowledgement. Satoshi Ukai, for instance, follows the diverse development of shame around the post-Shoah period by
Foreclosure is the scheme of Lacanian psychoanalysis by which Spivak in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* charts her method to track down traces of the native informant under erasure. She quotes from Laplanche and Pontalis: the defensive “ego rejects the incompatible idea together with the affect and behaves as if the idea had never occurred to the ego at all” (4, emphasis original). In explaining Spivak’s tracing of Tierra del Fuego in her reading of Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, Dina Al-Kassim points out that “the trace of the Aboriginal binds the reader within an ethical relation” (172). For Spivak, the affect is irreducible in the process whereby the ethical is connected to the political. Spivak goes on to add: “this rejection of affect served and serves as the energetic and successful defense of the civilizing mission” (5). Spivak’s reformulation of foreclosure is useful for a critique of dominant attempts by which the political is separated from the ethical.

Lamming’s use of shame has the potential to unhinge the foreclosure of the affect that Spivak theorizes. To testify this, Lamming’s view on language in “The Negro Writer and His World” is to be reexamined. Lamming suggests that the Negro writer and his other are emotionally complicit since the former “is a reluctant part of the conspiracy which identifies him with that condition which the Other has created for them both” (109). Subsequently, shame is posited as inherent in a thing rather than in a human being: the language of naming “enables us to rob things of their power to embarrass us” (109). This reversal turns both “the Negro writer” and the Other into those who can be embarrassed. Because a writer is not just signified but signifies the others, he is complicit with the power politics of language. The recognition of complicity is then translated into the responsibilities that a writer must bear. “There are”, proposes Lamming, “three worlds to which the writer bears in some way a responsibility” (112): the private world, the social world, and the “world of men” modeled on “the Negro in the United States” (115). In Lamming’s thesis on language, shame turns complicity into responsibility, connecting the political with the ethical.

European thinkers such as Primo Levi, Gilles Deleuze and René Major, and so on. With this genealogy, he opens up the affect from a seclusion to which Ruth Benedict in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946) relegated as a counterpart of guilt, a cultural stigma that contributed for the policy makers and the conservative thinkers to consolidate the alliance between Japan and US after the Second World War (3-36). In a different context, Stanley Cohen argues that “[s]hame is a more social emotion than guilt – it appeals to a sense of community and moral interdependence rather than to personal responsibility” (216).
3. Excavating memory: In the Castle of My Skin

The novel, In The Castle of My Skin, begins when the protagonist G inquires into himself in parallel with discovering the people who were relegated into submission and invisibility. The protagonist senses an important secret in the affect of shame that his mother revealed as though the destiny of collectivity is shrouded within it. Yet its reason and context are not clear to his son: “My mother said it was a shame, as was everything that displeased her. And even after many years I would try to fix her label.” He asks himself: “What precisely was a shame?” (Lamming, Castle 3) His mother’s contention of shame is unanswered, but her disclosure of the affect stimulates him to excavate the people’s indifference to their forgotten origin, the history of slavery, and the secret of the his birth — the inexistence of his father. He again asks: “What did I remember? My father who had only fathered the idea of me had left me the sole liability of my mother who really fathered me. And beyond that my memory was blank. It sank with its cargo of episodes like a crew preferring to scuttle the consequence of survival” (Castle, 3). Supriya Nair suggests that these lines include the “metonymic reference of the sea [which] recalls the Middle Passage” (82). Precisely, to share the history of the slave trade is the central concern for the Caribbean thinkers like Édouard Glissant. For Glissant, it is to identify the crowd of slaves in the ship that conditions his poetics: “We know ourselves as part and as crowd, in an unknown that does not terrify” (9). Yet the protagonist of In the Castle cannot uncover these crowds. He first has to acknowledge the blankness of his memory, an acknowledgement engendered by the shame his mother clumsily enunciated. The association of images in Lamming’s prose nonetheless portends in this beginning an emergent linkage of forgotten memories with these crowds.

For shame is subsequently used in order to resituate the memory of slavery in the society of the Creighton village. Because of the language of the educated and the Christian education, the memory, however, remains to be locked within the discourse of the master and the slave. The narrator indicates that they are subjugated under “the other’s imagined perfection” (Castle 19), a complicit tie between the dormant masses and the image of authority. This image is composed of the language of the educated by which “the overseer” is opposed to “the ordinary villager”. The narrator suggests that the antagonism is normalized in language: “The image of the enemy, and the enemy was My People. My people are low-down nigger people. My people don’t like to see
their people get on. The language of the overseer. The language of the civil servant” (Castle 18-9). This division within the society is perpetuated by the connection the educated has with “the culture of the Mother Country” (Castle 19). Education further aims to institute this relation. A boy quotes the words of his mother who is “a Sunday School teacher”: “When you are a slave of empire and the garden at the same time, you can be free to belong to both.” He continues: “And you can be free to be ashamed of not thinking enough about them. The more you think of them, the more you are ashamed, and also the less you think of them the more you are ashamed” (Castle 64). Irrespective of whether they recognize or deny their state of slavery, shame remains. Although his mother substitutes the word slavery with “bondage” (Castle 64), it is through shame that this double bind is at least uncovered as their collective situation.

The philosophical conversation of the boys at the seashore reorients the question of shame at the heart of language the colonial education hammered them into. The conversation prefigures a feeling that would substitute the affect of shame, a feeling they do not try to name. What makes them unstable is the language of the educated since they think it severs one from the others. Trumper refers to the mechanism in which one thinks and acts differently from other people, articulating it into his clumsy words as “goin' in your head”: “something goin' off in yuh head pop, pop, an' you can't control it. Boy, you'll get so lonely 'twould be a shame” (Castle 135). That the language dominates one's feeling irritates Trumper. Subsequently, this shame vanishes along with the anticipation that language would be no longer necessary. The protagonist G, Boy Blue, and Trumper encounter a fisherman who saved the life of Boy Blue. They identify themselves with him: “he was like one of us, just like one of us” (Castle 145). G ponders on: “We weren't ashamed. Perhaps we would do better if we had good big words like educated people. But we didn't. We had to say something was like something else, and whatever we said didn't convey all that we felt” (Castle 145). Simoes da Silva criticizes this encounter with the fisherman because of “the nostalgic overtone” which leads to racial essentialism (59). Certainly, a momentary dissolution of language might be dangerous as long as it presupposes an uncontaminated, masculine sphere that would easily slide into an exclusive community. Yet Trumper's comment confirms that a realm of feeling is at least to be retained to formulate a language that is incommensurable with that of the colonial education: “You could do away with feeling. That's why everybody wanted to be educated” (Castle 146). At the moment, the ambivalent choice between a feeling and
language is suspended till the ending of the narrative. Although shame might recede from the scene, the anxiety that the affect evoked remains. To confront this, they have to take recourse to the knowledge of the harsh condition in which the black people in US are subjugated.

4. Imagining “My People”

Shame turns denial into acknowledgement. In addition, it is mobilized in order for neocolonial leaders to dismantle the process of decolonization. Pa, the oldest witness to the events that occur in his community, is almost persuaded by the rhetoric of Mr Slime, an intellectual leader, who recommends he own lands. According to Slime, it is a “shame” to keep such a huge population on a small island. Pa talks to his wife, Ma: "'Twus a high burnin' shame to put on a piece of land no more than a hundred an' something square miles, that's as he call it, square mile, 'twus a shame as he say to keep two hundred thousand people on it” (78). Pa did not realize at this moment that owning the land in Mr Slime’s sense would further the dislocation of the people. In fact, the latter had concealed from the former the contract with the Penny Bank and the Friendly Society. In an interview, Lamming contends that he is “already very skeptical of the authenticity of what would be the new leadership in the form of Slime” since they are not “the natural leaders of the people who became their constituency” (“Sovereignty” 112-3). Lamming’s words indicate that the emergent neocolonial intellectuals cannot mediate the dignity of peasantry for their own lands.

For Lamming, what is crucial in the midst of the shift from colonialism to neocolonialism is not merely the absence of an adequate leader. It is also the need to mediate imagination. Trumper formulates the concept of “My People” by way of his exilic experience in America. As Neil Ten Kortenaar rightly mentions, “the novel implicitly agrees with Trumper’s vision” (53). Trumper finds this in Paul Robeson’s famous song “Let My People Go.” Hearing Trumper singing the song, G understands that “this new entity was different. The race. The people” (Castle 288). Near the end of the novel, G questions the meaning of what Trumper once commented: “You remember you were saying about a feeling,’ I said, ‘a big bad feeling in the pit of the stomach. A feeling you were alone in a world all by yourself, and although there were hundreds of people moving round you, it made no difference” (Castle 292-3). Trumper answers that a “‘man who knows his people won’t ever feel like that. […]
Never” (293). Here the imagination of the protagonist is about to be mediated by the concept of "My People" that his friend invented.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o in his recent essay on Lamming elaborates on this concept that is not fully articulated by Lamming himself. Ngũgĩ retells what he thinks is the core of the novel: what happens here is a transformation “from just a people in themselves, with lives governed by mythic consciousness and local allegiance, to a people for themselves, governed by a vision that goes well beyond the boundaries of the village and the Caribbean shores to the outer arena of black and social struggles worldwide” (“Freeing” 164-5). The people have to be mediated through language by a writer’s responsible relation to himself, to social relations, and to the world that the others confront — their harsh reality. Lamming himself paraphrases this: “there is always an acre of ground in the New World which keeps growing echoes in my head” (Pleasures 50). Lamming’s concept of “My People” is brought about through the mediation of the landscape that reverberates inside him. Consequently, it succeeds in rewriting “my people” in the language of the educated which was utilized to divide them.

5. Conclusion

I have examined that Lamming’s use of shame is marked to the extent that this affect lubricates a channel between complicity and responsibility. In addition, I have demonstrated that it thus makes him invent a way to mediate the imagination of the masses whose memory of slavery is buried and discover the way for them to mediate themselves. For Lamming, shame is an important affect that embraces and nurtures the potential of an ambivalent move from denial to recognition. On the other hand, James’s concern departs from the psychological terrain on which Lamming anatomizes the colonial society and the masses. I have emphasized that James’s idea of the masses, which occasionally mobilize themselves as historical agency, is first and foremost composed of acknowledging their condition that is historically limited. This recognition serves to critically describe the masses’ relation to its leader. Yet his imagination enables him to witness the masses as they mediate themselves, which in

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7 More than thirty years ago, Ngũgĩ had already mentioned that In the Castle of My Skin prophesized “what has happened to the peasant masses in Africa, the West Indies, and all over the former colonial world” (Homecoming 126).
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turn presages the decolonization to come. Despite such differences, they are equally engaged in writing the mass movement from below: the masses James traces are perpetuated in Lamming’s writing as “My People.”

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Mediating Imagination: The Figure of the Masses in C.L.R. James' *The Black Jacobins* and George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*

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The connection between the two Caribbean texts, George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin* and C.L.R. James's *The Black Jacobins*, hasler been rarely identified especially with regards to their shared concern for mediating the masses. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri rejects mediation in their foregrounding of the multitude, but in this rejection the dignity the masses have of their lands, as Franz Fanon encompasses, cannot be represented. In the process of decolonization, mediating this dignity is a form of responsibility in which Lamming and James differently partake, and is realized in critical engagement with their region.

In *The Black Jacobins*, the masses are not represented monolithic but articulated as two types, "descriptive" and "transformative", a distinction Spivak makes in her reading of Marx's analysis of the class relation in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. James's dialogue with Marxism prepares a concept of the transformative masses while the masses in Haitian Revolution are historically examined. Yet the contrast he draws with the leader of the revolution, Toussaint Louverture, enacts the necessity for them to mediate themselves. In Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*, such transformative masses are located near the end of the narrative in Trumper's knowledge of the black people in the US. Before reaching this, the novel employs shame for the characters to locate denials that colonial education has instituted— the memory of slavery, the politics of language, and a feeling that would be alternative to shame. Shame thus witnesses the complicity between the colonized and the colonizer, which subsequently stimulates in the former a responsible sense for their own people. Lamming's use of shame consequently succeeds in representing the masses and despite their differences this representation is consonant with what James tried to do in his writings.