

Cluster on Black Diasporic Writing

“From a Distant Witness” in Rome and
London: Black Atlantic Temporalities in
William Demby’s *Beetlecreek* and
George Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin*

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Abstract: Focusing on the formal methods of two modernist works of Cold War-era black Atlantic fiction, William Demby’s *Beetlecreek* (1950) and George Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953), the article examines the authors’ respective positions of exile in Rome and London and choice to pen their debut, semi-autobiographical coming-of-age novels, set in the 1930s, with existential undertones—Demby’s in a small segregated town in the Southern United States and Lamming’s in a small colonial village in the Caribbean. Demby and Lamming use aesthetic modes of defamiliarization as a liberatory strategy, adopting modernist formal and temporal strategies to estrange structures of oppression. The essay argues for reading the authors’ novels beyond national and canonical boundaries as part of a larger body of black Atlantic literature that deconstructs racialized regimes in the Global South. I conclude with a brief reading of each writer’s intersections with Langston Hughes and Richard Wright, positing mobile networks of black diasporic affiliation forged in a period of global flux and transformation. This article compares two writers normally read only in distinct African American, Afro-Caribbean, and/or Black British contexts and calls attention to their shared priorities of black modernist innovation and politico-aesthetics.

Keywords: William Demby, George Lamming, black Atlantic, expatriate literature, transnationalism, temporal turn, black internationalism

In Richard Wright's introduction to the first American edition of George Lamming's debut novel, *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953), he relates that "[o]ne feels not so much alone when, from a distant witness, supporting evidence comes to buttress one's own testimony" (vi). Wright's notion of a "distant witness" instantiates a mode of black diasporic affiliation, invoked by a renowned African American writer living in exile in Paris since 1946, in praise of Lamming, an Afro-Caribbean author who expatriated to London in 1950. This article compares the distant witness of Lamming's novel with that of *Beetlecreek* (1950), African American author William Demby's first novel, written upon his expatriation to Rome in 1947. Focusing on these two works of Cold War-era black Atlantic fiction,¹ this comparative analysis explores the formal and thematic effects wrought by these avant-garde expatriate authors. Read in tandem, their shared aesthetic project of bearing witness to their segregated homelands from a position of critical distance generates complex black Atlantic temporalities that defamiliarize structures of oppression: that of Jim Crow in *Beetlecreek* and colonization in *In the Castle of My Skin*.²

Demby and Lamming penned these modernist novels from their respective positions in postwar Rome and London, each electing to write semi-autobiographical, coming-of-age novels with existentialist undertones set in the fraught 1930s of the Global South. With *Beetlecreek*, Demby innovated a black modernist aesthetic that follows the inner desires and thwarted dreams of multiple characters living in a small fictional town in the rural Southern United States during the Great Depression. *Beetlecreek* centers on an African American adolescent, Johnny Johnson, and his uncle, David Diggs, whose experiences share some biographical resonances with Demby's own life story.³ *Beetlecreek* often features internal, existential reveries, and its themes focus on interracial relations and racialized violence under Jim Crow segregation. Demby worked on the novel in the late 1940s in Rome, where he was immersed in the antifascist, postwar art scene and lived with a leftist cadre of Italian artists and filmmakers. Lamming wrote his experimental bildungsroman upon his Windrush-era move to London in 1950, where he worked on the BBC radio program *Caribbean Voices* and formed friendships with other

West Indian writers and intellectuals, completing his first novel, like Demby, within the first few years of his expatriation.⁴ The reader first encounters Lamming’s semi-autobiographical protagonist, “G,” on his ninth birthday, before he appears again in the second half of the novel in his teen years. Through its poetic language and disjunctive form, *In the Castle of My Skin* defamiliarizes the colonial power structure, subtly undoing what Lamming later characterized as his debut novel’s project: to present and deconstruct the “tragic innocence” (“Sea of Stories”) of the colonized in the British Caribbean.

Critical distance shaped the writings of black authors in exile like Lamming and Demby, whose decision to move abroad after World War II was influenced by the forces of racism and a dearth of opportunities at home. Demby’s and Lamming’s first novels set into practice critical cosmopolitan thinking—what James Clifford terms “cosmopolitanism from below” (qtd. in Robbins and Horta 9) regarding the ravages of colonial modernity amid the rise of US imperialism. Both writers experiment with form, content, and style to “imagine,” in keeping with Rebecca Walkowitz’s theorization of cosmopolitan style, “that conditions of national and transnational affiliation depend on narrative patterns of attentiveness, relevance, perception, and recognition” (6). Demby’s and Lamming’s respective displacements from their homelands are compelled by a creative impulse: systemic oppression motivates each writer to seek alternative ways of being in and seeing the world. This is not to say that Rome and London afforded unfettered, utopic freedoms or a lack of racism, but they provided artistic spaces from which to deconstruct the status quo of the segregated societies that Demby and Lamming experienced in their formative years.

Reading these authors’ novels beyond national borders and canons and as part of a larger body of black Atlantic literature reveals their mutual investment in aesthetic defamiliarization as a liberatory strategy. Both novels warrant continued consideration for their formal innovation and politico-aesthetic achievements. *Beetlecreek* maintains a tone of modernist alienation and polyphonic narration that makes strange the US race relations of the 1930s, generating a temporal complexity given the racialized past of chattel slavery and the urgent demands for equity

and social justice during the post-World War II moment of its composition. *Beetlecreek* was completed four years before the US Supreme Court ruled on *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), initiating school integration and galvanizing the broader US civil rights movement. At the time of Lamming's novel's publication, in 1953, the West Indian Federation had not yet been formed, nor had Barbados gained independence from Britain. Demby's and Lamming's shared project of defamiliarization is integral to a larger project of conceiving a black diasporic voice and a desegregated aesthetic vision. Each novel uses formal methods including internal meditations, dialogue, and metaphors of stagnation and release to decolonize the material and psychic processes of racialized oppression.

Steeped in the modernist registers of experimental language, including stream of consciousness and wandering narrations that move into and across the minds of multiple main and minor characters, both novels contemplate complex modes of being in the world, and they present critical epistemologies espoused by young black characters who come of age in a time of local and global conflict. *Beetlecreek* ends on a dire, cautionary note: the violent outcome of rumor and speculation in a small segregated town in the early 1930s, which signals a world moving toward war, ethnic fanaticism, genocide, and nuclear catastrophe. *In the Castle of My Skin's* destabilization of knowledge production begins in the late 1930s and moves into the postwar 1940s by the novel's end, situating changes transpiring on Barbados against a backdrop of global violence enacted under the nationalist banners of Nazism, Fascism, and imperialism. Lamming's novel also ends on an ambivalent note, but it is more optimistic than Demby's, as G. and his friend Trumper set their sights on a futural horizon, albeit one outside of Barbados. When read side by side, these two novels reveal surprising affinities, linked by the Global South and the authors' respective experiences in exile. In "Sea of Stories," a meditation written at the turn of the twenty-first century, Lamming remarks on the interrelatedness of the US and the Caribbean in the context of US imperialism; in the wake of "the tactical withdrawal of the British," he observes, "the Caribbean returns to its old role of an imperial frontier, now perceived as essential to the security interests of the US." The politico-aesthetics of Demby's and Lamming's debut

novels are all the more temporally complex given that they were penned from Europe at the outset of the Cold War in an era of mounting social liberation and anticolonial movements.

I. Estranging the US South from Rome: Antifascist Perspectives in *Beetlecreek*

Demby expatriated to Italy in 1947, having served there in a segregated troop during World War II. He wrote his debut novel in the midst of an Italian society refashioning itself in a moment of leftist artistic momentum that defined itself against Fascist doctrines and Italy's failed colonial ambitions in Africa, particularly its brutal occupation of Ethiopia.⁵ Demby was aware of his unique choice to move to Rome rather than join the more established African American expatriate community in Paris; he relates that though there were thousands of African American servicemen in Italy during World War II, “[i]ndeed, those first years of my return to Rome after the war I had the eerie feeling of being the only Negro in Italy, since I seldom saw another Negro on the streets or met Negroes in the intellectual salons I was beginning to frequent” (“An American Negro Survives” II-II).⁶ Such an impression, which stands in contrast to the sizeable Afro-Caribbean population immigrating to London in this period, suffuses Demby's novel with its tone of alienation and the shared, though distinctive, feelings of isolation that its characters experience. *Beetlecreek* grew out of Demby's short story “Saint Joey,” which he wrote in 1946 while studying with poet Robert Hayden at Fisk University after the war.⁷ He continued working on the novel while visiting Salzburg in 1947; it came together while Demby stayed in his friend Alex Randolph's residence in Venice, the Palazzo Ca'Dario, which neighbored Peggy Guggenheim's palazzo on the Canal Grande.⁸ The novel, as I discuss below, makes racial oppression strange through an inversion model—a dynamic amplified by Demby's own exceptional position as an African American author living in postwar Italy.

Through its narrative focalization, the novel gives voice to the inner worlds of four characters living in the small, fictional West Virginian town of Beetlecreek in the Depression era: Johnny Johnson, an African American adolescent who comes to stay with his uncle in Beetlecreek

while his widowed mother convalesces in a Pittsburgh hospital and who is pressured to join the town's black gang, "The Nightriders"; David Diggs, Johnny's uncle, who had dreams of leaving Beetlecreek as a young man to pursue his passion as an artist but now paints signs for a living; David's wife, Mary Diggs, who does not understand her husband's remoteness and focuses her time and energies on planning church events and working in the home of a white family to whose lifestyle she aspires; and Bill Trapp, a lonely, elderly white man and former circus worker, whose small, shabby farm is located between the black and white sections of town.

Johnny is a catalyst for change in the town. When Trapp catches Johnny plucking apples from his tree, Trapp invites him to his porch for cider rather than punish him. The reclusive Trapp has not spoken to a single person for some fifteen years. When word spreads quickly through town that Trapp has apprehended Johnny on his property, Johnny's Uncle David rushes to Trapp's house to rescue his nephew; initially, Trapp asserts that he comes from respectable folks and owns his property, but his assertions of whiteness do not cohere (Demby, *Beetlecreek* 11–12). He is, as David knows, an outcast in town. Switching gears, Trapp seizes the opportunity for human contact and offers David refreshment, and the three characters, two black and one white and spanning three generations, share a pleasant evening together. This radical breaking of silence and isolation across racial and generational lines releases a destabilizing force that flows through the town and culminates with Trapp's ostensible death by the novel's end. These themes, explored by Demby after the war, gesture back to the previous decade and engage the violent aims of white supremacy, racial oppression, and nationalism.

As mentioned above, *Beetlecreek* pursues an inversion model, as it follows the fate of Trapp, who is falsely accused of a sexual crime. In an era of sustained racial violence against African Americans, including a wave of lynchings and wrongful incarcerations, *Beetlecreek* defamiliarizes the rhetoric of crime and punishment in the Jim Crow South. Trapp, however, appears not to recognize either the overt or tacit rules of segregation. Following his first encounter with David, he meets him again for drinks at Telrico's Café, which serves an African American clientele. As

an Italian American, Telrico is a liminal figure in the town who cathects with whiteness; nevertheless, “nobody thought of Telrico as a white man, but he never forgot it himself” (154). For his part, Trapp is energized by his visits with David and Johnny, and he begins a series of kind acts: he gives two white girls cups of cider and two African American girls a wheelbarrow full of giant pumpkins for their church benefit, sharing the bounty from his fecund, Eden-esque garden. Trapp is an abject figure—when he passes through the African American section of town, the children throw stones at him, spitting at him and calling him a “[p]eckerwood, peckerwood” (57), a slur for poor whites. Trapp, nevertheless, remains determined to maintain his newfound contact with people. His largesse culminates with his throwing a picnic for the town’s black and white children. The result of this interracial gathering, however, is disastrous, as he is falsely accused of molestation by one of the white girls in attendance and branded a “sex-fiend” (151) by the entire town. In his discussion of interracial encounters and the pervert in early 1950s literature, Tyler T. Schmidt observes that *Beetlecreek*’s climax “[re-minds] us how deeply threatening these desegregationist acts were to the Cold War ideology of containment” (137).

Alongside this inversion model of injustice, the novel subtly paints a picture of Jim Crow segregation as the strange fruit of the racialized past. The narrative takes pains to differentiate how the allegations against Trapp spread through the segregated quarters of town, thereby tracing modes of knowledge production and circulation. In the African American section of town, the townspeople repeatedly allude to the fact that Trapp would have been lynched immediately if he had been a black man. To confirm this point, a man named Slim directly invokes the infamous Scottsboro trials (Demby, *Beetlecreek* 151).⁹ Addressing a group of black men at the barbershop, Slim says, “Now you turn the tables of this thing. . . . You just pick up any newspaper from the last few years and read what happened to those Scottsboro boys and you can imagine what’d happen to him! His life wouldn’t be worth a row of pins” (151). In contrast, Trapp is ostracized but no formal charges are brought against him—members of both the black and the white parts of town decide not to call the authorities. In another subtle allusion to the racial-

ized past, David visits with his old flame, Edith Johnson, in the living room of her childhood home, where there is a picture on the wall “of a Civil War battlement with a regiment of Negro troops lined up stiffly to fight a white cavalry” (181). Given Demby’s own service in Italy in a segregated troop during World War II, writing this description from his vantage point in postwar Rome, where he lived, worked, and socialized freely with Italians, other Europeans, and Americans, defamiliarizes the practice of racial segregation and white supremacy’s *longue durée*.

In keeping with the novel’s use of an inversion model, the town’s black adolescent gang, the Nightriders, commands Johnny to seek vigilante justice against Trapp as an initiation rite for his alleged perversion by burning down his house. James C. Hall notes the “horrible irony” that the black gang members don black robes and masks and call for violence in an “imitation of the Ku Klux Klan” (233). Initially, Johnny resists their peer pressure to join their gang and is repulsed by their leader—notably, given the antifascist context in which Demby wrote the book, called “Leader” in the text—who kills a pigeon with his bare hands to impress the other boys. Nevertheless, Johnny’s growing urge to become a “member” (Demby, *Beetlecreek* 166) leads him to capitulate to their demand that he burn down Trapp’s home. Johnny’s violent initiation into manhood comes at the end of the novel, subverting the redemptive denouement sometimes associated with coming-of-age narratives and ostensibly leading to Trapp’s death (Johnny strikes him unconscious and leaves him on his property, engulfed in flames). While Lamming’s G. has apparently auspicious future prospects, the implications of Johnny’s actions are dire and his fate remains uncertain. He is, after all, a black adolescent who attacked a white man, however marginalized, in a segregated Southern town, a situation that recalls Slim’s speech in the barbershop.

Beetlecreek’s plot takes on a double meaning as a cautionary tale about Fascism and white supremacy in light of the context surrounding its publication at the dawn of the Cold War era. *Beetlecreek* was published in English by Rinehart in 1950 and in the same year by a major Italian press, Mondadori, translated by Fernanda Pivano as *Festa a Beetlecreek*.¹⁰ In a 2008 interview, Demby looks back on his experiences during this

period in Rome and the gap between perceptions of the role of the African American expatriate writer and his own aesthetic priorities:

I am almost famous, you know, like . . . Alberto Mondadori invites me to dinner because I am black! But then you discover that I am a complex black guy. I don't humor the Italian celebrity who invites me or who is talking to me. I don't humor their preconceptions. I want to always challenge them. I understand that they are coming out of Fascism, I am hip, and I want to show another dimension of being black and move the understanding of what it means to be black into the future that doesn't exist yet, in which there will be a world in which human differences will be defined, but not necessarily in the same way they are being defined now. And race will not be the fundamental one. (Interview)

In conceptualizing a desegregationist aesthetics, his debut novel constructs complex layers of trauma, loss, psychic devastation and critical resistance across time and space. Again, much of this work in *Beetlecreek* takes place through an inversion model that emphasizes Trapp's outsider status, which affords several occasions for readers and the novel's African American characters to compare their collective treatment by authorities and the white majority population against Trapp's treatment when he is accused. Racism suffuses the novel's Depression-era setting, made more temporally complex by its being written from postwar Rome by an African American expatriate and veteran of a segregated troop.

While Lamming's protagonist G. is presented in the novel as a nine-year-old and later as a teenager in the postwar 1940s, Demby's novel remains temporally rooted in the early 1930s, underscoring feelings of suffocation and dread as it follows Johnny, whose struggles are juxtaposed with those of his uncle, David. David's life in *Beetlecreek* is stymied by Jim Crow segregation, and he assumes the role of the repressed artist in the novel. His teenage crush, Edith, returns to town to attend the funeral of her adoptive mother and destabilizes David's stagnant life. She is an object of fascination in the African American section of town, having left *Beetlecreek* for college and later for a life in the city.

For David, Edith's return "brought movement to his life (a life which had become static, caught in the creek reeds, turned rusty and muddy), had importance because it lifted the suffocation from him" (Demby, *Beetlecreek* 94). Edith, who enacts David's wishes to leave Beetlecreek, demonstrates a critical distance as a black female outsider, a distance that highlights an alternative mode of being predicated upon departure.

Edith's stimulating presence awakens David to an awareness of his past experiences and the racialization of his ambitions. The narration reveals how David would walk for miles as an adolescent in Pittsburgh to borrow library books related to painting so that he could emulate them in his own drawings.¹¹ This form of creative travel and inspiration contrasts with the fixity he encounters that suffocates him upon his move to the segregated town of Beetlecreek. The result of viewing and making art is that "for a little while he could forget that he was a Negro" (Demby, *Beetlecreek* 95). This poses a tension in the novel between art as the idealized vehicle of individual transcendence and its irreducible connection to embodied and collective experience. The narration figures social identity in Beetlecreek as relentlessly homogenized, for "up there in Pittsburgh it was being a kid first and it didn't make any difference that he was a Negro. But when he went to that Negro college, he began to feel it, and along with it, the feeling of being suffocated and unable to move" (95). This feeling of suffocation, the narration posits, was not about a dearth of "opportunities" or even "civil rights," but it "had to do with Death, feeling frozen, suffocated, unable to breathe, knowing there was little to be done about it" (96). The novel describes the town's creek where mud and reeds trap endless objects; David thinks, "like the rusty cans, he was trapped, caught, unable to move again" (95).¹²

Written with critical distance from Rome, Demby characterizes segregation in terms of death and suffocation. The novel gives voice not only to the material reality of segregation but to its nuanced psychic effects: what David terms "the feeling of the death-grip" (96), which "would seem the most natural and permanent thing in the world" (97). The only relief from the death-grip, for David, is in making art, reading, or looking at art books. His college peers would rather engage in "goodtiming with girls or drinking" to escape their own feelings of "being suffo-

cated” (96), and he, too, sometimes joins them in these activities. Years later, having lost his sense of self in a loveless marriage that yields a still-born child (100), David yearns for a more authentic and creative life.

When Edith returns to Beetlecreek, she catalyzes a change in David, who decides to leave town with her for the North. She is a complex character who—like Lamming’s character Trumper, who returns to Barbados after living in the US—brings new knowledge to the town from the urban North, reconfiguring Beetlecreek’s status quo and causing characters throughout town to speculate about her experiences. In contrast to Edward Margolies’ early reading of the novel, which presents Edith “as a death figure, having been hardened and corrupted in the big-city Negro ghettos” (176), the narration describes her fierce, anti-hypocritical attitude toward Beetlecreek as generating movement out of stasis and homogeneity. Moreover, Edith’s apparent hardness, as she tells David, originates in the trauma of having been raped at age thirteen by an older white man while she was walking home (Demby, *Beetlecreek* 114). While Trapp is demonized and ostensibly killed over false allegations of assault, Edith’s true assailant is never brought to justice, which lends another layer to the novel’s inversion model and offers a nuanced call for social justice.

The “death-grip” of American racism and the peculiar status quo of Jim Crow segregation enter into a compelling dialogue with postwar Italian society. Composed in the shadow of Fascism and while Demby was living in an artists’ commune with a view of the ruins of Ancient Rome, *Beetlecreek’s* narrative meditations take up recurrent cycles of oppression. Such critical cosmopolitanism conjures the US South as part of a history-haunted Global South. Demby frames his book in these terms:

This was a story that was very sneaky, because it was a novel that was talking about some elements of racial prejudice, but not really. All the stories were occult, they were not the stories that people were thinking about. They read novels in the 1950s and what everybody was looking for, if it was a black novel, was Richard Wright. The problem was in that; no one

was thinking about a Proust in *Beetlecreek* and persons did not suspect that a black writer was so sophisticated that [he] had had in a very short time experiences, that he was very quick to understand in a metaphysical way, all of these problems that were coming out in a middle-class crisis in Europe, and a sexual crisis that was reflecting itself in Nazism, and Fascism, and even in Communism. (Interview)

Demby theorizes the role of the black writer in cosmo-political terms. While Wright's fiction has its own project in mind—that of social realism—Demby envisions his aesthetic project in syncretic terms. Traveling the black Atlantic from Rome to the agrarian US South of the politically charged Depression era, *Beetlecreek* privileges ambiguity and modernist alienation over triumph or redemption. Such a tone is fitting for the moment of its composition in postwar Italy amid the rubble of defeat and in the aftermath of the nationalist fervor underpinning Fascism.

Beetlecreek ends on a note of profound uncertainty that is indicative of mounting Cold War geopolitical tensions. Though Edith and David leave Beetlecreek together at the novel's end, in modernist fashion, the narration takes care to avoid implying that they are bound for a utopic future in the urban North; as their bus departs in the final scene, a divide has already settled between them, imparting a note of alienation and ennui. Moreover, the pair can hear fire engines in the distance, a reminder of Trapp's likely death and young Johnny's uncertain future as his assailant. Such violence and the lovers' emotional detachment from each other are steeped in the logic of segregation. Nevertheless, David and Edith's departure registers mobility, and the destruction of Trapp's farm—located at the crossroads of the novel's black and white communities—allows for a simultaneous set of futural, desegregationist possibilities. Like the US South's uneven modernization, Rome, too, sits at the divide between Northern and Southern Italy, compounding and elaborating Demby's debut novel's meditations on social identity and intersectional, sustained forms of oppression, which are always already preceded by modes of resistance.

II. Alternative Knowledge Production in *In the Castle of My Skin*

Unlike the physical violence against Trapp in *Beetlecreek*, which ultimately defamiliarizes the ubiquity of anti-black violence in the US, Lamming’s novel *In the Castle of My Skin* emphasizes the rhetorical violence of the colonial experience of his youth in Barbados, also known as “Little England.” *In the Castle of My Skin* engages with multiple systems of knowledge-making—colonial, diasporic, and hybrid, among others—to deconstruct what Lamming terms in his nonfiction writing “the colonial structure of awareness” (“Occasion” 36). Lamming asserted in 2003 that this structure “was not a physical cruelty. Indeed, the colonial experience of my generation was almost wholly without violence. It was a terror of the mind; a daily exercise in self-mutilation” (“Sea of Stories”). Lamming’s minor character Trumper, who moves to the US but returns to Barbados just prior to the novel’s semi-autobiographical protagonist G.’s own departure to work in Trinidad, differentiates between the African American experience of racialized physical violence and the rhetorical violence of racism on Barbados: the idea, for instance, of “[M]embers Only” (Lamming, *Castle* 296) spaces on the island to which black residents could never gain membership. In Demby’s novel, violence is a perpetual threat—as evidenced by talk of police raids (*Beetlecreek* 17, 20, 145) and the Scottsboro trials—that only punctures the town when Johnny attacks Trapp, whereas *In the Castle of My Skin* focuses on the psychic violence of colonialism in order to characterize the colonized’s “tragic innocence” (Lamming, “Sea of Stories”).

Like Demby’s wandering narration, which travels across multiple characters’ consciousnesses, Lamming’s novel refuses a stable narrative perspective, recalling Paul Gilroy’s notion of black Atlantic cultural production as “stereophonic” (3). *In the Castle of My Skin* opens with G.’s first-person narration—a perspective which returns periodically in the novel, often shifting, notably, into a “we” voice—before moving into the consciousness of other characters and also deploying a third-person point of view. This polyphonic novel spends a great deal of narrative space musing on the uses of language in a colonial context, self-reflexively emphasizing the incompleteness of knowledge in Creighton’s village, the novel’s setting, named after the British landlord, with depic-

tions of the villagers' forced reliance upon speculation and hearsay to make sense of and situate their respective experiences on the island. This narrative strategy both underscores the villagers' predicament and calls attention to the horizontal strategies the villagers use to make alternative meanings despite the material and rhetorical limitations imposed upon them by the colonial structure. Mary Chamberlain duly observes that Lamming's "narratives are interrupted narratives, modelled not on the compulsion of reason but on the convergences of history" (191). Chamberlain's insight signals Lamming's narrative tendency toward interruption and against a forward-moving telos, a tendency that works by historiographical compilation and juxtaposition rather than linear progression. A commingling of dialogical perspectives emerges in Lamming's novel's experimental style and disjunctive form to challenge a master narrative of colonial paternalism and progress.

At the meta-level, Lamming's text examines knowledge production from multiple angles that form an interplay between past and present: from the periphery of the village; from a liminal, proto-national space; and from the exilic space of Lamming's expatriation to London. These multiple vantage points appear throughout the text, probing modes of knowledge production and their effects. In "Narrating the Nation," Homi Bhabha posits that there is "a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write of it and the lives of those who live it" (359). Lamming was in a unique position at the forefront of an emerging West Indian literary movement, though speaking of and for Barbados is necessarily a fraught task. His anticolonial novel is marked with Bhabha's Janus-faced metaphor of ambivalence, as the novel reckons with the role of the racialized past in the present, casting its critical eye back upon the institutions of slavery and colonization even as it looks forward to possibilities of independence and structural refashioning. Although Lamming's text not does present nationalism as an antidote to colonialism, its implicit call for independence beckons toward a futural horizon by the novel's end. Lamming's novel contributes to the period's work of decolonizing the imagination. The fact that he wrote from postwar London—the heart of the waning British

Empire—amplifies his novel’s themes through critical distance from his homeland.

With its stylistic risks and innovative form, *In the Castle of My Skin* demonstrates a loosening of rigid categories instilled by the colonial apparatus—an artistic achievement that played an integral part in the formation of an emerging literary tradition. The novel, which depicts the intimate and social life of the villagers, puts into practice Lamming’s hope that a West Indian voice and vision would emerge in time, as he expresses in essays such as “The Occasion for Speaking.” In keeping with this desire, the novel effectively represents a diverse range of voices and perspectives. J. Dillon Brown observes that a number of critics note the novel’s elliptical, impressionistic narrative, which eschews conventional plotting and presents a certain formal difficulty characteristic of high modernism. Brown cites several reviews written in preeminent media outlets comparing Lamming’s novel to Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The difficulty of Lamming executing his rallying task and vision for the West Indian novel to find its own voice is woven into the form and style of this experimental first novel.

At the outset of the novel, G. voices the instability of knowledge and memory, a motif which recurs throughout the novel, particularly in regard to the boys’ colonial education at the village school. On his ninth birthday, which transpires amid a catastrophic flood, G. muses, “And 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 a blank” (Lamming, *Castle* 11). G.’s profound statement of coming into being as an “idea” in juxtaposition with his own memory as a “blank” speaks to the novel’s broader concerns regarding cultural history, shared memory, and the need to tell the story of one’s own past in order to create one’s own cultural meanings and narratives against those assigned by the dominant order.

In this vein, and reinforcing Lamming’s retrospective sense of his debut project’s displaying and deconstructing the “tragic innocence” of the colonized in Barbados, Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o argues that Lamming’s novel dramatizes a cultural “mutilation and amnesia” (167). Accordingly, when one of the village schoolboys asks his teacher about slavery after

hearing an old woman's remark about the "good and great queen" freeing the island's slaves, the teacher explains to the class that slavery was something that happened "not here, somewhere else" (Lamming, *Castle* 56, 58). The teacher's statement performs the constitutive function of language in the shaping of knowledge and experience—in other words, the teacher lies to the children about the past, but her narrative seems reliable because of her role as an authority figure; this constitutive function of disseminating misinformation facilitates the colonial project of making docile subjects. One of the schoolboys expresses great relief upon hearing this information: "Thank God, he wasn't ever a slave. He or his father or his father's father. Thank God nobody in Barbados was ever a slave" (57). In response to this passage, Ngūgĩ elaborates the effect of this lesson that "slavery has nothing to do with them; it happened to others. The school reproduces the notion of Barbados as Little England, a replica of Big England. This is more real, for it is played over and over again in the colonial narrative in books and on the blackboard" (167–68). Repetition and selective reading are integral to the production of colonial knowledge. The novel uses methods of defamiliarization to make strange these processes. In turn, not all of the boys are satisfied with the teacher's reply; despite their teacher's disavowal of slavery on the island, the boys cannot entirely dismiss the old woman's memory of slavery nor the oral transmission of her knowledge in the village. The word "slave" haunts the boys' minds, a haunting that announces their increasing skepticism and attendant alternative forms of knowing that exceed the village school's obfuscating, disciplinary function.

The village school's mission to inculcate and reinforce a message of dependency on the mother country is an incomplete process. Highlighting the school's ironic function and effects, Sandra Pouchet Paquet notes how although "supposedly a source of knowledge and understanding, the school functions to perpetuate ignorance, confusion, and a destructive cultural dependence on the mother country among its pupils" (19). The production of knowledge, again, is not entirely regulated in the exchange regarding slavery between the teacher and students. John Plotz explains the transformative potential of "discovering that one's imaginary motherland, the England that made and shaped one, bears

no relation to the England of the English. In other words, by refusing its imaginary hold, one can discover that the seeming portability of the imperial motherland is an illusion” (309). The novel supports such a conclusion regarding the colonial narrative as a collective fantasy with its unrelenting, defamiliarizing examination of the objects—flags, coins, uniforms, books, etc.—that go into maintaining British subjectivity. Lamming’s defamiliarizing narrative project takes on deeper resonances, as it is written from war-ravaged London, when England began to retract its colonial reach in the post-World War II era—alluded to in the novel as the inevitable end of the “ugly,” which the village shoemaker subtly links to his memories of Marcus Garvey’s visit to Barbados (Lamming, *Castle* 103).

The novel calls attention to the role of optical surveillance in driving the colonial project of control. Disparate images and effects commingle to form an idea of what the narrator terms “the Great,” which represents a mode of colonial knowledge production relentlessly conditioned and perpetuated by the power apparatus: “The landlord. The overseer. The villager. The image of the enemy. The limb of the law, strict, fierce, aggressive. These had combined to produce an idea of the Great” (Lamming, *Castle* 28). Lamming himself points to “the Great,” or dynamics of psychic violence wrought upon the colonized, affecting one’s perception of one’s self and the world as a form of “self-mutilation” (“Sea of Stories”). For example, the English inspector’s visit to the village school inspires dread in the village’s black teachers and pupils alike, so that “on such occasions the teachers and boys all seemed frightened, and the head teacher who seldom laughed would smile for the length of the inspector’s visit” (Lamming, *Castle* 35). Like “the Great’s” anxiety-producing omnipresence and the guilt-producing appearance of the constable among the innocent in the village, the inspector’s visit interpellates the teachers and students as incomplete British subjects. The novel estranges and dissects this oppressive structure, modeling resilience in the face of oppression and a way of living within this material and psychic realm of domination.

Language, as such, is at once a tool of control in the novel and a potential vehicle of liberation. Certainly, language’s indoctrinating po-

tential is made evident in the novel's treatment of colonial education. The regimented schoolhouse, however, stands in contrast to the beach, where G. and his friends Trumper, Bob, and Boy Blue spend time reflecting on their lives and speaking openly about their hopes and fears for the future. The beach—at once a place of dangerous tides and expansive possibilities—is an appropriate locale for the novel's meditations on language and recalls the paradoxically destructive and transformative power of the novel's initiating flood: “the season of flood could change everything. The floods could level the stature and even conceal the identity of the village” (Lamming, *Castle* 11). During one of the boys' ocean-side discussions, language is compared to a knife: “When the feelings came up like so many little pigs that grunted and irritated with their grunts, you could slaughter them. You could slaughter your feelings as you slaughtered a pig. Language was all you needed” (154). Language, the boys recognize, has been used on the island to exact control. In this vein, G. thinks, “Perhaps we would do better if we had good big words like the 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” (153). G. points to both language's potential to dominate others and its inadequacy to convey meaning owing to its constant deferral. The novel presents language as differential and incomplete, so that “something was like something else.” This revelation, that language has transformative, mobile dimensions, a quality which upsets young G., is ironically the same dynamic that unsettles the colonial project of fixed binaries over time and is at the heart of Lamming's novel's aesthetic aims.

Incomplete access to knowledge characterizes a key scene in which civil unrest explodes on the island, spreading from the city to Creighton's village as its black inhabitants seek better working conditions and wages. What Demby presents as an individual scandal in the form of Trapp's allegations is a communal one in Lamming's novel. Like the tension between town and city in *Beetlecreek*, Lamming focuses on the gap between village and city. As word comes to the village of riots breaking out in the city, the villagers find it “difficult to act since everything depended on the fighting in the city which no one had seen. . . . There was fighting in the city. That was what they were all told, and they repeated the words

and tried to guess who were fighting whom. But they couldn't follow it clearly” (190). Time and again, *In the Castle of My Skin* emphasizes how ruling officials withhold information from the villagers to exert domination and dampen mobilization. Nevertheless, several villagers join the masses protesting in the city despite deadly police force, and they return with news of what they have seen. Chamberlain details the widespread uprisings in the British Caribbean during the 1930s, noting that the uprising in Barbados in 1937 “[was] the culmination of a century of frustration and a watershed marking the transition from the struggle for emancipation to one for independence” (176).

Decades later, Lamming asserted that although the villagers in his fictionalized account do not harm their white landlord, who totters weakly through the village, shaken by what is transpiring, in retrospect, Lamming felt that “the past now seemed more brutal, and I wondered why I had allowed the landlord to go free” (“Sea of Stories”). He goes on:

No white man had been killed in the riots of 1937. But I had taken liberty with other facts, in the interest of a more essential truth. And I have thought ever since that the most authentic response to the long history of shame and humiliation that produced the riots demanded that the white landlord should have been killed: the symbolic end of a social order that deserved to be destroyed. (“Sea of Stories”)

Against the colonial apparatus, the villagers strive in communion with one another to come closer to what the village elder Pa calls “the facts” (Lamming, *Castle* 192) during this key scene of revolution. The narration notes that during the uprising, “[i]f they had all got together, each putting his bit with the other's, they might have been able to make a story, but they had to remain with the fragments” (194). Lamming's novel posits that these fragments, nevertheless, produce alternative knowledges and prompt further speculation by the village's inhabitants, and, by extension, the novel's readers, regarding a path toward a better future.

The novel's fragmentary, elliptical form, which wanders from first-person perspectives to heterodiegetic narration, demonstrates this theory in practice, hailing an active reader. In this way, Lamming models the undoing of the "innocence" that the British ruling class hoped to maintain as a method of control in "Little England." By relaying the experiences of its many characters, Lamming, like Demby, subtly orchestrates a chorus of perspectives without overtly championing any single framework. As Aarthi Vadde argues, "Lamming . . . strove to circumvent the individualism of the liberal cosmopolitan tradition" (135). His novel offers a shifting, polyphonic account of the colonial experience in Barbados, rather than a strictly ethnographic or autobiographical account. Lamming's polyphonic method privileges acts of imagination and critical inquiry in decolonizing processes.

In addition to the varied perspectives G. and Trumper provide as the island's new and increasingly mobile generation, the novel depicts how the village's elders, particularly Pa and his wife, Ma, make sense of the island's shifting dynamics. Notably, Lamming scripts their exchanges in dramatic fashion, signaling their roles in the manner of dialogue spoken by "Old Man" and "Old Woman" and providing elaborate descriptions that operate, in effect, as stage directions.¹³ Such a strategy calls attention to their use of dialect, which opposes the rote memorization of so-called Queen's English, delivered at the village school. Pa's poetic and lyrical monologue, which he delivers late in the novel in his sleep, expresses a freewheeling mode of knowing that exceeds constraint. Still, Pa's dream-speech points to the difficulty of finding space for such meaning-making on the island, as its content is peripheral to the dominant discourse. Though his words "are fluent and coherent," Ma "couldn't follow the meaning" (Lamming, *Castle* 209). Ma remains fiercely loyal to the British landlord and the church to her dying breath, and significantly, Pa's mystical dream-speech culminates with her sudden death. Because Ma finds comfort in the landlord's presence and in religion, her passing in the wake of Pa's revolutionary dream-speech suggests the island is taking a new direction, away from colonial modes of understanding, despite the villagers' forcibly dependent position on the British in the novel's timeframe.

Pa’s dream-speech articulates hope for the future generation and delivers a complex narrative of struggle that addresses the island’s history of slavery, which stands in sharp contrast to the colonial narrative of progress and betterment as heard in the schoolhouse. The promise of independence and a better future, of course, is in tension with the mass departures of young villagers, like G. and Trumper, and, moreover, with the fact that Pa is ultimately sent to live out his days sequestered in the almshouse. Pa’s dream-speech articulating the cultural unconscious courses with poetic power, challenging the colonial structure’s binaries with its very utterance. As a village elder, Pa cannot be entirely silenced, even when he is physically removed from the village. Read within the larger project of the novel, his dream-speech evidences ways of knowing that exceed the boundaries of colonial logics, revealing their illusory nature. The various perspectives uttered in Pa’s dream-speech do not necessarily cohere, in much the same way that the villagers’ fragments during the uprising, for instance, do not coalesce to convey the whole story. Nevertheless, they trouble and defamiliarize the “tragic innocence” of the colonized in Lamming’s text. The notion that Pa’s words, as he affirms, are for “those that come after” (211) implies that, while the island is frustrated vis-à-vis its independence, liberatory possibilities exist for the island’s future.

In its revolutionary approach to language and its acknowledgment of language’s power to both control and subvert, *In the Castle of My Skin* voices a self-reflexive mode of subjectivity, even as it bluntly highlights the difficulties of carving out such a place within “the colonial structure of awareness” (Lamming, “Occasion” 36). G. muses, “I remained in the village living, it seemed, on the circumference of two worlds. It was as though my roots had been snapped from the centre of what I knew best, while I remained impotent to wrest what my fortunes had forced me into” (Lamming, *Castle* 220). G.’s feeling of being on the “circumference of two worlds” evokes the possibility of change inasmuch as it speaks to a mode of indeterminacy. G. notes the performative aspects of his education—he enacts the colonial drills and exercises that go into making “good subjects” and alone among his friends advances to the island’s high school—which sustains the novel’s critical look at colonial

education. As a young man, G. acknowledges the limited choices available to him and his friends in a staccato fashion: “America. The High School. The Police Force. These were the three different worlds where our respective fortunes had taken us” (225). G. speaks with Trumper just prior to leaving for Trinidad, and Trumper plays for G. a song by activist Paul Robeson (295). Trumper reveals his newfound race consciousness, gleaned from his time in the US, which he assures G. that he, too, will find in time. This layer adds to the novel’s complex temporality, as Lamming writes the novel from London, where he is, indeed, carving out such a community and contributing to building an Afro-Caribbean literary movement that travels the black Atlantic.

Over the course of Lamming’s novel, the narrative’s dialogical strands unravel the tightly bound disciplinary and regulatory function of knowledge in “Little England.” Though the novel has been critiqued by scholar Neil ten Kortenaar for “its ungainly style and erratic narrative” (43), its formal innovations and open-ended structure effectively rehearse the instability of knowledge and postponement of meaning in the village. The absence of a central narrative perspective thus articulates a mode of hybridity and ambivalence that underscores the alternative modes of knowledge vying for recognition in the village. Lamming’s novel does not explicitly endorse any one articulation of truth; rather, the text presents a fabric of interwoven modes of understanding that commingle without concretizing, which radically contrasts the transcendental signifieds of the colonial project. The novel critiques the colonial enterprise by theorizing language’s constitutive function in the production of knowing subjects and ultimately advocates for the flexible, liberationist modes of meaning-making it reflects in its experimental prose.

Viney Kirpal argues for reading and appreciating Lamming’s novel “on its own terms as a work straddling different ‘literary’ traditions [oral and written] while remaining firmly rooted in the indigenous” (113). With its sustained deconstruction of the performativity of colonial identity and presentation of diverse identities that exceed or escape the demands of colonial identification, *In the Castle of My Skin* defamiliarizes the British colonial presence and its impact on the lived experiences of the colonized. By observing the limitations of Eurocentric knowledge

models imposed upon the island, it refashions conceptions of truth and history from a critical cosmopolitan perspective that tends toward assemblage and creolization—a self-reflexive perspective, like Demby’s, forged outside of the physical bounds of one’s homeland.

III. Conclusion

In 1955, Lamming traveled on a Guggenheim scholarship “through the Caribbean and North America, where Langston Hughes was his guide” (Chamberlain 184). Demby visited New York in 1956, where he received a call from his friend Arna Bontemps, who told him: “Langston Hughes is here. Come with us to Carl Van Vechten’s place, so you can be photographed as a member of the Harlem Renaissance” (Demby, “Ghosts” 133). Demby concludes: “And that’s the last photograph Van Vechten took of anyone connected to the Harlem Renaissance. I was the end of the line” (133).¹⁴ Demby’s feeling of reaching the “end of the line” translates into the dramatic shift in style and form that would characterize the black radical literary tradition of the 1960s at large and Demby’s second novel, *The Catacombs* (1965), in particular, whose aesthetic innovation is a harbinger of transnational black experimentalism.

The critical success of Demby’s *Beetlecreek* led to reporting opportunities for prominent Italian magazines like *Epoca* and American publications like *Harper’s* and *Holiday*. Demby traveled frequently throughout the 1950s through much of Europe, to postcolonial Ethiopia, and to postwar Japan before returning to the US in 1956. He traveled through the South for *Reporter* magazine, where he profiled the grassroots organizing efforts of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in “They Surely Can’t Stop Us Now: A Negro Reporter’s Journey through the Troubled South.” On his way back to Rome from this trip, Demby visited Wright in his Paris apartment overlooking the Rue Monsieur le Prince; the two discussed the Afro-Asian Bandung Conference held in 1955 in the Republic of Java, and *The Color Curtain* (1956), which Wright wrote in response to the transformative gathering. The two compared the Algerian anticolonial struggle to the black freedom struggle in the US.

Lamming, who visited the US in 1955, having worked as a freelance reporter for the BBC, was in Paris a month after Demby for the First

International Congress of Black Writers and Artists, in which Wright also participated.¹⁵ In Lamming's talk at the Congress, "The Negro Writer and His World," he describes the role of the black writer in the world, or rather three different worlds "to which the writer bears in some way a responsibility, worlds which are distinct, and yet very deeply related" ("Negro Writer" 323): his private world, his social world (that of his home country and culture), and the world of men. His private world, Lamming elaborates, "contains the range of his ambitions, his deceit, his perplexity, his pride, his shame, his guilt, his honor, his need. All these qualities are there, hidden in the castle of his skin" (324). These remarks, which cast light on his debut novel's title, gain resonance as he explains that these three worlds are, for better and often for worse, inseparable. Tangled as they are, the task of the black writer is "to find meaning for his destiny" and his place in the world (325), which is, perforce, both a private and public undertaking.¹⁶ This constellation of writers and their critical cosmopolitical take on the times form a poignant temporal node in black Atlantic literary history, urging us to read beyond national boundaries and canons.

Though I have found no evidence, to date, that Demby and Lamming ever met each other, their respective connections with Hughes in New York within a year and Wright in Paris within a month of one another help to map postwar networks of black Atlantic thought. Predicated on a critical detachment from structures of oppression and literary strategies of resistance, their shared project of narrative defamiliarization signals diasporic creative affiliations. This relational model situates acts of imagination in keeping with Édouard Glissant's articulation of the "poetics of relation" as being at the fore of decolonizing psychic and material processes, however "agonistic" (65) these processes may be, as Nadia Ellis forcefully contends in regard to such affinities.¹⁷ Both winners of the Anisfield-Wolf Lifetime Achievement Award, Demby's and Lamming's respective literary and critical contributions hold great relevance for nuancing black Atlantic literary history and for probing the continued role of transnational artistic production in effecting social transformation and justice.

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Notes

- 1 The title’s “Black Atlantic Temporalities” alludes to Gilroy’s foundational study *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, which defines the black Atlantic world in terms of “stereophonic, bilingual, or bifocal cultural forms originated by, but no longer the exclusive property of, blacks dispersed within [its] structures of feeling, producing, and remembering” (3). Though Gilroy does not discuss work by Demby or Lamming in his study, their debut novels are in keeping with his formulation and call for reading black Atlantic literary production beyond nationalist canons and in terms of their hybrid formations.
- 2 I invoke Shklovsky’s notion of aesthetic defamiliarization as a formal technique that makes strange the familiar in the face of a “devouring” habitualization: “The technique of art is to make objects ‘unfamiliar,’ to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception” (12). This article elaborates this formal method as a politico-aesthetic project in Demby’s and Lamming’s debut novels.
- 3 See my introduction to Demby’s posthumously published novel, *King Comus* (2017), for a biographical sketch of the author’s life.
- 4 Chamberlain documents Lamming’s friendships with Sam Selvon and C. L. R. James, among others. For detailed analyses of Black Britain and black internationalism in these years, see Matera and Ellis, the latter of which includes a reading of Lamming’s participation at the 1956 Congress of Negro Artists and Writers in Paris in dialogue with Baldwin’s analysis of the event.
- 5 The First Italo-Ethiopian War was in 1895–96 and resulted in the Italian army’s defeat. In 1935, Italy attacked Ethiopia again, claiming it as a colony until Ethiopia secured its independence in 1941. Demby traveled to Addis Ababa in 1950 to interview Emperor Haile Selassie for *Epoca* magazine.
- 6 Several African American writers and artists spent time in Rome in the 1950s and 1960s, including Ralph Ellison, Maya Angelou, Ada “Bricktop” Smith, and Barbara Chase-Riboud. Demby’s closest peer was African American expatriate actor and translator Ben Johnson, with whom he acted in *Il peccato di Anna* (1953), a retelling of *Othello* set in 1950s Rome. Other African American artists and performers living in Rome in these years include John Rhoden, John Kitzmiller, Edith Peters, and Katherine Dunham.

- 7 See Hall's Afterword for further details on Demby's time at Fisk and his studies there with poet Robert Hayden (231).
- 8 Randolph was a former Office of Strategic Services officer who befriended Demby upon his arrival to Rome.
- 9 In a notorious instance of racial injustice, nine African American teens, who came to be known as the "Scottsboro Boys," were falsely accused by two white women of raping them aboard a train in Alabama in 1931. The men's trials were botched and heard by racist juries. Though one of the women eventually retracted the charge, the men were brutalized throughout the flawed proceedings and served time in prison.
- 10 Pivano translated other American writers into Italian in this period, including Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner.
- 11 Demby himself was raised in Pittsburgh in a predominantly white neighborhood until his family moved to segregated Clarksburg, West Virginia, after he finished high school. There Demby enrolled in West Virginia State College, a historically black college, and studied with Margaret Walker before enlisting in the Army. Like his character David, Demby recalls visiting the Carnegie Museum, which was miles from his home, at least once a week to "gaze for hours at the works of the Italian artists, modernists like Giorgio de Chirico," painting his own versions of what he had seen and dreaming of one day moving to Europe ("Ghosts" 124).
- 12 Critics have aptly pointed to Albert Camus' *The Stranger* (1943) as an influence on *Beetlecreek's* existentialist themes. See Hall on this influence; Hall, for his part, reads Soren Kierkegaard as being more of an influence than Camus on Demby's early writing (228–29). Lamming, too, had ties to literary existentialism: "Simone de Beauvoir introduced *In the Castle of My Skin* to Sartre, who chose to publish it in his series *Les Temps Modernes* in 1958" (Chamberlain 177).
- 13 See Chapters 4 and 8 in the novel for examples of Pa and Ma's scripted dialogues.
- 14 Lamming, too, was photographed by Van Vechten, in May 1955.
- 15 The gathering was billed in French as "Le 1er Congrès international des écrivains et artistes noirs." *Présence Africaine* printed the proceedings in English and French. Though it is possible that Demby attended the Congress, I have not found evidence to that effect. Attendees included Baldwin and Hughes.
- 16 Ellis argues for recognizing a "*fraternal agony*" (63; emphasis in original) between Lamming's speech at the Congress and Baldwin's review of the conference, "Princes and Powers." She persuasively defines the men's shared search for diasporic affiliation as fundamentally agonistic, predicated on their respective fraught relationships to the West.
- 17 Glissant defines the poetics of relation in terms of an aesthetic and political mode of giving voice to a shared past and possibilities for future liberation. He writes, "What took place in the Caribbean, which could be summed up in the word *creolization*, approximates the idea of Relation for us as nearly as possible.

It is not merely an encounter, a shock (in Segalen’s sense), a *métissage*, but a new and original dimension allowing each person to be there and elsewhere, rooted and open, lost in the mountains and free beneath the sea, in harmony and in errantry” (34; emphasis in original).

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