

THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS

Creole Hauntings in Caribbean Literature

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They say that during the day they hide away, and at night they go out to walk about . . . and they celebrate and accompany the living.

Ramón Pané, An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians (1498)

In his edition of Caribbean ghosts stories, *The Haunted Tropics*, Martin Munro speaks of the indigenous populations of the islands as the region's "oldest ghosts"—"still present in the form of place names, fragments of language, ancient foods and pockets of descendants speckling the islands" (Munro 2015: vii). Intriguingly, the lives of Munro's "oldest ghosts" transpired in constant interaction with their own ghosts, as told by Spanish friar Ramón Pané in *An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*, a narrative compiled in Hispaniola around 1498. Pané's indigenous informants reported that at night the dead left their dwelling place (Coaybay, "located on one side of the island") to "celebrate and accompany" the living (19). Easily recognized by their missing navels, the dead or *operito* moved freely between the living world and Coaybay, "always at night", taking the shape of father, mother, and other relatives, and often in trickster mode. Navel-less women liked to fool men who wanted to lie with them, vanishing from their arms in an instant when their ruse was discovered; men wanting to battle against the ghosts of the dead often found themselves suspended from trees. Pané's ghost narrative offers an intriguing topography of Arawak afterlife, pointing to Coaybay as the place where the dead "hid" during the day, feeding on guavas, and turning the world occupied by the living into a shared realm at night. The liminal or crossing space is that of darkness, although not perhaps John Milton's "darkness visible" that "served only to discover sights of woe" (Milton 1909–14: 63–4) but a more congenial darkness peopled by familial and perhaps scary—but never terrifying—spectres.

In reading the liminal spaces teeming with supernatural beings of contemporary Caribbean ghost stories—among them zombies, *loup-garous*, bacoos, duppies, jumbies, and *soucouyants*—I want to focus on darkness as the quintessential ghostly threshold, a terrain where the dark night has come to be associated with the horrors of colonialism, slavery, violence, and the plantation. Taking as a point of departure the Amerindian *operito* as the foundational regional ghost—the fundamental liminal being free to roam between the afterlife and the natural world of living beings in the darkness of night—the discussion that follows explores two related questions. Does darkness—and its historical burdens—continue to be an essential element in the opening of a path between the supernatural and natural worlds in the contemporary Caribbean ghost story? If not, what happens to the Caribbean ghost tale when the spectres of history are forced into the light of day?

Pané's narrative marked a crucial milestone in the first decade after the Caribbean's transformative colonial encounter of 1492. Despite their manifestations only in darkness, the ghosts of Coaybay grounded the earliest stories of resistance against the violence and coerciveness of the *encomienda* system and of the traumatic ecological revolution represented by the newly arrived Europeans and their deadly microbes. Lethal epidemics took a harrowing toll among previously unexposed populations, while suicide was the only way for indigenous communities to resist forced labour and slow death by pestilence by retreating to Coaybay, away from living Spaniards and from an afterlife where they were condemned to a Christian heaven. These tales of resistance continue to provide a foundation for contemporary Caribbean fiction. In Merle Collins's ghost-awakening story, *The Colour of Forgetting* (1995), which opens at Leapers' Hill (*Morne des Sauteurs*, the site from which forty Carib fighters leapt to their deaths to avoid capture by the French in 1650/2), the central question is how to "kick-start [the] memory" (Collins 1995: 5) of these Caribs' ghosts so we can "walk back over all the story with them" (14). In Collins, we see an effort to bring the Amerindian ghosts—"a people who had given the island such a proud memory"—out of the darkness into the light of the memorial site's blue sky and "overgrown splendor, the greens so lustrous that it was impossible to see exactly where the drop began" (4). In *The Colour of Forgetting*, ghosts embody the island's untold and forgotten history, here represented by the Caribs who leapt to their deaths but are not represented by a monument and are therefore still kept in official darkness. As Jessica Lieberman has argued, the ghosts are "the contexts—social, racial, religious, etc.—that comprise the heritage of the subject . . . that which 'comes to haunt us'" (Lieberman 2001: 5). Ghosts, as Freud argued in "The Uncanny" (1919), pertain to "that class of the terrifying which leads us back to something long known to us" (Freud 1959: 369–70) but as yet unrevealed. In the case of the Arawak and Carib ghosts, the paucity of extant indigenous voices in the region makes the recovery of their historical accounts elusive, hence their surfacing so tenaciously in Caribbean literature as *revenants*, deploying their continued ability to haunt the region's imaginary.

In a short tale that mirrors the ghostly invisibility of the indigenous inhabitants in Collins's novel, Dominican writer Pedro Peix's "The Ghost of El Conde Street" (1988) offers as his protagonist the ghost of a man in armor, "sword in hand, his visor lowered", haunting Santo Domingo's iconic El Conde street on a Monday afternoon, searching for his beloved. A ghost of the city's early colonial past, "unhinged and enraged", he has ventured out of the darkness to escape centuries of solitary despair, cursing the very history that brought him to the new world: "On Tuesday, the morning well on its way, almost everyone saw him stalk across the Park to hurl abuse at the statue of Admiral Cristóbal Colón, and then they heard him muttering an unnamable blasphemy as he stared at the admiral's mausoleum in the Cathedral" (Peix 2000: 869). Confronted by an unrecognizable modern city, prey to neo-colonial realities ushered in by the arrival of too many like him, his quixotic emergence into the light, where he tries to battle against posts of reinforced concrete, leads to defeat and the passersby discovering an empty suit of armour. Like the zombies and vampires of contemporary film, our ghostly *conquistador* is unable to withstand the light, vanishing when light is shed on his ancient and present misdeeds. He is shown to be even ghostlier in his irrelevance.

In the impact of light on ghosts in these two texts, there is an opening into the symbolic play of light and darkness in the contemporary ghost story in the Caribbean: from Collins's bright light illuminating a hidden history to a *conquistador* whose nefarious actions cannot bear full exposure to light and historical truth. They point to the role of the ghost story in giving form to new assessments of history that underscore the importance of indigenous stories as foundational texts for a new historiography. Indigeneity, in these tales, can extend from Amerindian to African, Indian, and other non-European contributions to Caribbean culture from those exploited in the name of colonialism and capitalistic development (particularly through forced labour in sugar plantations). Such is the case, for example, of Guyanese writer Meiling Jin's haunting "Song of the Boatwoman" (1996), where young Xiao Huang must be led from the darkness of a small lake island where she has been left stranded to

the bright lights of the city by a ghostly boatwoman who teaches her about the importance of resisting the pull of old-world traditions when they conflict with personal destiny and independence of mind. Jin, a descendant of Chinese indentured workers, is particularly interested in the phantasmagoric as a vehicle for expressing the burden on second- and third-generation women in the Caribbean of cultural expectations from the home countries that limit personal growth and sexual freedom.

Jin's boatwoman is, nonetheless, a nocturnal ghost whose name, Bright Jade, underscores her enlightening capabilities without being able to transcend the darkness that is part of her ghostly imaginary and of her ghost's own personal tragedy (she had to drown herself in the lake when betrayed by the friend with whom she made a pact to remain single). In another eerie tale from *Song of the Boatwoman*, "The Tall Shadow", the young female protagonist, Maralyn, a roti-seller at the local market, despite her assertion that "[m]e na want nuttin to do with jumbie", misjudges the power of her "youth and recklessness" (21) and is drawn into captivity by a shadow, seduced by her own self-assuredness and complacency into crashing into a mirror in which she remains trapped forever. Jin moves Maralyn from the light and colour of the market, from the vibrancy and energy of her overconfident youth, into entrapment in the darkness of the world of a male shadow, a powerful jumbie, who tricks her into the false light of a mirror, condemning her to eternal imprisonment in a framed photograph.

Jin's clever play with light and shadows in her stories still consigns the ghostly to darkness, a deployment that allows her to use her richly textured stories as warning tales for women seeking to break traditions and escape from confining expectations, very much in the way that Bruno Bettelheim had explained the importance of the traditional fairy tale: "For a story to enrich a child's life it must stimulate his imagination, help him to develop his intellect & to clarify his emotions be attuned to his anxieties & aspirations, give full recognition to his difficulties, suggest solutions to problems that perturb him, promote confidence in himself and his future" (Bettelheim 1975: 50). Her stories, therefore, retain traditional, archetypal, connotations of light, shadow, and darkness, confining the ghosts and evildoers (jumbies, purveyors of poisoned sausages for dogs, betraying sisters) to the frightening and cautionary darkness.¹

These stories of female entrapment find an echo in Mayra Montero's "Corinne, Amiable Girl" (1987, Cuba/Puerto Rico) and Maryse Condé's "The Obeahman, Obeahed" (2015, Martinique), both tales of female zombification by a male *oungan*/obeahman whose sexual desire is not reciprocated. The "ghosting" of Corinne, doomed as a zombie to the darkness of a grave and a life in the shadows—her zombifier Appolinaire dreams of her as she will be after she returns "from the blue well of the deceased, clean and submissive as God intended" (Montero 1994: 836)—is a display of male power played out against the background of the Haitian people's struggle with the Duvalier regime, paralleling Corinne's determination to choose a husband freely with the Haitian community's struggle to elect a candidate committed to democracy and social justice. Condé's story is similar in its feminist presuppositions, but it is a tale played against the full light of day, eschewing symbolic plays with light and darkness to set Carmélien the Obeahman's first encounter with Bella against a "beautiful day, the sky a glorious blue" (Condé 2015: 8). Condé's decision to thrust his forced seduction into the brilliant tropical light is a radical approach, as it uncovers sexual practices that the culture has tried to force into darkness. Her zombified woman emerges from her reimagining of Montero's earlier text into a full revelation of power structures inherited from African religious practices and reinforced by colonial social institutions. Her en-lightened zombie, therefore, retains sufficient agency

1 These are narrative elements that Jin's stories share with a number of short stories by Dominican writer José Alcántara Almanzar focused on endangered children and pedophiles, among them "The Queen and Her Secrets" (*Máscaras de la seducción*, 1983), "My Startling Irene" (*Callejón sin salida*, 1975), and "The Bad Child's Farewell" (*Santo Domingo Times*, 2007).

to use Carmélien's own magic against himself, knowing that in killing him she may be killing herself in the process, but ready to die in the bright light of day.²

These stories of loss of female agency and zombification can be read against the work of Guyanese writer Dwayne Wong (Omowale), notably the contrasting use of light and darkness in "The Path of the Moon Gazer", from his 2015 collection *Jumbie Tales*, the story of a young girl who wanders into the jungle on a "dark and windy, and a strangely silent night" (Wong 2015: 21) despite numerous warnings. Overconfident and dismissive of "stories meant to scare children" (21), she ventures deep into the forest and into the path of the forty-foot man known as the Moon Gazer, a creature from Guyanese folklore believed to terrorize rural villages, crushing humans between his legs when they try to run past him. Knowing he will not leave—"not until the sun comes up anyway" (23)—she tricks him, wounding him with a piece of glass, and managing a miraculous escape. Waking the next morning as the village's hero—"it has been five generations since anyone has ever drawn blood from the Moon Gazer" (25)—she ventures again into the darkness of the jungle, taunting the monster, hoping to become the town's "greatest hero ever by slaying the beast once and for all" (26).

Here, Wong works with two genres: the ghost story invoked through the use of the haunting figure of the Moon Gazer (a force of terror both personal and communal, yet susceptible to enchantment and lunacy, perhaps vulnerable to female power) and Joseph Campbell's concept of the monomyth, where "a hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won" (Campbell 1949: 23). The introduction of a young heroine breaks the gender expectations of the monomyth, as does her determination to return to the forest for a decisive encounter, to feel "that sense of victory and overcoming great odds . . . that I wish to experience again; to feel my heart pounding as if it was about to explode" (Wong 2015: 26)—a victory necessary to fulfill the hero's journey, since s/he must return "from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man" (Campbell 1949: 23).

I see in this cacophony of stories about light and nighttime a glimpse into the possibilities opened by the exploration of darkness as the means of articulating histories of conquest, exploitation, migration, slavery, and the quest for freedom that have haunted the Caribbean imaginary. As Graham Huggan has argued, "it seems appropriate . . . that among the region's most prolific forms is the ghost story, or a hybrid variant of it, at least, derived both from African/Amerindian oral sources and from the repository of Western (Euro-American) literary fantasy" (Huggan 2013: 167). The many studies about Caribbean "hauntings" produced during the last decade attest to the usefulness of this approach to our understanding of cultural practices and literary approaches (see this chapter's bibliography for some salient studies). They belong to a narrative tradition in which darkness was "conceived as a realm in which spectral, ungodly forces congregated—an assortment of malign spirits lurked, including imps, hobgoblins, ghouls, boggarts and witches, fuelled by shadowy appearances and phenomena such as marsh gas or will-o'-the-wisp" (Edensor 2015: 560). Darkness, more positively, has also been central to the nurturing of resistance movements, often told through stories of ghostly hauntings. "In the dark, persecuted minorities and lower classes have escaped domineering masters, carving out time in which to organize politically, and oppressed groups such as African American slaves and Mesoamericans under brutal Spanish rule escaped the violence of imperial power by confining 'indigenous knowledge and practices to the hidden recesses of the night'" (Galinier 2010: 828).

2 Tales of zombification abound in contemporary Caribbean literature as a specific category of the ghostly and supernatural. Focused in their earliest manifestations on women's zombification (see my "Women Possessed: Eroticism and Exoticism in the Representation of Women as Zombies"), there is an emerging ecological approach to the representation of the zombie. See, for example, Geoffrey Philp's "Dawn of the Dread" (Munro's *The Hunted Tropics*), where the population of a small village is turned into murderous zombies because of the poisoning of a ganja crop through chemical fertilizers.

The relationship between ghosts or spirits and darkness in contemporary Caribbean fiction, however, has shifted partly as a result of profound changes in regional conditions—political as well as infrastructural. Ever-present electrical lighting, for example, has transformed nocturnal Caribbean landscapes, particularly during the last three decades, altering the cultural tenets and meanings linked to light and darkness. The relationship has also been altered by political independence and self-government, which has changed the nature of political contestation and regulatory strategies applied to dark zones (both urban and rural). Post-colonial theories have shifted attention away from the continued presence of colonial power and institutions and into deeply creative processes of recovery of indigenous histories and interpretations. Complete darkness has become elusive, rarified, changing the context for the development of narrative practices and spatial resonances. In places now flooded with electrical light, the uncanny has been freed from the darkness, emerging into the light, both expanding and transforming the realm of the ghost story.

Perhaps the best example of this transformation is the use of the *ciguapa*, a creature of Arawak origin, in “Teresa Irene” (1989) a short story by Dominican writer Ángela Hernández Núñez, from her collection *Alótopos*. Descriptions of the *ciguapa* range from female demons found in deep forest caves who lure men with their beauty and sensuality (or with a hypnotic malevolent stare) to their deaths or permanent captivity, to shy creatures reminiscent of forest fairies who feed on birds, small animals, fruits, and nuts, and who quickly vanish at the sound of approaching humans. Easily recognizable because their feet are turned backwards, the predominant manifestation of the *ciguapa* in Dominican folklore is as the eroticized being that “seduces and finally assaults humans with the violence of its erotic urges” (Rodríguez 2003: 122). The original description of the *ciguapa* comes from a tale by Francisco Javier Angulo Guridi, where he describes it as exhibiting

a precise harmony in all its muscles and members, a wonderful beauty in its face, an agility in its movements, which are so full of spontaneity and grace that it captivates the observer. It has the golden skin of the authentic Indian, black almond-shaped eyes, an abundance of soft, shiny fur which covers the female from its very beautiful shoulders down to its legs. [. . .] It has no language but a howling sound, and it streaks like a hare through the mountains or jumps like a bird from branch to branch as soon as it discovers another being of its race.

(Angulo Guridi 1969: 95)

Hernández offers a version of the story as a poetic tale of horror centred on the luring of a young girl into a river pool whose bed was “traversed by underwater currents forming treacherous whirlpools whose circular rages were unfathomable from the surface” (Hernández 1996: 91). The first time she hears the call of the river and dives into the pool she is rescued, although one of the rescuers never reappears. Protected for years by her family from the allure of the pool, her eyes display the colours of the rainbow, “configuring a disk in whose radial stripes it was impossible to determine the space occupied by the violets, blues, oranges, or any other components of the naked light” (92). When Teresa Irene finally disappears into the pool, renamed the *Ciguapa Pool* and consecrated to the rainbow to mark her transformation, we learn it has been the thirsty light, which had gone to the pool for a drink of water “and resolved to remained dressed in the eyes of a girl called Teresa Irene” (99).

In this story the transformation of light into the source of horror marks a new direction for the supernatural story in the Caribbean region, which habitually used the darkness as the realm of the uncanny. The horror is particularly effective because the narrative maintains its lyrical tone throughout, the terror of the girl being drawn into the world of the light conveyed only through the mother’s increasing fears of losing her daughter to the mysterious force emanating from the water. The space of horror, the luminous pool, is superficially Eden-like—its crystalline waters, verdant surroundings, and prodigious rainbow reminiscent of the descriptions of the Caribbean islands before the conquest, an identification that underscores the *ciguapas*’ origin in Amerindian lore.

Teresa Irene finds a strange counterpart in another child at the centre of a haunting tale: Margaret, the eavesdropping narrator of Denise Harris's *Web of Secrets* (1996, Guyana). Set in Guyana in the 1960s, the novel explores the tangle of family secrets—slavery, rape, incest, physical and emotional abuse, racism—that young Margaret believes must come out in the open if the family is to survive. “We inhabit a strange web of fictions replete with family histories rooted in violence . . . rage . . . incest . . . sorrow—betrayals” (173), her grandmother rages. Her fears centre on the house, which her grandmother believes is threatened by cracks which only she can see; Margaret sets out to learn the family secrets, which she articulates into a coherent tale told to a silent interlocutor, Arabella—a captive parrot or macaw, as we later learn—meant to untangle the web of secrets that precludes safety. Margaret believes in the power of narrative as a tool for love and understanding: “We have something within us that can change the pain and violence and suffering into something rich and glorious” (173), she claims.

Margaret's tale is of interest in our context because, in addition to her attempt to achieve self-protection and social redemption through untangling the family's narrative web, she seeks to improve the family's precarious finances with the help of a baku or bacoo. A folkloric figure of West African provenance, the bacoo is a small, elf-like creature found trapped in a corked bottle. A mischievous creature said to enjoy pelting stones at houses and moving objects about the house, it feeds on bananas and milk. Once released from its bottle and well fed by its owner, the bacoo will use its magical powers to fulfill its owner's requests but can turn vengeful and nasty when neglected.

Margaret's attempts to improve the family's fortune through the powers of a bacoo she finds under the house add a supernatural level of secrecy to the tangled skein of family dysfunctionality, while adding a pre-adolescent layer of magical thinking to her redeeming fantasies. Margaret's “baku”³—briefly the focus of her hopes, as she expects it will provide the “pot of luck” that will redress the family's financial fortunes—turns instead into a terrorizing figure. Glimpsed first sunning itself on the house steps in splendid nakedness, it displays the mischievousness and deviousness of the folkloric figure while refusing to be consigned to its characteristic abode in darkness. Left without food when Margaret is sent to the countryside for a month, the bacoo's wrath threatens to bring down her precarious narrative and family balance, underscoring her powerlessness: “Well, he stamped his foot and his eyes reminded me of marbles more than ever and he said that if things didn't improve soon, then I would regret it, that things would start happening that I never dreamt of” (85). When Margaret's mother becomes engaged following a period of careful feeding and tending of the bacoo, she interprets this as the first indication of the family's change of fortunes. The disappearance of the bacoo, however, ushers in a dark period in which the mother is physically abused by her new husband and dies a painful death from cancer. For Margaret, the bacoo acts as the embodiment of her belief that her thoughts and wishes can impact on her surrounding world, a sign of her emotional immaturity that underscores her inability to provide a narrative coherent enough to unify her deeply troubled clan.

Bacooos are a common element in recent Guyanese fiction focusing on the supernatural, albeit through reinterpretations that move away from the quintessentially folkloric figure of *Web of Secrets*, linking it to the brutal history of Dutch planters and gold prospectors in Suriname and Guyana. In many of these tales the power of the bacoo-like spirits is linked to colonial violence, brutality, rape, and murder. Such is the case of Peter Hill's *The Bacoo* (1998), where an entity released from an old rum bottle takes control of the body and spirit of the suburban Toronto housewife who has unwittingly bought the bottle at a garage sale after the death of his owner, reputed to be a “jumbie man”. The power of the bacoo in this tale lies in its ability to possess his victim: “Yvonne grasped her head, realizing that she was losing all control of herself, and sensing that her mind was being manipulated by some unknown force, feeling it mentally changing into something that was totally alien to her” (Hill

3 Harris uses the alternative spelling, “baku”, throughout the novel.

1998: 91). The impact of this possession is underscored by its setting in a modern suburban home in lovely summer weather, where the space of deepest darkness is the family's car garage. The complex tale (which includes a murder investigation) moves between the light and modernity of Toronto and the darkness of the Guyanese bush, where relatives of Yvonne and Obeahman search for the clues to her spirit's liberation.

Hill's interpretation of the bacoo resonates against a similar "possessing" figure in Raywat Deonandan's "Children of the Mélange" (from his 1999 collection *Sweet Like Saltwater*), the story of a young boy who, uncorking a bottle found on the beach, is possessed by the ghost of an old Dutchman. (Bacoo bottles are often thrown into rivers or the ocean, and Guyanese folklore warns against uncorking bottles found in water.) Babbling in archaic Dutch and other languages that represent cultural and ethnic legacies of Guyanese history, the young boy is "saved" from the Dutchman's possession by a quick-acting passerby who re-corks the bacoo in the bottle. The boy remains, nonetheless, haunted by the burden of the cultural legacies unleashed by the bottle, whose babbling reminds us of the cacophonous chorus that ends another battle with bacoo-like spectres, that of Edgar Mittelholzer's 1951 ghost story *My Bones and My Flute*:

Last night I heard them speaking in varied languages—languages I know not and yet which I myself spoke. I heard French and German and English and Italian and other tongues I could not identify. . . . They babbled about me in a clamour too deafening to describe. They fumed and wretched and turned in spirals . . . and the air thundered about me. . . . A catastrophe threatens. I sense it in the air. I am a thwarted, craven soul, a human tottering on the edge of ultimate darkness. To whom, to what, must I turn for salvation?

(Mittelholzer 2015: 231)⁴

But, as I conclude, let me move further into the light. The transformative power of light as it enters the Caribbean ghost story has led to sweeping reimaginings of the nature and significance of the ghostly and the terrifying in Caribbean literature. It allows for a ghost story that opens with the affirmation: "in the beginning, there was laughter", as in Jamaican writer Marcia Douglas's *Madam Fate* (1999). Douglas's approach to ghosts in her lyrical novel about women attuned to the voices of the surrounding spirits is deeply rooted in ways of confronting the trauma that assaults her characters repeatedly through intrusive images, memories, and nightmares, forcing them to relive violations, viciousness, wrenching losses. The confrontation involves a process of reinterpretation, or reimagining and recontextualizing. Listening in the darkness for the sound of a rolling calf—the duppy of a person known for his wickedness when alive—Ida envisages the quintessential sounds: "his chain dragging, dragging, dragging behind him all restless-like on the ground" (Douglas 1999: 13). Her heart open to the anticipated noises, when the rolling calf finally materializes, it comes with a startling revelation: "The sound this chain making, dragging through the mango walk, did have a kind of sadness to it—a loneliness, you know what I mean? And after I calm down and listen good, is as if something grab at my heart-ears and a feeling overtake me in the bed, and I *knew* this calf was not a wicked calf at all, not at all" (14).

4 The most famous of Guyanese bacoo stories, Mittelholzer's classic is subtitled *A Ghost Story in the Old-Fashioned Manner*, signalling its links with European genre traditions. Set in the 1930s, the plot revolves around a cursed manuscript that draws those who touch it into a desperate pact for survival: find his bones and flute and give them a Christian burial or they will be lured by the flute's music into a violent death. The story is particularly notable in our context for the ghosts', spectres', and bacoos' diurnal activities—perhaps the first such creatures not confined to darkness in the Caribbean ghost stories. For perceptive readings of *My Bones and My Flute* see Nibblet and Huggan.

The episode of the rolling calf sets the stage for the invention of a world in which Madame Fate lives in the light of her garden surrounded by duppies ensconced in calabashes festooning her cottage and the nearby trees. The image closes a representational circle that began in the fluid darkness of an Arawak night—when the *operitos* entered the realm of the living to rejoice with them—and ends in a Jamaican garden in which the spirits find solace for loss and pain in the light of day, the light in which a rolling calf can be recognized for what it truly is—an adolescent boy fleeing from violence and abuse. “There is laughter which comes from so far”, Douglas writes, and “only those ears sensitive to high frequency can hear it” (257) once the threshold from darkness to light has been crossed and fear has no dominion.

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