

23. Kincaid also envisions living, vibrant worlds in *Autobiography* (17). Xuela intuits trees, leaves, rivers, lagoons, birds, frogs alive and spawning life, evoking worlds that are alive, dynamic, generating, creating, creative, not passive, sterile, or created by human subjective or technological intervention. Compare *At the Bottom of the River*.

24. See especially *Faulkner, Mississippi*.

25. Also quoted in DeLoughrey, "Tidalectics" 21.

26. See Armbruster and Wallace, *Beyond Nature*.

CARIBBEAN LITERATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT: BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE (2005)

"The Argument of the Outboard Motor"

An Interview with Derek Walcott

George B. Handley

BORN IN St. Lucia in 1930, Derek Walcott is well known internationally for his poetry, playwriting, and cultural criticism. He is the recipient of numerous awards including, of course, the Nobel Prize for Literature, which he received in 1992. George Handley conducted this interview in two stages, first in July 2001 at Walcott's residence in St. Lucia and then at his residence in New York City in November 2001.

GH: What was your response to the construction of the Hilton Jalousie Hotel between the Pitons here in St. Lucia?¹

DW: I didn't go there in a protest. And the people around Soufrière wanted it because it gave them jobs, and that's the usual argument of these hotels that provide employment. And that's true enough, but right now in St. Lucia we have a serious decline in tourism, and it is very perilous and fragile for us to depend completely on tourism. I'm sure experts may have looked at alternatives, but I think that one of the things that may have happened is that we have settled down, or the economy and the economists have settled down into an idea that tourism is the alternative to agriculture. I don't like the dependency of thinking that the generosity of tourism becomes the equivalent of a waiter looking for a big tip, and depending on that big tip for sustenance, for his livelihood. I don't like to see that happening, and I think that we are building more and more hotels. The dangerous thing about it becomes not the fact that another hotel is being built, but where it is being built, so that there is nothing sacred. I mean, you live in Utah—if I said I was going to put a big hotel in any one of those primal sites, turning to spiritual locations for Americans, then that would be a serious thing. But the investor who can come here and think, "Well, it's just a small island. Who is going to care?" and then be supported by politicians, by the government on the pretext that it is

very good for the island, he is doing serious damage to the mentality of St. Lucians who say, "Yes, we should do it because it is going to bring employment." If I build a McDonald's on one of the rocks, or bluffs, the sites of all those great Western movies, it is the equivalent of a *Jalousie Hotel*. I am talking about the direct desecration of a thing. I am not even against hotels, really. I said so. I said build a hotel, but don't build it there. For Christ's sake, leave something that is really spiritual to St. Lucians more than just two big mountains sticking up out of the sea. I mean, would somebody really have the guts to say, "I'm going to build something under one of those two things?" No.

GH: How important is it to defend sacred spaces? Is it more important than defending art?

DW: It is stronger than art. Nobody can go by the Pitons and not be really moved by the power they emanate. The same thing would be true of any other sacred location that has become cherished for some vibration it gives off. I mean, we have a volcano. Once nature starts to act up, then we get very religious. Hurricane season comes, and that's a condition we live with. That's okay, that's natural in a way. I'm talking about someone deciding and ignoring the devotion of people. Well, that has happened to the American Indian, perhaps, the demoralization of violating sacred ground, or a sacred burial ground, for instance. That's the standard crime that is the history of America. So, again, historically, you see the support of people thinking it is a good idea, your own people, your own government thinking, "It's okay, there is nothing wrong with that."

GH: But many people around Soufrière wanted the hotel, didn't they? Is it an economic luxury to defend sacred spaces? How do we balance such a defense against economic need?

DW: You can individualize it; you can make a specific example of it if you say to somebody representing the government that it's not a good idea to build a structure because it violates the feel of the structure and violates it in a very profound way. The people feel an awe that all tribes feel in certain parts of the territory; certain parts are inviolable. So that inviolable part is the feeling of the tribe. If somebody who is more pragmatic says, "Yes, but what does inviolable do for bringing bread on the table or for giving shelter?" Then you have the exact crisis of America encapsulated there, because all you have to say is that it doesn't do anything for the Indian. But that is a blasphemy, really, however strong that word may sound, because these things are sacred.

If someone who is an Indian then says, "Look they're right. Let's do that," then you have a crisis not only in America, but we know that it is

now a crisis that is happening with great celerity in the global balance. I mean, people are protesting what is happening to the earth. I don't want to sound like someone preaching ecology, but that's the core of the question, and it's a moral question. And if people ignore immoral questions of landscape and do what they have to do, then ultimately the damage is incalculable. So the person who is protecting the sacred piece of earth is doing more than the person who thinks that right now concrete and steel are going to do more for some other generation coming. That's now a world crisis. It's an emblem that the Pitons are an example of. And I mean more than just to hate the idea of the hotel, or to challenge it, and if possible to have stopped that hotel from being built there, because aesthetically it is like a wound, and if I could look down at that hotel and see what I see, and it looks like any other hotel, then the Pitons will become what? They become prostitutes; you're making them whores. Basically you're saying it's okay to violate the landscape, it's okay to desecrate it, because they're the real thing that's bringing people money. It's very hard to communicate that to people in Soufrière who can't feel some ancestral anything about it, but who know that these are two emblems of something more than, say, another building.

GH: Philosophically speaking, is human activity always, inevitably, using nature in some way that results in a spiritual death of some kind? To what extent can we avoid such death? At what point does our activity move from being an ethical necessity to a violation?

DW: When you say nature, I hear a nineteenth-century echo "nature," meaning a Wordsworthian or even Miltonic feeling. But we have to update nature. A canoe is a beautiful thing in St. Lucia, the object which is hol- lowed out and has great elegance and speed. So there is the emblem of a canoe going across the sea with a man on it, and it is a great image and something organic, because that tree is like wood and water; it is made out of wood and is now afloat and moving on the sea. So you have two elements in a way there. None of that is thought of by the fisherman apparently, but the relationship of somebody who hammers, or sculpts, a canoe, into a shape that is elegant is really, if you want to put it bluntly, creating a work of art. It is also more than a work of art: it is the thing from which he makes his living. If I put an outboard motor on that canoe, it doesn't lose its elegance and is brought up to the immediacy of the twentieth century today and is an outrigger, outfitted canoe with a powerful engine that does what it does to help the fishing industry and so on. You can even accommodate it into the design of the canoe, but a man rowing on his own sea has something a little more strange, a little more

evocative, a little more baffling in terms of what he feels being on the water at sunrise, rowing with wooden oars, as opposed to starting his engine and going out. That subtlety that has been lost between the outboard motor and the oars is the area that we are talking about. One is obviously not saying "don't have an outboard motor because you are violating the symmetry of the canoe, the meaning of the canoe." On the other hand, you are saying, "Okay, have the outboard motor, it's good; you need it for your fishing." But if you let your outboard motor be your equivalent of, say, a hotel, of a skyscraper, of a big building, of another something that paves the ground and pays no attention to the contours of the earth, then you have the architectural question of what you are doing to the landscape. If you magnify the argument that the outboard motor does more for the fisherman than the oars, then you have the argument of people who say, "That is progress," and therefore it is legitimate to transform every little village in the Caribbean to a mini Miami or a small functioning modern outlet. And you can look at the architecture of the Caribbean and see it change. You don't know sometimes whether you are in Puerto Rico or Miami. They are identical. And you can continue on down the archipelago. This is what tragically is going to happen. What does that do in terms of the psyche of the fisherman we are talking about and the fisherman with an outboard motor? The industry is called progress.

What has been lost between the feeling and the pace of a man rowing and an outboard motor is exactly, well, not only poor countries but any country on earth now has to realize that that outboard motor distends its own sense of time. In other words, you row and get your own rhythm and then you fish and that's your industry, that's your feeling, that's your relationship to what you're doing. You get an outboard motor and it's like a third person with you—that's an engine that you use. But the ironic thing about time is that the rhythm of the human body is never satisfied with its own pace. In other words, you get in an outboard motor, and you wish you could go faster, so you build a faster boat, and you discard the canoe, and you build something made out of plastic that goes faster and faster until you get to the point that there's no more canoe; not that you can't have a relationship between sunrise and being in an outboard motor rig craft, but something has gone and what has happened recently with all of these demonstrations and riots in terms of ecology is that people are seriously, really seriously aware of the danger to the planet. This is a very large thing, but you can take a microcosmic thing like that, or like Jalousie, or violating something that should have a certain sanctity for every tribe—once you start to do that, then you start to use that argument in the

name of progress. Then you are doing the historical thing. You are saying that if I get twenty-five soldiers and I go into a territory that has Indians, if I shoot the Indians and if I convert them, then I am doing it for their own good. That has always been the argument for the outboard motor.

GH: How would you defend the idea of Adam as creator, not so much for yourself, but as an idea for the Americas? Is it really something transferable to urban areas?

DW: I don't think it can be seen as an industrial concept. I mean it's not going to work to think that in the heart of London somewhere, you are going to get up and get this feeling of the beginning of a new world. If you want to stretch it, you can say you want to treat it metaphorically and say that no matter where you are, you could condition yourself to look at the world, even if you were in an industrialized location. That's very hard to do. It has to relate, not to the inner sense but to the immaculateness of nature. That's what it is. The action of nature is to renew, and that kind of inner sense is possible because of the example in nature. So if you put it down in a ghetto in Chicago, you can ask how you can apply that practically to somebody living there. But I wouldn't say that it applies. I would say that the quest that one would have to have is to find that place in nature and to renew oneself from time to time by that awe and respect that we have in nature outside of cities, in any famous place or cherished locale. I think that's what these things are preserved for. They are preserved for more than the spectacle. They are preserved for something that restores that kind of feeling of a beginning, a reinstating of Adamic principles. That's why people go hunting or camping or fishing. The Adam idea is not an industrial theory. It won't work in that environment, but what it does do, I think, is it cherishes the environment, and if it's properly cherished, then it gives something to the cherisher. Obviously, to write with that in mind in the Caribbean, where the Caribbean is still preserved, still pristine, still organically spectacular, then that awe that comes with the experience of the sea brings certainly more than a possibility; it brings the concept of a beginning, of another day, the beginning of the possibility of another kind of culture, another kind of civilization.

I think the possibility is continually betrayed, even by island politics and by the repetition of the sea and by a kind of world ambition. But I think that it is still valid in terms of the relationship of what we are to the environment. It's what, in other words, could have been if America had somehow adapted its industry to growth. If the fusion had been possible between industry and, say, the American Indian's idea of nature, then that would have been America. But it's no longer America because that's gone,

and it's an elegiac America because what the American Indian could have taught a new culture would have been the cherishing of all those values that are Adamic, that don't want to violate what is pure. And that the struggle is still going on.

GH: Has the destruction of so much Native American culture in the Caribbean facilitated the Adamic idea in some way? Might it be more difficult to defend the idea with a more populous Native American presence to remind you more emphatically of a persistent and prior history and culture?

DW: Well, I think that they are all one tribe, from the Alaskas all the way down to Tierra del Fuego. It's all really one tribe with different branches, so that the Arawak is related to the Sioux. It really is one huge tribe of different families. The same way you might say, I don't know, some other ethnic group, Semitic tribes, for instance, cover a large territory. And there is not much difference really between the Egyptians and the Israelites. They are the same people. Not the Egyptians so much, but, say, other tribes who are in the Mediterranean.

GH: Why do you suppose Whitman's views of Adamic poetry didn't survive, or didn't work as well? What's wrong with his democratic embrace?

DW: I was at Columbia once, a long time ago, and somebody got up from the audience and gave a virulent and vehement attack on Whitman as a racist, and I guess it must have come from his essays and his polemical pieces, because it's not there in *Leaves of Grass*. But what's also not there in *Leaves of Grass* is what happened to the Indian. So *Leaves of Grass*, as great as it is in terms of its vision, does not include the American Indian or whatever happened to the slaves, really. It doesn't include slavery. It doesn't include the decimation of the American Indian. It's too idealistic for me to completely take it in. Had it taken in the guilt and the horror of becoming America, it might have been a greater achievement. It's a splendid achievement, it's immense, magnificent, but it's exclusive, and it does not include American sin.

GH: And yet you still want to preserve that idea of innocence in poetry?

DW: I think that *Leaves of Grass* would have had the stature and depth of *Paradise Lost* or *The Divine Comedy*, because there is sin in there. There is the reality of the cruelty of man, and that is something that Whitman does not take into account. It's very broad-shouldered and very gusty and so on, but it doesn't take in evil like Blake does. I mean, you can't compare the spiritual width of Blake's proverbs or Blake's epic to *Leaves of Grass* because Blake takes in the horror of mankind as much as he takes

in the innocence. So it's all innocence, in a way, in Whitman, as great as he is. I can understand the man from Columbia's position because he was saying a Yankee and imperial idea of the vision of the future doesn't include us from Latin America or wherever we are. It was hard to hear that, but the older you get and the more you read, you find works you sort of avoid or don't wish to take on. Then you get a little less, not respectful, but you find that which is missing in a great work like *Leaves of Grass*. It's not there really.

GH: I suspect that's why some have criticized the idea of Adamic poetry.

DW: But the idea of Adam contains original sin. I'm not talking about someone without a spiritual past. I am talking about someone looking at a morning that is unspoiled, not devastated by any means, and the feeling that one can rechristen things, rename things. That's what you are offered if you live in the Caribbean. Every morning you get that. Naming means you can say the same name. You don't have to try to get a new name for something. It's repeating the name, whether it's grass or water, or sea or sky. To say it again is Adamic, it's a rechristening. You are endowing it with a name, you have been given the privilege, by whomever you want, to name these things again. That's what I mean. If a blade of grass is coming out of a ruin, then that's what I'm talking about, no matter where the ruin is or how big. You know, the grass that emerges from the ruins is the grass that says it's a beginning again.

GH: Is the Adamic idea in a way an addiction to newness, to frontiers? Does it justify impatience with the old? Some people argue that the environmental crisis is in part due to this tendency of Western civilization to always want an Eden that it can go into and be the only civilization or the only individual—to be the lone Crusoe figure—and that that's always the precursor to a kind of environmental destruction. It's the idea of land as virgin so that you can be the one to have "her" first.

DW: Well, there are a lot of angles to answer from, but one is particularly a factor when you are talking about the Caribbean mainly, and that experience, as a Caribbean experience, is also an antidote to the idea of a consequential history. So the idea of being in a place that has not got his-tory, that doesn't have ruins and mementos, or promises of civilizations, is in a way a Caribbean experience because the renewal has to happen, particularly in people in a shipwrecked condition (that is the idea of Crusoe). The legacy of the erasure of what was there, say for Robinson Crusoe, what he left behind and what he may miss, is that he has to have another beginning. Now, if you think in terms of Friday, if you think in terms of the slave or the person whom eventually Crusoe is supposed to

subjugate and educate, then the issue will not have anything to do with the Adamic experience, but it will have to do with the attitude of Crusoe to Friday. The attitude of Crusoe to Friday in Defoe is still the attitude of the conqueror to the person who is captured, even by kindness.

All right, that's one or two emblematic figures dealing with a landscape that has no memorials and hasn't got any architectural promises in it. In both cases, though, what Robinson Crusoe has to strip himself of is nostalgia, memory, and despair, because he is in another place where he has to create a different kind of Crusoe. It is not quite the same thing as Adam, but it is quite close in the sense that it is a new world, and it requires a certain kind of physical courage and physical adaptability, all of those things that Adam himself as a beginner has to learn to do, including naming things.

Now Crusoe on his island doesn't know the names of the plants that he is living among. He doesn't know the names of the natives that he may find there. So he renames them, probably from what he already knows, so that the naming of America has simply been a repetition of names that come from Europe, like New York or New Brunswick, etc. Generally, the conqueror or the explorer renames something by associating what he is looking at with another image from the old world. I'm not talking about, necessarily, deliberately erasing the idea of history, but not treating it as a consequential thing, a thing that is bound to obey a certain mathematics of one, two, three, four, five, six. So if you think of an Adam who is not compelled by some kind of mathematical destiny that such and such is going to happen, then you are talking about somebody who really has to begin from the immediate surroundings that are there.

Well, I think that that is a condition that the poet gets into before he embarks on a poem, because none of the words that he knows can already express the experience he will create when he writes the words. It is not that he is making a reference to a standardized vocabulary with all of its associations. What has to be undertaken is a vocabulary that may be the same word, or same noun, but in the context of this idea of discovery, and immediacy, and freshness, and exploration, then that noun has to acquire its own identity in the poem. I don't think that's very different from, say, the naming of either the explorer or the naming that is already there in the mind of the native. I think that it's a simultaneous, common experience.

The other idea of longing for an Eden, for isolation or for removal from civilization, is a normal feeling for the essential separation of the soul from what surrounds it and what is too active and too disturbing. That is one attitude of flight, of escape, of trying to rediscover a place

where one can begin again and not be persecuted by all the harassments that are there in daily life. But the daily life itself, even in a castaway situation, has to have its own rhythm. In fact you have to eat, bathe, and do whatever, so that diurnal kind of thing happens anyway. I think the simple premise that I am taking is that everything that has to do with the prelude to the creation of anything is an Adamic situation. Now maybe I haven't answered yet very precisely some of the things that you are pointing out related to the idea of Adam. Metaphorically you could say yes, it's a person walking naked, or walking around in an atmosphere that is benign and in which nature is benign and has that kind of bliss of innocence. Well, I don't see anything wrong with that because I think that that is not a physical condition; it can be a condition within a writer or within an artist. In fact, I think that is the condition, that one is reduced to that nothingness before one makes something. That wondering and the isolation that is there in the artist trying to make something is an Adamic thing.

Geographically and historically, the Caribbean origin is of slavery and indenture. It is not escape from history to go into a kind of Edenic or blissful geography in which then you don't owe anybody anything and you are not responsible to anyone—that is not the idea of it. The idea of it is what I think has happened to the Caribbean, and that is the degradation, the condition of humiliation that was there when the slave was brought in and the indentured servant. Now I think that that is something we have worked ourselves out of, and I think that it is part of the geography of the place that permits that. I think in a desolate situation there would not be that elation and that pleasure that happens in the Caribbean landscape whether it's from the sea, or from the sky, or whatever it is that is there; and therefore, that renewal that happens daily in terms of what should be the experience of someone living in such a geography would be to rename the objects and plants around that person, and that is really an eradication of the inevitable alphabet, inevitable vocabulary that is there for what precedes the other kind of naming. But that's a condition, I think, for every poet anywhere. So if one is in Ireland or in Montana and you want to write about something you are looking at, you go to that condition, which is exactly that of the, not the noble savage, but of somebody who is trying to relearn the nouns that are around one.

GH: How is it that art escapes tourism, because great nature writing and so many great landscape paintings are converted into, or are used by a touristic mode of logic or power, and it contributes to it in a way, but how is it that you can escape being a tourist in your relationship to your own land?

DW: I think what does it is good art. Real art does it. The first time I went to Spain and every time I go back, maybe particularly at a bullfight or maybe when I have been a little bit out of the low mountains or somewhere not far from the villages, but every experience I had of Spain was a repetition of what I had read in Hemingway. Now technically I am a tourist when I am in Spain. That did not prevent me from enjoying things that are there in Hemingway like, you know, the bulls running, the bullfights, and all the cliché things that are there for one when you go back to Spain. But what has happened because of the art of Hemingway, and because of the thorough sensation of enjoyment that is there when Hemingway writes about Spain and love, if you want to put in another way. But that is communicated through the words, through the writing, through the prose. The same would be true if I went to any other part of the world that I had read about. If I went to the Lake District, maybe, and there was a Wordsworth poem that was in the back of my head—or, for example, I just went and was astounded by the beauty of Monterey [California]. I was knocked out by it, and I remembered as I went around Steinbeck's Cannery Row, and all the buildings there, and everything there was vitalized from what they used to be, and that change came because of the recognition of something that had been illuminated by art, and I think that that is true of whatever a great writer or painter can do to a certain area when it goes past the real and into literature or painting.

The Caribbean is extremely photogenic, but nothing photogenic lasts in the sense of the depth of what is registered. Every Caribbean advertisement has a good-looking girl, generally Caucasian, in front of some view, right? And so there's a combination of that kind of sensuality with the landscape behind it, and so on, or a golf course where people are playing, and all these cut-out things which are common to all advertisements about places, right? But what happens to the landscape that you look at, if you see it through the eyes of someone who has written lovingly about it? It becomes a totally different thing. So that if you are looking at the landscape in Trinidad of the Indian villages and you think of Selvon, then something is illuminated there in the same way that Cannery Row was illuminated by Steinbeck's prose. So everywhere you get those banalities. There are photographs, I imagine, of the Forum; there are photographs of, I don't know, the mountains in Utah, but what makes these mountains more memorable are the films of John Ford. I mean, anytime you see them you think of John Ford, and you think of what he did there. And so there's another dimension that happens because of art, and I don't think it has anything ultimately to do with tourism.

GH: But the great western films have themselves shown how easily art can be adapted for the purposes of tourism. You won't find an advertisement for travel to the American West without some reference to the stereotypes that come from those films. Consequently even those who live in the West often relate to their own landscape as if they weren't really there, loving something that isn't there.

DW: You'd have to specify the kinds of tourists one is talking about and what does that tourist want, and so forth. If somebody went on a quest, a sort of literary tour, which they often do of, say, Joyce's island. I mean that's kind of flattering, in a way, to talk about people doing that, but, I mean, Bloomsday is observed in Ireland, and it's a tourist thing if you want, but it depends on with what reverence you look at the same objects that Joyce looked at. I mean, I went to the tower and I felt the presence of *Ulysses* the book every time I turned. I felt, well, I'm *in Ulysses*. And that's fine. I've been to Spain and looked out on some hills, you know, going outside Madrid and going south, or whatever, and said if it were not for *Don Quixote* these things would just be windmills or they would just be the landscape. But if you have a dramatic echo of something that is associated with that landscape, then some things are being formed in the landscape.

What's your main point? Do you think there is something dangerous in that?

GH: I believe there is a potential danger if we can't pinpoint the distinction between an artistic relationship to landscape and a touristic one.

DW: I think you can't separate the idea of poverty from the whole experience. In other words, people can afford to go to Spain and can afford to go and look at cathedrals or go to bullfights, from America or from wherever they come from. That's part of the luxury of location. People who come to tour the Caribbean are going to tour a lot of poverty, and that's going to be visually and practically there. What is corrupt is if you exploit the picturesqueness of the poverty, and if you say, "Well, the poorer scenes are better than the expensive-looking scenes." Anse La Raye, as you know, is a very poor village, and is a very photogenic village. And therefore, what's photogenic is to have a very poor, young, black kid in front of some terrific-looking shacks in great sunlight. Now that's the kind of whoring that you are talking about.

This is a very profound question in a way because I know, for instance, that when they were building Jalousie, they made sure that the road did not go through any place that had a lot of poverty because they didn't want to upset the tourists. There's that. The obvious thing to do is not to

avoid the poverty that is there but to do something about it, right? Even if it doesn't look as picturesque to do some concrete houses or houses in the places you are trying to avoid, that would be better than saying that I am saying the tourists from being exposed to the horror of poverty. But it is also true of the politicians and the people who have the money and may be able to do something about it who retain that attitude of a kind of happy poverty that may be presented to the Caribbean. That is horrendous. But what is the other reality? The other reality is that these places are picturesque, that they do look a particular way. I think that it is what illuminates them; when an artist illuminates them, then it becomes a different thing. Because now what you're looking at is not only the reality of poverty but something beyond it that the artist finds worth illuminating.

GH: You said in *Tiepolo's Hound* that you can't paint overseas, meaning, I suppose, that the physical and intimate immediacy of the environment is very crucial to your conception of painting. How is that different from your conception of poetry? Is less immediacy necessary to create poetry?

DW: When I say things like that I try to mean them from the very depth of what they could really mean, and even if I paint or draw or do something while I am away somewhere, it's not really where my work really belongs. In other words, if I were doing a landscape in France or Italy, and I did my best to do it, it would not be the same to me as a landscape that hadn't already been painted. The whole excitement of painting in the Caribbean is the newness of painting in the Caribbean, not the idea of going to Provence and trying to paint like Cézanne, which is like going to Italy and the next thing you find yourself doing is something really Italian-looking—the Tuscan landscape or something.

I was amazed when I went to Monterey. I was so startled by the beauty of the landscape, seascape, and everything there that I thought that nothing had ever really been written that had done justice to that, that I know of. I mean, Robinson Jeffers is kind of a morose for whom everything is going to rot, and everything is doomed, which is very stoic Greek stuff, which is not the feel of the landscape to me. That is his hang-out, that is his anguish, if he wants to call it that. But the exultation of the landscape is not there, and no one has done justice to it. Not in poetry and not in painting. So this is strange, because what I saw was more beautiful than what I had seen in Europe. It's incredible. It's staggering. I mean, I'd go down to the car and I was shaken. Okay, what does that mean? This landscape is waiting to be described, waiting to be heard, waiting to be painted. I think someday somebody is going to write about it or paint it. In some

way there is going to be memory of it. And, would I paint it? I don't know if I would, because it is not mine, in a way; as beautiful as it is, it is not mine, and what I would have achieved would have been a translation of what I felt, in a way. Now that may be nonsense. I am talking really radically about feeling, in terms of relating to a landscape.

I think the same is true of poetry. If you took poets out of their locale, if you uprooted them, it would be pointless; then you would be deracinating them from something very profound in their spirit. If you took Hardy out of his countryside and Faulkner out of his, then you would have a different person. So the growth that happens in terms of a poet and a place (not quite the same as a painter and a place, but it's close)—it's not likely that you would have as severe a detachment if one was a painter only. Or that even as a poet you might feel that if I lived somewhere else I don't have to remember the landscape or even the streets I walked in when I was younger. Ultimately, as with everything that is provincial, the area that is around an artist is really a very small area; although he can have a huge vision, a world vision of things, the ultimate experience remains very strict and very provincial.

Note

1. Hilton built the Jalousie Hilton Resort and Spa in the early 1990s between St. Lucia's Piron peaks, the island's most recognizable natural attraction. The property was previously privately owned, sold to the government, and then, after some debate, sold to Hilton. Today only patrons of the resort are allowed behind the peaks, where some of the island's most attractive hiking areas and vistas can be enjoyed.