

# (In)visible Interstices: Double-Consciousness and the Gutter in Brazilian Jefferson Costa's *Rosebush, Medal, Plantation and Other Stories*

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## FIGURE 1

360° VR cyclotourism experience (while one participant was testing, the others observed).

Cover of the first edition published in Brazil in 2019.

This article explores the relations between W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of "double-consciousness" and the gutter, a specific component of the language of comics and graphic narratives in general, in order to read the graphic novel *Rosebush, Medal, Plantation and Other Stories* by the Brazilian author and illustrator Jefferson Costa. To make the connection, the article further uses the themes of a "crossroads" and "spiraling time" associated with the Brazilian theorist Leda Maria Martins, Homi Bhabha's espousal of "in-between spaces," and Umberto Eco's notion of the "unsaid." Bringing these conceptual areas together helps to approach Costa's work in terms of its support for his Afro-Brazilian roots, and in such a crossing, the gutter becomes a metaphor for counter-hegemonic, identity-producing discursive practices associated with Afrofuturism. In this way, the text plays with the power of graphic strategies, both brought together and separated by the gutter, in the service of leading the reader through the various time periods which make up the narrative. As with all stories, it has been constructed in constant tension between what Costa has decided to show and what he hopes may be imagined by the reader. This link, between what is shown and what might be perceived, complies with a point of view proposed by Afrofuturist thought, in that it does not situate time as linear – past, present and future – but rather as circular and interdependent. Time is also both continuous and discontinuous, performing an erratic relation which approaches the constructions of identity as mixture and indeterminacy explored by Homi Bhabha. Indeed, graphic narratives in general may be said to evidence well this ambivalent relation with discourses of identity, emerging out of the dynamic flows and tensions among their basic mixture of graphic and verbal resources.

## References

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