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## Cartographies of Be/longing: Dionne Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here*

For Africans in the Caribbean and the Americas, who in the words of the spiritual, have been trying to sing their songs in a strange land, be/longing *is* a problematic. Be/longing *anywhere* — the Caribbean, Canada, the United States, even Africa... how could they — we — begin to love the land, which is the first step in belonging, when even the land was unfree? (Philip 22)

After unmasking the norms of race, gender, sexuality, and nationality, where can we turn but to space itself, to that named and unnamable anchor that seems to moor both nations and bodies in place? (Yaeger 13)

### I: “Go home my ass...”

“All fiction is homesickness,” Rosemary Marangoly George contends in *The Politics of Home: Postcolonial Relocations and Twentieth-century Fiction*, suggesting that the “search for the location in which the self is ‘at home’ is one of the primary projects of twentieth-century fiction in English” (3). Indeed, recent theorizations of subjectivity and agency have foregrounded the centrality of belonging — that “most inexpressibly complex experience of culture” (Cohen 16) — to both personal and collective identity.<sup>1</sup> As the observations by Marlene Nourbese Philip and Patricia Yaeger further underscore, a relation to

1 See, for example. Brown, Cohen, Kaplan, Probyn.

place and space lies at the heart of the experience of selfhood and belonging, an experience Jerome Bruner has described as an ongoing project of “self-location” (133). We constitute our selves, Bruner suggests, by locating “ourselves in the symbolic world of culture,” making ourselves at home in the world through multiple relations of identification with and individuation from family, community, and the culture at large (133). Yet the internal logic of “being at home” and belonging is one governed as much by a principle of inclusion as by patterns of exclusion and difference: “Homes and home countries are exclusive,” contested spaces (George 2). As social geographer David Sibley argues in *Geographies of Exclusion*, home, locality, and the nation are “different sites of exclusion” (90), built on select inclusions and declared the exclusive domain of some (the Same) and not others (the Other). Dionne Brand explores this terrain—upon which the complex relations between being, longing, and belonging play themselves out—in her first novel, *In Another Place, Not Here*.<sup>2</sup> Driving this narrative, which “flashes with Brand’s social acumen and lyricism” (Jackson 26), are compelling questions that arise from the experience of those who have been exiled by colonial history: where is home for those seeking an elsewhere in flight from some evil, in pursuit of some solace? where is the future to be found when the living ghosts of a violent past continue to haunt the space of the present?

Set in Toronto and an unnamed Caribbean island that, as a number of reviewers have noted, strongly resembles Grenada (Ruta 13), *In Another Place, Not Here* is divided into two parts, each focalized through one of the novel’s two island-born main characters: Elizete and Verlia. Verlia leaves the island for Canada at seventeen, becomes involved with the black power movement in Toronto in the 1970s, and returns to the island years later, as a union organizer, to help the sugarcane workers shake off an oppressive and exploitative system. Elizete is one of these cane workers, and the two women become lovers. After Verlia’s death, Elizete leaves the island for Toronto, driven by the simple logic of grief: Verlia “had only left her the last place she had been before” (AP 72). In Toronto, Elizete meets with the familiar fate of the illegal female immigrant of colour, but she also seeks out Abena, Verlia’s former lover.

In two telling moments in the novel, Elizete is told to “go home.”

2 Originally published in 1996. All quotations from the novel refer to the 1997 Random House edition; hereafter cited in the text as AP.

The first moment is recounted in Elizete's narrative of her life in the first part of the novel, entitled "Elizete, beckoned." She relates the moment when, an abandoned child, she is beckoned by the woman at whose doorstep she has been left. The woman — a descendant, like Elizete, of Africans brought to the island as slaves, a woman haunted and disfigured by this history of violence and displacement — hails Elizete with a spite whose meaning and history will become the only kin Elizete will ever know: "The woman beckoned her from the door, not before saying 'Go away girl. Go away spirit. I didn't send call you. Shoo! . . . Go home jumbie girl!'" (AP 44–5). This early beckoning of Elizete as an unwanted ghostly presence from another place resonates with a second moment, near the novel's conclusion. Then Elizete, now in Toronto, is told by Abena, a fellow Caribbean: "'Go home, this is not a place for us'" (AP 230). Elizete, however, knows better, thinking to herself: "Go home my ass anyway. She think anything simple like that?" (AP 233). The narrative that unfolds between these two framing moments indeed seeks to interrogate such complex realities: where is home for the cast-out child and the abused woman, for exiled slaves and their descendants, for families separated by economic necessity, for exploited workers and persecuted minorities? Where is home for those seeking refuge from the weight of place and the burden of history?

This last question, in particular, drives the novel's second part, entitled "Verlia, flying" and focalized by Verlia, whose death — in the shadow of an imminent invasion of the island — is prefigured by the section's title. The novel closes with the image of Verlia leaping off a cliff,

flying out to sea...its eyes translucent, its back solid going to some place so old there's no memory of it. She's leaping. She's tasting her own tears and she is weightless and deadly.... Her body has fallen away.... She doesn't need air. She's in some other place already, less tortuous, less fleshy. (AP 246)

Verlia's last act functions as a fatal gesture of escape from space itself, from all the spaces that bound and bind: from history, family, place, the body, and ultimately life itself.

*In Another Place, Not Here*, then, continues Brand's earlier engagement with issues central to much postcolonial writing, namely issues of history, identity, and place.<sup>3</sup> This thematics, of course, has

3 Discussions of these issues in Brand's earlier writing include John Ball's reading of

particular resonance for settler colonies like Canada, “characterized by their struggles over race and space” (Walcott 38). Rinaldo Walcott’s reading of Brand’s novel, in the 1997 *West Coast Line* special issue on New African Canadian Writing, foregrounds Brand’s achievement in mapping a “black Canadian poetics of place” (41), pointing to her refusal of nostalgia as she redraws “the Canadian urban landscape in order to announce and articulate a black presence which signals defiance, survival and renewal” (40). I would like to pursue this line of inquiry further, examining the novel’s extensive exploration of various modalities of being and belonging in place and space.

Before starting my analysis, I would like to delineate the theoretical framework that informs my reading of Brand’s novel. In *Indifferent Boundaries: Spatial Concepts of Human Subjectivity*, Kathleen Kirby identifies five dimensions to what she calls the space of the subject: the place of birth (defining the subject along lines of class, gender, race, language, religion, etc.); the space of the body with its marked topography; discursive spaces, which structure physical spaces and upon which belonging and exclusion are mapped; psychic space; and social space, which could be seen to bring together the other four. Each of these spaces, Kirby argues, “shapes the subject’s ‘substance’ according to different logics, and each space offers its own degree of freedom and imposes its own kind of confinement” (15–16). As I will attempt to show through my reading of the novel, Brand engages these dimensions both thematically and figuratively, and her particular interest in the vital interplay between determination and freedom — between “here” and “another place” — resonates with what Kirby describes as the ongoing negotiation between *place* and *space*, between “maintaining place in order to foreground the materiality of subjectivity, but investing in space to demonstrate and promote the subject’s mutability” (19). Such a negotiation is central to Brand’s novel; “here,” for Elizete and Verlia, is the tragic and doomed place they had been born into; their longing for

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“Blossom” and “At the Lisbon Plate” in *Sans Souci and Other Stories* as offering a resisting vision of Toronto, introducing characters whose ancestral consciousness challenges and extends the white city’s limits. Teresa Zackodnik’s carefully argued reading of *No Language Is Neutral* shows Brand moving “from a nostalgic desire for homeland [in the earlier *Primitive Offensive*] to a recognition of homeland in herself and in a synthesis of experiences shared with others. . . [carving] from her exile a paradoxical place of belonging” (208).

“another place” amounts to yearning for space and its promise of freedom and transformation. But as the novel’s title already intimates, space is always already another place, both because subjects carry their places within them even as they venture into new spaces, and because new spaces are ultimately places with their own confinements and freedoms.

Brand’s novel is structured in such a way that Verlia’s story is effectively embedded in Elizete’s. The thematic significance of this narrative embedding is articulated across two central axes. The first, the diachronic axis of history, makes belonging “a judicious balancing of remembrance and forgetting” (George 197); where Elizete is determined to remember, Verlia ultimately seeks to forget. The second is the synchronic axis of agency and resistance; where Verlia, in the end, chooses to perish, Elizete resolves to prevail. *In Another Place, Not Here*, highlights both these axes — the relation to history, and the exercise of agency and resistance — as inextricable from one’s relation to place and space.

## II: A Topography of “Here”

The lyrical opening passages of *In Another Place, Not Here* introduce Elizete’s voice (and the nation language that will characterize that voice) as she watches Verlia cutting cane ahead of her in the scorching sun: “GRACE. IS GRACE, YES. And I take it, quiet, quiet, like thieving sugar” (AP 3). Looking up to this sweet promise of a graced elsewhere brings into sharper relief Elizete’s here and now. In this place all that is left for “a woman to do is to lie down and let a man beat against she body, and work cane and chop up she foot and make children and choke on the dryness in she chest and have only one road in and the same road out and know that she tied to the ground and can never lift up” (AP 4). Elizete’s experience of this abject existence — a state in which selfhood itself is denied her (“Who is me to think I is something” [AP 4]) — is inextricable from a particular topography and the oppressive realities that overdetermine it. “I come here with Isaiah,” Elizete tells us, “he show me the room and he show me the washtub and he show me the fire and he show me the road. He tell me never let him catch me at the junction” (AP 8). Elizete’s “here,” then, is a place constituted by and

through an oppressive grid of class and gender relations: the canefield by day, site of body and soul crushing labour, where she is at the mercy of, in Verlia's words, "[this] son of a bitch up there who is robbing the workers blind and they're too scared to touch him" (AP 209); at day's end, the same road leads back to Isaiah's house, a house that will never become a home, where the same scene of abuse repeats itself nightly.<sup>4</sup> The forbidden junction, with its promise of escape, becomes, after numerous failed attempts, yet another reminder of her utter dispossession: "Didn't have no place to go anyway when I think of it" (AP 8).

But Elizete *does* think of it, and imagining spaces of asylum becomes her first act of resistance, a necessary preliminary to her eventual "escape" (AP 71) to Toronto in the hope of "leaping into another life" (AP 113). In *Space, Place, and Gender* (1994), Doreen Massey suggests that the web of social relations that constitutes "the particularity of any place" always also includes a mix of links and interconnections with places and spaces that lie "beyond" it (5).<sup>5</sup> Thus, personal identity and the identity of "those envelopes of space-time in which and between which we live and move (and have our 'Being')" (122) can be understood as constructed precisely through that interconnectedness. Elizete's "beyonds" are varied yet alike in being spaces characterized by everything her present lacks: movement and the potential for transformation. They are also alike in deriving their (revolutionary) potential from the boundless vitality Elizete perceives in the natural world. Elizete transports herself to three such places of sanctuary in her moments of need: the dust tunnels of wood lice she first discovered as a child: "I cover myself in their fine, fine sand, I slide through the tunnel and I see all where I have to go" (AP 10); the sand quarry where

4 Brand's representation of Elizete's "homelessness" inside the conjugal space resonates with Elizabeth Grosz's contention that, in a patriarchal society, women experience "a homelessness within the very home itself"; the domestic sphere becomes "the space of duty, of endless and infinitely repeatable chores that have no social value or recognition, the space of the affirmation and replenishment of others at the expense and erasure of the self, the space of domestic violence and abuse, the space that harms as much as it isolates women" (122).

5 Drawing on the work of theorists such as Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, and Paul Gilroy, James Clifford expresses a similar idea in *Routes*, describing location as "an itinerary rather than a bounded site — a series of encounters and translations" (11).

the mountain she feels inside her dissolves into a calm hollowness that is then filled with a new vitality: “If I dig enough it cool me and take my mind off the junction. I feel my body full up and burst” (AP 11); and then the Maracaibo of her daydreams, another place whose natural plenitude would implode the prison that is her body, releasing her into a life rife with possibilities of revenge and regeneration: “I imagined it [Maracaibo] as a place with thick and dense vine and alive like veins under my feet.... My stomach will swell and vines will burst out. I dream it is a place where a woman can live after she done take the neck of a man” (AP 12).

When Verlia enters Elizete’s life, she is, for Elizete, “the woman bursting at the junction” (108); Verlia gives Elizete her first glimpse of a possible and not just imagined elsewhere: “nothing ever happen to me until Verl come along and when Verl come along I see my chance out” (AP 4). But before Elizete can see her way out, she has to recall her way in, she needs to remember how she got to “here.”

### III: A Topography of Origins: “a place name Nowhere”

In Brand’s novel, the past one needs to recall in order to explain the present and free up the future is conjugated in both the singular and the plural. Elizete’s past is part of the history of “a place name Nowhere” (AP 20): not a nameless place, but a place of unnamings, of unbeing, of unbelonging. When the young child Elizete is left under the samman tree, she is taken in by a woman who remains unnamed, a woman who *will* not mother her, a woman who will begrudgingly offer her — in return for chores — shelter and food, but “not [a] home” (AP 27). The woman, too, has a past that explains her present: she is the great-great-great granddaughter of Adela, the ancestress brought across oceans as a slave, one of many who “had not come here willingly looking for food or water or liking the way the place set off against the sky or even for hunger.... They had been taken. Plain. Hard. Rough” (AP 41). Adela’s grieving for the place from which she had been so brutally taken made her curse everything with namelessness, curse the place “that could not yield to her grief” (AP 18), and the children “she spill and spill so and she mothered not a one” (AP 19). This curse of namelessness would continue to plague future generations, so that

although the woman who takes Elizete in grows a plentiful garden, not a single plant in it is named.

Adela and her progeny embody a modality of the exiled subject's relation to place, a particular form of nostalgia. Elizete reflects that for Adela, "the place she miss [Africa] must have been full and living and take every corner in she mind so when she reach, there was no more room for here" (AP 20). But *here* is all there is, for the place of origin has been irrevocably lost; however much Adela tries, on the passage over, to memorize the route in the hope of tracing it back, "her maps fade from her head" (AP 22). Seeing "here" as "Nowhere," Adela shuts her heart (AP 22), and "insist[ing] so much is nowhere she gone blind with not seeing" (AP 19). To repudiate the only existing here, Elizete recognizes, amounts to becoming placeless; and without place one forsakes self, community, and indeed life itself. "I used to make my mind as empty as Adela'," Elizete says, "but I never like it because it make me feel lonely and blind and sorrowful and take me away from myself" (AP 20).

"I don't belong here" (AP 36), the woman who took Elizete in spitefully insists, and indeed her people are "after belonging" (AP 40): "[b]elonging was too small, too small for their magnificent rage. . . . They were not interested in belonging. It could not suffice. Not now. It could not stanch the gushing ocean, it could not bandage the streaming land" (AP 42–3). Their ancestors having been violently displaced, they respond by rejecting place itself, choosing instead to inhabit the only space big enough for their pain: "They owned the sublime territory of rage" (AP 43). But as Elizete comes to realize, to be past belonging in a ghostly territory populated by "everyone who had existed for five hundred years" (AP 43) implies becoming "trapped" (AP 44) and paralyzed; for without destination, no movement can be initiated. Her people cannot go back, since "where they had to go was too far and without trace and without maps" (AP 43–4); and they cannot move forward, because nostalgia means not so much living in the past as having "a present that was filled, peopled with the past" (AP 44).

#### IV: Between the Cell and the Deep Blue Sea

Verlia, like Elizete, is born into this present peopled with the ghosts of



a violent colonial past, born to a people who “loved grief” and “expected peril” (AP 124), so that “despite trying, [Verlia] caught peril like any childhood disease” (AP 125). Like Elizete, Verlia dreams of escaping this place cursed by history. Unlike Elizete, in Verlia’s dreams she flees time and space altogether, fleeing the spaces to which memory so stubbornly clings: place, family, the body, and so ultimately life itself. As a young child on the island, Verlia dreams of a

house sailing out to sea, she is in it; . . . riding out to sea, . . . going to someplace so old there’s no memory of it. . . . But she fears that any mortal self is heavy and persistent, full of presentness, which jostles the air and is unpleasant. She knows that drawing breath is the first mistake; it limits you to feeling your finite body, that empty box with nothing but greed for air. She’d like to live, exit or be herself in some other place, less confining, less pinned down, less tortuous, less fleshy to tell the truth. (AP 126–7)

Verlia’s life story enacts this flight, and it will end with the deadly acting out of her childhood fantasy. The novel’s denouement, with its echoes of the earlier passage — “Verlia . . . [leapt] off the cliff . . . flying out to sea . . . going to some place so old there’s no memory of it . . . Her body has fallen away . . . She doesn’t need air. She’s in some other place already, less tortuous, less fleshy” (AP 246) — underscores the palimpsestic nature of Verlia’s last defiant gesture, as much a refusal to fall into enemy hands as a rejection of the tortured script bequeathed her by history.

Verlia will come closest, in life, to the “less tortuous, less fleshy” existence the depths of the sea promise during the heady days of the Movement in Toronto. More specifically, the “cell, the Committee for Revolutionary Struggle” (AP 178) becomes, for a while, the longed for other place — Verlia’s asylum from the tragedy of history. When Verlia first arrives in Canada, in flight from the island, she witnesses yet another way in which place can become a deadly trap. She rejects the life arranged for her — with her childless uncle and aunt in white Sudbury — when she recognizes in their attempts to distance themselves from the black community a “self-hate” (AP 170), the product of internalized racism: “They have come here to get away from Black people, to show white people that they are harmless, just like them. This lie will kill them” (AP 142). She heads not so much towards Toronto as towards

the black power Movement, that non-place where she can become “what she wanted to be” (AP 155). The city, Verlia thinks, “could have been any city” (AP 159), as long as it provides her with the needed distance from where she came from and satisfies a simple formula: “no family, no grief” (AP 160). In Toronto, Verlia seeks to construct for herself physical and affective spaces emptied out of memory and of another’s neediness. Moving into a room off Bathurst, Verlia resolves: “She’ll never furnish this room.... She wants it bare.... No photographs, no sentiment, no memory. Everything down to the bone, everything she thinks, now bone sharp and clean” (AP 156).

But wishing to be all bone and no flesh, like a skeleton, means wishing for death. And when life enters Verlia’s affective space — in the form of Abena’s love and need — she similarly seeks to empty it bare. Abena the activist had been the promising space Verlia initially leapt into in her search for another life (AP 189–90), but Verlia cannot bear “sticky domesticity” (AP 204). Those in flight from themselves, Brand seems to suggest, will also flee the intimate spaces of engagement with others. The novel’s free indirect discourse allows us into Verlia’s consciousness and her mortal fear of those private spaces that require emotional presence for the sake of another person:

*She needed a mission outside of herself.* When she didn’t have one she was uncertain. She could not be swallowed by any comfort, she could not take that as all. It may be enough for Abena but not for her. This *small place* getting smaller, down to her and Abena, was stifling and hopeless. Nothing more hopeless than two people down to themselves for company, for air; nothing more hopeless than a *room* where all the talk is why not and what about me and I feel this and I want that and love me, love me, love me. Nothing more hopeless than a *house* where some accustomed play-acting had to be done and repeated in every house across cities, forests, ice-caps, continents. Dull language on tongues to [sic] lazy to say no and this is not how I’ll live, tied to a single human being. I’ll abandon air and light if I do; I’ll not step out of this universe of duty then. No, *she wasn’t flesh like that*, nothing as hopeless yet. (AP 97–8; emphasis added)

In the revolutionary cell, Verlia finds the mission outside herself that she needs, and a way of shedding flesh, becoming “a new person” (AP

169) and entering “another life” (AP 170). A shoe box full of clippings of her heroes — Marx, Mao, Nina Simone, Gandhi, Rosa Parks, Fidel, the Black Panthers, James Brown, Cassius Clay — becomes “her new past” (AP 164). The Movement promises escape from all the bodies and places that tie you down, an escape into the liberating anonymity of revolutionary space/time/self: “She knew that it was possible to leap” (AP 159), for hadn’t Fanon declared that “In the struggle for liberation: ‘Individualism is the first to disappear’” (AP 158)? Joining the cell thus becomes Verlia’s last bid for life; she acknowledges: “the cell has been her life here. Holding her together like family, it’s the only family she can bear” (AP 192). Elizete offers a further insight: “[Verlia] bet all of she life on this revolution. She had no place else to go, no other countries, no other revolution, none of we neither” (AP 114–5). The negative qualifiers undeniably signify that by joining the cell Verlia says no to place, to time, to kin. Resisting the pull of a devastating collective history but also rejecting the allure of nostalgia, Verlia “didn’t want to be anywhere but now, nowhere but the what to do about” (AP 183). Verlia thus seeks to obliterate place — with its embeddedness in history, memory, the flesh — hoping for a flattened temporality, where only the present exists, and only as a militant agenda, “what to do about.”

As the Movement changes, however, and the initial idealism dissipates, Verlia finds herself more imprisoned than liberated by the cell. Comrades leave for Zimbabwe or Guyana, or are ground down by the fatigue that settles in when it becomes clear that the revolution will never happen. Only the small, daily efforts to get around or break the rules are left: to arrange for a health card, a passport, payments under the table. Feeling crushed by “the weight in her head of airlessness, of not belonging” (AP 194), Verlia is ironically beckoned back to the Caribbean with the promise of place itself. The here of Toronto becomes a “hole in the wall opening to the sea” (AP 198), and Verlia decides to go back “for something so small” (AP 200): not people, not family, not even her own past, but “what [is] essential” (AP 200). The essential calling her back is a topography of mountains and sea, the taste of tamarinds, and colour, the “pools of purple dust on the side of the road under a lilac tree. Then pink mountains, tumbling mountains of poui petals...red hibiscus going wet and limp...the leering yellow face of mango...an ochre daub of earth jutting up...shell pink from sea wash” (AP 199–200).

Back in the Caribbean, however, Verlia continues to run. A relation to place, Brand suggests throughout the novel, is a modality of the subject's self-location in the world, and Verlia is a subject in flight. Even her love and need for Elizete cannot make her stop running: "I can't stand the feeling of being attached" (AP 223), Verlia repeats. Neither can this be a homecoming, for there has never been a home; Verlia reflects: "I never got to know this place because I spent so much time running from my family" (AP 206). Listening to people on the rural buses calling out place names, Verlia recognizes her placelessness:

*All the names of places here as old as slavery...The meanings underneath are meanings I don't know even though I was born somewhere here.... I've never said the name of a place like this, dropping darling and sweet boy and eh after them. You would have to know a place for that and I don't really know anywhere. But I enjoy the way they say it. I could ride this bus all day listening.* (AP 211; emphasis added)

Precisely because the names of places here are as old as slavery, Verlia has nowhere to call home. She has been dispossessed from place itself not just by the grief and peril bequeathed her by her family:

It's not only my family. It's the fact. Fact. Fact. Intangible fact of this place. It's not possible to get rid of that. So much would have to have not happened. It's like a life sentence. Call it what we want — colonialism, imperialism — it's a fucking life sentence. Nobody I come from knows these words but they do the time. (AP 215; emphasis added)

The guns driving Verlia and her comrades "off the cliff's side into the sea" (AP 246) turn that life sentence into a death sentence, yet Verlia goes "laughing and laughing and laughing" (AP 246). The cell having failed her, the sea now beckons Verlia with Adela's impossible dream, the dream of retracing the route of exile, of finally going back "to some place so old there's no memory of it" (AP 246).

Although at the end Verlia concedes that nothing could save her, she recognizes that through her relation to place Elizete defies the life sentence of colonial history. Elizete, Verlia knows, is a woman "so earthbound that she would rename every plant she came upon.... who believed that the world could be made over" (AP 202). The earth would

indeed become the gate through which Elizete will pass in pursuit of her salvation, but its doors remain forever locked to Verlia. Just before leaping to her death Verlia remarks on the outrage that, in the final account, “not even the earth sided with them [the revolutionaries]” (AP 116), everything human being “inconsequential to the earth” (AP 116). This, to Verlia, is the ultimate exclusion: the natural place defining and belonging only to itself, “the sound of bees and cicadas singing tautly... as if they were drawing a map of the place, as if they were the only ones left to do it.... Cicadas, bees, busy with their cartography,... the simple geography of dirt and water... holding the name of the place in their voices” (AP 117).

### **V: Naming the Places of Be/longing**

Elizete had learned young the lessons taught by the cicadas and the bees — that belonging is made through acts of claiming, by holding the name of a place in one’s voice, by mapping its simple geography of dirt and water. So, through Elizete, Brand explores a relation to place that makes survival and resistance possible.

When Elizete leaves the island for Toronto, the last place her dead lover had been to — driven by the same affective logic that had made her “roll over into Verlia’s spot in the bed warm after her getting up to drink water or go to the bathroom” (AP 87) — she does so in defiance of her people’s code of nostalgia, a code that dictates that one is irrevocably attached by a long line of blood to that first, forever open, wound, that “there was no belonging that was singular” (AP 39). Elizete learns to make her own, singular belonging, not by forfeiting the collective past, but by actively engaging with it; “is you [Adela] I must thank for that,” says Elizete. “Where you see nowhere I must see everything. Where you leave all that emptiness I must fill it up. Now I calculating” (AP 24). Adela had calculated in vain to locate herself solely in relation to that lost place of origin; learning from Adela’s fatal nostalgia, Elizete resolves to make herself in this place, and make this place hers by naming it. Such naming, which Elizete offers as a gift to disconsolate Adela, becomes a double blessing, a gesture of solidarity with her violated ancestors, and a way of reclaiming the past in a manner that will empower the present and make possible a future:

all I could think was how the names of things would make this place beautiful. I dreaming up names all the time for Adela's things. I dream Adela's shape. I even get to talking to she as if she there and asking how she like this one or that one. Tear up cloth flowers, stinking fruit tree, draw blood bush, monkey face flowers, hardback swamp fish. I determine to please she and recall.... I say to myself that if I say these names for Adela it might bring back she memory of herself and she true name. And perhaps I also would not feel lonely for something I don't remember.... Nothing barren here, Adela, in my eyes everything full of fullness, everything yielding. (AP 23-4)

While the burden of colonial history ultimately drives Verlia to self-forgetting and death, Elizete reconstitutes herself through willful remembering. Such remembering, Brand suggests, is part of the vital appropriation of place through a reconstruction of its history and a critique of the social relations that constitute it. Viewed this way, the here of Toronto and the here of the island are contiguous spaces; for Toronto, like the island, is populated by the ghostly presences of slave ancestors. Elizete reflects that coming to Toronto perhaps meant not so much coming to "another place but travelling, a continuation, absently, the ringing in your ears of iron bracelets on stones, the ancient wicked music of chains and the end of the world" (AP 65). Inescapably human, geography is shaped and reshaped by personal and collective experience. Thus the "Caribbean sea [is] drowned in the Atlantic" (AP 60), just as "third world people going to the white man country" (AP 60) get swallowed up, abused, silenced. When Elizete is raped by a white employer she is pushed "against the immense white wall, the continent" (AP 89), her only escape a familiar place she now carries inside her: "When he raped her she thought of sand, her face in the sand, the particles flying down her nostrils into her lungs; she thought of the quarry with sand so thick it caked off like brick" (AP 90).

The sand quarry that "travels" with Elizete from the island to Toronto epitomizes Brand's understanding of place as constituted by and through its subjects. In Toronto, as in that "place name Nowhere," albeit with different inflections, Elizete finds herself, again, "homeless, countryless, landless, nameless" (AP 48), her body a place too hostile to inhabit: "Heavy as hell. Her body. She doesn't want a sense of it while she's

living on the street” (AP 54). Elizete recognizes in herself the exile’s fantasy of a “back home,” of “another place” (AP 51) away from the misery of here, but she also reminds herself that the kind of life she imagines other people in the city to have — “making life with each other” — is a life she has never known, “not here, not there” (AP 52). Here is indeed very much like there; the city — just like the woman at whose doorstep she had been left — beckons Elizete in the familiar way, inviting and rejecting at the same time. The city makes her feel “[l]ike something someone had forgotten... [putting] her back to the nervous sweat of childhood... waiting to be taken in” (AP 52). In the city Elizete is caught in another grid, and just as with that earlier grid of the canefield, Isaiah’s house, the road, the junction, here, too, the oppressive topography of “a room, a station, a clearing, a road” (AP 66) makes the familiar longing “for another place, not here” bearable: “[Elizete] thought she could smell the sea as she moved along the grid of pavements and alleys and houses” (AP 53).

The final pages of *In Another Place, Not Here* present two striking images, two modalities of being in relation to time/space/place. By “flying out to sea” towards “some other place... less tortuous, less fleshy” (AP 246–7) Verlia fatally attempts to escape the tragic space of history. In a room in Toronto, Elizete and Abena find a way of prevailing by filling space with their fleshy, torturous stories, thereby reclaiming the places of their being and belonging. “She knew that she would exist, unfortunately or forever” (AP 235), Elizete thinks as she murmurs her names for Adela’s plants and counts “the endless names of stones” at the site of Verlia’s death: “[r]ock leap, wall heart, rip eye, cease breath, marl cut, blood leap, clay deep, coal dead, coal deep, never rot, never cease, sand high, bone dirt, dust hard...” (AP 241–2). Elizete brings herself into existence in Toronto by naming and unmasking the social relations that constitute the city, now her here: “here, there were many rooms but no place to live. No place which begins to resemble you” (AP 63); here “nothing ties people together” (AP 65–6); here is a place where each morning, migrants like her feel like “two people — one that had to be left behind and the other. The other was someone they had to get to know, the other was someone they were sometimes ashamed of” (AP 61).

The vision Brand articulates through Elizete resonates with a view put forward by Erica Carter, James Donald, and Judith Squires in *Space*

*and Place: Theories of identity and Location*, namely, that while “places are no longer the clear support of our identity, they nonetheless play a potentially important part in the symbolic and psychical dimension of our identifications. It is not spaces which ground identifications, but places,” and space becomes place by “being named.... Place is space to which meaning has been ascribed” (xii). Orphaned by a colonial past, Verlia and Elizete are women without a place of belonging: without a home, without a country. Abena’s simple solution to “Go home” will not do, Elizete knows: “really no country will do. Not any now on the face of the earth when she thought about it. Nothing existed that she could live in” (AP 109–10). Since no pre-existing alliance of place and identity awaits Elizete, she has to name both self and space in order to create places of be/longing for herself.

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