

Affective Coordination and Avenging Grace

Dionne Brand's *In Another Place,
Not Here*

Everything make sense from then
the way flesh make sense settling into blood.
—Dionne Brand

Dionne Brand's first novel *In Another Place, Not Here* represents the Black diaspora through a queer, chaotic narrative that knots together—and rips apart—the relationship of a grounded Grenadian sugarcane worker, Elizete, and an idealistic Trinidadian-Canadian revolutionary, Verlia. The women's lives are also at times mediated through a third character, Abena, who is a friend to Elizete and lover to Verlia. This character arrangement disrupts the heteronormative convention of love as being exclusive to binary pairings of people and firmly contextualizes Elizete and Verlia's relationship within a broader network of Black diasporic women. Because the text is primarily organized around Elizete's and Verlia's lives, however, this essay concentrates on their relationship. The brief time that the two protagonists are together coincides with their entry into a socialist revolution. These intertwined developments (romantic and revolutionary) develop the text's central interest, an interest suggested by the above epigraph. *In Another Place, Not Here* explores new possibilities for a continuum between the "sense" that is produced in language, discourse, and culture and the body's ability to "sense," its affective capacity to experience and influence the world. Attention to bodies-in-contact emphasizes that discussions about affect can be, as in discussions about discourse, analyses of how power is organized and exercised in shifting, historically specific ways across different moments and geographies. Brand explores the continuum between these different kinds of "sense" to show how the potential for massive social change can be catalyzed at the

minutest levels of the flesh. Her writing insists that the body is not merely a passive site upon which history is inscribed or across which signifying acts play out, but is a living source of hope for an anti-racist, anti-capitalist politics.

Written in 1996 but set between the late 1960s and early 1980s, the tone of the novel alternates between bright optimism and devastating lament as the characters' personal lives channel the anti-colonial political struggles of that era. Brand turns to this time because, as she explains in an interview with Christian Olbey, it offered a brief moment of "collective victory" for Black political activism during which "Black people in general, in the Americas, breached [the] walls of racism and were able to re-think themselves in quite different ways" (92). Brand synthesizes social awareness and embodied sensation in her writing because the period was "gone too soon, or too quickly, or unrecorded as taking place in the body [before] the [capitalist] master narrative had taken over its description" (92). Set during a socialist revolution on an unnamed Caribbean island, moreover—an island that despite being unnamed is identifiable as Grenada—Elizete and Verlia's queer relationship literally embodies revolution against militarized globalization. Their relationship makes possible reinvigorated resistance and their mutual caring issues a powerful refusal of racialized and sexualized oppressions in the Black diaspora.

I describe Elizete and Verlia's shared experience of diasporic reorientation as "affective coordination," a term that invokes a doubled meaning of "coordinate." As a verb, "coordinate" evokes the kinetic, sensual synchronization of different bodily parts that creates an overall increase in ability (such as when an athlete relies on coordination instead of muscle to generate power). Brand's writing enables readers to visualize the surprising operations that are made possible when we coordinate with each other in unorthodox ways, creating unexpected encounters that unbalance established arrangements of power. While theorists generally agree that affective experience is constituted by non-conscious sensation, a stream of impressions that floods and vanishes beneath the surface of awareness, they are also adamant that we can study its effects to elaborate on discussions of power in culture. Brand, for her part, makes this possible by depicting characters' series of encounters as unrepresentable in the conventional terms of love, but which have the discernable effect of allowing them to combat their shared disorientation. Elizete, Verlia, and others come together to generate a collective political agency that is well out of proportion to their minoritized socio-economic positions in Canada and Grenada. Their revised relations, their unlikely sexual and social coordinations, enable them to participate in grand acts of

armed resistance as well as in small, daily acts that give life purpose, elevating it above the struggle for biological survival in diaspora into the pursuit of enriched collective well-being.

Just as the racialization and economic exploitation of their bodies effects their dislocation, the raw pleasure that Elizete and Verlia generate through the coordination of their affective experience is the means by which they begin to create new orientations in the world. To advance this argument, I also deploy the word “coordinate” as a noun to invoke the vocabulary of longitudes and latitudes, the unit that safely guides travelers and demarcates the territories of established nation-states. My use of “coordinate” in “affective coordination” draws attention to the alternative, diasporic mapping that the characters’ relationships produce. The maps to belonging that the protagonists chart do not simply stake a claim according to dominant territorial logics. As in much of Brand’s writing, these characters are blocked from settling into “place.” The new kinds of relationality that they discover, however, point to processes of reorientation that depend on the capacity produced by their mobile, displaced bodies.

As mine is a project of literary analysis, I face an obstacle by grappling with the potential generated on a pre-linguistic plane of embodied sensation. The problem of approaching affect through language is exemplified in the difficulty that theorists and critics have faced in simply distinguishing affect, feeling, and emotion. My thinking follows Brian Massumi’s *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* in its primary distinction between affect and emotion. “Feeling” is briefly aligned with “emotion” in at least one sentence of *Parables for the Virtual* (61), but the scarcity of “feeling” in his text is signaled by the fact that it does not even appear in the index.¹ Massumi understands “affect” as a prepersonal flow of intensities, while “emotion” is “subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal” (27). In a minor contrast with Massumi’s work, my writing occasionally allows for a slippage between affect and feeling.² Whereas “emotion” connotes a discrete recognizable experience that can be recognized and owned by the individual, “affect” and “feeling” describe nebulous events of sensation rather than identifiable moods or mental states. This problem, one of attempting to evade containment by dominant discourses of feeling, persists throughout *In Another Place, Not Here* as Brand’s characters refuse the conventional vocabularies of love and lust in describing the impulses, sensations, and affective exchange that constitute the basis of their relationships. At one point, Verlia explicitly

disavows the language of seduction and bourgeois concepts of love (75-78). Instead, the personal-political rejuvenation and empowerment that Elizete and Verlia experience in their encounters with one another is repeatedly described with a highly corporeal, pliable notion of “grace.” Is the experience of being in and desiring grace a feeling? An emotion? An affective trace? These ambiguities resist definition, and much of this essay is dedicated to teasing out the politicized nuances of corporeal-incorporeal experience that Brand makes possible for readers to imagine as a resistant, and at times avenging, aspect of being.

Affect in Brand’s writing is highly corporeal. In *In Another Place, Not Here* “grace” cannot be separated from the joy and beautiful ease that Elizete and Verlia find in one another’s bodies. This erotic pleasure is not compartmentalized from the rest of their lives, however. It exerts an irresistible influence on their fundamental, and equally embodied, sense of displacement in the world as diasporans. In this sense, once the women connect with one another it becomes clear that affect in this novel is also incorporeal in important ways. It becomes the catalyst for hope by briefly converting the unenviable fact of their diasporic disorientation into new possibilities for living. Prior to Elizete and Verlia’s meeting and after Verlia’s death, the characters’ respective experiences of displacement are characterized by desperation and confusion, a need to reduce pain in their lives. When Elizete and Verlia are together, however, their revised experience of mobility leaves them open to wonder, pleasure, and possibility.

My understanding of the displaced body’s ability to generate hope builds on Massumi’s meditations on affect in *Parables for the Virtual* as well as on the writings of Gilles Deleuze upon which Massumi builds. In his study of Baruch Spinoza’s *Ethics* in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze explains that affect is not just the world of moods and passions, nor just the inconsequential matter inhabited by a being more properly defined by transcendental intellect. Reading Spinoza’s *Ethics*, Deleuze senses opportunities for a deeply enriched life, a more ethical life, in the recognition of the unity of mind-body and the individual’s ability to be radically, actively affected by other mind-bodies. He asserts that we are defined not by the passive reception of passions, but by that embodied capacity which allows us to relate to others in a way that increases or decreases our agency, our “*power of acting*” (27). In a line of thought that fits surprisingly well with diaspora theory, Massumi reiterates Deleuze’s thesis with an intensified attention to the ever-replenished incorporeal dimension of the physical body, a dimension that is produced by its

incessant mobility. He elaborates on Deleuze's radical commitment to hope in *Spinoza* as well as Deleuze's fascination with processural becomings in *The Logic of Sense* and Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* by emphasizing the indeterminacy that characterizes every body even at "rest." Even "[w]hen a body is in motion," Massumi writes, "it does not coincide with itself. It coincides with its own transition: its own variation" (4). Ever in transition from one position to the next, he theorizes, bodies constantly produce infinite possibilities for the future. It is at this plane, constituted by what Massumi, following from Deleuze, describes as intensities, that one encounters raw potential. This dimension of the body's incorporeality is incessantly renewed by that which the body senses as possible because the flesh can never catch up to, or finally *embody*, the infinite potential created through what it feels to be possible (30-32). If the minute mobilities of the body produce enhanced opportunities for relationality and even the experience of possibility itself, the global mobilities of the diasporic body can be thought of as revealing irregularities in and producing new possibilities against the institutions, practices, and norms that regulate citizenship within any given nation-states and the international networks of capital.

The possibility of diasporic sensory bodies producing the basic matter of social change has been anticipated by other scholars who seek to move beyond post-structural, performative strategies of subversion. Smaro Kamboureli's work of diasporic literary criticism *Scandalous Bodies*, for instance, analyzes the symbiosis between a group of dislocated bodies and the crisis of an unhealthy body politic. Particularly in analyzing Joy Kogawa's novel *Obasan*, Kamboureli describes the body's tendency to register and its ability to resist the established state's ills. She theorizes the diasporic body as a powerful medium of knowledge and agency, a site of experience that contests racist Canadian discourses of nation, gender, and sexuality. Clearing the way for my notion of "affective coordination," Kamboureli tracks the pleasures and pains of diaspora as the transmission of embodied knowledge between *Obasan*'s protagonist Naomi, her mother, and her grandmother, a diasporic network of feeling that she terms "dialogic corporeality" (180). The notion of dialogic corporeality, a theory of relation-in-displacement, argues against figuring the body as a *tabula rasa* upon which conflicting discourses write and instead figures it as a locus of empowered, politicized subjectivity. I am extending this notion here by drawing attention to the affective incorporeality that is produced by the corporeal body, a ever-present becoming that is a function of the body's mobility.

Before elaborating on the philosophical connection between mobility and affect, I would like to note how the sense of possibility as a function of mobility operates in Brand's writing at the level of literary form. By infusing her prose with a sense of constant movement, Brand sweeps the reader through *In Another Place, Not Here*: sentences flow for paragraphs without final punctuation, and dialogue and interior monologues sometimes appear as transcriptions of oral speech. The flow of any given section shifts, often without warning, between past and present; first, second, and third person narrative voice; Caribbean and Canadian dialects; and Trinidadian, Canadian, and Grenadian settings. As readers, we cannot observe these shifts with disinterest as playful variations in linguistic code, but are disoriented by Brand at the level of our own sensory bodies. Our eyes are compelled to over-ride our habit of taking periodic pauses, our breathing adjusts to the flow of sensory experience across pages, and our minds must loosen to absorb content that is determined, in part, by unconventional styles of textual meaning-making.

Verlia fascinates Elizete when she suddenly appears in Grenada where the pace of life is slow and steady. She alone, in Elizete's words, is "all the time moving faster than the last thing she say" and even when standing still is "moving, moving, moving all the time without moving" (7). Verlia's tendency to frenetic motion, however, is not idealized in the way that Masumi fantasizes about the incorporeal potential of perpetual bodily transition. As a Black queer woman in the socialist revolution of the 1970s and 1980s, her commitment to an agitative politics ultimately leads to her death. In a gesture that is equal parts defeat and defiance, Verlia leaps off a cliff while defending the island's socialist government from heavily armed American invaders and power-hungry, pseudo-Marxist internal usurpers. The details of Verlia's death are not narrated until the novel's closing pages, but the event is gradually made tangible in the text long before it is actualized in plot. With a rhythmic consistency, Elizete indexes her own unspeakable grief and foreshadows this yet-to-be-narrated spectacular event with dreamlike images of a "cliff" and veiled references to Verlia "flying," "leaping," "jumping," and "leaving" (22, 23, 47, 53, 75, 84). In "Sexual Citizenship and Caribbean-Canadian Fiction: Dionne Brand's 'In Another Place, Not Here' and Shani Mootoo's 'Cereus Blooms at Night,'" Heather Smyth notes that the language of this painfully specific mobility emerges even in the women's erotic relationship. She recalls a passage (Brand 75) where the women have sex, noting "Elizete says that Verlia writes her words 'in an arc in the sky' while

her own words ‘come to grounds’” (Smyth 156). This series of lyrical eruptions both anticipates and embodies Verlia’s death in a style that exceeds the forcibly grounded orientation that had dominated Elizete’s life before she met Verlia.

Before elaborating on the relationship between orientation, affect, and history, I would like to acknowledge that which Brand establishes as the antithesis of diasporic hope. In her novel *In Another Place, Not Here*, as well as in several other of Brand’s texts including the short story collection *Sans Souci*, the poetry text *No Language is Neutral*, the novel *At the Full and Change of the Moon*, and the non-fiction text *A Map to the Door of No Return*, the political potential of diasporic feeling is always at risk of being extinguished by nostalgia for origins. Nostalgia, in Brand’s work, is a symptom of resignation to the hierarchized, racialized social order that characterizes Canadian culture. And if embodied affect is indeed a precious source of political hope, Brand could not portray “nostalgia” in more loathsome terms than by depicting it as a narcotic that numbs the displaced body. Rinaldo Walcott, analyzing Brand’s work in *Black Like Who?*, states bluntly “Nostalgia is dead” (45). He implicitly identifies *In Another Place, Not Here* as the text that killed it. I suggest that his report of nostalgia’s death is slightly exaggerated, but he is right that it can be toxic. In Brand’s novel, the term surfaces at a deeply frustrating point in Verlia’s nascent political development when she first becomes aware of a paralyzing apathy of migrants. “She hates nostalgia,” the narrator states, “she hates this humid lifeless light that falls on the past” (182). The narrator elaborates:

She smells their seduction, it’s the kind of seduction that soothes the body going home on the train, insulates it from the place of now and what to do about it. It’s seduction that keeps them here for thirty years saying they’re going home some day, seduction that makes them take the bit in their mouths, expect to be treated like dirt, brush past her hand outstretched . . . (182-83)

Verlia senses that doctrines of multiculturalism encourage people in minority cultures to offset their objection to racialized hierarchies with the belief that “somewhere else [they] are other people,” thus enabling a system of white privilege to thrive (182). While transnational mobility can be a catalyst for hope, Brand warns, migrants must beware of indulging in nostalgia, an easily co-opted experience that produces political and personal paralysis.

It is against this Canadian culture of apathy that Brand sets Verlia’s need for revitalized attention to diasporic orientations. Living in Toronto, Verlia finds herself unexpectedly overwhelmed with sense memories of her

Trinidadian home. The unexpected smells and tastes terrify her because it suddenly appears that, against her will, her body is producing paralyzing nostalgia. She panics and heads for Grenada, where she plans to immerse herself in the thriving socialist revolution. She leaves because of her terror that her body can be held hostage by a hostile Canadian place. On meeting Elizete, however, she learns that the inverse of her fear can also be true, that a reoriented relationship to place can result from affective coordination with other displaced peoples. In meeting Verlia, Elizete is likewise reoriented by the event of their affective encounter. She describes her epiphany at the advent of their sexual relationship: "Everything make sense from then the way flesh make sense settling into blood" (6). The power of this simile in part depends on the simplicity of the imagery that Brand invokes, imagery with which we are all intimately, bodily familiar. At the same time, the metaphor bears complex ontological and epistemological implications for the queer, diasporic lives of the characters. The image of flesh settling into blood evokes the erotic sensuality of the women's sexual relationship, and also naturalizes their relationship in the most basic matter of human life. Because the image describes a queer relationship, it defies heterosexist conventions that privilege heteronormative arrangements as singularly creating the conditions for life-giving sex. In light of these considerations, the deceptively simple statement encapsulates the novel's core idea: by taking control of the way they inhabit their own and each other's bodies—in work, in sex, in migration, in war, and in language—Elizete and Verlia provide each other with affective coordinates, a sense of embodied orientation that defies sexualized violence and the haunted conditions of diasporic exile.

In *Parables for the Virtual*, Massumi enlarges on his basic ideas of movement to theorize the human capacity for orientation. He disputes the common understanding that orientation is a function of vision, and instead describes it as a function of proprioception, the human "sixth sense" that can be "defined as the sensibility proper to the muscles and ligaments as opposed to tactile sensibility . . . and visceral sensibility" (179, 59). Our muscles and ligaments, Massumi suggests, "register as conditions of movement what the skin internalizes as qualities," so that "the hardness of the floor underfoot as one looks into a mirror becomes a resistance enabling station and movement; the softness of a cat's fur becomes a lubricant for the motion of the hand" (59). From this capacity we develop "lived diagrams based on already lived experience, revived to orient further experience" that are cross-referenced with visual cues, but that are much more powerful than visual maps

(186-87). He reflects: “Lived and relived: *biograms* might be a better word for them than ‘diagrams’” (187). What Massumi conceptualizes by raiding clinical science, Brand conceptualizes in *A Map to the Door of No Return* by raiding bird watching manuals. She writes:

The rufous hummingbird travels five thousand miles from summer home to winter home and back. This hummingbird can fit into the palm of a hand. Its body defies the known physics of energy and flight. It knew its way before all known map-makers. It is a bird whose origin and paths are the blood of its small body. It is a bird whose desire to find its way depends on drops of nectar from flowers. (6)

Brand’s description of the miraculous rufous hummingbird signifies in much the same way as Massumi’s proprioception, except that the scale of her depiction—the success of the small creature against overwhelming distances and odds—also carries a diasporic charge. This is especially true of her statement that the hummingbird’s “origins and pathways are the blood of its small body” (6). In my initial readings of the text, my mind supplied the preposition “in” where it did not exist in the middle of the statement. When I finally noticed that the bird’s routes are not *in* the blood but *are* the blood, the passage revealed a more profound message not only about abstract hope, but about the real abilities generated by the incorporeal dimension of the diasporic body.

While cursory readings of Brand’s hummingbird and Massumi’s biograms might seem to reduce the experience of affect to the individual organism, *In Another Place, Not Here* asserts the necessity of reconceptualizing how humans inhabit shared histories shaped by public discourses and economies. The biological fact of affect is not negligible; Brand’s fiction forces us to confront how the discursive and the corporeal are implicated in one another with an intimacy that belies that anxious post-structural distaste for “essentialisms” and “biology.” In the specific context of often unrecorded, disorienting histories of slavery, for instance, the innate capacity for orientation must contend with the dizzying, nauseating force of an eviscerated past, a force that continues to racialize everyday experiences in education, employment, and other routine practices of daily life. Brand represents this most distinctly when describing Elizete as utterly, completely lost in Toronto— affectively, geographically, and socially—following Verlia’s death (46-54).

In depicting the coming together that enables the characters to overcome their own disorientations, Brand chooses, paradoxically, the brute conditions of the cane field—described in Verlia’s journal as “one step short of slavery”—as the setting for the women’s entry into graceful eroticism and

mutual reorientation (220). Elizete is enchanted by Verlia's sheer intellectual determination and her bodily shortcomings. She remembers the new arrival rushing into field labour, "sweating as if she come out of a river. . . . *she head running ahead of we, she eyes done cut all the cane*" (15 ital. mine). In this moment, Brand gestures to the fallacy of separating mind and body, the futility of disembedding the body from a political ideology by representing Verlia's intellectual zeal as a deep naivety. Verlia's prioritizing her mental/visual capacity over the actual bodily work of cutting cane signifies the inadequacies of grand theoretical strategies for social change that are out of touch with lived affective experience. The text does not condemn Verlia or the intellectual passion that she represents, however. Elizete senses Verlia's over-ambitious ignorance, but instead of dismissing the foreign intellectual, finds it as a source of raw attraction, translating the site of potentially dehumanizing field work into a medium of passion. Elizete recalls, "That is the first time I feel like licking she neck" (15). Verlia comes to think of her outsider's vigour as foolishness, but her efforts to translate intellectual energy into physical labour exerts a force of attraction on Elizete and other diasporans that becomes crucial for their later armed rebellion. The text is, clearly, not anti-intellectual, but it insists on recognizing the inseparability of abstract political thought and daily personal lives and the insufficiency of any model that does perform such a separation.

Verlia's attraction for Elizete is likewise narrated in such a way that it emphasizes her lover's affective tendencies and stresses the fundamental singularity of the personal and the political. Focalizing through Verlia, the narrator explains: "When they'd first met she thought that she was the one who knew everything, and how she was going to change this country woman into a revolutionary like her, but then something made her notice that she was the one who had doubts and what she was saying she merely said but Elizete felt and knew" (202). To elaborate again on Massumi's distinction between a visual map and a biogram, or the distinction between Cartesian dualism and Spinozian singularity for which it stands: Verlia arrives to promote radical socialism in Grenada with what she thinks is a complete economic-historical discursive "map" of the cultural situation, but her map is affectively deficient. She is out of touch with the people's sense of their place in the local landscape and culture, and is subsequently transfixed by Elizete's deeply embodied sense of orientation. The narrator describes Verlia's connection to Elizete's biogrammatic sensibility through sex and the hope that this affective coordination brings:

It was usually close to morning when [Verlia] missed [Elizete], when she reached over and felt for her, hoping that she was there and sensing another thing, the room full of hoping. She knew that she was safe with a woman who knew how to look for rain, what to listen for in birds in the morning. . . . She needed someone who believed that the world could be made over as simply as that, as simply as deciding to do it, but more, not just knowing that it had to be done but needing it to be done and simply doing it. (202)

Though over-idealized by Verlia, Elizete's biogram of her place creates new coordinates for Verlia. By connecting with Elizete Verlia comes to a clearer understanding of her own mission in search of enlightened living. Her idealization of Elizete's rootedness creates self-doubt, but it also equips her with a new, embodied sense of purpose.

The characters' coordination with one another also provides Elizete with a fresh sense of direction. Her attachment to place may radiate an alluring certainty for Verlia, but Elizete is aware that it is a symptom of resignation to personal and political immobilization. Verlia's earnestness in the field counteracts this fixity. Though Verlia is overzealous, she inspires and mobilizes Elizete. By setting the sexual and political dimensions of their affective coordination against the charged context of the cane field, Brand represents their brief triumph over the immediate and historical, local and global conditions of their diasporic existence.

Elizete and Verlia's victory, then, is not just over the pains of the day, but over gendered and sexualized exploitation by neo-colonial powers. Brand's blending of queer desire and intensive labour introduces the novel, not with a sentence, but with a single word: "GRACE" (3). The next line reiterates this signifier of beauty, agility, dexterity, and strength. It confirms, still in capital letters, "IS GRACE, YES" (3). "Grace" heralds the narrator's introduction of the characters. In this moment, the narrator focalizes through Elizete as she studies Verlia working furiously. Near the novel's close, Verlia resurrects this concept as she watches Elizete. She laughs at herself, "That she would envy hardship . . . That she would fall in love with the arc of a woman's arm, long and one with a cutlass, slicing a cane stalk and not stopping but arcing and slicing again. . . . That the woman would look up and catch her looking and she would hate herself for interrupting such *avenging grace*" (202-03, ital. mine). "What made her notice that she was the one needing," the narrator explains of Verlia, "was that grace, that gesture taking up all the sky" (203). Grace is more than a condition of easy movement: its suggestion of bodily dynamism, productive power, and ascendant beauty defines how these women save one another. Elizete and Verlia's queerness represents a

refusal to bear life by heteronormative means, but their desire, cultivated in the cane field, is their saving grace.

The relationship between the hypermobile Verlia and the re-rooted Elizete is sensual, but, set in cane fields and in diaspora, is not conventionally romantic. Their queerness intersects with their lives as field workers in uneven, unpredictable ways because they approach the same scene from radically different directions, each with her own cultural biogram. Elizete becomes angry, for instance, when, lying in bed, Verlia kisses the scars inflicted by her ex-husband Isaiah that criss-cross her legs. Having caught Elizete as she tried to escape to the train station, he had whipped her with the “[s]ame rhythm” they used to cut the cane, and Elizete “knows that there is no kiss deep enough for that” (55). Brand’s invocation of the whip strikes a continuity between the violent contempt Elizete suffers at the hands of her husband in the neo-colonial plantation and the conditions of slavery that ought to be a fact of the past. For all of the incorporeal promise that Elizete and Verlia’s erotic bodies generate together, Elizete’s discomfort during this erotic scene shows that embodied hope must contend with the deadened, non-regenerative scar tissue inscribing both Elizete’s legs and the corporeal history of the Black diaspora. In “Written in the Scars: History, Genre, and Materiality in Dionne Brand’s *In Another Place, Not Here*,” Pamela McCallum and Christian Olbey discuss this aspect of the novel by reading the text as a postmodern appropriation of the antebellum slave narrative. They draw attention to “the ubiquity of the whip” in this novel, a figure that “reminds us of the connection between past and present forms of coercion” (173). While my reading of the novel theorizes Brand’s originality in her representation of the body’s innate capacity to bear history in significant ways, McCallum and Olbey’s materialist analysis reminds us that Brand’s representation of the body is in conversation with a larger aesthetic tradition that attests to long-standing relations of bodily and economic domination.

The history that Brand inscribes upon these bodies is not only the deep legacy of slavery, but also the relatively recent history of the Grenadian socialist revolution. Brand’s novel deviates from historical accounts of Grenada’s socialist demise by slightly disrupting the temporality of its events. She spreads out October 19, 1983—Grenada’s “Bloody Wednesday”—over a few days. This temporal distortion is necessary. Even extrapolated, the series of events feels compressed in the novel. Had she tried to represent them in an even *more* compressed time frame, Verlia would not have had time to note them in her diary. Nonetheless, Verlia records events akin to those that transpired on

“Bloody Wednesday”: the imprisonment of Grenada’s revolutionary leader by a usurper; the liberation of the leader at the insistence of the people; the subsequent execution of the leader; the ensuing uprising of the people in protest; and the usurper’s militarized effort to destroy unarmed protesters and lightly armed dissidents with the heavy armour of personnel carriers. The factual integrity of the details that Verlia cites as she claims overarching triumph for the real Marxist revolutionaries is supported by non-fiction historical texts. Kai Schoenhals and Richard Melanson verify the magnitude of the people’s will in *Revolution and Intervention in Grenada*, writing that the protest against Maurice Bishop’s incarceration included ten thousand people, or ten per cent of Grenada’s population and that the protest that moved to Fort Rupert included about three thousand people, many of whom were “uniformed schoolchildren” (75, 76). Schoenhals also describes how Coard’s People’s Revolutionary Army dispatched three Soviet personnel carriers that, in firing on the crowd at Fort Rupert, drove many Bishop supporters “fifty to ninety feet to their deaths” as they jumped from the walls “to escape the shells and machine gun fire from the three armoured cars” (77). Some historians, including Schoenhals, record that the pro-Bishop faction opened fire first while others, including Gregory Sandford and Richard Vigilante in *Grenada: the Untold Story* and Mark Adkin in *Urgent Fury*, record that Coard’s armoured cars opened fire in a pre-meditated slaughter of the population. Whichever political agenda shapes their interpretation, however, historians agree that these destabilizing events were exploited by the American government as an opportunity for invasion. Considering the violence currently being performed upon other nations’ sovereignties, global grassroots protesters, and the very concepts of truth and responsibility in the context of the American War on Terror, it might be argued that Brand’s critique of self-serving American global policing signifies with even more importance today than when *In Another Place, Not Here* was published in 1996.

If Verlia’s diary entries represent a self-consciously textual counter-narrative of the events leading up to the massacre at Fort Rupert, Brand’s depiction of Verlia’s final stand represents a self-consciously affective counter-narrative of the event. The latter is just as important as the former because it embodies the thousands of injustices imposed on thousands of bodies that day and because it forms a continuity with the countless injustices imposed on countless Black and Indigenous bodies in centuries before. This episode evokes a specific event in Grenada’s past that also constituted an embodied protest against colonial power. Schoenhals describes how,

following Columbus' "European discovery" of the island, French colonizers from Martinique began to exploit it. They strove to annihilate the Carib people whose island it was. He explains that "[b]y 1654, the French had pushed the Carib Indians to the northernmost cliff of the island. Rather than surrender, the Caribs—men, women and children—jumped to their death into the ocean below" (2). The place of their death is now called La Morne des Sauteurs, or Leaper's Hill (2). Schoenhals does not construct a connection between the deaths at La Morne des Sauteurs and the deaths at Fort Rupert, but his statement that the spectacular death of the Caribs is "much depicted and commemorated in present-day Grenada" suggests that such a connection would be recognizable for readers familiar with Caribbean history (2). While Brand's narrator likewise does not explicitly invoke the Caribs' death, Verlia's leap performs an embodied citation of the island's earliest anti-colonial resistance as it issues an improvised, personal gesture of radical defiance.

The novel shifts from Verlia's diary into third-person narration as it describes her final rebellion. Waking in a cemetery with fellow revolutionaries, including Elizete, Verlia feels intense rage, and vows not to die passively. She rouses the group and leads them to an unnamed fort that overlooks a harbour and offers "comfort [in its] stone walls" (245). On entering the confined space, however, the group is immediately cut off from behind. Armoured cars open fire with massive guns. Elizete's response is typical of her biogrammatic sensibility, her connection to the land. She hits the ground, and even smiles at the predictability of her reaction: "solid as usual, [her body's] usual weight hitting something solid, ground." (245-46). Turning to share this with Verlia, however, she sees her lover embodying an opposite but equally characteristic biogrammatic response. She sees Verlia "running, turning, leap off the cliff . . . her back leap, her face awake, all of her soar, her arms out wide, her chest pulling air" (246). In the next paragraph the narrator's scope broadens, focalizing through the perspective of a distant spectator on the other side of the harbour. The anonymous spectator "saw them fall . . . heard the pound, pound, pound *po, po, po, po, pound* of the guns . . . saw them tumble, hit, break their necks, legs, spines, down the cliff" (246). Having admitted to the fact of mass bodily destruction in the past tense, the narrator switches into present tense and focuses tightly on Verlia flying: "She's leaping. She's tasting her own tears and she is weightless and deadly" (246). Though this tasting suggests that Verlia senses her own body for its affective meaning as she flies, the remainder of this passage transcends the

corporeality of affect and dwells on an incorporeal state that represents freedom from the oppressed diasporic body.

Though terrible, Verlia's final mobility is also euphoric and inspiring. Her incorporeal inhabitation of the liminal phase between life and death is a release from the forced restlessness that drives her every move throughout the novel. Falling, "She feels nothing except the bubble of a laugh each time she breathes. . . . Her body has fallen away, is just a line, an electric current, sign of lightning left after lightning, a faultless arc to the deep turquoise deep. She doesn't need air. She's in some other place already, less tortuous, less fleshy" (246-47). If Brand plays on the title of the novel in earlier moments to describe "another place" as the affect-negating experience of numbing nostalgia, she invokes the same phrase here to portray its opposite, an "other place" that is the shift to maximum affective incorporeality.

Despite Verlia's ecstasy, the intensity of her final flight creates an opening for multiple, conflicting interpretations. Driven by armoured-car fire, Verlia's proud defiance is also crushing defeat. The joy that she feels with her shift into incorporeality is in part a freedom from the degrading, dehumanizing conditions that continue to structure the lives of the living. So what can it mean that the novel's ultimate affective triumph is a total political and military defeat? How could such acts represent hope, let alone an enhanced power to act? I argue that, while the activities constituting Grenada's revolutionary crisis cannot be altered by a novel published in 1996, Brand's depiction of Verlia as she flies over the cliff's edge signals that the way that they are recorded, interpreted, and used for future thinking can be affected. This final climax suddenly compresses the message that has run through the rest of the novel: the body is not merely a passive site upon which histories and discourses are inscribed, but is an active producer of future histories. Verlia's silent leap screams out a counter-narrative of historical events that were twisted to justify the American invasion of Grenada and reenacts a counter-narrative first performed by Grenada's original inhabitants. Her biogrammatic redoubling is not just a repetition of her own potential for movement, but also channels a similar leap taken by Indigenous peoples in 1654. Brand's final question reintroduces a quality of openness into a capitalist narrative that often exaggerates the "death" of socialism. Verlia, and the surge of political energy that she represents, are not necessarily and finally defeated.

Brand represents the collapse of Grenadian socialism in such a way that it occurs *despite* the successes of the system and the will of the people. Her novel represents one defeat that happens to have occurred at one time under

unusual historical conditions of political hypocrisy, internal betrayal, and external invasion. The affective pulse of the novel asserts that the event was not an inevitability and has not foreclosed potential for the present. Verlia recorded the revolution as a triumph in her diary. Brand's final representation, then, does not portray a condition of loss, of final defeat for Black diasporic activism. Instead, by weaving hints of Verlia's leap throughout the body of the text before representing the event itself, Brand asks readers to think about the slipperiness of history's powerful grasp in personal and cultural terms. Her final depiction of Verlia bursts open a sense of the innumerable, unpredictable futures that can be produced by the affective body, and the words "in another place, not here" begin to signify as a promise of a rejuvenated affective politics even as they testify to the diasporic pains of an irresolvable deferral of belonging.

NOTES

- 1 "Feeling" is likewise absent from the index of Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley's anthology, *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* while the distinction between "affect" and "emotion" rates only a passing mention in two of the anthology's essays.
- 2 Jeremy Gilbert also notes the ease of the slippage between "feeling" and "affect" as he calls for new ways of thinking the social in "Signifying Nothing: 'Culture,' 'Discourse' and the Sociality of Affect." Gilbert explicitly rejects Massumi's argument for the "autonomy of affect" and points out that both affect and feeling imply "contact, sensation, intensity, tactility and emotion" as he compares Raymond Williams' notion of "structures of feeling" and Deleuze and Guattari's work on affect. Of course, all of these terms remain pliable. Diana Brydon's "Dionne Brand's Global Intimacies: Practising Affective Citizenship," for instance, cites Rose McDermott to define "emotion" in a way that overlaps with most scholars' definitions of "affect" (1001). It is perhaps worth citing Gilbert's optimistic opinion that "[i]t is one sign . . . of its increasing significance that the meanings attached to [affect] seem to proliferate and slip around."

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