

“Quite here you reach”: T(h)inking Language, Place, Extraction with Dionne Brand’s *Land to Light On*

“You live in Trinidad?”: predawn, the customs lady asking you to deny what you only know true. Ah dead anywhere else. But who re’llly live in Trinidad this hour? Dem either not working, just working, or reachin from work: we claim antithesis of why we here,¹ despite history, industry. Is soucouyant and douen whey about now.

But is not the first time. What does a migrant labourer supposing what they can from de cold all these years say when confronted, “Is here yuh reach back? Fuh what?”

How to make a life defined outside the concept of border,² beyond nationalism, and the politics of “international student,” “foreign worker,” blackened and all but Black ‘cept for a last name nobody in the North could spell or pronounce? Mar-ga, Marag, is a *j* allyuh fighting up with so? The Anglicized extraction from *maharaja*, cuz what could indentured labour do but appeal to caste to cast somewhe’e they future? What to mek ah road out from but the pitch lake in yuh belly? LaBrea tar when you learn to tell people you from a land of oil and gas and stick

¹ T(h)ink peripheral. T(h)ink note as technology for stringing together re/verb of whatever we want to call body, whatever we want to restrain an say “text”—*oh the weight dey put on dis word*—even genre. With Brand in “All That Has Happened Since: IV viii,” “steal what they have, thief from thief make god laugh / . . . false passports and new / identities” from they flip jargon (*Land* 32).

² T(h)ink inter(con)textually, across/with/through disparate bodies, spaces, places, movement, semiotics, formations of meaning along the deep rhetorical ecologies (Maraj) that constitute and co-constitute what Christina Sharpe calls the “weather” of anti-Blackness (172), the afterlives of transatlantic slavery stifling still. Doh forget the moving rhetorical situations with every utterance, gesture, resonance, but consider the implications of dem and those positioned in spaces of the unthought (Hartman and Wilderson).

yuh head high cuz Trinidad and Tobago ent pedaling banana. “Heads high, killem wit it now,” so the tune go.

Buh all these people gehn take, I think, watching the bag of families from my flight each pointed with their five and six suitcase to pay duty—extract from extracted commodities: this forever loop like circling a room in a re/inscribing fugue—or to scan in order to get charge. “Is jus my mother I come to see. She not well.” Which is not to say she ent already been welled—a woman raisin chirren and grandchirren, brown-skin like she self. Dionne Brand’s woman in “Every Chapter of the World” (re)turns as the figure for whom “the mouth of the world will open / yawn her in, float her like a language on its tongue, // forgetting” (*Land* 94). I ain’t forget what meh mudda do for me, nah. I reach back to dis woman. The swell in meh belly not eating from worry. I ask the university, kindly, to reach home and check she—I doh want to cry bah-bye on *WhatsApp*. But they mek meh beg the Dean, talk bout how she lie down on the bathroom floor for hours crying for somebody—sap story dey like, yea. Is these scene they need—Black suffering per/formed as trope, a disciplining gesture where kindness requires humility,³ humility = subservience, subservience that Brand’s “red truck on a rural road” could (re)turn to proffer: “closing, / no wonder a red truck could surprise me” (*Land* 4, 11), the linger-threat of white modernity.

I consider Brand’s object-trigger-trauma when I board the plane t(h)inkin⁴ bout border—the way some ah dem truckers start blocking for their own order and my colleagues laugh and say “yea, they’re six years late,” joking that white supremacists now reach dey place call “Canada,” as though they never construct the lines, ideas, nation, colony.

³ T(h)ink over how we want this a happy object (Ahmed) in knowledge-making, a home as though some department, trope, or constrained mode of thought might mek we more. Move across and disturb the foundations of every miniature tower built in service of intellectual capture for sale.

⁴ T(h)ink para the usual, verb: meditate, study—as in “you feel is you me have to study?”; sit with and through *tink* as in process by which each stitch becomes undone, unfurled to fray. T(h)ink with apposite *tinker* fiddling to no particular end, often, in Black study as Harney and Moten offer, “Study, a mode of thinking with others separate from the thinking that the institution requires of you” (Halberstam 11), but in the mobilized expression of Trini *study*, which signals a deeper care affected often in bother, a “you studyin’ them still?” “doh study dat, man!” “all that yuh studying? Is tabanca yuh have?”

History will tell yuh that *truck*, verb and noun, and the gerunding space in neither, from calendar of Western memory marked thirteenth to nineteenth century augurs: “To give in exchange *for* something else; to exchange (one thing) *for* another; also, to exchange (a thing) *with* a person”—to truck, to trade, to make money outta things and people and then call it “freedom,” to shape metaphor outta ghost and frame it singular (“truck, *v.* (1)”). And as Brand echoes, through that woman caught in “Every Chapter,” “in all nouns’ masculinities, in rocks cut out in / every single . . .” (*Land* 95).

How far we reach that freedom parlours subjection—but we never leave—explains Saidiya Hartman that anti-Blackness it churns to “make discipline pleasure and vice versa” (*Scenes* 43)? Is Brand’s woman in “Every Chapter of the World” at the end of *Land to Light On* that have me capture—between the volatility in but violent construction of language: Brand describes the order of “men, old instruction books on care and discipline / of slaves, not to go too far back, after all not / their fault, no need . . .” (100). My father asks her if Uncle Chris have somebody there with him cuz Tanty Mer leff and go; my mudda say “his niece is there.” “She does cook and ting?” “No, she doesn’t cook for she self; how she go cook for he?” “Wha’ yuh mean? How she does eat then?” This man, asking as though only woman know how to find food, and me in the back seat growing more and more vex ‘cause is my same mudda have to cook, “her face . . . hacked in revolutions of the sun and kitchens” (96). *I remember them, blue lights then red for the ambulance asking, as I tuck my shirt into primary school uniform khaki shorts, “wha happen, Mummy?” when Jason father come from behind while she washing dishes and chop he mudda dead until we couldn’t play with Jason and dem no more and he aunts lock up inside the house still.* Is the selfsame Black woman who refuse and refuse and refuse but Brand show it have no way out dis politics of extraction: out of the body marked, conscripting murder—we hemmed in dis destruction. She write, “over her palms, knowing nothing, / knowing no one alive inside her after // knowing nothing / nothing more” and all “should have stopped and changed shape” (89), the narrator as narrators go, this one assured, resolved that it have no outside this commodity, dis representation, the breaking apart of language not doing nothing fuh we.

And while nouns gendered masculine in *Land*, verbs not any better at resolving, revolving, bouncing against gerund dat go trap them as something. In “Dialectics XII,” just before “Islands Vanish,” the poet points to them, “acid verbs”: yuh see, it have no escaping through poetics or story, she opens with “Out of them. To where? As if I wasn’t them. / To this I suppose” (69). Consider the *I* mobilized by Brand: the technology, as Denise Ferreira da Silva highlights, only transparent of Western Man. Sit with the *self* as in: “da’s de ting, self!” and “if self we have to go we go reach!” Self, an *it*, a conditional “it is” or “it is indeed,” a reification of ontology speaking in on itself. What first person could then speak demselves free of the burden of modern European philosophy who trap we in the fraught construction of liberal subject? So whe’e this speaker trying to go t(h)inking “The choices fallen into / and unmade. Out of them. Out of shape / and glimmer and into hissing prose” (69)? *Landing*—used in this piece, dis place, to evoke moving possibility—maybe?—from property but still tie to that noun, dat property that everybody want to call upon and say “is my one!” Count it as they own. Word. Indeed, Brand ends—buh doh joke, it have no end!—here on “and / even though you had a mind, well, landing . . . / it doesn’t count on flesh or memory, or any purposes” (69). No telos then or rest, for that prose, those words one might bode escape, but why she di’n’ jus put a *No* in front the title and call that done? It not, though.

No, see, as Brand theorizes, elsewhere in non-fiction, the self: product of augured autobiography (written) “gestures to the world of a reading self” (*An Autobiography* 7). It is but a consequence “made, through colonial pedagogies in the form of texts” (7). Continuing, still, in *An Autobiography of the Autobiography of Reading*, she summons *subject* as somehow ambiguously coincidental to colonial mastery and ellipsing “something other than violence, erasure, and absence” (7). When pressed for the unknown self outside of BBC-consciousness in *A Map to a Door of No Return*, that African self only reproduces that which that selfsame mediated vision manifests: “No amount of denial, however, dislodged this place, this self” (29). Land, then, re/turns to *Land* as Brand understands de way repetition circumnavigates imagination to border resource, extract, transact, to truck. Watch how she trade in/across/beside a cosmology some other than its own, the

woman, steupsing, in “I Have Been Losing Roads: II ii” explains “Is so things is”—a reminder “don’t expect / nothing good. Quite here you reach and you forget” (*Land* 10): dat “quite here” the expansive lengths to which the Caribbean soul might go haunted by what they feel better. I jus sit down here and listen to the TV saying “first world countries use this technology” to push they cancer screening. The way we does mek meh sad sometimes. James Clifford suggests diasporas dey self prefigure “a constitutive taboo on return” (304). I t(h)ink of Fanon, re/turning to his Martiniquais brethren and formulating Black “the result of a series of aberrations of affect” (2)—my hand cramping as Mummy grip tight.

I hold my mudda hand hard when we go and walk—she hol’in the stick—but it stingin!—every Monday, Wednesday, Friday, we goin’ Eddie Hart Savannah. And every stranger whey pass we say “mornin’ mornin’”—is so Trinis like to repeat theyself, I’m told. Cyah tell yuh how much time I hear, “but Louis, is Trinidad, yuh know?” from my brudda mouth, “yuh know yuh in Trinidad, right?” when somebody disappear, ghost yuh and leave yuh waiting in dey trail—is so yuh does remember geography through cultural inscription, like coming up on the jagged shore of ah island—but the edge they usually mark here through absence. Da’s why they say #TrinidadIsNotARealPlace. So when Brand in “All That Has Happened Since: IV” understand that repetition, that simulacrum, that mimesis cyah re’lly function cause commodification grasps people and words and place and “Arani, I meet my old friend at Arani. Arani is piece of what / someone carried . . .” (*Land* 21). The poem’s speaker gestures “they’re all the same, why are you hoping, I say, all the same class” (23), really just “subjects of affectability” (Ferreira da Silva xxxix) at the whims of some brutal, “human” imagination—overrepresented (Wynter, “Unsettling” 287-88) and overwrought. Every time we walk past the man drinking he rum on the one bench, he watch how she shuffle with the stick and stare blatant—“is Trinidad, Trinis does stare, yea,” as meh brudda say, but is study dey studying. Same Brand “exhausted at Arani, my eyes reach for something / domestic” (*Land* 23), like how I know on the plane back “home”—which is where again?—I already missing the squeeze Mummy putting on meh hand as we round the lap again and seeing that same drunkard nine o’clock in the morning, finally saying “yes mornin’” the third time before he was staring just to stare.

But watch deep into the working language then, deeper into that particular despair of making a way out of some Fanonian *n'est pas*: "There is no way out of it. Me, nothing but me" (Fanon 165). As though travelling or living some where else or way might replicate us out, Brand's speaker, later, in "All That Has Happened Since: IV xi," out a plane window reflects: "For different reason / all of we, everyone the bridge over . . . fire in we tail, it wasn't enough that all we had was to find a way" (*Land* 37). The compulsion to leave because we always look at England, the States, the great North as some place to ameliorate conditions cane-sweet and sunny and against work for work sake. Once, a friend from New Jersey who come home with me say Trinidadians don't know nothing bout customer service and I agree but who trying to serve what customer and why we mus' wuk with a smile on we face, we like being Marx worker-commodity? She say Trinis so nice when yuh meet them outta work though—and that, once friend, couldn't gather as revolt against capitalism but rather sought logistics she knew safe in some place else, a home.

Is people like them we talk bought just the other day when we reach Andre house to re-create he wake—we always talking bought the dead to bring them with us. Hartman say grief centralized in the "vocabulary of the diaspora" ("Time" 758). And is Andre same face on the bookmark wh'e I reading *Land* with, the dead traversing these poems with him, rest in peace dear cousin, always bringing a cologne from duty free when he coming—oh how travel dictate we always going and coming. But yea, Tanty Mer and Tanty Ros host a li'l small lime and we start talking about "foreign" labour cuz yuh know "Trinis don't like to work, eh," but I say to my cousin and dem "is it that dey don't like to work or they don't like what they working for?" All the while I shuddering how *they* become *dey* and not *we* cuz I have degree so now I divorce, eh. Nobody respond but Anissa and Joey continue along, is the labourers coming from elsewhere and "*no, no, no* they don't want to live here"—Joey say "dey want to *own* here." "Yea it have people work they entire life to come by Maracas and we have it all the time and we jus take it for granted," Anissa forwards. Grant from the Latin *crēdere*, to entrust ("grant, v."), to imbue with responsibility sitting there asking, how might we take care of the bay or ocean proper or what act might bring us closer

to something outside ownership? How *dey* become *we* so fas’ *dey*? “But is the same way we is with snow,” she compares—but nobody don’t want to own the snow “is to experience it, yuh does want to experience it.” Subjects to affect what it have so far to reach up in de cold to get stopped by cops in “Islands Vanish: XIII” as Brand’s speaker et al. fall under such: “eyes fixes us / in this unbearable archeology” much like the irritating question “where are you from” (*Land* 73, 75).

As my cousin and dem pinpoint it have something *dey*, something there we does go looking for “had was to find a way” (37). “had was to” get beat out meh with a stick by Mr. Moore in Standard Four cuz grammar and violence go hand (and) in hand like a cane to the palm. *I remember superlatives and how if yuh get one wrong yuh stand, yuh get two wrong yuh stand on the desk, and the next one he ask was “handsome” and I refuse to say “most handsome” to the effect of a few lash on meh hand turning it julie mango red.* Tense, listen: tense, mechanics, history, none ah dat not up for debate eh. *Who doh hear go feel!* Brand noting “Something there, written as / wilderness, wood, nickel, water, coal, rock, prairie, erased / as Athabasca, Algonquin, Salish, Inuit . . .” (77) The things we went looking for in migration went the way of nouns taken as objects, erasing the names of who was transform / late into history’s confines “Are we still moving . . . submerged . . . When will we arrive?” (77) With “when” is “how?” And I listen to another Zoom meeting start with a white woman colleague reading the land acknowledgement canned alongside the curriculum initiatives and the language of progress we so caught up in—ironically situated as outpost in Brand’s quote—preceding the above—from Joseph Conrad (77): we only know these lands landing recent, stuck in a relentless present struggle to say “we have learned.” But have *dey*? Why we mus’ still be talking about the perils of transaction, of border, of nation as we round the corner to planetary extinction? As Audre Lorde, meditating *From a Land Where Other People Live*, cry “which me will survive / all these liberations” (159).

I want to believe though, and I t(h)ink Brand too, but can’t, in a notion not just para- or contained or fugitive fleeing beyond but the hard tears of it all—is jus, is jus, is jus that “what I / really want to say is” at the end of the particular section “Land to Light On” in “V vi,” “I don’t want no fucking country, here / or there and all the way back” (*Land* 48).

In refusal, in the impulse, ritual, and meditation of saying *haul all allyuh so and so*, “bodies lie still across foolish borders. / I’m going my way” but we trapped (48)! Which part yuh goin? *Is quite here yuh reach to forget it have nowhere to go?* We constrain in individual profit. But I go argue that is not simply an ambiguity Brand suggesting in world-building oppression and the struggle against it, as literary scholar Sophia Forster highlights. For Forster, Brand builds an inventory of essentializing logic in order to resist it, which teases through the complications of identity’s role in both sides of that equation. Pushing against critics who read *Land’s* pessimism as contra ambiguity in order to demonstrate the latter, Forster believes is through such Brand demonstrates a kind of optimism even in paradoxes of words’/poetry’s exhausted limits. Through language, though, yuh think it possible to read instead *Land’s* refusal as fraught, relentless attempts at para/ontological Blackness?

Elsewhere, I relate the possibilities of moving between, across, along, adjacent to, outside, but still with/in the constructs of Black being as ontological zero (following, say, Afropessimist readings of it—see Warren 5-6)—reduced to slaveness in an anti-Black world—and its capacities for fugitivity, of being otherwise in Black sociality—as theorized by Nahum Chandler and Fred Moten. Para/ontology “simultaneously describes concepts conjured in ontological ‘being,’ the ‘paraontological’ (beside, adjacent to, subsidiary to, and beyond being), and, importantly, what flows and moves in between and across those two ideas” (Maraj 6). Brand, to me, in unpacking tensions constructed with/in nation, gender, sexuality, geography, language, et al. animates that slash: de violence marking Blackness in the West and throughout the colonial project, all while engendering possibilities for undoing it in moments, in glimpses, whey language and fraughtness of Black experiences with/in them show somewhe’e dey else—despite being circumscribed, ultimately, in negation of a Southern im/migrant consciousness.

We could see it in the way in “Dialectics: VIII i” the speaker, challenged by her aunts, watch them wining to Kitchener and say “I didn’t know no dance could be so dark / and full of serious desire that frighten me” (Brand, *Land* 58). Here/hear the indulgence unfurling, t(h)inking through that movement, those Black sexualities represented in dey fluid motion shakes the speaker into one of the few restful declarations in *Land*:

“we home, ‘Is dance all yuh want to dance” (58); in a way a question presented in a statement—a movement with/in noun—the aunts ask “is fass allyuh like to be fass?”⁵ Only if—or *even self*—fleeting, the very next poem “VIII ii” begin “that night we wanted to fly in our aunts’ skin / we so loved their talk” (59)—coming close to what R. A. Judy might call flight, thinking in disorder, or multiple semiosis at play, offering multiple fluidities in meaning. And although “Dialectics” in “IX i” would reach to acknowledge “how it was not / you, not you but something holding us all . . . how the circumference / of this world grips us to this place” (Brand, *Land* 64), the fluidity across, along, in movement through time even self marked out of time by the essentialism of racism gifts the speaker’s para/ontological envy for these aunts’ lives they didn’t know dey was living (Forster 6; Brand, *Land* 65). Though penned in by the word envy here, Brand is not describing that “native envy” she find in Fanon, of “envy to the participle and / adverb, the way they own being” (38). Instead, the gesture orchestrates/exhibits the “artful craft of de ting” which “lies in being okay with not knowing in order to know,” a mashing up of de place and conditions of extractive existence (Maraj xiv).

Intimately demonstrating these para/ontological poetics in *Land*, the poet’s play with multiply iterated negation signals throughout a making through Trini language, but not simply a reductive kind of invention toward some notion of freedom a la Brathwaite’s “nation language” (5-6). In “I shouldn’t say / nothing” in the opening section (Brand, *Land* 5); “I didn’t know no dance” and “No I didn’t want their life” (*Land* 58, 65) (I jus mention); “No she cannot speak” and “no, no, I did not feel that. It was not // race” in “Every Chapter of the World” (98-99); and the outright refusal concluding “Land to Light On” with “I don’t want no fucking country” (*Land* 48), Brand re/orients readers to a phrasing inherent with/in, ideas that some ting

⁵ T(h)ink the phrase “fass and out ah place” and how yuh might throw it for somebody somehow min’in’ yuh business, overstepping with they boldface self (Maraj 133). Simone Browne points similarly to the Jamaican “facety,” as “obtrusive, audacious, and ‘not knowing one’s distance” (72). Browne asks how we could envision it as resisting colonial “lived objectification,” as pushing against the imperative toward Black people to stay in they place (72)—dat shelf where white people put yuh and always trying to put yuh back.

like #TrinidadIsNotARealPlace inaugurates. Dis memetic, excoriating government, laughing at quotidian absurdity, joking bout makin' boundry round existence, of de/framing essence, places place in some no place, elsewhere. Against situating expression with/in logics of language and their integral limits, dis shifting, turning, and moving away from discretionary poetics of border, invite readers, disbar them, and affect dem across a spectrum of those and other possibilities of engagement para-extraction. Alongside these moves, it have a playing with subject, with the *me* and the *I* and the object of the speaker, in *Land*, especially as the book opens in "I Have Been Losing Roads." Indeed, the very first poem start "Out here I am like" (3)—a speaker bound to metaphor, to tropes, to the machinations of what Hortense Spillers calls an "American grammar" that positions Black peoples with/in continuously reiterated racisms in the West (68). "All I could do" (Brand, *Land* 7), "I have to think again," "I was / supposed to" (9), etc. all illustrate the ways Brand's speaker understands being bound up in language, its compulsion, and its churning settler-colonial engine: "Yes, is here I reach" (6)—noting that this is whey language take meh. The relation/ships represented in the Queen's English even when made putty by dem who she would never grace still steering the circular trade, the trucking wake of transatlantic slavery linguistic.

And we know gender bear out together, similar in the tether to bodies that never forgive us and the way that system, that particular truth of power—to conjure Sylvia Wynter ("A Black Studies" 7, 9)—confine expression to what there only in Western notions of biology/culture. Every kin'a body discrete—water, religion, individual, "sacredly // stitched, called history and victory and government" (Brand, *Land* 96), call "Every Chapter of the World," call book, map, note, call part of speech or tense or grammar know dey importance in and of it/self. Jus so the speaker look at the woman, seemingly stuck at the end of the anti-Black world, lookin' at a lizard "suspicious, she asks, what gender, as if what / guarantee, if not certainty, how does she hold //" (97). Dat hold, that metaphor Sharpe offer as the belly of the slave ship which part we still stick in slavery's afterlives. Is for dis reason that Brand sets out to disrupt the genre of even book, of even poem, in ways that don't offer some redemptive narrative for Blackness, migrancy,

diaspora, or nation.⁶ That awareness of how construct of body and the very technologies that per/form them align with how scholars could claim Brand might exhibit the book as an anti-Black object (McCoy and Montgomery)—so is every level it permeate from word to grammar to chapter to book, look how these texture communication, aesthetics, poetics, etc.: inventories for making clear the ills of border (Forster).

To get caught in the perils of structure though, seem like an inevitable path for African diasporic English-ruled peoples of the South who grow up hearing bout *Vanity Fair* and Shakespeare and learn identification with they character. Brand in *An Autobiography* explains in dialogue with C. L. R. James these British models of civility, of gender, or personality prophesy what we learn as value, and technologies of capture, like the photograph, like the book re/present them in service of settler-colonial projects (11-23). But is in a recurring question, a reclaiming not delineated through (proprietary) Western logics, where “the ‘claim’ of de ting as a question, a demanding request; the re of de ting represents a turn ‘once more’” (Maraj 138). So when Brand consider “All That Has Happened Since” and ask while masking as declarative “and why I think their lives would not / be just so somewhere else but bless them in other thoughts just / for here” of three Sikh men selling goods (*Land* 28), that “for here” pelt we into disarray, a dis-cohesion of self in other, attempting reiteratively attempting escape from the literal sentence (is) dat hol’ us self. Dis t(h)inking disorder while knowing full well the well of tropes, of territorializing expressive matter from whence we came will leh we glimpse some crack in de frame, some fracture beyond this anti-Black world order manifesting over and over the trucking of gesture.

Some time after Mummy had fall again trying to clean the kitchen when she know she can’t stand up proper and I wipe she face—if you see how she mouth swell—she stop meh and say “yuh know I jus’ needed

⁶ T(h)ink performance through colonial technologies again mediated against those very things, as Cranston-Reimer argue of Brand’s *A Map to the Door of No Return*. Brand know bout undercutting genre, word, and telos, as the critic explains, *Map* “exceeds the norms of auto/biography because of the impossibility of adequately representing, or, perhaps more accurately, containing, the trauma and legacies of colonial history in a narrative” (95).

one person to care bout me to feel better,” I nearly cry cause the betrayal was it was jus so I leave and went abroad to show I didn’t. But as *Land* know we, right dey if I had stay was some version of dat thing woulda forestall meh—is jus a big circle dis anti-Black world and we could say it doh matter how we well up in it—that same circle the woman at the end drawing in she cell (103). We could agree with Kaya Fraser’s assessment—much like Azucena Galettini’s on Brand reminding us how it is forsaken—that “Language functions as a metaphorical ‘land’ for [Brand’s] weary-voiced persona to light on, but it is a very shaky ground indeed, and as the darkly ambiguous end of the book suggests, it may imprison her as much as it frees her” (292). Fraser’s analysis finish by pointing to the sacrifice of a poet to orchestrate how it have “no resistance in language” (307), and we could re’lly see that in that voice saying, “No she cannot speak of this or that massacre, this / or that war like a poet. Someone else will do that. She //” (Brand, *Land* 98). Dat dissolution/refraction of poet, poetry, and character, though, de fractures between self/other/environment summon some ting else here beyond the disavowal of language as immolation. I know that read all too well raise by my mudda who only know how to give up she self, forfeit most chance she have for somebody else, to sweep the kitchen floor even though she prone to fall, hit she head, and easy end up dead for nothing. “Just ask meh nah. I here. What you think I come back Trinidad for?” I beg she.

Dat giving up, though, relenting to the folly of language to demonstrate it useless, to think “these lines will / not matter, your land is a forced march on the bottom / of the Sargasso” and offering dat poetry (44), sacrificing “land to light on” as “only true, it is only / something someone tells you” in the very next poem “V iii” could tell we about some polysemic possible in poesies (45). More than “your planet is your hands” (44), a planet is nothing nobody could give or give up for anybody else resisting the white eco-logics that, rather, is something to take, to be taken and traded as wealth, as futurity. Leh we resist the compulsion to say dis or dat then, or Brand’s *Land* offering we jus ambiguity between two polities of being. Is what there or not in the move across, along, beside, adjacent to, outside, beyond, with/in a “no, no, no, is not that I saying!” in Brand’s verse, how that could mash up de self granular that could leff we without conclusion to tarry.

And while some critics consider Brand’s work—particularly *A Map*, in relation to fixity (Goldman; Brydon) and movement proper (Cranston-Reimer)—I want to sit with *Land* and t(h)ink through its mode of t(h)inking it/self an orientation to logics in/consistent with that “place and placelessness in tension” in diaspora, and as Katherine McKittrick highlights, particularly in Canadian context (106), but, at the same time—and outside dem temporal logics—burst forth through inter(con)text here most intimately with the Caribbean and dey linguistic vestiges. T(h)ink how the shape of our genres promote dis/orientation toward some product—quick lemme coin some way of describing what go on here so ah could profit from being quoted and cited and fuel the same foolish academic impulses Brand rail against. I suppose what I not saying is I see people—including me, self—sacrifice their language, place, politics everyday to get close to what we offer in the university, offer they chirren to the folly of progress, jus to end up with the same gravel in they mouth throughout Brand’s *Land*—re/turning the same value as invested.

We was liming again by Andre, and ‘Nissa husband Joey was laughing how she say something to they daughter. She start explaining how she could never pronounce *r*—in school other chirren tease she bout it, but luckily the daughter didn’t inherit that trait which the mother could not escape. ‘Nissa turn and say, but what I explainin’ to a professor of English bout language?—you know better than me what is the proper way to say these words to pronounce these terms (these expressions by which we do more than communicate, [’]cause Black expression in modernity always prefigured as resource, really). How to explain to my family that the progress they invest in, a mother giving up for she chirren for something other mean we continuing the selfsame logics that does lick we up? How to say it have no “proper,” no “better,” no superlative, no “handsomest” in the violent grammars, structures, and thinking the ground what we walk on? How to t(h)ink without the words and constructs, the tropes, sentences, genres we trade so willingly in in academic books, essays, and disciplines? Is only questions I have positioned *not, against, no*, up against the forward-moving gravity of Western temporality.

Re/turning to “Dialectics” Brand might know what I mean when I:

could not say a word to you that was not awkward and insulting,
there was really no way to describe you and what I wanted

to say came out stiff and old as if I could not trust you
to understand my new language which after all I made
against you. (*Land* 63)

Is dis feeling I sit with when t(h)inking language/place/extraction, when t(h)inking with Brand about and around the Black im/migrant Southern imaginary, when t(h)inking how my mother would get up in the night if she fall and I back up here in the people and dem university talking, and talking, and talking, bout systemic oppression, and department culture, and final essay, while circumnavigating t(h)inking in the selfsame language/place/extraction I trying to unstitch. It really ent easy to trade in words and then t(h)ink possible how to unmake them, how to disavow the designs of such exchange.

Reading relation/ships between Brand's *No Language Is Neutral* and *Land to Light On*, Leslie C. Sanders points to how the poet reverses course in revisiting the Trinidad/Canada dialectic in the two books of poems, where a home/exile focus in the former moves to considering identification with country in the latter. On that belonging the critic points to how *Land* illuminates its limits and eschews its demands, while committing to refusing it in some ways. I get ketch now trying to do just dat wishing some place to rest dis t(h)inking, dis tussling around with what it have leff but that woman imprisoned to a re-animated death at the end of "Every Chapter of the World" have me still compelled by t(h)inking language to re/turn to "Dialectics" t(h)inking "It was some place you had to hurry to and something / hot and sweet was going on there and waiting for you, / knowledge" (103, 61).

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