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Politicizing the Past: The Exploration of Revolutionary Collectivity within Neoliberalism in Dionne Brand's In Another Place, Not Here and Rita Indiana's Tentacle

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Abstract

This thesis explores the depictions of revolutions in the two Caribbean novels *In Another Place, Not Here* by Dionne Brand and *Tentacle* by Rita Indiana. I analyze how the novels explore the potential for political collectivity within neoliberalism through their depictions of the environment and same-sex relationships. I also examine how both authors engage their reader by forcing them to confront their positionality within the economic system. While Brand imagines ephemeral moments of collectivity within neoliberalism, Indiana shows revolutionary individual and collective action is inhibited by late-stage capitalism. Paring these novels together shows how contemporary individuals of differing positionalities can join collectivities towards the goal of creating social change within neoliberalism and perhaps even work towards the goal of changing the economic system itself.

Introduction

Change is eternal. Nothing ever changes. Both cliches are "true." Structures are those coral reefs of human relations which have a stable existence over relatively long periods of time. But structures too are born, develop, and die.

-Immanuel Wallerstein page three of *The Modern World-System I*

Neoliberalism is a political and economic theory that gained popularity in the 1970s. In his book *A brief history of neoliberalism*, David Harvey defines the titular theory as the belief "human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade" (Harvey 2). He explains within this system, the state's role is to promote these ideals by keeping the market unregulated. In the 1980s, Ronald Regan and Margaret Thatcher became proponents of neoliberalism, leading America and England to embrace its ideals of competition and individualism. Many countries with already thriving capitalistic economies embraced neoliberalism and they encouraged more nations to open themselves to world trade. As a result of European, American, and Japanese pressures, in 1995, the World Trade Organization (WTO) formed with the goal to "open up as much of the world as possible to unhindered capital flow" and achieved this mission when "more than a hundred countries signed on within the year" (Harvey 93). While neoliberalism is theoretically supposed to give individual

entrepreneurial freedom to developing economies who trade with potent economic powers like America, historical global inequities have been exacerbated under neoliberalism.

In his work, "The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis," Immanuel Wallerstein historicizes capitalism on a global scale to reveal underlying structural inequities of economic power. While Wallerstein does not focus on neoliberalism, his work explores how colonial legacies affect a state's development. Naming his conclusions World-Systems Theory, Wallerstein divides the globe into three categories: the core, periphery, and semi-periphery. The core consists of industrialized capitalist states that exploit the resources and labor of the periphery and semi-periphery (Wallerstein 401). Wallerstein describes the periphery as economically underdeveloped areas, often lacking a strong state. The semi-periphery has aspects of both categories and is simultaneously the exploiter and the exploited.

In the book *The Modern World-System I*, Wallerstein continues to write about his World-Systems theory. Although the author does not take an environmentalist approach in his analysis, in his introduction he relates global structures to "coral reefs of human relations which have a stable existence over relatively long periods of time. But structures too are born, develop, and die" (Wallerstein 3). While likely unintentional, Wallerstein's metaphor suggests an intrinsic connection between human economic structures and the natural world. Normally, we think of economic systems as rational and stable structures that control the actions and relations of the people within. But what if we liken them to a coral reef, an ecosystem that both provides for and depends on the plants and animals who live within? By viewing economic structures as dynamic coral reefs we can imagine how they are like reefs that are "born, develop, and die" (Wallerstein 3).

In my thesis, I will explore how the novels *In Another Place, Not Here* by Dionne Brand and *Tentacle* by Rita Indiana imagine revolutionary collectivity within the constraints of their neoliberalism. In paring these novels together, I will explore how their depictions of same-sex relationships and the environment show hope for or impossibility of collectivity within the modern economic system. While previous scholarship has explored how Brand and Indiana depict sexuality and the environment, my thesis will explore how both authors address the political potential of their characters and readers to join a collective within neoliberalism.

I will split my work into two chapters, one for each novel. In the first chapter "the reader, beckoned: ephemeral collectivities of melancholy subjects in Dionne's Brand *In Another Place, Not Here,"* I will argue Brand's novel imagines collective melancholia as a political unifier of the Caribbean people and the diaspora. Using Ian Baucom's book *Specters of the Atlantic,* I define melancholia as the perpetual state of mourning during which an individual recalls traumatic history while recognizing aspects of the past that remain unknowable. I will argue Brand's characters experience melancholic solidarity when they mourn communally. The source of the characters' melancholia changes based on the characters' identity and physical location. In my chapter, I will explore how the locations of the island and the Canada inhibit or enable melancholic solidarity. Throughout my thesis, I define solidarity as the unification of two individuals of different backgrounds toward a common political goal.

In addition to her characters, Brand gives the reader revolutionary potential as, through temporary embodiment of characters, the reader enters ephemeral moments of solidarity. Brand crafts the novel as a space that allows the reader and characters to interact and uses nonlinear narration to urge the reader to share in the characters' melancholia. By creating many ephemeral moments and presenting characters of different identities with whom the reader can form

solidarity, Brand invites all readers into her imagined collective no matter their positionality. I argue, after fostering ephemeral moments of solidarity between the reader and her characters, Brand invites the reader into a melancholic collective at the end of the novel, priming them to join other political groups after they close the book.

While Brand imagines collectivity, Indiana is not as optimistic about unified political action. In my second chapter, "King or Commodity?: neoliberalism's suppression of individual and collective revolutionary action and the address of the complicit reader in Rita Indiana's *Tentacle,"* I argue, Rita Indiana shows individual and collective revolutionary action are impossible within the oppressive system of neoliberalism. In her exploration of revolutionary potential and her eventual pessimistic conclusion, Indiana gives her reader hope then disappoints them. As the reader projects their expectations for revolution onto the protagonists, they feel discontentment with the characters whom they expect to forgo their lives and identities for a communal cause. In having her reader feel disappointment in the characters, Indiana makes them complicit in neoliberalism as the reader solely values the characters as their labor. Therefore, Indiana ultimately makes the reader contend with their positionality and complacency within neoliberalism. In my thesis, I will explore how Indiana imagines characters of every identity entrapped in neoliberalism. Similarly, she imagines her reader, no matter their positionality, as complicit in the modern neoliberal system.

In comparing these two novels, I will explore how each author sees the possibility for revolutionary collectivity based on the historical moment from which they write. Writing in the 1990s, Brand's novel depicts a Marxist revolution that takes place on an unnamed Caribbean island. Many assume Grenada as the location of the island because of Dionne Brand's own participation in the country's revolution. While the events of the novel can be recognized as the

Grenada revolution, Brand intentionally illustrates her movement as distinct. For instance, while the Marxist leader in the novel is akin to Maurice Bishop, Brand names him "Clive" to show she is thinking through the historical event, but not trying to replicate it. Therefore, to understand *In Another Place, Not Here*, one must have knowledge of the revolution on which the novel is based.

The Grenada revolution started when the Marxist-Leninist New Jewel Movement, led by Maurice Bishop, overthrew the oppressive dictatorship of Eric Gairy in 1979. The new leadership, named the People's Revolutionary Government, maintained a "political philosophy that was socialist in orientation" as Bishop's government sought to have a mixed economy where the private and public sectors coordinated to industrialize and improve living conditions of the people (Grenade 40). With the leaders' socialist agenda and the tensions of the Cold War, foreign capitalistic powers like the United States were wary of the new government. At the time, "The United Kingdom was Grenada's main export market. However, the PRG developed strong trading ties with other socialist regimes, in particular Cuba and the Soviet Union" (Grenade 46). Under the presidency of Ronald Reagan, America wanted to maintain free trade with Grenada and protect its own economic interests as Grenada lay in important sea lanes for American oil tankers. With external pressures and internal fractures, in 1983 the PRG broke apart when Bernard Coard committed a military coup that killed Bishop and most of his ministers. Within a week, America invaded Grenada under the pretext of protecting medical students on the island with the actual intention of protecting its political and economic interests. During the invasion, "Cuban casualties included 25 dead and 59 wounded among an estimated 600 to 800 fighters. Of up to 1,500 Grenadians who fought, 45 died and 337 were wounded" (Swift). While the Grenada

revolution had been a beacon of hope for revolutionary thinkers abroad, the invasion left many with a sense of loss and hopelessness.

Writing *Tentacle* in 2015, Indiana also thinks though issues of foreign intervention as neoliberalism has enabled the United States and other capitalistic nations to dominate the economies of the Caribbean. In addition to contending with increasing economic power imbalances, Indiana confronts the effects of global warming and rising waters that disproportionately affect the islands of the Caribbean. In "Ocean 2.0," J. Emmett Duffy holds the popular belief collective effort and scientific innovation can reverse the negative effects humans have had on the ocean. Duffy promotes a solution that works within neoliberalism and "avoids massive disruption of human communities and economies" (Duffy 94). For Duffy, technology, specifically social media, is a powerful tool that allows "scientists and members of the general public throughout the world to collaborate, advancing both innovation and democratic decision making" (Duffy 92). In *Tentacle*, Indiana critiques approaches such as Duffy's that work within neoliberalism because the economic system creates a culture of individualism that inhibits collective revolutionary action.

To explore the potential for political collectivity, both Brand and Indiana craft nonlinear plots that move in time and space. In Brand's novel *In Another Place, Not Here,* Verlia, an educated Marxist revolutionary, and Elizete, a field worker, form a romantic and physical relationship on the island during the revolution. While the women's relationship is central to the plot, Brand never depicts the women together in the present as most of the novel is narrated by Eliztete as she reflects on her relationship with Verlia after it has ended. While the island is the site of connection, Brand depicts Toronto, Canada as a city of isolation. While both women spend time there, they are never in the space together. Verlia moves to Canada as a teenager and

joins the Marxist movement in Toronto. When the revolution starts on the island, she returns home. In contrast, Elizete immigrates to Canada after the failed revolution. At the end of the novel, Brand reveals Verlia has been dead since the end of the revolution as during the American invasion of the island, she leaps off a cliff while under gunfire.

While Brand depicts various moments in time through Elizete's memories, Indiana illustrates time travel that enables one consciousness to control multiple avatars in different temporalities. At the start of the novel in 2027, all marine life is dead after a tsunami has washed biological weapons into the ocean. To reverse this catastrophe, a religious group selects Acilde as the prophesized male savior who will go back in time to fix their present. With the power of the sex-change inducing drug Rainbow Brite and a sacred anemone, a young woman Acilde achieves her desire of transitioning into a man and goes back in time. Acilde, now in the body of a white man, simultaneously controls three avatars in distinct time periods: 2027, the 1990s, and the early 1600s. In the 1990s, Acilde crafts the identity of Giorgio and acquires wealth and social status. Giorgio and his wife Linda become patrons of art who raise money for coral reef research. One of the artists Giorgio supports is Argenis, a painter whose classical style is not profitable in the era of multimedia art. After accidently getting stung by an anemone, Argenis goes back in time, controlling an avatar in 2001 and one in the early 1600s.

In both novels, the authors depict same sex relationships to explore potential collectivity. The authors depict queer relationships and same sex relationships that are platonic. In *In Another Place, Not Here*, Brand imagines relationships between women as less hierarchical than those between a man and woman. Brand writes at the start of third wave feminism and her novel is in conversation with the collection of art *This Bridge Called My Back*. The collection is a reaction to white feminism that claims a single experience for women. *This Bridge Called My Back*

contains art from women of different races and sexualities, becoming a place where women of different backgrounds can share a space and hold conflicting ideas. In the introduction to the collection, Cherríe Morage and Gloria Anzaldúa reflect on the revolutionary potential of the work as "Mere words on a page began to transform themselves into a living entity in our guts" (xliv). Like *This Bridge Called My Back, In Another Place, Not Here* becomes a revolutionary text that imagines how "mere words on a page" can transform the reader and bring them into a collectivity within its pages.

In contrast to Brand's hopeful depiction of female collectives, Rita Indiana illustrates failed male collectives. Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men* helps us understand why masculinity atomizes individuals. Sedgwick argues the homosocial is a spectrum of desire. However, in fear of being labeled as homosexual, men often police their actions toward and feelings for each other. In *Tentacle*, Indiana shows competitive masculinity inhibits characters from politically connecting. She uses masculinity to represent the culture of neoliberalism as both embrace competition. Additionally, in both neoliberalism and masculinity, the "winners" are most often white heterosexual men. Therefore, in showing failed male relationships, Indiana shows the system of neoliberalism prevents collectivity.

Furthermore, both novels take environmentalist perspectives in their exploration of collectivity within neoliberalism. Brand explores how the spaces of the island and Canada enable or inhibit collective melancholia. She depicts the industrial environment of Toronto, Canada as individualistic and competitive. Therefore, for Brand, the space inhibits collective melancholia for individuals of the diaspora as they view it as a tool to individualistically achieve social mobility. In contrast, Brand depicts the environment of the island as a vital carrier of history that enables collective melancholia for the traumatic history of colonialism and enslavement. While

the characters view the space of Canada as a tool to gain social mobility, they have a less hierarchal view of themselves and the island, enabling political collectivity.

While *In Another Place, Not Here* explores the spaces of Canada and the island, *Tentacle,* has an explicit environmentalist lens as Acilde/Giorgio aims to save marine life. While the main conflict in the novel concerns the environment, Indiana seldom features imagery of lush nature. Instead of idealizing the environment, Indiana shows, within neoliberalism, nature is a commodity. Through her characters' neglect of the environment and their use of nature for personal gain, she shows how the individualistic and entrepreneurial culture of neoliberalism thwarts the goal of saying the marine life.

Finally, both Brand and Indiana address their reader's potential for revolutionary collectivity. George Lukács' *In the Historical Novel* helps foreground the reader's revolutionary potential or lack thereof. Lukács writes, the genre historical novel arose at the start of the nineteenth century. For Lukács both the author and the reader of the novel are isolated bourgeois subjects who use the genre to maintain class status. While the novels depict the revolutions of the past, the reader does "not consider any new revolution to be necessary for the final realization of these positive things (Lukács 29). While Marxists like Lukács traditionally think of the reader as unchanged and isolated, I will show how both Brand and Indiana engage and potentially transform their audience.

Both Brand and Indiana are aware they write to the isolated reader. Brand invites the reader to embody her characters, leading them to participate in moments of solidarity and eventually join in a collective with the characters. While inviting the reader to embody characters, Brand addresses the individual by reminding them of their privileged positionality. Indiana has a more antagonistic relationship with the reader as she obstructs them from

embodying her characters. Furthermore, Indiana consistently disappoints her reader with her characters' failed attempts of revolutionary activity. By making them feel disappointment, Indiana forces the reader to contend with their positionality and complicity in neoliberalism. Therefore, while Brand sees the novel as a hopeful unifier of people of different backgrounds within the current economic system, Indiana shows both her characters and reader cannot join political collectives within neoliberalism.

Chapter 1

the reader, beckoned: ephemeral collectivities of melancholy subjects in Dionne's Brand *In Another Place, Not Here*

I see she. Hot, cool and wet. I sink the machete in my foot, careless, blood blooming in the stalks of cane, a sweet ripe smell wash me faint. With pain. Wash the field, spinning green mile after green mile around she. See she sweat, sweet like sugar

- Dionne Brand pages four and five of *In Another Place, Not Here*

Introduction

Dionne Brand opens *In Another Place, Not Here* with the memory of a self-inflicted injury. Distracted by desire for her lover Verlia as they work together in the cane field, Elizete slices her foot with a machete, causing a life-long impairment. Elizete narrates the event from Toronto, Canada, recalling her relationship with Verlia and involvement in the Marxist revolution that have both died on an unnamed Caribbean island. Elizete remembers her pain through the space of the field as blood "bloom[s] in the stalks of cane" and her injury becomes one with the land. While her memory is painful, Elizete has nostalgia for the moment as she longs for her lover Verlia and her "sweat, sweet like sugar."

With this vivid depiction of trauma, Brand establishes the novel will explore the connection between loss, place, and memory. On the surface, the cane field is the setting of egalitarian revolution as Elizete, a working-class woman, and Verlia, an educated Marxist who returns to the island from Canada, can work side by side. While Brand seems to depict a utopia,

this ideal is undercut by the pervasive history of the cane fields that continue to hold the memories of colonialism and enslavement. Therefore, with her multifaceted depiction of the cane field, Brand creates a tone of melancholy for both the failed revolutionary moment and the unknowable history of colonialism and enslavement that will pervade the novel.

Ian Baucom's *Specters of the Atlantic* helps us understand the role of memory in Dionne Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here* as he explores melancholia as a political response to history that has been lost to the violence of slavery. In clinical psychology, when an individual loses an object, normally a loved one, they must find another object to project their feelings onto and replace the original. Without a replacement, one cannot complete the mourning process and continues to feel loss in the form of melancholia. When contending with the history of slavery, Baucom does not believe an individual can complete the mourning process as much of the past is lost to the archives. In his work, Baucom focuses on the events on the Zong ship during which enslaved Africans were thrown overboard in a storm. The only historical evidence is a court case which violently refers to murdered Africans as cargo for the purpose of gaining insurance money. To cope with the unknowable aspects of history, Baucom imagines an ethical witness for whom "melancholy may constitute an inability to forget what cannot be remembered, but it also comprises the obligation to see what has not been seen" (Baucom 218).

While Baucom imagines an individual witness, Brand explores what it would mean for people to communally witness history. I will argue in *In Another Place, Not Here*, collective melancholia leads to the formation of revolutionary moments of solidarity in which two people of different positionalities become unified by shared political interest. Brand's relationships of solidarity change based on their location because people of the Caribbean and diaspora experience different types of melancholia based on the physical space they occupy. In depicting

unification around different forms of melancholia, Brand invites the reader to embody characters and share in their loss, ultimately making the novel itself a revolutionary space as she utilizes the traditionally individualistic medium to bring the reader into relationships of solidarity and collectivity. In this chapter, I will show Brand presents her collective as a group of three or more people who, despite being messy and directionless, are revolutionary in their diversity and occupation of a shared political space.

When forming my own argument, I must consider how other scholars have explored the political ramifications of individual and unified responses to history in Brand's work. In "Traumatic Forgetting and Spatial Consciousness in Dionne Brand's 'In Another Place, Not Here,'" Vikki Visvis argues Brand shows intentional forgetting of trauma can be unethical as individuals must remember past injustices to recognize and combat current inequity. Simultaneously, Visvis asserts deliberate forgetting can be a political act as Verlia forgets her past and attempts to reinvent herself. Similarly, John Corr is interested in how memory can be transformed into political action. In "Affective Coordination and Avenging Grace: Dionne Brand's In Another Place, Not Here" Corr argues although bodies are typically deemed passive carriers of history, they can become powerful actors in political change. For Corr, the relationship of the women exemplifies "affective coordination" as they use their political agency to engage in large and small acts of resistance that undermine historic power imbalances.

Kristina Quynn also takes interest in the revolutionary potential of the women's relationship. She argues in "Elsewheres of Diaspora: Dionne Brand's 'In Another Place, Not Here,'" Elizete and Verlia's relationship becomes an elsewhere that evades the oppressive systems of capitalism, racism, and sexism. Quynn argues the novel itself offers a "mode of women-oriented, anti-heteronorm activism" (Quynn 123). While Quynn focuses on the political

relationship between Verlia and Elizete, I will investigate how Brand depicts solidarity between women to imagine connections that are less hierarchical than heteronormative relationships. In addition to exploring how characters respond to history, scholars writing about *In Another Place, Not Here* are interested in the relationship between identity and space. In "'No Moon to Speak Of' Identity and Place in Dionne Brand's 'In Another Place, Not Here,'" Paul Huebener argues Elizete and Verlia form their dynamic identities based on their relationship with the "nonhuman," meaning the natural and industrial environments of "Grenada" and Toronto.

In this chapter, I will explore how spaces affect the characters' identities and relationship with history. I will split this chapter into three sections to discuss how the spaces of Canada, the island, and the novel itself enable or inhibit melancholia and political collectivity. I will argue Toronto, Canada does not carry visible history for people of the Caribbean, making it hard for the diaspora to politically organize. In contrast, the nature of the island allows individuals to collectively remember history while acknowledging its unknowable aspects. While the setting of *In Another Place, Not Here* is constantly moving in time and space, I will temporarily stabilize Canada and the island, to identify the even more elusive and abstract moments of solidarity and collectivity Brand establishes between the characters and the reader.

Canada

In the novel, Canada is a space of loss for members of the diaspora who are physically severed from their home of the island. Brand also depicts Canada as a space of isolation as both Elizete and Verlia live there, but never occupy the space at the same time. Verlia immigrates to Canada as a teenager to live with her aunt and uncle and gain an education. After disagreeing with her family's ideal of assimilation, Verlia leaves the suburbs to join the Marxist movement in

Toronto, eventually leaving Canada to return to the island for the revolution. Elizete on the other hand immigrates to Canada after the movement has died when she goes to Toronto to retrace Verlia's steps. In Brand's depiction of Canada, she shows Caribbean immigrants are united by their separation from the island. Despite their shared experiences, within the ahistorical environment of Toronto, the people of the diaspora experience a culture of individuality that inhibits collective melancholia.

Frederic Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* is from the same time period as *In Another Place, Not Here* and helps us understand the cultural obstacles to revolutionary collectivity during the 1980s. In his work, Jameson argues postmodernism is the ahistorical cultural response to late-stage capitalism. Jameson explains our current cultural aesthetic "emerged as an elaborated symptom of the waning of our historicity, of our lived possibility of experiencing history in some active way" (Jameson 21). In the novel, Brand imagines Toronto as the embodiment of ahistorical postmodern culture.

Brand depicts the environment of the city as postmodern because it lacks visible connection to history. With its concrete streets and skyscrapers, Toronto is "not an old city. Nothing happened here. You can't look at the buildings and say ah! That's where…Things are made up" (Brand 65). The assertion "Nothing happened here" is ironic because Toronto has a visible history and connection to the environment for its native people were violently removed from their land. However, through the Caribbean diasporic lens, the city seems ahistorical and "made up." Brand's use of the ellipsis both signifies and creates physical absence to acknowledge the inaccessible past of the environment.

Lacking visible history, both the city and Caribbean immigrants become ahistorical commodities. Brand describes the compelling dream of the city as a perfume so potent the smell

"made you deny your origins, beat back your family, see in their faces only the envy of you" (Brand 64). The author uses the consumer product perfume as a metaphor to convey the city is a commodity as immigrants imagine themselves using the space to achieve personal mobility and wealth. In doing labor to gain money and disconnecting themselves from their pasts, immigrants also become ahistorical commodities in Brand's postmodern Toronto.

While they attempt to cut ties to home, Brand shows diasporic individuals still experience melancholia for the island. Longing for the natural environment of their home, "their thoughts belonged to wood and this place belonged to metal" (Brand 61). The people are unified in their experience of melancholia as they mourn the "wood" of the island. However, their melancholia does not enable political collectivity because, in Toronto, the culture of individualism and competition inhibits communal mourning. Although Elizete and her roommate Jocelyn are both from the island, they do not speak of home and instead "at moments when they felt safe from each other, they exchanged stories about how cunning you had to be to live there" (Brand 79). While the women both feel melancholia for the island, the environment of the city forces them to present an ahistorical identity that boasts individualistic triumphs of the immigrant experience. Since the women do not let themselves mourn the island communally, their melancholia does not lead to political solidarity.

While the culture of the postmodern city represses unification, Verlia's engagement in the movement shows people of the Caribbean diaspora can partake in political collectivity. While Verlia is politically active, her conflicting motives show ongoing tension between the individual and the collective. While Verlia romanticizes the movement as a unified space into which she can conform, she simultaneously views it as a place where she can individualistically foster and signify her identity as a revolutionary. When moving to Toronto, Verlia chooses an apartment

based on its proximity to the Revolution and imagines “This is where she will cut her perm, this is where she will begin. This is where she will grow thinner with whiskey and talk and work for the struggle” (Brand 155). Verlia’s desire for natural hair reflects her intention to acquire the movement’s shared ideology. While Verlia wants to conform to the political collective, in her romanticization of natural hair and a thin frame, Verlia individualistically wants to alter her body to signify her status as revolutionary and personal dedication to the movement.

In addition to changing the public-facing space of her body, Verlia crafts the private space of her apartment to detach herself from her family on the island. When Verlia moves into her apartment, she makes her room “bare, everything bare. No photographs, no sentiment, no memory” (Verlia 156). Verlia wants to detach herself from the island and its history, believing she can fully control her space and identity. She collects newspaper clippings of revolutionary action and “Her clippings are her new past. Bits of newspaper are her history, words her family” (Brand 164). Although Verlia sees herself as a part of a “family” of revolutionaries, she is isolated from people as her “family” is objects and ideas.

While Verlia wants to erase her history, as a diasporic member of the revolutionary movement, she must consider how the past has led to present inequities and contend with the space of the island. In her attempt to forge an ahistorical identity, Verlia hinders her participation in the collective. Since Verlia does not allow herself to mourn the space of the island “she will struggle for a more ‘scientific’ understanding of the place that she’s come from” (Brand 165). Brand uses the adjective “scientific” to undermine Verlia’s ideal of analyzing the island with rationalism and objectivity. In showing Verlia cannot achieve an understanding of the island, Brand shows Verlia must accept the melancholic nature of her past and her inability to fully comprehend her history.

Verlia finally mourns the island collectively when she bonds over the shared memory of the land. When a woman comes into her office for help, Verlia expects to take an authoritative role and share encouraging ideas from revolutionary thinkers but "Vee couldn't summon it up even one last time. So she remembered tamarinds, sour, seedy, and stringy but eaten voluntarily. And without reason she started to cry and the woman cried too" (Brand 194-195). In this moment Verlia tries to hierarchically position herself as the educated revolutionary and the woman as the one she must save. Brand dismantles this hierarchy when Verlia imagines herself and the woman as equals connected by the experience of eating tamarinds. Although eating the "sour" and "stringy" fruit is unpleasant, Verlia and the woman eat them "voluntary," showing while mourning the island is painful the women need to remember the nature of the land to achieve melancholic solidarity. A limitation to connecting over the island is that this unification requires people to have experienced the land. For people who are unfamiliar with the land, this is not a possibility. Therefore, the imagined space in the novel is another way to imagine political unification.

The Island

I will consider Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* to understand how the spaces of land and the archives are insufficient in revealing traumatic history. Like Brand who looks back on the failed Grenada revolution, Hartman engages with the space of Ghana decades after the socialist first president Francis Kwame Nkrumah was violently overthrown by an American-aided coup (Hartman 38). Hartman feels disenchanted with the prospect of large-scale political action and in contrast to the previous generations of revolutionaries who wanted a "decisive break… between the past and the

present," Hartman seeks to understand the painful history of enslavement and colonialism (Hartman 39). After her experiences in Ghana and struggle to find answers within the historical archives, Hartman ultimately concludes she cannot go back to her roots because colonialism and slavery have severed them.

In her efforts to address unknowable history, Hartman grapples with the archives of the Middle Passage, taking issue with the historical record of the colonizer that claims logic and rationality. Frustrated with the inability to hear the voices of the enslaved, Hartman describes her desire to recreate the life of an enslaved girl who died on the ship the *Recovery*. The only evidence of the girl's life are differing accounts from the captain and doctor who claim they tried to save her. Trying to diagnosis the girl's cause of death, they claim objectivity and rationality that does not exist within the violent system of slavery. Hartman admits her own desire to piece together the girl's life, claiming she is as "as guilty as the rest" as she tries to "save the girl, nor from death or sickness or a tyrant, but from oblivion" (Hartman 137). While Hartman desires to craft a complete narrative, she abstains as telling a false story would only cause further violence as the girl's life is unknowable.

In this section, I will argue Brand's depiction of an all-female lineage of storytellers presents an alternative to understanding history solely through a physical space or the violent archives. In telling stories of a shared ancestor and her relationship to the environment, the women effectively pass down unifying melancholia for the history that has been lost to colonialism and enslavement. This unification does not lead to a large formal political movement but allows for small revolutionary moments of solidarity.

Using fiction to imagine a melancholic form of historical representation, Brand presents a lineage of female storytellers. In the novel, the women tell stories of their shared ancestor and

her broken relationship with the land to pass down the traumatic past while acknowledging the unknowable aspects of history. Elizete gains her knowledge of the natural world from the lineage of storytellers and as she pulls dasheen and weeds, she says she doesn't know their names because “The woman they give me to don’t know their names, and she don’t know them because her ma before and her ma before that as far as she know don’t know neither but it’s for a reason which she tell me” (Brand 17). For Elizete her lack of names is her inheritance of inaccessible history. Elizete explains the women lack the names because her ancestor Adela was violently taken from Africa to the island Adela calls “Nowhere” and “She say nothing here have no name. She never name none of her children, nor the man she had to sleep with and she never answer to the name that they give she which was Adela” (Brand 18). The repetition of “she” shows Elizete acknowledges she will never know Adela’s true name and recognizes her own melancholia for the past. While the women view Adela as their ancestor, Brand complicates the figure for the reader as she describes Adela as “long dead and gone who was never here” (Brand 37). Brand shows while Adela may not have been a real person, the figure of the women’s stories has multiplicity as she represents countless people lost to the violence of colonialism and enslavement. Unlike the archives that violently claim accuracy and objectivity, Brand’s depiction of oral storytelling is invested in a way to represent history while acknowledging how parts are unknowable.

Furthermore, the worldview of women and the environment as carriers of history is a subversive unifier for people of the island as they share melancholia for the traumatic history of the past. The woman who takes Elizete in explains “God make all Adela’s children women and all her generations” (Brand 31). In her depiction of a lineage of female storytellers, Brand directly opposes the male-dominated archives. While the women use the environment to address

their history, Brand is careful not to conflate female bodies with the land as Adela's legacy not only unifies her female descendants but extends to everyone on the island as "the living, they lived in the past or had no past but a present that was filled, peopled with the past" (Brand 44). Therefore, Brand shows everyone on the island experiences melancholia as they must contend with the past and its unknowable details.

The people's unified melancholia creates the potential for revolutionary moments of solidarity. As a child, Elizete lacks a maternal figure and recalls "Until the woman I was given to come home from the field the samaan was my mother" (Brand 17). While "the woman I was given to" may be Elizete's mother, Elizete's name for her shows she does not feel an emotional connection or bond with her. When this woman dies Elizete is handed to "the woman they'd given her too" who places her on the doorstep of a woman with a market garden every day until she does not return (Brand 28). Elizete's naming conventions for the women shows how she sees herself in a parasitic hierarchy where she is a burden to caretakers who do not want her. When Elizete meets the woman with a market garden, although she is hesitant about raising the child "the woman beckoned her from the door" because "the child standing under the samann had to be taken in" (Brand 44). Previously, Elizete's names for her caregivers describe their hierarchical relationship in which Elizete is a burden. Now, Elizete calls this new figure "the woman," showing their relationship is less hierarchical. Furthermore, Brand refers to Elizete as "the child," showing it is not Elizete's individual identity that prompts the woman to extend her home, but Elizete's position under the tree, illustrating shared history and environment, that leads the woman to raise Elizete. Therefore, the woman's act of beckoning Elizete into her home is a revolutionary act of solidarity.

Elizete inherits melancholia from the woman who raises her, but the two do not participate in collective mourning, showing their previous moment of solidarity does not create a permanent relationship of political unity. The woman reveals stories of Adela to Elizete when she is drunk and Elizete "always stood facing the wall when the woman wanted to talk" because the woman "didn't want Elizete to imagine loving so she gave her a wall to face, the wood knots and wood lice trails" (Brand 32). In forcing Elizete to face the wall, the woman makes her undergo mourning in isolation. While she stares at the wood trails and listens to stories of Adela, Elizete tries to "trace them home, yet perhaps home was these paths, she thought, or their way of not being seen, waiting and listening" (Brand 32). Elizete likens herself to the wood lice as she looks for directionality. While Elizete seeks to complete the mourning process, she cannot productively contend with this violent history in solitude. Since the woman and Elizete struggle with the past alone, in these moments of storytelling and listening, they do not find solidarity in their melancholia.

The Novel as Another Place

In the previous sections of this chapter, I explored how individuals of the diaspora, and the Caribbean are united in their shared melancholia in the spaces of Canada and the island. But what about the secluded reader who occupies another dynamic malleable place that goes unnamed? In this section, I explore how Brand creates ephemeral spaces of solidarity in the novel to later draw the reader into an imagined collective. I will argue Brand lets us temporarily embody individual characters so we may share in melancholia for the revolutionary moment and engage in solidarity. In creating moments of connection between the reader and individual

characters, Brand primes the reader to join a collective that is a messy directionless cacophony of voices.

Starting the novel from the first-person perspective of Elizete, Brand immediately aligns the reader with Elizete. In doing so, Brand forces the reader to share a melancholia for Verlia as Elizete refers to Verlia's death throughout the novel. When first describing Verlia, Elizete says "I like how she leap. Run in the air without moving. I watch she make she way around we as if she was more here, all the time moving faster than the last thing she say" (Brand 7). To the reader who does not know of Verlia's death at the very end of the novel, Elizete simply describes Verlia's energy and constant motion. However, Brand is alluding to Verlia's final moments of "leaping," and being "weightless," and "breathless" (Brand 246-267). By consistently describing Verlia as in motion without revealing her fate until the end of the novel, Brand forces the reader to share Elizete's melancholia for Verlia as the reader feels a loss they have yet to fully understand.

While Elizete has melancholia for Verlia and their relationship, for the reader, the melancholia represents the loss of the idealized masculine individualistic hero to whom Verlia likens herself. Throughout the novel, Verlia emulates charismatic revolutionary leaders like Che Guevara as "She wants to live in Che's line. She's memorized it, memorized it, 'at the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love'" (Brand 165). While Verlia wants to be an individualistic revolutionary, her dreams of being like Che go unrealized. Later in the novel, when Verlia is released from jail, she wants to quote Che but instead she makes a hand gesture at the guard and spits on the floor in front of him saying "'Never have a day's peace. Look for me everywhere.' Such an old curse creeping out of her. She did not remember learning the gesture" (Brand 184). Instead of quoting the male

revolutionary she likens herself to, Verlia gives a hand gesture and old curse that invokes her past and community on the island. Therefore, while the reader feels loss for an idealized male hero, Brand shows the hero never existed because Verlia never embodies this ideal. Since Verlia never satisfies the expectations of her or the reader, Brand deepens the reader's melancholia for the male hero.

In addition to letting the reader share Elizete's melancholia for Verlia, Brand uses second person narration to let the reader to witness Elizete during her private experience of sexual assault. By letting the reader imagine Elizete's experiences while permitting them from fully embodying her, Brand forms an ephemeral moment of solidarity between Elizete and the reader. While the first section of the novel is primarily narrated by Elizete the narration switches to third person when she is sexually assaulted, providing space between the reader and Elizete during her traumatic experience. In the moment of the assault, Brand switches to a second person address describing how "a man you don't know bends you against a wall, a wall in a room, your room" (Brand 89). With the address of "you" Brand projects the violent actions onto the reader as they happen to Elizete. As the reader imagines Elizete's experiences happening to themselves, they experience a moment of solidarity. After the description of the assault, Brand describes "Elizete, flat against the immense white wall," returning to third person and pushing the reader out of the ephemeral moment of connection (Brand 89). While Brand's use of second person lets the reader imagine the events of the assault, the reader cannot know Elizete's experiences because Brand's narration shields Elizete by projecting the violence onto the reader.

In addition to aligning the reader with Elizete, Brand uses the second person address to align the reader with Verlia and embody her feeling of inadequate revolutionary action and loneliness. Brand describes Verlia's struggle to make change in the movement questioning how

to act "if you recognize injustice then the moment arrives when you must act or say I accept this… How to act then when just like that, when everybody is asleep and you're alone your room reading, you feel cracked open and close to this" (Brand 175). Brand describes Verlia's inner thoughts as she expresses loneliness while reading revolutionary texts at night. At the same time, with the address of "you" Brand speaks to the reader who is "alone" reading the novel and considering the same questions as Verlia. With the double-meaning of the text, Brand depicts both Verlia and the reader's states of isolation and in naming their shared solitude, Brand creates a bond of solidarity based on a common experience of atomization. Brand starts to imagine this solidarity as a collective as she describes lack of revolutionary change saying "you're the same as the day you discovered it… You're the same. Whether you carry pamphlets or perhaps a crude kitchen knife into a corner store, a scythe for cutting down some crop, a spanner in a bicycle factory" (Brand 175). Brand's first use of "you're" is singular as the reader/Verlia is the one to discover the unnamed "it." The second "you're" is a plural address to the reader, positioning them in a group of people who are united in their longing for personal and collective change. While Brand lets the reader imagine themselves in a unified group, she has yet to allow them into a collective because the reader and Verlia do not yet occupy the same space as the people carrying "pamphlets," "a crude knife," or a "scythe."

While Brand aligns the reader with Elizete and Verlia individualistically, she also crafts the women's partnership as a relationship of solidarity the reader can peer into and sometimes enter. In her depiction of the women's relationship, Brand disrupts previous literary tropes where heterosexual relationships are metaphors for reconciliation of different social groups. In Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America, Doris Sommer investigates novels written by the founding fathers of their countries. She explores how they used the tropes

of heterosexual love and marriage in fiction to advance their national agenda to non-violently reconcile different conflicting identities. Many of the novels depict "socially convenient" marriages that ideally place characters and the groups they represent into hierarchies (Sommer 112). If this novel were to follow the formula Sommer describes, Verlia would represent the bourgeois masculine-coded revolutionary while Elizete would represent the feminine-coded working-class individual. The woman's relationship subverts the trope because it features a queer relationship that is not hierarchical in the same way as a heterosexual relationship. Additionally, the two characters do not end up together and at the end of the novel, showing Brand does not present their queer relationship as a formula for nation building or a perfect synthesis of different groups coming together.

In her depiction of a relationship between two women, Brand presents a connection that is not hierarchical in the same way as a heterosexual relationship. Elizete remembers Verlia differentiating their relationship from a heterosexual one and says "I am not a man… I cannot take care of you like that; a man can promise things that will never happen not because he is lying but because they are within his possibilities in the world" (Brand 72). For Verlia, a man can make promises to Elizete because in heteronormative society, men are stereotypically the providers for women. Verlia says the one promise she can make as is "I can only promise to be truly naked with you. We'll be very scared walking down a street, hungry all the time, frightened of our own breasts when the meet" (Brand 73). In the relationship, Verlia promises vulnerability and her description of their breasts meeting shows Verlia thinks she can have an egalitarian relationship with Elizete where they experience hardship in the same way. While Verlia idealizes their relationship as the blending of people of different backgrounds, Elizete acknowledges how their different positionalities affect their understanding of each other.

Brand shows while the relationship is less hierarchical than a heterosexual one, the women still experience hierarchy based on class. In encouraging the reader to embody Verlia, Brand forces the reader to contend with their own positionality. Elizete remembers feeling shame when Verlia touched her scarred legs because "Of course there was a distance between them that was inescapable and what they did not talk about. At times she saw someone she did not know in Verlia… someone who felt pity for people less capable (Brand 54). In this moment the reader embodies Verlia as we feel pity for Elizete's legs. While Verlia and Elizete do not talk about the "distance between them," Brand addresses the reader's bourgeois positionality as in pitying Elizete they look down upon her. Furthermore, through Verlia, Brand shows the reader they cannot understand Elizete's experiences as Elizete says "I tell she I not no school book with she, I not no report card, I not no exam, I not she big-time people with they damn hypocrisy, she want to dig and probe she could go to hell" (Brand 77). Verlia wishes to read Elizete like a "school book" similar to how we as the reader want to consume and fully understand her. However, in scolding Verlia, Elizete reminds the reader they cannot fully know her. Additionally, Elizete expresses jealously of Verlia's bourgeois status saying "I was the one going to stay and she was playing because she could leave this island any time. For this I had to find a hatred of she" (Brand 77). Like Verlia who can leave the island, the reader has the freedom to move in and out of the spaces in the novel. Therefore, Brand reminds the reader their embodiment of Verlia and Elizete is temporary as they will never be able to fully understand the women or their positionalities.

While the main example of the solidarity in the novel is the relationship between Elizete and Verlia, Brand complicates the relationship with the character of Abena, Verlias' lover from Canada. After she moves to Toronto, Elizete finds Abena, hoping she will explain what went

wrong in her relationship with Verlia. Elizete wonders about Abena and Verlia's relationship asking, "Had she ever understood Verlia saying to her 'not enough'? If she had then there might be a chance that she could explain" (Brand 111). Despite the desire of Elizete and the reader, neither Abena or Brand explain why the relationship or revolution end. Therefore, Elizete and the reader stay in their melancholic states of mourning.

Since Elizete, Abena, and the reader communally experience melancholia for Verlia, they form a collective. While Abena tells Elizete to go home, she refuses and lays under the window. Over the course of days, Abena speaks of her mother, revealing her history of abuse, while Elizete mutters names for Adela (Brand 236). Although the women chaotically speak over each other Abena

"knew what she herself had to tell would fit well in the middle of this noise. She knew that it had a place in between names and grass and murmuring. That way it would go. She stooped to the floor putting her face against Elizete's. She lay there too looking at the window and the wood" (Brand 241).

Earlier in the chapter, I described Elizete's solitary mourning for the past during which she traces trails of wood lice, searching for directionality. In contrast to Elizete's previous moment of isolation, Elizete, Abena, and the reader look at the directionless wood of the window, as their murmurs join to create an elsewhere of understanding. In the cacophony of voices that speak over each other and lack cohesion, Brand shows actual collectivity is messy and directionless. While the space seems chaotic and unproductive, Brand's collective is revolutionary because people of different positionalities occupy a shared political space.

Conclusion

While Brand positions the reader in a collective with Abena and Elizete near the end of the novel, she does not leave us at that moment. In the very last pages, Brand describes Verlia's death, presenting the reader with the scene they experienced loss for throughout the experience of reading the novel. While Brand provides the reader with the loss they have been yearning for, she describes Verlia's death as confusing and incomprehensible as

"She's leaping. She's tasting her own tears and she is weightless and deadly. She feels nothing except the bubble of a laugh each time she breathes. Her body is cool, cool in the air. Her body has fallen away… She doesn't need air. She's in some other place already, less tortuous, less fleshy" (Brand 247).

Verlia's ambiguous death lends itself to many interpretations. In "Traumatic Forgetting and Spatial Consciousness in Dionne Brand's 'In Another Place, Not Here,'" Viki Visvis says the scene could be read as triumphant as Verlia's death is a "fulfillment of a childhood wish for a place devoid of social oppression" (Visvis 122). However, Visvis asserts, given the political context of American troops firing at her, "This death-dealing jump is bereft of agency and suggests an act of subjugation" (Visvis 122). Given the ambiguous language of the death, both rationales seem plausible along with countless others. But why must we attempt to craft a neat narrative of Verlia's death?

Earlier in this chapter, I discussed the deaths of enslaved Africans aboard the Zong and Recovery ships. In both instances, the lives and deaths of the enslaved Africans are unknowable as the archives document the perspectives of their enslavers. While it is tempting to recreate the lost lives of the dead, Ian Baucom and Saidiya Hartman show that we cannot understand the

events and in trying to form a narrative we only commit further violence. Like the liminal space of the ships, the air through which Verlia flies is out of our purview and past our understanding.

I argue, while we have witnessed Verlia's death through Elizete's recollection of the painful memory, we cannot get back to the moment or understand it. In this final move to establish the reader as a melancholic subject, Brand leaves us with the loss of Verlia and the revolutionary moment, priming us to close novel the as a witness of history who can go forth and join melancholic collectives beyond the pages of the book.

Chapter 2

King or Commodity?: neoliberalism's suppression of individual and collective revolutionary action and the address of the complicit reader in Rita Indiana's *Tentacle*

An intense black broke only in the very center, where Giorgio Menicucci, his precise features and body lost in gloom, had become an igneous mask floating in the air. In front of it, Argenis decided to paint another face: his own, the one he'd worn after the accident with the anemone… The face lit by the candle was haughty and beautiful; it seemed to be giving an order which the deformed monster, given the inclination of its head, would comply.

- Rita Indiana page sixty-one of *Tentacle*

Introduction

In her novel *In Another Place, Not Here* Dionne Brand imagines how the reader can embody the space of others to form a collectivity. In *Tentacle*, Rita Indiana makes literal embodiment of multiple identities in different temporalities possible through her depiction of time travel. The novel starts in 2027 after the tsunami of 2024 has washed biological weapons into the sea, killing all marine life. After being chosen as the ocean's savior, with power of the sex-changing drug Rainbow Brite and the anemone, Acilde transitions into a man and goes back in time. The anemone enables Acilde to control three bodies in different temporalities: 2027, the 1990s, and the early 1600s. In 2001, Acilde creates the identity of Giorgio, presenting himself as a rich Italian who came to the Dominican Republic with nothing and acquired wealth with grit

and smart business transactions. With his wife Linda, Giorgio runs the Sosúa Project at Playa Bo where they sponsor artists to raise money for coral reef research. One of the artists Giorgio sponsors is Argenis, a classically trained painter whose style is considered outdated in the age of mixed media art. During a group snorkeling trip, Argenis accidently touches the anemone when he chases Linda to get a look at her body. After being stung by the anemone, Argenis time travels and controls both his original body and an avatar in the early 1600s he names Côte de Fer. While in the past as Côte de Fer, Argenis joins a group of buccaneers led by Roque, Acilde's third avatar whose connection to Acilde/Giorgio remains unknown to both Argenis and the reader until the end of the novel.

With Indiana's nonlinear narrative and multifaceted characters, the scene described in the epigraph above provides insight into how Indiana imagines the characters interacting with each other and the reader. The material conditions of the painting reveal the economic relationship between Giorgio and Argenis is one of patron and client within the larger system of neoliberalism. In this economic exchange, Giorgio needs Argenis to produce profitable art while Argenis relies on Giorgio's social connections and money to make and sell his paintings.

In addition to revealing the transactional relationship of the men, the layers of paint illustrate how they understand each other. Although Argenis seeks to create a facsimile of Giorgio, his painting tool breaks and his patron's "precise features and body [are] lost in gloom," becoming a "mask floating in the air." Indiana uses the metaphor of the mask to show both Argenis and the reader cannot embody or understand Giorgio as we cannot see past the mask he chooses to show us. The reader is further mediated as, throughout the novel, they experience Giorgio from Argenis' perspective. Unable to depict a realistic image of Giorgio's face, Argenis paints himself over the previous painting. While we may think we understand Argenis as we see

his ugly face that has been stung by the anemone, it is a face "he'd worn," conveying there is something beneath the image we cannot see or understand. Therefore, Indiana reminds the reader they cannot embody either of these men.

With the final image Argenis produces, Indiana forces us to contend with a "deformed monster." This begs the question: who is the monster? Is the monster Giorgio whose mask lurks underneath the finished painting? Is the monster Argenis' deformed face after it has been stung by the anemone? Or is the monster the layered painting that is comprised of both men whose identities under their masks remain unknown to the reader? Finally, who is the "haughty and beautiful" face ordering the complicit monster?

In the thesis, I will explore Giorgio and Argenis' experiences of time travel and assess their potential for individual or collective revolutionary action. After the religious group 21 Divisions chooses Acilde as their savior, Indiana presents him as the traditional hero who will individualistically alter history to reverse the ocean crisis. In contrast, Indiana more subtly presents Argenis as a potential revolutionary as he inhabits the collective spaces of the Sosúa Project in 2001 and the group of buccaneers in the early 1600s. I will argue Indiana presents the potential for individual heroism and collective action to depict their failure within neoliberalism, ultimately showing there cannot be revolutionary change within the oppressive economic system.

Many scholars who have written about *Tentacle,* surmise what solution Indiana may present to her reader. In "Science Fiction and the Rules of Uncertainty," Guillermina De Ferrari argues Indiana views time travel as a "retroactive moral compass" that reveals our ethical obligations in response to catastrophe (De Ferrari 2). For De Ferrari, Indiana presents art as a way to represent potential hopeful futures. In "Rita Indiana's Queer Interspecies Caribbean and the Hispanic Literary Tradition," Charlotte Rogers argues in the novel's depiction of Acilde's

failure to save the ocean, Indiana conveys the responsibility of saving the natural environment "should never rest on the shoulders of a single individual. Instead, we must ask ourselves, What kinds of systems can we put in place to circumvent our pleasure-seeking motivations and encourage collective action" (Rogers). While Rogers believes Indiana suggests collectivity, Joshua R. Deckman asserts Indiana calls on individual readers to make personal sacrifices to effect change. In "Spiritual Crossings: Olokun and Caribbean Futures Past in La Mucama de Omicunlé" Deckman argues Indiana educates the reader by depicting painful histories to imagine social change and resistance. Deckman believes, by using the past to teach the reader, Indiana asks the reader to do what Acilde cannot and make "the decision to sacrifice what is comfortable to move against a colonial patriarchal system that turns bodies/geographies into exploited and dying spaces of historical amnesia" (Deckman).

While previous scholars have read *Tentacle* as a map for revolutionary action, I argue, through her depiction of the parallel journeys of Acilde and Argenis, Indiana shows revolutionary individual or collective action is not possible within neoliberalism. As I have explored earlier, Indiana positions the reader outside of her characters, inhibiting complete understanding. Furthermore, by fostering a sense of disappointment in the characters as they fail to do revolutionary activity, Indiana forces the reader to uncomfortably confront their complicity within neoliberalism.

Georg Lukács' work *In the Historical Novel* helps establish the relationship between the bourgeois individual and the historical novel. Lukács is interested in the historical context in which the genre emerged and asserts after the European revolutions of 1848, the bourgeoisie reworked its concept of universalism to exclude the industrial proletariat to maintain their position of power and prevent a classless society. In his preface to Lukács' work, Fredric

Jameson describes with a "new class-conscious defense of middle-class privilege, however, the historical novel also, as a form, loses its vitality and its vocation, and is degraded" (Lukács 3).

Writing in 2015, Indiana mimics the form of the historical novel as she affirms the reader's isolation and individuality. However, she imagines her reader to not just include the bourgeoise, but individuals of every background as, for Indiana, everyone is complicit in neoliberalism. While previous authors were interested in establishing the status of distinct classes within a nation, Indiana contends with a more complicated system of global inequity within neoliberalism she seeks to criticize. By subverting the genre, Indiana ultimately critiques the economic system as she forces the reader to confront their complicit position in neoliberalism.

To make my argument, I will split this chapter into four sections. In the first two sections, I will show how the characters of Acilde and Argenis function within neoliberalism. While Acilde embraces the system and Argenis resents it, both men comply. In the following two sections, I will explore how both characters show individual or revolutionary activity is not possible within neoliberalism. In these sections, I will also analyze Indiana's address of the complicit reader.

Acilde's Relationship to Neoliberalism

At the start of the novel, Indiana introduces us to the grim future of the Dominican Republic in 2027 in which neoliberalism dominates. With the characterization of Acilde as entrepreneurial and individualistic, Indiana situates the revolution and its savior Acilde within the constraints of neoliberalism while conveying the character's embrace of the system.

Acilde embodies the values of neoliberalism as she[1] believes someone, or something's value comes from its productivity and ability to do profitable labor. In the start of the novel, Acilde is cleaning windows as the live-in maid of the wealthy religious leader Ester and notices machines called "collectors" picking up "illegals" who are escaped virus-carrying Haitians who had been quarantined to the other side of the island (Indiana 10). While Acilde "cannot make out the men they're chasing," she takes interest in the machines that collect and disintegrate the infected and "touches her left wrist with her right thumb to activate the PriceSpy. The app tells her the brand and price of the robots" (Indiana 10). Acilde's inability to "make out" the people, symbolizes her incapacity to sympathize with them. Instead of paying attention to the people, Acilde seeks the "price and brand" of the robots to determine their value. The app informs her the brand is Zhengli, translating as "to clean up" (Indiana 10). The name Zhengli conveys the robot's identity and value is based on its labor of cleaning. To the reader, "to clean up" is a gross euphemism as the machine's task of systematically killing Haitians is genocide. However, to the desensitized Acilde, the name and function of the Zhengli seems logical because the machines remove the infected Haitians who cannot do profitable labor and therefore have no value in a neoliberal society.

In addition to equating a person's value with their labor, Acilde turns herself into a marketable and profitable commodity. While some may view her sex work as liberating, in the novel, she lacks full autonomy and is solely her labor in the eyes of her clients. Before working for Ester, Acilde works as a prostitute, accentuating her androgynous appearance to pass for a "fifteen-year-old boy" to appeal to the sexual fantasies of her "regular clientele, mostly married

[1] While Acilde identifies as a trans man and wishes to take the drug Rainbow Brite to medically aid his transition, I use feminine pronouns to refer to the character in the same way as the third person narration. After Acilde's transition, I switch to male pronouns as the narration makes the change.

man, sixtyish" (Indiana 11). In addition to making herself seem underaged to attract men, "she'd switch on the PriceSpy to check out the brands and prices of her clients' wardrobes, charging them for her services with that in mind" (Indiana 13). The narration does not explicitly say if Acilde thinks her sex work is autonomous or degrading. While some readers may view her as a savvy businesswoman who changes prices based on the wealth of her clients, the imagery of a middle-aged man and Acilde who passes for a fifteen-year-old boy connotes an uneven power dynamic, even if Acilde consents to the exchange. While Acilde has some power in exchanges when she adjusts prices based on her clients' wealth, the only example directly described of Acilde working as a prostitute in the novel is when Eric sexually assaults her (Indiana 12). In this instance, despite physically and verbally resisting, Acilde is overtaken, conveying she does not have full autonomy because Eric views and treats her as a commodity instead of a person.

Despite being sexually assaulted by Eric, Acilde agrees to go to breakfast with him when he promises to pay her extra money. In their conversation, Acilde reveals her belief in meritocracy within their economic system. As they eat, she tells Eric "There's nothing worse than a junkie f*****… They throw away their money, because mommy and daddy earn it from them, but not me. I want to study to be a chef, to cook in a fine restaurant, and save enough to get these cut off," referring to her breasts (Indiana 12). Acilde is upset that the addicts "throw away" their money because she believes they are wasting their birth-given class privilege. Acilde differentiates herself from them because she earns her own money, conveying she believes in a meritocracy in which her sex work will enable her to gain social mobility and save enough money for a sex change. Acilde does not seem to be angry at systemic societal wealth gaps because she believes an individual is responsible for their own success or failure.

After hearing Acilde's desire for economic mobility, Eric offers her a job working for Esther, believing she will be the one who will save the ocean. Eric later performs Acilde's sex change as the prophecy requires a male savior. While Acilde recovers from the procedure, Eric enacts a nonconsensual religious ritual, joining the anemone to a "crown of moles, dark spots that made a circle all the way around his head" (Indiana 51). Acilde's crown of moles seemingly illustrates power as Acilde gains his desired body and joins with the anemone, assuming the role of the savior. However, the crown is ironic when the narration switches to align with Eric who initially noticed the pattern of moles "when the girl, now finally in the male form she'd so desired, had knelt before him to suck him off that night at the Mirador" (Indiana 51). Although Acilde's sex change is self-perceived empowerment, it does not give him more power or autonomy within neoliberalism because Eric continues to see Acilde as the commodified "girl" who gives him sexual gratification. Furthermore, Eric continues to view Acilde as her profitable labor when he tells him "We gave you the body you wanted and now you've given us the body we needed" (Indiana 51). Eric's administration of the Rainbow Brite is transactional because the religious movement views Acilde's new body as a commodity they can give Acilde in exchange for his life-long commitment to saving the ocean. While Acilde desired a sex change, he did not consensually assume the role of savior, illustrating he lacks power over his body and labor as the religious group uses him as a tool in their larger plan to revive the ocean.

Argenis' Relationship to Neoliberalism

While Acilde is an entrepreneurial individual who believes in meritocracy, the novel introduces Argenis as someone Acilde would despise as a "junkie f*****" who throws away his parents' money (Indiana 12). Living with his mother after his divorce, Argenis uses his salary to

support his coke addiction as he works as a psychic for Americans in a call-center. While the first chapter's third-person narration reveals Acilde's belief in meritocracy, Argenis' voices his discontent with systematic economic inequity while working within it. Since Argenis fails to succeed within the system of neoliberalism, he embraces the hierarchical male-female binary in an individualistic attempt to assert power over others and maintain his masculinity. His mindset shows, although he recognizes there are systemic inequities, his response is not to challenge the system but to try to assert dominance over others to bolster himself.

When we meet Argenis, his offensive voice overwhelms the third-person narration as he speaks to a woman named Katherine at the call-center and feels upset by the global economic power imbalance that places him within the relationship of client-service provider. When speaking to Katherine, Argenis visualizes her as "white and horrible, in an XXL T-shirt with some kind of promotional logo, bending her Rs and Ts with an accent from some southern backwater of the United States" and imagines she has an abusive husband (Indiana 25-26). While Argenis' visualization of Katherine is offensive, the description indicates the disgust with neoliberalism in which he must serve callers. Argenis is in the subordinate position because Katherine is from America while Argenis is from the Dominican Republic. Recognizing this global inequity, Aregnis negatively stereotypes his client as poor, white, and Southern to diminish her status. Based on her gender, Argenis also lowers her status by assuming her husband abuses her. Contrary to Acilde who views neoliberalism as a meritocracy and opportunity for social mobility, Argenis recognizes global power imbalances and resents them.

While he dislikes the system and the people he serves, Argenis still attempts to do his job of pleasing the customer, showing he remains complicit in neoliberalism to survive as he makes himself into the commodity Katherine desires. Guided by the image of a young man on a tarot

card, Argenis asks Katherine vague questions. As the conversation shifts to the subject of Katherine's husband, Argenis asks if he is an "artistic fellow" to which Katherine humorously responds "Yes, he likes Metallica and Marilyn Manson" (Indiana 27). Although Argenis does not say anything concrete about Katherine, she projects her desires onto the conversation and believes in Argenis' psychic powers. She does not care about his identity and views Argenis a malleable product that can give her the physic reading she desires.

In recognition of how he must use others to succeed within neoliberalism. Argenis willingly enters the patron-artist relationship with Giorgio and Linda. While at the art collective Argenis speaks to Linda and "Argenis now understood Linda was only interested in him for one reason, the same reason he was interested in her and Giorgio: money" (Indiana 64). Argenis rightly identifies that in their relationship he needs the couple to support his art and in return the couple hopes to make a profit from Argenis' labor. After identifying the transactional relationship, Argenis concludes he and this "high-class women were equals" (Indiana 64). Both Giorgio and Linda are Argenis' patrons, but he equates himself to Linda, lowering a "high-class" woman to his level to protect his masculinity. Due to his sexism and need to individualistically bolster himself, Argenis reduces the status of women. Therefore, while Argenis is socioeconomically marginalized, he does not find solidarity with other marginalized groups like women.

In addition to permitting him from having political solidarity with women, Argenis' masculinity is an obstacle in his relationships with men. Indiana shows Argenis has extreme internalized homophobia that permits him from bonding with other men as he constantly polices his actions. To understand Argenis' self-policing, I will consider Eve Sedgewick's, *Between men: English literature and male homosocial desire*. In her work, Sedgewick says the

homosocial is a “continuum whose visibility, for men, in our society is radically disrupted” (Sedgewick 1). Although, the homosocial is spectrum of desire, men often police their emotions and actions to avoid being seen as homosexual.

In the novel, Aregnis fears expressing desire others may label as homosexual, therefore, he self-polices his actions and does not allow himself to have physical or emotional intimacy with other men. When Giorgio notices Argenis looks tired, he gives him a massage and a high Argenis thinks to himself “these f*****s are trying to rape me” (Indiana 67). After relaxing during the massage, Argenis recalls a childhood memory when his father held him, and Argenis gave him a kiss on the mouth and “his father threw him violently on the ground” (Indiana 67). Although Giorgio’s massage was not sexual, for Argenis, any physical interaction with another man is forbidden. Indiana shows Argenis’ upbringing created his fear of relationships with men, showing his toxic masculinity is learned, not inherent.

Since Argenis has internalized homophobia, he cannot recognize his own sexual desires for Giorgio and believes his feelings toward his patron are strictly platonic. Unable to place his sexual desires onto Giorgio, he hypersexualizes Linda, using her as a conduit for his homosocial desire. When Argenis overhears Linda complaining to Giorgio about how Playa Bo is frivolously spending money that could be spent on a lab, Argenis thinks to himself “Giorgio was an altruistic man who believed in him and she was a conceited and selfish slut. He fantasized about raping and strangling her” (Indiana 95). While he idealizes Giorgio, Argenis diminishes Linda and calls her a “slut,” hypersexualizing her as he imagines assaulting her. Ironically, Linda is the one who is more “altruistic” as she wants to use their money to conduct scientific research while Giorigio wants to continue hosting artists and throwing events. Argenis expresses his desire for Giorgio when fantasizes about comforting Giorgio “to gratefully be a friend to him, to put his arm around

him and let his chest finally touch his patron's" (Indiana 95). Argenis justifies his sexual feelings by telling himself he wants to be Giorgio's friend. Instead of simply saying he wants to hug Giorgio, Argenis says he wants to "put his arm around him and let his chest finally touch his patron's." This detailed language and avoidance of the simple verb hug conveys Argenis' desire for physical intimacy that he finds difficult to vocalize.

Since we understand Giorgio through Argenis' lens of unidentified sexual desire, the reader has desire for Giorgio that manifests in our expectation for him to save the ocean. Due to Argenis' homophobic perspective, the reader does not always identify Argenis' desire for Giorgio as sexual. For instance, in "Rita Indiana's Queer Interspecies Caribbean and the Hispanic Literary Tradition," Charlotte Rogers states Argenis "finds that his toxic heterosexuality becomes more porous when he begins traveling in time and inhabiting other avatars" (Rogers). For Rogers, Argenis is heterosexual and loosens the boundaries of his sexuality during his experience of time travel. However, I have just argued Argenis always had repressed and unrealized desire for other men. Rogers' reading of the text shows Aregnis' homophobia has the potential to obstruct the perspective of the reader. Since the reader may not see Argenis' desire as homoerotic, when we share in his desire for Giorgio, our desire manifests in our expectation for him to become the individualistic hero who will save the ocean.

Acilde/Giorgio's Journey: The Failure of the Individual Hero Within Neoliberalism

In criticizing Acilde/Giorgio's methods of working within neoliberalism, Indiana shows he cannot work within the system to make actual change. After joining with the anemone, Acilde is born into another body in the 1990s he names Giorgio, and one consciousness simultaneously controls the bodies of Acilde and Giorgio. Acilde's control over two bodies and identities may

suggest a collectivity. However, since Acilde views the different personas as tools for personal advancement, there is no collectivity as Acilde's values of neoliberalism permit him from embracing the multiplicity of his new state. Acilde uses his presence in both time periods to make profitable business decisions and "In the same way he had used the PriceSpy, Acilde now used the computer in his cell to look up words or names he didn't recognize when they came up in conversation, or to confirm the assertions of a future business partner" (Indiana 102). The two identities and bodies of Acilde and Giorgio use each other as tools for advancement as Giorgio needs Acilde's future insight to gain wealth in business and Acilde needs Giorgio's body in the 1990s to improve the state of the ocean in 2027. Since Acilde/Giorgio views his other identity as a commodity, there is not collectivity as the character embraces the individualistic and entrepreneurial values of neoliberalism.

Giorgio uses the same tactic of relying on multiplicity of his identity for personal reasons as he looks up scientific names of coral to seduce Linda. Giorgio's actions show he treats the ocean as a tool for personal gain. After Giorgio successfully deceives Linda into thinking he cares about the reefs, the two become intimate on the beach and "When she came, she screamed as though she were being murdered" (Indiana 102). Linda's female body is associated with the passive land while Giorgio is representative of the active masculinity. Giorgio's manipulation of Linda and use of the land to capitalistically beat competitors for her affection shows he thinks of the environment as a tool for personal gain. Indiana purposefully uses the unnerving verb "murdered" to illustrate Giorgio's use of multiple bodies and the environment is violent and ineffective in saving the ocean.

Driven by desire to impress Linda, Giorgio attempts to protect the reefs by raising funds, working within the system of neoliberalism. Using the money from the art gallery, Giorgio

would “finally be able to make Linda’s dream come true: to build a laboratory at Playa Bo” (Indiana 106). Giorgio’s desire to protect the environment is motivated by his need to impress Linda, showing the character does not care about saving the environment unless it benefits him.

While Giorgio advances Linda’s goals, it may be tempting to argue Linda has an egalitarian relationship with the environment she loves. However, Linda ultimately sees the environment as passive, showing within neoliberalism, the environment is a commodity to be controlled and protected. Linda feels emotional distress over the state of the environment and “She felt like an oncologist standing before her patient’s body” (Indiana 98). Viewing the ocean as genderless human body, Linda defies typical representations of nature as passive and female. However, the imagery of her as an “oncologist” and the nature as the patient shows she believes she has a position of power over the environment and an obligation to use special knowledge of a doctor, or in her case a researcher, to save it.

In addition to presenting Giorgio and Linda’s gradual efforts to save the ocean, Indiana depicts a critical moment in which Giorgio can change the future. At the end of the novel, Giorgio meets a young Said Bona, the future president who will later accept the biological weapons that spill into the ocean and kill all marine life. In her description of the future president, Indiana writes “Here was the person responsible for the deplorable state of the sea a few decades from now” (Indiana 129). Indiana uses the statement “here is” to create a tone of immediacy, conveying to the reader this is the exact moment in history Giorgio must alter to save the ocean. Furthermore, in illustrating Said Bona as “the person” responsible for the future state of the ocean, she conveys the current state of the sea was caused by one person’s singular mistake rather than years of communal abuse. While there is no guarantee altering this moment

in time will change anything, Indiana depicts this scene as pivotal to give the reader a sense of hope as they expect Giorgio to act.

Despite the reader's wishes, Giorgio does not interact with Bona. Instead, he decides to maintain his current life with Linda as "she was his queen" and "he was a king, the king of this world, the big head, the one who knew what was at the bottom of the ocean" (Indiana 128). Giorgio makes the ultimate decision to embrace individuality when he leaves his other identities and "In a little while, he'll forget about Acilde, about Roque, even about what lives in a hole down there in the reef" (Indiana 132). As Giorgio fails to meet the reader's expectations, Indiana positions him as an antagonist. In "Science Fiction and the Rules of Uncertainty," Guillermina De Ferrari regards Acilde as a failed Christlike figure, both one and three people who must save humanity. De Ferrari states "While Giorgio does not make the right choice, it is only in choosing that he becomes the man he needed to be to become a man" (De Ferrari 5). For De Ferrari, Acilde/Giorgio had the potential to act as a Christlike figure and sacrifice himself for the lives of everyone else. Indiana's writing allows this expectation because she does not allow us into the mind of Acilde/Giorgio. Since the reader cannot embody the positionality of their expected savior, they antagonistically view him as selfish or ineffective.

Ultimately, in the reader's disappointment in Giorgio they become complicit in neoliberalism as we view Giorgio as his labor. Contrary to De Ferrari's argument, Acilde/Giorgio was never a man or divinity. Furthermore, despite Indiana's own description of Giorgio as "king," he is a commodity as from the start of the novel, the religious group has used him as a vehicle to save the ocean. As the reader views Giorgio as a commodity, Indiana forces them to contend with their complacency within neoliberalism.

Argenis as Artist and Buccaneer: Indiana's Depictions of Failed Collectives

From the start of the novel, Argenis despises the art world because his classical-style paintings do not sell. In 2001, he joins the Sosúa Project, hoping he can pursue his craft in this nuanced artists' collective. Indiana initially depicts the Sosúa Project as an egalitarian revolutionary space. The physical space of the buildings reflects this ideal as members of the Sosúa Project live in cabins "a few meters from the house. The studios would serve as both workplaces and shelter; they were well-lit and breezy… all painted white and devoid of decor" (Indiana 39). At first inspection, the cabins represent egalitarian space as they are minimalistic and are all the same. While the Sosúa project seems egalitarian as the artists work and live in a community, the position of the cabins "a few meters from the house" reminds the reader of the collective's position within neoliberalism as the project requires the funding of Giorgio whose money controls and enables the artistic space.

Indiana undermines the revolutionary potential of the art collective by illustrating the artists as in competition to sell their works. Throughout the novel, Argenis feels contempt for Elizabeth whose use of video and music is more popular than his classical style of paining. Aligned with Argenis, the narration critiques Elizabeth who "discovered, specifically and eloquently, the extreme poverty suffered by Haitian workers" (Indiana 112). Argenis is jealous of Elizabeth's success, showing in the supposed art collective, the artists are individualistic as they compete to sell their works and gain praise. The sarcastic and ironic use of the word "discover" suggests Elizabeth is out of touch with her subjects, the very people she is advocating for, and uses the plight of others to make profitable art. While Elizabeth's disconnection from her subjects is possible, the reader must remember the observation comes from the perspective of

jealous Argenis. With Argenis' resentful commentary, Indiana shows the artists compete and makes the reader question the political potential of their art within neoliberalism.

In her depiction of the relationship between the artist Malagueta and the curator Iván, Indiana suggests art can be a productive way for individuals to cope with their positionality within the hierarchies of neoliberalism and form bonds of solidarity. Malagueta's relationship with Iván helps him understand his identity as Ivan "taught him to understand the secret voices, use the invisible power of the history of his body, and plan a strategic attack against the repulsive and cruel mouths on everyone" (Indiana 121-122). On a personal level, art helps Malagueta understand his black identity. In learning the "history of his body" Malagueta contends with historical racism. Furthermore, Malagueta and Iván have a relationship of solidarity as they come from the different countries of the Dominican Republic and Cuba and unite to create and promote art that critiques racism. While the men have a meaningful relationship, their titles of artist and curator remind the reader their bond is still within the larger system of neoliberalism.

While Malagueta's art helps him express his political identity, Indiana shows Malagueta's art and body are still commodified within the economic system. As a performance artist, Malagueta explores the theme of race and Dominican masculinity through baseball as he was "standing naked in a batting cage, without a bat or glove, he was hit over and over on his belly and chest by a stream of baseballs from the machine" (Indiana 53). Malagueta becomes the commodified art as his body is abused for the entertainment of the audience. While he attempts to use art to make political commentary on Dominican masculinity, Malagueta recreates violence against black bodies. Therefore, Indiana critiques the potential of art to create meaningful political change within neoliberalism.

The second potential collective Indiana presents is the group of buccaneers in precolonial times. Argenis believes the space is a utopia that frees him from the pressure to prove his masculinity. Switching in and out of 2001 and the early 1600s, Argenis/Côte de Fer has a sexual interaction with Giorgio/Roque after which Argenis' consciousness remains in the avatar of Côte de Fer. While in 2001 Argenis fears physical intimacy and polices his actions, Côte de Fer feels happy because "that past he still didn't recognize as totally his had no repercussions in the present, where he was still a true macho and where no one knew anything" (Indiana 93). While Argenis feels pressure to present himself as a "true macho" in 2001, he sees the group of buccaneers as a space unaffected by social pressures and gender norms.

Argenis also idealizes the group as a uniform utopia. Aligning with Argenis' perspective, the narration describes a French-speaking man, "the Taíno," "a one-armed man," "a black man they called Engombe" and "Roque" as united because "They were all bags of bone and sinew, encased in skin that had been marbled by permanent sunburn" (Indiana 59). Argenis idealizes the buccaneers as a uniform egalitarian collective who treat each other as equals as they work together to survive the harsh environment. While Argenis claims the men are the same because they are all "encased in skin," his names for the men show he still defines them by modern classifications. For instance, Argenis' mention of a "black man called Engombe," emphasizes Engombe's race. Furthermore, Argenis' name for the "one-armed man" is offensive as Argenis never learns his name and classifies him based on his lack of an arm. While Argenis treats the space as a utopia where every man is the same, he ignores the actual diversity of the group.

In her depiction of the buccaneers, Indiana encourages the reader to view the group as a potent collective in which Argenis can experience empathy and learn to think outside of himself. After seeing Engombe kill the French man, "Argenis cries with grief over the poor French guy

and the one-armed man curses and the Taíno drop to his knees and screams… Argenis cries inconsolably 'Côte de Fer, Côte de Fer' just like the poor innocent man used to do" (Indiana 89). Indiana depicts Argenis' grief as profound because he mourns the loss of a man he was never able to communicate with due to their language barrier. Argenis' cries of "Côte de Fer, Côte de Fer" suggest embodiment as he recites the words of the man who came from a different culture than his own. Furthermore, Indiana presents Argenis as in a collective with the one-armed man and the Taíno as they communally mourn the man's death.

By showing Argenis experience loss, Indiana creates the expectation the collective of buccaneers will change Argenis into a more empathetic person in both time periods. After Linda compliments his art, Argenis reflects while he would normally have a sexual thought about Linda, "he felt a strange repulsion connecting the libidinous desires that drove him into the nest of anemones with the resulting disagreeable experience" (Indiana 63). Indiana suggests Aregnis' experience with the anemone that led him to embody multiple avatars and temporalities makes him more empathetic as Argenis no longer wishes to sexualize Linda. Furthermore, when he walked Linda to the door Argenis "saw her in this new light. He could make out the lines the sun and her excessive concern for her cause- a lost cause, as far as Argenis was concerned- had drawn on her face" (Indiana 64). In contrast to his earlier objectification of Linda, Argenis sees her in a "new light" as he sympathetically recognizes her concern for the lost cause of the ocean. In Argenis' changed relationship with Linda, Indiana shows his involvement in the collective of buccaneers makes him into a better person.

While Indiana's reader expects Argenis' change to be permanent, the author depicts Argenis as his sexist and hateful earlier self later in the novel. Indiana therefore disappoints the reader and illustrates collectivity will not make Argenis empathetic. Poisoning a sausage,

Argenis spitefully kills Linda's dog Billy and thinks to himself "He's curious why he feels sympathy [for the one-armed man] and not with the fucking Billy" (Indiana 114). Despite his earlier moments of connectivity with Linda, Argenis reverts to his previous sentiments when he kills her dog, showing the experience of embodying different avatars in different temporalities does not make Argenis into a more empathetic person. Furthermore, as Côte de Fer, Argenis creates engravings of sexual violence against a woman and depicts "the victim's face as Linda's" (Indiana127). While earlier the reader expects Argenis to gain empathy and become a better person, they are now disgusted by his violent engravings. By disappointing the reader, Indiana reveals the reader's complicity within neoliberalism as they expect Argenis to do the revolutionary labor of becoming a better person and joining a collectivity.

At the end of the novel, Indiana ultimately shows the group of buccaneers was never a collectivity when Roque and Engombe betray Argenis. While the buccaneers run from men who seek to attack them, Argenis "wait[s] for Roque and Engombe thinking they care about him" (Indiana 116). While Argenis believes the men of the group all protect and care for each other, he realizes they are individualistic when he feels Engombe's gun on his neck. Argenis is even more betrayed when Roque/Giorgio kill him. In this moment, Argenis learns of Roque's multiplicity as "Giorgio and Roque [speak] in unison" before they deal the fatal blow to his head (Indiana 117).

Conclusion

At the end of the novel, Indiana reveals Acilde/Giorgio/Roque tricked Argenis/Côte de Fer into making the engravings in the early 1600s, so that he could unearth and sell them for a fortune in 2001. While Argenis' art style is unprofitable in the modern era, the historic context of

the engravings and quality makes them valuable. Earlier in the chapter, I argue Indiana shows the reader is complicit in neoliberalism as they treat the two protagonists as commodities who have the potential to do revolutionary labor. Finally, I return to the scene I presented at the start of my chapter with the “haughty and beautiful face” and the monster it commands (Indiana 61). In her address of the bourgeois reader, Indiana encourages them to self-identify as both the commanding haughty face of neoliberalism and the ugly monster who complies.

Conclusion

In my conclusion, I return to Brand's ambiguous unnamed island. Brand's island is recognizably Caribbean to readers of the Caribbean and diaspora. Therefore, Brand crafts a pan Caribbean space that invites readers familiar with the land to share in collective melancholia for the history of colonialism and enslavement. At the same time, the island is an intangible fictional place readers of all positionalities may occupy through the medium of the novel. Through the embodiment of her characters, Brand invites outsiders to the Caribbean to share melancholia for its history and engage in ephemeral moments solidarity. By appealing to readers of heterogeneous positionalities, Brand primes her readers as melancholic subjects who, after finishing the novel, may form potent political collectivities with each other.

While Brand crafts an ambiguous space of the island to imagine collectivity within neoliberalism, Rita Indiana presents the island of Hispaniola as a space of individualism and violent systematic hierarchies. In 2027, protagonist Acilde watches the government of the Dominican Republic commit genocide of Haitian inhabitants of the island. However, she remains unphased by the deaths outside her window and individualistically focuses on her task of cleaning the glass (Indiana 9). In her depiction of Hispaniola, an island home to politically and physically divided people, Indiana shows the Caribbean is dominated by neoliberalism and its culture of competition and individuality. Through the failures of both Acilde and Argenis, Indiana shows individual and collective revolutionary action are impossible within neoliberalism. Furthermore, Indiana's disappointment of the reader forces them to address their complicity within the economic system. While Brand imagines uniting her readers with shared melancholia, Indiana imagines her readers united by their shared complicity within

neoliberalism. Ultimately, by depicting a failed revolution, Indiana advocates for abolition of the system.

One may be tempted to diagnosis the authors' varying approaches to revolution within neoliberalism as symptomatic of the historical moments from which they write. Brand writes in 1996, a decade after neoliberalism starts to gain popularity as an economic theory in the 1980s. In 2015, Indiana writes during late-stage capitalism when the economic inequities between the Caribbean and capitalistic world powers have been exacerbated. A simple reading of the authors' varying perspectives suggests Brand has an optimistic view of collectivity because she writes during earlier stages of neoliberalism while Indiana's pessimism stems from her historical moment of late-stage capitalism.

However, a more fruitful reading and synthesis of the texts shows the texts are not just simple products of their times and reading them in conjunction provides insight into how to achieve modern political collectivity. In my introduction I explored the work of Immanuel Wallerstein and his likening of global structures to "coral reefs of human relations which have a stable existence over relatively long periods of time (Wallerstein 3). While we may view large structures like neoliberalism as permanent, Wallerstein suggests like the dynamic natural environment, "structures too are born, develop, and die" (Wallerstein 3). One may argue for the reef of neoliberalism to die, nature must die along with the humans inside the ecosystem. However, this is a top-down view. While the coral reef provides the structure for the plants and animals within, the inhabitants simultaneously maintain their home as they keep pests in check, keep algae off the reef, and provide nutrients for growth. Furthermore, one must remember reefs are dynamic as they naturally degenerate and regrow themselves with the help of fish and plants, ultimately becoming a completely different structure.

This hopeful metaphor helps us understand how the synthesis of the novels informs our contemporary political moment. In her depiction of a failed revolution, Indiana argues for the abolition of neoliberalism while showing this change will be slow and not immediate. Through her disappointment of the reader, Indiana shows everyone is complicit in neoliberalism. Since everyone is inside the system, Brand's work allows us to imagine how to view ourselves as the fish and plants that aid in the erosion and regeneration of the reef of neoliberalism. Therefore, as we strive for the abolition of neoliberalism, we need must rely on moments of solidarity and collectivity to persevere in our revolution.

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