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Waiting for Now: Postcolonial Fiction and Colonial Time

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WAITING FOR NOW: POSTCOLONIAL FICTION AND COLONIAL TIME

A Dissertation Presented

by

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

WAITING FOR NOW: POSTCOLONIAL FICTION AND COLONIAL TIME

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This dissertation examines the temporalities of waiting in global Anglophone fiction, reinvigorating waiting as a modality that can be at turns debilitating, strategic, calculating, and meditative. By arguing for the centrality of waiting to the experience of postcoloniality, my dissertation challenges the dominant narrative of the twentieth century as a time only of acceleration and movement.

In the introduction, I draw from social scientific studies of waiting, as well as philosophies of time, mobility studies, and history, to create a robust framework of waiting as a cultural practice and privileged analytical concept for scrutinizing colonial and postcolonial regimes of time. In chapter 1, I argue that V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* and Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* literalize the spatiotemporal metaphor "waiting room of history" to achieve very different ends. Maureen's refusal to wait any longer in *July's People* rejects the apartheid temporalities that condition that "waiting room," whereas Salim's refusal to wait in *A Bend in the River* ultimately reproduces the waiting room model of history—to which, in Naipaul's view, certain occupants of the globalized, postcolonial world will always be relegated. In chapter 2 I read Alejo Carpentier's *Kingdom of This World* and J.M. Coetzee's *Life & Times of Michael K*

through the lens of marronage; the protagonists' labor and their "idleness" become newly legible as resistive waiting. I explore the temporal dimensions of waiting and disillusionment following political independence in Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments* in chapter 3. In chapter 4, I link waiting with healing and reconciliation after apartheid and civil war using Ndebele's *Cry of Winnie Mandela* and Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow*. I conclude my dissertation with a reflection on the significance of waiting in the post-9/11 world, such as in the rhetoric of preemptive military strikes that frame national security in terms of refusing to wait. As my dissertation argues, the temporal dimensions of waiting are not only implied in the discourses of colonial administration and anticolonial nationalisms, but are also deployed in strategic and political expressions of resistance, and remain central to the formation of geopolitical realities.

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INTRODUCTION

"For years now I have heard the word 'Wait!'…This 'wait' has almost always meant 'never.' We must come to see with the distinguished jurist of yesterday that 'justice too long delayed is justice denied.'"—Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," April 1963

On March 6, 1957 at midnight, Ghana's national flag was raised, replacing the Union Jack and marking the establishment of the Republic of Ghana and its independence from the United Kingdom. Among the dignitaries in attendance was Martin Luther King, Jr., fresh from the success of the Montgomery County bus boycotts in the American South and invited to attend by Kwame Nkrumah. In a sermon at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church the following month, King drew parallels between the civil rights movement in America and the push for independence in Ghana, using the story of Exodus as both metaphor and model for freedom struggles. Often linking civil rights and freedom movements across the globe, from Ghana and India to the American South, King was convinced "that the black struggle in the Jim Crow South had much to contribute to and learn from movements for independence abroad" (Baldwin xx). Of the particular events of that midnight ceremony in Ghana, King remembered the crowds teeming with people who "had waited for this hour and this moment for years"—a sight that brought the American civil rights activist to tears (*Single* 64). Before ending the sermon, King appealed to the congregation, asking them not to "go out this morning with any illusions…. If we wait for it to work itself out, it will never be worked out. Freedom only comes through persistent revolt, through persistent agitation, through persistently rising up against the system of evil" (67).

From civil rights movements within countries to anticolonial nationalist movements across the globe, agitation for change has often been linked with refusals to wait. In *Why We Can't Wait*, which draws from and expands upon the "Letter from Birmingham Jail" that serves as the epigraph to this introduction, King argues that the United States was surprised by the "Negro revolution" in part because "the nation had come to count on [the Negro] as a creature who could quietly endure, silently suffer and patiently wait" (*Wait* 2). The Revolution gained momentum, King writes, as American Blacks were motivated by "the decolonization and liberation of nations in Africa and Asia since World War II" (9). As King sat in attendance at that midnight ceremony in Ghana, the first African country south of the Sahara to achieve independence from European colonial rule, he heard Kwame Nkrumah declare, "We are not waiting; we shall no more go back to sleep. Today, from now on, there is a new African in the world and that new African is ready to fight his own battle…" (Nkrumah 106–7). Although there are limits to the comparisons that can be drawn between the United States and Ghana, "the parallels between colonialism in the Third World and racial oppression in the United States converge on the roles of violence and temporality" (Hanchard 295). Waiting, as both Nkrumah and King observed, expresses an oppressive temporal modality that must be rejected in the struggle for freedom and independence.

Rather than disappear in the post-independence era, however, the temporal dimensions of waiting continue to be evoked, revised, critiqued, and reconfigured in postcolonial fiction. This study argues that "waiting" is an essential concept in the theorization of postcolonial temporalities, and charts a genealogy of the temporal dimensions of waiting from the colonial-era *Heart of Darkness* to the 2014 novel *The*

Radiance of Tomorrow by Sierra Leonean author Ishmael Beah. Previous studies have formulated postcolonial time as the temporal experience wherein "colonial experience appears, simultaneously, to be consigned to the past *and*, precisely due to the modalities with which its 'overcoming' comes about, to be installed at the centre of contemporary social experience—with the entire burden of domination, but also the capacity for insubordination, that distinguishes that experience" (Mezzadra and Rahola). While postcolonial accounts of time and temporality certainly respond to the lasting effects of the colonial experience, throughout this dissertation I will demonstrate that postcolonial novels draw on manifold temporalities that exist in relation to, as well as independently of, colonial regimes of time. My project aims to show that waiting is at the center of colonial regimes of time, but rather than a wholesale rejection of waiting at the end of formal colonial rule, postcolonial novels reframe waiting as a multivalent temporality that can register the tensions of multiple temporal modalities confronting the postcolonial subject in making sense of her world: allowing for palimpsests of temporalities, layering time's various frames, and permitting a fuller exploration of the way time frames are used to liberate, oppress, and defer.

An understanding of waiting that draws on its multiple etymological valences can usefully revise the static connotations of the term and provide a temporal framework that captures its passive and active registers. The *Oxford English Dictionary* indicates that to wait can entail delay, deferral, and submissiveness, from which we derive the sense of waiting as waiting upon others as a servant, or "to continue in expectation of" or even "to remain for a time without something expected or promised" ("wait, v. 1"). But older meanings of waiting suggest strategy and scheming, as in the sense "to lie in wait for,"

"to keep hostile watch," and "to take precautions." Waiting as a temporal state or condition emphasizes the present moment, but waiting in the sense of "look[ing] forward to some future event," from which we derive the word "await," registers waiting's orientation toward the future. Waiting can and has been used to defer justice and to distort a lived sense of historicity for colonial subjects, but it can also, I suggest, be actively engaged as a strategy that resists the imperatives of colonial time, formulating a sense of temporality poised between and in active relation to the past and future. The texts under review in my dissertation demonstrate that waiting is neither wholly repressive, as configured by Nkrumah and King above, nor fully liberating, but rather is a temporality that can register both passive and active modalities.

This study draws together several areas of inquiry within postcolonial studies, and is situated within the critiques of Western time and history that have always been under the discipline's purview, but which have become more salient and urgent in light of the emergent field of critical time studies. In his 2014 *Omens of Adversity*, a study of temporality and the 1983 Grenada Revolution, David Scott observes that the accumulating scholarship on justice, memory, trauma, and time suggest that, "though in a still inchoate way, a new time-consciousness is emerging everywhere in contemporary theory" (*Omens* 1). This "temporal turn" reinvigorates diverse areas of scholarship, from globalization studies to American studies and theories of nations and territoriality. In part, the increased attention to time responds to the intense focus on space previously; Bob Jessop argues that for globalization studies, "the spatial turn associated with the interest in the globalization of capital has been overdone and a temporal (re)turn is overdue"

(Jessop 97).[1] Within postcolonial studies, and South African literature in particular, David Attwell perceives, "The axis has been shifting…from an emphasis on how to write about sameness and difference, to writing about *temporality*, which is to say, writing about one's place in history or one's place in the present and future" (*Rewriting* 8).

In what follows, I first chart this dissertation's contribution to the resurgence of time and literary studies by developing a reading of postcolonial studies' engagement with and criticism of colonial time in order to contextualize the rhetoric of "refusing to wait" as espoused throughout anticolonial nationalist movements, independence, and decolonization. This section will first define "colonial time" in terms of the regimes of time that mapped temporal difference onto perceived racial and cultural difference, and then situate waiting in the context of this larger colonial construction of time. Using Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe*, I then discuss anticolonial nationalist rejections of the "waiting room" model of history, and the ways that the rhetoric of waiting lingered in development discourses after colonies achieved political independence. The subsequent section turns to philosophies of time, sociology, history, psychology, and literary studies to formulate a robust description of waiting's temporal dimensions, creating a framework through which to read waiting as a cultural practice, as well as an essential analytical concept to scrutinize structures of power. To conclude and anchor my discussion of waiting and colonial time, I read *Heart of Darkness* to

[1] Similarly, Beck and Levy observe that "the spatially rooted understanding of social theory is being challenged by a 'temporal turn'" more broadly, which has implications for reading national collectivities (6). Jeffrey Insko's "Prospects for the Present" reviews recently published work in American studies, and summarizes that the temporal turn in the discipline has produced "some of the most compelling Americanist scholarship of the twenty-first century," in part by "address[ing] the formations, reformations, and promises of the present, the *now* and the *not yet*" (836).

foreground a genealogy of colonial time that, in my view, is already marked by an obsession with waiting.

Colonial Time and Postcolonial Studies

A survey of the seminal texts and voices at the beginning of postcolonial studies' institutionalization in the academy reveals that time has been a central concern and battleground for scholarship grappling with the legacies of colonialism. In its earliest stages, postcolonial criticism aimed to uncover the violence of Eurocentric notions of history and difference, as well as the relationship between colonial power and knowledge. "If the discourse of postcolonial criticism evinces a concern with problematizing the issue of time," Keya Ganguly observes, "this is in turn shaped by questions of historicity, modernity, and temporality that constitute the broader horizon of present approaches to knowledge" (163). A hallmark of postcolonial critique, then, has been "the proliferation of histories and temporalities, the intrusion of difference and specificity into the generalizing and Eurocentric post-Enlightenment grand narratives" (Hall 248). Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which argues that the West's relationship with its Orient other is unevenly structured and "based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience" (Said 1), and V.Y. Mudimbe's *The Invention of Africa*, which focuses on the West's representation of African philosophy as well as African responses, are two seminal studies that are emblematic of early postcolonial critiques and their engagements with colonial time.

Said's "Orient," as a term, is at times synonymous with the East, and geographically represents an area that includes Asia and the Middle East. As an idea, the Orient is defined in contradistinction to the Occident or the West. Although there are, of

course, "cultures and nations whose location is in the East," Said is principally concerned with "the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient (the East as career) despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a 'real' Orient" (Said, *Orientalism* 5). When I refer to the West, East, and Europe throughout this dissertation, I intend the terms to be understood in these "hyperreal terms"—a phrase Chakrabarty borrows from Baudrillard to clarify his own later use of Europe and India to "refer to certain figures of imagination whose geographical referents remain somewhat indeterminate" (Chakrabarty, *Provincializing* 27). In addition to its place as foundational text for postcolonial studies, Said's *Orientalism* is also significant for its description of Orientalist interpretations of time. Orientalist discourse views the Orient as "fixed in time and place for the West" so that encounters with the Orient can be framed as predictable and knowable; implicit here is a sense of progression through time where the West is further ahead and the Orient is further behind (Said, *Orientalism* 108). This temporal difference contains two opposing positions: (1) the view that if the Orient is to exist coevally with the West, it is the West's obligation to usher the Orient into the present through integration into the world economy and history, and (2) given the West's advanced position, the Orient will always be "not yet" ready for integration on equal footing.[2] In the Orientalist project of dominating, knowing, and restructuring the world, seemingly contradictory narratives coexist, employed depending on their usefulness to colonial expansion and its attendant colonial discourse.

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[2] Or as Peter Osborne puts it in *The Politics of Time*, "the results of synchronic comparisons are ordered diachronically to produce a scale of development which defines 'progress' in terms of the projection of certain people's presents as other people's futures, at the level of the development of history as a whole" (17).

V.Y. Mudimbe's 1988 *The Invention of Africa* and 1994 *The Idea of Africa* address the consequences of distortions of Western and colonial discourses for African areas of knowledge and cultural production, including philosophy, history, and art. Unlike Said, Mudimbe is additionally concerned with the way that contemporary Afrocentric perspectives depend on a "Western epistemological order" (Mudimbe, *Invention* x). Africanist discourse functioned similarly to Orientalist discourse, in that colonists and colonialists "have all tended to organize and transform non-European areas into fundamentally European constructs" (Mudimbe, *Invention* 1). In Africa and elsewhere, the "colonializing structure" has produced a "dichotomizing system" whose "paradigmatic oppositions" include "traditional versus modern; oral versus written and printed; agrarian and customary communities versus urban and industrialized civilization; subsistence economies versus highly productive economies" (Mudimbe, *Invention* 4). *The Idea of Africa* continues in this vein, and asserts that "Africa (as well as Asia and Europe) is represented in Western scholarship by 'fantasies' and 'constructs' made up by scholars and writers since Greek times," and these constructions have "simplified cultural complexities" (Mudimbe, *Idea* xv).

Both Mudimbe and Said are responding to a theorization of time and history grounded in Western epistemological practices and assumptions, which became integral to philosophical and political motives, and later justifications, for colonial expansion. Many Enlightenment thinkers, from Kant and Rousseau to the later Mill and Hegel, forwarded assessments about the place of Africa and other non-European locales in world

history.[3] The association of Africa with timelessness was especially pernicious and prevalent across the European continent and scholarly disciplines. Joseph K. Adjaye's introduction to *Time in the Black Experience* provides an overview of this widespread practice, and cites British physician Thomas Hodgkin's conclusion that in Africa "'there was no account of Time; not Arts; no Letters; no Society'" and French philosopher Lucien Lévy's assertion that "'[t]o the primitive time is not, as it is to us, a kind of intellectualized intuition, an 'order of succession'" (Adjaye, "Time" 3). Adjaye then discusses German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel before concluding, "For much of the first half of the twentieth century, therefore, theories and conceptions of time in Africa merely articulated popular European misconceptions and prejudices" (3). Integral to these misconceptions and prejudices are assumptions about European temporal attentiveness and authority that imagined Europe "as a time-conscious civilisation in opposition to a time-less Other," producing claims to "universal definitions of time, regularity, order; hence also to definitions of knowledge, religion, [and] science" (Nanni 2).

Hegel's *The Philosophy of History* is often cited as an emblematic text for the development and elaboration of colonial time later under scrutiny by postcolonial scholars. In a sweeping declaration, Hegel jettisons the entire continent of Africa from the study of world history, announcing, "At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the World; it has no movement or development to

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[3] Although Said's *Orientalism* is concerned with the East/West axis, several of his examples typify the tendency to substitute one "Other" for another. Take, for example, this excerpt Said pulls from England's representative in Egypt, Lord Cromer's essays: "'in dealing with Indians or Egyptians, or Shilluks, or Zulus. […] each special issue should be decided mainly with reference to what, by the light of Western knowledge and experience tempered by local considerations, we conscientiously think is best for the subject race […]'" (37).

exhibit. [...] What we properly understand by Africa is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, which had to be presented here as on the threshold of the World's History" (157). At the center of the colonial discourse that developed across the European continent in tandem with these prejudices is a will to remove colonial others from the universal narrative of history, a temporal distancing that erases precolonial history and understands the colonial other's present in terms of the Western subject's past. Hegel's account of world history combines the East and Africa together in one world (the "Oriental") in opposition to the Greek, Roman, and Germanic. The latter of course is the highest stage of modernity, and these stages "not only succeed one another and advance through time, but they are also organized geographically from east to west" (Agacinski 3). This temporal regime tends toward total incorporation through the imposition of one time and one History, a "colonization of time" that Walter Mignolo calls "a spectacular case of a global design" (xiii). The reverberations are still felt in postcolonial writing around the globe; the Martinican writer and critic Édouard Glissant observes that Amerindian peoples were relegated to a "prehistorical" position in relation to Europeans, and because "the Caribbean notion of time was fixed in the void of an imposed nonhistory, the writer must contribute to reconstituting its tormented chronology" (Glissant 64–5). In its attempt to describe and contest the legacies of colonialism, postcolonial studies has necessarily engaged with the imbrication of power, knowledge, history, and time as central problematics of colonial discourse.[4]

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[4] Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* challenges the diametrical opposition of Hegel's philosophy and black resistance and creativity. In Gilroy's view, "Hegel provides the terms for 'a firm rebuke to the mesmeric idea of history as progress' and 'an opportunity to re-periodise and reaccentuate accounts of the dialectic of Enlightenment'" (qtd. in Fischer 25). It is not my intention to ignore these recent reinterpretations of Enlightenment philosophy, but rather to track the ways these theorizations dovetailed with and fostered

And yet, when internal and self-reflexive critiques of postcolonial studies gained momentum in the 1990s, theorists questioned the way that postcolonial studies engaged with and perhaps reinstated a teleology indebted to "colonial time." Anne McClintock's important and frequently anthologized 1992 "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-colonialism'" noted that the term "is haunted by the very figure of linear 'development' that it sets out to dismantle" because it "re-orients the globe once more around a single binary opposition: colonial/post-colonial" (85). Despite postcolonial theory's promise to offer "a decentering history in hybridity, syncreticism, multi-dimensional time, and so forth, the *singularity* of the term effects a re-centering of global history around the single rubric of European time" (86). With Western or European time often serving as a silent referent in postcolonial studies, the discipline reinforces, rather than dismantles, the linear, stadial time associated with colonial time. Writing in the same issue of *Social Text* as McClintock, Ella Shohat also advocates for "a more limited, historically and theoretically specific, usage of the term 'post-colonial'" (100). Like McClintock, Shohat finds postcolonialism's chronologizing tendencies problematic, charging postcolonial scholars with using "postcoloniality" to suggest a "unified temporality […that] risks reproducing the colonial discourse of an allochronic other, living in another time, still lagging behind us" (104).

From the "post" appended to its name to its description of the power and violence of colonial discourse's temporalities, postcolonial studies as a discipline has always acknowledged and contended with time as part of its critique. One way more recent work

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colonial discourse, and especially the ways postcolonial writers and thinkers have responded to this intellectual history.

in postcolonial studies has addressed the concerns raised in the 1990s is to examine more carefully and critically what we might take to be "colonial time," acknowledging that the insistence on linear, developmentalist time is belied by lags, delays, and disruptive competing temporalities. Adam Barrows's 2011 *The Cosmic Time of Empire* usefully describes the process of synchronizing the world to one standard time at the Prime Meridian Conference, which pitted a universal, standard time against dissenting local conceptions of time that revolved around agriculture, religion, and other cultural practices (43). Signs of struggle over the imposition of standard time not only gesture toward competing temporalities, but also caution against too easy a conception of colonial time as a monolithic concept.[5] In a similar vein, On Barak's 2013 *On Time* examines the way "'Western time' [came] to be associated with standard clock time and 'Egyptian time' with a substandard approximation,'" and he found that Egypt's modernizing classes in the early twentieth century tended to characterize "the slowing down of colonial modernity as Egyptian and its acceleration as Western" (Barak 1–2). The conclusion to this dissertation will address globalization, acceleration, and waiting; at this point, I want to stress Barak's observation that in practice, "colonial time" was not only *not* homogeneous, but was also marked equally by sensations of delay and waiting, as well as acceleration and speed.

By colonial time, then, I refer to colonial discourse's production of an *ostensibly* homogenizing and universalizing temporality, indebted to the Enlightenment, that

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[5] Vanessa Ogle's *The Global Transformation of Time 1870-1950* also describes these temporal tensions; the movement for "universal time" at Greenwich in fact "made contemporaries realize not how similar but how heterogeneous the world was—to the degree of being incomparable" (Ogle 6). The practice of "plotting the histories of nations and peoples onto a grid of universal, evolutionary time" was integral to managing this difference (7).

underpinned European colonial expansion during high imperialism beginning in 1870.[6] Colonial time is, like "modern historical time […] organized around a notion of discrete but continuous, modular change, and in particular, modular change as a linear, diachronically stretched-out *succession* of cumulative instants, an endless chain of displacements of before and after" (D. Scott, *Omens* 5). It is true that postcolonial critiques of time have often been "premised on a simplified and even monolithic understanding of Western modernity as an ideology of 'linear progress,' the consequence of which is a binary conception of time" (Helgesson 546). By noting the perceived linearity of historical and colonial time, I refer both to the way colonial-era writers and politicians characterized history as linear progress, as well as to the way early postcolonial studies tended to reproduce this notion with the short-hand "homogeneous, empty time."[7] By focusing on the temporalities of waiting in fiction across the twentieth-century to present, I aim to work across the colonial/postcolonial temporal divide that assumes an "underlying structure…of segmented absolute time" (West-Pavlov 166).

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[6] Other scholars have employed the term "imperial time" to describe the process by which the Western narratives of history and time work in tandem with colonial expansion. In her reading of Kipling's *Kim*, Sara Suleri Goodyear asserts that imperial time "demands to be interpreted less as a recognizable chronology of historic events than as a contiguous chain of surprise effects: even as empire seeks to occupy a monolithic historic space, its temporality is more accurately characterized as a disruptive sequence of a present tense perpetually surprised, allowing for neither the precedent of the past nor the anticipation of the future" (113). In contrast the homogenizing tendencies of linear time, Suleri reads imperial time as marked by disruption and a suspension between the past and the future. In her later reading of Forster's *Passage to India*, this suspension is a "dischronology of 'not now,' 'not yet,'" which could alternatively be interpreted as a chronology of waiting. Paul Stasi's 2012 *Modernism, Imperialism, and the Historical Sense* also employs the term "imperial time," which he describes as a conceptual structure that represents a "contrast between an unending telic modernity and a world of reified unchanging traditions" (6). While Suleri's and Stasi's uses have significant differences, what is striking between the two is a focus on confrontation and contrast, struggle and disjunction. My use of colonial time is meant to capture and include this sense of imperial time as well.

[7] The phrase "homogeneous, empty time" originally comes from Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (261). Even when postcolonial studies has "deconstruct[ed] the 'time of history' as specifically 'Western' time," these insights have not been incorporated into new practices by historians or philosophers of history, whose works "are still generally based on an absolute, homogeneous and empty time" (Bevernage and Lorenz 9, 13).

Instead, waiting reveals what West-Pavlov describes as "a plurality of heterogeneous temporalities," which I further explore in Chapter 3's delineation of postcolonial timescapes.

By colonial time *regime*, I emphasize the power of this temporal organization to regulate and influence interactions and behaviors at all levels of society. I view colonial regimes of time to be a subset of cultural time regimes, which "refer to a temporal ordering and orientation that is deeply entrenched in the culture and provides a basis for implicit values, patterns of thought and the logic of action" (Assmann 42). The term "colonial regime of time" is meant to capture the ideological and epistemic consequences of the imposition of colonial time (and its associated assumptions about history and modernity), as well as its material and political consequences. Formulated this way, colonial regimes of time include various subsets of time emerging from colonial encounters, including the "racial time" described by Michael Hanchard. "Racial time" refers to "the inequalities of temporality that result from power relations between racially dominant and subordinate groups," and "produce[s] unequal temporal access to institutions, goods, service, resources, power, and knowledge, which members of both groups recognize" (280). Crucially, Hanchard identifies "waiting" as the first conceptual facet of racial time: "Members of subordinate groups objectively perceive the material consequences of social inequality, as they are literally made to wait for goods and services that are delivered first to members of the dominant group" (284). "The end of waiting," Hanchard concludes, "meant the beginning of a more autonomous existence" (295). It is not surprising, then, that refusing to wait became central to anticolonial movements across the world.

Theorizing Waiting After Independence

In response to colonial regimes of time and history, which situated colonized subjects in prehistorical or ahistorical stages of history in comparison with their European others, anticolonial nationalist movements insisted with urgency that they ought not to wait any longer for self-rule. Dipesh Chakrabarty writes in *Provincializing Europe* that the classical liberalism deriving from John Stuart Mill's writings utilized an historicist sense of time—the historical time of development and civilization—to argue that "Indians or Africans were *not yet* civilized enough to rule themselves" (8). This "historicist consciousness," Chakrabarty summarizes, was "a recommendation to the colonized to wait. Acquiring a historical consciousness, acquiring the public spirit that Mill thought absolutely necessary for the art of self-government, was also to learn this art of waiting. This waiting was the realizing of the 'not yet' for historicism." Anticolonial nationalisms in India rejected this "waiting room" of history both by insisting on home rule *now* and by integrating the peasant as a citizen and "full participant in the political life of the nation" (9). Whereas the European narrative of modernity mandated that the "primitive" colonial subject must wait to progress through stages of civilization before integrating into world history as a modern political subject, the anticolonial response was predicated on an interruption of this historical chronology. In his gloss of twentieth-century anticolonial movements, Chakrabarty opposes the "not yet" of European discourse with the "now" of anticolonial nationalism. While useful as a general heuristic, this opposition overlooks the persistent prevalence of waiting in anticolonial democratic movements and fiction around independence and after.

In Chakrabarty's account, waiting is wholly negative and a process of deferral that reproduces a Eurocentric view of history by relegating (pre)colonial histories to a

primitive past that the West has already experienced and surpassed. Indeed, the rhetoric of waiting is both implicit and explicit in later development discourses, neoliberal economics (embodied in the International Monetary Fund and World Bank's structural readjustment policies), and modernization theory as fledging countries and their subjects are instructed to wait for their integration into the world economy, history, and modernity—a waiting that ends only when the steps of progress and development (a narrative written in the West's image) are followed. Yet the insistence on catching up and acceleration common to decolonization discourse recapitulated a model of Western modernization.[8] With reference to Nehru's declaration in the 1950s, "'What Europe did in a hundred or a hundred and fifty years, we must do in ten or fifteen years,'" and Julius Nyerere's biography entitled *We Must Run While They Walk*, Chakrabarty argues that the "discourse and politics of decolonization in the nations that met in Bandung often displayed an uncritical emphasis on modernization" ("Legacies" 53). Implicating both waiting and refusing to wait, this discourse of modernization abandons waiting as a temporality that could provide meaningful political resistance.

But waiting might also benefit from a reconsideration of its complexity as a concept that could, in Ross Chambers's terms, create room to maneuver.[9] Chakrabarty himself revisits the achievements and legacy of subaltern studies in a 2010 article

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[8] By way of example, Richard Wright's *Black Power* recounts an exchange he had with a Ghanaian clerk on the eve of Ghana's independence: "'You American chaps are three hundred years ahead of these Africans. It'll take a long time for them to catch up with you. I think that they are trying to go too fast, don't *you*?" (qtd. in Hanchard 291).

[9] Indebted to de Certeau's notion of oppositional practices and the distinction between tactic and strategy, Ross Chambers's study of oppositional narrative posits that literary discourse is uniquely situated to navigate between repression and recuperation, transforming "imposed structures, languages, codes, rules […] in ways that serve individual or group purposes rather than those 'intended'" (3,4).

"Belatedness as Possibility: Subaltern Histories, Once Again." He notes that subaltern studies was viewed by some in Europe as a "belated" project, repeating the practices and approaches already developed by British "history from below" (165). Belatedness, though pejoratively used in the above sense of simple repetition, is not necessarily a repetition of the old, but rather an answer to the question of how newness enters the world—a question raised by Salman Rushdie, repeated by Homi Bhabha, and revisited by Chakrabarty. Chakrabarty writes, "To see 'advantage' in 'backwardness'—that is, to see belatedness as opportunity—was also to challenge the time that was assumed by stadial views of history, it was to twist the time of the colonial 'not yet' into the structure of the democratic and anti-colonial 'now'" (169-70). The sense of waiting associated with a suspension of progress and time for the colonial subject, Chakrabarty's reading suggests, can also be adapted for the present and mobilized for specifically anticolonial purposes.

Taken together, Chakrabarty's writings on waiting in conjunction with decolonization, modernization, and developmental discourse make clear that waiting as a condition and temporal orientation illuminates structures of power that mediate the expectation of eventual fulfillment, or the arrival of that for which a subject or people waits. More recent social scientific work, which I discuss in the following section, expands the significance of waiting to include waiting as a cultural practice, shaping subjects' understanding of and engagement with their selves in time, as well as (post)colonial society.

The Temporal Dimensions of Waiting

By turning to fictional representations of the temporal dimensions of waiting, this study is primarily concerned with temporality as the lived experience of time, and the ways in

which these experiences of waiting interact and conflict with, as well as respond to, colonial regimes of time. In order to assess the degree to which waiting is a temporality actively negotiated and/or passively endured by an individual actor, we must also consider how subjects conceive of and orient themselves in time. Differences between the ways that time is measured and the ways that time is experienced highlight the distinction between time and temporality, terms that philosopher David Couzens Hoy carefully distinguishes. An analysis of the nature of time would present "a complex array of issues about the status of what could be called 'scientific' or 'objective' or 'universal' time, that is to say, the 'time of the universe'" (Hoy xii). Temporality, on the other hand, is "time insofar as it manifests itself in human existence" (xiii). That is not to say that temporality is less real, or merely subjective; as Hoy clarifies, temporality "seems equally objective and subjective," because the sensation that time is passing "faster or slower is subjective, yet nevertheless it is generally acknowledged that the flow is objectivity happening" (xv). As we will see in the fictional case studies discussed and analyzed in the subsequent chapters, waiting is evoked in response to time passing differentially for the waiting subject and external markers of time (such as clocks, rituals, life cycles, and seasons). The temporality of waiting is shaped by the objective passing of time, as well as the subjective experience of being oriented in time.

This insistence that temporality is not any less real than time is particularly important for analyzing the temporality of waiting in postcolonial contexts. As studies of time and colonial power have revealed, the powerful discourse of mathematical and scientific time as objective and universal encouraged the degradation of other ways of marking and experiencing time. After Greenwich Mean Time was established,

demarcating time zones as resonating from the European center, "social temporality"—time that is "embedded […] within a social community, produced by and inseparable from a grid of contextually determined variables"—was "degraded to a second-order reality, while the abstract, neutral, universal constant of Greenwich-based time [was] projected as an immutable law, a truth of Nature discovered by science and independent of various judgments, needs, and activities of the communities forced to restructure themselves according to its image and dictates" (Barrows 30). Attending to the temporality of waiting as it is expressed and conceptualized in postcolonial fiction cannot undo this epistemic violence; nevertheless, I aim to recuperate the value of temporality as a means of structuring social relationships and reality alike.

Whether one lies in wait, remains without something expected or promised, or looks forward to a future event, waiting as it is commonly understood emphasizes an imagined future. Philosopher Ernst Bloch considers this space of waiting or expectation—between the now and the "not yet"—to be fertile for utopian politics, which as he shows in *The Principle of Hope*, formulates a future both desired and ultimately undetermined. According to Bloch, the expectation and anticipation characteristic of "waiting" is integral to the way humans conceive of and negotiate the world. He writes, "Expectation, hope, intention towards possibility that has still not become: this is not only a basic feature of human consciousness, but, concretely corrected and grasped, a basic determination within objective reality as a whole" (7). Anticipatory consciousness is oriented toward a potential and desired future, but the temporality assumed by this consciousness is at odds with the teleological linearity typically associated with the

colonial regimes of time discussed above. Douglas Kellner clarifies Bloch's unique rendering of anticipatory consciousness and temporality:

> For Bloch, history is a repository of possibilities that are living options for future action; therefore what could have been can still be. The present moment is thus constituted in part by *latency* and *tendency*: the unrealized potentialities that are latent in the present, and the signs and foreshadowings that indicate the tendency of the direction and movement of the present into the future. The three-dimensional temporality must be grasped and activated by an *anticipatory consciousness* that at once perceives the unrealized emancipatory potential in the past, the latencies and tendencies of the present, and the realizable hopes of the future. (81)

Because Bloch is concerned with utopian politics, the ways that the awaited future might be *feared* or *dreaded* are missing in his account. Nevertheless, his concept of anticipatory consciousness and its attendant temporality are useful for theorizing the temporal dimensions of waiting because it allows for an expansive view of the relationships between the past, present, and future. Though certainly future-oriented, anticipatory consciousness is always already in dynamic relation with both the past and the present. While waiting-as-anticipation certainly names an orientation toward the future, waiting is also equally concerned with the possibilities presented by the past and the present's potential. Anticipatory consciousness, or the consciousness of the "not yet," can be manifested in daydreams, "where individuals have presentiments of what they lack, what they need, what they want and what they hope to find" (Davies and Sarpong 4). The daydream is a form conducive to examining Bloch's anticipatory consciousness, but the

daydream is also a form suitable for the waiting subject; while the waiting subject appears to be doing nothing, she may be engaged in daydreaming.[10] This daydreaming, which might appear to be an individual's waste of time, instead can have a "collective dimension, an expansive quality, and a commitment to "Weltverbesserung [world-improvement]," an anticipation and vision reverberating beyond the individual and beyond the present moment (Ni Dhuill 157).

When we view waiting to be a characteristic of anticipatory consciousness, which shapes and urges human action toward the future, waiting's temporal dimensions become more extensive than they might seem at first. The expectation of the "not yet" engages the past even as the present and future are left open; Bloch's sense of anticipation prompts us to reconsider the future's relationship to the present and the past. The sense of impatience that can accompany waiting comes from a perception that waiting is a period of suspension or stasis that tends to be only future-directed. The conception developed above suggests that waiting names a complex relationship with the past and present, and posits that the time of waiting can also be a productive temporal modality to imagine, and thereby usher in, a future still in a state of becoming.[11]

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[10] Discrepancies between observations and the internal experiences of time can produce extreme misunderstandings. In the African context, philosopher John Mbiti writes, outsiders might charge loitering locals with wasting time, but "time has to be created or produced" in traditional African life, such that "[t]hose who are seen sitting down, are actually *not wasting* time, but either waiting for time or in the process of 'producing' time" (Mbiti 19). The conflict between different cosmologies of time and charges of "unproductive" time-use are further explored in chapter 2, through *The Kingdom of This World* and *Life & Times of Michael K*.

[11] Elizabeth Grosz's work on time and becoming is indebted to reworkings of time and temporality that borrow from Bloch's utopian futurity. Like Bloch, Grosz develops a concept of temporality in *Time Travels* that is "not under the domination or privilege of the present" and "redirects the present in an indeterminacy that also inhabits and transforms our understand of the privilege of the present" (*Time Travels* 1–2). In the same vein, Grosz argues in *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures* that making "becoming" a central philosophical concept in studies of time enables a "fundamental openness of time to futurity" and resists "reduc[ing] time to the workings of causality" (*Becomings* 3). This notion of

In addition to the temporal dimensions of waiting that allow negotiation and intentional, strategic delay, waiting can also instantiate a power differential that places the waiting subject in a position of deference. Thus, while a notion of waiting as a productive suspension of linear time opens up the narrative of historicism and gestures toward the ways in which things might have happened otherwise, waiting's temporal dimensions may also oppressively defer or postpone. In this configuration, waiting is a temporal relation associated with "boredom or 'discontent' in the sense used by Hegel […] a dissatisfaction with the present that implies the negation of the present and the propensity to work towards its supersession" (Bourdieu 209). Unlike Bloch's conception of temporality outlined above, this dimension of waiting privileges the future in such a way that not only diminishes the present and past, but also sets the present in opposition as an obstacle to be overcome as quickly as possible. In this way, the passage of time is more acute and frustrating for the waiting subject, for whom time moves too slowly (Bourdieu 224). Waiting, then, affects the subject's sense of duration through the lack of desired event or activity; time passes at a loss, yielding a sense of time that is antagonistic and paralyzing for a subject who feels helpless to actualize the desired future.

Insights from philosophy reveal that waiting characterizes an existential experience directed simultaneously outward toward the perceived passage of time, and inward toward the future imagined by anticipatory consciousness. Waiting is also, paradoxically, described as both activity and inactivity by those who wait. Drawing

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"becoming," shared by philosophers such as Nietzsche, Bergson, and Deleuze, emphasizes fluidity rather than fixity, creativity rather than order, and its advantage is the privileging of time as "an opening up" (3). My study shares Grosz's interest in exploring concepts of temporality that are at odds with the notions of linear time characteristic of colonial regimes of time.

primarily from research in the field of psychology, Florian Klaproth's "Waiting as a Temporal Constraint" observes that waiting has both active and passive components: "On the one hand, waiting seems to be an activity, as a waiting person is someone who waits. On the other hand, however, a wait is mainly characterized by a lack of activity" (179).[12] In both scenarios, however, the waiting person feels "constrained by time" and conceptualizes time as "a barrier" (180). This sense of waiting emphasizes the discrepancy between the existing present and the desired future, which might be associated, from more pessimistic points of view, with anxiety and distress. Klaproth identifies four characteristics of the state of waiting: (1) an inhibition of a desired goal, resulting in a sense of lost time, (2) an experience of spending time passively, (3) dependency on external variables, and (4) a sense of uncertainty (180). In the end, Klaproth concludes, the waiting subject can only cope through expectation and anticipation. Expectations can either "raise the individual's concerns about the wait," which causes "the waiting person feel more constrained by time" or "help the individual perceive waiting as more controllable and hence less restrictive" (196). In other words, insofar as expectations fundamentally structure waiting by emphasizing the temporal distance between a desire and its fulfillment, expectations are *also* mechanisms by which a subject can manage and negotiate the experience of waiting.

As Harold Schweizer describes in his book, *On Waiting*, those who wait "find themselves in an exemplary existential predicament, having time without wanting it"

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[12] The following section, on waiting as a cultural practice, will critique this assumption that waiting is a passive activity by pointing to the myriad ways waiters manage their waiting, as well as use waiting as a strategy to forge social bonds and lighten the burden of waiting. For my purposes here, it is enough to note that waiting, in its everyday usage, tends to be associated with lack of activity because it *appears* that nothing is happening related to the awaited event or outcome.

(Schweizer 2). Waiting has a positive polarity when experienced as an expectant state of anticipation or longing, but a negative polarity when experienced as awaiting something dreaded or uncertain (Hook, "Indefinite" 54). One way to catalogue the state of waiting in relation to these temporal variables and constraints is illustrated in Table 1 below. To Klaporth's account, I have added a distinction between an anticipated and feared future event—a distinction that neither Bloch nor Bourdieu adequately theorizes.

	Shorter Duration	Longer Duration
1. Excitement/anticipation with belief of certain outcome	Easier to wait; waiting is mitigated by hope and belief that the duration of the wait will be temporary or short	Easier to wait; longer duration is offset by certainty; more likely to invest in waiting
2. Dread, with belief of certain outcome	Waiting is anxious, but shorter wait allows for the "known" future to manifest and be dealt with faster	Waiting is more anxious; duration heightens anxiety and makes waiting more difficult
3. Excitement/anticipation with uncertainty about outcome	Waiting for a short time is welcomed; ending waiting is desirable; waiting is not valued	Potential for anticipation to be reduced by the duration of the wait; it is not clear that the waiting will pay off
4. Dread, with uncertainty about outcome	While waiting is anxious, the end of waiting is not necessarily desired because waiting could postpone the undesired outcome	Waiting is anxious, but slightly desirable; the longer the wait, the greater the impression that the undesired outcome might not occur

Table 1.1: Temporal Variables and Constraints of Waiting

The table above is an attempt to account for the many variables associated with waiting for a particular event or outcome. The experience of waiting is shaped by whether the

outcome is anticipated or desired, or dreaded or feared; the certainty or uncertainty—whether warranted or justified or not—that the outcome will occur; and also the duration of the waiting. As the table reveals, waiting can be easier to endure when the outcome is desired, but also when the outcome is dreaded; what accounts for the difference is certainty. Without certainty that an undesired outcome will happen, it may be easier to inhabit the temporality of waiting because each passing moment does not necessarily ensure that the outcome will occur sooner. The waiting, in other words, may stretch indefinitely, and the experience of waiting may be preferable to an undesirable event or outcome. The relationship between waiting, fear, anticipation, and certainty is further explored in chapter 1, in relation to V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* and Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*. As their respective protagonists inhabit the temporality of waiting in their "waiting rooms" at the bend in the river or in July's village, these variables—excitement, certainty, fear, uncertainty—mix and yield remarkable differences in their characters' apprehension of the future of African countries under black-majority rule.

The table yields one further insight about the experience of waiting and time; waiting as described in both (1) and (4) may manifest in practice as "patience," where the waiting is endured more easily because of the combinations of desire and certitude, dread and uncertainty. In both (2) and (3), the waiting may encourage "impatience," where waiting is experienced as prolonging unnecessarily what is certain to occur but undesired, or what is desired but may not necessarily come to pass. The repetition of the word "may" in the preceding analyses of the table is suggestive of other variables that can affect the experience of waiting. For example, a waiting subject may be more willing or

able to wait for longer durations, if certain that a desirable event will occur, but this schema does not take into account whether she can, literally, afford to wait. In *Time Wars: The Primary Conflict of Human History*, Jeremy Rifkin cites a sociological study, "Time Orientation and Social Class," which "found that the time orientation of the lower classes is much more present-oriented while the time-orientation of the middle and upper-middle classes is much more future-directed" (Rifkin 166). The study focused on American children in the 1950s, but as we will see in the recent studies of youth across the world, discussed in the following section, class continues to shape the experience of waiting. Rifkin also observes that the way durations are measured and observed is not consistent across the globe; he notes that cultures that demarcate durations using clocks consequently have a concept of time that is "abstract, external, linear, and quantitative," whereas durations can also be measured "by the unfolding of environmental events or the ordering of sacred rituals," or "by reference to specific tasks rather than abstract numbers" (52-3). Chapter 3 will further examine how waiting is not only affected by the way time is measured and observed, but also produced by the interaction and intersection of multiple temporalities whose durations are marked by different mechanisms.

Table 1 is thus not an exhaustive representation of all the possible ways that one may wait. At the same time, the table usefully underscores the fact that the experience of waiting exists on a spectrum influenced by the interaction of a multitude of variables, including whether outcomes are apprehended as predictable and whether the duration of the wait is believed to be temporary or permanent. A fuller account of the variations in waiting, its different modalities and textures, can be gleaned from the following sociological accounts of contemporary waiting in postcolonial settings. These studies of

waiting in settings as diverse as Accra, Ghana to Meerut, India, and Dogondoutchi, Niger to Yanbian, China suggest that waiting is not only a global temporal experience, but also one that deserves more sustained critical attention. The ways that the scholars below "read" urban waiting usefully expands the interpretative framework of waiting to include its dimensions as a cultural practice, taking into consideration social, cultural, and economic variables that impact the experience of waiting. The section below additionally introduces empowerment and powerlessness as variables that are only implicit in the table above, but which are also essential to how that waiting is represented in the fictional texts that comprise the rest of this dissertation study.

Cultural Practices of Waiting

When waiting, perceptions of powerlessness (real or imagined) to accelerate a desired future, or to delay an undesired future, produce the experiences of patience and impatience, excitement and dread. Even in circumstances where waiting appears to be compelled by underemployment or political disenfranchisement, individuals negotiate their waiting or even elect to wait as part of a strategy of protest and perseverance. The *samari*—young men—at the center of Adeline Masquelier's study, "Teatime: Boredom and the Temporalities of Young Men in Niger," exhibit many of the characteristics of waiting described above; elders charge them with idleness for electing to pass time by tea-drinking together, and their waiting to secure stable employment, according to the elders, "leads to ennui, apathy, and temporal anxiety" (Masquelier 474). Although the *samari* yearn for full-time, or higher-level employment, and "bitterly resent what they see as the blatant disregard for their predicament by past and present governments," they turn to tea-drinking as a way to manage "enforced inactivity" (470, 472). The *samari* are

challenged to negotiate expectations associated not only with their positions as educated youths, but also as *men*; their "failure to assume the role of provider and fulfil social expectations of masculine success is a stark reminder of their exclusion from Euro-American modernity" (473). Tea-drinking, the *samari* contend, is a way to manage time:

> Anxious as they are to get on with their lives, they experience enforced inactivity as a torment. In this context, the lengthy preparation and consumption of tea not only participates in efforts to imbue life with future-oriented expectation but also constitutes a form of time management. […] youth who are otherwise temporally suspended transform waiting into a goal-oriented, meaningful practice, lessening its burden. (472)

Through the activity of tea-drinking, the *samari* draw attention to the larger geopolitical, and economic contexts that have produced limited options for young men in Niger. At the same time, the men negotiate the temporality of waiting through the preparation of tea and the forging of social bonds through shared experiences of disenfranchisement.

Other studies, focused on African geographies and beyond, also point to particular practices of waiting by unemployed young men. "Gymmers," in Ato Quayson's *Oxford Street, Accra: City Life and the Itineraries of Transnationalism*, handle un- or under-employment by turning to formal and makeshift gyms to spend their time. The gymmer's negotiation of urban free time links him to others who also wait for integration into the formal urban economy in postcolonial Accra. Gymmers are a subset of kòbòlòi, who are characterized by their "transitional state of urban existence at the intersecting vectors of space, time and longing" (Quayson 199). Like *samari* in Niger, the kòbòlò's waiting is a

kind of "enforced waiting" that draws attention to the inadequacies of an economic system unable to provide enough work in a formal economy, and his "attempt to move between life phases" is restrained by "a state of expectant waiting" (210). The economic conditions that compel the kòbòlò to wait also yield what Quayson calls a "phenomenology of waiting" (245-6). He writes:

> The choice is not between work and rest, or work and boredom, but between active and inactive understandings of the agency that is required to survive the incoherences generated by economic informality. This view requires the interpretation of free time as at once a set of urban practices *and* a peculiar phenomenology that is experienced *as an obligation to do something* as a way of combating the vagaries of free time. (246)

To use the words operative in this study, waiting can be understood here as an urban practice that yields a particular orientation to time and temporality, encouraging the subject to act ("to do something") even as she waits.[13] Building from Masquelier's work in Niger, I would add that waiting can also function as an indirect form of social critique aimed at the institutional or systemic inequalities that force free time on the kòbòlò and permit leisure time for the employed. Gymmers navigate their free time by using the gym as an "orientation toward change and self-transformation," where the time of waiting becomes a time of negotiation (Quayson 210).

Likewise, Craig Jeffrey's *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India* argues that the "educated unemployed" in Meerut, India "advertis[e] their

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[13] See also Abdoumaliq Simone's "Waiting in African Cities," which notes that waiting is becoming "a modality of living in cities that needs to be enacted in new ways as a site of possibility" (97).

aimlessness through a self-conscious strategy of hanging out—a masculine youth culture that challenge[s] the temporal logics of their parents and the state" (Jeffrey 2). Like the kòbòlò youth who navigate their waiting by become "gymmers," these Indian youths turn to waiting "as a basis for mobilization" (2), where their experiences of loitering in public spaces like street corners also create "friendships across caste and class lines" that were cemented when they "engaged in political protests together" (33). In both Accra and Meerut, the shared experience of waiting prompt those who wait to engage in time-management strategies—loitering, gymming—that can also form the basis of political protest and complaint.

These ethnographic accounts of waiting across the globe underscore that the temporality waiting can be harnessed for self-validation even as one holds out for the employment that might signal an end to indefinite waiting. The practice of gymming permits an expression of agency under conditions that tightly constrain the kòbòlò's acquisition of employment. On the other hand, it might also be possible to read the kòbòlò's waiting as a refusal to work, or least a "refusal of work as the necessary center of social life and means of access to the rights and claims of citizenship, and a refusal of the necessity of capitalist control of production" (Weeks 99). Kathi Weeks posits that refusing to work, as both an "analysis and strategy," critiques "the organization and social value of work" and thus "can make time and open spaces—both physical and conceptual—within which to construct alternatives" (99-100). For the purposes of this study, Weeks's argument suggests that the political commentary and critique of refusal, or of appearing to wait, cannot be understood simply on the basis of surface-level appearance. A kòbòlò waiting on the street corner, for example, may be experiencing

dejection and disillusionment, or loitering aimlessly, or waiting purposefully and making time variably for the gym or perhaps for a job, or intending his waiting to be understood as part of politically-charged refusal to work in and for an economy that withholds security and stability.[14]

Ethnographic studies of public waiting—or public practices used as strategies to manage waiting—have largely tended to focus on men. In contrast, June Hee Kwon's 2015 article, "The Work of Waiting," studies labor migrations from China to Korea, which produce conditions wherein both men and women wait. Like the kòbòlò of Accra or the *samari* of Dogondoutchi, Niger, those who wait during this transnational migration are granted a context-specific term. Kwon explains, "The single parent or waiting partner is called a *botoli*, a Yanbian term that connotes someone who is waiting and suffering from long-term loneliness due to the conditions of the contemporary transnational, migratory landscape" (479). Unlike the previous ethnographic studies cited above, here the term *botoli* applies to men and women alike. Moreover, the waiting that a *botoli* experiences, Kwon argues, "is an immaterial, but nonetheless important, form of unwaged, profit-producing labor" (481). Whether the *botoli* left behind in China are women or men, their waiting "enables mobility and helps perpetuate the circulatory routes and returns of migration" (481). Rather than indicating a broken economic system, then, Kwon's study suggests that waiting might be *integral* for the global economy and

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[14] See also Honwana and Andersen. Alcinda Manuel Honwana's 2012 *The Time of Youth: Work, Social Change, and Politics in Africa*, which uses the term "waithood" (first coined in studies on youth in the Middle East and North Africa) to describe a "prolonged adolescence of an involuntary delay in reaching adulthood" (Honwana 4). Honwana argues that waithood is in fact a "dynamic" period, where youths "invent new forms of being and interacting with society." Morten Koch Andersen's 2016 "Time-Use, Activism, and the Making of Future" also finds that waiting is a "key concept" in theorizing "political mobilization" by students at Dhaka University (Andersen 421).

its migratory labor to function. Waiting as a gendered temporal experience will be taken up directly in chapters 3 and 4, as I read novels by Anita Desai and Ayi Kwei Armah in relation to reproductive nationalisms, and by Njabulo Ndebele and Ishmael Beah in relation to silence and reconciliation.

Waiting can be a tactic used by the disenfranchised, as we've seen in waiting by *samari* and kòbòlòi, as well as unwaged labor by *botoli*, but governments also create conditions of waiting as a way to exert and sustain their own power. Javier Auyero's *Patients of the State*, a study of waiting in Argentina, reveals that waiting works in both capacities, on the part of ordinary citizens as well as the Argentinian state. On the one hand, Auyero understands "acts of waiting…as *temporal processes in and through which political subordination is reproduced,*" as subjects are reminded of their disempowerment and begin to view waiting as their eternal temporal condition (2). Through queues, wait lists, and unpredictable bureaucracy, their subordinate positions are reinforced through the "uncertainty and the arbitrariness that is already present in poor people's daily lives" (20). The queue, or waiting line, is an exemplary site to observe the complicated power dynamics intertwined in the temporal experience of waiting. According to research in queue theory, the more powerful one is, for example, the less likely one is to wait; the powerful who "have the resources to refuse to wait […] can often afford to go elsewhere for faster service or cause others, such as servants or employees, to wait in their places" (Schwartz 849). Additionally, servers can become more powerful to the extent that clients wait for them (857). As a corollary, one "can maintain and dramatize his worth by purposely causing another to wait" (859).

At the same time, Auyero recognizes that waiting is not simply a description of the powerful leveraging their dominance over the powerless, nor is it merely "a negative practice that tells people it is not yet their turn" (8). Auyero asserts that waiting "ceases to be 'dead time'":

> The subjective experience of waiting and the regular practice of making the destitute wait become productive phenomena in need of further scrutiny. […] the implicit knowledge incarnated in these patients of the state reveals acts of cognition that are, simultaneously, acts of recognition of the established political order. (9)

Here, we can see a link between Auyero's depiction of waiting in Argentina and Jeffrey's account of waiting in Meerut; while state policies and a larger geopolitical and economic context certainly produce the temporal experience of waiting, this waiting can be a transformative experience through which the waiting subject gains a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of power and the inequities built into the prevailing political order.[15]

The temporality of waiting is thus intimately tied to power—the power to fulfill and satisfy, the power to negotiate, and the power to withhold. "Waiting," Pierre Bourdieu writes in *Pascalian Meditations*, "is one of the privileged ways of experiencing the effect of power, and the link between time and power […] both on the side of the powerful (adjourning, deferring, delaying, raising false hopes, or, conversely, rushing, taking by surprise) and on the side of the 'patient', as they say in the medical universe,

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[15] Valeria Procupez builds from Auyero, and in her own study of patience and waiting in Buenos Aires, concludes that the patience exhibited by the poor can, in certain circumstances, be a "political stance and is better understood as a collective mode of inhabiting temporality rather than as a cultivated virtue" (S56).

one of the sites par excellence of anxious, powerless waiting" (228). Bourdieu's formulation points to the way that the temporality of waiting is fundamentally a shared temporality between subjects who wait as well as the thing, event, person, or abstract future they wait for. To study waiting is to study the construction, manipulation, and effects of power, making the ubiquity of waiting in postcolonial fiction especially significant. But where I depart from Bourdieu's theorization of waiting is his assertion that waiting "implies submission" and that a person can "be made to wait, hope, etc…only to the extent that he is invested" in that which he desires (228, 231). Indeed, the critical attention that temporalities of waiting as cultural practices have begun to receive indicate that waiting indexes power differentials with more nuance than the powerful/powerless schema Bourdieu references. A panoply of variables condition the experience of waiting, including certainty, anxiety, hope, fear, duration, class, gender, and education among others. Given these variables, we can conclude with Auyero that "waiting is stratified, and there are variations in waiting time that are socially patterned and responsive to power differentials" (27).

While the recent proliferation of ethnographic research on waiting and postcolonial societies might suggest that "waiting" is a newly legible, temporal experience, the fictional texts under review in this dissertation affirm that "waiting" has a much longer history as part of colonial and postcolonial discourses alike. To that end, I turn to Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* in order to locate the temporality of waiting in the colonial context, creating a genealogy for "waiting" that extends from the turn of the twentieth-century to the present day. Given its canonical status in world literature, Conrad's novel has been fertile ground for discussions of European civilization and

imperialism, racism, and representations of history and time.[16] The novel is also remarkable for its early mobilization of waiting to register the ambivalences of temporal difference and conflict that, in my view, become implicit in critiques of colonialism and later postcolonial theory. The novel foregrounds the complex relationship between waiting and dominant and alternative temporalities, which are not necessarily in strict opposition.

Waiting at the Heart of Colonial Time

"The *Nellie*, a cruising yawl, swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails, and was at rest. The flood had made, the wind was nearly calm, and being bound down the river, the only thing for it was to come to and wait for the turn of the tide."—opening lines of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*

Heart of Darkness opens with an image of stillness: The *Nellie* is anchored, the sails are stationary, and the crew mirrors the ship's immobility as they rest at ease on the deck. Barges are "drifting up with the tide," but despite this ostensible movement, the narrator remarks that the "tanned sails […] stand still"—unsurprising given that the air, "condensed into a mournful gloom," is "brooding motionless" over the city of London (99). Caught in this stillness, the narrator remarks, the only option is to wait for the tide to turn.

Heart of Darkness thus begins by evoking waiting, and this waiting is the impetus for Marlow's tale, which comprises the rest of text. The framing narrator explicitly makes the connection between the storytelling and waiting. After Marlow remarks, "'The

[16] In addition to the scholars referenced in the next section, see also Achebe's groundbreaking "An Image of Africa," as well as Kim (2012), Lawtoo (2013), Tabachnick (2013), and Watts (2008).

conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much,'" the narrator observes, "We looked on, waiting patiently—there was nothing else to do till the end of the flood […]" (103). The period of waiting is a time of forced contemplation for Marlow and his listeners as Marlow's recollections oblige them to look into the darkness of colonial conquest and exploitation.

While the repetition of various words—darkness, whiteness, haze, light, voice, ivory—in the novel has not gone unnoticed, the repetition and significance of "waiting" throughout the text has.[17] When critics have turned their attention to issues of time and representation in Conrad's fiction, they have emphasized Conrad's historical context, pointing to the new theories about time and experience circulating at the turn of the twentieth century and contrasting human-centered temporality with the possibility of accessing independent and mechanical time. J.A. Bernstein's 2012 article in *The Conradian* pairs Conrad with the philosophy of J.M.E. McTaggart, whose 1908 article "The Unreality of Time" argued that time is ideal rather than a physical fact of the universe. McTaggart demonstrated that a paradox exists between what he designates as the A and B series of time, corresponding respectively to the perspective of a fixed observer and an absolute series of events arranged for all (Bernstein 32–3). Bernstein concludes that Conrad "wrestles with the questions of temporality by conferring an uncertain status on his narrative," allowing "the reader to share…in the very dilemmas of

[17] F.R. Leavis famously faults the novel for being "marred" by such "adjectival insistence"(174, 177). Conrad's "adjectival and worse than supererogatory insistence on 'unspeakable rights', 'unspeakable secrets', 'monstrous passions'" is, in Leavis's view, "merely an emotional insistence on the presence of what he can't produce" (179, 180).

chronologic uncertainty—a theme that very much reflects the debates of Conrad's day" (Bernstein 44). Conrad's *The Secret Agent* is the focus of the Conrad portion of Bernstein's discussion; the novel is perhaps Conrad's most explicit in its attention to time and politics, as the plot concerns an attempt to blow up the Greenwich Observatory. John G. Peters's article "Joseph Conrad's 'Sudden Holes' in Time: The Epistemology of Temporality" broadens the discussions of Conrad and time beyond *The Secret Agent,* surveying Conrad's oeuvre and arguing that his characters in general "experience difficulties precisely when they forget or fail to realize that mechanical time is merely a convenience, not an absolute measurement of time" (436). In all of these accounts, the narrative time and temporality evoked in Conrad's work is opposed to mathematical or physical time.[18]

Heart of Darkness expresses a temporality of waiting that blurs such strict distinctions between human-centered and mathematical, linear time. As we will see, waiting is Marlow's dominant temporal experience in the interior of Africa. In their descriptions of waiting, Conrad's characters refer implicitly to a sense of time passing or moving forward independently of their own temporal experiences, but the frequent references to waiting emphasize the effect of time on the characters and the subsequent shaping of their conceptualizations of the past and future in an uncertain and ominous present. Throughout Marlow's framed narrative, his experience as well as the experiences of his African others in the Congo are described in terms of waiting, and punctuated by

[18] This opposition in Conrad scholarship can be traced back to J. M. Kertzer's 1979 "Joseph Conrad and the Metaphysics of Time," which traces a temporal spectrum in Conrad's work that ranges from, "on the one hand, the temporal, coherent, full, and meaningful; and on the hand, the timeless, empty, and archaic" (316).

that temporality. The text's use of what Ian Watt famously called "delayed decoding" in Marlow's storytelling—combining "the forward temporal progression of the mind, as it receives messages from the outside world, with the much slower reflexive process of making out their meaning" (Watt 175)—in effect reproduces for the reader the sensations of waiting Marlow experienced in the Congo.

The association of the center of Africa with the temporality of waiting begins subtly, in a waiting-room within the Company offices. Two women knitting black wool greet Marlow before he is ushered into the waiting-room, whose wall is decorated with the colonial map of Africa. Here, while waiting for his examination, he remarks that he will travel to the yellow area, "Dead in the center," where the Congo river slithered "fascinating—deadly—like a snake" (106). Marlow's examination takes all of forty-five seconds, and again Marlow is escorted back into the same waiting-room, where he begins "to feel slightly uneasy" and blames "something ominous in the atmosphere" (106). In the midst of this apprehension, Marlow's gaze returns to the knitting women, whom he imagines to be "guarding the door of Darkness" (107). Marlow perceives the women as guarding both the door of darkness and the door to the waiting-room. The waiting-room, whose temporality is implied by its name, functions as a mediating space between lightness and darkness, and Marlow's unemployment and enlistment in the Company. Marlow passes through the waiting-room twice, on his way in as well as out of the interior Company office, and it is only after he has signed the papers that the waiting-room takes on an ominous and fateful aura. The open-endedness of waiting on the first pass through the room is replaced by a sense of inescapable doom encapsulated in the motto "*Morituri te salutant*": those who are about to die salute you (107).

Throughout the trip up the Congo River, Marlow continues to associate waiting with frustration and hopelessness. Marlow's arrival at the Central station and encounter with the brick-maker serves as a representative scene, linking waiting with futile absurdity. Marlow relates:

> The business entrusted to this fellow was the making of bricks—so I had been informed; but there wasn't a fragment of a brick anywhere in the station, and he had been there more than a year—waiting. It seems he could not make bricks without something, I don't know what—straw maybe. […] However, they were all waiting—all the sixteen or twenty pilgrims of them—for something; and upon my word it did not seem an uncongenial occupation, from the way they took it, though the only thing that ever came to them was disease—as far as I could see. (121)

Here, waiting is the operational temporality in the interior; the brick-maker stands in for the experience of the employees generally, who are united in their waiting. With over a year passing without a sign that the straw will be delivered, the waiting has become indeterminate and unrelenting. Instead of signaling a future-oriented temporality, waiting here emphasizes an unending present. Marlow indicates that the waiting is more empty habit than genuine hope, observing that instead of the delivery of straw, the only surety is disease.

Waiting, from Marlow's point of view, is also a potentially dangerous condition for Europeans traveling through the Congo. Just eight miles from Kurtz's inner station, Marlow and his crew are forced to wait for a debilitating fog to lift (137). The men pass the night in anxious concern that the boat, now vulnerable in the fog, will be attacked.

When the fog does lift and the steamer presses on, Marlow's crew is attacked with arrows. An end to waiting does not guarantee increased security and stability either, as Company employees are also thwarted in their impatient efforts. Marlow, for example, is forced to wait months for rivets in order to repair the steamer at the central station, but his waiting is a direct result of the Company manager's impatience. After revealing that the steamer had sunk two days prior, the manager explains that Marlow "had been very long on the road. He could not wait. Had to start without me. The up-river stations had to be relieved. There had been so many delays already that he did not know who was dead and who was alive, and how they got on—and so on, and so on" (119). Waiting, structured as a series of delays, is exacerbated by the European Company employees who succumb to their impatience. Later, the Company condemns Kurtz's destructive and violent methods for their impatience. The manager concludes, "But there is no disguising the fact, Mr. Kurtz has done more harm than good to the Company. He did not see the time was not ripe for vigorous action. Cautiously, cautiously—that's my principle. We must be cautious yet. The district is closed to us for a time" (161-2). Marlow then assesses, "My hour of favour was over; I found myself lumped along with Kurtz as a partisan of methods for which the time was not ripe […]" (162).

The Company's sense of its own strategies rests on a sense of the not-yet that is indebted to, rather than in contention with, the colonial regimes of time described above. Whereas in some contexts, as Chakrabarty's argument in *Provincializing Europe* demonstrates, the not-yet is used as an historical narrative strategy to postpone rights for colonized subjects, here the waiting serves the Company's interests by championing patience. The Company believes it can embrace patient and cautious action because its

eventual domination of the district is inevitable and all-but guaranteed by the narratives of progress, development, and civilization that undergird colonial time. At the same time, Marlow's frustration with the series of delays that occurs on the trip belies the Company's position on patience. The seemingly contradictory ways that waiting is evoked throughout the narrative suggests contradictions at the heart of empire and colonial regimes of time.

Thus, even as colonial regimes of time insist on inevitable forward movement and linear chronology, they are belied by the delays and disruptions. The homogenizing and universalizing tendencies characteristic of colonial time regimes are undercut by the differences, drags, and delays that they seek to subsume. Many of the images that evoke this forward march of progressive time carry a double valence in *Heart of Darkness*. For example, the decrepit and abandoned boiler and railway truck that Marlow observes at the outer station, signs of European technological prowess, suggest the misguided vanity of imperialist narrative of progress. But on the other hand, these images might also suggest, for other readers, Africa's primitivism and unsuitability for the "gifts" of European civilization. The ambiguity of the text's language and its complicated form and frame narrative have encouraged vigorous debate in literary scholarship, providing support for a variety of stances on the novel's representation of Africa. Patrick Brantlinger's 1985 article took a moderate approach, arguing that the novel "offers a powerful critique of at least certain manifestations of imperialism and racism, at the same time that it presents that critique in ways which can only be characterized as both imperialist and racist" (364). To borrow Brantlinger's language, my reading of time in *Heart of Darkness* is that the novel forwards a critique of the narratives of time that

underwrite European imperialism, but that this very critique evokes, in some ways, colonial regimes of time.

Waiting engages with this doubling, working alternatingly between trafficking in colonial regimes of time that render Africans temporally removed from their European counterparts, and gesturing toward alternative temporalities that expose the contradictions and heterogeneities inherent in colonial constructions of time. The examination of the temporal dimensions of waiting in the text revive the novel's complicated relationship with colonial regimes of time. The text suggests that waiting is an alternative modality that inscribes these temporal tensions, resisting the aspiring total dominance of colonial regimes of time. The resistive potential of waiting surfaces in Marlow's remarks about the colonial enterprise in the Congo. After discovering that his steamer is sunk at the Central station, Marlow ascribes "waiting" to the environment itself:

> 'All this talk seemed to be so futile. […] and then I saw this station, these men strolling aimlessly about in the sunshine of the yard. […] And outside, the silent wilderness surrounding this cleared speck on the earth struck me as something great and invincible, like evil or truth, waiting patiently for the passing away of this fantastic invasion. […] It had been hopeless from the very first.' (23)

Several elements are noteworthy here. First, the passage exemplifies a trend that continues throughout *Heart of Darkness*, associating waiting with futility, at least from Marlow's European perspective. Significantly, however, the language of the passage allows for an alternative reading of waiting as *resistance*, or a resistive modality for colonial Others just beyond the limits of Marlow's comprehension and understanding.

With a *longue durée* or alternative view of history, the colonial episode appears as a "fantastic invasion" which too might pass—waiting is a mode of survival, where the Congo and its people may be poised for an opportunity to transform waiting into action, or a perspective informed by deep time, waiting to outlive this epoch.

The significance of this passage is underscored by the repetition of "fantastic invasion" two subsequent times in the text. The second occurrence concludes the episode where Marlow eavesdrops on the nephew and uncle at the Central station. The two discuss the series of delays in reaching Kurtz, and exhibit beliefs in line with the Company's alleged civilizing mission: "'Each station should be like a beacon on the road towards better things, a centre for trade of course, but also for humanizing, improving, instructing'" (130). The uncle assures his nephew of his inevitable promotion with a sweeping gesture of his hand toward the wilderness and an admonition to "'trust to this—I say, trust to this'" (131). Despite their conviction, Marlow frames their conversation with the observation, "The high stillness confronted these two fantastic figures with its ominous patience, waiting for the passing away of a fantastic invasion'" (131). The third repetition occurs after Marlow has discerned that the round knobs on sticks outside Kurtz's hut are not ornaments, but rather human heads on sticks serving as symbols of power, madness, and despotism. Marlow breaks narrative chronology and draws from conclusions reached after his return to Europe, explaining that Kurtz's methods were a result of the wilderness, which "'had found him out early, and had taken on him a terrible vengeance for the fantastic invasion'" (157). A repetition of the phrase "fantastic invasion" occurs once in each of *Heart of Darkness*'s three parts, and the idea of waiting transitions from passive observance and perseverance to active assault on Kurtz's

sensibilities. The association with waiting drops out of the third occurrence, when the wilderness is most assertive and combative.

Waiting is a way that Marlow registers both the frustrations of colonial incursion into the Congo—waiting for rivets, for straw to make bricks, for "something" unnamed, for repairs to be completed—*and* the encounter with colonial Others. Conrad's novel is a model of how waiting can function in fictional narratives to express temporal tensions between colonial discourses and alternative modalities of time. *Heart of Darkness* is a landmark text for emerging critiques of colonial and imperial exploitation at the turn of the twentieth century, and the divide among scholars of the work on the issue of its racism and representation of the Congo ensures that the novel is continually revisited within postcolonial studies in general. While the representation of Africans may traffic in developmentalist and evolutionary time centered in Europe, Conrad's deliberate obscuring of linear time in the novel has political import. Although there is no "outside" to European time here, waiting registers that time regime's contradictions, paradoxes, and potential alternative conceptualizations beyond Marlow's comprehension.

Waiting for "Now": Chapter Summaries

The rest of this study takes up the themes established in *Heart of Darkness* and examines the temporal dimensions of waiting in postcolonial fiction, assessing the way that waiting interacts with the rhetoric of anticolonial nationalist movements, colonial discourses of idleness, widespread disillusionment after independence, and the temporalities of reconciliation undergirding Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. The temporal dimensions of waiting explored in this study track how waiting extends into the postcolonial era, is critiqued for its oppressive tendencies, and is reconfigured in response

and resistance to social, political, and economic disenfranchisement. Waiting, as it manifests in postcolonial fiction, evinces what Achille Mbembe calls the "time of entanglement": "an interlocking of presents, pasts, and futures that retain their depths of other presents, pasts, and futures," constituted by "disturbances […] not necessarily resulting in chaos and anarchy," and "harbor[ing] the possibility of a variety of trajectories neither convergent nor divergent but interlocked, paradoxical" (16). Entanglement, moreover, usefully "offers an alternative to historical linearity that might read the 'post' in 'postcolonial' as simply 'after,'" because the concept encapsulates "the heterogeneous forms of modernity that emerge vividly in postcolonial sites through the ongoing, uneven articulation of neoliberal, nationalist logics in conjunctions with differentiated cultural ones" (Moore 33).

The novels I have selected also implicitly triangulate time and history with fictional narrative practices. I have chosen novels as my archive because I have found, following Edward Said, the novel to be "immensely important in the formation of imperial attitudes, references, and experiences" (*Culture* xii). The novel too has occupied a privileged space in relation to the imagination of nations and communities; in different ways, both the newspaper and the novel, Benedict Anderson famously argues, "provided the technical means for 're-presenting' the kind of imagined community that is the nation" (24). Though Anderson is primarily concerned with the way the novel form consolidated communities through a sense of simultaneity and horizontal comradeship, the postcolonial novels discussed in the following chapters illuminate the corollary power to exclude. Given, too, that the "birth of the novel coincided with the European colonial project," and that I aim to illuminate the temporal dimensions of waiting across the

colonial and postcolonial divide, postcolonial novels are the most appropriate form to begin this examination (Azim 30). I anticipate that further research on other forms, with their own characteristic narrative strategies—short stories, poems, film, drama—could be fruitfully explored through the analytic of "waiting" as well.

By pulling together texts from diverse times and places, I contend that texts may speak from their particular histories and locations, but they also speak to the larger world. The implications of tracking waiting in subsequent postcolonial novels are threefold. First, this thematic concept pushes back on dominant narratives of anticolonial nationalism—movements that are characterized by "refusals to wait"—by opening up alternative and competing temporalities for both the characters and the nation they inhabit. Second, the methodology of pairing novels from different geographical locations and authors reveals unexpected correspondences across postcolonial novels through their shared investments in waiting as a temporal mode, yet their contrasts underscore the ways that specific historical and cultural contexts condition the experience of waiting. These contrasts yield a finer understanding of waiting in postcolonial fiction, its dimensions, and implications. Finally, examining waiting as it is manifested in these novels illuminates the contradictory temporalities that underlie narratives of progress, modernization, and development. Contrary to the widespread association of waiting with passivity or powerlessness, waiting can become an active strategy of resistance in the face of pressures to develop and to modernize in the West's image.

Chapter 1 pairs two novels with intertextual relationships to *Heart of Darkness*: V.S. Naipaul's 1979 *A Bend in the River* and Nadine Gordimer's 1981 *July's People*, and argues that these authors' constructions of "waiting rooms of history" in the interior of

Africa are designed to achieve very different ends. I reevaluate the "waiting rooms of history" model and its relationship to independence by drawing on the work of Uday Mehta. I then turn to Naipaul's fiction, and assess his rendering of the eponymous bend in the river as a waiting room for Salim and other African citizens of Indian descent where, notwithstanding political independence, "not yet" will never become "now." With reference to Vincent Crapanzano's *Waiting: The Whites of South Africa*, I conclude that Gordimer's novel depicts a different kind of "waiting room," where the spatiotemporal experience of moving to July's Village disrupts Maureen's relationship to time and its lived patterns. The temporal modality of waiting encourages Maureen to reevaluate herself in relation to others (her own family, as well as July's), and her final refusal to wait embraces the uncertainty of her position in the new dispensation to come.

Chapter 2 analyzes the Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier's 1949 novel depicting the Haitian Revolution, *The Kingdom of This World*, and argues for the importance of maroons to the narrative's theme and structure. Maroons were escaped slaves who fled to the hills, and I argue the maroon's separateness or withdrawal, the insistence on spatial difference, produces a sense of time and history antagonistic to the colonial state. I then read South African author J.M. Coetzee's 1983 novel *Life & Times of Michael K* through the lens of marronage, identifying idleness as a strategy of resistive waiting. The lens of marronage permits a reading their protagonists' flight, labor, and "idleness" as newly legible dimensions of resistive waiting.

Chapter 3 studies the temporal dimensions of waiting in postcolonial novels of disillusionment. Drawing on the concept of timescapes as a way to capture the interplay between different temporalities and temporal modes in the text, I read Ayi Kwei Armah's

1970 novel *Fragments* and Anita Desai's 1963 novel *Cry, the Peacock* for their representations of waiting in relation to patience and urgency. While any explicit discussion of gender has been absent from timescape scholarship, the novels themselves emphasize their imbrication—especially in regard to representing patience and urgency—which have been traditionally coded as feminine and masculine respectively. The reinscription of masculine national identity in these postcolonial settings after independence creates additional tensions for the women in the novels, and their embodied dramatizations of patience and urgency disrupt the received narrative of disillusionment and its attendant, underlying association of waiting with passivity and femininity.

Chapter 4 examines Njabulo Ndebele's 2003 *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* and Ishmael Beah's 2014 *Radiance of Tomorrow* in order to assess what I call "strategic waiting" as a temporal modality that can be productively inhabited in service of reconciliation. The novels, set in South Africa and Sierra Leone respectively, were published after Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) in both countries reported their findings. Although neither novel suggests that waiting should be inhabited indefinitely, both depict important community-building work being accomplished while characters wait. Ndebele's novel is structured like a waiting room, where ordinary women discuss their personal histories of waiting until they are ready to embark together on a journey out of the unspecified present moment and into the future. Likewise, the elders of *Radiance of Tomorrow* wait as they rebuild, and waiting produces time to heal even as it facilitates reconciliation through small, deliberate silences.

Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow* extends the study of waiting and postcolonial fiction to the twenty-first century and the challenges that confront a world that is still

decolonizing. The dissertation's conclusion reflects on the significance of waiting in the post-9/11 world, such as in the rhetoric of preemptive military strikes that frame national security in terms of refusing to wait. Those in power have certainly leveraged waiting as a temporality of oppression and deferral, but as I will demonstrate throughout this study, waiting can also be actively engaged to resist and disrupt the imperatives of colonial regimes of time. By arguing for the centrality of waiting to the experience of postcoloniality, this dissertation challenges the dominant narrative of the twentieth century as a time only of acceleration. Waiting, I argue, is not only implied in the discourses of colonial administration and anticolonial nationalisms, but also deployed in strategic and political expressions of resistance and remains central to the formation of geopolitical realities.

The dimensions of waiting elucidated in my study reinvigorate waiting as a modality that can be at turns debilitating, depressing, strategic, calculating, and meditative. To read waiting in fiction demands that we pause and consider its dialogue with colonial and postcolonial discourse alike. Waiting recurs in postcolonial fiction from the height of imperialism to the present moment, and each appearance is inflected by particular historical moments and geographical locations. My intention is not to valorize waiting, nor to celebrate it prescriptively as a practice. Whether choosing to wait or being forced to wait, "waiting" for a postcolonial subject is nevertheless a political position. The title of this dissertation plays with the tensions of waiting's temporal dimensions, especially in the context of postcolonial contestations over time, power, and self-determination. On the one hand, given the appearance of belatedness or deferral, especially with regard to under- or unemployment in the global economy, waiting

subjects are still waiting for "now"—that moment when preoccupations with an imagined future become a reality in the present. On the other hand, waiting for now also captures the strategic use of waiting as a temporal modality inhabited for the *time being*, and the dimensions of being in the midst of time; that is, a sense of waiting for now, but not for always.

CHAPTER 1

THE WAITING ROOMS OF V.S. NAIPAUL AND NADINE GORDIMER

> "As a response to the temporizing and the various conditionalities with which empires typically opposed the demand for national freedom, it is ironic that newly independent nations, such as India, should themselves have made the assertion of freedom conditional on achievements which could at best only be prospective. […] the terms in which new states conceived of freedom, once independence was secured, made its affirmation a most capacious *project* and a *promissory note* that was issued not just to all members of the nation itself, but to the world at large. […] The nation and its freedom, following independence, was a project for the future." –Uday Mehta, "Indian Constitutionalism: The Articulation of a Political Vision"

After signing his enlistment papers with the Company, Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* exits the waiting room with a sense of ominous foreboding—at least, that is how he recollects the event as part of the larger narrative of his Congo journey, recounted as he reclines on a boat on the Thames river. From that point forward, the narrative proceeds inexorably toward Marlow's encounter with Kurtz in the interior of the "Dark Continent," where time seems to move backward to the "prehistoric ages." It is not just the African bush and environment that contribute to Marlow's impression, but also his appraisal of the Africans themselves, which Conrad marks in Marlow's speech parenthetically: "(I don't think a single one of them had any clear idea of time, as we at the end of countless ages have. They still belonged to the beginnings of time—had no inherited experience to teach them, as it were) […]" (139). While Conrad, through Marlow and the frame narrator, does not draw out the implications of this timelessness with respect to waiting, throughout *Heart of Darkness*, Marlow's anxious waiting

contrasts sharply with his African others. Without a "clear idea of time," without a sense of the present retreating into the past, and without a sense of progression into the future, the Africans appear not to experience waiting the way that Marlow does. As Chinua Achebe pointed out in 1976, in a reading of *Heart of Darkness* that continues to influence scholarship on the text today, this depiction "was and is the dominant image of Africa in the Western imagination and Conrad merely brought the peculiar gifts of his own mind to bear on it" ("Image" 15).

With regard to this depiction of Africa and Africans, writers of fiction from around the world have subsequently engaged with Conrad's legacy and influence in a myriad of productive and revealing ways.[19] This chapter pairs two novels with intertextual relationships to *Heart of Darkness*: V.S. Naipaul's 1979 *A Bend in the River* and Nadine Gordimer's 1981 *July's People*.[20] In addition to their intertextual triangulation with *Heart of Darkness*, the novels share the striking final image of their protagonists escaping existences of anxious waiting for imminent revolutions or civil wars to commence. These refusals to wait, however, are imbued with diametrically opposed orientations toward the future.

Subsequent chapters will analyze the ways that the temporality of waiting has intersected with strategies of resistance and idleness, disillusionment and postcolonial

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[19] Works of fiction that have explicitly responded to *Heart of Darkness* include Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Michelle Cliff's *Into the Interior*, al-Tayyib Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, and Ata Ama Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy* among others.

[20] While comparisons to *Heart of Darkness* have become commonplace in Naipaul scholarship, only Byron Caminero-Santangelo's *African Fiction and Joseph Conrad: Reading Postcolonial Intertextuality* explicitly links *July's People* to Conrad's fiction. Caminero-Santangelo contends that *July's People* illuminates "the disruptive potential in colonial discourse," and notes connections between the move from suburban Johannesburg to the interior South African bush in Gordimer's work and Marlow's journey down the Congo River, in both cases forcing their focalizing characters to reassess assumptions grounded in colonial structures of power (27, 90).

timescapes, and the temporalities of waiting associated with Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. This chapter advances a claim that will be a touchstone throughout the dissertation: that the temporality of waiting and the "waiting room" model of historicism persisted even as formal declarations of independence occurred across the globe, or as struggles against colonial or white minority rule intensified. The arguments in this chapter focus on the waiting room model of history, as described by Dipesh Chakrabarty, and assess the ways the two fictional works invite renewed engagement with his conceptual framework. Both novels literalize the spatiotemporal metaphor of history's waiting room through their characters' movements to specific locations tied to the temporal experience of waiting, where characters reflect on their understandings of history, time, and their role in the emerging future. Whether looking back on independence, as Naipaul's novel does, or imagining the moment of imminent revolutionary change, as in Gordimer's novel, both narratives ruminate on the significance and possibilities of political transition in African countries in the postcolonial period.

In the following section, I reevaluate the waiting rooms of history model and its relationship to independence by drawing on the work of Uday Mehta. I then turn to Naipaul's fiction, and discuss his rendering of the eponymous bend in the river as waiting room for Salim and other African citizens of Indian descent, before examining Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*. This chapter argues that these authors' constructions of "waiting rooms of history" in the interior of Africa are designed to achieve very different ends; for Naipaul, the waiting room of history is both the default and requisite temporal model for the formerly colonized Africans of the unnamed country in *A Bend in the*

River. For Gordimer's Maureen, her perception of July's village as a kind of waiting room pushes her to confront the apartheid regimes of temporality that have structured the economic, social, and political relationships between her family and July's. Her refusal to wait any longer signifies a rejection of that apartheid temporality, whereas Salim's refusal to wait in *A Bend in the River* ultimately signifies acquiescence to the waiting rooms of history, to which certain occupants of the globalized, postcolonial world will always be relegated. Naipaul's nihilism, as so many critics have characterized his pessimism, is a product of taking a revolutionary "refusal to wait" and inverting its revolutionary potential. Because the precolonial lies in wait to reclaim the present in *A Bend in the River*, the future is already foreclosed. Regardless of the events of the colonial period and independence decades, his narrative suggests, the formerly colonized are still waiting, and always will be.

Projects and Promissory Notes: Continuities of Waiting

Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* usefully chronicles the imbrication of historicism and colonialism, noting that historicism "posited historical time as a measure of the cultural distance (at least in institutional development) that was assumed to exist between the West and the non-West. In the colonies, it legitimated the idea of civilization" (*Provincializing* 7). The introduction to this dissertation summarized the way this model of history and political modernity encouraged a view, at least from the colonizing powers' perspectives, that colonized peoples were not yet ready for self-rule and political independence (8). Although Chakrabarty's area of interest is primarily India, he notes that this historicist perspective "consigned Indians, Africans, and other 'rude'

nations to an imaginary waiting room of history. In doing so, it converted history itself into a version of this waiting room" (8). Europe was destined to "arrive earlier" than its colonized counterparts, but ultimately the path to modernity was expected to be the same. The "arrival" of colonial others into European modernity, however, was never guaranteed; indeed, colonial regimes of time tended to postpone this potential future indefinitely. Historicism's powerful narrative also gave anticolonial nationalist movements their shape, as anticolonial nationalist movements insisted on the "now" (rather than the delay tactics of "not yet"). Chakrabarty observes that nationalist struggles in India, for example, asserted that the peasant was already "a full participant in the political life of the nation," meeting the requirements of citizenship "long before he or she could be formally educated into the doctrinal or conceptual aspects of citizenship" (10). While at first blush this nationalist claim appears to trouble the teleological, stagist progression of time and history underpinning the "waiting room of history model" (and indeed Chakrabarty cites this strategy as a "practical, if not theoretical, rejection" of historicism), this acceleration does not, in the end, undo historicism's temporal assumptions.

On this point, Uday Mehta's chapter "Indian Constitutionalisms: The Articulation of a Political Vision" is instructive. Mehta's chapter is included in a collection edited by Chakrabarty and others. In Mehta's view, countries such as India reinstated the "waiting room" of history after independence by "mak[ing] the assertion of freedom conditional on achievements [such as national unity, social uplift, and recognition] which could at best only be prospective" (Mehta 16–7). Here, independence and freedom are delinked, where freedom became "a most capricious *project* and a *promissory note*," effectively

deferring a complete realization of national freedom as a "project for the future" (Mehta 17). His analysis invites a reconsideration of the temporalities underpinning this conceptualization of Indian national independence. Mehta suggests that Indian independence "was marked not so much by metaphors of novelty and revolutionary rupture, but rather, by those of transference and continuity" (19). The reinstitutionalization of the waiting room model of history, I contend, fostered this temporal continuity, even as advocates for independence stressed acceleration and jumping ahead. In Meera Ashar's view, anticolonial nationalist movements in India "did not really challenge or reject the colonial 'not yet'; at least not in principle. Instead, they claimed their freedom as a compensation for the years of tyranny and domination during colonization" (261). Mehta references Chakrabarty's waiting rooms explicitly, and suggests that the nationalist tendency was to "agree with the idea and logic of the argument but to disagree with particulars of its application" (25). Put another way, some advocates for Indian independence insisted that the requisite time had *already passed*, not that the need to wait itself was unnecessary.

What, then, would characterize a revolutionary temporality, one that would more directly reject this waiting room model? Drawing from Mehta, I suggest that revolutionary temporalities involve "radical disjunction and rupture with the past" (21). For Mehta, India's revolutionary moment occurred when the constitution was ratified, because ratification "ruptures the particular relationship with time and history. […] the Indian constitution does not so much emerge from history as it emerges in opposition to history and with a firm view of the future" (24). As the following sections will elaborate, Naipaul's novel does approach history and historical time ambivalently, but stops short of

affirming a revolutionary temporality that could dismantle the waiting room of history model.[21] In contrast, Gordimer's novel reworks the concepts of both history and time, therein affirming the temporal disjunction necessary for revolutionary change.

Conrad's Heir: Naipaul's African Fiction

When the Swedish Academy awarded Naipaul the 2001 Nobel Prize in Literature, the announcement heralded Naipaul as "Conrad's heir"—a comparison proudly printed on the back cover of the Vintage International edition of *A Bend in the River*, and one courted by Naipaul in his fiction and nonfiction alike. In "Conrad's Darkness and Mine"—originally published in the *New York Review of Books* in 1974, and reprinted in *Literary Occasions: Essays* in 2003—Naipaul reflects on parallels between Conrad's world and his own. In an oft-quoted remark, Naipaul proclaims that Conrad, "sixty years before, in a time of a great peace—had been everywhere before me. […] Offering […] a vision of the world's half-made societies as places which continuously made and unmade themselves, where there was no goal […]" (*Literary* 170). Naipaul elaborates this affinity with Conrad and his world, noting that "Conrad's value to me is that he is someone who sixty to seventy years ago meditated on my world, a world I recognize today" (173). Of course, between Conrad's era and Naipaul's own, significant changes occurred within Africa as well as across the globe, including several World Wars, the onset of the Cold

[21] In his review of Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe*, writer Amit Chaudhuri allots two paragraphs to suggesting a link between Naipaul and this historical model. He writes, "The non-West—the waiting room—is therefore doomed either never to be quite modern, to be, in Naipaul's phrase, 'half-made'; or to possess only a semblance of modernity." He continues, with reference to *The Mimic Men*, *A Bend in the River*, and *In a Free State*, to assert that Naipaul "is a writer who seems to have subscribed quite deeply to the sort of historicism that Chakrabarty describes. […] In fiction, the greatest explorers of this Millian terrain have been Naipaul and Naipaul's master, Conrad."

War, and decolonization and national independence movements. When Naipaul begins to set his fiction in Africa in the 1970s, then, he not only ignores the radical aspects of Conrad's formulation of time, but also glosses over the entire independence period when he draws on this temporal framework of changelessness, circular creation and destruction.

Again, like Conrad, Naipaul's African fiction took the form of short stories as well as longer works, fiction and nonfiction, and even a *Congo Diary*.[22] Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* were informed by their authors' first-hand observations, enumerated to differing degrees in their diaries. Moreover, both authors used short stories to explore the themes that would be developed later in their longer fiction. "An Outpost of Progress," the forerunner to *Heart of Darkness*, is in Naipaul's view the "finest thing Conrad wrote" ("Conrad's" 169). Conrad wrote "An Outpost of Progress" in 1897, two years before *Heart of Darkness*, and depicts the experience of two Belgians, Kayerts and Carlier (the similarities between "Kayerts" and "Kurtz" of *Heart of Darkness* are striking), who are stationed in the center of Africa to conduct ivory trading. With their African assistant Makola, they agree to trade slaves for ivory. The story concludes with Kayerts shooting Carlier after a dispute over sugar, and then hanging himself as the delayed Company steamer arrives. Like Kurtz, Kayerts experiences moral and mental deterioration at his outpost, and in both texts faith in "progress" is troubled in the colonial context. Just as "An Outpost of Progress" contained themes reworked and enlarged in *Heart of Darkness*, "[m]any of the features of *A Bend in the River*'s Africa

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[22] Joseph Conrad's Congo diary was published posthumously in 1926 by Richard Curle. Naipaul's own *A Congo Diary* was published in 1980, a year after his novel *A Bend in the River*.

are prefigured by *In a Free State*" (Hayward 193).[23] The relationship between time and belonging is just one of the prominent features shared by these representatives of Naipaul's African fiction.

Naipaul's 1971 "In a Free State" and 1979 *A Bend in the River* bookend the 1970s, and share a vision, through the eyes of outsiders, of postcolonial African countries fractured by the capricious desires of dictators. "In a Free State," the longest of the four pieces collected in the volume of the same name, follows Bobby and Linda as they travel from the capital city of an unnamed country inward, where Bobby is eventually beaten at a checkpoint by army soldiers. The encounter is initiated with Bobby's question about curfew, pointing to his watch. The soldier grasps Bobby's wrist and asks, "'You give me?'" (*Free* 237). Bobby declines and moves to leave, but at the call "Boy!" resigns himself to "what was going to happen." The soldiers move in to punch his face and tear his clothing, and while he initially resists, he ultimately submits to the punishment. Upon returning to the car, Linda remarks emptily, "Your watch is broken" (241). This is the second time Bobby's watch has been "broken" within the narrative; the first occasion is referenced earlier in the car ride, when he recalls the failed treatment to "cure" his homosexuality. After accidentally stepping on his watch, he decided not to fix it until he was cured. He confides to Linda, "'Walking around with a smashed watch. […] how

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[23] The scholarship on Naipaul's relationship to Conrad is rich and well-established. Roger Berger notes that the "sense of an African personality" in *A Bend in the River* is "borrowed from Joseph Conrad" (147). Kenneth Harlow makes an important distinction between the texts' representation of Africans, noting that while both Conrad and Naipaul fall short of representing Africans as people with "human consciousness," Naipaul is "more insidious" by nevertheless "imput[ing] barbarous impulses to them" (332). Although Naipaul certainly employs Conradian imagery (the text is replete with references to darkness and light, as well as specific images like Father Huismans's head on a stake), attempts to draw one-to-one correspondences between characters in *A Bend in the River* and their counterparts in *Heart of Darkness* are misguided. As Bruce King detects, Naipaul "transforms characters and details from Conrad's novel in significant ways, dividing them between characters" (126). See also Lynda Prescott's "Past and Present Darkness: Sources for V.S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*."

quickly you can adapt to having your whole life written off. At first I used to say, "I'm going to get better next week." Then it was next month. Then it was next year'" (162). The echoes of the broken watch connect the attempt to cure Bobby's homosexuality to his attempt to serve the new government; neither the treatment nor the offering of service is successful, and his humility in serving the postcolonial country is met with his humiliation. Bobby is no longer able to measure the movement of time, which destroys his confidence in time moving forward altogether as well as his aspiration for the future.

Several developments in the narrative of "In a Free State" are important for the ways Naipaul will return to them in *A Bend in the River*. First, both texts use "outsiders" as dominant focalizing perspectives. A homosexual Englishman, Bobby is doubly displaced, from his native England as well as from the unnamed former colony where the narrative's action is set, whereas Salim in *A Bend in the River* feels increasingly isolated by his Indian lineage as enthusiasm for Black nationalism increases in the country. Additionally, the image of the broken watch in "In a Free State" suggests that the forward march of time is suspended. The narrative mourns the inapplicability of mathematical time to measure the passing of moments, and presents no other mechanism or perspective to offer an alternative symbol to affirm a future—for Bobby, or for the Africans now in charge. Likewise, *A Bend in the River* presents a bleak picture for the future of independent African nations. As Naipaul infamously proclaimed in an interview with Elizabeth Hardwick, prompted by the subject of *A Bend in the River*, "Africa has no future" (Jussawalla 47). Naipaul's novella and his novel both depict their protagonists faced with no choice but to escape African locales, where time is endlessly circular and violence hopelessly repetitive.

This view of African temporalities is informed by Naipaul's sympathies with colonial regimes of time, which share Western historicism's teleological assumption that every society ought to tend toward modern nation-states modeled in the West's image. In Naipaul's fiction, the inability to replicate this model reflects poorly on the countries and their inhabitants rather than calling into question the model itself. With reference to Naipaul's entire oeuvre, Fawzia Mustafa finds that Naipaul's "implication within colonialist discursive practice" is partly due to his "obsessive privileging of the Word and Book and the 'coherence' and 'order' leading to 'knowledge' they represent" (27). Naipaul's rendering of time and history in relation to the African interior in *A Bend in the River* is compatible with the characteristics of colonialist discursive practice that Mustafa identifies; Naipaul underscores differences between his ethnically Indian protagonist Salim and his black African neighbors in terms of the latter's association with chaos, irrationality, inscrutability, and timelessness. Indeed, Mustafa identifies echoes of Hegel in *A Bend in the River*'s endorsement of trampling the past, citing Hegel's proclamation that "'Africa proper, as far as History goes back, has remained […] shut up […] the land of childhood, which lying beyond the day of self-conscious history, is enveloped in the dark mantle of Night'" (Hegel qtd. in Mustafa 148).

The opening pages of *A Bend in the River* establish the novel's complicated relationship to Western historical time, which anchors Salim's sense of his family's history on the continent. At the same time, Naipaul introduces the *longue durée* history of Arab and European interactions to frame Salim's historical consciousness. As Bruce King points out, this history decenters European colonialism, in a way, by situating the continent within "a long history of contacts with the outside world" (121). This historical

context is missing from Conrad's portrayal of Africa in *Heart of Darkness*; the longer historical perspective is reserved only for England, which is contextualized in a history of barbarity and conquest stretching from Roman times to Marlow's contemporary, turn-of-the-century moment. Where Conrad limits his focus to Europe's interactions with its southern continental neighbor, Naipaul places the eastern coast of the continent at the center, at least initially, identifying it as "an Arab-Indian-Persian-Portuguese place, and we who lived there were really people of the Indian Ocean" (*Bend* 10).[24] This ostensible affirmation of Afro-Indian interculturation, however, is undercut by Salim's observation that the east coast was then "not truly African" (10). This pattern of essentialism continues throughout the novel; among Salim's observations is that black Africa is "True Africa" (10), Zabeth is a "good and direct businesswoman […] unusually for an African" (6), and that "there is a simple democracy about Africa: everyone is a villager" (48).

Salim's view of Africa as timeless and unchanging is consistent with his other generalized essentialisms about Africa and its inhabitants. "The world is what it is," Salim remarks twice (*Bend* 3, 15) in a tautology that, in the context of Salim's observations about Africa more generally, underscores Africa's fundamental characteristics, its propensity for chaos and disorder, which the novel then proceeds to depict. Naipaul's description of the "timeless ways of village and river" (*Bend* 36) is reminiscent of Conrad's Marlow likening his trip to "travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world" (*Heart* 131). As a location of timelessness, the bend in the river

[24] Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter, Naipaul's novel could be productively read through an Indian Ocean framework—an analytic of increasing prominence within global literature studies. See, for example, Ashraf Jamal's "Telling and Selling on the Indian Ocean Rim," which discusses Naipaul's novel *Half a Life* in relation to the Indian Ocean.

becomes increasingly associated with the temporality of waiting, and functions as a "waiting room"—not only for Salim, but as a microcosm intended to encapsulate the dynamics of an entire continent.[25] The shop that Salim buys at the bend in the river was originally owned by Nazruddin, a family friend who is admired for his instinct to pull his investments from African countries before political crises disrupt trade (23). After Salim's relocation, he is joined by his family's servant Ali, renamed Metty (from the French *métis*) by the locals in response to his mixed race ancestry. Other characters that converge at the bend in the river include Ferdinand, a trader's son who studies at the *lycée* and has the novel's final word on the future of their country; Indar, Salim's Indian childhood friend who goes to London for school and returns for a time to the country to teach; and Raymond, the "Big Man's white man" and historian who aborts his own attempts to write the country's history. While Salim is initially hopeful that he can start over in the town at the bend in the river, he is disappointed in the violence he sees as both recurrent and inevitable.

In this way, time is depicted differently than "In a Free State," but though time appears recurrent and circular in *A Bend in the River* rather than broken, both texts evince a future already foreclosed. Structurally, the novel is divided into four parts, beginning with "The Second Rebellion." The title implies the event of a first rebellion, and the fourth section, "Battle," gestures toward a continuation of the pattern of conflict. Salim explicitly characterizes the country in terms of endless conflict; when an uprising on the coast results in the murder of Arabs, he remarks, "But what had happened was not new.

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[25] This impression is underscored by Naipaul's excision of particular and specific African locations within the text (a practice Conrad also follows in *Heart of Darkness*), as well as creating the unnamed African country as an amalgam of Zaire, Uganda, and Trinidad (Weiss 167).

People who had grown feeble had been physically destroyed. That, in Africa, was not new; it was the oldest law of the land" (29). In the return to chaos and barbarism, Naipaul collapses the country's past and future in "a hopeless, repetitious circling or returning from the prehistoric bush to another bush, where there is no democracy, but only the rise and fall of Kurtz-like dictators" (Nakai 10). The futility that Bobby senses in "In a Free State" is here more directly mapped onto the African inhabitants, who are depicted as "agents of their own cyclical destruction….because they are locked into a hermetic system of self-destruction" (Nixon 92).

The novel represents this cyclical violence as inevitable, and so the period of relative peace that Salim enjoys in the town is a time of waiting, between one rebellion and the next. The eponymous bend in the river is described by Salim as a place of waiting: "I didn't see myself spending the rest of my days at that bend in the river, like Mahesh and the others […] I was waiting for some illumination to come to me, to guide me to the good place and the 'life' I was still waiting for" (95). Salim posits a better life beyond the bend in the river, suggesting both that a move away from the interior will be the only way to realize a good life, and that his perseverance there is motivated by a projection of future happiness elsewhere. Such is Salim's drive to fashion a better future that he "expresses no nostalgia" for the past, and "thinks he has jettisoned this decrepit order for an ethos of individual progress" (Krishnan 826). Salim waits in anticipation of a future that seems guaranteed by the rhetoric of individual progress and hard work, but this anticipation is already cast by the novel's opening as an unrealistic, and ultimately unrealizable future.

The narrative increasingly links Salim's waiting to despair because the temporality of cyclical violence disturbs his confidence in progress in Africa. The text's condemnation of Africa for the inability to nurture progress is significant; Salim's valuation of development and Western cultural values remains unshaken throughout the text, and his decision to leave the country at the end is the logical outcome of the twinned beliefs in Western progress and African devolution. Given the inherent, unharnessed rage and irrational violence Naipaul attributes to the Africans within *A Bend in the River*, Joseph Walunywa concludes that "the prevailing idea that underlies the book is the problematic notion that Africa has no hope in terms of its future economic development precisely because Africans are inherently incapable of resolving the crises that bedevil their environment" (4–5). Within this context, waiting takes on a contingent form; Salim is doomed to wait for the future he desires only to the extent that he remains at the bend in the river. The gap between the present and the future can only be bridged, Walunywa notes, by a spatial "relocation to globally powerful nations" (2). As we will see below, with respect to Indar's travels specifically, this relocation does not guarantee an escape from the temporality of aimless waiting. Nevertheless, it is here that we can see most clearly the text's formulation of the bend in the river as a waiting room, whose occupants include those inhabitants of the formerly colonized world who were not, and are still not yet, ready for independence.

As narrator and protagonist, Salim conveys this "not yet" following independence in two ways. One way is the commentary he provides on independence and its significance directly. Rather than representing a decisive, and affirmative break with colonial rule, independence, for Salim, is synonymous with "troubles." His arrival at the

bend in the river coincides with the de-escalation of post-independence violence. Finding other traders and foreigners who "had been there right through the troubles," Salim "waited with them. The peace held. People began coming back to the town…. And slowly business started up again" (5). The new beginning is short-lived, however, and Naipaul depicts the African country going back to its "old ways" and drifting further back to a prehistoric, precolonial past. Salim laments,

> You could imagine the land being made part of the present: that was how the Big Man put it later, offering us a vision of a two-hundred mile 'industrial park' along the river. […] In daylight, though, you could believe in that vision of the future. You could imagine the land being made ordinary, fit for men like yourself, as small parts of it had been made ordinary for a short while before independence—the very parts that were now in ruins. (8-9)

Drawing on *Heart of Darkness*'s tropes of darkness and light, Naipaul here contends that the lightness of colonial rule is finally extinguished after independence. The old colonial town lies in ruins, formulating the colonial period as an irregularity in a longer African history.

The second way that Naipaul formulates the bend in the river as another "waiting room of history" after political independence is through the introduction of characters with explicit ties to Western historical traditions. These characters, which include Father Huismans as well as the academic historian Raymond, are both rejected by their local African communities. Their associations with waiting and history contribute to the narrative's overall rendering of spatial distance between Europe and Africa into temporal

distance, and suggest that it is impossible to envision a future in Africa any different from the cycles of violence Salim identifies as constituting its past. While Peggy Nightingale views these characters as evidence that Naipaul "seems close to recanting his faith in the study of history" (210), I contend that his commentary here directly targets Africa, Africans, and African history, creating distinctions from Europe, Europeans, and European history. This binary is ultimately employed to underscore Salim's alienation as an Indian-African, and the experiences of other Indian-Africans abroad suggests that his exit from Africa will not necessarily create an exit from the so-called waiting rooms of history.[26] In the following section, I examine Father Huismans and Raymond for the dimensions of waiting they embody as white, Euro-American outsiders at the bend in the river. I argue that they function in the text to underscore what Naipaul sees as the inapplicability of "modern," Western sensibilities of history and progress toward modernity to the whole of the African continent, thereby expanding the scope of the "waiting room" to include the entirety of Africa.

Colonial Relics: Father Huismans and Raymond

The Belgian Father Huismans and the white academic Raymond present two different commentaries on the status of "history" at the bend in the river, yet neither proves to be a lasting presence in the African interior; the former is killed mysteriously, while the latter flees Africa abruptly. Salim observes, "All that I know of our history and the history of

[26] I employ the term "Indian-African" to draw attention, through the hyphen, to the split identity Salim exhibits. Other scholars have chosen Arab-African, Muslim Indian, or even simply "Indian" as a descriptor; given Salim's complicated relationship to national belonging—a difficulty Indar shares as he attempts to get a job as an Indian embassy and is rejected: "'How can we have a man of divided loyalties?'" (149)—I have used "Indian-African" to capture this tension.

the Indian Ocean I have got from books written by Europeans," and Raymond is one such European academic (11). Indar introduces Salim to Raymond, who resides at the new Domain polytechnic school and is known as the "Big Man's white man" for his early mentorship of the current African president. But as the Big Man consolidates his power, Raymond's utility for the Big Man's administration begins to fade. As a result, Raymond, Indar confides, "so as not to get orders [from the Big Man], he is beginning to anticipate orders. […] The Big Man is going his own way, and he no longer needs Raymond. […] It's a dreadful thing for a man of his age to have to live with" (140). His wife Yvette gives Salim insight into Raymond's struggles with the history book: "'He's working on this book, and has been for some years now. The government were going to publish it, but now apparently there are difficulties'" (172). Salim notes that the difficulties weren't specified, but that "Raymond had temporarily put aside his history to work on a selection of the President's speeches" (173). Raymond's pivot to publishing a collection of the Big Man's speeches instead of continued work on the history of the country is revealing, and suggests that Raymond's efforts are belated. His attempts to anticipate the Big Man suggest that he is aware of himself as an anachronism in contemporary Africa, and his work shifts from new narratives about the past to simply recycling, in a different form, the Big Man's words that have already been spoken. Seen another way, Raymond is only able to parrot or mimic the Big Man in a reversal of old colonial roles.

Raymond's inability to write the history of the country confirms the narrative's larger suggestion: that such a history cannot be written in Raymond's forms. Elsewhere, Naipaul has been candid about his views on writing the history of his native West Indies. In *The Middle Passage*, he asks rhetorically, "How can the history of this West Indian

futility be written? What tone shall the historian adopt?" and answers summarily, "The history of the islands can never be satisfactorily told. […] History is built around achievement and creation; and nothing was created in the West Indies" (29). While his focus here is on the Caribbean, evidence of Naipaul similarly assessing the African continent is clear in "In a Free State" and *A Bend in the River*, for which Naipaul drew inspiration from locales as diverse as Uganda, Zaire, and Trinidad. Naipaul produces the effect that "all of these places are images of a single, fictional state….This vision of a Fourth World derives in part from European colonial discourse about sub-Saharan Africa, especially from Conrad's stories set in 'half-made societies' forever making and unmaking themselves" (Weiss 167). Since Raymond has already written the nation's colonial history, the suggestion here is that nothing further—or new—can be produced.[27] Instead of advancing toward an unfolding future, the country in *A Bend in the River* is poised only to restage its turbulent past. In Raymond's waiting for the Big Man to ask for his assistance, and waiting for inspiration for a new history book, the text situates this ostensibly "transitional" moment between rebellions as yet another waiting room of history.

As long as Raymond remains at the bend in the river and in a subservient position to the Big Man, he too feels entrapped by the temporality of waiting. For most of his stay at the Domain, Raymond resists the lull of waiting as well as insinuations of his growing irrelevance to the Big Man. Raymond praises the Big Man in the face of criticisms from

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[27] Moreover, Salim explicitly notes that the world was "really quite a simple place" for outsiders like himself because they "were far away from our civilization, far away from the *doers and makers*" (54, emphasis mine). The implication here, again, is that the achievements and creations required for "history" as Naipaul defines it do not exist at the bend in the river.

the Youth Guard, and Salim interprets his defensiveness on the Big Man's behalf as a sign that he "was still waiting, then" while he "might have nowhere else to go" (196). Nevertheless, by the time Raymond gives up on the Big Man and departs the country, Salim has framed Raymond's stay at the Domain as a time of powerless waiting: "At some moment he seemed to have decided that he wasn't going to be called back to the President's favour, and he had stopped waiting, stopped reading the signs" (214). Significantly, Raymond's resignation coincides with Salim's impression that Raymond "was reading old things he had written." The past continues to be a refuge for Raymond, but he has given up on fashioning new narratives for the present. Instead, Raymond's tragic alignment with the country's past—which does not fit the vision the Big Man seeks to promote—reduces Raymond to a state of impotent waiting.[28] The text does not directly depict Raymond and Yvette's departure from the country, and Salim hears about their exit second-hand. By the time Salim returns from London, they had "gone away; no one, not even Mahesh, could tell me where or in what circumstances" (259). The bend of the river is destined to be a place of indefinite waiting, but given Raymond's ability to claim ties to elsewhere—both he and his wife have ties to Europe, as well as the United States—he is able to end his waiting and exit the country.

Father Huismans embodies another kind of historical project, but his murder in the narrative suggests that his approach is similarly not endorsed by Naipaul. Father Huismans's unwavering belief in Africa's greatness depends on a static, romanticized view of Africa encapsulated in the artifacts he collects. Timothy Weiss argues that

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[28] The association of impotency with Raymond works on two levels; not only is he unable to produce new histories, but also his wife Yvette has an affair with Salim.

"Father Huismans represents a certain Western viewpoint that looks at Africa as a museum (or wildlife reserve) rather than as a changing, human world of cultures in conflict and collision" (187). In addition to running the lycée, Father Huismans is an avid collector of African artifacts from the colonial and precolonial periods. He is introduced in the narrative when Salim returns the gymnasium book that Ferdinand and other schoolmates had stolen. Over the course of their subsequent conversation, Salim learns that Father Huismans "didn't simply see himself in a place in the bush; he saw himself as part of an immense flow of history" (63). As a result, he views the recent uprisings and "troubles" with more tranquility than Salim can muster, because "[f]or him the destruction of the European town, the town that his countrymen had built, was only a temporary setback. Such things happened when something big and new was being set up, when the course of history was being altered" (63). Father Huismans's admiration for Africa is coupled with a seemingly paradoxical regard "[f]or everything connected with the European colonization, the opening up of the river" (64). Salim explains that Father Huismans can maintain this position because he is able to see "beyond" the bitterness of colonization.

While the tensions between Huismans's complicated views on history and Africa might be resolved through this *longue durée* historical view—Africa's "primitive" greatness eventually grafted on to colonial modernization as "something big and new"—I want to suggest that Huisman's abrupt murder early on in the text signals that, in Naipaul's Africa, the two views are incompatible. The resurgence of "troubles," with the country returning to rebellion and revolution at the novel's close, coupled with the image of the New Domain retreating to African bush as the old colonial structures did before,

indicate that neither lens adequately captures the historical dynamics at work at the bend of the river. When Father Huismans abruptly dies at the conclusion of the novel's first part, Salim notes that his body, "mutilated, his head cut off and spiked," had been sent down river in a dugout intentionally to send a message (82). Ferdinand, now a student at the *lycée*, speculates that Father Huismans's African obsessions were anachronistic in the postcolonial context. He asserts, "'It is a thing of Europeans, a museum. Here it is going against the god of Africans. We have masks in our houses and we know what they are there for. We don't have to go to Huismans's museum" (83). Ferdinand's language here carefully identifies the masks' usefulness in the present ("what they are there for"), in contrast to the museum's tendency to ossify cultural artifacts as relics of the past. Weiss's reading of Father Huismans referenced above is closely aligned with Ferdinand's view. But Salim himself suggests another reading of this scene, one more consistent with the narrative's larger commentary on time in the interior of Africa. Whereas Father Huismans insists on something big and new manifesting at the bend in the river soon, Salim cynically sees hopeless repetition. A character with such an optimistic—and Salim suggests, also misguided—view cannot last long in *A Bend in the River*.

Far from representing critiques of European historicizing, Father Huismans and Raymond are rejected from their places at the bend in the river precisely because the historical perspectives they espouse are incompatible, from the narrative's point of view, with the repetitious circularity of African history and time. Naipaul underscores this association through the imagery of the Big Man's new Domain buildings, designed to propel the country and its people into postcolonial modernity. The Domain was built both on African bush and on the ruins of the old European settlement, with the aim of

"creating modern Africa" (100). Naipaul "divide[s] Africa into Old and New," with the former "receiving somewhat more favorable treatment than the New" because—and here, Kenneth Harrow pantomimes the narrative's position—it is the "natural home of the blacks" (Harrow 238). Despite becoming the site of a university and research center, Salim observes, "The Domain had been built fast, and in the sun and the rain decay also came fast" (102). The modernity supposedly embodied in the new buildings "is therefore represented as shallow and superficial—a mere graft" that also implies "[t]he incongruity of imported European notions of progress" (Hayward 174). The characterization of the Domain as being built too quickly situates independence as occurring too quickly as well; the Africans, Naipaul proposes, perhaps should have waited longer (or indefinitely) for self-rule.[29]

In this way, Naipaul constructs a "waiting room of history" for the entire country's population, affirming utter incommensurability and compatibility between the time of European modernity and progress and the time of postcolonial Africa. Through images of the new Domain, erected and now rotting with equal speed, and the figures of Raymond and Father Huismans, *A Bend in the River* depicts an Africa that will never catch up with its Western others, so refusing to wait and fomenting further revolutions alike will ultimately change nothing. In the following section, which will conclude my reading of *A Bend in the River*, I analyze the specific experiences of waiting described by Salim and his friend Indar. These two characters further develop Naipaul's pessimistic

[29] Similarly, Walunywa reads *A Bend in the River*'s Salim as a "[c]onduit for Naipaul's apparent belief that Africans are incapable of negotiating the transition from underdevelopment to modernity because their faults in that regard are inherent" (2). As a result, the European modernity Salim covets will always resist "implantation" to Africa and will be indefinitely deferred.

vision of African futures as a continuation of waiting rooms of history. Not only is the country destined to repeat the rebellions and conflicts of the past, but for Indian-Africans who attempt to escape abroad, their waiting will also follow them wherever they go.

"I will wait for the rest of my life": Indian-Africans Abroad

Although scholars often interpret Salim as Naipaul's mouthpiece, espousing the values of and his identification with Western neocolonialism, Salim's relationship to colonial time is complicated by his Indian ethnicity and a worry that, no matter how much he tries, he is fated to exist with a sense of belatedness. Together, Salim and Indar indicate that, from the novel's perspective, Indian-Africans are doubly removed from history; even though they appear more cognizant of history and the need to record it, their ethnic backgrounds in the context of Black nationalism consistently leave them feeling written out of history. Over a series of pages at the beginning of the novel, Salim is concerned that "as a community we [Indian-Africans] had fallen behind," and that "Europeans were better equipped to cope with changes" associated with independence, opting "to get out, or to fight, or to meet the Africans halfway" while the Indians on the coast "continued to live as we had always done, blindly" (16-17). The ethnically Indian community in Africa, Salim submits, suffers feelings of belatedness even at independence because they are not temporally integrated with their black African neighbors. As Bruce King observes, this positioning of Hindu Indians as outsiders at the moment of postcolonial independence is consistent with Naipaul's view of decolonization in his native Trinidad as well, where the "rhetoric of decolonization was filled with black nationalism, pan-Africanism, Judaeo-Christian notions of black racial deliverance and Marxist models of single party states,"

situating the Hindu Indian as an "outsider, the marginal, the opposition to those who felt destined to inherit the apparatus of the state at independence" (11). Even if independence marked a revolutionary temporal rupture that rejected the waiting room of history for black Africans—and the narrative undermines this assumption through its emphasis on waiting and cyclical violence—Naipaul suggests that ethnic minorities in Africa and Indian-Africans in particular were not necessarily included in this future imagined community.

At the same time, Salim notes that the temporal experiences of Indian-Africans on the African coast are not homogeneous. Reminiscing on his childhood and youth, Salim remembers that Indar's departure to go to England to study exacerbated his feeling of falling behind. Salim reflects, "He had always made me feel so backward," in part because of Indar's family's greater financial investments and subsequently higher standard of living, their enjoyment of physical exercise as leisure activities, marked them "as 'modern' people" for Salim (109). Renouncing jealousy, Salim nevertheless admits to feeling "the unhappiness of a man who felt left behind, unprepared for what was coming" (110). When Indar returns to the country as a visiting lecturer in the Domain, the passing of the years is only reflected in Indar, whose London clothes symbolize the distance if not the time traveled. Self-deprecatingly, Salim remarks, "And I—well, I was in my shop, with the red dirt road and the market square outside. I had waited so long, endured so much, changed; yet to him I hadn't changed at all" (110). When Indar finds Salim in the same state of waiting for the future that he was in eight years ago, he perceives that time has passed differentially for the two childhood friends.

Naipaul explicitly contrasts Indar's distinct relationship with the past with Salim's future-oriented present; Indar's view of the past is more aggressive, and he advocates several times, "'We can trample the past'" (136). Though the novel is primarily focalized from Salim's perspective, the voices of other characters interrupt several times with long digressions, flashbacks, or sustained reflections. Indar takes over in the second section, "The New Domain," and he advises, "'We have to learn to trample on the past, Salim. I told you that when we met. […] It isn't easy to turn your back on the past. It isn't something you can decide to do just like that. It is something you have to arm yourself for, or grief will ambush and destroy you'" (141). Indar intends his strategy of trampling on the past in pursuit of his future to contrast starkly with Salim's waiting at the bend of the river, but the language of waiting in fact creates continuity between their temporal experiences. The fifteen pages that comprise chapter nine in "The New Domain" are told exclusively from Indar's perspective, and it is remarkable how often waiting punctuates his story of purported forward movement. Indar's initial excitement over acquiring a university degree is tempered by his unsavory realization that he had been naïve in believing "'that after my time in the university some wonderful life would be waiting for me'" (142). His pursuit of a diplomatic position with the Indian embassy yields more waiting, before the embassy dismisses him with the charge of having "divided loyalties" between the India of his heritage and the Africa of his birth (149). At this point, Indar's association of the life and job "out there" in the world just waiting for him transfers from Europe to Africa as he remembers "'our stretch of the African coast. [...] I felt I had known that life, and that it was waiting for me again somewhere'" (150-1). At the

conclusion of Indar's retrospective narrative, he quickly qualifies the dream of a future waiting in Africa: "'It was fantasy, of course.'"

Indar's exit from the story, aboard a steamer that mirrors Salim's eventual escape, reinforces rather than resists the state of waiting. Indar is the novel's most mobile character, traversing the unnamed African country, England, Africa again, America, and beyond. There is no sense of Indar's restlessness receding as he seeks out a future to match his desires. Indar is last depicted flustered and frustrated, making his way to a private suite on the steamer, and complaining about being forced to wait at the airport for hours the day before. Salim learns that the interminable waiting was a result of the Big Man commandeering the plane for his own purposes—an experience that Salim later encounters himself. Although Indar's departure holds out a hope that his waiting on others and on the future might end, Kareisha's later interruption into Salim's narrative fills in the blanks concerning Indar's experience in America. Kareisha is Salim's fiancée and Nazruddin's daughter, whom Salim visits in London just before the government's African nationalization program appropriates his shop and gives it to a black African to manage. Kareisha relates that Indar is depressed following a "bad experience in America" (241). On a mission to recover funds for his business ventures, Indar instead finds himself attending social and business functions, yet "'nothing seemed to be happening. It was always just back to the hotel, and waiting'" (242). Resigned, Indar submits to the pointlessness inscribed in waiting for a future he cannot bring about himself, "'know[ing] he is equipped for better things, but he doesn't want to do them'" (244).

Despite Salim's misgivings that he is being forced to wait while Indar moves ahead, Kareisha's description of a broken man being forced to wait makes "waiting" a

shared condition between the men; regardless of geographical location, the temporality of waiting inheres in the characters' relation to the future and appears to follow wherever they go. The novel's final word on Indian-Africans' position vis-à-vis the waiting rooms of history is perhaps best summarized by Nazruddin, who informs Salim in England, "We've come here at the wrong time. But never mind. It's the wrong time everywhere else too" (239). Indeed, Indar's violent trampling of the past does not bring him any closer to a desired future, and with both past and future truncated, he is trapped in a waiting present. As Robert Balfour observes, "[Indar] is the global citizen in the most antithetical sense; with obligations only to the present, no fixed location, no loyalties or local connection" (26). Instead of providing an alternative to Salim at the bend in the river, however, Indar's temporality of waiting reproduces the same temporal dimensions that divorce the past and future alike from the present. Given these similarities, we are primed to read Salim's own exit from the country at the end of the novel as following in Indar's footsteps, burdening his departure with a sense of already guaranteed failure.

Salim's decision to leave Africa follows his epiphany that waiting is the inevitable condition of his existence at the bend of the river. His refusal to wait out the present "troubles" is a way to manage this waiting even as he notes that he will, like Indar and Nazruddin before him, continue to wait regardless of where he is located. Salim explicitly identifies the bend in the river as a space of perpetual waiting when he is detained in jail. Salim has indicated at different points that waiting has been oppressively limiting; he thinks that for Ferdinand and Metty, the past could be shed easier, whereas for him, "I have lost my twenties, and what I have been looking for since I left home hasn't come to me. I have only been waiting. I will wait for the rest of my life" (107). His affair with

Yvette is a temporary distraction or interruption, but her departure as well as the quickening deterioration of the country hastens Salim's surrender to waiting. After police, tipped off by Metty, discover contraband ivory tusks buried in the yard, the police take Salim into "preventative detention" for a weekend.

Forcibly removed from the town and river, Salim must confront the fact that a future in Africa does not exist for him. Of the police headquarters, Salim remarks, "There I learned to wait. There I decided that I had to shut out thoughts of the town and stop thinking about time, that I had as far as possible to empty my mind" (266). The temporality of waiting and the condition of being physically outcast from society dovetail here; Salim's recognition that he is an outsider is occasioned by his most extreme moment of waiting. Salim concludes, "I had to learn to wait, in a jail that was suddenly real, and frightening now because of its very simpleness" (268). I would contend that the jail is frightening precisely because, in its evocation of waiting, it reveals that there is no difference between the temporality of the jail and the temporality of the town at the bend in the river for Salim. Through the language of waiting, Naipaul suggests that the unnamed African country imprisons Salim. His exit from the country puts an end to his waiting at the bend in the river, but this refusal to wait leaves Salim suspended in a present, still waiting, without an anchor in the past or grasp on the future.

Although Naipaul initially links the temporality of waiting with specific physical spaces—the bend at the river, the unnamed African country, the jail—by the novel's conclusion the waiting room is an existential condition for Indian-Africans rather than a concrete location in space. This extra-territorial waiting undermines Walunywa's suggestion that the novel promotes the "relocation to globally powerful nations" as a

solution for Indian-Africans marginalized in Africa (Walunywa 2) and Selwyn Cudjoe's conclusion that "[t]he certainties offered by London and similar places are unavailable in India or Africa because of the arbitrariness of those societies" (Cudjoe 187). As Indar's circumstances especially underscore, the temporalities of waiting in Naipaul's novel follow them across the globe and deconstruct the Europe/Africa binary that Indar and Salim—as well as critics like Walunywa and Cudjoe—appear to instantiate. This formulation of waiting is consistent with the waiting-room model of history, privileging progress and modernity emanating from Europe and simultaneously placing them out of reach for Salim, Indar, Nazruddin, and the other inhabitants of the unnamed African country. My reading here contrasts with Erica Johnson, who proposes that Naipaul "presents a rigorously skeptical portrait of the overdetermined concept of progress," and thus "effectively provincializes Europe" in the way Dipesh Chakrabarty calls for (211). Johnson's unusual reading posits that the novel "reveal[s] European signs taken as universals to be the discreet, geographically specific concepts that they are" (213), but to do so she must ignore the fact that Naipaul maps primitiveness onto Africans to render them *unsuitable* for the "progress" the characters reserve for Europe. In other words, even if the novel alleges that European models of progress are geographically specific rather than universal concepts, Johnson ignores the ways that Naipaul's characters mourn this incompatibility. Given the reinstantiation of the "not yet" for Salim as he travels abroad, as well as the devolution into violence of the African country he leaves behind, the novel does not "provincialize" Europe so much as reassert its centrality as a referent for measuring the myriad ways that the continent continues to wait. Naipaul does not

allow other alternative configurations of modernity or civilization to emerge.[30] Rather, European notions of progress and modernity are still centered, privileged, and acclaimed.

In this way, Naipaul creates a foil between the temporalities of progress, history, and achievement in Europe and his insistence that the temporalities of Africa are constituted by cycles of violence. Naipaul's declaration, cited earlier in this chapter, that "Africa has no future" (Jussawalla 47) is depicted within the novel as well as mirrored in its structure, which imitates "the cycle of progress and reversion," but "refuses to move to a point of crisis or recognition" (Coovadia 8). The predictable repetition of violence "affirms only duration" rather than the unfolding of time into an undetermined future (Berger 152). Or, to use the operative terms in this study, the novel imposes a temporality of indefinite waiting and defers the incorporation of African and Indian-African subjects alike into modernity by returning to the waiting rooms of history model of historicism characteristic of the colonial era. Naipaul adapts notions of circular time to insist that the "not yet" will never become "now," where the repetition of cycles of violence posit a doomed temporality emptied of the possibilities of agential action. *A Bend in the River* depicts a zero-sum temporality, where waiting and refusing to wait are both evidently self-defeating for Indian-Africans.

Perhaps the most fitting image for the temporality of *A Bend in the River* is one from Naipaul's earlier story, "In a Free State": the broken watch. The suggestive rejections of various European histories for writing the past, present, and future of the town at the bend in the river do not affirm an alternative narrative or temporality beyond

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[30] In this, I follow Ranu Samantrai in identifying the "tautology established between 'Europe' and 'modern'" in the novel, which "forecloses [the] reading of African independence" as "another step forward in the grand march of progress" (52).

a state of waiting. Time may continue to pass for Salim, as it surely does for Bobby, but the ends of both stories suggest that the characters are disoriented in time, unable either to measure it or to project beyond the present moment. The refusal to wait that concludes *A Bend in the River* guarantees Salim's isolation, and he departs the country under the cover of darkness, constructing the temporal dimensions of waiting in terms of an interminable present: as a departure where the arrival is indefinitely postponed beyond the pages of the text.

Temporal Dimensions of Waiting During the Interregnum

According to Naipaul in a 1979 interview, "all over the third world, the West is waiting for the helicopters that will facilitate their escape" (Jussawalla 49). While Salim escapes under the cover of darkness aboard a steamer instead of a helicopter in *A Bend in the River*, the image of the helicopter is provocative and resonates with Salim's other observations about air travel. On the one hand, Salim agrees with his friend Indar that travel by air allows him "to adjust to his homelessness," and the experience of "being in two places at once"—between Africa and Europe—means "you had no feeling of having made a final decision, a great last journey" (*Bend* 228–9). In hovering over the ground and yielding a sensation of suspension between two places, Naipaul's helicopter figures as an escape both from the African continent and from the pressure of making a choice. On the other hand, the helicopter is striking for the intertextual resonance it creates with Nadine Gordimer's later 1981 novel, *July's People*. Gordimer's novel concludes with an image of the main character, Maureen Smales, running toward a helicopter as well as an uncertain fate in the revolution that signals the possible end of apartheid.

Turning to Gordimer's *July's People* after Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* usefully illuminates some of their shared preoccupations—intertextual connections with *Heart of Darkness*, the temporal dimensions of waiting, imminent political revolution—as well as their starkly contrasting views of the postcolonial future of Africa. Gordimer's sustained interrogation of history and time, especially in contrast to Naipaul's capitulation to centering European temporal narratives of progress and modernity, is at the center of my analysis. In order to highlight this very different formulation, and ultimately, rejection, of the waiting rooms of history, I begin with an overview of the novel's representation of time at the imagined moment of revolution in South Africa. Gordimer's epigraph, excerpted from Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, characterizes the temporal moment as the "interregnum," a period Gordimer further elaborates in her lecture "Living in the Interregnum." The temporality of the interregnum, I suggest, can be productively analyzed in relation to Vincent Crapanzano's anthropological study, *Waiting: The Whites of South Africa*, published just four years after *July's People*. While Crapanzano's investigation is restricted to South African whites' impressions of time in 1985, Gordimer's novel imaginatively envisions the function of "waiting" once the anticipated event of revolution commences. Although *July's People* and *A Bend in the River* both concern characters who move inward into the unfamiliar interior of their African countries, and whose flights mark the conclusion of both narratives, I contend that the difference between the two is that the kinds of waiting are qualitatively different. Unlike Salim, Maureen's waiting in July's village encourages her self-reevaluation and maturation, engendering a different orientation toward her position in the new dispensation to come.

The novel opens by describing the distorted temporality that the beginning of the revolution creates for Maureen Smales, the white main character, as she escapes with her family from Johannesburg to their servant July's village. The novel's epigraph positions the novel between the dying old and the new that cannot be born—the temporality of the interregnum. The rest of the novel elaborates and wrestles with the difficulties of transitioning from the old ways to the new, especially in the context of great uncertainty over how the future might unfold; Maureen and her husband Bam struggle to recognize their own complicity in and benefits from apartheid, despite their more progressive politics. Maureen's relationship with her children, her husband, her servant July, and July's family all require reassessment as the structures and economies of the suburb become increasingly anachronistic. The village location upends their sense of time as well as their relationship to July. The tension between the Smaleses and July over the custodianship of the *bakkie* (pickup truck) and the gun, for example, underscores how difficult it is to break with old ways in new or unfamiliar contexts. The novel concludes with Maureen running toward a helicopter—an ambiguous ending that has variably suggested to scholars that she is running toward revolutionaries who may kill her or rescuers who may save her, a sign of rejection or embracement, alternatively pessimistic or cautiously optimistic.

In her lecture "Living in the Interregnum," Gordimer describes the interregnum period in terms of disruption and interruption, making disorder and incoherence characteristic of the state of transition. The interregnum period, Gordimer argues, is characterized by the winds of "revolutionary change" and the absence of "historical coordinates" to offer orientation (Gordimer, "Living" 263). Ernest Cole notes that the

way scholars interpret the interregnum and its temporality substantially influences their sense of South Africa's future as portrayed in the novel (60). Cole's pessimistic reading of *July's People*, for example, emphasizes the ominous "the new cannot be born" portion of the novel's epigraph, and posits a "gap between the two transition periods [the old and new]" that ultimately "gestures toward a process of continued interregnum" (60). The future, in this reading, seems indefinitely postponed.[31] Although the interregnum is clearly a transitional time wherein the old and new intermingle and overlap, it would be too neat to separate these periods or reigns distinctly. The morbid symptoms result from the old and new comingling together, giving rise to a disjunctive temporality distinguished by the lingering old and the incipient new.[32] The temporal disjunction characteristic of the interregnum manifests in the sentence structures on the novel's first page, where the enjambment of lines produces:

> The knock on the door
>
> no door, an aperture in thick mud walls, and the sack that hung over it
>
> looped back for air, sometime during the short night. (*July's* 1).

The first door is understood to be one associated with the old ways and located in the suburbs, and the absence of a door in the succeeding line reorients Maureen and the reader to the present and emerging new in July's village, where the old ways and roles are rendered not only irrelevant, but also impossible to sustain.

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[31] Jeffrey J. Folks's reading also emphasizes the interregnum as transitional, and a period "between rulers," but argues that the novel is in effect "an imaginative working out of Nadine Gordimer's own commitment to the future" (115, 125). Both critics read the interregnum as characterized by transition, but they are divided on what that portends for future commitments.

[32] In this, my reading is most similar to Nasser Mufti's assessment. He argues that the novel accommodates both the past and the present, rather than the either/or scenario commonly assumed by critics. "A politics of transition," he argues, "requires the reader to look towards an 'open' future, while simultaneously looking back towards an obsolete past" (66–68).

Significantly, and in contrast to both Conrad's and Naipaul's texts, Gordimer does not depict the movement into the interior, from the Johannesburg suburb to July's village, as a movement back to a pre-modern period. Instead, this spatial shift prompts Maureen to reflect on her personal history in relation to apartheid and the labor economy. After finding that reading fiction is impossible because she was already "in another time, place, consciousness," Maureen reflects on the interiors of the houses in the village, which include objects that miners acquired while working in the mines (29).[33] The brass plaque that reads "BOSS BOY" prompts Maureen to recall a childhood memory walking to school with Lydia, her black nanny, who also carries the young girl's school case on her head. A photographer documents the scene, promising to send the photo but never following through. Maureen remembers seeing the photo years later in a book about "White *herrenvolk* attitudes and life-styles," and wonders, "Why had Lydia carried her case? [...] Did the book, placing the pair in its context, give the reason she and Lydia, in their affection and ignorance, didn't know?" (33). *Herrenvolk* is German for "master-race," utilized by the Nazis to describe those "born to mastery" ("herrenvolk, n."). This flashback, as well as further interactions with July and his village, pressure Maureen to confront her own position and privilege during apartheid, from shift boss's daughter in the Western Mines area to employer of black servants—whose tempos of work and leisure are still influenced by their white boss.[34]

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[33] Maureen is significantly reading Alessandro Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi*, a nineteenth-century Italian novel. For a discussion of the connections between Manzoni's novel and Maureen's present, see Michael Neill's "Translating the Present: Language, Knowledge, and Identity in Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*," and in particular pages 85–87.

[34] See Laura Wright's "National Photographic: Images of Sensibility and the Nation in Margaret Atwood's 'Surfacing' and Nadine Gordimer's 'July's People'" for a sustained reading of the role of photography in the novel.

Although these memories do facilitate Maureen's critical self-reflection, they also function within the narrative to emphasize the interconnectedness of July's village and Maureen's suburban home. Rather than separate the city and village as modern and traditional respectively, as we saw in Naipaul's presentation of London and the bend in the river, Gordimer emphasizes their dependent, coeval development in time. In doing so, Gordimer not only reconstructs the temporal relationships between the interior and exterior of Africa in *Heart of Darkness* and replicated in *A Bend in the River*, but she also addresses the specific South African context, where Apartheid's creation of separate homelands instantiated "temporal divisions of worlds of tradition and worlds of modernity," what Steffen Jensen calls "homeland temporality" (Jensen 991). Apartheid apologists justified policies like the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 with claims replete with temporalizing falsehoods, asserting that each group could "develop 'in its own time and in accordance with its own predispositions'" (Crapanzano xix). Apartheid legislation created racial groupings—white, Black, Coloured, and Indian—and mandated policies of separateness that dominated all aspects of life, including education, politics, healthcare, and residences (Posel 56). These racial categories, combined with theories of separate development that trafficked in the denial of coevalness, were designed to maintain white minority rule at the expense of the majority of the population. *July's People* disrupts this temporal narrative through the move from the suburb to the village, emphasizing their interconnectedness in time in ways that counter apartheid's philosophy of separate development. Gordimer suggests that the interregnum—during which the old is dying and the new cannot be born—is

especially suited not only to reveal the pervasiveness of these temporal narratives, but also to revise them.

The temporal tensions between old and new in the novel are characterized by Maureen and her family with reference to their anxious waiting. Their anxiety is heightened by the uncertainty that attends it; no one is certain how the events of the revolution will unfold. The village itself is the "place of interregnum, between past and future," where the interregnum as Gordimer intends it is "a space of transition, suspension, or displacement, where co-ordinates are dislodged, horizons uncertain, perception distorted in the very instruments it depends on" (Clingman, *Grammar* 212, 206). I will suggest below that the "instruments" that distort perception in the novel include time and history, embodied in the image of Maureen's broken watch. For now, I want to emphasize the inapplicability of certain co-ordinates to direct and orient. Historical coordinates, returning to Gordimer's own description in "Living in the Interregnum" above, are not able to orient during the interregnum, indicating that what is to come is not necessarily dictated by what has come before, despite the residual and lingering vestiges of the past. This vision is radically different from Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, where the future is known and anticipatable because it will be a repetition of what has come before. Given the great uncertainty attending Maureen's refuge in July's village, her temporal experience of waiting is predominantly characterized by anxiety and dread.

In emphasizing that "waiting" is central to Maureen's temporal experience as she negotiates the interregnum, Gordimer's novel underscores the pervasiveness of waiting in white South Africans' experiences during the turbulent 1980s. Vincent Crapanzano, an

anthropologist studying South African whites near Cape Town in the early 1980s, observed "that South Africa today is caught in a deadened time of waiting" (xxii). This waiting was experienced differentially, however, because fear attends to waiting by whites, hope for Blacks, and a mixture of fear and hope for Coloureds and Asians. Two of Crapanzano's subjects, Ruth and Carl, are representative of the white South African experience of waiting. Ruth remains in South Africa, and in response to a question about the future, she responds, "'Ah, you ask me about the future. I don't like to think about it. …When I think about the future, I get scared. We are all acting out of fear, and so we are not doing the right thing. We didn't pay enough attention in the past, and now no one knows what to do'" (18-19). Gordimer's Maureen similarly turns to the past while she waits in July's village for the future, turning to childhood memories of her relationship with her black servant Lydia to make sense of the inequalities unspoken in "affection and ignorance" (33).[35] Crapanzano's Carl, however, left South Africa to teach in the United States of America, and he articulates passionately, "'I left South Africa because I couldn't stand the waiting any longer for something, anything, to happen'" (42). Carl's comment causes Crapanzano to realize that "*Waiting for something, anything, to happen* was a constant preoccupation," and "provide[d] a thematic unity to what I heard, observed, and read" (43).

Although Crapanzano does not cite *July's People* directly, he does close the chapter "Waiting" with a reference to Gordimer's essay "Living in the Interregnum" and

[35] But this return to the past is not a nostalgic reminiscing; through Maureen, Gordimer "turns the tables on the past and goes a step further; for, crucially, the mere reversal of roles of authority is shown to be not revolutionary enough" (Clingman, *Novels* 203).

notes that while waiting certainly captures the absence of "historical coordinates" in South Africa, he would "caution against overplaying the *morbidity*," which threatens to overly pathologize apartheid and make "what is a question of morality a matter of disease" (47). Nevertheless, the reference to Gordimer's essay, itself an elaboration of the interregnum temporalities that are explored within *July's People*, links both literary text and anthropological study in a shared consideration of South African whites waiting for the post-apartheid future. Crapanzano's account of the temporality of waiting situates the waiting subject in an uneasy position vis-à-vis this awaited future:

> Waiting means to be oriented in time in a special way. It is directed toward the future—not an expansive future, however, but a constricted one that closes in on the present. In waiting, the present is always secondary to the future. […] It is a sort of holding action—a lingering. (In its most extreme forms waiting can lead to paralysis.) In waiting, the present loses its focus in the now. […] Its only meaning lies in the future—in the arrival or non-arrival of the object of waiting. Waiting is always waiting for something. […] It is a passive activity. (44)

Part of the reason that waiting constricts the present is that the future weighs so heavily on the subject's mind, but this constriction is additionally caused by a growing awareness of the past during the time of waiting. Crapanzano observes that we draw from the past in order to assess whether "what we are waiting for will or will not come. Our expectations become 'realistic'" (45). This assessment of probability, drawing from past experience, ensures that "in waiting [there is] always this backward glance, this seeking security in

the experience of the past" (45). This waiting can either be positively configured as desire and longing for something, or negatively configured as dreading something undesired.

It is my contention that Gordimer explores white South African waiting through Maureen and *July's People*, and that Maureen's refusal to wait can be understood as a rejection of the temporality shared by parts of white South Africa. *July's People* situates 1980s South Africa as a time of suspension and anxious waiting, and the beginning of the revolution that causes Maureen's family to flee intensifies their waiting experiences. Given South Africa's complicated colonial history—conflicts between Britain and the Afrikaner inhabitants, the establishment of a Cape Colony, the Boer Republics, a South African Republic, and later the institution of apartheid—it is difficult to speak of colonial time and *July's People* in the same way that Naipaul evokes it in *A Bend in the River*.[36] Instead of "colonial time," I see the novel grappling with "apartheid time," especially given the temporal dimensions inscribed in apartheid policies. The Smales family is at the end of apartheid time, both because of the imminent revolution and because the temporality that governed and justified apartheid is quickly becoming anachronistic. In traveling to July's village, "the vehicle had made a journey so far beyond the norm of a

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[36] Derek Hook summarizes, "It is worth conceding that for some, apartheid South Africa is not necessarily a paradigmatic instance of 'the postcolonial.' The 'neocolonialism' of apartheid occurs within what is, strictly speaking, an already postcolonial state, an independent republic, free of imperial rule'" (*Critical* 10). On the other hand, David Attwell notes that "in a formal sense, South Africa became postcolonial in 1910 with the Act of Union, which brought about a coalition of Boer and Briton in a white colonial state; a bleaker kind of postcoloniality emerged with the triumph of Afrikaner republicanism after the National Party's victory in 1948; then, mercifully, in 1994, a constitutionally-defined, non-racial democracy was established, representing the point at which these various postcolonial histories have begun to coalesce, at least in the legal sense" (*Rewriting* 2). This is not to say that colonial and apartheid practices and discourses have nothing in common (in fact, Hook notes that these distinctions between "apartheid" and "colonial" are "stopgaps against the making of unwarranted generalizations") (Hook, *Critical* 10)—but that care should be taken when discussing the colonial dimensions of the apartheid context, and the "postcolonial" aftermath.

present it divided its passengers from, that the master bedroom *en suite* had been lost, jolted out of chronology as the room where her returning consciousness properly belonged: the room that she had left four days ago" (3-4). In this confused chronology, the *master* bedroom with all of its trappings—not only amenities but the power of "master" associated with it—is left behind. The hallmark and *raison d'etre* of apartheid, apartness, is disrupted both by the close proximities in the village as well as the overlapping temporalities of there and then and here and now.

July's village thus becomes a revolutionary waiting room, in the sense that the spatiotemporal experience of waiting prompts Maureen's critical reflection on and eventual refutation of the temporal and historical coordinates of apartheid policies and discourses. Temporality, as the "psychical and social experience of time," Derek Hook argues, "might express a variety of underlying (psycho)social contradictions" through its "paradoxes and apparent distortions" ("Indefinite" 48). Hook praises Crapanzano's study for decoding the "paradoxical temporality of waiting," where "the present is very much premised upon the future" but also "diluted" by the "generality of 'the present' and the specificity of 'the now'" (54). Waiting, in Gordimer's novel, is not just a characteristic of apartheid South Africa's temporality, but also a temporal modality that directly exposes the structures of power in the novel—an interrogative temporality, pushing characters to ask, who waits, and for what?

While waiting in the village for something, anything, to happen, Maureen newly comprehends and appreciates the extent to which time has always structured relationships, specifically between herself, July, and his wife Martha. As the family's servant, July's time was contingent on the Smaleses's needs and requests. Maureen's

time was shaped by the routines of middle-class life and leisure, part-time work and vacations. The economic relationship between white employer and black servant is disrupted when the Smales family flees to July's village. Their arrival "disturbs not only the established economic arrangements of July's family (since money will no longer be remitted from the city each month); their arrival also disturbs July's family's relationship to time and its lived patterns" (Nicholls 23). For Martha, time passes and is shaped by July's returns to his village in his "free" time. The seasons of being with and without a man "overlaid sowing and harvesting, rainy summers and dry winters, and at different times, although at roughly the same intervals for all, changed for each for the short season when her man came home. […] The sun rises, the moon sets; the money must come, the man must go" (*July's* 83). A contrast can be drawn between Maureen and Martha's waiting; whereas Martha waited for July during apartheid, in the revolutionary moment Maureen now also waits. In upsetting the power and temporal structures of apartheid, however, the novel stops short of depicting what the new structures and new time might look like.

The future that Maureen no longer waits for, but instead runs toward, is ultimately open in Ernst Bloch's sense; the kind of utopian future that will succeed the dystopian apartheid present is anticipated but not prescribed in *July's People*.[37] As Stephen Clingman argues, while the novel "appears to be a projection from the present into the future […] is from another point of view *seeing the present through the eyes of the future*; it is after all the present that falls apart in the revolutionary context the novel proposes"

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[37] Brendon Nicholls suggests that by refusing to depict apartheid's future, the novel declines to confirm apartheid's racist principles, refuses to purge the consciences of whites, and "lures Apartheid into a consideration of its end but refuses to allow it to plan against its own demise" (35).

(*Novels* 201–202). Despite the anticipation of a post-apartheid future, the novel works within a limited horizon for seeing beyond the present. The novel's early reflection on emergency supply kits is particularly suggestive:

> In various and different circumstances certain objects and individuals are going to turn out to be vital. The wager of survival cannot, by its nature, reveal which, in advance of events. How was one to know? […] The circumstances are incalculable in the manner in which they come about, even if apocalyptically or politically foreseen, and the identity of the vital individuals and objects is hidden by their humble or frivolous role in an habitual set of circumstances. (6)

The future to come is similarly indecipherable, even if the signs are becoming visible now. It is impossible to predict what objects will be useful because it is equally impossible to predict how events will unfold. In this sense, the narrative is non-teleological, what Elangbam Hermanta Singh calls a "postmodern utopia," in its rejection of "prescription, teleology, and naïve optimism" that anticipates rather than dictates the "outlines of freedom" (Singh 61).[38] There is a sense that linear time and history are *insufficient* for imagining the post-apartheid future, and that such a future requires a radical reconstruction of the very categories of past, present future, old and new, white and black, master and servant that the apartheid narrative of history depends on. The novel ends with Maureen refusing to wait any longer, closing mid-run toward a helicopter. We are told that Maureen "could not have said what colour it was, what

[38] Ali Erritouni uses the same language of postmodern utopia, derived from Frederic Jameson's work, to describe *July's People*. After citing Jameson, he concludes that this kind of utopia "is neither apocalyptic nor doctrinaire: it rejects prescription and teleological visionary history" (74).

markings it had, whether it holds saviours or murderers; and—even if she were to have identified the markings—for whom" (158). The novel's final words, "She runs," maintain an image of movement in suspension, appropriate for the novel's transitional interregnum temporality. Whatever her fate, Maureen's run underscores that a return to "back there" is impossible.

Broken Watches: Dismantling the Waiting Rooms of History

In closing, I want to return to my claim that Gordimer isolates the clock as a distorting instrument of perception in this interregnum context. Maureen's initial temporal disorientation is further suggested by the obsolescence of the calendar and her watch, two markers and anchors of time. Whereas Bam "kept glancing at his watch," Maureen instead "knew hers was a useless thing" (43). This significant difference in their conceptions of time coincides with the gradual devolution of their marriage; Maureen's sense of being "in another time, place, consciousness" is heightened, compared to her husband's (29). Likewise, the calendar's utility to link the passing of days with the body's natural rhythms is undercut in July's village when Maureen realizes that she is menstruating a week earlier than usual (67). Neither the watch, which marks time as it passes, nor the calendar, which marks the passage of years as well as the return of anniversaries and dates, allows Maureen to orient or anchor herself in time. By the end of the novel, the watch evolves from being useless to broken:

> At about midday (from the height of the sun and the quiet of the bush—her watch was broken) Maureen Smales, who is alone at the hut although not alone in the settlement, no one was ever alone there—feels some

> change in the fabric of subconsciously identified sounds and movements that make the silence. There is a distant chuddering as of air being packed in waves of resistance against its own destiny. (157)

Scholars have noted the shift from the past tense to the present tense that sets the novel's final chapter apart from the proceeding ones, but they neglect to link this shift with the image of the broken watch. Not only does the present tense indicate a more decisive break with the past, but the broken watch suggests a radically open future not governed by the temporalities regulated by and associated with the clock and calendar. The helicopter—at the center of scholarly debate concerning the novel's lasting hope for or pessimism about the future—arrives simultaneously with the text's acknowledgement that the time of the past is irrevocably broken; apartheid's temporalities are not only impractical now but also inaccessible entirely.

Through the temporalities exhibited in the final chapter, *July's People* illustrates the confluence of several temporal strands: the old time is broken, the new has yet to manifest (although the helicopter seems to be a harbinger of the new time), the past tense is wholly unavailable for narration, and the run toward the helicopter signals a refusal to wait and see—Maureen instead runs to see for herself. In this way, Maureen, like Salim, refuses to wait. But the temporality of waiting here is inflected with not only Maureen's specific South African historical context and its attendant temporality of waiting, but also a general commitment to an as-yet obscured future. Given the profound inconclusiveness of *July's People*'s final chapter, we might then read the novel's much-discussed "ending" as marking a beginning, rather than a conclusion, what Clingman calls "a flight from, but also […] a flight towards" (*Novels* 203). My reading of Maureen's refusal to wait

underscores Clingman's reading of the end as a beginning, marking a forward movement directed toward a post-apartheid future that gestures beyond the interregnum even if it does not depict it as fully realized by the end of the novel. Gordimer's novel rejects the principles of apartheid time and its temporality by deciphering the ways that the characters' relationships were structured by the time of the suburb and the relation of employer and servant, and also by the waiting that shapes Maureen's experience of July's village. Waiting in the village not only permits the difficult and painful negotiation of the relationships between whites and blacks, as well as within the families, but also uncovers the sense of time tacitly governing these socioeconomic dependencies. Maureen thus achieves the moment of crisis and recognition that Naipaul's Salim never does, even as their "escapes," on the surface, appear to be similar.

Both writers employ the imagery of the broken watch in their fictional works, though the function of the image in *July's People* is different from its role in Naipaul's "In a Free State." The watch, especially coupled with the calendar in *July's People*, evokes the time-keeping and synchronizing mechanisms of the clock and calendar, so integral to Benedict Anderson's "homogeneous empty time" required for imagining a national community (Benedict Anderson 24). To suggest the obsolescence of the clock and calendar in *July's People* is not simply to reject both the nationalism and historicism described by Anderson and Chakrabarty respectively. The clock and calendar, as symbols and instruments of time-keeping alike, "have been coupled with processes of colonialism and globalization" (Birth 5). The homogeneity posited by clocks and calendars, Birth suggests, elides the existence of multiple temporalities coexisting with the temporalities produced by these standardizing mechanisms (32). By coupling Maureen's observation

that her watch is broken with her decision to run toward whatever awaits, Gordimer makes room for coexisting and alternative temporalities that underscore the heterogeneity of the interregnum as well as posit a future that is not predetermined by the past. As Gordimer's emphasis on the old lingering and the new only just emerging stresses, this future cannot be wholly divorced from the past, which must be grappled with and continuously interrogated. But Maureen's refusal to wait signals a turn away from apartheid temporalities and toward a revolutionary one—where black-majority rule may break from the waiting rooms of history in ways that Naipaul's country in *A Bend in the River* never will.

Neither Gordimer nor Naipaul present an uncomplicated vision of the temporalities of waiting and the transition to black-majority rule in Africa. Naipaul's retrospective view on the end of colonial rule and Gordimer's proleptic vision, imagining the future from the stormy vantage of the interregnum, present villages as "waiting rooms" that concede to or contend with the "waiting rooms of history model" in strikingly different ways. In neither of these novels, where the protagonists refuse to wait any longer, is waiting imbued with overtones of resistance; waiting permits Maureen to reflect and to confront, but is not in itself a temporality she inhabits willingly. In the next chapter, the pairing of Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World* and J.M. Coetzee's *Life & Times of Michael K* explores waiting as a temporal modality of disruption and resistance—one at odds with the colonial regimes of time depicted in the texts.

CHAPTER 2

MAROONED TIME: DISRUPTIVE WAITING AND IDLENESS IN CARPENTIER AND COETZEE

"Specifically I want to notice how the idea of alternative or subaltern modernities operates by constructing a normative expectation of resistance or overcoming. Notably it does this, at least in part, by imagining the conditions of the modern as a largely passive or negative environment merely waiting to be surmounted or mastered or translated or displaced by preconstituted subjects: modern transformations occur, and subalterns respond in more or less creative ways."—David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*

Toussaint L'Ouverture, famed leader of the slave rebellion that would become the Haitian Revolution, is a towering figure in the historical chronicles of the Haitian struggle for independence. C.L.R. James's 1938 account, *The Black Jacobins*, portrays L'Ouverture not only as a central figure in the slave revolt's success, but also as the embodiment of it. In the preface to the first edition of his classic historical account, James proclaims that "the individual leadership responsible" for the Haitian Revolution "was almost entirely the work of a single man—Toussaint L'Ouverture" (ix). In fact, James continues, L'Ouverture was so deeply connected to the historic revolution that "[t]he history of the San Domingo revolution will therefore largely be a record of his achievements and his political personality" (x). This close focus on L'Ouverture threatens to minimize the efforts of other well-known figures in the decades that comprised the rebellion, as well as those whose names and individual participation are not recorded for posterity. Another effect of this version of history, David Scott argues in *Conscripts of Modernity*, is that it posits an anticolonial "narrative mode of Romance" that plots a relationship between the past and future as "a narrative of revolutionary overcoming"

(*Conscripts* 209). According to Scott, anticolonial resistance is problematically constructed in *The Black Jacobins* in two ways; the conditions of modernity are "merely waiting" for the revolutionary subject to overcome them, rather than dynamically negotiated, and second, the implicit teleology of overcoming determines in advance what ought to be recognized as acts of resistance (114). This accounts, in Scott's view, not only for James's fixation on Toussaint L'Ouverture as a "romantic" hero of the Revolution, but also for the limited set of questions posed to the "problem-space" of the revolutionary moment (4).[39] Instead, Scott calls for analyses "more attuned to the productive ways in which power has shaped the conditions of possible action, [and] more specifically, shaped the cognitive and institutional conditions in which the New World slave acted" (*Conscripts* 106). In turning to the power dynamics of the slave plantation, he urges, we ought to consider "less what [the regime of the slave plantation] restricts and what resists this restriction, less what it represses and what escapes or overcomes this repression, and more the modern conditions it created that positively shaped the way in which language, religion, kinship, and so on were reconstituted" (115).

As will become increasingly clear in this chapter, I do not share Scott's enthusiasm in setting aside questions of resistance. Nevertheless, his argument is important for illuminating historiography's and critical theory's reliance on romantic narratives of overcoming, and his framework suggestively reconstitutes the revolutionary subject and revolutionary conditions in active and dynamic interplay. This negotiation is not "a Romantic one in which history rides a triumphant and seamlessly progressive

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[39] By "problem-space," Scott intends "to demarcate a discursive context" as well as "an ensemble of questions and answers around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well as ideological-political stakes) hangs" (4).

rhythm," but rather "a broken series of paradoxes and reversals in which human action is ever open to unaccountable contingencies—and luck" (Scott 13). In both retelling and interpreting narratives set in revolutionary times, historians and literary scholars would do well to resist the determinism of romance, and embrace the "tragic" times of instability, ambiguity, and open-ended temporality. This approach, I believe, will also allow us to read the potential resistive strategies and negotiations of actors that are otherwise illegible through the lens of romantic anticolonial overcoming.

To that end, Alejo Carpentier's 1949 novel of the Haitian Revolution, *The Kingdom of This World*, offers a useful contrast to James's focus by imagining the Revolution through the eyes of a slave, Ti Noël. Other scholars have studied James and Carpentier together, especially because James's heroic Toussaint L'Ouverture is conspicuously absent from Carpentier's novel, but all stop short of discussing the significance of the Haitian maroon for modeling alternative relationships to the (post)colonial state and strategies of resistance in the novel. And rather than pairing Carpentier's novel with other texts and studies of the Haitian revolution, I examine *The Kingdom of This World* in conjunction with *Life & Times of Michael K*, a 1983 novel by South African author J.M. Coetzee. My aim is not simply to demonstrate that the temporal dimensions of waiting manifest differently in these two novels, as the comparison of Nadine Gordimer and V.S. Naipaul in chapter 1 argued with respect to the waiting-room model of history. Rather, I elaborate the interpretive strategies of reading the maroon, derived from the fields of literary criticism, history, and anthropology, through my reading of the first novel, *The Kingdom of This World*. These insights allow me to extend the framework of marronage beyond the immediate Caribbean setting in

order to understand the eponymous character of *Life & Times of Michael K* as another maroon figure.

This chapter makes two interventions in literary scholarship. First, I develop a framework for reading the maroon as a trans-historical figure and literary trope, and second, through the lens of marronage, I contest the dominant scholarly interpretations of these two novels. By arguing that the maroon is central to *The Kingdom of This World*, I suggest that the temporal dimensions of the maroon's flight offer a less pessimistic reading of the novel's ending than previously allowed by critics. The strategies of the maroon encourage new and important reconsiderations of Michael K's relationship to the apartheid state as well, beyond the usual frame of Giorgio Agamben-indebted criticism on the novel, and create a "line of flight" between the Caribbean and South Africa. The maroon's separateness or withdrawal, I argue, is characterized by spatial distance that also engenders a challenge to the authority of colonial regimes of time and the colonial state, or in the case of *Life & Times of Michael K*, the apartheid state. Through the lens of marronage, the flight, labor, and idleness of Carpentier's and Coetzee's protagonists become newly legible dimensions of resistive waiting.

Timelessly Recurrent: Reading the Revolutionary Maroon

The Haitian Revolution was, and through its echoes in contemporary literature continues to be, a global event. Haitian slaves, free men, and maroons fought from 1791 to 1804 to achieve the first and only slave-led revolt to transition into the creation of a modern state. The Revolution ignited white concerns throughout the Americas that insurrection could spread, which in Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwankwo's view, "forced people of African descent to

throughout the Americas, particularly in the public and published eye, to name a relationship to the Haitian Revolution, in particular, and to a transnational idea of Black community, in general" (7). The Revolution affected other countries and colonies in the Caribbean as well; the Haitain Revolution forced the global sugar industry to shift its epicenter from Haiti to Carpentier's native Cuba, increasing Cuba's reliance on slave labor and creating conditions similar to colonial Haiti (Paravisini-Gebert, *Literature* 5). Despite the shortcomings of the Revolution—Jean-Jacques Dessalines' order after Independence to exterminate white Haitians, the striation of society into laborers and soldiers, the return to a kind of slavery under the guise of serfdom—the historical moment remains an influential and deeply symbolic event to revisit in Caribbean literature and scholarship.

Phillip Kaisary's 2014 *The Haitian Revolution in the Literary Imagination: Radical Horizons, Conservative Constraints* categorizes fictional representations of the Revolution into either radical or conservative versions. I will depart from Kaisary's categorization of Carpentier's *Kingdom* as a conservative text—one where the "possibilities of progress and transformation are curtailed, and regression is ingrained in the theories of cyclical historical fatalism" (3). Nevertheless, Kaisary's study testifies to the prevailing importance of the Haitian Revolution in literary texts, and my reading of *Kingdom* aligns the novel with his category of radical texts, where the Revolution remains "a decisive and transformational historical moment" (3). Referencing *Kingdom* specifically, Victor Figueroa also notes that Caribbean fiction and historiography continue to "illustrate the way in which the revolution has become a space wherein Caribbean intellectuals can explore issues, problems and aspirations often quite distant

from, yet perfectly incarnated in, the immediate events in the island of Saint Domingue" (*Prophetic* 33). The Revolution has become, in Figueroa's words, "a floating signifier within the Caribbean region" that writers return to "with their own preoccupations and obsessions" (1). In summary, the Haitian revolution simultaneously signifies a rupture with Europe and the creation of new links across the Caribbean, and remains a rich and contested historical and symbolic moment with import not only for contemporary Haiti, but also for the larger Caribbean and Black diaspora.

The contested etymology of the word "maroon" is itself emblematic of the Caribbean's interculturation. Most scholars locate the word's origin in the Spanish *cimarron*, a word equally applied to cattle and slaves who escaped to the hillsides in Hispaniola (C. James 11). But others such as Richard Price and Cynthia James speculate on its Amerindian (Arawakan/Taino) roots as well (James 11). Tracing the usage of "maroon" through the *Oxford English Dictionary*, James argues for "a distinctly Caribbean application of the word, as well as corroboration for its application to people of African descent living in primal conditions in their flight from an imperial master" (11). Marronage occurred in both *petit* and *grand* forms, where the former included short-term flights and absenteeism, and the latter indicated permanent or long-term flights, often with the goal of establishing separate maroon communities (Weik 82). The history of marronage in the Americas demonstrates that the topography of the landscape proved instrumental to the proliferation of marronage; slaves escaped more easily into the wilderness of hills and mountains in countries like Jamaica and Haiti (Mullin 45). Even in *grand-marronage*, however, maroons exhibited a complicated relationship with the

plantation through their periodic returns to raid for food, recruits, and women to increase their numbers (46).

The implicit emphasis on movement in marronage—the initial flight or escape, the returns, the guerilla tactics of retreat and ambush—evinces a dynamic rendering of maroon autonomy. While the maroon has become, particularly in Jamaica, a popular symbol of resistance post-Independence, the history of maroons in the Caribbean exemplifies the complex positions maroons negotiated between plantations and colonial governments. As Patrick Geggus notes in his important *Haitian Revolutionary Studies*, marronage in some ways functioned as a "safety valve" for plantation societies, permitting the small-scale escape of rebellious slaves in order to prevent large-scale insurrection (Geggus 62). Once they escaped, maroons in Jamaica "maneuvered as third parties" between slaves and the colonial government, working to quell slave uprisings in exchange for the official recognition of the sovereignty of maroon communities. In "Welcome the Outlaw: Pirates, Maroons, and Caribbean Countercultures," Erin Skye Mackie considers both the Haitian maroons' military campaigns and the Jamaica maroons' negotiation of treaties with the colonial government to be evidence of successful persistence (37). Similarly, Juris Silenieks argues that "whatever accommodations the Maroons had to resort to in order to survive, their presence did benefit the cause of Blacks and influence the white slaveholders to treat their slaves more humanely," and maroons additionally "served as a constant reminder that slaves could flee and even offer armed resistance" (116). Acknowledging a history that encompasses moments of both resistance to and accommodation of the colonial government, Mackie concludes that "this failure of 'pure' oppositionality […] does not invalidate the socio-

cultural power of [maroons]; rather, if anything, it constitutes one feature central to their continuing currency in a postcolonial world where lines between law and outlaw, black and white, inside and outside, disappear almost as quickly as they are, often opportunistically, calculated and imposed" (35). In other words, maroons remain relevant as both symbolic and historical figures for their real, complex, and even contradictory negotiations between slave communities, plantation owners, and colonial governments in pursuit of freedom.

As Neil Roberts demonstrates, this acknowledgement of maroons' special history in the Caribbean can revise the limited formulations of freedom and slavery often assumed by contemporary political theory. Drawing from James C. Scott's *The Art of Not Being Governed*, Roberts argues that maroons function as "heretical, non-state actors" who "cultivat[e] freedom on their own terms within a demarcated social space that allow[s] for the subversive speech acts, gestures, and social practices antithetical to the ideals of enslaving agents" (5). Maroons thus represent not only physical but also ideological opposition to the state and its slave institutions. The very act of flight—not simply the arrival at a destination or sustained state of being—challenges theories of freedom that assume freedom and slavery to be stable conditions (15). Roberts concludes that a theory of freedom based in marronage emphasizes continual flight, and suggests that "freedom materializes in the liminal and interstitial social space between our imaginings of absolute unfreedom and the zone of its opposite" (173-4). For my purposes, freedom as marronage emphasizes several characteristics of maroons and their legacies that will be central to my reading of literary maroons: the actions of historical Maroons establish "flight" as a movement that embeds both opposition and

accommodation, challenges commonplace notions of freedom and resistance, and threatens either to disrupt the state or to manufacture an alternative to it. While Roberts relies heavily on the Haitian maroon to theorize marronage and freedom, he insists that it is not a concept to be "provincializ[ed …] as relevant merely to Caribbean regional discourse" (14) and acknowledges that the term marronage "is a normative concept forged in a historical milieu, yet it has trans-historical utility" (4).

For these reasons, the maroon is an enduring trope in Caribbean fiction, serving as a vehicle for the imaginative reconstruction of the past and inspiration of continued resistance in the postcolonial present.[40] At the same time, however, I want to take care not to emphasize maroons' symbolism at the expense of their roles as historical actors and agents of resistance and rebellion. It is especially important to note the maroons' symbolic role in cultural discourse as well as their real and continued existence in postcolonial Jamaica, where the state continues "to deny the validity of the Maroons' claims regarding their special legal status and their right to self-determination, while at the same time continuing to pay tribute to the 'Maroon heritage' through periodic visits to present-day Maroon communities and other symbolic gestures" (Bilby 43). Perhaps underscoring Roberts's claims that marronage is a perpetual state of flight, present-day descendants of Maroons continue to exist in antagonistic relation to the state. My intention in elaborating both the historical and literary discourses surrounding marronage in the Caribbean is to augment the study of literary marronage by including insights

[40] The appeal of the maroon varies from writer to writer; Simon Gikandi, for example, uses the maroon as a metaphor for writing in the colonial context, asserting, "Like the slaves fleeing into the hills to establish autonomy, the modern Caribbean writer seeks to rework European forms and genres to rename the experience of the 'other' America" (20).

derived from marronage as it was and continues to be practiced. Through a study of marronage in *The Kingdom of This World* and *Life & Times of Michael K* that is attentive to the narratives' representation of history and time, I hope to undo some of the violence that is perpetuated when the maroon is relegated only to the symbolic plane. This approach will balance the maroon as a figure who is historically situated as well as a symbol that is, in Juris Silenieks' words, "timelessly recurrent" (122).

Flight, Freedom, and Formulations of Time: Maroon Characteristics

Although unusual at first glance, the proposal to link diverse times, spaces, and texts through the image of the maroon is not unprecedented in literary scholarship. In identifying marronage in *The Kingdom of This World* and *Life & Times of Michael K*, I build from scholars such as Neil Roberts as well as Barbara Lalla and Cynthia James, who conceptualize marronage in terms that are more general in order to identify maroon practices in fiction outside of the Caribbean. Drawing primarily from the archive of Jamaican fiction, Lalla creates a list of maroon attributes and character types derived and yet distinguished from the historical Maroons, including fugitives, strays, recluses, rejects, outcasts, and "rebels in physical or psychological wildernesses" (2). Marked in equal measure by displacement and resistance, the maroon, according to Lalla, is identifiable through a "withdrawal from the mainstream of civilization as defined by others, into the wilderness, to make a last stand for freedom" (2). Likewise, James ascertains both positive and negative markers of the maroon condition, including abandonment, an ambivalent relationship with the past, dispossession, survival skills and the continuation of ancestral practices, syncretism, resilience, and improvisation (15). If,

as James observes, the prototypical maroons are "the African slaves who harried the British during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from forested enclaves, eventually securing autonomous existence" (8), then the maroon's antagonistic opposition to the state, and the potential alternative social and political configurations that inhere in the founding of these autonomous communities, are central to the maroon's historic and symbolic significance.

The maroon's flight, then, involves a double movement: first, a move away from or rejection of slavery and its oppressive power structures, and second, a move toward or affirmation of contrasting principles or practices. Roberts likens the maroon communities to James Scott's "zones of refuge," which "describe maroons' regions of existence and cultivation away from state power" and are opposed "to the zones of governance and appropriation intrinsic to existing state regimes of slavery" (Roberts 5). According to Scott, zones of refuge offered shelter to maroons, but threatened the state, as these ungovernable zones "represented a constant temptation, a constant alternative to life within the state" (J. C. Scott 6). Although Scott's study is limited to southeast Asia, he maintains that the hill peoples in his study are "best understood as runaway, fugitive, maroon communities" (ix). In evading the state, the hill people adopted social and cultural practices such as mobility, egalitarianism, and orality that continued to aid them in resisting incorporation or capture (9). For my purposes in studying maroons in literature, I want to stress Scott's observation that practices or acts that stigmatize a community from one point of view, may from another perspective be seen as effective and deliberate strategies of resistance. The first characteristic of marronage that I stress in

my study of *The Kingdom of This World* and *Life & Times of Michael K* is thus deliberate isolation in opposition to an oppressive state.

The second characteristic of marronage as I conceptualize it here is the commitment to a struggle for freedom, with the recognition that freedom is, following Roberts and Scott, a state of continual flight from oppression rather than a place of achievement. This view is consonant with Edouard Glissant's discussion of the rhizome and marronage together. The rhizome is, Roberts summarizes, "a metaphor for Relation and lines of flight [that] explain[s] further the act of marronage as a continual process of becoming in order to underscore freedom as a relational concept" (166). The maroon's emblematic flight is anti-teleological, because lines of flight can change direction unpredictably, and privileges movement over destination. Following Deleuze and Guattari, rhizomatic marronage connotes an anti-hierarchical approach that resists binaries and the reinstantiation of the power dynamics the maroon has fled. This sense is consistent with Roberts's emphasis on flight as transitional and dynamic movement.

Although the maroon's relationship to space is typically highlighted in theorizations of marronage, the final characteristic that I want to emphasize is the maroon's relationship to time—not only the way that the maroon challenges the totalizing time of the modern state, but also the way that the maroon is produced and referenced in narratives to negotiate struggle in the postcolonial present. By absconding from slave plantations, maroons set themselves in opposition to slave plantations. While the plantations were not themselves state institutions, they were nevertheless colonial institutions dependent on the power and support of European states for their livelihood. Countries such as France and England instituted trade tariffs to protect the export prices

of their colonies' goods, and of course slavery was legally permitted by European countries through virtually the whole of the eighteenth century: England abolished the slave trade in 1807, and France abolished slavery in its colonies in 1794, reinstated the practice in 1802, and permanently abolished it in 1848. Though the jurisdiction of slave plantations was relatively limited, the plantation itself—drawing materials, labor, and technology from eastern North America, western Africa, Europe, and southern Asia—was "a global, not a regional, enterprise" (Richardson 38). By rejecting French rule, "abolish[ing] the plantation system in Haiti and stop[ing] the recruitment of slaves," the Haitian Revolution broke with colonial rule and the slave plantation system simultaneously (Stinchcombe 107).[41]

The relationship between the regimes of time on the plantation and the regimes of time in Europe are also intimately linked. By producing cash crops, the slave plantation's labor was controlled to maximize profit, and the slave's time was organized accordingly. Trade influenced temporal rhythms on a larger scale too; dependency on European ships to bring subsistence crops to the plantations produced, in the colonies, a sense of the seasons synchronized with trade. Bonham Richardson notes that "[t]he autumn hurricane season, when shipping was curtailed in the Caribbean, always was the 'hungry time' among the slaves. Then the Christmas season usually provided welcome relief as slave diets were enriched with fresh food imports" (Richardson 63). And the production of new temporal regimes, in the European country and colony alike, was not unidirectional; the

[41] The first leader of independent Haiti, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, attempted to sustain the plantation economy without slaves, and required that all citizens work as either soldiers or laborers. As Carpentier depicts through Ti Noël in *The Kingdom of This World*, the forced labor felt like the reinstitution of slavery to many Haitians.

sugar that flooded the European market led to the ritualization of tea times and coffee breaks in Europe, which

> helped to condition European working peoples to the punctuality and routine eventually demanded by the industrial revolution. In this way, the colonial Caribbean sugar-cane plantation, by providing capital surpluses, provided a critical stimulant that helped to feed and even socialize working-class Europeans in fulfilling their roles in a new economic order. (52)

Despite the disappearance of the slave plantation over the last three hundred years, the coffee break persists as a staple of the industrial and post-industrial economic order and its organization of workers' time.

Slave resistance took many forms to challenge the circumscription and control of the slave's space and time. Slaves used a range of tactics, including "emigration, mockery of planters, 'laziness,' and the establishment of independent village settlements" as well as "balking, malingering, feigned stupidity, self-inflicted wounds, and even suicide" (Richardson 160-1). Both marronage—absconding from plantations to establish autonomous communities—and deliberate idleness were tactics to withhold labor and disrupt the temporal regimes of the slave plantation and, by extension, the larger regimes of colonial time, power, and trade that shaped the slave's daily life in the eighteenth-century Caribbean.

I contend that the maroon signifies both spatial difference *and* temporal difference in its antagonistic relationship with colonial power and regimes of time. The term "temporal difference" is not meant to reproduce the Orientalizing tendencies of colonial

historiography that relegates colonial others to what Dipesh Chakrabarty calls the waiting room of history (*Provincializing* 9). Nor is it intended to collude with similar tendencies that Johannes Fabian identified in his classic *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, where he found that ideological and epistemological biases in anthropological scholarship entailed "the affirmation of difference as *distance*"—a distance comprised of spatial and temporal separation alike (16). This spatialization of time results in a progressive view of history that divides epochs into discrete units occurring sequentially. Instead, with the term "temporal difference" I intend to capture the ways that maroons positioned themselves to be deliberately disruptive to the totalizing temporality of the colonial state and the limited liberalism that inspired the French revolution's "liberté, egalité, fraternité," yet continued to withhold equal rights to free blacks and slaves alike.[42] By insisting that temporal difference is an integral characteristic of marronage, I recuperate the maroon's vexed relationship to the state's space and time. The European narrative of modernity, as Chakrabarty describes for the Indian context, mandated that the "primitive" colonial subject must wait to progress through stages of civilization before integration into world history as a modern political subject; the anticolonial response (and, I would add, the maroon response) was predicated on an interruption of this historical chronology. It is with the rejection of this appeal to wait, the refusal of the "not yet" of European liberalism, and the positing of different temporal modalities, that I begin my study of marronage in Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World.*

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[42] In this spirit, Article 4 of the 1987 Haitian Constitution establishes "liberté, egalité, fraternité" as the country's national motto.

Countertemporalities of *Kingdom*: History, Circularity, and Flight

In the retellings of the Haitian Revolution, writers have at their disposal a panoply of epic, heroic, and flawed characters to emphasize, celebrate, and critique. Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World* eschews the tendency to focus on famous figures, focalizing the narrative through the slave Ti Noël, whose name evokes the resistance of historical maroons. As Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert points out, Carpentier borrows the name Ti Noël from a real historical leader of maroon rebels, who temporarily pledged allegiance to Dessalines and ensured the success of the Revolution ("Haitian" 117). This suggestive choice links Carpentier's protagonist to the larger history of marronage in the Caribbean in general, and the role of maroons in the Haitian Revolution in particular.

Beginning with Carpentier's decision to borrow the name Ti Noël from the historical leader of rebel Haitian maroons, it becomes difficult to ignore the way that marronage shapes the novel—from moments of *petit-* and *grand-marronage*, to the direct depiction of the maroons Macandal[43] and Bouckman. Scholarship on the novel, however, tends to highlight the historical figures conspicuously absent from Carpentier's narrative; Paravisini-Gebert notes that by omitting details about Dessalines, the narrative maintains "cycles of oppression" and forecloses the possibility for independence to be "truly meaningful" ("Haitian" 123). Victor Figueroa explains that Toussaint L'Ouverture is absent from the text because he "does not fit into Carpentier's magical presentation of

[43] Other spelling variations of Macandal and Bouckman include Mackandal, Makandal, and Boukman; throughout this chapter I will use the variations that are consistent with Carpentier's fictional text. Where critics have used alternative spellings, I will maintain their variations.

history and the cosmos in his novel," but that in doing so the novel "seems to fall into the trap of denying the Haitian slaves the very capacity for rational political action" ("Kingdom" 62–3). These approaches to the text are useful starting points to understand Carpentier's manipulation of historical research and narrative, but by focusing on who or what is absent from the novel, they cannot fully account for the maroon presence that punctuates the novel and presents the possibility of breaking cycles of oppression through rational political action.

By analyzing marronage throughout the novel, I contest the dominant scholarly view that *Kingdom* is, ultimately, a pessimistic novel because of its cyclical representation of history's unending patterns of oppression. As Roberto Gonzalez Echevarría's influential *Alejo Carpentier: The Pilgrim at Home* aptly demonstrates, history is the "main topic in Carpentier's fiction," and his construction of history develops and changes across his literary works (25). While Echevarría shares with Kaisary and Paravisini-Gebert the position that the text's narrative endorses a cyclical view of history, he counters their pessimism through a mathematical close-reading of the text and chapters, noting that Carpentier adjusts the dates and days of the week to create an affinity for Sundays and Mondays, beginnings and endings of cycles, and puts Carnival at the center of the narrative's form. These changes create "a celebration which announces a beginning and marks an end, which momentarily suspends dissolution, hiding it and showing it at the same time" (149). Echevarría undercuts the potential for a wholly affirmative reading of the narrative, however, when he announces that Ti Noël and others are mere "functions within the mechanics of history," and that Ti Noël in particular is a "passive presence" who "is certainly not a protagonist in the sense of a

maker of events or a character who polarizes the action" (157, 135). In the first place, to recall David Scott's critique of romantic narratives of heroism, Echevarría's assessment of Ti Noël depends on a particular metric of resistance premised on a construction of power as a negative force that must be overcome in particular, active, and assertive ways. But resistance need not be configured in such narrow terms; as W.E.B. Du Bois suggested in the context of the United States, slaves refusing to work and fleeing—neither direct acts of insurrection—can change the tide of a war (Roberts 47).

More crucially, Ti Noël's acts of *petit-marronage* in the text, as well as his role in the sacking of Sans Souci, create links between the historical and fictional Ti Noël to position him as anything but a passive witness to the Revolution. Ti Noël is connected to marronage first through his historical namesake, and second, directly through his close relationship to Macandal. Unlike Ti Noël, Macandal's character shares much with his historical counterpart; Macandal was the most famous maroon in Saint Domingue, managing to avoid capture for anywhere between ten and eighteen years, and he was responsible for the poison campaign that ultimately led to his execution in 1758 (Geggus 75). Macandal the maroon, rather than Toussaint the soldier, becomes the heroic center of Carpentier's tale, the "true precursor of the struggle for independence" (Silenieks 117). Prior to his *grand-marronage* flight, Macandal spends time with Ti Noël, visiting the witch Maman Loi and learning the art of poison. Each *rendez-vous* is made possible by Ti Noël's own acts of *petit-marronage*, as he "would absent himself for hours from the Lenormand de Mézy plantation," using "bathing the horses" as his excuse (Carpentier 18).

The chapter that depicts Macandal's execution is titled "The Great Flight," recalling the language of marronage that is further reinforced in the description of his death: "The bonds fell off and the body of the Negro rose in the air, *flying overhead*, until it plunged into the black waves of the sea of slaves. A single cry filled the square: 'Macandal saved!'" (46, emphasis mine). Most critics read this scene for its use of what Carpentier calls the *real maravilloso*, the comingling of real and extraordinary elements in "'harmonious contradiction'" (Webb 18). But it is also the moment where Macandal's continued inspiration for Ti Noël and the other slaves is most clearly embodied in the figure of the maroon—not only through his purported escape, but also through the direct association of his escape with flight.[44]

After Macandal's death, the move toward maroon-led rebellion is reignited by the Jamaican Bouckman, who conducts a ceremony at Bois Caïman to create a pact between the gathered and the *loas* of Africa. Historical accounts corroborate Carpentier's depiction; however, Carpentier frames the ceremony by stressing that acts of *petit-marronage*—absconding in secret from plantations without permission—constitute the conditions of the ceremony's possibility in the first place: "In spite of the darkness, there was no possibility that a spy might have sneaked into the gathering. The word had been passed around at the last minute by men who could be trusted" (59). Ti Noël returns to his plantation before the overseer rises for the day, "sitting and singing" as if nothing had occurred the night before (63). *Petit-marronage* strategies create the space and time to

[44] In *Freedom as Marronage*, Roberts notes that the "public speech act [of 'Macandal saved!'] introduced the image of Makandal as a transcendent resister to slavery, forever reappearing throughout space and time like a specter, heralding a freedom to come" (101). He has the same role in Carpentier's text, in my view, but with the added emphasis on marronage as his mode of resistance.

plan a surprise insurrection, which will occur eight days after the Bois Caïman pact, and strike a balance between orderly execution and the element of surprise.

Ti Noël is present at all of these important moments leading up to the Haitian Revolution, and he is active through acts of *petit-marronage*. These short-term flights position him, in my view, as an already-active participant in the struggle. But additionally, the chapters that depict Ti Noël's life before the revolution underscore nascent, rebellious sentiments. After his master exits the barber's shop with freshly shaved and powdered cheeks, Ti Noël contemplates "how much [the dead cow's head he carried] probably resembled the bald head of his master hidden beneath his wig" (9). Earlier, the calves' heads occasioned Ti Noël's realization that "a wooden wall separated the two counters" of the tripe-shop and the barber's shop, and that the wax heads of white men shared the same tablecloth with the calves' heads (5). The recent events of the French Revolution cast an ominous shadow over this scene, although there is no indication that Ti Noël is aware of the violence across the Atlantic. Nevertheless, Ti Noël's ruminations create parallels between the beheaded calves and the beheaded Frenchmen, especially as de Mézy's face "bore a startling resemblance to the four dull wax faces that stood in a row along the counter, smiling stupidly" (9). The chapter closes with the master whistling a tune from his time as a petty officer, and Ti Noël "in a kind of mental counterpoint, silently humm[ing] a chanty that was popular among the harbor coopers, heaping ignominy on the King of England" (10). Ti Noël repeats the song when he flees the city under Henri Christophe's oppressive regime, creating parallels of oppression between the white colonial planters and the new Haitan king—*but also*

parallels of resistance and rejection through the musical counterpoint and physical flight (126).

The actual achievement of Haitian independence, however, occurs silently in the gap between parts two and three and is not witnessed directly by Ti Noël, who is laboring as a slave in Cuba. Rather than focusing narrowly on this omission, I am interested in Carpentier's use of the Cuban chapters to emphasize the role of the maroons in keeping the revolution alive. At the beginning of the chapter "The Ship of Dogs," Ti Noël learns that the French are transporting hundreds of mastiff dogs to Saint Domingue to chase down slaves and quell the rebellion (84). Successive pages recount events in Saint Domingue as learned from the Dufrené family's slaves, focusing on the arrival of Pauline Bonaparte on the island with her husband General Leclerc. Bonaparte's departure signals a shift back to Ti Noël's narrative, and the omniscient narrator relates, "The day the ship Ti Noël had seen rode into the Cap, it tied up alongside another schooner coming from Martinique with a cargo of poisonous snakes which the general planned to turn loose on the Plaine so they would bite the peasants who lived in outlying cabins and who gave aid to the runaway slaves in the hills" (97). The minor details of dogs to chase and snakes to stifle aid to fugitive slaves remind us that acts of marronage persist in Ti Noël's absence as the Haitian Revolution continues.

Importantly, *The Kingdom of This World* holds out the promises and possibilities of marronage even as Christophe and Dessalines begin new cycles of oppressive rule. When the new mulatto elite arrive to survey and appropriate the land, "hundreds of peasants were leaving their cabins […] to seek refuge in the hills. Ti Noël learned from a fugitive that farm work had been made obligatory […]" (170). Several details here are

significant. Images of marronage reappear with the flight to the hills for refuge, an escape that does not as much signal defeat or bowing to the fatalism of cyclical, oppressive history, but instead indicates a rejection of mandatory labor and the new rule. Importantly, the text observes that Ti Noël's informant is a fugitive; this designation places him in antagonistic relation to the state and its laws, and continues the practice of word-of-mouth networking among runaways, fugitives, and potential maroons. The threat of "this rebirth of shackles, this proliferation of suffering" causes Ti Noël to lose hope in resistance, and he attempts to follow Macandal's lead by turning himself into a bird, among other animals (172). His metamorphosis leads him to seek refuge and community with geese, described in the language of marronage, who "escaped the sack because the Negroes did not like their meat, and […] had lived as they pleased, all this time, among the canebrakes of the hills" (175). Ti Noël had "taken notice of their model habits when M. Lenormand de Mézy had attempted years before, without much success, to acclimate them" (175). The geese, however, reject Ti Noël, which Barbara Webb interprets as his "punishment for having betrayed the legacy of Mackandal; the rebel slave had undergone a series of metamorphoses to *serve* his people, not to forsake the world of men" (40).

I want to suggest that we can read this betrayal of Macandal in terms of marronage, specifically that Ti Noël and others have forgotten the revolutionary promise embodied in the act of flight, which was a movement with the potential to found alternative communities at odds with the colonial state by way of *grand-marronage*, or to spark a revolutionary overthrowing through moments of *petit-marronage*. The leaders of the Haitian Revolution faltered when they began to assume the same roles, practices, and pageantry of the ousted French planters, whereas the geese "denied all superiority of

individual over individual of the same species" and the oldest gander maintained order "after the manner of the king or head of the old African assemblies" (176). By harkening back to precolonial, African forms of government, Carpentier suggests that the new republic might draw on other models to prevent Haiti's establishment as a country modelled in France's image. Despite rejecting Ti Noël from their own ranks, the geese present a model of egalitarian community at odds with the former colonial state as well as Dessaline's new republic, and to which Ti Noël might aspire. Among the epiphanies that follow, Ti Noël realizes the value of struggling in the kingdom of this world and shouts a "new declaration of war against the new masters" (179). While we can presume that Ti Noël meets his end in old age and senility as the plantation crumbles and a storm rolls in, the novel concludes with one final image of renewal amid death, and flight: a vulture dries his wings in the sun before taking flight to Bois Caïman, the site of Bouckman's solemn pact that initiated the Haitian Revolution.

Idle Time: Laboring Against the State in *Michael K*

Unlike Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World*, whose engagement with historical time most critics acknowledge, reviewers of J.M. Coetzee's work, and *Life & Times of Michael K* in particular, have accused Coetzee of ahistorical allegorizing and passive disengagement.[45] Before offering a reading of Michael K as a maroon figure, I want to

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[45] Criticism on Coetzee frequently points to Nadine Gordimer's oft-cited review in the *New York Review of Books*, where she charged that Coetzee's protagonists "ignore history, not make it" ("Idea" 3). Interestingly, Gordimer also characterized *Life & Times of Michael K*'s temporality as "ultimate malaise," a time of suspension where history's course is utterly undetermined—what we might consider a kind of waiting that links Coetzee's earlier *Waiting for the Barbarians* with *Life & Times of Michael K*.

contextualize Coetzee's preoccupations in the novel—with waiting, history, time, and idleness—in light of his other writing projects in the 1980s. Published four years before *Life & Times of Michael K*, Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* announces on the first page that Colonel Joll's presence at the outpost is a consequence of a state of emergency and suspension in an unnamed, imaginary Empire. Composed entirely in the present tense, *Waiting for the Barbarians* tracks the Magistrate's complicated relationship with the Empire he serves, providing commentary on the nature of truth, confession, justice, and barbarity. The first half of the novel describes the Magistrate's preoccupation with another unnamed character—a barbarian girl—and the inaccessible story of her torture and history prior to arriving at his outpost. The text pivots on the Magistrate's decision to return the girl to the barbarians. After his return, Colonel Joll labels the Magistrate as a traitor, and he is imprisoned and tortured. He is released at the same time that the Empire's conscripts retreat following a failed offensive in the desert.

All of the alleged antagonistic interactions with the barbarians occur off-stage in the narrative; the guerilla tactics employed by the barbarians include misdirection, disorientation, cutting horses loose, eliminating the weak stragglers, and waiting for the Empire's soldiers to defeat themselves (Coetzee, *Waiting* 147). When the barbarians are first physically present in the narrative, which is focalized through the Magistrate, they are victims of torture whose confessions are engineered by the Empire to provide support for foregone conclusions. The "waiting" that preoccupies the Empire, that mandates more troops to be sent to the fort and disrupts the relative ease in which the Magistrate worked and waited for his retirement, is the Empire's own creation. Early in the novel, a young barbarian boy's father is tortured to death, and when it is the boy's turn, he confesses to

Joll's men that the barbarians are planning an imminent attack. This confession, elicited by torture, contradicts the old man's earlier statement that the two barbarians approached the Magistrate's outpost only for medical attention (3). Stunned, the Magistrate confronts the boy: "'They tell me you have made a confession. They say you have admitted that you and the old man and other men from your clan have stolen sheep and horses. You have said that the men of your clan are arming themselves, that in the spring you are all going to join in a great war on the Empire. Are you telling the truth? Do you understand what this confession of yours will mean?'" (*Waiting* 10–11). The Magistrate has already introduced doubt regarding the reliability of the confession; he questions how Colonel Joll can discern "the tone of truth" (5) in a man's voice, and notes that throughout his years on the frontier, he has never seen the unrest that the Empire insists must be prevented through "precautionary measures" (8). The Empire's anxious waiting for an imminent attack must be understood in the context of this coerced confession. Given that "once in every generation, without fail, there is an episode of hysteria about the barbarians" (8), this heightened sense of waiting is characteristic of the Empire's machinery and modus operandi; by insisting that the barbarians will attack—that they lie in wait—the Empire can justify its own preemptive measures and attacks.

While I identify waiting to be essential to the Empire's justification of its own use of preemptive force, other critics have instead turned to the characters and considered the ways that waiting marks an ethical engagement with the other. Drawing from the scene where the Magistrate washes the barbarian girl's feet, Patrick Hayes argues that the Magistrate enters an "anxious and productive state of 'waiting'" (62) that allows him, through the disorientation that attends the experience, to "become open to other ways of

perceiving—ways that had hitherto been felt to be 'nothing', or 'beside the point'" (70). The Magistrate's sense of time and space is here confused and suspended: "I lose myself in the rhythm of what I am doing. I lose awareness of the girl herself. There is a space of time which is blank to me: perhaps I am not even present. When I come to, my fingers have slackened, the foot rests in the basin, my head droops" (Coetzee, *Waiting* 28). Hayes's analysis cites the Heideggerian difference between awaiting, which anticipates and posits an object, and waiting, which is characterized by openness (30).[46] Although the temporality of "waiting" in *Waiting for the Barbarians* permits the Empire to suspend the rule of law and act preemptively to defeat the rumored barbarian threat, the Magistrate temporarily experiences waiting as a temporality where extreme openness to another means losing awareness of the girl as well as himself. Taken together, the empire and the Magistrate both evoke waiting to describe their positionality toward the barbarians; waiting indexes the empire's inflexible binary of self and other, and the Magistrate's tentative reworking and questioning of his own relationship toward the empire as well as the barbarian other. With *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Coetzee begins the 1980s, a time of emergency in South Africa, by developing in his novels a nuanced temporality of waiting so central to the discourse of empire that it is evoked by empire and its would-be challengers—or at least, ambivalent practitioners—alike.

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[46] Turning to the scene where the Magistrate interacts with the old barbarian man, Brian May makes a similar argument about the ethical possibilities that inhere in waiting. May writes, "Having auspiciously forgotten the question he was going to ask the old barbarian, he still waits for the old man, who remains still, to speak" (414). This waiting, in May's view, "displays an ethical alternative to empire: a kind of waiting that represents at once the relaxation of the imperial will and the achievement of authentic openness to others."

At the same time that he was drafting *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Life & Times of Michael K*, Coetzee was also at work on non-fiction essays that would be eventually collected in the 1988 collection *White Writing: On the Culture of Letters in South Africa*. The first chapter, "Idleness in South Africa," describes the evolution, in the Cape, of the discourse of idleness, which was first ascribed to the Hottentot natives, and then denounced in European settlers (Coetzee, *White* 35). Influenced by the European Reformation's emphasis on work over idleness, the discourse of idleness on the Cape excluded natives from the civilizational paradigm that leads "from Adam via a life of toil to civilized man" (25). Idleness marks a lack of self-improvement and a sinful nature. Implicit is a judgment on idle time, which for the native is spent "sleeping, while among other savages who have passed through the toolmaking revolution free time becomes leisure" (25). Because of its scandalizing illegibility to colonial settlers, idleness, Coetzee suggests, evinces colonial anxiety (34). Rejecting the labor economy of European settlers and ethnographers, idleness becomes "an authentically native response to a foreign way of life, a response that has rarely been defended in writing, and then only evasively" (35). This "unreadable" idleness in the Cape system of signification marks a limit of comprehension and as such, is a site of anxiety.[47]

Both idleness and waiting are coded as unreadable in Coetzee's work, and in their instability, they present possibilities for reading difference or resisting the imposition of meaning. Coetzee's interest in waiting can be traced at least as far back as his doctoral

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[47] See also Clifton C. Crais's *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa*, which also affirms that "[f]rom the end of the 1820s Africans were increasingly represented [by the British-settler elite] as libidinous, uncontrolled, lazy and disrespectful. […] The growth of negative appraisals initially centered on two issues […] violations of private property ('thievishness') and the unwillingness of Africans to labour for whites ('indolence')" (129).

dissertation on Samuel Becket, the Irish novelist and playwright whose *Waiting for Godot* Coetzee references in "Eight Ways of Looking at Samuel Beckett." There is a clear limit to how much "God or Godot" could discover about an Other, Coetzee illustrates in his characteristically enigmatic language, and waiting is the ambivalent time that points to that gap:

> Let us call him God or Godot, the little God. How much can this God, with his nuts and tubes and boxes, find out about me, and what if anything will be left that he cannot know? […] God thinks I spend my time waiting for him to arrive with his apparatus for testing my limits. […] I cannot leave, there is nothing for me to do but wait. But I am not seriously waiting for God. Rather I am occupying time while I wait for him. What God does not understand is this "not seriously" with which I wait for him, this "not seriously" which looks like a mere adverbial, like "patiently" or "idly"—I am patiently waiting for God, I am idly waiting for God—not a major part of the sentence, not the subject or the predicate, just something that has casually attached itself to the sentence, like fluff. (Coetzee, "Eight" 20)

Coetzee's remarks are worth quoting at length because of the economy of equivalences he establishes between waiting and idleness. "Idly" can attach to waiting without changing its appearance for an outside observer. Likewise, whether one patiently or idly waits, the attitude one takes during the time of waiting is neither directly experienced nor unequivocally knowable by an Other.

In his study of the manuscript revisions of *Waiting for the Barbarians*, David Attwell discovers that during the process of writing, Coetzee "realized that [*Waiting for the Barbarians*] was about 'waiting for a desire which does not come because one is waiting for it. *Waiting for Godot* is about waiting for a subject' (24 Oct. 1978)" ("Writing" 215). This is the difference between waiting and awaiting that Hayes identifies in *Waiting for the Barbarians*, and between what Mike Marais calls non-intentional and intentional waiting. In his reading of waiting in Samuel Beckett and J.M. Coetzee, Marais references Maurice Blanchot to argue that waiting can be mobilized to indicate "a passivity that is not simply the opposite of subjective action but a product of the absence of a subject who intends and acts" (11). Like idleness, embodied waiting is scandalous because of its refusal to be read as active or passive, and its potential to disrupt systems of meaning. This "discourse of waiting," Laura Wright observes, is shared by both *Waiting for the Barbarians* and *Life & Times of Michael K* (*Writing* 94).

By the time Coetzee was writing the later *Life & Times of Michael K*, waiting had accumulated various valences in Coetzee's work; waiting is related to idleness, called forth in the time of Empire through the suspension of law, but also a temporality that permits ethical engagement with the other. *Life & Times of Michael K* recounts the eponymous character's birth—born with a harelip and classified as "not quick" (4)—his attempt to return his dying mother to the mythic farmland of her youth, and his evasions and escapes, from hospitals, labor and refugee camps. Unlike *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *Life & Times of Michael K* is largely written in the past tense, but the narrative

paradoxically produces an openness to time rather than a sense of time foreclosed.[48] In Cape Town with his mother, frustrated by "waiting for permits" that "would never come," Michael K's narrative announces, "Now was the time" (18). The tension produced by the "now," an indicator of the present moment, and the past tense of "was" creates "an indeterminant [sic], endless newness, a resistance to other defining restrictions beyond the narrative attachment 'was'" (Heider 83). The past tense is unable to capture the slipperiness of "now," yet the present is "more elusive, for it exists perpetually, yet cannot be recorded, for it is gone as soon as it arrives" (Heider 83). As *Life & Times of Michael K* progresses, Michael K begins to inhabit this temporality more and more, opening himself up to time and embracing the possibilities of idleness.

Interpretations of the novel that speculate on Michael K's import for political critique, however, tend to emphasize his relationship to space over his relationship to time. Often, scholars turn to Giorgio Agamben's theorization of the state and bare life to understand Michael's continual incorporation and rejection by the state. Agamben argues that the *homo sacer*, the sacred man "who may be killed but yet not sacrificed," is integral to modern politics (Agamben 8). The bare life that marked the limit of sovereign

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[48] The third-person narration is conducted in the past tense, but there are meaningful slips into other tenses in Michael K's speech and thoughts through free indirect discourse, which characterizes the first and third parts of the novel (Easton 592). The use of the past tense becomes increasingly unstable as the narrative progresses. Erin Mitchell observes that by the novel's final pages, Michael K "astonishes the reader by thinking in modal auxiliaries expressing obligation and the conditional," and this is significant because Michael K is able "to remember, imagine and represent his past and future gardens" and reconcile his relationship to the masculine and feminine symbolic orders (Mitchell 99). Ashraf Jamal references *Life & Times of Michael K* along with Ivan Vladislavić's novel *The Folly* as manifestations of future-anterior tense, where the "'*will-have-been* […] replaces the stable-self-contained temporality of the 'past', 'present' and 'future' tenses'" ("Bullet" 13). In Jamal's view, this future-anterior tense is opposed to the "linear logic" that does not capture the "new and emergent (hybrid) moments in South African literature" (13). The discussion below, with reference to critic Timothy Wright and the temporal anteriority of the modern state, suggests some constraints of the temporal mode.

power has become gradually and increasingly included through states of exception, which have also become the rule (9). This process is realized fully in the space of the camp, where the state of exception is normalized (168). Coetzee's novel does concern a man, marked and consistently set apart, confronting the mechanism of the apartheid state through run-ins at check points and camps; these thematic links between Agamben's political theory and Coetzee's literary text help to "explain why, four decades after its first publication, a never-ending stream of commentaries still, and in vain, attempt to stitch up Michael K into the latest nomenclatures of 'bare life' and '*homo sacer*'" (van Niekerk 22). Buelens and Hoens are indebted to Agamben's theorization of the state of exception and the rule in their reading of Michael K as a figure "'above and beneath classification'" (57). Likewise, Catherine Mills reads *Michael K* for his role as "a figure of 'bare life', of a life exposed fundamentally to violence in the ban of the law" (184). And Timothy Wright interprets Michael K's resistance "in light of current theoretical concerns with issues of sovereignty and the state (raised by, among others, Hardt and Negri and Agamben)" (55). Scholarship on *Life & Times of Michael K* tends to apply concepts from European political theory, with the effect that the theory dictates the way power is configured as well as the ways one might resist or escape. Michael K becomes at best a figure of resistance or refusal in his evasion of the apartheid state, and at worst a site for Western political theory to illuminate its own assumptions about state power.

Coetzee's own interest in state power circles around its ubiquity and the difficulty one encounters in trying to think of alternatives to it. As Rita Barnard notes, Coetzee is preoccupied with the temporality that inheres in our understanding of ourselves as state subjects; the state is an utterly naturalized idea that appears prior to us and to which we

are, in Coetzee's words, "'born subject'" (Barnard, "Tsotsis" 543). If, as Barnard summarizes, "[w]e cannot reverse the narrative of our acquiescence and think entirely outside the structures of the state," we can nevertheless employ alternative generic modalities, such as the fable or the allegory, to "imagine the unimaginable." Timothy Wright agrees that Coetzee's interest lies in the "narrative form taken by the state," and that that state's "production of its own temporal anteriority" is central to its function (57). The interest in exposing the mechanisms of temporal anteriority may explain Coetzee's use of the past tense; Michael K is consistently hailed by state actors as a thief, a deserter, or a terrorist, and each of these words names a specific, but deviant, relationship to state power. Yet Michael K's descriptions of his own day-to-day experiences, specifically his idleness, are at odds with the temporality the state assumes and imposes. Michael K's mode of refusal is more than simply an evasion of the space of the camp or the logic of the checkpoint, but also a rejection of the state's apparatus of time and history.

Michael K's sense of time puts him at odds with the state and the logic of capitalistic labor, which privileges productivity and condemns idleness. After returning to the Visagie farm and taking up residence in the cave, Michael K remarks that the sound of fighter jets seem to come from "the other time in which the war had its existence," but as for himself, "he was living beyond the reach of calendar and clock in a blessedly neglected corner, half awake, half asleep" (*Life* 116). Living outside of state power, here, is determined not only by physical distance from centers and agents of power, but also by *temporal* distance, where the clock and calendar have not yet penetrated. In citing the clock and calendar specifically, Coetzee's novel presciently identifies the same mechanisms that Benedict Anderson argues underlie the temporality of the modern state.

In *Imagined Communities*, published the same year as *Life & Times of Michael K*, Anderson argues that the nation-state's temporality is shaped by the conception of "'homogeneous, empty time,' in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar" (24). In placing himself outside of those strictures, Michael K resists the mechanisms necessary for imagining the modern nation-state. Instead, he explicitly refuses to "master time" or "impose a personal frame of reference onto the things exterior to him" (Monson 95).

As a result, Michael K's sense of the past and the future is at odds with the temporality of the state. His apparent idleness and extreme focus on the immediate present yields a radical open-endedness toward the future. Once his mother dies, the vague notions of what Michael K will do next and where he will go dissolve into aimless wandering and indefinite pauses. The idleness he will embrace on the farm and in the veld is prefigured in the text's earlier description of his first experience with unemployment. Michael K leaves his first gardening post for reasons unspecified, and spends a "spell of unemployment […] lying on his bed and looking at his hands" (4). Later, Michael K will describe freedom in terms of idleness and the absence of work, in the same paragraph where he delineates the time on the farm from the time of war:

> But most of all, as summer slanted to an end, he was learning to love idleness, idleness no longer as stretches of freedom reclaimed by stealth here and there from involuntary labour […] but as a yielding up of himself to time, to a time flowing slowly like oil from horizon to horizon over the face of the world […]. (115)

As Sarah Heider notes, Coetzee also explores this contrast between labor and idleness in *White Writing* (95). Michael K's idleness, however, is not "a betrayal of humanity," as the discourse of idleness on the Cape asserted, but rather "divorced from his economic status," separating value and labor (Heider 96). As Coetzee makes clear in recounting Michael K's time on the farm, this "idleness" includes acts of gardening and tending to his pumpkins. What sets this idle time apart is the way Michael K refuses to master or own the land. Michael K's desertion of "involuntary labour" and refusal to possess the land as private property echo early accounts of African laborers who fled the British settlement of Theopolis in South Africa. Clifton Crais recounts that in the 1820s, these "refugees frequently squatted on unused or unclaimed land and established, like mission stations, 'artificial communities' where they violated private property rights and lived 'in a state of idleness without possessing property sufficient for their subsistence'" (131). Those who escaped conditions of unfree labor were called *drosters*, and included "runaway slaves, deserted sailors, absconding soldiers" and others in the Cape, forming "groups, bound together in a particular form of resistance to oppression—flight" (Penn 41). In the Cape, just as in Haiti, the mountainous geography "beckoned to fugitives, offering […] a wild and alluring place of refuge seemingly removed from colonial control" (Penn 41). Through his refusal to "work" and to possess the land, as well as his flight from unfree labor, Michael K draws on tactics of resistance with a long history in South Africa.[49]

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[49] For further accounts of slavery and Cape, see the edited collection *Slavery in South Africa: Captive Labor on the Dutch Frontier*, and in particular Richard C.-H. Shell's "The Tower of Babel" and Fred Morton's introduction "Slavery and South African Historiography." Shell notes that "[t]oo many slaves of the same origin in one holding increased the risk of flight or rebellion.[…]newly arrived slaves tended to run away in groups to reach 'home' together" (20).

The refusal to work, as Kathi Weeks notes in *The Problem With Work*, "can make time and open spaces—both physical and conceptual—within which to construct alternatives" to capitalism's organization and imposition of work (100). "The utopian aspect of the refusal to work," Weeks elaborates, is "its insistence that we struggle toward and imagine the possibilities of substantial social change," where "paths to alternative futures" can be opened (101). Michael K's idleness is characterized instead by an openness to time that neither dwells on making sense of the past nor anticipates the future in concrete terms. Whereas the "ordering of knowledge and history associated with society require fixing references to break the ceaseless flows of time," Michael K welcomes the flow of time (Heider 91). When there is work to do, Michael K is indifferent because "it was all the same" (Coetzee, *Life* 115); leisure and labor are indistinguishable outside of the labor economy.[50]

Michael K's sense of time frustrates all of the state agents he encounters. To the roadblock guards who ask him to wait, he replies, "'I don't want to stop, I don't have time'" (40). Although he is forced to work on the railway tracks for a few days, Michael K escapes "[w]ithout waiting […] duck[ing] through a hole in the fence" (44). His sense

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[50] In addition to Coetzee's *White Writing*, see also Richard Waller's "Rebellious Youth in Colonial Africa" for an historical account of youth, defiance, leisure, and labor. In the 1940s, unemployed male South African youths, "able-bodied but idle, were especially suspect in the eyes of the virtuous, their poverty wilful and morally threatening" (Waller 86). Waller notes that colonial rule promoted "the ideals of productive masculinity, tamed by work and made responsible through the obligations of marriage and citizenship, and of modern wifehood and motherhood that taught girls the disciplines of a new but still subordinate domesticity" (78). Michael K's "idle time," spent tending to his plants, not only opposes the colonial regime's "productive masculinity," but also the dichotomy of male labor and female nurturing. We might also fruitfully read Michael K's gardening in light of the history of mission gardens in South Africa. Jean and John Comaroff describe a scene where Tswana men ask the white missionaries why their garden is more productive than their own fields. The missionaries respond, "'Your idleness'" (278). The Comaroffs note that this episode served "as a lesson in the contrast of 'labour' and 'idleness'—and, no less, in the relative value of male and female work," especially because Tswana men's "political and ritual exertions [did] not signif[y] 'work' to the missionary eye" (278).

of urgency derives less from a sense of things he must do, and more from a sense of how he must be: outside the reach of the state and its temporality. In the rehabilitation camp, Michael K is continually pressed to tell the truth and answer a battery of questions ranging from the political to the philosophical and temporal: "What is your stake in the future?" (140). Once again, Michael K refuses to comment or elaborate. His sense of time is stubbornly irreducible to the time of state, but also irreducible to seasonal or natural cycles. Although Michael K's first visit to the farm finds him living "by the rising and setting of the sun, in a pocket outside time," by the second time he arrives he "kept no tally of the days nor recorded the changes of the moon" (60, 115). Michael K seems to pass his time in a state of non-intentional waiting, a waiting characterized by an openness to the future without dictating what the future will bring. While Heider notes that Michael K, in the narrative, "is removed from recorded time, from language, and from work," the implication of her passive-voice construction is that Michael K is not deliberate or intentional in his actions (84). But on the contrary, Michael K moves constantly and evinces a deliberate intention to seek out both spaces and times more amenable to his sense of freedom.

Michael K's nomadism and acts of escape constitute his resistance. Though Michael K does not articulate, to potential interlocutors, an affirmative theory of freedom, we can nevertheless look to how freedom is negatively defined in the narrative through his decisive acts of escape; what Michael K does not prefer can give insight into his predilections. When Michael K first leaves the Visagie farm, it is because the Visagie grandson "tried to turn him into a body-servant" (65). Although less explicit than Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*, Coetzee's novel also suggests through Michael K that the old

structures of power and relation are no longer applicable. When Michael K refuses to carry on in the same manner as the Visagies, resisting a "reenactment of their misfortunes" by establishing "a new house, a rival line" (Coetzee, *Life* 104), Coetzee "engages with and writes, through the lens of the pastoral […] the larger ideological underpinnings of the modern state as such" (T. Wright 58). The time of emergency is also a time when established and traditional social roles can be suspended or reconstituted. In a small italicized section on refusal in their classic *Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri link Melville's Bartleby with Coetzee's Michael K, noting that both are figures "of absolute refusal," but Bartleby is passive where Michael K is "always on his feet, always moving" (203). Both Bartleby and Michael K, in their refusal to work, signal "the beginning of liberatory politics," but stop short of "construct[ing] a new mode of life and above all a new community" (204). In my view, however, Coetzee's emphasis on Michael K's alternative sense of time constitutes a first step toward constructing a new mode of life—a mode of life where waiting and idleness are modalities of refusal, resistance, and a kind of freedom.

Michael K also escapes from the Jakkalsdrif resettlement camp and infirmary, which are additionally significant spaces where staff and medical officers attempt to interpret him, fill in his history, and make sense of his intentions. At the infirmary, the Medical Officer's struggle to diagnose and to help Michael K constitutes the entirety of the novel's second part, where the narrative shifts to the officer's first-person perspective. Although many critics have noted and discussed Michael K's extreme illegibility to the officer, part two also demonstrates the effect Michael K has on others and their own senses of time. His very presence at the infirmary is disruptive to the Medical Officer and

camp commander Noël, who struggle to get the "truth" about Michael K from his own lips and find themselves instead reassessing the relationship between truth and lies. When Noël balks at signing his name to a fabricated report, the Medical Officer responds, "'It's not a lie, Noël. There is probably more truth in the story I told you than you would ever get out of Michaels if you used thumbscrews on him'" (141). Michael K becomes a figure of refusal—refusing to eat and refusing to confess. The Medical Officer struggles to understand the significance of the refusal, asking, "Why? Are you fasting? Is this a protest fast? Is that what it is? What are you protesting against? Do you want your freedom?" (145). Because the soldiers and police persistently assume Michael K is an insurgent giving aid to rebels in the mountains, they can only imagine his "protest" as a direct response in opposition to the state, choosing one side instead of the other in a binary opposition. But in fact, Michael K's refusal to signify puts him "at odds with the discourse of war. [...] Michael K, always attempting to escape, exists outside of such categorizations" (L. Wright, *Writing* 89). In the same way, the camps attempt to fix freedom and imprisonment as opposing nodes, as if the matter could be settled merely by the presence of a fence. In the hospital ward, Noël is perplexed that Michael K was malnourished despite "'living by himself on that farm of his free as a bird, eating the bread of freedom'" (146). Likewise, at Jakkalsdrif camp, the guards are emphatic that "'[t]his isn't a prison,'" despite the fact that Michael K will be punished with penal servitude in Brandvlei camp if he is found to be vagrant again, and that he will be shot if he attempts to climb the fence (78). In order to make sense of Michael K's refusal and the form of resistance he embodies, we need a framework or paradigm that will account for his ambivalent relationship to the various "sides" in the war, his constant movement, the

way he frustrates the easy delineation of freedom and unfreedom, and his developing sense of time.

If we read Michael K in the tradition of marronage, we can better understand the way Coetzee reworks the concepts of freedom and resistance in *Life & Times of Michael K*, and the role of waiting in configuring Michael K's counter-temporality. If we revisit the characteristics of marronage developed in the first part of this chapter, we can see that Michael K fulfills the criteria of deliberate isolation, of seeking freedom in flight, and of reconfiguring the totalizing time of the state. His escape from Jakkalsdrif is instructive in all three regards; he scales the camp's fence and trembles "with the thrill of being free" (97). At the same time, each subsequent fence he encounters reminds him that his sense of freedom is contingent, and that he is "a trespasser as well as a runaway" (97). When Michael K contemplates the meaning of freedom in the novel's third part, he concludes, "Perhaps the truth is that it is enough to be out of the camps, out of all the camps at the same time" (182). The changing landscape of South Africa in the novel ensures that the space outside of the camps will be a constantly shifting environment, requiring Michael K to be on the move or in flight always. Like historical maroons, Michael too escapes to the mountains. Here, his sense of time again is influenced by idleness: "He spent a day in idleness, sitting in the mouth of his cave gazing up at the farther peaks on which there were still patches of snow. […] When he awoke in the morning he faced only the single huge block of the day, one day at a time" (66). Michael K acknowledges that previously, he relied on other people in positions of authority to give him orders, but "now there was no one, and the best thing seemed to be to wait" (67).

The possibility of waiting expresses, for Michael K, a freedom outside the confines of the work day in the Cape or the camp. Concerning *Waiting for the Barbarians*, Patrick Hayes notes that the novel is "truly amenable to an anti-foundational imagining of moral community—one that, like the Magistrate himself, is placed in a sustained condition of 'waiting,'" and that freedom is experienced "as a continued slipping of the chains" (71). The relationship between waiting and freedom is similarly configured in *Life & Times of Michael K* through idleness, which renders Michael illegible to the state that would like to incorporate him in its system of meaning. In this, Michael K is a mystery to himself, admitting that his story is "full of the same old gaps that he would never learn how to bridge" (176). He is utterly resistant to interpretation and unable "to interpretively colonise himself," which in Timothy Wright's view "makes him a problematic subject not only within the context of the South Africa state, but, potentially, for any future state" (72). Rita Barnard comes closest to reading Michael K as a maroon figure when she writes that the "brilliance of the survival strategy Michael K devises is that he finds a way to reclaim displacement and tracklessness as a form of freedom" (*Apartheid* 31). Even within the camps, Michael K exhibits a sense of time hostile to the state by slowing down or refusing to work.

To recall Coetzee's writing on idleness on the Cape, the discourse of idleness separated natives from colonists based on the perception that the natives wasted their time doing nothing (11). Coetzee remarks that in European writers' travel ethnographies, "the Hottentot is indolent, spending his 'free' time sleeping, while among other savages who have passed through the toolmaking revolution free time becomes leisure, time devoted 'industriously' to the elaboration of 'conveniences'" (25). The parallels between

the native constructed through the discourse of idleness and the novel's characterization of Michael K are difficult to miss; Michael K spends much of his time on the farm, in the camp, and at Sea Point sleeping, and in the Jakkalsdrif camp, Robert presses him, "'You've been asleep all your life. It's time to wake up'" (88). To help him cope, Robert advises Michael K to slow down with his work, since he will be paid one rand for his day's work no matter the output: "'Just go slow. […] They can't make you do what you can't do'" (87). Other times, Michael refuses to work entirely, telling the guard, "'I don't want to work. Why do I have to work? This isn't a jail" and "When I need to eat, I'll work'" (85). Michael K's refusal posits a temporality that is in sync with the rhythm of his body rather than the ticking of the clock; by inhabiting this temporal mode, Michael K's decision to work or not is utterly unpredictable. In effect, Michael K's idleness in the camp forces others to wait, which as Pierre Bourdieu discerns in another context, "is an integral part of the exercise of power" (228).

Although Michael K does not take up arms for the insurgency or react in expected ways to protest the state and its emergency powers, his continual flight from the state's camps, hospitals, and roadblocks shares affinities with marronage and its attendant formulation of freedom. The Medical Officer learns that from an early age, Michael K dreamed of the freedom of flight. Of life in Huis Norenius, Michael K remembers, "'I used to think about flying. I always wanted to fly. I used to stretch out my arms and think I was flying over the fences and between the houses. I flew low over people's heads, but they couldn't see me'" (133). In Michael K's imagination, flying would enable him to bypass the barriers of fences, which create separations and boundaries, and to inhabit in-between spaces without settling in a single home.

In all his incommensurability and illegibility, Michael K nevertheless gestures toward another way, another mode of existence that causes the Medical Officer to reassess his role in the war. Whereas Michael K is initially read in terms of waste—wasting away, wasting his time in idleness, doing nothing—his escape from the hospital ward prompts the officer to reflect, "I was wasting my life […] I was wasting it by living from day to day in a state of waiting […] I had in effect given myself up as a prisoner to this war" (157). The temporality of waiting imposed by the war makes prisoners of the guards, upsetting commonplace conceptions of freedom. Noël too, the Medical Officer remembers, once described war-time as "a time of waiting," where one must "wait, going through the motions of living, fulfilling one's obligations" (158). At the same time, the officer acknowledges that not everyone necessarily experiences waiting in this way, since the nurse Felicity does not seem to "think of herself as a castaway *marooned* in a pocket of time, the time of waiting, camp time, war-time" (158, emphasis mine). Still, the Medical Officer adds parenthetically, "(Or do I underestimate Felicity?)" to maintain the inaccessibility of an individual's experience of time. What *Life & Times of Michael K* suggests is that wartime may indeed be a time of waiting, but that the waiting is experienced differentially and individually. For Noël, the Medical Officer, and others employed in the state's interests, the waiting makes them more beholden to power as "prisoners" waiting for the next order. But for Michael K, waiting is manifested in idleness, which challenges the state that commands him to work, and frees him to embrace an indeterminate, open future.

Lines of Flight: States of Freedom in Marronage

Ti Noël and Michael K, despite the vast distances in space and time between Carpentier's 1949 fictionalization of the Haitian Revolution and Coetzee's 1983 novel set during the Emergency in South Africa, share a commitment to freedom and the future through their affirmation of flight and marronage. For *The Kingdom of This World*, marronage offers a way of reading the novel's historical and revolutionary investments through the evocation of real life maroons and the continual reference to maroons and runaways that give the plot its shape. Flight is central to Carpentier's novel, not only in the textual metaphors recalling flight and birds, but also through acts of *petit-* and *grand-marronage* that foment the Haitian revolution. For *Life & Times of Michael K*, the strategies of marronage that Michael K adopts enable his mode of resistance, allowing us to read his temporal mode as refusal in the context of the Cape's discourse of idleness. Both characters are marked by their ostensible passivity, but reading the texts in terms of marronage reveals accents of active opposition. Their respective deliberate, intentional acts are disruptive to state or colonial power, exposing the underpinnings of the state mechanism even if not directly or successfully abolishing it. But where Ti Noël and the other Haitian revolutionaries seem to have forgotten the revolutionary promise embodied in the act of flight, Michael K's relentless movements and escapes permit him a kind of freedom in flight.

Reading Michael K as a maroon figure allows us to return to *Kingdom* with the notion of marronage's association with waiting. Michael K embraces waiting as idleness in his refusal to work or to follow the expected patterns of time dictated by the labor camp work day or even the natural cycles of the moon. To wait can also mean to lie in

wait with hostile intent or ambush, or to look forward or continue in expectation ("Wait, v. 1"). Both meanings are applicable to the practice of marronage derived from the Haitian Revolution, where survival strategies included ambushing plantations and waiting for opportune moments to launch offensives, as well as a commitment to an alternative, free future. Like the act of waiting, which can be experienced as a suspension of time between past and present, marronage can also disrupt the naturalized progression of time associated with the temporal regimes of nation-states.

The temporality assumed by state structures, according to James Scott, "consists of a historical series arranged as an account of economic, social, and cultural progress," and the structures of maroon societies, like the hill peoples he studies, are illegible as agents of deliberate choice when confronted with the state's "powerful civilizational narrative" (187). The theory and practice of marronage illuminates not only the totalizing temporality of the state, but also the varied ways resistance to it might be embodied through flight. If the philosophy of marronage is, following Glissant and Roberts, one of continual becoming and movement and "counter to the idea of fixed, determinate endings" (Roberts 174), then marronage opposes the temporality of the modern nation-state. The modern state naturalizes its existence by professing "to give political expression" to nations that "always loom out of an immemorial past, and still more important, glide into a limitless future" (Anderson 11-12). Marronage's alternative sense of time as becoming is similarly developed by Elizabeth Grosz, whose *Time Travels* rereads Charles Darwin's work to suggest that the temporality of evolutionary unfolding involves "a fundamentally open-ended system which pushes toward the future with no real direction, no promise of any particular result, no guarantee of progress or

improvement, but with every indication of inherent proliferation and transformation" (*Time* 26). The emphasis on "a fundamental openness of time to futurity" runs throughout Grosz's work, and "becoming" in particular is central to her theory of time as an "opening up" (*Becomings* 3). Ti Noël and Michael K share an affinity for non-intentional waiting, in the sense that they are open to the future without explicitly anticipating how the future will become manifest. The mode of non-intentional waiting is, in this way, compatible with the philosophy of marronage and its temporality of being and becoming.

This chapter, together with chapter 1, considered novels set during revolutions and anticolonial movements, or anti-Apartheid struggles for freedom and black-majority rule. Thus far, we have observed the way that refusing to wait was a response to the waiting-room model of history, which characterized colonial regimes of time and in turn affected what kind of future—if any at all— the text is able to anticipate or imagine. Waiting can be an oppressive and limiting temporal experience, as Salim in *A Bend in the River* illustrates, but waiting can also be a tactic or practice of resistance, as this chapter's discussion of marronage suggested. The following chapter builds from these insights but pivots to a new context: postcolonial disillusionment in the second half of the twentieth century. Although Michael K and Ti Noël, as maroon figures, couple flight with a spatial and temporal politics of resistance, chapter 3 explores to what extent the temporal experience of waiting can empower the protagonists in novels of disillusionment. This discussion raises the following questions: If refusing to wait was central to anticolonial nationalist movements' urgent insistence for independence, could waiting possibly signify differently after independence had been achieved? How might gendered ideas about waiting, women, and passivity generate new critiques of postcolonial states,

illuminate their failings, and also trouble the association of waiting with passivity and femininity?

CHAPTER 3

GENDERED TIMESCAPES OF WAITING: PATIENCE AND URGENCY IN ARMAH'S *FRAGMENTS* AND DESAI'S *CRY, THE PEACOCK*

"The anteriority of the nation, signified in the will to forget, entirely changes our understanding of the pastness of the past, and the synchronous present of the will to nationhood."—Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*

"As Homi Bhabha points out in his work on nationhood, these performances of synchrony may seem to consolidate collective life, but the coherence they provide is fragile."—Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds*

Postcolonial Novels of Disillusionment

To date, the label "novels of disillusionment" has been applied almost exclusively to fiction from the African continent that reflects the disappointment resulting from several unrealized hopes: for a full representative government after independence, a unified nation and state, an even promotion of political, social, and economic welfare across all segments of society, and a cultural, institutional, and political break with the colonial past. Despite the initial euphoric optimism of independence, the fiction of the immediate postcolonial period depicts the struggles of the people, still waiting for these promises to be fulfilled. As Joe E. Obi remarks in "A Critical Reading of the Disillusionment Novel," fiction from "the 'disillusionment' period. […] engage[s] postindependence African reality in a critical way," and levels criticism at the "indigenous ruling elite" who exploited the masses and often exacerbated intra-national conflict (400, 402). Arthur Ravenscroft's early 1969 account of the proliferation of disillusionment themes, "Novels of Disillusion," was published less than a decade after large swaths of the African

continent acquired independence, and focused his discussion on Chinua Achebe's 1966 novel *A Man of the People* and Wole Soyinka's 1965 novel *The Interpreters*. More recent work, such as Derek Wright's 2004 "African Literature and Post-Independence Disillusionment," argues that "high-sounding rhetoric" at independence predominated where "framing political principles or social visions" ought to have guided, which made it "not surprising" that independence was an uneven process, benefitting a handful of professional elites ("African" 797). Indeed, writing in 1976, the Ghanaian writer Kofi Awoonor remarked that Ayi Kwei Armah, among other African writers, seemed "to epitomize this era of intense despair" (303–4). Thus, Armah's novels, beginning with his first, *The Beautfyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, have long been associated with postcolonial disillusionment. Neil Lazarus's *Resistance in Postcolonial African Fiction*, a study of Armah's fiction, contends that Armah's work is "exemplary of the passage from messianism to disillusion," marking the disappointment that succeeded the euphoria of independence (x). The disillusionment that Ravenscroft and others have identified in African postcolonial literature after independence depends on a narrative of anticolonial nationalism that, according to Hugh O'Connell, "posits a frenzy of Utopian nation-building texts in the 1960s that eventually turn dyspeptic and critical due to the failure of postcolonial states in the 1970s" (372).

While O'Connell and other scholars overwhelmingly reference African fiction in their discussions of novels of disillusion, postcolonial literatures from around the globe also reflect the various shortcomings of postcolonial states. In contrast to African novels of disillusionment, many works of Indian fictional register disillusionment immediately

after or simultaneously with independence. R.K. Gupta draws out the parallels and contrasts between these two traditions:

> In India, as in many African countries with a colonial past, the new native rulers turned out to be no less rapacious than the colonial masters they had supplanted. […] The disenchantment to which this gave rise found in Africa its classic expression in the works of such writers such as Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka. […] In India the sense of hopes belied and aspirations not fulfilled began to appear as a literary theme soon after 1947. (303)

Significantly, Gupta links the African and Indian traditions of disillusionment fiction, but also acknowledges an important departure: that the trauma of Partition effectively inaugurated disenchantment concurrently with independence.

While the category "novels of disillusion" has been generative for theorizing postcolonial fiction, including a range of novels not limited to Africa alone that register disenchantment with postcolonial states after independence, its employment has resulted in two major scholarly omissions. First, there has been insufficient attention paid to the complex role of waiting in disillusionment novels, especially insofar as waiting is evoked with reference to post-independence experiences of patience and urgency. Novels of disillusionment depict the postcolonial subject in a continued state of waiting in vain; in what is often characterized as literature of disillusionment, scholars note a marked pessimism about the future in a seemingly stalled present that is doomed to replicate the power dynamics of the colonial past. The urgency that characterized the independence-era's state and nation-building dissipated in the Cold-War era, and with many of the

structures of the former colonial state still intact, postcolonial state rulers replicated the marginalization of "weaker or subnational groups" (Amin-Khan 48-9). By collapsing waiting and disillusionment, scholarship risks overlooking the way that individuals may employ waiting to criticize the state and, in some cases, to empower themselves still. Second, considerations of the gendered dimensions of waiting—that waiting might signify differently in relation to discourses of gendered nationalism—have been omitted. In contrast, this chapter argues that in post-independence novels by Armah and Desai, women evoke the temporal dimensions of waiting in ways that challenge the simplistic opposition of revolutionary urgency, replaced by disappointed waiting, that dominates the scholarly narrative of "postcolonial disillusionment."

In order to arrive at a more expansive rendering of waiting and gender in these two disillusionment novels, I turn to the concept of "timescapes" as a way to capture the interplay between different temporalities and temporal modes in the texts, which produce the seemingly opposed modes of urgency and patience. Barbara Adam coined the term timescape to refer to "the embodiment of practiced approaches to time," and, unlike other "scapes" (such as land, city, and sea) that privilege the spatial, the concept of timescapes "emphasize their rhythmicities, their timings and tempos, their change and contingencies" (Adam, *Timescapes* 10). By emphasizing the timescapes created in the texts, I aim to avoid a reductive comparison of Western linear temporalities to indigenous cyclical temporalities. Scholarly studies of African temporality and fiction in particular have often fallen into such a reduction, which as Adam Barrows observes, tend to impose "a stark dichotomy between African time as cyclical and Western time as linear" (633). As I traced in the introduction to this dissertation, Orientalist studies similarly pitted the East

and West in dichotomous opposition, fixing the East in time and place such that the West is further ahead and the East is always further behind (Said, *Orientalism* 108). V.Y. Mudimbe notes that this practice also occurred with respect to Africa, which was "represented in Western scholarship" through constructions that "simplif[y] cultural complexities" (Mudimbe, *Idea* iv). In both Orientalist and Africanist discourse, the "other" temporalities are exoticized, emphasizing their irreducible difference and complete incompatibility with Western notions of time.

Drawing on the concept of timescapes, I read Ayi Kwei Armah's 1970 novel *Fragments* and Anita Desai's 1963 novel *Cry, the Peacock* for their representations of waiting in relation to patience and urgency. While timescape scholarship has omitted any explicit discussion of gender, the novels themselves emphasize their mutual imbrication, especially in regard to representing patience and urgency, which have been traditionally coded as feminine and masculine respectively. In these novels, women register the interaction of multiple temporalities, including the temporal regimes of capitalism, history, prophecy and religion, Hinduism, Akan and ancestral time, and the reproductive accents of national time. The reinscription of masculine national identity in these postcolonial settings after independence creates additional tensions for the women in the novels, and their embodied dramatizations of patience and urgency challenge the dominant narrative of disillusionment and its attendant, underlying association of waiting with passivity and femininity.

Engendering Timescapes: Patience and Urgency

Clocks and calendars effectively produce sensations of simultaneity and homogeneity across space—an impression that globalization has deepened. In *Time Passing*, Sylviane Agacinski remarks that the "contemporary chronotechnology"—that is, the "extension of production methods and the establishment of [the West's] temporal architecture"—has resulted from "the unification of the world's rhythms, all adjusted to the Western clock" (Agacinski 5–6). But because of the ubiquity of the clock and calendar in the industrialized West, and the increasing hegemony of "industrial time" in the globalized world, Barbara Adam counters, people around the world are not sufficiently attuned to the "multi-dimensional" temporalities embedded in "socio-environmental life" (*Timescapes* 8). Just as industrial time suppresses alternative temporalities, homogenizing and synchronizing temporal experience to the mathematical time of clocks and calendars, national time, accordingly to Benedict Anderson, relies on these same external time-keeping mechanisms to produce the "homogenous empty time" required for the nation to be "conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history" (26). Anderson notes that national revolutions tend to ground themselves "firmly in a territorial and social space," but his attention to the simultaneity undergirding national time redirects us to the ways that temporal landscapes—or timescapes—are integral to consolidating national identity.[51] Of course, the clock and calendar also suppress

[51] Pertinent to the elaboration of timescapes as the heterogeneous comingling of temporalities, Partha Chatterjee notes in "Anderson's Utopia" that the homogenous, empty time of the nation-state is "utopian," and that the "real space of modern life is a heterotopia. […] Time is heterogeneous, unevenly dense" ("131). Chatterjee asserts that the strongest case can be built with reference to the postcolonial world, where "there more than anywhere else in the modern world" we can see the "the presence of a dense and heterogeneous time" (132).

alternative and coexisting temporalities in an effort to "achieve temporal standardization and uniformity" (Birth 123). In order to avoid the tendency of making calendrical and clock time stand in for universal and homogeneous time, Byron Ellsworth Hamman advises, we ought to examine "times and places where that calendar functions alongside other, alternative forms of time reckoning" (Hamann 279). To contest the myth that Western temporality is "inescapably 'homogeneous, empty time,'" Hamman argues, we must both "desecuarliz[e]" and "provincialize" the notion of Western time (286). The concept of timescapes can address both concerns, because attending to timescapes entails acknowledging the multiple temporalities that coexist within and alongside dominant temporal regimes that otherwise posit homogeneity through standardization, and illuminating the suppressed or overlooked temporalities interacting in a given setting or experience.

A timescape framework is particularly fruitful for reading time in postcolonial contexts. In his ethnographic study of Trinidad, Kevin Birth employs the term in order to attend to the nuances of "multiple and contextually embedded sources for determining time" (Birth 66). According to Birth, time-markers in Trinidad included clocks and calendars, but also references to distances walked, the position of the sun, and recurring environmental or natural phenomena. Comingling temporalities can be categorized according to the kind of discord or harmony they produce; another word for the coexistence of temporalities is polyrhythmia, which can be eurhythmic (consonant) or arrhythmic (conflicted) (Birth 101). Not only do timescapes reveal the interaction of temporal schemes, but as John Taylor demonstrates in his study of time in Vanuatu, timescapes can function "as a label through which to comprehend the spatial and

geographical nature of temporalities across cultures, not only in their global diversity, but more crucially in their conjunction through processes of colonialism, migration, and transnationalism" (192). Timescapes may serve as unconscious references for authors, characters, and readers, but they may also be "actively and creatively deployed by conscious agents" (Taylor 192).

While the growing body of scholarship on timescapes thus far has been attuned to various temporalities in conjunction with industrialization, modernization, the environment, and nature, none has interrogated the way that gender is mapped on to temporalities, or the ways in which time and temporal experiences are gendered—especially with regard to waiting. A growing body of scholarship in mobility studies, however, addresses the ways that patience and urgency, immobility and mobility, are gendered and associated with waiting. Combining these two areas of research highlights the intersections of waiting, gender, movement, and passivity, and will enable a robust reading of timescapes in *Fragments* and *Cry, the Peacock*. Waiting, David Bissell observes in his widely cited article "Animating Suspension: Waiting for Mobilities," complicates commonplace notions of activity and passivity; he argues that waiting need not be reduced to "slowed rhythms or somehow opposed to speed," but rather entails "rich durations" replete with "multiple temporalities" (279). Configured as a mix of urgency and delay, patience and impatience are central to this reformulation. Patience is, in a way, the "apotheosis of waiting" as a subject positively endures the present (290). On the one hand, patience is the ability to reconcile the tempo of the self in duration with the tempo of the world. But on the other, impatience "'stems from [an] inability to reconcile

the two temporalities […] that grate and jar'" (Schweizer qtd. in Bissell 290). Urgency is closely linked to impatience, as that which cannot wait any longer.

Impatience and patience, as well as activity and inactivity, tend to be coded male and female respectively. Deirdre Conlon's "Waiting: Feminist Perspectives on the Spacings/Timings of Migrant (Im)mobility" analyzes narratives of migrants and secondary research on attitudes toward asylum seekers, and finds that regardless of gender identity, "those who wait in refugee camps in the global South are feminized, considered passive, immobile and more likely deemed 'authentic' refugees. In contrast, individuals who move are produced in accordance with masculinist assumptions; they are coded as politicized self-serving subjects who represent a threat to security and resources in the global North" (Conlon 355).[52] Citing Breda Gray's study of 1950s Irish women who did not emigrate, Conlon observes that "the feminization of 'staying put' has a positive valence that allows women to come to term with the place of waiting in their lives in strategic ways," such that "waiting can be appropriated as part of a feminist political project" (358). This view requires not only that we deconstruct the opposition between waiting and movement, immobility and mobility, but also that we attend to the "multi-faceted" temporalities of waiting, which include waiting as "an active and intentional process" (Conlon 358).

The coding of mobile migrants as masculine, threatening, and potential national security threats assumes that there is a correct, ethical way to wait; patience will be

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[52] The North/South divide that Conlon observes structuring the relationship between the waiting refugees in the global South, and the global North's role in delaying movement or migration reproduces a dynamic similar to Dipesh Chakrabarty's "waiting room of history," described in the Introduction and Chapter 1, and reintroduced in this chapter's section on *Cry, the Peacock*.

rewarded, as in the platitude, "Good things come to those who wait." In the field of human geography, Elizabeth Olson has found that "[h]ow a person waits can also produce judgments about both her culture and her character. As it organizes the routines of our daily lives, waiting can serve—rightly or wrongly—as a measure of lawfulness and civility, and potentially as a justification for the removal or denial of rights. A worthy citizen waits appropriately or faces consequences" (Olson 517). The assumption that patient waiting reveals worthy moral character plays out not only on an international scale, such as for Conlon's asylum seekers, but also within national borders, as we will see in Armah's *Fragments*, and within the home, in Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*. In this way, national governments leverage the distinction between patience and impatience to dismiss urgent criticisms and calls for change. This "ethical dimension of waiting" was underscored by Martin Luther King Jr., who argued "that a demand to wait can be immoral and therefore requires an apposite counterforce, what he called 'the fierce urgency of now'" (qtd. in Conlon 518).[53]

In *Fragments* and *Cry, the Peacock*, the gender-coding of patient waiting as feminine and commendable intersects with the gendered nationalisms of postcolonial states. The gendering of the nation-state is well-documented in scholarly literature; Elleke Boehmer's 2005 *Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation* summarizes that "gender forms *the* formative dimension for the construction of nationhood, if in relation to varying contextual determinants across different regions and

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[53] See also Mario Feit's "Democratic Impatience," which argues that King "rejects the binary logic that casts patience and impatience as mutually exclusive opposites," and advocates for "democratic impatience" (Feit 3). In language that echoes the findings of chapter 2 regarding resistive waiting, Feit suggests that "democratic impatience *contains* subordinate elements of *operational patience* in the form of strategic delays and long-term programs of transformation" (3).

countries" (22).[54] Benedict Anderson's own formulation in *Imagined Communities* is also suggestive of the link, despite not being otherwise concerned with the gendered dimensions of nationalism: "[I]n the modern world, everyone can, should, will have a nationality, as he or she 'has' a gender" (14). In Boehmer's comparative study, she finds that "women's externalized, static and a-historic relationship to power," as well as their association with "past, tradition, nature," are distinguished from men's occupation of "the dimension of time-linear, future-directed" temporalities "associated with change and progress" (32). Here again, the gendered temporalities of national time dovetail with the coding of immobility and stasis as feminine, timeless, and ahistorical. The following analyses of timescapes in *Fragments* and *Cry, the Peacock*, however, reveal disruptions of these associations. *Fragments* not only challenges the male-dominated dimensions of future-oriented national time, but also troubles the association of women with tradition and the past. In *Cry, the Peacock*, the constraints of the woman/tradition bind become more pronounced, and deadly; Maya's response to the imposition of waiting is her insistence on the fierce urgency of now.

Waiting Impatiently: Timescapes of Accra

While Michael K, in my reading of *Life & Times of Michael K* in the preceding chapter, embraces waiting as idleness, Baako Onipa in Ayi Kwei Armah's 1970 novel *Fragments*

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[54] Other influential literary studies include Sangeeta Ray's *Engendering India: Woman and Nation in Colonial and Postcolonial Narrative* which attends to the Indian context specifically, as well as Andrew Parker et al.'s edited collection *Nationalisms and Sexualities*. Studies in political science include Joanne H. Wright's *Origin Stories in Political Thought: Discourses on Gender, Power, and Citizenship* and Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams's *Women, the State, and War: A Comparative Perspective on Citizenship and Nationalism.*

suffers acute anxiety as he experiences waiting and delays in post-independence Accra. When we first encounter Baako, he is waiting. In the Paris airport and *en route* from studying abroad in the United States, Baako "avoided the initial stampede of passengers in a hurry" (*Fragments* 38). Titled "Awkwaaba," the Akan word for welcome, the chapter pits the excitement and eagerness of other "been-tos" returning from abroad against Baako's increasing anxiety that his arrival will be disappointing for his family, who expect ostentatious displays and distributions of wealth. His immediate family—mother Efua, sister Araba, and grandmother Naana—expects that his return to Ghana will entail prosperity for the entire family, but Baako balks at the idea of success "'at the expense of the community'" (103). He meets Juana, a psychiatrist and his eventual lover, with whom he confides his growing despair not only for himself, but also for his country. He encounters other Ghanaians struggling to support themselves in a country and economy that puts them at a disadvantage: Ocran the old teacher, Boateng the writer, and Skido, a truck driver. While the first and final chapters are focalized from his grandmother's point of view, the rest of the novel concerns Baako's anxieties, fears, and disappointments.

Like the native intellectual in Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, Baako dreams of returning to Accra and awakening the masses to their exploitation by the educated elite.[55] Instead, he becomes discouraged by the general malaise and stagnancy he observes across the country. As Baako's grandmother Naana adeptly observes in the novel's final chapter, Baako has crumbled under the pressure of others' "heavy dreams

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[55] In language particularly relevant for reading Armah's *Fragments*, Fanon notes that "the violent collision of two worlds has considerably shaken old traditions and thrown the universe of the perceptions out of focus," and that the native intellectual's "family very often proves itself incapable of showing stability and homogeneity" in the face of the "various assaults […] of Western culture" (195).

and hopes filled with the mass of things here and of this *time*" (Armah *Fragments* 198, emphasis mine). Fanon cautioned of a "time lag, or a difference of rhythm, between the leaders of a nationalist party and the mass of the people" (107), and in fact Baako's return evinces these arrhythmias as he feels out of step with both the masses and the new nationalist elite. Indeed, the dissonance between the temporalities engendered by national development and "progress," disillusionment, deferral, Akan time, and tradition contribute to Baako's eventual mental breakdown and his institutionalization in a mental asylum. This confluence of temporalities, I will demonstrate in this section, creates a timescape wherein waiting is reduced to stasis, and neither Baako's patience nor impatience assists him in achieving his goals and disrupting the cycles of greed and corruption implicit in "productive time."

The assumption that "been-tos" necessarily return with great wealth has a long history in colonial center-periphery relations. Been-tos leave their native countries to be educated abroad, and then return home to assume powerful or lucrative jobs. *Fragments* has been called "the most fully developed, artful usage of the been-to convention in all West African fiction," a theme that is both a "recognized cultural reality, and a repeated literary convention" (Lawson 70, 2). This theme, of course, is not limited to West Africa, but is taken up in anthropological studies and African literature from across the continent.[56] The intrinsic value of traveling abroad overlaps with the ways that mobility is generally valued over immobility, a residual effect of the "generally competitive neo-

[56] And the theme is not limited to Africa, either. See, for example, Vera Milhailovich-Dickman's edited collection, *"Return" in Post-Colonial Writing: A Cultural Labyrinth.*

liberal rationales of productivity and a concern that time needs to be utilized more productively in order to be more profitable" (Bissell 280). This in turn produces "chronological time as a container waiting to be filled," and "must be used wisely" and not wasted (280).

This sense of productive time is additionally informed by the legacies of colonialism and the creation of African labor forces by colonial authorities on the continent. Using Kenya and Malawi as case studies, Alamin Mazrui and Lupenga Mphande trace the creation of African labor pools through the imposition of capitalist conceptions of time. Echoing J.M. Coetzee's writings on idleness on the Cape in *White Writing*, Mazrui and Mphande note that activities that "may be seen as idleness and time-wasting" had value in the Kenyan and Malawian communities, and that the "idea of time as a linear object that could be gained, saved, or lost was alien" to the African cosmologies colonists encountered (100). In order to bind Africans to a standard work day, colonial governments passed vagrancy laws and introduced penalties for unemployment and failure to pay taxes (Mazrui and Mphande 105). Upon Baako's return, he is pressured to capitalize on his mobility—his time abroad and the cultural capital associated with Western ties—and turn time spent elsewhere into financial returns. Commodified time is, as John Mbiti points out, discordant with traditional African life, where in some settings "time has to be created or produced" rather than "utilized, sold and bought" (Mbiti 19). During his journey back, Baako is consistently perplexed by this valuation of time and he confesses that he does not have a job waiting for him, or connections with "big men" who can facilitate rapid socioeconomic mobility. Baako's foreign education and inability to integrate into Accra's workforce prefigure the

proliferation of kòbòlòi in twenty-first century Accra, discussed in the introduction to this dissertation. The kòbòlòi Ato Quayson describes are unemployed or under-employed young men whose "attempt[s] to move between life phases" are restrained by "a state of expectant waiting" (Quayson 210). Unlike Quayson's kòbòlòi, however, Baako in this earlier era does not turn to gymming or other activities to manage, navigate, and control the dissonance between his impatience and the economy of waiting.

The detrimental effects of these tensions are clearly exhibited in Baako's meditations on the cargo cult and its resonance in contemporary Ghanaian society, which occur during his most acute exhibition of mental distress. The chapter "Dam," the Akan word for madness, opens with Baako immobilized by fever (Zabus 165). Agitated by thoughts and reflections that flit quickly through his mind, Baako attempts to "trap" them with his typewriter. In the fragmented text that follows, Baako meditates on the similarities between the Melanesian cargo cults—the "ritualistic religious expression of the fetishization of material goods introduced to Melanesia by Europeans" (Murphy 63)—and the expectation that the been-to will similarly act as an intermediary and human export. Baako writes, "A return is expected from his presence there: he will intercede on behalf of those not yet dead, asking for them what they need most urgently" (157). The been-to "is the ghost in person returned to live among men" who "[m]eets established, well-known expectations handsomely" and "is and has to be a transmission belt for cargo" (157). He then elaborates the cargo mentality in terms of waiting:

> CARGO MENTALITY. The expectancy, the waiting for bounty dropping from the sky through benign intercession of dead ancestors, the beneficent ghosts. […] The waiting not a simple expectation, but something more

> active. An integral part of the waiting is an active expression of strong belief that the cargo will come, i.e., the phenomenon of hope is incomplete without an incorporated act of faith. (160)

The waiting Baako describes here is without end; in this active expression of strong belief, the absence of bounty—which might disrupt such steadfast certainty—can still be reconciled through continued hope and faith. In the same way, Baako's return, despite falling short of expectations, is not enough to dispel his family's faith in the been-to narrative and the wealth that is expected. The expectations centered on returns, of the spatial and material kind alike, reveal that waiting and return here are mutually constitutive and contribute equally to Baako's growing mental instability. The continued power of hope and returns depends on expectations maintained through the temporality of waiting.

One way to understand the relationship between this meditation on cargo mentality and the text's larger timescape is through the recurring images of the slave trade—a past that Baako attempts to link with Ghana's present, but that others continually suppress. Laura Murphy argues that the trauma of the slave trade causes "Baako's stress and existential nausea," and that the text, through the slave castle that figures as an image in Baako's scripts and appears in the background on the beach where Efua and Juana meet, makes "explicit links between the materialism of postcolonial Ghana and the earlier vicious and deadly consumption of human lives" (56). Linking the slave trade with the cargo cult mentality of awaiting the been-to, *Fragments* creates a "layered temporality" in which present-day consumerism "is no modern, post-independence malady" (63-4).

Building from this observation, I want to suggest that the waiting and return that the characters evoke and experience supplement the slave trade imagery to provide temporal continuity between colonial and postcolonial Ghana. In the rush to embrace a break with colonial government, the characters in *Fragments* avoid coming to terms with the history of the slave trade, and inadvertently perpetuate its vices through what Murphy calls "the slave trade's commodification of human life and his [Baako's] family's vision of him as the deliverer of consumable 'cargo'" (63). Rather than confront slavery, and I would argue the existing geopolitical and economic realities that are the legacies of colonialism, producers at Ghanavision tell Baako, '"Look, we're a free, independent people. We're engaged in a gigantic task of nation building. We have inherited a glorious culture, and that's what we're here to deal with. […] Look, don't waste time"' (147). This forward-looking mentality, however, excises the past prematurely by mobilizing the language of "wasted time," and allows similar dynamics of dispossession and privilege—acceleration for some and waiting for others—to continue.

Armah frames *Fragments* with Naana's perspective, which operates as a corrective to the commodification, greed, and corruption informing the sense of capitalist, productive time. A grandmother figure, Naana evokes the circular relationship between the living, the unborn, and the ancestors, what Chukwunyere Kamalu calls "a cyclical process of becoming" (31). Naana's point of view evokes both circularity and return at odds with the forward-only thrust of modern Accra's environment, and also offers a promise of forging continuous connections despite breaks and interruptions in the construction of time and history. Derek Wright's work on the Akan background to

Fragments helpfully addresses Naana's role in the text. In his view, Naana's final call to the ancestors, whom she will shortly join,

> holds in simultaneous [o]pposition contrary ideas of cyclicality and terminality, process and endings, leaving uncertain the final value which is to be attached to Naana's religious vision. Naana's death, in her own view, is subsumed into a cycle of renewal and restoration, and the historical decline of which it is part is only another development in the unceasing process of the spirit. But from the quite different and more material viewpoint of her age, the deteriorative historical process has already subverted this circular progress. ("Akan" 188)

As she awaits her own return to the ancestors, she represents and enacts a dynamic relationship with the past in defiance of her contemporaries' viewpoints. Naana's vision of the present and future engenders a different temporality than that assumed by narratives of linear history or disillusionment, allowing her to wait rather than despair, not only for herself but for Baako: "The returned traveler also—in all that noise I thought he would surely die, but there must be strong spirits looking after him. […] I know no way of reaching him and letting him know as I go that my spirit has been filled with thoughts of his happiness, that I have wished for him a life of good things done and a great peace at the end" (199).

In this way, Armah uses Naana to shift the definition of "success" for Baako from the acquisition of material goods and status to "a powerful unifying understanding" (Lawson 71), one that resists the temporality of waiting as stasis and instead makes the past present as the characters turn toward the future to come. The temporal modality that

Naana inhabits, according to Wright's reading, is neither inflexibly cyclical nor absolutely linear; in her negotiation of time and culture in contemporary Ghana, Naana evokes waiting to wrestle with these competing temporalities. In her, we see that "the traditional order is given a dynamic continuity with the present" (Wright, "Akan" 176). Additionally, the Akan temporalities conjured by Naana do not exist in isolation from capitalist time. She admits, "I too have had my dreams of his return, and they too have been filled with things to give rest to tired flesh heavy things, things of heavy earth. I have also dreamed of riches and greatness for Baako, and they were not for him alone" (*Fragments* 3). The complex timescape forged from Naana and Baako's perspectives reveals that the Akan rituals that formerly provided cohesiveness to temporal and communal experience have, in interactions with competing temporalities, produced temporal arrhythmias—resulting in the sensation that actions inevitably occur too soon, too late, or both at once. Taking a closer look at the moments of temporal arrhythmias and their effects on Baako will enable us to see the ways that waiting, passivity, and patience come together to drive Baako toward a nervous breakdown.

The temporal arrhythmias are most apparent in the conflicts arising during traditional ceremonies, marking Baako's departure and the outdooring ceremony for Araba's baby, Baako's nephew. Both Akan ceremonies "not only locate individuals in the past, present, and the future but also become vehicles for historical recall, interpretations, and reappraisals" (Adjaye, "Time" 71), creating a palimpsest of temporalities. Naana remembers the ceremony marking Baako's departure, which was similarly rushed by the "hot desire impatient at his departure for his return" (4). The ceremony itself, led by Uncle Foli, was marred by selfish greed; Foli withholds a generous pour of alcohol from

the ancestors, as well as Naana and Baako, in favor of saving more for himself. Even before Baako's departure, then, Armah's narrative indicates that growing greed, selfishness, and impatience threaten not only the respect and traditions that underpin Baako's family structure, but also the sense of time that inheres in the rituals themselves. From the perspective of Akan ritual, the premature ceremony bodes ominously for the baby's future, and it appears that Baako and his family would have done well to wait, or at least slow down.

Like the departure ceremony, the outdooring ceremony for Araba's baby is meant to establish links between the newborn in the world of the living in relation to the world of the ancestors. Also called a naming ceremony, this tradition "locate[s] individuals into the world of their contemporaries with whom they share a community of time" (Adjaye, "Time" 63). Both the unborn and the ancestors occupy the spirit world, and so the outdooring ceremony acknowledges a cyclical process of continuity between the physical and spirit worlds (Kamalu 31, 49). In this way, Akan temporalities contain both linear and cyclical elements. As Joseph Adjaye writes,

> Akan time perceptions are at once and the same time linear and cyclical. In the long continuum from protohistoric times through the present to the future, there is a linear view of an unbroken chain linking all phases. […] Yet, it is clear that the Akan do not see this linear perception of history as conflicting with the view of time as being cyclical from the present to the future and back to the present, which becomes the past of tomorrow. There is not only an awareness of the contribution of the ancestors in times past

> toward the growth and well-being of the present group but also a realization of the duty to preserve the present for future times. (73)

The outdooring ceremony is emblematic of this temporal orientation, as the family welcomes the child to the physical world and looks forward to its future.

It is important to note that in *Fragments*, the outdooring ceremony is recounted in a flashback, after Baako has a mental breakdown and is institutionalized in an asylum. The actual planning of the outdooring ceremony, however, is narrated much earlier in the text. We learn that traditionally the outdooring ceremony is held one week after the birth, but that Efua and Araba move it earlier to coincide with the first weekend after payday (88). Naana foreshadows the baby's premature death, warning that the child "'is not yet with us. […] His birth can be a good beginning. […] But for this he must be protected. Or he will run screaming back, fleeing the horrors prepared for him up here'" (97). The child's premature outdooring ceremony parallels its premature birth and death alike. Baako botches his responsibility of calling for gifts for the baby, and as the guests leave, Naana remarks, "'It was too sudden, whatever you did. […] Everything is wrong now"' (187). After a paragraph break, the text continues, matter-of-factly reporting, "Three weeks after the child was buried Efua asked for help and [Baako] asked her what for." Baako is disturbed to learn that "'[t]he time has come to put an announcement in the papers'" to report the baby's death. This new ritual, which Baako believes to be motivated by a desire to keep up appearances, is governed by a sense of time and customs of propriety with which Baako is, again, unfamiliar.

Because of Baako's time away, the discrepancies in temporal schemes and rhythms are especially jarring. In the instance of the outdooring ceremony, the time of the

working week that controls when the men are paid conflicts with the ritualistic time that traditionally dictates when the ceremony occurs. Likewise, new traditions such as farewell announcements in the newspapers require temporal adjustments; the announcement is expected three weeks after the death, a conventional mourning period, but its timing will additionally depend on the newspaper's publication schedule. Unable to negotiate these different temporal modes, Baako's actions are, from every perspective, "too sudden." Subsequently, Baako's temporal experience devolves into an impression of stalled time, manifested in flashbacks to earlier moments during bouts of mental breakdown. The narrative itself reflects this temporal fragmentation, jumping between Ghanavision's rejection of Baako's television scripts about slavery, the outdooring ceremony, and fevered meditations on the cargo cults of Melanesia. In this timescape, where the rhythms of various temporalities variably overlap and conflict, the new postcolonial elite tell Baako to wait patiently.

Waiting, as it surfaces throughout the text, is sometimes presented as desirable; for example, the death of Araba's baby suggests that it perhaps would have been better to wait and hold the ceremony as tradition dictates. Impatience and refusing to wait is linked to the family's longing for more and better gifts. But more often, waiting permits the powerful to maintain the status quo. Two characters, Skido and Boateng, in addition to Baako himself, illustrate this difference. Baako meets Boateng at a gathering for writers, where Boateng is encouraged to read from his "novel await[i]ng publication" (115). Drunk and uninhibited, Boateng rails, "'Nobody meets to discuss real writing anymore. This has become a market where we're all sold. There's money for this and that. Grants and so forth, but who swallows all this money?'" The language here forges connections

across space and time, evoking the slave trade in its contemporary moment. While Boateng is justifiably frustrated, Ocran the old teacher scolds, "'You have a novel. O.K. You've had it done for six years, and you're waiting. Just waiting. A serious writer would have three, four more novels done by now, instead of waiting. And you'd have a totally different picture'" (117). This exchange illustrates the debilitating effects of waiting, foreshadowing the lessons Baako will similarly learn as the newness of returning home fades. Ocran is similarly justified in his entreaty to use the time of waiting to write more, but Boateng's predicament highlights the real, demoralizing effect of waiting, which can stifle the energy to act and to create.

A later scene involving the death of an impatient truck driver, Skido, qualifies the resistive potential of refusing to wait by showing that it is also fraught with danger. Juana and Baako encounter Skido while waiting for a ferry to take their vehicles across the river. Skido has been waiting longer, and as the ferryboat approaches, drivers dash to cut in line. Skido pleads angrily, "'I've waited three days by the river and it's food I have in my lorry, not iron. I won't let it happen again'" (135). Instead, policemen allow the government buses to load first, followed by "other trucks and lorries crashing after and into each other" (136). Nerves frayed by the waiting, Skido makes a "crazy" move and propels his truck forward, leaving the lorry in a "long suspended moment with its rear tires on land and its front on the moving boat" (137). Juana and Baako look on in disbelief as the ferry undocks, the truck falls, and Skido is crushed in the attempt to leap from it. Clearly, exhibiting patience in waiting for the ferry only further exploits Skido. And yet, refusing to wait results in his death.

The public works department engineer elaborates the injustice implicit in this advocacy of waiting, when he responds to the incident, "'No one asks them to rush. If they don't make the last ferry at four they can wait till morning. […] A bit more patience and he'd still be alive. Why are they in such a hurry anyway?'" (139). When Baako presses the engineer to change the operating rules of the ferry, the engineer replies, "'Listen: I joined the PWD twenty-three whole years ago. I was patient, I waited, that's why I have my present post'" (140). The futility of Skido's earlier waiting, however, challenges the sensibility of this advice. The imposition of waiting is one way that the powerful maintain their own positions, as refusing to wait or settling in to the tempo of Accra makes one vulnerable. Faced with the impossibility of negotiating these senses of patience and impatience, Baako's temporal experience upon his return to Ghana becomes increasingly reduced to waiting and immobility.

Efua, Naana, and Juana: A Challenging Patience

These examples underscore that Baako is not alone in his thwarted attempts to negotiate Accrao's timescape, and especially that other characters who have not left the country and returned from abroad also share his disorientation and impatience. Over time, Baako develops a sense of stalled time, of waiting as stasis, through the continued circling back to the past. Neil Lazarus similarly argues that Baako is unable to bridge the past and future in the present moment. Baako's problem, according to Lazarus, is that he is unable "to sustain his activism in the concrete here-and-now while appreciating that it is not in the present but only in the 'not yet,' in the as-yet unforeseeable and uncertain future, that this activism will be seen to have been constructive" (101). Juana, on the other hand, "understand[s] that the present is in so many wearying respects barely more than an

extension of the past," and so she "live[s] not merely with future in mind, but as though it were already here" (Lazarus 105, 116).

In other words, Baako faces a disjunction between acting in the present and knowing that the results will only be realized in the future: a discouraged sense of waiting. In this final section on *Fragments*, I suggest that the women in the novel—Baako's mother Efua, his grandmother Naana, and his lover Juana—pry apart the ways in which waiting and patience tend to be associated with immobility and passivity. In doing so, they disrupt the gender-coding of passive waiting with femininity, and suggest methods of inhabiting the temporal dimensions of waiting in order to reach out toward the uncertain future. The Akan are distinct among "Ghanaian ethnic groups […for their] matrilineal descent systems" (Adjaye 57), which in my view, further supports increased attention to their voices and roles in the text, despite the fact that the novel largely lingers on Baako's experiences.

While Naana insists that Baako, regardless of his travels and the changes he no doubt will exhibit, will be "welcome[d…] just the same," the narrative in fact depicts Baako's strained interactions with his community and family, who are less welcoming to the failed been-to (3). The community's sympathy rests with Efua, Baako's mother, who waited a long time for her son to return and whose expectations of material changes to their circumstances are unsatisfied. Despite her disappointment, Efua has one moment where she exhibits a spirit of reconciliation toward Baako that configures waiting as a temporality open to the future, but does not dictate its outcomes.

This tentative reconciliation occurs in a short chapter that bears her name, and immediately after the chapter "Dam." As Baako remembers this encounter, he is in the

hospital, lying in the acute ward after running across Accra, tortured by the image of Brempong's business card that reminds him of his failures. In contrast to the immediately preceding chapters, Baako's memory is clear here and he more or less linearly remembers the events of an earlier Sunday with Efua. She warns Baako "not to let the waiting make him angry" as they take the bus to a deteriorating building that she hoped he would renovate to be a house for her (176). As part of her "soul-cleaning," she tells him that she had previously cursed him for his failures, but now lets go of the dream of the extravagant house. She continues with her "happy laugh" throughout their return home, "waiting in the sun for whatever would come" (179). Efua's hopeful expectation becomes disappointed disillusionment, a transition consistent with the larger mood of the "disillusionment" era in which *Fragments* was published. But when Efua releases Baako, reiterating that "it's all over now," we might also read through her disappointment to a new orientation toward the future, heralded and more fully realized in Naana's concluding voice that announces, "The time has come" (195). Put another way, the "not yet" has become "now."

Given the ways that the novel's women negotiate Accra's timescape, what the novel may model is a way to harness a different kind of patience—one that is not the same as that demanded by those in positions of power, nor one that requires inactivity or acquiescence. Naana is an exemplary figure in this regard. Unlike many of the other characters preoccupied with materiality, wealth, and waste, Naana is certain that "All that goes returns and nothing in the end is lost" (1). This perspective starkly contrasts with Brempong and the producers at Ghanavisision, who are quick to call "unproductive" time "wasted time." Naana's voice, both structurally and thematically in the novel, bookends

the text. Rather than signifying a supplementary position, however, I contend that Naana's voice becomes central to the text's renegotiation of time and patience. While patience is often understood as "calm, uncomplaining endurance," patience can also connote "calm, self-possessed waiting" ("patience, n.1"). The latter allows for critique, and we see this most clearly in Efua's waiting, where she airs her dissatisfaction but is able, nevertheless, to wait "for whatever would come." As David Bissell contends, while waiting might be experienced as a slow rhythm, it may also "take *effort* and therefore some form of intentional action to wait," and this "active *doing* […] could be seen as an achievement of a specific set of ongoing embodied tasks" (285). Waiting, he concludes, can instead be understood "as an anticipatory consciousness that is inherently intertwined with the present but with the excessive pressing immanence of the 'not yet'" (292). The language here resonates with Lazarus' appraisal of Juana's sense of time in contrast to Baako's, and this orientation toward the future is similarly applicable to Efua and Naana. If one lives as if the future is already here, as Juana seems to do, then each moment in the present is potentially imbued with a renewed sense of urgency—which Anita Desai's protagonist, Maya, underscores.

"Now" is Here: Fierce Urgency in *Cry, the Peacock*

Despite their many differences, *Fragments* and Anita Desai's first novel *Cry, the Peacock* share striking similarities in their explorations of the themes of madness, restraint, waiting, and despair. Both novels register dissatisfaction with their respective postcolonial societies, but this disillusionment is more complex than simply a period of stasis for characters marginalized in the new nation. As an organizing category, the term

"novels of disillusionment" risks flattening these differences and histories by positing a homogenous period of waiting. Together, *Fragments* and *Cry, the Peacock* lend nuance to the temporalities shaping disillusionment, exhibiting multifaceted timescapes in which waiting becomes variably a source of strength and a cause of destruction.

Cry, the Peacock is organized into three parts of unequal lengths. Part one spans just over two pages, but efficiently establishes the tensions between the protagonist Maya and her husband Gautama after the death of Maya's dog. Maya is deeply troubled, but Gautama is coldly brisk in arranging the dog's disposal. Part two comprises the majority of the novel, and shifts from the omniscient third-person perspective of part one to Maya's first-person perspective, interrupted by several flashbacks or memories. The first memory introduces the horoscope, prophesized by an albino astrologer when Maya was a child, that death would come early either to Maya or to her husband after four years of marriage (31). Scenes where the couple argue about life, logic, religion, and emotions dramatize the differences in their worldviews and values, and Maya's increasing desperation is reflected in the text's frantic pacing, moving quickly between their charged disagreements and Maya's own internal commentary. This section concludes with Maya killing her husband by pushing him off of the roof. In the final section, which mirrors the first in its brevity, Maya's mother-in-law and sister-in-law discuss Gautama's death and their plans to place Maya in a mental asylum. Maya's voice and independent perspective are completely silenced, and the novel ends with the suggestion that Maya and her mother-in-law perish together after falling off the balcony.

Because scholars tend to focus so narrowly on the novel as an exploration of female consciousness, they have missed the ways that the novel comments on

disillusionment in postcolonial India, especially as articulated by women. An early collection, *Perspectives on Anita Desai* (1984), is representative of the general trend and declares that "there are no significant historical incidents, let alone contemporary ones, in her novels," and scholars' narrow concentration on her early works as explorations of female consciousness, largely separate from the external world that shaped it, has certainly contributed to this impression (Srivastava xix).[57] In contrast to this prevalent trend, Josna Rege argues that *Cry, the Peacock* and other early Desai novels reflect the paralysis and malaise of post-independence India, which resulted from "contradictions within the Indian nationalist discourse" (Rege, "Codes" 317). In my view, Maya shares Baako's growing sense of the sociocultural, as well as socioeconomic restrictions that condition the monotony of her daily life. Like Baako, Maya experiences extreme mental and emotional strain, and most critics agree that Maya suffers from a mental breakdown as well.

In my examination of Maya's timescape, I aim not only to contextualize Maya's waiting in post-independence India, but also to acknowledge the ways in which Maya's relationship with other women—not strictly her relationship with Gautama and her father—exacerbate her isolation and alienation. My reading contends that Desai's novel directly engages with its historical and temporal context, specifically the legacies of

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[57] The studies that focus explicitly on *Cry, the Peacock* tend to reproduce the dichotomous oppositions of male and female, outside and inside, modern and traditional, West and East in pitting Maya against her husband Gautama. See, for example, Sudhakar R. Jamkhandi's "The Artistic Effects of the Shifts in Points of View in Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*," and in particular page 42: "It is Maya's proclivity for the instinctual that helps her battle against her fate; it is this that conflicts against Gautama's inclinations to the intellectual; it is that that dramatizes her adherence to an Occidental taste for life. (In this is symbolically conveyed the East-West encounter though the circumstances be vastly different from those of Indo-English novelists who also concern themselves with this theme)." This formulation is also found in Som. P. Sharma and Kamal N. Awathi's "Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*: A Vindication of the Feminine" (especially p. 140).

gendered nationalism and the association of women with motherhood, the home, and continued waiting for the equality promised at independence to be codified in laws that extend to the private sphere. While *Fragments* is more concerned with political stasis and the psychodynamics of waiting and patience, I argue that *Cry, the Peacock* emphasizes urgency as a temporal dimension of waiting, and that Maya's actions—while certainly self-defeating in the most literal sense—affirms a fierce urgency of the now.

The landscape that anchors Maya's timescape is, overwhelmingly, the home. With few exceptions, Maya's movements are restricted to her present-day home with Gautama, her childhood home with her father, and brief visits to the homes of acquaintances. Maya's associations with "home" evolve from the idyllic childhood of carefree indulgence to that of restriction and anxiety. As scholars from Partha Chatterjee to Elleke Boehmer have shown, the home occupies an ambivalent position in the context of Indian nationalist discourses. While the home was viewed as the domain of tradition during independence movements, for women who expected full civic participation after independence, the home was not necessarily a liberating space. Scholarship on Indian nationalisms, especially after Partha Chatterjee's influential "Whose Imagined Community?" has revealed the ways that "the female domestic sphere" during the independence struggle functioned "as storehouse of traditional attitudes […] one which enables male nationalists to appropriate the forms of European modernity while simultaneously conserving an apparent cultural authenticity" (Boehmer 8). In Chatterjee's rejoinder to Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, he admits that anticolonial nationalist discourse in India created a "domain of sovereignty within colonial society" from which nationalism gained its force as well as its *difference*; but in the process

instated a different patriarchal order wherein the new Indian woman would display the signs of national tradition—what he calls "false essentialisms" (Chatterjee, *Nation* 6, 9, 134). Women occupied a vexed position in the new nation; elevated as symbolic signifiers, they tended to be denied full participation in political and social life.

Despite the insistence on "now" and anticolonial nationalism's rejection of the waiting room of history, as Dipesh Chakrabarty put it in *Provincializing Europe* (8-9), marginalized factions of India's citizenry continued to experience the deferral of full equality and participation in the new nation, which reinstated the rhetoric of "not yet" in a new context. Christine Keating traces the development of democracy in India, and, in language that echoes Chakrabarty's, notes that the 1946 Indian constitution signified "a radical rejection of the racialized logic of colonial rule, which held that Indians were not 'ready' for democratic self-rule" (5). Simultaneously, however, a new "not yet" was introduced, as the constitution "reject[ed] measures that would have ensured adequate political representation for minority groups, in particular Muslims" and "consolidated women's legal subordination in property ownership, inheritance, marriage, and divorce." While women were granted universal suffrage in India and included in the public sphere after independence, the dominance of men in the family and home was maintained "by preserving the system of personal laws developed under the British" (73).[58] The history of the Hindu Code Bill, which would have codified Hindu personal laws, is a concrete example of deferring the promises of independence for women. Radha Kumar observes

[58] Rajeswari Sunder Rajan similarly remarks that while "suffrage and other forms of political representation and participation were relatively easily won for women in India […] the acceptance of women's equality in actual political and socioeconomic structures comes up against resistance and opposition in powerfully entrenched patriarchal structures" (17).

that women raised the issue of codifying the Hindu personal laws as early as the 1930s, and a committee drafted a code in 1944 (97). However, under pressure from influential Congressmen, including then-President of India Rajendra Prasad, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru stalled the bill until it was passed in piecemeal fashion in 1955-56—a decade after independence, and over twenty years after the issue was first introduced.

In placing Maya almost exclusively within the confines of the home, and emphasizing her restless unhappiness, Desai makes literal the gendered discourse of nationalism and reproductive feminism in the setting of the novel. Maya's father's influence is overbearing, her husband Gautama is dismissive of her views, and as I will demonstrate further below, her childlessness indexes her anxieties as well as her subtle criticism of traditional Indian womanhood that had become so central to anchoring women's role in the nation. To achieve political visibility, as Elleke Boehmer, Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, and Asha Nadkarni among others observe, Indian women increasingly turned to the rhetoric of gendered nationalism to stake a claim in the emerging Indian nation in the twentieth century.

The influential gendered nationalism of Sarojini Naidu, a prominent Indian politician, is a case in point. Throughout her speeches and writings, she relied on "highly traditional images of Indian womanhood" in her insistence that women "were central to the nation-building project in India" (Boehmer 77). Despite pre-independence documents like the Women's Role in the Planned Economy report from 1939-1940, which proposed "a radical mode of citizenship for women as workers," the first five-year plan was limited to "provid[ing] women with adequate services necessary to fulfill what was called a 'woman's legitimate role in the family'" (Sunder Rajan 27). Asha Nadkarni traces this

development in gendered Indian nationalisms through the lenses of eugenic feminism and reproductive nationalism, and she shows that Indian women were legible in the language of development in India through their maternal roles (Nadkarni 17). "The decades following independence," she notes, "have been labeled the 'silent period' of the women's movement" (133). This very period, which also saw "accelerating modernization" in India (Nadkarni 166) overlapped with what Josna Rege calls "post-independence malaise" or disillusionment ("Codes" 317). Given the persistence of gender-based subordination after independence, it is not surprising then that Desai's novels register "a progressive sense of disillusionment" ("Codes" 323). Although Elleke Boehmer does not discuss *Cry, the Peacock*, I draw on her general observations about postcolonial women writers in my reading of Maya's timescape: these writers "strategically play off [the] different narratives [of the homogenising nation]—of patriliny and matriliny, of modernity and tradition—against one another" (16). The concomitant, diverse temporalities assumed by these narratives are also put into dialogue and discord, as well as harmony in the novel, pushing Maya inexorably toward the only actions available to her in moments of fierce urgency.

The narrative's organization, with interruptive flashbacks that provide context and a sense of causality, create a mood of inevitable tragedy and disillusionment. The narrative present is introduced in part one with the grisly image of Maya's dog rotting in the afternoon sun and Maya "sobbing, and waiting for her husband to come home" (7). Part two shifts from the omniscient third person-perspective of part one to the first-person perspective, interrupted by several flashbacks or memories that assist in contextualizing the present. The first memory introduces the horoscope, that death would come early

either to Maya or to her husband after four years of marriage, to which Maya responds, "'No! [...] I will never marry'" (31). This outburst is tragic and ominous, given that the narrative opens four years into her marriage. A subsequent flashback reveals that Maya's childhood was "idyllic" and protected, in no small part because of her doting father. The childhood flashbacks, which recur several times throughout the novel, nevertheless reveal Maya's present concern with women and domestic dispossession.

In one memory, Maya recalls a desperate woman, the wife of her father's friend, asking futilely for assistance in escaping her husband (42). At the conclusion of another memory, Maya reflects, "(Yes, now that I go over it in my mind, my childhood was one in which much was excluded, which grew steadily more restricted, unnatural even, and in which I lived as a toy princess in a toy world. But it was a pretty one.)" (78). Further flashbacks revisit her brother Arjuna's troubled relationship with their father and Maya's desperate but ineffective attempts to connect with her childhood friends Leila and Pom. Combined with her sister-in-law's visit, which was occasioned by her desire to divorce her husband (and a process she must accomplish on her own, as her brother Gautama refuses to help), the novel's seemingly strict focus on Maya's psychological decline expands to include all women in developing the theme of entrapment.

These analeptic moments heighten Maya's sense of impending doom and despair, and complement the dominant temporal scheme in the narrative, which is shaped by Hinduism's concepts of fate and free will. Rege's *Colonial Karma: Self, Action, and Nation in the Indian English Novel* argues that the concept of karma "was recast under colonialism, partially secularized to denote selfless action in the service of the nation, and eventually, embedded in Indian nationalist discourse and public discourse more

generally" (*Colonial* xi). For the protagonists of Desai's novels specifically, karma entails the "selfless performance of domestic duty" (*Colonial* 81). In Rege's view, Maya's husband Gautama espouses "an inexorably logical theory of cause and effect, which denies the possibility of all independent agency" to the extent that "for Maya, karma comes to mean, not action, but its impossibility" (*Colonial* 93). Here, karma and inaction dovetail in a gendered configuration of indefinite waiting. Rege argues that "nationalist discourse," which collapses karma and gendered nationalist symbols in order to postpone the self-determination of the modern Indian woman, goes unchallenged in the novel because "Desai both resists and reproduces the dominant structures and symbols of nationalism" (*Colonial* 90). I depart from Rege's analysis by suggesting that the novel's representation of waiting and Maya's developing sense of urgency registers the very challenge that Rege believes "remains unvoiced" (90).

Significantly, the advocates of this particular post-independence rendering of Hindu theology in *Cry, the Peacock* are the most imposing male figures in Maya's life: her father and Gautama. Karma, in the Hindu tradition, ought not to be conflated with irreversible fate; karma's "round of rebirths, of world creations and destructions in an endless series, offers the possibility of ever new changes in decisions being made," and as such, "does not cancel free will and genuinely free decisions" (Klostermaier 176). The concept of karma as described in the Upanishads reveals an interplay between fate and free will, as karma "keeps in motion the vicious circle of action, desire, reward, and new action" (Klostermaier 175). Real disagreement on the relationship between fate and karma exists among scholars and practitioners of Hinduism, and the everyday practices of religious belief vary across the Indian subcontinent. Nevertheless, popular discourse

exhibits a tendency to collapse fate and karma, and we see Desai's male characters do the same when they frame acceptance and detachment in fatalistic terms.[59] Previous literary scholars have remarked on fate's function in the novel, but instead of considering the way that fate pervades Maya's timescape, scholars such as Sudhakar Jamkhandi corporealize fate and transform it into Maya's adversary in a battle over her mind (35). While I am interested in fate's role in shaping her temporal experience, my reading is also attuned to the ways in which the temporality of fate is espoused and imposed by the men in Maya's life.

The astrologer's initial prophecy of Maya's fate includes a caution that her life will not necessarily take this path, and he advises her to pray and sacrifice to avoid the undesired outcome (21). This rendering of fate is consistent with the concept of karma as theorized in the Upanishads, where fate and free will exist in dynamic interaction. However, the possibilities of alternatives are continually dashed or suppressed with each new urge to accept and submit uttered by Gautama and her father. When Maya first receives the unfortunate horoscope, her father burns the paper in response. At first glance, this act might suggest that he rejects the notions that fate and prophecy are immutable. However, as Maya's memories of her father's advice are elaborated throughout the novel, we can understand the act as one of denial, suppression, and intentional forgetting, rather than a radical rejection of fate and its attendant, deterministic temporality. In adolescence, Maya found her father's point of view soothing:

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[59] As Judith Pugh notes, "popular understandings of karma and *qismat* are not organized with the fineness of detail nor the thoroughness of integration nor yet the generalized abstractness of doctrines of destiny known in 'high' Hinduism and Islam" (132). In her anthropological study of North Indian culture, she observes that fate is not only treated synonymously with karma, but that "popular ideas of fate […] are oriented to a comprehension of everyday life."

> "It is best to accept, Maya. What good does it do to cry?" "Why must you get so upset? Surely it is for the best." "It cannot be undone now, and it must be accepted as it is—you will find that to be the wisest course." […] I felt them soothe me like a stream of cold water that tumbled through the ferns of Darjeeling, like the cold, pearl mists that crept over the blue hills and poured into the valley. (48)

The admonition to accept circumstances and outcomes is palatable for young Maya, but as she develops a stronger sense of her own desires, she chafes under similar directives, this time uttered by Gautama, who emphasizes detachment and logic (101, 104). Despite Gautama's disdain for what he perceives as Maya's fatalism, inherited from her father, he too urges her, "Let it go—it must be so," and this appeal produces a jarring dissonance between her outer calm and inner turmoil, a "dance within [that] grew more urgent, more significant" (50-1).

While fate is the dominant temporal scheme in the novel, Maya's sense that she has been left behind to wait in the home while others actively contribute to Indian society additionally accentuates her perception of urgency. Gautama's family constitutes one particularly illuminating point of comparison. Like Maya's father, Gautama is a lawyer and his family shares his interest "in parliament, in cases of bribery and corruption revealed in governments…of trade pacts made with countries across the seas, of political treaties with those across the mountains, of distant revolutions […]" (43). Rather than engage her in welfare activities, Gautama's mother looks to Maya only as a financial resource; she inquires about receiving money from Maya's father in order to pay nurses who need the money urgently. Maya summarizes, "I knew I was […] one of those

outsiders who could be used for this purpose and were therefore necessary, though not necessarily loved'" (44). Maya's dissatisfaction is consistently registered in her recollections of family dinners, where she was excluded from political conversations "with a naturalness I had to accept for they knew I would not understand a matter so involved, and I knew it myself" (45). When Gautama's family does speak to her, they limit their conversations to "babies, meals, shopping, marriages, for I was their toy, their indulgence" (45).

The men in Maya's extended family are even more closely tied to the success of anticolonial nationalist movements; her father-in-law was "a political prisoner while India's independence hung uncertain as an unfurled flag at half-mast," and her brother was active in the Quit India movement and later in the civil rights movement in America. She imagines her brother to be "a wild bird, a young hawk that could not be tamed, that fought for its liberty," but she perceives herself to be "a partridge, plump, content" (113). While most critics are quick to recognize that Maya, in contrast to the other characters, experiences intense attachment to the world and sensory experience, almost all ignore the political dimensions of Maya's desires. Repeatedly, Maya's discontent is registered in the novel by the comparisons Maya draws between herself and others who have active roles in shaping India's, as well as their own, future.

Not only does Maya detect her exclusion in debates and activities surrounding national identity, but she also consistently rejects inclusion or purpose predicated only on images of traditional Indian womanhood. Maya's friends Leila and Pom give in to "fate" in different ways, but both end up modeling versions of traditional Indian femininity. Leila married a man who was already suffering from tuberculosis, and Maya observes

that “she had married the fatality of his disease as much as the charm of his childish personality” and Leila’s movements reflect both “great beauty and great bitterness” (52). Leila teaches at a girl’s college, “where she taught Persian literature to a handful of girls” who were “waiting, coyly, for suitable marriages to be arranged.” Distance develops between the two friends because Leila no longer rages or revolts against her condition; in contrast to Maya, who frantically seeks to circumvent her own destiny, Leila laments, “‘It was written in my fate long ago’” (54). Pom, on the other hand, “did not speak of fate” directly and instead relished food, color, and beautiful textiles, but her exuberance is dimmed, in Maya’s eyes, by pregnancy. Pom’s pregnancy inspires in her a new religiosity, and Maya is stunned into silence by the revelation as they drive to put flowers at a Temple to secure the birth of a boy (56). Maya ends her reminisces, “There was not one of my friends who could act as an anchor any more, and to whomsoever I turned for reassurance, betrayed me now” (57). Their betrayal, Maya suggests, involves their embrace of fate, and the temporality of waiting complemented by it. Leila in particular aides other young women in managing waiting by passing the interim time, between childhood and marriage, in school.

Taken together, these scenes detailing Maya’s relationship to family—in the abstract, as well as her own—and to nation suggest that she rejects, at least for herself, the temporality of gendered nationalism, where women’s significance and empowerment is tied to their reproduction of the future of the nation through child-bearing. Not only is Maya childless herself—a condition she never laments—and troubled by Pom’s pregnancy, but her reaction to mothers becomes increasingly agitated as the novel progresses. Maya’s intense responses to women and children reach an apex when she and

Gautama are out to dinner in a friend's home. Before depicting the Lal's dinner party, the chapter opens with a conversation between Maya and Gautama that occurs chronologically after the event itself. Maya declares that the whole evening was "horrible," while Gautama asserts that it was merely boring. Incredulous, Maya demands, "You didn't want to weep when you saw that pregnant woman? You were just—bored?" (58). Gautama tries to comfort her, asking, "What if they do live in a grubby house? What if she is pregnant again? […] Besides, your life is your own, so different from theirs—your world completely separate" (60). Maya's strong reaction belies this soothing assertion, suggesting that she nevertheless sees links, or potential links, between Mrs. Lal and herself.

Here again, fate intertwines with images of motherhood to create a temporality of doom and futility. Mrs. Lal's young son interrupts the gathering, and Maya recalls that at his entrance,

> [a]n indescribable air of futility had entered the room with the child. It seemed to me that we alone existed upon an island in a city of the dead, and that we, too, were gripped by a fatal disease and would soon, slowly, perish since even the youngest, freshest generation was touched by it and had no hope of survival. (62)

The child's entrance represents hopelessness and death, paradoxically associating an image of birth and reproduction with disease and fatality. When Mrs. Lal admits that she has four other daughters, Maya immediately imagines "dowries, of debts, humiliations to be suffered, and burdens so gross, so painful that the whole family suffered from them" (63). These images of confinement and burden produce Maya's most intense affective

responses, and combine to reveal her increasing identification with and simultaneous fear of a confined future, despite her equally strong desire to live.[60]

Within this progressively desperate context, Gautama reacts to Maya's anxieties by instructing her to be patient. The third chapter of part two, which depicts not only the Lal's disastrous dinner party, but also introduces the motif of crying peacocks—whose poignant dance and cry signify awareness of their impending death—occupies the very center of the novel. Maya identifies with the peacock's agonizing prescience, lamenting, "Now that I understood their call, I wept for them, and wept for myself, knowing their words to be mine. Not only their words, but their fate" (84). Maya recognizes that she will not have peace or rest as long as the prophecy haunts her present, and she is increasingly aware that Gautama's death may be required to fulfill the prophecy in a way that would still allow her to live. Tormented with the memories of the horoscope, chapter three concludes, "There is no rest any more—only death and waiting" (84). Positioned as consonant with death, waiting describes Maya's temporal experience that must be terminated if she is to live.

Whereas the relationship between uncertainty and anxiety in a novel like *Fragments* is directly proportional—in other words, when one is more uncertain about the future, one is more anxious and fearful—here, uncertainty and anxiety are inversely proportional. That is, the more certain Maya is, and the closer the future comes to the present through the temporality of prophecy, fate, and prediction, the more anxious and

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[60] In a later scene, Maya has a similarly strong reaction to cages of monkeys, who, whether they shriek in terror, bare their teeth, cling to the rails, sit quietly, or put a paw out in hope of acquiring food, remain nevertheless enclosed (130). In fact, the monkey-nut shell that a lone animal reaches out for is discovered to be empty; the animal drops it, and "then was silent again, waiting."

mentally strained she becomes. To return to the temporal variables and constraints of waiting illustrated in Table 1.1, the second category most accurately describes Maya's waiting: a long duration of waiting in dread, with a belief that the undesired outcome is certain to come about. While Maya unequivocally rejects the death predicted by the horoscope, she is still discontent with life if it implies indefinite waiting. This discontent is central, in my view, to understanding why the narrative continues beyond the moment that Maya pushes Gautama off of the roof. While this act may have circumvented her own predicted *death*, it has not necessarily afforded her a *life* without waiting.

Maya's final rejection of passive waiting, and her decision to push Gautama off of the roof, can be understood as both a personal and a political choice in the context of Maya's timescape. Recognizing that Maya's timescape combines fate influenced by Hindu belief as well as national time shaped by reproductive time, we can see the ways these temporalities complement one another to promote a resigned temporality of waiting. Maya's need to act with a fierce urgency of "now" is a direct response to the several ways that "fate" and a sense of predetermination merge in the scenes where Maya encounters images of traditional Indian femininity. Maya's stake in her own future is not contingent on her participation in reproducing the Indian nation. Her defiant rejection of waiting occurs in tandem with her affirmation of the present moment. As the narrative builds toward its tragic conclusion, Maya's thoughts coalesce around waiting and urgency, as she ponders, "But how long could one stand with one's eyes shut, waiting?" (152). She realizes, "And it was the end that I waited for. The beginning had begun long ago, was even forgotten. It was the end, the ultimate, the final version of the final fate that had to appear now—*had* to appear now. I had waited too long—another day would

be one too many" (154). If fate dictates this unfortunate future, then Maya is paradoxically "free" to act as she believes she must.

The temporality of fate works in two ways here. On the one hand, fate is the very outcome that Maya is agitating against; she registers this resistance not only in her first, immediate response to the horoscope ("I will never marry!") but also each time her mind wanders to the option that killing Gautama could be a way to negotiate the prophecy. On the other hand, fate, in tandem with her attachment to sensuous life and Gautama's seeming indifference to it, is a source of empowerment. If the horoscope has limited her options so severely, to the point where her husband dies so that she can live, then the prophecy's inevitability softens the lines of justice and fairness, in effect mitigating her culpability in committing a "crime." As Maya herself imagines, "I saw a future insanity projected before me, beyond the window in a world where guilt, sin, crime, punishment all stood stock still, struck into threatening immobility by a ruthless force of fate" (154).

I have been arguing that Maya's sense of urgency is oriented in opposition both to the horoscope's prediction, where the future is in many ways immutable as well as undesired, and to an alternative future modeled on acceptable roles of wife and mother. Both temporalities—of prediction and reproductive time—entail an already-defined future; in the first, either Maya or her husband must die, and in the second, Maya's claim to the future is dependent on reproduction. By killing her husband, Maya deftly avoids both futures, and her urgent act disrupts the temporalities that undergird both. Urgency itself is "temporal, pushing for resolution in the immediate present or very near future, and it is also authoritative, demanding attention, compelling action or preventing us from acting" (Olson 518). If "the important ethical work of urgency has been to identify that

which must not wait" (Olson 521), then Maya's urgency here deserves further attention. Undoubtedly, Maya's desperation is linked to her sense of impending doom and struggle against what she fears is a future lying in wait. But the ways in which Maya feels additional panic and rage when she contemplates the idealized image of traditional womanhood suggests that her "refusal" to wait any longer should also be placed in relation to the novel's larger, mid-1960s Indian context, when, as Sunder Rajan, Keating, Boehmer, Kumar, and others have demonstrated, many Indian women continued to wait.

In articulating this urgency of now, Maya subtly reconfigures the very categories of acceptance and detachment, originally promoted by her husband and father, to fit her own desires. Maya and Gautama's final interactions are alienating and aloof, reinforcing Maya's conclusion, "This was as it had to be" (161). In my view, Maya's certainty here is also dependent on limiting her focus to the immediate present, because a future at odds with the horoscope is still in the making. As a conversation about the weather begins to drift to the night, which should be cooler, Maya "bit [her] words off abruptly, having strayed too far. The present, I reminded myself fiercely, the present and not the future" (162). The parenthetical commentary, ostensibly from the future Maya reflecting back on this moment, clarifies the power of temporal tenses to ease Maya's commitment to her own future. She explains, "(And yes, now that I remember, all the while I thought of him and of our marriage as things of the past. I thought of the past with deep, twilit, hopeless regret.)" (168). At this point, Maya has already committed herself to choosing her life over Gautama's.

Moreover, from the vantage point of the narrative present, Maya realizes that because her husband and marriage are "things of the past," she can reproduce a similar

temporality of inevitability and fate for her independent actions. In Maya's conscience, the ethical and moral dimensions of killing her husband appear to be similarly diminished; when she thinks of the past with regret, it is with *hopeless* regret—that is, the present is rendered "past" as if the act had already been done. Maya's impatience to endure the conditions in which she finds herself is not simply an involuntary reaction to the circumstances, but rather a calculated response to the self-effacing rhetoric of karma and fate espoused by Gautama and her father. As Mario Feit argues with reference to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy of democratic impatience, "impatience affirms the dignity of the oppressed" by refusing to support "the undemocratic status quo [made possible] by compromise" (10). Maya's impatience is her mechanism for self-determination. Though *Cry, the Peacock* presents a bleak account of Maya's possibilities for self-assertion, the urgency and impatience of her actions challenge the ways that gendered nationalism, fate, and inaction collude to present her with very little room to maneuver.

Underscoring Maya's heightened awareness of time, Desai fittingly depicts Maya passing a statue of Shiva—the Hindu deity associated with time—on her way to the roof. In the form of Kali, the "goddess of destruction and all-pervasive power of time," Shiva is associated with "'great time' and 'all-devouring time'" (Adam, *Time* 7). Maya is mesmerized by the statue, which despite its fixed form is not "frozen or immobile in this pose of eternal creative movement" (Desai 169). The Shiva statue captures the paradox of the Hindu god, who "awakens inert matter, animates the inanimate world and brings forth the cycles of time: birth and death, creation and destruction" (Adam, *Time* 7). As Maya prepares to step onto the veranda, she takes solace in remembered Sanskrit passages and

the image of Shiva's "arched foot, raised into a symbol of liberation" (Desai 169). Linking Maya's apprehension of time to the twinned processes of creation and destruction, as well as to liberation, the novel's climax lends both weight and rationality to Maya's decision to kill Gautama in an effort to save herself.

Before concluding this reading of *Cry, the Peacock*, I want to address the scholarly readings that focus on Maya's "madness," which appears to progress throughout the novel and culminate in Gautama's murder. Many, like Sudhakar Jamkhandi, take for granted that Maya is evidently insane (46). But Inder Kher, who explicitly addresses madness in the novel, argues, "By focusing on Maya's clarity about Gautama's death and its purpose, by highlighting Maya's apparent serenity and happiness toward the end of the novel, Anita Desai strongly suggests that Maya is not mad and should not be confined to an asylum" (23). As *Fragments* demonstrates, a character's experience of madness or mental breakdown can still function as a social or political critique to draw attention to the external conditions and circumstances that affect the character's senses of being and time. Thus, even if Maya were clinically insane, a diagnosis that the novel does not unequivocally assert, her decision to murder her husband would not necessarily be voided of its social and political critique.

In my view, however, the charge of madness is more appropriately leveled at the society in which Maya lives, rather than at Maya herself. As a first-person narrator, Maya is cognizant that her strong reactions and feelings might encourage others to consider her mad, and she succumbs at points to doubting her own sanity. But her doubts arise in the first half of the novel because of her lingering memories of the horoscope, which she was not certain truly occurred. Her brother Arjuna's letter, however, turns these otherwise

unsubstantiated memories into facts, and her fears are verified. That which has made Maya doubt her sanity is then proven to be real; if she experiences a mental breakdown as a result, then it is the "real" that drives her madness. This, in turn, suggests that we read Maya not simply as a study in an isolated individual's psychology, as many others have done, but rather in her social, familial, and even national context. Given this context and the temporalities jostling to restrict her sense of the future, Maya's act takes on an aura of cold reasonableness rather than hot hysteria.

Unfortunately, the immediate result of Maya's action is that her self-affirming moment is reinscribed into the discourse of madness; her sister-in-law Nila and her mother-in-law discuss their plans to place Maya in an insane asylum, and discredit Maya's own version of the events.[61] Unlike waiting, which "can be productive or unproductive for radical praxis," as we saw in *Fragments*, "urgency compels and requires response. […] Insisting that a suffering body, now, is that which cannot wait, has the ethical effect of drawing it into consideration alongside the political, public and exceptional scope of large-scale futures" (Olson 523). While Maya's death, which presumably occurs at the novel's close, is ultimately a self-destroying act, the urgency that attends her actions throughout the novel compels us to consider the political, public, and temporal contexts shaping the possibilities she identifies for action.

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[61] Although it is beyond the scope of the present chapter, there is a striking parallel between the ending of *Cry, the Peacock* and Susan Glaspell's short story "A Jury of Her Peers." In the short story, Mrs. Wright has allegedly murdered her husband; women from the community are left downstairs while their husbands retreat upstairs to gather evidence. In both the short story and Desai's novel, there is evidence that the murdered husbands were dismissive of their wives' attachments to animals and emotionally abusive, and that the women suffered isolation from their communities. But whereas the women in Glaspell's story are able to discern both evidence and motives indecipherable to the men doing the official investigation upstairs, here, Desai's female characters remain in the dark. Gautama's mother discounts Maya's own version of events, which would implicate Maya completely, and insists that it was an accident (180).

Gendered Temporalities of Waiting

The protagonists of *Fragments* and *Cry, the Peacock* repeatedly emphasize their impatience while waiting, and for Baako and Maya the temporalities of waiting gesture toward sociocultural and economic conditions that restrain their sense of possibility and resistance, to the point that each experiences mental breakdown or madness. My reading of the novels also draws attention to the communities of women who further add nuance to the novels' timescapes. Waiting is not a static signifier in *Fragments*; rather, it is named by Efua and Naana to describe temporal orientations that are at odds with Baako's sense of waiting and stasis. Likewise, Maya's comparison with Leila and Pom suggest that women wait differently—not only in ways that may be different from men, but also ways that are different from one another.

In terms of the two novels' stances with regard to postcolonial disillusionment, women, and the nation, both register discontent and critique, but also new ways forward. Maya's self-assertion "stands for change, even if it is nihilist," Fawzia Afzal-Khan suggests, "whereas Gautama and her father symbolize the continuance of patriarchal, neocolonialist traditions" (66). Given the various factors affecting and constricting Maya's self-determination, waiting is not a possibility, and the narrative suggests that change is needed desperately, and now. For *Fragments*, Lazarus has already described the way that Juana's sense of time is at odds with Baako's, but Efua and Naana additionally posit ways of being in time that are critical of postcolonial Ghana without giving in to disillusionment. Efua waits for whatever will come, but her acceptance is still forward-looking even as she relinquishes the expectation of financial returns on Baako's

own return to Ghana. Naana's sense of return and waiting in the novel's final section creates synchronicity with the ritual time of Akan ceremonies, and might yield continuity with tradition and communal solidarity for a postcolonial context at risk of fragmentation.

The interplay of multiple temporalities comprising the novels' timescapes, structuring waiting as a combination of patience and urgency, uncovers the gendered assumptions that waiting entails immobility and passivity. Maya, Naana, Efua, and Juana challenge these assumptions. Maya's sense of waiting emphasizes the urgent dimension of waiting. For her, in this period of disillusionment, the fierce urgency of "now" has not lost its potency to register complaint, even as Maya's refusal to wait involves self-destruction. Baako's sense of time forces us to confront the ways in which the neocolonial, postcolonial state, as well as the new elite, use the language of patience to maintain indefinite deferral, and to exercise power over others. Yet the women in Baako's life, in diverse ways, practice patience as a way of synchronizing with temporalities that coexist and contrast with "productive" time. Together, these novels expressly draw our attention to the multiple temporalities that are implicated in the characters' experience of waiting. The complex timescapes suggest that waiting does not divide people evenly into those with power and those without, but rather that gradations of power and resistance shift in relation to various temporal schemes. The relationship between women and waiting will be taken up further in the following chapter, beginning with Njabulo Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, a novel that alludes to one of the most famous waiting women of all time: Homer's Penelope.

CHAPTER 4

"STRATEGIC WAITING" AND RECONCILIATION IN *THE CRY OF WINNIE MANDELA* AND *RADIANCE OF TOMORROW*

"do not eat an unripe apple
its bitterness is a tingling knife.
suffer yourself to wait
and the ripeness will come
and the apple will fall down at your feet.
now is the time
pluck the apple
and feed the future with its ripeness."—
Njabulo Ndebele, "The Revolution of the Aged" (lines 54-61)

The speaker in Njabulo Ndebele's 1981 poem "The Revolution of the Aged" captures the strained atmosphere of the final decade of apartheid in South Africa, bringing to the fore anxieties about timing, agency, and activism. Addressing the youth of today, the aged speaker recounts lessons learned over the course of a long life, including, "if you cannot master the wind,/ flow with it/ letting know all the time that you are resisting" ("Revolution" 10–12). To the young who are "hot for quick results," the speaker explains that he has "watched and listened," and while experiencing "humiliation/ i felt the growth of strength in me/ for i had a goal/ as firm as life is endless" (43-46). While the thief and oppressor, the source of his humiliations, has grown old, the speaker still has "the weapon of youth" (53). The final stanza advises the youth on the utility of waiting, which allows the fruit to ripen; at the same time, the speaker urges that the time is "now" to harvest the fruits of waiting.

The poem contains both caution and encouragement; the speaker advises the youth not to be so quick to act, nor so quick to judge the apparent patience of the

generations before them.[62] When the speaker counsels, "suffer yourself to wait," the language connotes both pain and endurance in relation to waiting. Though the verb "suffer" is commonly understood in the transitive and passive sense of "to have (something painful, distressing, or injurious) inflicted or imposed upon one," the history of the word's association with endurance suggests undertones of choice and agency ("suffer, v."). To suffer can also entail "to go or pass through," or "to hold out," or "to allow oneself, submit *to be* treated in a certain way; to endure, consent *to be* or *to do* something." Suffering, in this sense, entails endurance and patience. The speaker suggests that to wait, rather than act before the time is ripe, can be a choice, and in this case it is a transformative process. Not only does the fruit ripen in time, but also the speaker's strength grows as he "watched and listened," never losing sight of his "goal/ as firm as life is endless" (17, 45-6). To the youths who would scorn his choices, he reminds them, "it is a blind progeny/ that acts without indebtedness to the past" (27-8). The poem enacts a complicated temporality, "looking backward and forward at once, embracing as needed direct and indirect forms of discourse and action and the perspectives of both old and young…" (O'Brien 49). Timing, here, is everything. With reference to "The Revolution of the Aged," Jennifer Wenzel enumerates several questions that preoccupy Ndebele's poem: "[W]ould the shift from armed struggle to negotiation bring the bitterness of unripe fruit? […] What was the difference between waiting for the apple to

[62] For the larger Black Consciousness movement context and generational struggle that the poem addresses, see Tom Penfold's "Volume, Power, Originality: Reassessing the Complexities of Soweto Poetry," which notes that Ndebele's warnings to the youth "extends the message of Black Consciousness to a wider group, including the old" at the same time that it "attacks the modern and the urban African youth" (16).

decide it was ripe or choosing the moment to seize it, so that its imminent ripeness might 'feed the future'?" (159).

Decades later in 2003, Ndebele returned to the temporality of waiting in *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* with renewed interest in the relationship between waiting and the settlement and negotiation that had occurred in the meantime. Divided into two parts, Ndebele's novel concerns "Penelope's Descendants"—women who waited for their men during the apartheid years, and who now struggle in the post-apartheid present to reconcile with this past. Each "ordinary" woman in *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* has two largely uninterrupted narrative sections. In part one, the women introduce themselves and their particular histories and experiences of waiting for their men; in part two, they address Winnie and ask her questions. Winnie then has her own section, where she imagines her double and addresses herself. For clarity, throughout this chapter I will refer to the fictional character as "Winnie," and the historical person as "Mandela." The novel concludes with the group together in a car, encountering Homer's Penelope as a hitchhiker on the road to Durban. The allusion to Penelope—the figure from *The Odyssey* who becomes a character in the novel's final section, "The Stranger"—draws attention to the ways that women have been expected to wait indefinitely, and chastely, for their male counterparts.

In the Penelope tradition of waiting, waiting is moralized and gendered as passive and feminine, and the novel's dialogue with this history suggests that these expectations have become "timeless": inherited, transnational, and trans-temporal. The four waiting women, as well as the character Winnie, describe and revise the assumptions of this gendered history of waiting. Sometimes waiting is not rewarded, sometimes the women

cultivate opportunities for themselves while waiting, and other times the women refuse to wait at all—but in each case, the waiting is grounded and contextualized in the specific, ordinary circumstances in which the women live. In their probing reflections, conversations, and apostrophes to Mandela herself, the waiting women raise the following questions: What role can the temporal experience of waiting play in the process of reconciliation—with self, other, and nation—after trauma? Given the agony of waiting the women experienced during apartheid, how could waiting possibly signify differently in the post-apartheid present? And how might the temporal dimensions of waiting interact with the temporalities of reconciliation, especially those evoked in the narrative process of recounting memories for Truth and Reconciliation Commissions?

This chapter pairs *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, by the South African writer Njabulo Ndebele, with *Radiance of Tomorrow*, a 2014 novel by the Sierra Leonean writer Ishmael Beah, in order to assess what I call "strategic waiting" as a productive stage in the process of negotiating a traumatic past in order to create a shared future. Like the speaker in Ndebele's poem, *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* and *Radiance of Tomorrow* illustrate that the time of waiting may be inhabited actively and intentionally, especially in an effort to "feed the future." The novels are set soon after Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) in both countries reported their findings and suggestions. The South African TRC was established by an act of Parliament in 1995, but its provisions can be traced to the negotiations for a peaceful settlement conducted between President F.W. de Klerk and the African National Congress (ANC) between 1990 and 1993. As Johnny De Lange characterizes, in language that resonates with my focus on waiting, the ANC "as the government-in-waiting" was committed to the idea of a truth commission as

a way of "dealing in the future with past violations" (De Lange 20). The South African TRC aimed to bring about reconciliation through restorative justice by investigating human rights abuses that occurred between 1960 and 1994, restoring dignity to victims and encouraging rehabilitation and reparations, and granting amnesty to violators in exchange for complete disclosure in public hearings.

The Sierra Leonean TRC began its operations in 2002, though the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement had included provisions that called for such a Commission to bring about reconciliation after the civil war (Sierra Leone 2). According to Abubakar Kargbo, the TRC was meant to "break the cycle of violence" in the country, and its mandate extended back to 1991, when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebelled against President Joseph Momah's government (46). The Sierra Leonean civil war began with an attempted coup by the Revolutionary United Front, led by Foday Sankoh and supported by Liberia's Charles Taylor. Like the South African TRC, the Sierra Leonean TRC sought both written statements and testimonies in public hearings. One complication for the Sierra Leonean TRC, detailed further below, was how to reintegrate child soldiers, who uneasily straddled the line between "victim" and "perpetrator" that TRCs tend to draw. Rather than extensive truth telling, Rosalind Shaw and Lars Waldorf find that "[d]uring closing reconciliation ceremonies, many ex-combatants made 'apologies' that—while full of silences about specific acts of violence—nevertheless enacted moral norms critical to local processes of reintegration" (14). In contrast to South Africa's highly standardized practice of eliciting, submitting, and promulgating stories of victims and perpetrators, the ex-combatants and the TRC audience in Sierra Leone reshaped "what was intended to be a ritual of verbal accountability. […] 'from below' into an

alternative mechanism that would facilitate coexistence" (14). Despite some variation in structure and practices, ending waiting was an important function of both TRCs—waiting for news of disappeared loved ones, for facts, for resolutions, for knowledge, for closure.

As I describe in more detail below, the South African TRC released the first five volumes of its report in 1998, and the last volume in 2003 (coinciding, incidentally, with the year that Ndebele published *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*). Sierra Leone's TRC released its report the following year, in 2004. Throughout his novel, Ndebele incorporates excerpts from the TRC proceedings in South Africa verbatim, and we will see that the text's women acknowledge and address the TRC's purview, process, and conclusions as they situate their own life experiences alongside this national narrative. While not *only* a response to the South African TRC, *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* explicitly discusses the TRC hearings and Mandela's controversial refusal to submit fully to its method of reconciliation. Beah's characters, on the other hand, do not refer to the Sierra Leonean TRC or the Sierra Leonean Special Court, which functioned in tandem with the TRC. Nevertheless, I argue that *Radiance of Tomorrow* is invested in the process of reconciliation and rebuilding after conflict, and the narrative explores the limitations of confession and confrontation, as well as the potentially healing function of silence. In their explorations of waiting, the novels highlight not only the limitations of TRCs—especially as some characters continue to await justice, closure, or reparations—but also the work that fictional texts can do in tandem to supplement and to augment the work of TRCs.

In selecting novels as the fictional form to place in conversation with TRCs, I follow Edward Said, who asserted in another context that novels "are forms of beginning

and being in the world" (*Beginnings* xii). I find that the same could be said of TRC processes—that they are forms of beginning (again), and enabling being in the world by giving shape to painful experiences. Mark Sanders makes a compelling case for an interdisciplinary law and literature study of the South African TRC, given that "[i]n post-apartheid South Africa local cultural formations interact with more widely shared juridical codes such as human rights to produce new kinds of legal, political, and ethical concepts and practices," and "[l]iterature is at the heart of these developments" through "testimonial narrative" (4). Significantly, Sanders notes that while the South African TRC was unable to take up the "interpretative labor" of addressing the "abuse of female comrades in the liberation struggle," such work has "been initiated in two remarkable recent works of fiction;" Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* is one of these novels that "take up predicaments of advocative storytelling" (82-3). To be clear, the novels discussed in this chapter and the official TRCs in South Africa and Sierra Leone do very different work, but I contend that these fictive responses to TRCs and national projects of reconciliation expand and continue the dialogue of reconciliation in a productive, different form.

Thus, this chapter will argue that these fictional narratives examine the philosophical assumptions and temporal underpinnings of TRCs, and variably serve as correctives and complements to TRC processes. Whereas Ndebele's focus on waiting women addresses lacunae in the South African TRC's method and report, Beah's limited focus on the rebuilding of a single village, Imperi, scales down the scope of the Sierra Leonean TRC to focus on sub-state reconciliations of injury and loss. Despite these differences in geographical location, scale, and narrative, as well as the unique

formations of the TRCs in South Africa and Sierra Leone, the texts evince instances of "strategic waiting" as a temporal modality that can be productively inhabited in the service of reconciliation. In order to elucidate the ways that strategic waiting intervenes in the temporalities of reconciliation as promoted by TRCs, I provide an historical account of the establishment of TRCs in South Africa and Sierra Leone in the following section, with an eye toward illuminating their narrative and temporal underpinnings. I then examine the strengths, controversies, and shortcomings of the TRCs, and emphasize the temporal tensions at the heart of the reconciliation processes. Given these strengths and limitations, I turn to *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* and *Radiance of Tomorrow*, and I argue that these fictional renderings work to extend, qualify, and even redirect the official national reconciliation narrative process. If, as Adam Czarnota asserts, "[r]econciliation does not merely happen in time but requires time for its happening" (160), then these novels suggest that strategic waiting can be mobilized precisely to accomplish this work.

"Breaking the cycle": History, Memory, and New Beginnings

From Bolivia to Argentina, Uganda, El Salvador, and the Philippines, official national commissions that aimed to uncover the truth about state violations of human rights proliferated around the world across the twentieth century. In 1990, Chile became the first country to use the term "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" to describe its project of investigating human rights abuses, and five years later South Africa followed suit. Sierra Leone's own TRC was established in 2000 after the country's eleven-year-long civil war. While the particular focus of each Commission, its mandate, and its

purview were specific to each country, TRCs broadly share several assumptions about truth, justice, and temporality.

First, TRCs require the double perspective of looking back in order to look forward. While Commissions are often candid about the challenges that remain for the nation, and the difficulties (or impossibilities) of achieving "harmony," the teleology of forward movement underpins the popular justifications for the work of the TRCs. Despite the difficulties of looking backward, or remembering, doing so is necessary to moving past, or beyond.[63] As Desmond Tutu wrote in his foreword to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report, the South African TRC aspired to "hel[p] our nation to come to terms with its past and, in so doing, reach out to a new future" (South Africa and Tutu 2). These efforts toward "accounting for the past," Tutu explains, will enable the nation to "become accountable for the future" (7). Those who participated in the South African TRC's public hearings, which lasted from 1996 to 2001, had diverse reasons for doing so; some sought amnesty, others information about missing loved ones, and still others desired the opportunity to be heard or to tell their stories.

But in terms of the South African TRC report's own account, formally remembering and reconstructing the past is important to bringing about a future where the violations would never happen again. The Chairman of Sierra Leone's TRC, Bishop Joseph Christian Humper, echoed similar sentiments in his foreword to Sierra Leone's TRC report: "Forgetting or ignoring the past means we cannot learn its lessons and are at

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[63] In his foreword to the South African TRC report, for example, Tutu anticipates many objections leveled at the Commission, writing that the report "is not and cannot be the whole story; but it provides a perspective on the truth about a past that is more extensive and more complex than any one commission could, in two and a half years, have hoped to capture. Others will inevitably critique this perspective—as indeed they must" (2).

a greater risk of repeating it" (Sierra Leone 2). The report, he hopes, will "serve as a roadmap towards the building of a new society in which all Sierra Leoneans can walk unafraid with pride and dignity" (2). Likewise, according to the South African TRC report's summary of its mandate, the "Commission was conceived as part of the bridge-building process designed to help lead the nation away from a deeply divided past to a future founded on the recognition of human rights and democracy" (48). The metaphor of the bridge, however, elides the complicated temporalities of memory and history, which can impede easy transition from one side of the "bridge" to the other.[64]

Second, TRCs share a commitment to victim-centered restorative, rather than retributive, justice. The TRCs in both South Africa and Sierra Leone were charged with understanding and reconstructing the past in an effort to forge national unity. In this way, the Commissions were "both preventative and restorative," aiming "to reconcile the old and new, and to move forward in effective harmony" (Rotberg and Thompson 3). South Africa's amnesty for truth arrangement—that in certain cases perpetrators of gross violations of human rights could be granted amnesty if they fully disclosed their actions and if their actions were themselves politically motivated—is emblematic of this emphasis. Sierra Leone, on the other hand, added retributive elements to its reconciliation process through the establishment of a Special Court. The Sierra Leonean Special Court, the TRC report notes, "was created after the abandonment of the amnesty provisions (or certain of them) following breaches of the Lomé Peace Agreement by elements within the RUF" (15). The Lomé Peace agreement had incited protests within Sierra Leone as

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[64] In his essay "Of Lions and Rabbits: Thoughts on Democracy and Reconciliation," Ndebele also draws on the imagery of the bridge, noting that the TRC "allowed the country to cross a particular river of *time* and circumstance" (155–6, emphasis mine).

well as in the greater international community because it granted amnesty to all combatants, including Foday Sankoh, the leader of the RUF. The Truth and Reconciliation Act was officially passed in 2000, the same year that President Kabbah requested that the United Nations create a tribunal to pursue criminal charges against RUF combatants (Sierra Leone 30). The disarmament of the RUF and other rebel groups was one of the goals of establishing a TRC in Sierra Leone, but the government was concerned that the TRC would be "perceive[d] as a court of law" and stall the process (Alie 176). Thus, in language I find particularly suggestive for considering the temporality of reconciliation underlying the Sierra Leonean TRC process, the "government's position, supported by most people, [was] 'to make haste slowly,'" utilizing both a TRC and a Special Court (176).

Third, TRCs, as temporary institutions of investigation, are necessarily limited in their temporal scopes; not only are TRCs charged with investigating abuses within a circumscribed amount of time, but also the Commission is not intended to continue its work indefinitely. Complicating these temporal limits, the TRC and the Special Court in Sierra Leone were held to different timelines. While the Sierra Leonean TRC was authorized to address violence and abuses beginning in 1991, the date recognized as the start of the civil war, the Special Court was limited to 1996, when the Abidjan Peace Accord failed. South Africa's TRC was limited to the years 1960-1994. As we will see below in the subsequent discussion of *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* and *Radiance of Tomorrow*, the demarcation of set dates for TRC mandates imposes a narrower scope that, while making the volume of claims more manageable and establishing a starting

point for the narrative of reconciliation, necessarily excludes contributing events that pre-date the imposed starting point.

In practice, then, the rigid scope of the TRCs' mandate disqualifies some abuses from being addressed, deferring closure for some individuals even as the nation ostensibly works toward unification. The South African TRC has come under scrutiny because some experiences—including the ordinary, banal experiences of abuse under apartheid—appeared to be excluded or downplayed in the process of reconciliation. While Sierra Leone followed South Africa's example in establishing a limited scope for its TRC, the country did attempt to learn from the earlier Commission's shortcomings; important differences between the two include the Sierra Leonean TRC's focus on human rights violations and its separate Special Court. Within its report, the Sierra Leone TRC acknowledges that South Africa's experiences proved an instructive example. Under "Mandate of the Commission," the report notes that the South African TRC's scope of "gross violations" of human rights was "much narrower" than the "violations and abuses" Sierra Leone's TRC was authorized to probe (34). Citing Priscilla Hayner, the report suggests that the narrow scope of gross violations of human rights "excluded a large number of victims" and potentially "compromised truth" (34). In Sierra Leone, supplementary ceremonies of reconciliation occurred outside the parameters of the official TRC hearings, highlighting the role of local community-level negotiations of reconciliation that allowed, in some instances, a "forgive and forget" approach at odds with the TRC premises of truth-telling and the rigorous reconstruction of the past.

In summary, the South African case was a useful touchstone for Sierra Leone, as it was the first commission created "through a public and participatory process, by way of

an Act of parliament" (De Lange 14). But transitional justice can be a messy legal endeavor, especially when neither side can claim military victory, and when amnesty is at issue. During the transition in South Africa, "the apartheid legal order remain[ed] the law of the land, even if unconstitutional, until amended by the democratic parliament, or declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court" (19). Recalling Nadine Gordimer's concept of interregnum temporalities discussed in chapter 1, we might view the origins of South Africa's TRC as befitting the twilight of the "interregnum" context from which it emerged, embedding the negotiation of the dying old and emerging new. As mentioned above, the amnesty for truth arrangement that was so central to piecing together South Africa's past originated in the settlement negotiated by President de Klerk and the African National Congress (ANC) between 1990 and 1993. During the regime change, Paul van Zyl notes, "the former government retained control over a formidable military and police force," and "maintained considerable power" (649). The interim constitution of 1993, in fact, "was completed without agreement on whether an amnesty provision should be included," and that provision was eventually included as part of a postamble (650-1).

Rather than enabling decisive breaks with the nondemocratic past, then, the conditions for TRCs' possibility often emerge explicitly from the negotiation and settlement process. While metaphors of bridges (in the South African case) and roadmaps (in the Sierra Leonean case) suggest an implicit acknowledgement that the past and future are linked, there is also, I believe, a desire for the traffic to proceed in one direction, from the "divided past" to the reconciled future. From the intermingling of legal regimes during the transition process to the provision of amnesty marked by the belatedness of a

postamble, the temporal conditions for the creation of the South African TRC by no means progressed linearly or discretely. To illuminate the multiple temporalities generally configured in relation to and through TRCs, the following section will outline the narrativization of time in TRC hearings and reports, which is complicated by the temporalities of memory, as well as the temporalities of reconciliation. Specifically, I am interested in the ways that desire for closure—in the form of truth, justice, and narrative—posits an anticipated end to waiting that TRCs have not been able to realize fully.

Rush to Closure? Narrative, Time, and the Limits of TRCs

For individuals identified in TRC processes as perpetrators and victims, the complicated reworking of the past through remembering, witnessing, and testifying—acts central to TRC proceedings—can similarly produce psychological tensions between the temporal categories of past harm and future reconciliation. Many commentators on TRCs, and in particular South Africa's TRC, evoke what Claire Moon calls "popular therapeutic platitudes about denial and mental health: that recalling buried memories or truths about past trauma can help alleviate anxiety and emotional suffering, and prevent the unsettling and disruptive 'return' of the past" ("Reconciliation" 165). In her view, individual and national experiences of suffering, healing, unity, and reconciliation "were conflated […] such that individual healing became commensurate with national reconciliation" (165). The forward-movement emphasized by the South African TRC's own narrative of bridging the past and future is here underscored by the imperative to recall in order to prevent an unbidden return of memories—language that is consistent with the above

insistence that TRCs can help to break cycles of violence. Creating parallels between TRC confessional and testimonial practices and therapy, Moon observes, "implies a teleological adjudication of trauma that necessarily engages inner psychological and emotional processes, professing to be destined, at some unknown point in the future, for wholeness or healing" (181). Ultimately, all "three distinct constituents of reconciliation—past atrocity, present truth-telling and future reconciliation," Moon finds, "were constructed, indeed narrated, by the TRC as existing in a causal, linear, and inevitable relationship with one another" (*Narrating* 6).

Moon's analysis points to a central tension in the construction of TRC narratives—that while positing a unified, reconciled future, the Commissions nevertheless acknowledge a plurality of stories and perspectives on the past (*Narrating* 7). The temporality of reconciliation, then, is more heterogeneous than TRC narratives of unified reconciliation admit. And reconciliation, Emilios Christodoulidis and Scott Veitch argue, "is all about time" (2). Their observations about the temporality of reconciliation are worth quoting at length because they illuminate how the narrative of national reconciliation charts a teleology of closure not necessarily shared by the individual participants in the process:

> Reconciliation calls forth both a future that is uncontroversially common, but significantly also a certain past. This "past" is one of conflict but, crucially, one where the conflict is seen as resolvable […]. In all these formulations reconciliation "overdetermines" the past. It projects onto it the origin of a common future. But this is a future that will only be had if,

> and this is the *if* that reconciliation misses, the past lends itself to the overcoming of the conflict that divided it. (2)

Reconciliation, then, posits a particular future *as well as* a particular past.

The resultant temporality posited by TRC processes also emphasizes closure, temporal unity, and teleological significance, with the desired ending conditioning the way the story unfolds (Moon, *Narrating* 59, 61). Put another way, TRC narratives tend to "embod[y] a liberal version of history as progress," exhibiting redemptive models where the past can always be recuperated in service of a better future (Shaw and Waldorf 3). One of the most widely cited critics of the South African TRC, Wole Soyinka, objected to what he viewed as the overwhelming emphasis on closure or catharsis (McGonegal 34).[65] The emphasis that TRCs placed on testifying in order to produce healing, in any case, encouraged participants to view the TRC as a mechanism toward achieving closure.

Many of the limitations of TRCs that commentators identify result from the imbrication of narrative with memory at each stage of the process, from witness statements and testimonies to the Commission's writing of a the final report to be disseminated at the conclusion of the process. In order to try to understand, inasmuch as it is possible, "what really happened," TRCs create an historical account. While TRCs place great emphasis on remembering and recounting, Hayden White among others reminds us that the production of history is "as much about forgetting as it is about remembering" (323). The South African TRC process attempted to address the

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[65] As mentioned above, the official TRC report anticipated this critique, noting that the process ought to continue beyond the present, and that its story is not the only story. But Soyinka's assessment captures the way the TRC was perceived more generally, and highlights the report's own proffering of its work as assisting to close the door on a divided past. At the same time, Soyinka acknowledges in another context, "We cannot take refuge in amnesia" (Soyinka 22).

limitations of trial court hearings—which do not present incentives for perpetrators to tell the truth, and tend to be "harrowing" experiences for victims—by foregrounding victims' experiences (South Africa and Tutu 6). Whereas trials "consult victims only to illustrate the fact or scope of the defendants' guilt," and "interrupt and truncate victim testimony" through cross examinations and objections, TRC public hearings invite testimony in a setting where the victims may speak without interruption (Minow 238).[66]

Even in this more open setting, the testimonies needed to be placed in particular narrative forms as a matter of expediency and interpretability. As the South African TRC report notes, the "large volume of data required methodical and consistent treatment to ensure that each statement and amnesty application received a fair and equal evaluation" (South Africa and Tutu 158). To gather victim statements, the South African TRC housed approximately "three hundred statement-takers" in "offices around the country" (Moon, *Narrating* 82). Statements were taken over the course of two years, from the beginning of the Commission until December 1997 (South Africa and Tutu 167). From the narrative testimonies, these statement-takers were charged with "taxonimiz[ing] forty-eight distinct violation types" and "three different categories of agent [victim, perpetrator, witness]" (80). In actual practice, the statement-takers were overwhelmed by "'unstructured'" testimonies that "relied more heavily on an individual interpretation which could not be

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[66] Because of time and logistical constraints, not every statement submitted to the South African TRC occurred in a public hearing. From January 1996- December 1997, "the Commission gathered and processed about 21,000 victims' statements" (Mack 37). To manage this volume of statements, the South African TRC "selected those deponents who were representative of the demographic of the population of the region where the hearing was taking place and whose stories represented varied perspectives on the violence and the types of human rights violations that had occurred there" (37). In a sense, the patterns and types of abuse the TRC collected started to coalesce around representative or generic forms. In this way, *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* mirrors these representative victim statements, as Ndebele writes at the beginning of the novel's second part, in reference to the four waiting women characters: "Some have names, others don't. They all come across to us like stories we've heard. Yes, there's something generic about them" (39).

captured by the data processing unit employed by the TRC, nor framed within the taxonomy of violations which structured agents simply into either 'witnesses', victims', or 'perpetrators'" (82). In the end, statements were taken through a "highly structured questionnaire," which restricted an "open and free narrative interpretation of the events" (82).

Through the identification of victims and perpetrators, TRCs create specific subject positions that participants inhabit, and provide an interpretative framework for understanding the relationships between individuals. The South African TRC report self-consciously acknowledged the power of these positions, and noted "discomfort with the use of the word 'victim'" for the way it may "imply a negativity or passivity" (59). The term "victim" was retained in contrast to the alternative "survivor," however, because from the South African TRC's perspective "the intention and action of the perpetrator…creates the condition of being a victim" (59). Mahmood Mamdani's oft-cited critiques of the South African TRC identify this practice as a major limitation; he argues that "[t]he TRC's version of truth was established through narrow lenses, crafted to reflect the experience of a tiny minority. This tiny minority included two groups, on the one hand perpetrators, being state-agents, and, on the other, victims, being political activists" ("Truth" 178).

While such subject positions can influence how participants view and recount their own stories, the limitations of the categories of victim and perpetrator are especially visible in the Sierra Leonean context, where the "'victim-perpetrator' dichotomy […] fails to adequately confront the moral 'gray zone' of civils wars such as Sierra Leone's" (Shaw 114). These narrative positions may constrain or even distort the lived experiences

of participants in the armed conflict, particularly the experiences of child soldiers. As Sandra Rein reflects, the forced conscription of children into the Revolutionary United Front's army drew "little, if any, distinction between civilians and combatants" (Rein 136).[67] These child soldiers' involvement in the conflict "challenge easy distinctions between passivity and agency, or between innocence and culpability or complicity," pitting their suffering against "the harms they have committed and their own maturation" (Moore 31).

During South Africa's TRC proceedings, underlying, gendered assumptions about victimhood additionally constrained the recognition of women's experiences of victimhood and abuse under apartheid. H. Louise du Toit argues that the South African TRC "entrenched a single-sex model of politics, i.e. one in which masculine agency and victimhood, as well as masculine biased concerns and vocabularies still pose as the universal" (187). Specifically, she finds that "rape was eclipsed by other forms of oppression and violation where men were the vast majority of victims," and this narrative frame relegated women to "the road-sides of history" (193). The language here is striking, resonating both with the Sierra Leonean TRC's language of producing "roadmaps" for the nation's future, and with Ndebele's novel *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, which explores the diversity of women's experiences of waiting during and after apartheid in South Africa, and concludes with the women embarking on the road together with Winnie. During the first year of the South African TRC's human rights

[67] Perhaps reflecting the need to attend to the traumatized experiences of children, the Sierra Leonean TRC, Paul Gready notes, "swiftly produced versions of its report for young children (2004) and for senior secondary school students (2005)" (Gready 47).

violation hearings, it became increasingly clear that "a gendered pattern of testimony" was occurring, wherein women testified largely as secondary rather than primary victims of abuse (Mack 38).

To address this tendency and make women's testimonies more legible in the broader historical and national narrative, Beth Goldblatt and Sheila Meintjes recommended that the TRC "reconsider the questionnaires used by statement takers…to elicit more details about women's experiences; not to probe too deeply for graphic details […] and to offer closed hearings, staffed only by female commissioners" (Mack 40). These recommendations paved the way for what the TRC called special Women's Hearings, which called upon women to testify directly about the abuses they experienced under apartheid. The Women's Hearings in Johannesburg on July 28, 1997 opened with this explicit invitation from Thenjiwe Mtintso, the chairperson of the Commission on Gender Equality, for women "'to speak as actors, as active participants and direct survivors of the violation of human rights. Not as relatives, not as spouses, not as wives, but as themselves, those that directly suffered'" (Oboe 61). These special hearings were designed to integrate the diversity of women's experiences into the South African TRC report and its larger historical narrative.

Narrative is clearly the *modus operandi* of TRC activities, but while narratives certainly shape TRC and criminal court proceedings alike—from the initial statements taken to the presentation of select testimonies to the public, to the final write up in report form—the role of narrative to facilitate reconciliation after conflict is much more ambivalent than advocates of TRCs tend to admit. Because TRCs aspire to achieve truth and closure through restorative justice proceedings, emphasizing healing and truth over

punishment, commentators have tended to focus on the advantages and disadvantages of TRC proceedings in contrast to the criminal court system, noting the ways that the role of narrative differs in the context of transitional justice. Ndebele, for example, praised the South African TRC as "'a living example of people reinventing themselves through narrative'" (qtd. in Barnard 658). In this view, the South African TRC became a transformative site for the restoration of dignity and personhood, foregrounding the power of narrative in the performance and formation of identity. Narratives, as part of a greater context of reconciliation and forgiveness, "are places where the imperative to remember has to do with the construction of a different future," and have the potential to "recollect the past in an attempt to bring about that which has *not yet* come" (McGonegal 15, emphasis mine). In the following sections, we will see how novels provide counterpoints to some of the TRC shortcomings outlined above—not to denigrate the important and essential work of TRCs, but rather to suggest how cultural art forms such as fiction might supplement and extend the discussion. I contend that official, state-sanctioned TRC processes and reports are not the only locations where the tensions between past and future are negotiated in a transitional present, but rather that fictional texts, such as novels, also continue such an exploration with an eye toward the "not yet."

Fictional Responses, Counterpoints, and Supplements to TRCs

One of the most significant ways that *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* and *Radiance of Tomorrow* contrast with the official TRCs of South Africa and Sierra Leone respectively is through their expansion of the period under consideration, beyond the temporal parameters to which Commissions adhered. While the South African TRC was restricted

to the years between 1960 and 1994, Ndebele's novel introduces four waiting women whose experiences establish a pattern of waiting that predates and extends past the TRC's mandated time frame. In the first section, "Penelope's Descendants," the narrator explains, "For over a century, millions of [Penelope's] South African descendants have unremittingly been put to the test by powerful social forces that caused their men to wander away from home for prolonged periods of time," starting with "massive male labour migration to the mines and factories of South Africa" (*Cry* 5–6). The pattern continues with men forced into exile after the banning of political organizations in 1960, as well as the "internal exile of detention" of those who stayed behind (6-7). The experiences of waiting and absence became "the dominant African experience of home" (Napolitano 337), but as *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* demonstrates, waiting occupies a particularly gendered temporality with a long history in South Africa. This history was truncated by the Commission's "temporal ambit," which "precluded adequate assessment of the *longue durée* of certain forms of violence" (Ross 74). When Ndebele's novel concludes in the post-apartheid present, then, with the women no longer waiting but moving together along the road to Durban, the temporality of waiting the women have reconciled with is rooted not only in the apartheid past, but also in the more distant colonial past.

Rather than extensively detail the pre-1991 past, Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow* instead focuses exclusively on the post-TRC present. In this way, Beah's novel looks past the temporal parameters of the Sierra Leonean TRC, which was limited to 1991-1999, and considers the way that reconciliation is an ongoing, local process whose methods might take forms other than those embodied by the TRC process. While the TRC focused

on reconciling combatants and noncombatants from various factions—the RUF, the Sierra Leone Army (SLA), the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) among other local militias—Beah's novel shows that the fragile national unity is threatened in the present by multinational mining interests and their exploitative industrial development. The first half of Beah's novel depicts members of the village Imperi returning after the civil war, and their labors to reconcile with the traumatic past. The second half of the novel focuses more narrowly on the teacher Bockarie, whose struggles to provide for his family are first stymied by corruption at the elementary school, and later by the mining company. The company not only requires dangerous, life-threatening work, but also conceals the deaths of its workers, pollutes the local water supply, and refuses to discourage sexual violence perpetrated by the white management class on the local women. The mutilations, rapes, concealments of truth, and destruction of communities that characterized the civil war are eerily restaged in the Sierra Leonean present through interactions with the exploitative mining company. The difficulty with reconciling and forgiving is compounded by the ways that the trauma recurs and repeats in a neocolonial present.

If the TRC looms large in *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, restaging Mandela's testimony in the second half of the text through intertextual references and explicit excerpts, the TRC as a formal structure is conspicuously absent from *Radiance of Tomorrow*. Scholars have addressed the role of the TRC in Ndebele's novel in various ways, ranging from a "marginal yet activating presence" (Barnard, "Rewriting" 659) to "extend[ing] the most valuable aspect of the work of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission—the foregrounding of personal narrative and victim

testimony" (Napolitano 332). Joe Napolitano even observes that Ndebele's novel is structured like a truth report (356). While Mandela testified as part of the South African TRC proceedings, none of the other waiting women in the novel would have, as the Commission would not have been identified them as either victims or perpetrators of gross violations of human rights. Similarly, none of the characters in *Radiance of Tomorrow* is depicted telling her story to Commissioners. Instead, each novel demonstrates a commitment to the personal narratives of ordinary, everyday experiences of loss as well as reconciliation potentially missing from official TRC reports and histories.

In addition to extending the temporal periods beyond those delimited by TRCs, the novels implicitly interact with another critique of TRCs—one especially leveled at the South African TRC—that the official history derived from the final report elides the experiences of many who suffered. The insistence on "everyday" experiences has a particular resonance for Ndebele, whose essays advocate the rediscovery of the ordinary in contrast to the prevalence of the spectacular in protest literature. Ndebele's lecture "The Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Some New Writings in South Africa" was originally given as a keynote address in London in 1984. Protest literature, he argued, focused on the "spectacular," and was written by "the powerless identifying the key factor responsible for their powerlessness" (*South African* 49). In contrast, the literature of the ordinary reminds readers "that the problems of the South African social formation are complex and all-embracing. […] that the ordinary daily lives of people should be the direct focus of political interest because they constitute the *very content* of the struggle, for the struggle involves people not abstractions" (57). In David Medalie's view, *The Cry*

of Winnie Mandela takes up this challenge in the post-apartheid era by "cast[ing] the oppressed as 'makers of the future'" (54). Thus, while we might situate Ndebele's call for literature of the ordinary as a response to the proliferation of protest literature under apartheid, this same insistence on the ordinary proves useful even after apartheid, in post-transition times.

While the South African TRC proceedings certainly included the experiences of "everyday" people, along with testimonies by prominent figures like Eugene de Kock and Winnie Mandela, the TRC's focus on gross violations necessarily excluded the experiences of those who suffered the ordinary humiliations and abuses endemic to life under apartheid. The South African TRC "resolved that its mandate was to give attention to human rights violations as specific acts" rather than the general laws and policies of the apartheid government, "however morally offensive these may have been" (64). But there were also good reasons, beyond the mandate's language, to justify this scope. As Albie Sachs points out, "these individual cases of torture, assassination and violence […] were hidden, secret and denied," as well as "criminal even in the terms of the laws of apartheid" at the time ("Henry" 95). In a sense, the ordinary experiences of apartheid were not hidden, but rather were well known; the South African TRC did not need to uncover them in the same way, yet these ordinary experiences are essential in assessing the magnitude and scope of apartheid abuses. In establishing a distinction between the spectacular and the ordinary, as well as between the South African TRC and novels like Ndebele's, my aim is not to condemn the TRC's limited purview, but rather to demonstrate that fiction here is able to expand upon the TRC's scope to consider the everyday lives precluded from the official TRC report.

The Cry of Winnie Mandela gives voice to four ordinary women whose individual stories emphasize the waiting that collectively structured their lives under apartheid and, in some cases, after apartheid as well. To recall the discussion of Vincent Crapanzano's *Waiting: The Whites of South Africa* in chapter 1 in relation to *July's People*, the temporality of waiting captures the prevailing sense of the present for South African whites in the 1980s as they anxiously considered their futures in the midst of turbulent times. Derek Hook characterizes this sensation from the vantage of his post-apartheid present, noting that this "state of anxious and fearful expectancy" was "not merely waiting, but a time of *awaiting judgement*" (Hook, "Indefinite" 64). In the context of post-apartheid South Africa, the period in which Ndebele wrote and published *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, this question of judgment—as least in a legal sense—had already been handled or indefinitely postponed through the hearings and amnesty proceedings of the South African TRC. Still, the waiting remains and permeates post-apartheid South African literature.

In the last twenty years, scholars of South African literature in particular have noted the ways that waiting patterns and proliferates throughout post-apartheid fiction. Rita Barnard notes that "the term 'post-transition,'" for some scholars, "describe[s] the more disenchanted writing that has emerged in the new millennium" ("Rewriting" 652). This disenchantment, however, is markedly different from the "disillusionment" described in this dissertation's chapter 3, which tended to emphasize stasis over other temporal sensations. Derek Hook notes that "the temporality of South Africa's (post) apartheid period of political transition is unique," marked by "accelerations and apparent 'slow-downs' and reversals of history [that] co-exist alongside anxious periods of stasis,

suspension and retroaction" (Hook, "Petrified" 18). While for Hook waiting may not be the dominant temporal mode that distinguishes post-apartheid temporality, it is nevertheless present as a sense of suspension that interacts with competing impressions of accelerated and backward movements.

Other scholars of South African post-apartheid fiction, such as Andrew van der Vlies, note a lingering disappointment in South Africa that is "a structuring affect" as well as "a temporal condition" (viii). In his forthcoming book, *Present Imperfect: Contemporary South African Writing*, van der Vlies describes the aesthetics of waiting in post-apartheid South African fiction through suspension, arrested development or waithood, boredom, and stasis.[68] While he does not discuss Ndebele's *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, he does consider other authors I have addressed throughout this dissertation, including J.M. Coetzee and Nadine Gordimer. Although he notes that waiting is peppered throughout both authors' apartheid-era fictions, his focus is decidedly on the waiting that continues to pervade their post-apartheid texts. With reference to *No Time Like the Present*, the final novel published by Gordimer in 2012, van der Vlies argues that the characters "attempt to imagine another temporality in which such stasis might be overcome" (6). My argument in this chapter, however, is that we ought not to take for granted that waiting—as it figures in both Ndebele's and Beah's novels—must be overcome in every instance. In post-apartheid fiction, waiting may not always (or only) appear as an *obstacle*, but may also function as an *instrument*.

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[68] As I also noted in the acknowledgements pages, I am grateful for Andrew van der Vlies's generosity in allowing me to read the manuscript, and for Stephen Clingman's facilitation.

Ndebele's women address waiting-as-obstacle in the first part of the novel, when each woman recounts the circumstances of her waiting. 'Mannete Mofolo, the first waiting woman, waits for her husband Lejone to return from the mines. Unbeknownst to her, the reason he never returns is because he has started another family. 'Mannete breaks "Penelope's law" by refusing to wait at home, and looks for her husband (*Cry* 15). Her story resists closure, not because the narrator discloses what happened to her husband Lejone, about which 'Mannete remains ignorant, but because he lingers in her thoughts as an absent presence, even as he represses memories of her. While the narrative initially insists on her name, repeating it several times in the first few pages, by the end of her first section her name is replaced by "she." The final occurrence of her name in this first section occurs on page 13, when 'Mannete begins to wait anxiously after her husband's infrequent visits home stop altogether. Even as she "begins to contemplate the meaning of a future definitively without her husband," the narrative suggests that the indefinite waiting caused by her husband's unexplained absence is self-effacing (15). Her section concludes with the sensation of being unmoored in time, forgetting everything except "the floating feeling, the medium of forgetfulness and shelter" (16).

In the second and fourth sections of part one, Ndebele withholds the names of the descendants until later in the novel. Like 'Mannete , the fourth descendant, Marara Joyce Baloyi, confronts waiting without end because her husband dies prematurely after an extended period of sleeping around. While she does not love her husband any more at the time of his death, she cannot face the "truth" and instead pays for an expensive burial. She was faithful to her husband, but notes that society expects infidelity from a waiting woman, and that "[i]f they cannot find the proof, they'll invent it" (38). The second

descendent, Deliswe Dulcie S'khosana, waits over a decade for her husband to return from his medical studies abroad. Deli's infidelity results in a child, and her husband immediately divorces her upon his return. As Deli tells it, only when she becomes pregnant and the possibility of departing to join her husband vanishes, does she begin to wait (22).

The third descendant, Mamello "Patience" Molete, exemplifies the self-destructive consequences of identifying oneself wholly with the temporality of waiting. Mamello waited for her husband while he was in exile for ten years, and again when he was sentenced to fifteen years on Robben Island, but after he is released he refuses to return to her. All her life, she had considered chaste waiting to be a virtue, but her endurance goes unrewarded. Instead, her husband leaves her for a white woman, triggering in her a series of mental breakdowns. Mamello writes to him of her personal pain, but he responds by recontextualizing their discussion in terms of the nonracial language of post-apartheid South Africa, lecturing her on the use of the word "coloured."[69] While Mamello desires discussion on the personal and individual level, her husband insists on the public, national scale in his rebukes. Her section ends on a plaintive cry that the rest of the novel takes up: "I want to reclaim my right to be wounded without my pain having to turn me into an example of woman as victim" (35).

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[69] See Ian Goldin's "The Reconstitution of Coloured Identity in the Western Cape" for a brief history of term in South Africa. Goldin notes that while "coloured" was originally applied to all non-European peoples in the Western Cape in the 19th century, by 1904 the census "distinguished between three 'clearly defined race groups in this colony: White, Bantu, and Coloured'" (158). The Nationalist Party reconstituted the category "Coloured" in the twentieth century in order to further fragment South African society and limit challenges to the state (178). Though used as a racial category, the grouping is multiracial in composition, and is a category many in South Africa reject.

I have described each of the four descendants at length because they illustrate a range of different experiences of waiting during apartheid, and in my view their stories also evoke the South African TRC's project, as well as the critiques outlined earlier in this chapter. Taken together, the four descendants' stories introduce themes of closure, memory, forgetfulness, truth, and victimhood explored above in my discussion of TRCs and their limitations. I will now take these concepts, so central to TRC processes and their criticisms, and identify the distinctive ways that both *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* and *Radiance of Tomorrow* address them, before turning to the texts' unique contribution of "strategic waiting" to negotiate the temporalities of memory and reconciliation in the following section.

Through Winnie's sections in *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, Ndebele explores the relationship between the temporality of reconciliation and the closure it posits, and the role of the South African TRC in shaping narratives of cause and effect as well as subject positions of victims and perpetrators. The connections between Winnie and reconciliation are drawn explicitly; both Winnie and the other women reference Mandela's testimony to the South African TRC. When Mandela took the witness stand at the South African TRC hearings, she famously refused to answer questions or acknowledge her involvement in a series of abuses. The report instead notes that Mandela thwarted attempts to uncover the truth, and her "denials were complemented by a series of allegations and insinuations about individuals and structures that provided information about her role and involvement in the events of this period. She refused to take responsibility for any wrongdoing" (South Africa and Tutu 578). The Commission was particularly interested in events between 1986-1991, during which time the Mandela United Football Club

(MUFC)—a group of youths who functioned as Mandela's bodyguards—were accused of assaults, kidnappings, murder, and attempted murder (556). In 1997, the TRC subpoenaed Mandela to testify related to allegations of gross violations of human rights during the struggle—including her role in the kidnapping and murder of Stompie Seipei, who the MUFC thought might be an alleged police informer. While the Commission found her "politically and morally accountable for the gross violations of human rights committed by the MUFC," it conceded that the Commission was nevertheless "unable to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion as to what went wrong" (581-2).

Ndebele's fictional exploration of Mandela's intractability focuses on this refusal to participate in reconciliation practices, and refuses to grant the demanded closure as well. Mamello is the first to broach the topic of Mandela's TRC testimony; she writes to Winnie in a letter, "Under [Tutu's] pressure, you expressed regret. But it did not really follow from the entire logic of your testimony," and she speculates that this refusal "was the victory of image and posture, which had become fused into a compelling reality of their own" (74). But she notes that while Mandela escaped technical, criminal guilt, "the cloud of moral doubt will hang over you without end" (Ndebele, *Cry* 75). Mamello turns to the TRC report itself to note Mandela's moral accountability, and Ndebele inserts some of the Commission's findings verbatim into the text. Mamello's letter to Winnie ends in the same place as the TRC—in the gap between "fact and legal indeterminacy" (77).

In the next section, Marara links Mandela and the TRC through a shared commitment to ambiguity and complexity. She asserts that when anti-apartheid forces "gave up the AK-47 for negotiation, we opted for intimacy. […] We opted for

complexity, ambiguity, nuance, and emergent order" (85). Unlike Mamello, Marara is more open to the kind of contradiction Mandela represents—a representation that she views as compatible with the TRC itself. She posits, "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was really not about truth, but about the revelation of deliberately hidden facts so that this revelation might lead to new interpretations of our social realities and new knowledge in the public domain. […] It was not so much about judgement, but about the process of formulating judgement" (86). For Marara, what matters more than determining Mandela's culpability, the logic might continue, is the way we formulate our judgments about her.

Ndebele's Winnie, when she does enter the text, gives fewer answers of the sort that the South African TRC sought, but does make suggestive observations with regard to her relationship to the closure and truth demanded of her. She reflects on order, and how city street "grids of order" seem to be "built that way for us waiting women to go through them…searching for our husbands" (106). Order, she asserts, "is one of the central features of whiteness" (106). As a figure of disorder and disruption, of refusing a neat conclusion or easy explanation, Winnie characterizes her opposition to order as part of her struggle against apartheid. She hypothesizes that Boer policemen understood this powerful imposition of apartheid order, and they enacted "the disruptiveness of disorder on a mind structured into order" as a method "to make you desire more order" (107). Against these laws, Winnie staked out her own law: "embrace disruption, and then rage against order instead of longing for it" (107). At this point, Winnie interrupts her own story, and announces that she too will address Mandela; the narrative then takes the form of the second-person as Winnie addresses herself and navigates memories, spanning from

Nelson's imprisonment, to her own torture, and later his release. This experience allows Winnie to "reclaim myself" (130) before she discusses the TRC hearings.[70] Here, ambiguity and the rejection of reconciliation as closure manifest again. She notes that legal proceedings, even quasi-judicial proceedings like the TRC, result in a "perilous gap between technical process and lived life" (135). "Would I really be expected," she asks, "in that situation to tell the story of my life, and charm you into reconciliation?" Her section concludes with a refusal to "be an instrument for validating the politics of reconciliation. For me, reconciliation demands my annihilation. No. *You*, all of you, have to reconcile not with me, but with the meaning of me" (137). Here, Winnie's refusal to reconcile according to the TRC's terms demands that we—readers, as well as the Commission and its audience—wait indefinitely for an answer that may never come.

Literary scholarship has made much of Winnie's steadfast opposition to reconciliation here in the narrative. Her character embodies the anxieties and misgivings about the South African TRC project; while the possibility of amnesty could compel some to testify, it could not, in all cases, elicit the truth. Ndebele looks to Mandela specifically, Joe Napolitano suggests, because she "represents the possible failure of both the new South Africa in general and the process begun by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in particular" (346). While acknowledging that Mandela's refusal to explain in detail the circumstances and events under investigation limits the recovery of the past, Ndebele "attempts to 'exhume' this chapter of the South African past in a way that will reaffirm and reinforce the continuing healing process begun by the TRC"

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[70] In his introduction to the revised 2013 edition of *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, Ndebele explains that this narrative strategy had an additional purpose as "a second-order distancing effect": "I could get closer to an imagined essence as I got further and further away from the reality of the woman" ("Introduction" xiv).

(Napolitano 355). In this way, the narrative exhibits the paradox of fiction: that the novel "reveals far more truth than either Winnie Mandela's trial or TRC testimony ever could" (356). In Napolitano's view, one of the ways that the fictional text builds on the South African TRC's legacy is to refuse to fetishize the closure that would "undermine the achievements of the TRC" (357). Indeed, while the characters are on the road, traveling together at the conclusion of the novel, the novel ends before they arrive at their destination. Penelope, on her own journey of reconciliation with women for the "burden of unconditional fidelity [she] placed on their shoulders," is picked up as a hitchhiker but she quickly leaves the women in order to continue "her timeless journey of consciousness" (145-6). Here, Ndebele powerfully suggests that while the novel's dramatic monologues allow the women to reconcile with themselves, reconciling with others is a continual process.

Ishmael Beah's *Radiance of Tomorrow* is, unlike Ndebele's novel, written in a realist mode that proceeds largely in a linear fashion. The novel is set shortly after the end of the Sierra Leonean civil war, and concerns not only the difficulties of rebuilding after crisis, but also the new challenges that neocolonial entities—such as a foreign mining company—present. The novel opens with one of the elders, Mama Kadie, returning to the village of Imperi after years of civil war. As characters elect to remember parts of their past, the omniscient narrator slowly recounts the destruction of the village and the violence inflicted on its inhabitants. Each memory is tentative; Mama Kadie "managed to conjure the memory of what the town had looked like the day before she began running away for her life," but the reverie stops abruptly as soon as she arrives at the moment when "gunshots rang through the town and chaos ensued" (*Radiance* 6).

Whereas Ndebele's waiting women, in contrast to the fragmented narratives produced by the South African TRC statement-takers' protocol and questionnaires, each tells her story in full, Beah's characters choose to share what seems necessary in the moment, deciding at other times to let the past go unspoken in the service of forging new relationships. In this way, Beah's novel restructures the relationship between reconciliation, disclosure, and closure in a different form from Ndebele's novel and the Sierra Leonean TRC process.

But like TRCs more generally, *Radiance of Tomorrow* underscores the restorative role of storytelling, though in his novel storytelling is also a method of approaching painful truths less directly. In an author's note at the beginning of the novel, Beah remarks that the oral tradition of storytelling in Sierra Leone taught him "that stories are the most potent way of seeing anything we encounter in our lives, and how we can deal with living" (vii). The phrase "deal with living" points to the struggle to come to terms with the hardships and memories following violence and trauma—a struggle the novel's characters exemplify.

Within *Radiance of Tomorrow*, oral storytelling becomes an intimate method of processing the past, as Mama Kadie adjusts old stories for the present. All gather at the town's square to hear Mama Kadie's story about the water spirits, who are blamed when a young man does not heed warnings about the treacherous river and drowns (48). A boy interrupts the story to ask whether the hunter seeking revenge used arrows or guns, pointing out, "'He could do more with guns and grenades,'" while his "eyes [were] redder than the flames and memories of the recent past in his imagination" (48). Without a pause, Mama Kadie sits closer to the boy and explains "how in those days there were no

guns or grenades […] and how the act of one person whose heart had been quickly consumed by negative fire had caused the water spirits to hide from humans forever" (48). The narrative contextualizes the moment for the reader in terms of what it accomplishes for former child soldiers seeking to be reconciled with their communities: "It was an important point that needed to be made about the nature of distrust and how it can spiral into violence. It was also a story to reassure some of the younger ones that their innocence was not to be feared any longer, as it had come to be during the time of war" (49).

The epigraph that frames the novel is also repeated at the text's conclusion, and emphasizes not only the regenerative power of stories, but also the continuities storytelling can forge between women. The italicized text reads, "*It is the end, or maybe the beginning, of another story. / Every story begins and ends with a woman, a mother,/ a grandmother, a girl, a child./ Every story is a birth…*" (*Radiance* 3, 240). In returning the reader to the novel's opening and linking endings and beginnings, the text resists the closure we might expect from an otherwise chronologically ordered narrative. By linking women closely with storytelling, the novel shares with *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* an interest in creating community through shared and gendered experiences of storytelling. Though Ndebele's novel eschews dates, the women's experiences in *Radiance of Tomorrow* situate them roughly in the same generation of waiting women living under and through apartheid. In *Radiance of Tomorrow*, we see Mama Kadie sharing stories for

the whole community, but also transferring stories directly and intimately inter-generationally to Ouma,[71] Bockerie's daughter.

In both novels, then, waiting is essential for the transmission of stories. Ndebele's women are linked through their experiences of waiting, but by unanchoring the women in time during their monologues and apostrophes to Winnie Mandela, the narrative reenacts a suspension of time that recalls the temporal experience of waiting as well. In *Radiance of Tomorrow*, Mama Kadie informs Ouma, "'It isn't about knowing the most stories, child. It is about carrying the ones that are most important and passing them along. […] You have to be *patient*, though, for the stories can only remain in the mind and veins of a *patient* person'" (35, emphasis mine). Patience here registers an orientation in time that is open, deliberate, and unrushed. Ouma returns to Mama Kadie periodically for more stories, and through her patience is able to retain and process each story in turn. Ouma understands the importance of timing and storytelling; as Mama Kadie demonstrates, when told at the right time, the right story can lend powerful insight even in new contexts. To achieve the desired effect, reconciling old stories and new contexts, sometimes one has to wait.

"Strategic Waiting" and the Temporalities of Reconciliation

Thus far, I have discussed the two novels and the ways they interact with the TRC hearings and reports' formulations of closure, storytelling, and narrative. In this section, I

[71] I am grateful to Stephen Clingman for pointing out that this word means "grandmother" in Afrikaans and Dutch; I have been unable to determine any Mende lineage for the word; it remains, then, an interesting and provocative link between *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*'s South African context and *Radiance of Tomorrow's* Sierra Leonean one.

turn to the novels to identify terms and concepts central to their theorizations of time and reconciliation, but that are not obviously central to the reconciliation process structured by TRCs in South Africa and Sierra Leone. In rebuilding the social fabric, both texts exhibit "strategic waiting," but Ndebele's novel additionally explores waiting in opposition to victimhood. Beah's novel, on the other hand, establishes the relationship between waiting and silence, where declining to speak affords one additional time to process even as it compels others to wait indefinitely.

For many of the women in *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, waiting appears to result in further pain and uncertainty, and none of their experiences as recounted in the novel's first half seems to suggest waiting as a source of empowerment. Yet it is the shared experience of waiting that forms the basis for their incorporation first into an *ibandla* (a gathering) of women, and second into the larger narrative of South Africa. The novel opens with "the blurb of an imaginary book about a South African woman during the long years of apartheid," and asserts, "*Departure, waiting, and return: they define her experience of the past, present and future"* (1). While Vincent Crapanzano's study on waiting and South Africans in the 1980s—discussed in more detail in chapter 1—focuses almost exclusively on the experiences of whites, Ndebele here makes the case for waiting to be central, albeit in different forms, to the experiences of black South African women as well.

The state of waiting, as well as the women's reflections on it, facilitate a transformation of their senses of time, space, and agency that resists reduction to passivity. Even as 'Mannete resigns herself to indefinite waiting for her husband's return from the mines, she "contemplate[s] the meaning of a future definitively without her

husband," as well as the "notion of independence" that "push[es] her towards independent decision-making" (15). In a similar vein, waiting and its tribulations force Deli toward action. At first, "the hope of departing one day" is "a way of managing the state of waiting" (17). Hopeful anticipation quickly turns to dread after she becomes pregnant with another man's child, which forces her to confront "the reality of her situation"—that she would never depart to join her husband (22). Nevertheless, she realizes now that there is "[n]o more time to waste. She acts fast" and opens a shop to meet her family's basic needs (19). Importantly, this time of waiting is not a time of idleness, or dead time. Despite the circumstances of her husband's absence, which pit his mobility against her immobility as she stays behind, Deli demonstrates that her waiting is not her sole occupation, and neither is 'Mannete wholly limited by her waiting. As much as the novel reflects a gendered history of labor, exile, detention, and jail in South Africa, Deli's swelling belly subtly suggests that this gendered history's assumptions—that waiting is all women do, that waiting is unproductive time—are misplaced.

Winnie's section, as a response to the women who have addressed her in order to work through what Deli calls the "minefield of ambiguities" that is the life of waiting (51), embodies the contradictions and complexities of waiting in a way that makes space for all of the women's myriad experiences to coexist. Together, they are "more than simply waiting women" and while "the novel seems to retain some difference between herself and the other women, [Winnie] finally occupies—as they all do—an intersection of order and disorder, as indeed of waiting and not waiting" (Driver 8). Winnie's relationship with other waiting women—even as she waits for Nelson to be released from prison—is complicated. She admits, "From time to time I created more of them by taking

their men" and claims, "They had nothing for me" (125). This assertion is belied by the reconciliation with herself that is enacted within the text *through* the women's evocation of, and addresses to, Winnie. While embracing her own status as a symbol of the waiting woman, Winnie nevertheless proclaims, "Winnie does not wait. She goes and gets what she wants" (105). Waiting, here, is a double bind; while she can leverage the image of the waiting woman to empower herself in the public domain, she finds that waiting also "empties out your life" (106).

Throughout the novel, as Dorothy Driver observes, "the women's two states—of waiting and not waiting—are simultaneously held in place, despite the overall shift in focus from waiting to travelling" (14). To recall the discussion of the gendered construction of waiting in the previous chapter, this move undoes the association of waiting with immobility, as well as with static passivity. Waiting, and reflections on the lived experiences of waiting, can be a transformative temporal modality that forces one to confront her anticipations of what the future will be, and the values that underpin these expectations. Waiting, in other words, encourages an opening up of experience, giving temporal experience more time, volume, and texture. Their shared experiences of waiting—waiting that they experienced in the past as well as in the unspecified present moment of the text—suggest that "the women's waiting may come to mean something more than the moribund condition of victimhood, that the power of agency may not be lost after all" (Medalie 62). Each of the women is better able to identify the oppressive dimensions of waiting by the novel's end, yet their shared experiences suggest that "waiting," when strategically and consciously inhabited, can also empower and build community.

In his 2001 essay "South Africans in Search of Common Values," Ndebele argues that time is an essential dimension to formulating community. He observes, "Missing in our social calendar are the symbols necessary for expressing a vital sense of community life as South Africans," and then suggests that the "answers might lie in the cycles of daily life in our communities" (Ndebele 75, 77). In addition to imposing a divided sense of space, apartheid also created an abbreviated sense of time:

> The calendar of life in a typical township in the worst days of apartheid was all too short. It was a 24-hour calendar. Designed to obliterate any sense of history beyond yesterday, any sense of the future beyond tomorrow. The township was little more than a dormitory, a place of limited social growth. (77)

Ndebele's characters in *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, published two years after this essay, identify waiting as a facet of apartheid temporality that also worked to truncate the future; as Deli describes, hope and uncertainty produce the monotony of days that "begin and end without a definitive future. […] Waiting. Not waiting. But waiting" (17). But I contend that the novel is also an imaginary exploration of what might make South Africans gravitate toward collectivity. Turning to the mundane, everyday experiences of waiting, Ndebele demonstrates that the "strategic waiting" inhabited by the waiting women as they recount their diverse experiences may shape their sense of community, even after they exit the temporality of waiting at the novel's conclusion. This is not to elevate waiting as ideal state of being—the characters' pain, anxiety, and loss speak as much to the detrimental effects of waiting.

But these experiences of waiting that would not be incorporated otherwise in the TRC narratives of life under apartheid are, in *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*, essential to theorizing reconciliation. This insistence on the centrality of waiting—in all its uncertainty, dread, anticipation, and expectation—offers an explanation as to why Ndebele's Winnie places herself in opposition to the form of reconciliation as outlined by the South African TRC. To return to the temporality of reconciliation described by Christodoulidis and Veitch above, reconciliation "'overdetermines' the past" by "project[ing] onto it the origin of a common future" (2). In Winnie's view, her refusal to "validat[e] the politics of reconciliation" is a "defense of the future" (137). To understand how this might work, it is essential to read further in the paragraph, where Winnie explains, "For my meaning is the endless human search for the right thing to do" (137). I contend that this language contrasts significantly with Mandela's statement to the TRC hearings, where she admitted that "'things had gone horribly wrong'" (South Africa and Tutu 578).[72] Unlike the temporality of reconciliation, which projects onto the past the seeds of later reconciliation, Winnie resists the temporality of inevitability. Rather than "proclaim a truce between old lives," she emphasizes a "distrust of reconciliation" and a commitment to continue to wrestle with the past and its meaning in the present and for a future yet to come (Ndebele, *Cry* 137).

Reconciliation threatens to erase retroactively the coexisting opposites Winnie embodies—she lists solutions and mistakes, beauty and ugliness, hell and heaven, honour

[72] The distinction between right and wrong in the context of the struggle against apartheid continued to be debated by the TRC; combatants in the struggle objected that they need not seek amnesty because theirs was a "just war." At the very least, the ANC argued, "abuses committed by its members could not be equated with those of the apartheid state" (Campbell 42).

and humiliation, to which I add right and wrong—in service of a common, collective future. Citing Christodoulidis, Andrew Schaap writes that "political reconciliation refers to a future anterior, an imagined 'not yet' that is 'brought into the present to become constitutive of the experience of the present'" (15). In creating this narrative, the extraneous elements that might impede the realization of this future, or at the very least appear irrelevant, risk being omitted. Whereas the South African TRC's theory of reconciliation involved "constructing victims that it can then proceed to heal, Ndebele's novel constructs victims who want to redefine their past experience and escape the confines of victimization" (Liatsos 126). In this way, Ndebele's Winnie redefines the past and victimhood at odds with the South African TRC, as well as the TRC's temporality of reconciliation.

The Cry of Winnie Mandela and *Radiance of Tomorrow* share departure, waiting, and return as framing temporal experiences, and in both texts, they are not easily pried apart. Departures can signal the beginning of a time of waiting, and returns can take on the temporality of waiting for changes to register or manifest. *Radiance of Tomorrow* begins with the elders slowly returning to Imperi in order to rebuild, overlapping their spatial return with the temporality of waiting. Mama Kadie and Pa Moiwa are the first to return, and they are joined shortly after by Pa Kainesi. As Mama Kadie walks the miles from the town to the village, she notes that the tree "branches grew toward the ground, burying the leaves in the soil to blind their eyes so the sun would not promise them tomorrow with its rays" (3). Given the novel's title and eventual endorsement of the radiance of tomorrow, this opening paragraph depicts the difficulty of facing the future when the past has not been sufficiently dealt with.

In negotiating the time between pain and reconciliation, Mama Kadie and the elders also strategically inhabit waiting in order to suspend the need to speak or to reconcile before the time is right. The paths Mama Kadie traverses are "now ready to shed their old skins for new ones, and such occurrences take time with the necessary interruptions. Today, her feet began one of those interruptions" (3). The temporality of waiting can also be inhabited as an interruption, as a modality that will eventually facilitate the shedding of old pain for new hope, given the requisite time. Pa Moiwa relates a familiar proverb to Mama Kadie to underscore the same message: "'The spider sometimes runs out of webs to spin, so it waits in the one it has spun.' Pa Moiwa used the saying to assure his friend that more words would come to her and she might be able to dwell on things other than the horrors of the past" (13).

The waiting embodied and practiced by the elders who return first to Imperi generates a temporality of waiting that is expressly linked to (re)creating the lost community and coming to terms with the past. Pa Kainesi reflects on the next steps to rebuild, and remarks, "'We still have laughter among us, my friends, and hopefully some of those we have shared it with so deeply will return and we will be waiting'" (18). Although waiting, the elders are not idle; as they walk through "the ruins of their town," they kick up "a small tornado of dust as though cleansing the air for the possibility of life again" (18). While slowly burying the exposed skeletons of villagers killed during the war, the elders orient themselves in time through waiting, where waiting is inhabited as a strategic temporality for the elders to process the immense trauma produced by the civil war.

The novel then complicates the temporality of waiting by drawing attention to the way it can reproduce, through the economic and environmental devastation wrought by the mining company, the dynamics of the powerless and powerful. The productive and strategic waiting that the elders choose and that predominates in the first half of the novel is replaced in the second half by the pressures of progress and development embodied by the mining company. Following his friend Benjamin's death in a mining accident, Bockarie laments, "'We cannot wait any longer. We must leave Imperi tomorrow'" (172). Bockerie and his family fled during the civil war, and their flight here is occasioned by circumstances that mirror the earlier conflict. Most strikingly, the mining company represses news of workers' deaths, leaving families without bodies to bury or truth to bring closure. Benjamin calls Bockerie from the mining dredge, where an iron bucket collapsed and pinned him along with five coworkers. "'Three have already died,'" he confesses, "'and it is just a matter of time'" (168). The narrative then describes a conversation between the workers and a loyal company driver, toeing the company line. In response to their desperate inquiries about Benjamin, they are told, "'Haven't you heard that no one was harmed? The dredge just fell and everyone working at that time is safe'" (170). Stunned, Bockarie is helpless because he "couldn't go to the police and he had no way of spreading the truth—no money to pay for a radio announcement or a notice in the newspapers. He and the families of the other men couldn't even recover the bodies—the company stuck by its story, which was that no one had died" (170). The company even doctors the scheduling rosters to substantiate its claim that none of the men who died was working that day. By restaging cover-ups, denials, and the manipulation of written documents to obscure the truth, this moment—which also

functions to pivot the narrative from village to city, as the family subsequently moves to Freetown for work—evokes the TRC without ever naming the institution. These kinds buried truths were precisely the targets of TRC investigations. Through direct references to the civil war, the novel makes an oblique connection to the circumstances that necessitated the Sierra Leonean TRC, as the narrator observes, "The incident reminded people of the war, when they'd suffered the same emotional and psychological toll, burying people without their bodies or graveyards" (170).

Radiance of Tomorrow ultimately frames waiting in three ways. First, the elders inhabit the temporality of waiting in order to process their pain, and second, the mining company imposes the temporality of waiting on the villagers in order to defer indefinitely the truth of workers' fates. The novel reformulates the temporality of waiting once more when Bockarie's family moves to the city. The jobs Bockarie and his wife Kula acquire are disheartening; Bockarie discovers that rather than correcting student papers, his job actually requires him to write essays on commission for wealthy students (225). And Kula loses her job at a hotel reception desk abruptly because of a turnover in management, leaving them both with "the worries of a broken tomorrow" (236). Their experiences with under- and unemployment are prevalent among the city's population. Here, people are "waiting in vain for something. After they had waited for so long, anything, even the devil, became an opportunity […]" (177). Just when the waiting and the despair threatens to overpower them, a former boy soldier, Colonel, who has had to flee Imperi for retaliating against the company on behalf of the elders, reappears. To Ouma, he gives a basket of food and a message. She announces to her family, "'The one who gave me the food told me to tell you that the world is not ending today and that you

must cheer up if you want to continue living in it'" (239). Satiated with the meal, Kula tells a story about two boys who accidentally leave their hearts behind before they embark on a journey. When the boys hasten back to retrieve their hearts, they discover that ants have eaten pieces of them. Kula concludes, "'The brothers washed the hearts and put them back in their places, but they could no longer experience things the way they had'" (239). Into the silence, Ouma adds new lines to the story, adjusting its message: "'So they must find a way to repair their broken hearts by relighting the fire that is now dull within them. They should live for that'" (240). Before the epigraph that both begins and concludes the novel, the narrative's final line reads, "That is what happens when old wisdom and new wisdom merge, and find room in the young" (240).

By locating the possibilities of reconciliation, renewal, and adaptation in the young, Beah addresses one of the defining features of Sierra Leone's civil war, reconciliation, and reconstruction: the reintegration of child soldiers. Beah's first book, the 2007 memoir *A Long Way Gone*, recounts his personal experiences as a teenaged soldier conscripted by army forces, and describes in brutal detail the violent acts he witnessed as well as perpetrated. In the novel, Beah moves the timeframe forward, declining to recount the events of the civil war as they occurred, and focusing instead on the challenges of reconciliation and rebuilding that face small communities. While Colonel's storyline, out of all the child soldiers who return, is the most straightforwardly redemptive, another former child soldier, Ernest, underscores the difficulty many children had in coming to terms with their dual positions of perpetrators and victims.

Glimpses of Ernest's coerced role in a roving armed squad are revealed early on in the text, when Sila and his children return to Imperi. The elders quickly note the

family's amputations, which were a widespread mechanism of violence and abuse during the war.[73] Neither Sila nor Ernest describe the amputations Ernest inflicted on the family. Instead, the omniscient third-person narrator fills in these blanks, noting that Ernest, who had "been forced at gunpoint to do his first cutting [amputation] when he was nine years old" on his relatives, is called upon to amputate the family's hands (25). We learn that Sila and his children unnerve Ernest because they endure the amputations in silence, which "made him hear the sound that the machete made when it went through the flesh, the bone, and then the flesh again, finally hitting the log" (26).

The silence that triggers remorse in the otherwise hardened Ernest recurs throughout the novel's early chapters that depict return and rebuilding, and in my view establishes silence as an important aspect of reconciliation that tends to be overlooked in the TRC's emphasis on testimony. This is not to discount the vital work that public testimony accomplished in Sierra Leone for reconciliation at a national level, but it does point to the ways individuals may *wait* in silence until and unless they choose to speak. Mahawa, a teenaged girl who returns with a two-year old son, "dread[s] having to explain how this child had come to this world, a story she didn't want to remember, not yet, perhaps ever. She wanted people to make their own assumptions and leave her out of it" (22). Mahawa is a minor character in the narrative, and is taken in by Mama Kadie to create a new family unit. Her past is never elaborated any further.

Likewise, silence is integral to Ernest's reconciliation with Sila and his family. To the elders, Ernest's story is contained "in his eyes" but they are aware that "more needed

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[73] In the Sierra Leonean TRC's video *Witness to Truth*, MM Kosia, former Colonel in the RUF, explains that amputations were done to prevent voting (Caldwell).

to be done to mend what had been broken" (30). Ernest's overtures of reconciliation involve secretly watching over the family at night, and then protecting the family when foreigners associated with the mining company throw a bottle that inadvertently hits Sila's son. While Sila "learned what Ernest had done and wanted to thank him […] he still needed time to be able to shake Ernest's hands" (122). Eventually, the text suggests, the time may come when the silence can be broken, but in the meantime silence can be a refuge. At the same time, however, Beah notes that silence, when combined with the temporality of waiting, does not necessary entail forgetting or burying the past; as the occupants of Imperi look for activities to fill the "silence of that waiting, memories of war were awakened, bringing restlessness and irritability" (38). The silence characteristic of the waiting that Imperi experiences is maintained strategically, not in an effort to silence others who want or need to talk about what happened, but rather as a mode of recuperation and healing. Kula's advice to her children on how to navigate their own friendships with Sila's children is instructive here: "'It is an accident that people do not want to speak about just yet. So don't ask questions, okay. In time you will know if necessary'" (42). The narrator continues, "They laughed and stood together for a while, holding each other to gather the strength that was needed for this day, *another day of waiting*" (42, emphasis mine).

Silence as Receptive Waiting

In contrast to TRCs' emphasis on the cathartic power of testimony, *Radiance of Tomorrow* centers silence and waiting as important strategies for coming to terms with the past and with one's neighbors, especially after a traumatic conflict that blurred the

lines between victims and perpetrators. In a critical reading of novels such as *Beasts of No Nation* and *Song for Night* in addition to *Radiance of Tomorrow*, Alexandra Moore notes that child soldiers are "paradoxical figures of death and the future […] poised at the limit," and in Beah's novel in particular the child soldiers are "side characters who signify the depth of destruction of social bonds and the difficulty of their reconstruction" (34, 60). By turning to the post-conflict era, she argues, "Beah tries to imagine a local alternative to the therapeutic promise articulated within IHL [international humanitarian law]" (60). TRCs are implicated here too, though Moore does not address them specifically. In addition to civil rights violations, TRCs investigate violations of international humanitarian law, and both institutions—TRCs and international humanitarian law—strive to put an end to armed conflict.[74] Thus, I would argue that the novel's imaginative exploration of reconciliation outside the parameters of TRCs also resists the therapeutic promises so often associated with them as well.

Critical studies of Sierra Leone's TRC echo Beah's representation of the strategic roles of silence and waiting for reconciliation after armed conflict. In "Stay the Hand of Justice: Whose Priorities Take Priority?" Harvey Weinstein et al make two observations that resonate with my reading of Beah's novel via-à-vis the Sierra Leonean TRC. First, they note that in assessing the success or failure of the Sierra Leonean TRC, "the 'official view' at the international level" might not match the impressions of "Sierra Leoneans, especially since many reported a lack of 'genuine partnership' with local civil society

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[74] The Sierra Leonean TRC report explains its work "in relation to violations of international humanitarian law" by positing that "'international humanitarian law continued to apply within Sierra Leone subsequent to the Lomé Peace Agreement and probably until 18 January 2002, when the conflict was officially declared to have come to an end'" (Cullen 138). Thus, the applicability of IHL in Sierra Leone both aided in establishing what counted as violations of human rights, and also in shaping the timeframe of the Commission's mandate.

organizations'" (29). The Sierra Leone Working Group on Truth and Reconciliation observed in 2006 that "'Sierra Leonean voices are heard at the international level, where criteria for assessing the success and failures of the 'experiment' may be different from those locally and where different agendas may shape the conclusion reached'" (29). Electing to be silent can be a restorative, empowering strategy for recently traumatized parties after armed conflict, but the assessment at the international level of the TRC's outcomes and accomplishments risks perpetuating further institutional violence by silencing voices whose experiences may belie the narrative promoted on an international scale.

Second, the authors point to Rosalind Shaw's 2005 assessment commissioned by the United States Institute of Peace, which found that "'there was little popular support for bringing such a commission [TRC] to Sierra Leone, since people preferred a "forgive and forget" approach'" (30). One explanation for the appeal of this approach is that "close-knit communities have to learn to live together," and an extended process of sifting through truth and blame—especially in conflicts where child soldiers are involved—might not serve the reconstitution of the social fabric (Gready 53). Indeed, such strategies have been labeled practices of "'social forgetting'" in Sierra Leone (Shaw qtd. in Gready 53) or in Rwanda, "'chosen amnesia'" (Buckley Zistel qtd. in Gready 53).

By demonstrating the strategic possibilities of silence and waiting, Beah's novel illustrates techniques that, while at first glance appear utterly at odds with the mechanisms and goals of public testimonies and TRCs, can also address devastation and social disintegration following armed conflict. Child soldiers, he suggests, might be reconciled not only through public hearings and acknowledgements, but also slowly,

through small acts and meaningful silences. As Mahawa also expresses, silence—refusing to tell one's story—can be leveraged to make someone else wait and to assert oneself by withholding speech. From this standpoint, we might connect her with Winnie Mandela, who famously refused to disclose her involvement in human rights violations, and who in Ndebele's fictional rendering maintains her intransigence. Though the silences of both characters are obviously employed for different ends, the two instances nevertheless crystallize the relationship between silence, waiting, and power.

Silence, these novels suggest, is an undertheorized but integral aspect of theorizing reconciliation in relation to TRCs. While silences during the "post-Cold War phase of transitional justice" may have indexed "repressive political silencing," in post-conflict areas like Sierra Leone it may be truth, rather than silence, that "subverts the process of living together" (Shaw and Waldorf 13). In fact, silences may be "shape[d] […] into a modality of reintegration" (13). Concerning the South African TRC, Fiona Ross proposes, "There is a temporal dimension to the expression and reception of harsh experience; it may take time for events to settle in such a way that they can be narrated" (86). While official TRCs operate within a given timeframe, and focus on a designated time span, the work of reconciliation and repair, narration and knowledge, must continue in order to accommodate new voices when the time comes. Turning to feminist scholar Tillie Olsen, Ross points to the productive interplay of silence and waiting; while silences can certainly manifest in forms ranging from censorship to oppression, silences may also be natural, in that they mark "'that necessary time for renewal, lying fallow, gestation, in the natural cycle of creation'; 'a receptive waiting'" (Ross 86).

Charting waiting and silence as important concepts to theorize alongside TRCs' philosophies of narration and reconciliation has allowed us to complete a full revolution, back to Ndebele's "The Revolution of the Aged" and concerns of timing and agency. Strategies of waiting—to speak, to address, to recount—may syncopate with the tempos of reconciliation on a national scale, but may also be necessary temporal modalities from which to stage reconciliation with oneself as well as others. As a result, "waiting for" transforms into "waiting with," creating bonds through a shared temporality of waiting that shifts from a focus on vertical lines of power and oppression to horizontal lines of comradeship. Neither novel suggests that waiting, when chosen as a temporal modality, should be inhabited indefinitely, but both depict important community-building work being accomplished while waiting. *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* is structured like a waiting room for Penelope's descendants, where they can analyze their personal histories of waiting until they are ready to embark together on a journey out of the unspecified present moment and into the future.[75] The novel notes the shortcomings of the temporal ambit of the South African TRC while also modelling waiting as a strategic temporality, *despite* the ways that waiting limited the women's lives during apartheid. Likewise, the elders of *Radiance of Tomorrow* wait as they rebuild, where waiting produces time to heal even as it facilitates reconciliation through small, deliberate silences. But waiting also produces vulnerable populations, as Bockerie navigates first the mining company's deception and then restless urban unemployment. In this way, *Radiance of Tomorrow*

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[75] Ndebele remarks that readers shared this process as well; in South Africa, he writes, "the overwhelming view was that the novel pried open some space for a more honest and potentially healing public reflection […]. The stories of unknown, ordinary women who tell their own stories enabled many readers to reflect intimately on the privacy of their own lives" ("Introduction" xxvi).

additionally gestures toward the complications of neocolonial progress and industrial development in postcolonial societies: a reminder that the struggles produced in and by waiting are very much still here in the present.

CONCLUSION

"'He moves too slow for me, Daddy Joe; I'm tired waiting so--…If a thousand years with us is but a day with God, do you think I'm required to wait all that time?...That's no talk for me, Daddy Joe; I've been 'standing still' long enough—I'll 'stand still' no longer.'"—Martin R. Delany, *Blake, or The Huts of America: A Novel*

At the Black Entertainment Television (BET) Awards on June 26, 2016, activist and actor Jesse Williams accepted the Humanitarian Award with a powerful speech, decrying the inability of police to deescalate conflicts with the Black community in the same way that they do for whites, and calling for urgent organization and resistance: "Now, freedom is always coming in the hereafter but, you know what, though, the hereafter is a hustle. We want it now. […] We've been floating this country on credit for centuries, yo. And we're done watching, and waiting while this invention called whiteness uses and abuses us" (Toney). The Awards ceremony closed with Beyoncé and Kendrick Lamar's surprise performance of "Freedom," which for the show was remixed to include a sample from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. From the emphasis on urgency and waiting, to freedom and resistance, the BET speeches and performances certainly echoed and underscored the sampling of King's speech, which criticized the United States for signing and subsequently defaulting on a "promissory note" of "unalienable Rights." The excerpted sample from King's speech ended just before King proclaimed, "We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now"—a line which instead is substituted by the rest of the anthem "Freedom."

The larger Black Lives Matter movement, to which Williams, Beyoncé, and Lamar allude, responds to the "typical origins of black leadership" embodied in figures like King, and "represents a move from a singular political organizing centered on racial justice to an intersectional agenda" (Black Lives Matter). With a more expansive, inclusive, and decentralized organizational structure, the Black Lives Matter political and cultural movement organizes in response to some of the same issues that animated the 1960s civil rights movement: institutional racism, police brutality, and the persistent deferral of freedom. From King in 1963 to Williams in 2016, the language of waiting and urgency is striking in both speeches. At the same time, the tactics and strategies of each movement has played with the power of waiting: from refusing to vacate seats at lunch counters, forcing the establishments to choose to either *wait on* them or *wait for* the police to intervene with arrests, to contemporary highway "sit-ins," disrupting commutes and insisting that others *wait*. These strategies of direct action mobilize "waiting" to accomplish two goals; first, the tactics underscore the ways that the status quo of racial oppression has been maintained through waiting, and second, the tactics render that waiting visible by appropriating the temporal strategy for the aims of social justice.

The Black Lives Matter movement in the United States stresses the enduring dialectic of waiting and urgency in the struggle for social justice progress, not only in the United States but elsewhere as well.[76] As Alicia Garza, one of the co-founders of the Black Lives Network acknowledges, "[W]e understand that we're in a moment that is different from ones in the past. It is informed by them, but it is not the same. […] Our

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[76] On the Network's webpage, Black Lives Matter includes "globalism" as one of its guiding principles: "We see ourselves as part of the global Black family and we are aware of the different ways we are impacted or privileged as Black folk who exist in different parts of the world."

approach at this point is to experiment and innovate, boldly and courageously" (Fletcher Jr.). Likewise, the waiting that is named and produced in these settings shifts in response to new concerns in new moments, informed by the past but not reducible to a reproduction of it. Throughout this dissertation study, waiting reappears in diverse settings and times, and different actors inhabit and invoke the temporal modalities of waiting for oppressive and resistive purposes alike. The introduction to this dissertation discussed Kwame Nkrumah's midnight independence speech and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Why We Can't Wait*, and in some ways, their words continue to reverberate for the "global Black family" named on the Black Lives Matter website and other communities marginalized in the still-postcolonizing world. Yet, as each of the subsequent dissertation chapters have shown, the temporal dimensions of waiting interact with specific settings, histories, and circumstances, producing possibilities for action and resistance—as well as passivity and capitulation—that are informed by the colonial history of waiting, power, and politics, but not the same.

To conclude this dissertation, I turn to the ways that waiting continues to structure the contemporary geopolitical landscape, and especially how waiting has been leveraged within and by the United States. Instead of ending with a close-reading of novels, however, I draw out this dissertation's impact and implications beyond literary studies. I examine the rhetoric of waiting as it has been voiced by state representatives, such as former President George W. Bush and the then-Presidential candidate Donald J. Trump, and by United States citizens, such as the marginalized residents of the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans post-Katrina. It has been my contention that the temporal dimensions of waiting in literature respond to postcolonial conditions outside the novels'

pages, and this concluding analysis of waiting in the speeches, declarations, and descriptions of post-9/11 experiences underscores the relationship between text and greater context.

The choice to pivot to the United States is deliberate for several reasons, not least because of the United States' influential role in brokering trade deals and imposing sanctions, waging war and negotiating peace—employing what many identify as neocolonial practices through interventions in the function and affairs of countries in the so-called developing world. Additionally, I aim to underscore the multivalent function of waiting, especially at the level of the state, where waiting can be simultaneously mobilized by a government to disenfranchise populations within a state's territorial boundaries, even as refusals to wait are exhibited in its interactions between other states. There is not a single, homogeneous way that powerful entities engage the temporal dimensions of waiting for political ends. And finally, in turning toward my own country of origin, the United States, I want to disrupt any notion that the vicissitudes of waiting are navigated only elsewhere, in an isolated "postcolonial" world.

Waiting, as this dissertation has argued, has a particular resonance with colonial discourse and anticolonial nationalist movements, taking on additional textures in conjunction with post-independence disillusionment, truth and reconciliation commissions, and other temporalities in complex timescapes. Contemporary evocations of waiting by representatives of the United States government are informed by these colonial and postcolonial discourses, but interact with what Ben Anderson calls "catastrophic futures" to produce new conditions for "waiting" as an approach to being in time and in the world.

Waiting and the George W. Bush Administration

In his Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress on September 20, 2001, former President George W. Bush indicated the scope and indeterminate duration of what would become the U.S.-led global War on Terror: "Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated. […] Our response involves far more than instant retaliation and isolated strikes. Americans should not expect one battle, but a lengthy campaign, unlike any other we have seen" (68–69). The preemptive military strikes that would become characteristic of the War on Terror campaign, as well as the ratcheting up of surveillance within the United States, are foreshadowed as well, as Bush promised: "We will come together to give law enforcement the additional tools it needs to track down terror here at home. We will come together to strengthen our intelligence capabilities to know the plans of terrorists before they act, and find them before they strike" (71-2). Put another way, we might read the grammar of Bush's simple-future statement as declaring, "We will not wait for them to act first"—an assertion of preemption and a pronouncement of preparedness. Here, Bush asserts a complicated relationship between the present and the future, insofar as the future is not only anticipatable, but also able to be circumvented in advance to usher in its alternative; we will know when terrorists *will* strike so that we can act in such a way that this future will never be realized.

More than any other, the temporality of waiting has characterized the politics and strategies associated with the War on Terror. In *Qualified Hope: A Postmodern Politics of Time*, Mitchum Huehls observes that the rhetoric of preparedness and preemption stems from the way that "the future's unpredictability" is posited as the United States' "primary enemy" (7). Rather than the "patient justice" Bush promised at the conclusion

of his speech on September 20 (Huehls 73), the United States has increasingly followed the path of impatient action.[77] Huehls points out that this radically open future does not guarantee a realization of the liberatory politics envisioned by Elizabeth Grosz, but instead presents a "stark, all-or-nothing choice: it can subscribe to a real-time model of temporal experience, a wait-and-see approach that might get everyone killed; or it can preempt time, acting in the present to make sure that the future plays out according to its plans and desires" (7).

At the same time, would-be terrorists in waiting evoke the temporality of waiting differently. Strategically, terrorists "wait-out preemption (hence the phrase 'sleeper cells'), wielding the specter of the unknown next attack as their strongest weapon" (Huehls 83). While domestic "lone-wolf" plots such as the 2015 San Bernardino attacks and the New York and New Jersey bombings in 2016 were nowhere close to the scale of destruction that characterized 9/11, these attacks can shore up support for subsequent preemptive, precautionary measures. For example, during the 2016 presidential campaign, Republican nominee Donald Trump repeatedly called for a ban on Muslims entering the United States—a proposal he reiterated in various forms from December 2015 through July 2016, and changed with chimeric frequency from an indefinite to a temporary ban, to a religious test, to a values assessment, to restrictions based on geographic locations. As Beth Reinhard and Damian Paletta observed in *The Wall Street*

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[77] In subsequent speeches to the nation, Bush insistently characterized U.S. operations in Afghanistan and Iraq as "patient": "we will win this conflict by the patient accumulation of successes" (76), "no cave is deep enough to escape the patient justice of the United States of America" (92), "[we] will continue to be steadfast and patient and persistent in the pursuit of two great objectives" (105), "America is a patient nation, and Iraq can count on our partnership" (386), and "the families of those murdered that day have waited patiently for justice" (418).

Journal, Trump's first television ad, in January 2016, "depicted images of the suspects in the San Bernardino attacks and of Islamic State militants and said, '"That's why he's calling for a temporary shutdown of Muslims entering the United States'" (Reinhard and Paletta). Measures like immigration bans or restrictions, however unconstitutional, racist, and unrealistic, aim to prevent a capricious threat by emphasizing prevention and preemption. Instead of waiting for a threat to materialize (the "retroactive temporality of representation"), the logic of preemption imposes "the immanent temporality of performance […] forcing [time] ahead of itself to determine the future before it has a chance to occur" (Huehls 83). In this way, the temporality of waiting continues to "affect our political interactions with the world and with each other."

The proposed "temporary ban" on immigration, at least according to the version Donald Trump initially touted in the January campaign ad, would be in place "'until we can figure out what's going on'" (Holpuch). This ban, then, is predicated on waiting (indefinitely?) until such a time as complete knowledge of the present (what is currently going on) and implicitly, the future (what will happen, what is plotted for the future) is achieved. Epistemological impossibilities of "complete knowledge" aside, Trump has given voice to a particular framing of the multivalent temporality of waiting in relation to security. On the one hand, the U.S. government cannot afford to wait and see whether immigrants from conflict areas will plan terrorist acts in the U.S. On the other hand, the government can use the temporality of waiting, as embodied in temporary bans, ostensibly to postpone these anticipated acts indefinitely. In short, immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees must wait until we can figure out what is going on.

Waiting for Refuge

The Syrian conflict has underscored the refugee as an emblematic political figure for the twenty-first century. While theorists from Georgio Agamben to Hannah Arendt have discussed the camp as a prevailing image of the twentieth century,[78] the contemporary camp's parameters have become more amorphous—whole countries and smaller enclaves, temporary holdings for indeterminate lengths of time, sanctioned officially as well as unofficially by the global community. Even before the Syrian refugee crisis, refugees' protracted waiting was on the rise; the wait time for refugees "has increased from nine years in 1993 to 17 years in 2003," and the contemporary refugee crisis will continue to exacerbate the conditions of asylum-seeking (Hyndman and Giles 361).[79] The association of refugees with the temporal dimensions of waiting, however, extends beyond the way that waiting characterizes their own temporal experience; waiting itself has become a condition through which countries in the global North assess refugee risk. As Hyndman and Giles explain, from the perspective of the global North, refugee populations are divided into two groups, and "those who stay still are viewed as genuine, immobile, depoliticized, feminized, while those on the move are potential liabilities at best, and security threats at worst" (363). Paradoxically for the waiting refugee, the ability to wait characterizes "non-threatening" behavior, but this patient waiting will not impress urgency upon the countries of asylum to accelerate repatriation or resource-allocation. As we saw in Chapter 3 through Baako and Maya's experiences of patience and urgency, an external demand to wait that is in conflict with a subject's impression of

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[78] See Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, part 3 chapter 12, and Georgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*.

[79] According to the U.S. State Department, the average wait time for refugees in protracted refugee situations is now 26 years.

urgency can be self-destructive. In this contemporary moment as well, "space and waiting come together to produce and maintain potentially abusive and harmful arrangements of power and inequality" (Olson 517).

Increasingly, as governments debate and navigate crises of civil war and large-scale global movement, the "end" of one period of waiting tends to beget another. As Elizabeth Olson notes, the urgency of state security "creates new scales and new temporal orders of response […] many of which treat the urgent body as impulsive and thus requiring management" (520). As a result, "the urgent body is at best an assumed eventuality, one that will likely require another state of waiting, such as triage" (521). More and more, the urgency of managing the threat of terrorism from abroad overrides the urgency of attending to humanitarian need elsewhere. These "contemporary geographies" are constructed and maintained "in the name of preempting, preparing for, or preventing threats to liberal-democratic life" (Ben Anderson 777). This new temporality—refusing to wait in the twenty-first century—posits an uncertain and indeterminate future that "will radically differ from the here and now," shaping the discourse as well as policies on issues ranging from climate change to the war on terror (Ben Anderson 780). The future-to-come is increasingly viewed as "ungovernable, radically uncertain and dangerous" (Amin 140). The radical openness of the future envisioned by Ernst Bloch and Elizabeth Grosz, discussed in this dissertation's introduction, has become tainted with a dark apocalyptic cast.

Recognizing that the temporality of waiting in the twenty-first century is imbricated with discourses of preemption, precaution, and preparedness—to borrow the three logics of contemporary anticipatory action that Ben Anderson identifies—is a

starting point for thinking new forms of critical response and resistance. It is clear that "[t]o protect, save and care for certain forms of life"—that which cannot wait—"is to potentially abandon, dispossess and destroy others" (Ben Anderson 791). Refusals to grant refugees asylum on the basis of preempting threats depend precisely on this assessment and management of risk. With regard to the United States, we can identify this calculation in the government's response to terroristic threats from without its borders, as well as its response to disasters within. To that end, the following section turns to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, where waiting is an indictment of the belatedness of the U.S. government response, as well as a strategy employed by residents in their new temporal reality.

Waiting's Aftermath: Post-Katrina New Orleans

By the time Hurricane Katrina made landfall on August 29, 2005, the city of New Orleans was already ill-prepared for the catastrophic disaster. One year after the hurricane hit, various failures were already becoming apparent: the state and city evacuation plans relied on personal transportation for evacuees required to flee, and yet there was no guideline to identify drivers for volunteer buses, so they "were not deployed" (Nigg, Barnshaw, and Torres 114–5). The Convention Center became a refuge after the Seventeenth Street Canal's levee was breached, and "[a]lthough the media widely reported the deteriorating conditions at both the Superdome and the Convention Center […] FEMA Director Michael Brown and DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff claimed to have no knowledge" about the situation until September 1 (116). The National Response Plan implemented in 2004 made provisions for temporary housing, but no plans existed to outline strategies for "long-term sheltering in distant locations" (123). In

the wake of the hurricane, FEMA was criticized for bureaucratic delays that prevented, for example, trucks delivering bottled water, as well as the inexplicable delay of the search and rescue services of the 82nd Airborne, which did not arrive until five days after the event (125).

More than a decade after the natural disaster, some residents of New Orleans continue to wait. According to Paul Chan, an artist responsible for staging five shows of *Waiting for Godot* in New Orleans in 2007, "'[T]here was a terrible symmetry between the reality of New Orleans post-Katrina and the essence of [*Waiting for Godot*], which expresses in stark eloquence the cruel and funny things people do while they wait—for help, for food, for tomorrow. It was uncanny'" (qtd. in Harvey 2). In the Lower Ninth Ward, where the play was performed, waiting was the dominant temporal modality experienced by residents:

> Residents waited for months to go back and look at the damage. Then they had to wait longer, almost a year before they could begin moving back. Then many waited for checks from the Road Home program, insurance companies, and other state and federal programs. They waited for the water and electricity to be turned on. They waited for neighbors to return. They waited for unscrupulous contractors to do the work they had been paid for. They still wait. (Harvey 2)

By the time Daina Harvey conducted her fieldwork in New Orleans from 2010-2011, waiting had been reclaimed by some residents as a temporal strategy "not to only organize social relationships, but to cognitively adjust to social domination or feelings of being valueless" (D. C. Harvey 4). In language that resonates with the observations of

Javier Auyero, Ato Quayson, Adeline Masquelier, and Craig Jeffrey cited in this dissertation's introduction, Harvey observes that "residents used waiting to deal with their social abandonment by the State" (4). While the residents certainly continued to wait for promised aid and resources, they also "thought that they too could play the waiting game; that if the city was waiting them out, then they would simply wait out the city (or at least wait for a more favorable political atmosphere). Rather than designated as passive, waiting became an action, something to do" (6). In this way, the act of waiting became "an agentive process," or a "way to gain some ownership of time" (6). While the temporality of waiting, from one point of view, certainly characterizes the dispossessed and marginalized residents of the Lower Ninth Ward who wait to rebuild, from another point of view waiting is a way to forge a sense of solidarity and control.

While disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina, and crises, such as terrorist attacks or civil wars, can prompt governments to respond with measures designed to prepare for and preempt a future recurrence, individual responses can counter this compressed temporality by insisting on the temporality of waiting to organize their lived experiences. With reference to Mumbai, India, Arjun Appadurai remarks that one strategy communities employ to "oppose the politics of catastrophe, exception, and emergency […] is frequently the politics of patience, which can even more accurately be called the politics of waiting" (Appadurai 126). His observations regarding the slum dwellers in Mumbai share Harvey's awareness that waiting can be agentive; he finds that "organized hope mediates between emergency and patience and produces in bare citizens the internal resources to see themselves as active participants in the very process of waiting" (127). As a result, "waiting for" transforms into "waiting with," creating bonds through a shared

temporality of waiting that shifts from a focus on vertical lines of subordination to horizontal lines of comradeship.

Waiting for Now

We saw in chapter 2 that waiting can additionally be harnessed as a strategy of resistance that rejects the temporal regimes of colonial or apartheid states. Both Ti Noël and Michael K demonstrate that flight, labor, and "idleness" can be mobilized as strategies of resistive waiting. Similarly, the elders of Imperi in chapter 4 reflect and rebuild through strategic waiting, which is inhabited in the service of reconciliation. Like the residents of the Lower Ninth Ward, the elders in *Radiance of Tomorrow* suggest that important community-building work can be accomplished while waiting. Similarly, Nadine Gordimer's Maureen Smales in chapter 1 illustrates that waiting can disrupt the relationship between time and lived patterns, such that Maureen is able to reevaluate herself in relation to others. At the same time, the temporality of waiting carries its own risks. As chapter 1 also demonstrated, V.S. Naipaul's rendering of the eponymous bend in the river as a waiting room for Salim and other African citizens suggests that, notwithstanding political independence, "not yet" will never become "now." With a cyclical African history of destruction doomed to repeat itself indefinitely, any "refusal to wait," in Naipaul's hands, is emptied of its urgency.

The temporal impression of urgency has also been threaded throughout this dissertation study of the temporal dimensions of waiting. As this conclusion's brief examination of preemptive military strikes in the global War on Terror suggests, urgency can compel precautionary actions designed to circumvent a feared and anticipated future; at the same time, the safety and security of some necessitates the abandonment or

destruction of others. Yet even urgency is contingent on circumstance; Maya in chapter 3 eschews patience and embraces a "fierce urgency of now" to reject her subordinated condition. The language of "fierce urgency" returns us once again to Martin Luther King, Jr. and mid-twentieth-century rejections of waiting. King's promotion of what Mario Feit calls "democratic impatience" can incite "a political crisis" that hastens action and manufactures urgency for the movement's demands; at the same time, "operational patience"— "strategic delays and long-term programs of transformation"—also has a role in the realization a more just future (Feit 3, 12). While U.S. American discourses of preemptive military strikes as "refusals to wait" in the War on Terror might appropriate the radical rhetoric of mid-century independence and civil rights movements' opposition to waiting, the novels surveyed in this dissertation remind us that waiting continues to have multiple valences. Waiting can be re-appropriated as a cultural practice, a way of marking and managing time with the potential to trouble the structures of power that seek to dichotomize the powerful and powerless.

Theorists of globalization and modernity, from David Harvey to Lynn Hunt, have posited that the contemporary experience of time is shaped through a sensation that space too has been compressed. At the turn of the twenty-first century, Harvey influentially argued that "we have been experiencing, these last two decades, an intense phase of time-space compression that has had a disorienting and disruptive impact upon political-economic practices, the balance of class power, as well as upon cultural and social life" (98). But he clarifies: "the maelstrom of ephemerality has provoked an explosion of opposed sentiments and tendencies" designed to protect "against future volatility" (105). Harvey's observations pinpoint acceleration and speed as dominant temporal modes of

the later twentieth century. My argument, however, is slightly different; it is not that the impression of acceleration has *provoked* temporal modes such as waiting in response, but rather, waiting is a constitutive element of acceleration. As we have seen, for example, in Baako's 1970s Accra, accelerating "progress" and prosperity is not evenly distributed, and economic mobility for some may depend on others' continued waiting in destitution. Waiting and acceleration are two sides of the same coin.

The analytic of waiting draws our attention to unevenness and counter-temporalities, asynchronies and arrhythmias that also characterize postcoloniality. The insights of critical time studies have allowed us to identify waiting as a prevailing temporal mode of the twentieth-century and today, and its prevalence prompts us to reconsider the way concepts like "modernity" have been framed. If modernity is not simply defined, as Reinhardt Koselleck would have it, "by an experience of acceleration of time that is philosophically grounded in an original gesture of reduction of the plurality of traditional histories to the 'collective singular' of History" (Mezzadra and Rahola 49), but *also* defined by the experience of waiting, then the premise of unidirectional, linear history is also unsettled through a critical time framework. More work remains to be done on the impact of "waiting" on studies of time and globalization, as well as time and modernity. Jean-Francois Bayart describes the paradoxical relationship between waiting and speed in relation to globalization this way: "the processes of globalization create states, and even, to an increasing degree, 'states of emergency' or 'of exception', which are states in which peoples are stockpiled and forced into latency. […] It is at the heart of the reactor of globalization that they wait" (269). Bayart warns, "Intoxicated by speed, we neglect waiting" (290). This study has been an effort to compensate for that neglect.

Though waiting has been used to defer justice and to distort a lived sense of historicity in colonial and postcolonial settings, this dissertation has argued that waiting can also be a tactic adopted by the politically, socially, and economically disenfranchised as part of a larger strategy of protest and perseverance. Although it has become commonplace to describe the twentieth century as an era of intensifying speed, this study has shown that the temporal dimensions of waiting paradoxically characterize this temporal experience of acceleration. From the Belgian Congo to Sierra Leone, and from Ghana to the United States, waiting is not only implied in the discourses of colonial administration and anticolonial nationalisms, but is also deployed in strategic and political expressions of resistance. In this way, the temporal dimensions of waiting remain central to the formation of geopolitical realities.

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