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## Insurgent Testimonies

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**Vindicating the Law**

*H. G. de Lisser, V. S. Reid, and the Morant Bay Rebellion*

The previous chapters examined how efforts to bear witness to historical traumas, events in which the nation and empire are threatened by revolt and state violence, shaped the formal strategies of British modernist writing. To glean a fuller sense of how twentieth-century Anglophone literature responds to crises in collective memory when the status of a nation and empire, and the laws that secure them, are particularly unstable, I shift focus now from works written from the metropole to writings produced from within the colonies during colonial and postcolonial periods. In the second half of this book, we will see how the staging of testimony to such crises by authors who were *not* part of the great waves of postwar and postcolonial migration manifests the difficulties of managing the often conflicting demands of national and transnational forces. These works also invite us to reassess divisions between categories that govern contemporary literary study. In this chapter, those categories are national literature and world literature, in the next chapter, modernism and postcolonial literature.

This chapter functions as a transition between the preceding chapters, centered on works written before and immediately after the Second World War, and the final chapter, which will address a text composed in the recent aftermath of postcolonial independence in Kenya. Here, I consider three writings that span the period of anticolonial nationalism in Jamaica: H. G. de Lisser's 1919 historical romance *Revenge: A Tale of Old Jamaica*; V. S. Reid's 1949 epic novel *New Day*; and, finally, Reid's 1960 young-adult novella *Sixty-Five*, published two years before Jamaican independence. Each one presents a version of the Morant Bay rebellion, an event in imperial modernity still largely overlooked in literary criticism.<sup>1</sup>

By analyzing these particular works by these particular authors, I respond to Paul Gilroy's request to investigate this key historical moment in black Atlantic history, but I do so with aims and a method distinct from the approaches initiated by Gilroy. In his groundbreaking and field-generating book, Gilroy argued that "the specificity of the modern political and cultural formation I want to call the black Atlantic can be defined, on one level, through this desire to transcend both the structures of the nation-state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity. These desires are relevant to understanding political organizing and cultural criticism."<sup>2</sup> Twenty years later, these desires drive contemporary literary and cultural criticism. Explorations of how fiction imaginatively transcends the structures of the nation-state and the constraints of national and ethnic particularities organize postcolonial and world literature studies. This work continues to be important, but because migration and diaspora narratives have taken center stage in critical scholarship, and because mobility and rootlessness have become master tropes for contemporary ontology, literature that does not thematize these conditions increasingly eludes our attention. Alison Donnell makes this point in her study of twentieth-century Caribbean literature.<sup>3</sup> I consider two Caribbean writers who were important in their own times but whose works have fallen out of print, not having triumphed in what Pascale Casanova calls the "world republic of letters."<sup>4</sup> These novels are set within the space of the colony. I focus on them because, like Donnell, I want to "draw attention back to the local and the dweller as figures worthy of intellectual attention."<sup>5</sup> I also want to question critical models that oppose world literature to national literature.

I acknowledge that "the kinds of transcultural and intercultural work that Gilroy locates as somehow exceeding and even deconstructing the nation

can actually be located within the Caribbean nation, city, or even village.”<sup>6</sup> My goal, however, is not only, or even mainly, to show how de Lisser’s text and Reid’s responses to it enact a transcendence of national particularities through intercultural and transcultural work. It is, instead, to demonstrate how the Morant Bay rebellion and the legal controversy that followed it determined for both the antinationalist de Lisser *and* the cultural nationalist Reid that the intercultural and transcultural history of Jamaica could not form the basis of an independent nation-state nor provide sufficient conditions by which to work through colonial trauma. For de Lisser to argue against national independence and for Reid to argue for it, each must vindicate English law.

The details of the rebellion are by now well established.<sup>7</sup> On October 16, 1865, several hundred Jamaican men and women, mostly black, entered the town of Morant Bay. They were led by Paul Bogle, a native Baptist minister. Bogle made clear that he was not rebelling against the Queen, to whom he even appealed to help Jamaicans resist the inequities and injustices produced by the colonial government. The rebels targeted the Morant Bay courthouse and the vestry. They were protesting unfair wages, decisions regarding land distribution, and among their grievances also listed the expulsion from the vestry of another of their leaders, the minister and politician George William Gordon. At Morant Bay, eighteen officials and members of the militia were killed and thirty-one were wounded, and seven members of the crowd were killed. The rebellion then spread throughout the parish of St. Thomas in the East. Thomas Holt explains that “at its peak, the rebellion involved an estimated fifteen hundred to two thousand people, men and women, African and creole, estate workers and settlers” and that “the rebels’ grievances included proletarian issues such as higher wages and better working conditions on the estates along with peasant issues such as lower taxes and more land.”<sup>8</sup> In response to the uprising, Governor Edward Eyre declared martial law, and Jamaica was placed under Crown colony rule until 1944. The counterinsurgency was of a length and violence such that it gave rise to an enormous controversy in England, which set conservative Victorians such as Thomas Carlyle and Charles Dickens against liberals organized as the Jamaica Committee, led by Charles Buxton and John Stuart Mill.

On July 7, 1866, the Jamaica Committee made a case for trying Governor Eyre before a court of law in England. The committee framed its argument in terms of vindication. The word “vindicate” appears numerous times in

this brief appeal. To be vindicated, however, are not those Jamaicans who suffered multiple and varied acts of torture and killing under Eyre's authority, or even the colored leader Gordon, who was hanged following a court-martial that the English government's extensive inquiry into events in Jamaica through the Jamaica Royal Commission (JRC) had determined broke with procedures under martial law.<sup>9</sup> To be vindicated is law itself. "When there is reason to believe that a British subject has been illegally put to death, or otherwise illegally punished by a person in authority," the Jamaica Committee claims, "it is the duty of the Government to inquire into the case; and if it appears that the offence has been committed, to vindicate the law by bringing the offender to public justice."<sup>10</sup> Although "the Government declined to take any steps for the vindication of the law," the committee persists, but not because it is motivated "by vindictive feelings." Rather, its goal, "besides upholding the obligation of justice and humanity towards all races beneath the Queen's sway, is to vindicate, by an appeal to judicial authority, the great legal and constitutional principles which have been violated in the late proceedings, and deserted by the Government."<sup>11</sup> Upholding justice and the humanity of colonial peoples is presented not quite as an afterthought, but certainly not as the central motivation of the committee. What has been deserted and abandoned by law are not those who suffer its violence but law itself. Law is outside of itself, because English law is discontinuous with violence, which has been inflicted in its name, according to Mill and the Jamaica Committee. Eyre was charged with murder but was never found guilty.<sup>12</sup>

Neither de Lisser nor Reid would comfortably identify with the philosophies of Mill or the Jamaica Committee, and they certainly would not identify with each other's positions on colonial rule. Yet both, I will argue, try to vindicate English law in their representations of the rebellion. They do so in ways distinct from Mill and from each other. *Revenge* attacks Mill's liberal principles and supports the ideals espoused by an acolyte of Carlyle, Mill's antagonist during the Governor Eyre controversy. *New Day*, which Reid composes as rebuttal to the racist portrayal of Jamaican history he ascribes to de Lisser's historical romance,<sup>13</sup> vindicates law through the performance of a dialectical history of liberation whose rhythm and pacing in fact reflects that of historical romance.<sup>14</sup> Despite their antithetical positions on colonial rule, both authors' works attempt to vindicate English law by separating

it from violence. In both works, too, the formal production of witnessing generates unintended effects that create a friction with the strategies of vindication. This friction alerts us that structures of feeling underwriting the nation as an autonomous political formation either to be strived toward (in Reid's case) or prevented (in de Lisser's case) conflict with the demands of transcultural as well as global economic forces that would crosshatch and even constitute the nation.<sup>15</sup> In de Lisser and Reid's novels, the effort to vindicate law is the symptom of this conflict, which stymies the effort.

*Catching the Myal Spirit: Revenge and the Temporality of Necessity*

Herbert George de Lisser, a brown Jamaican of Portuguese Jewish and African ancestry, began his career as a writer for the *Jamaica Times* in 1898, became editor of the *Daily Gleaner* in 1904, a position he held until his death in 1944, and was also an editor of *Planter's Punch*. Mervyn Morris named him "the first competent Caribbean novelist in English."<sup>16</sup> Many of the twenty-five novels and novellas he composed beginning in 1913 were made available to Jamaicans in the pages of *Planter's Punch* and were also published in England. de Lisser's career and racial and class identifications shifted drastically between the 1890s and 1920s and thereafter. Transforming from a brown-identified supporter of the middle classes to a strong supporter of the white business elite, de Lisser opposed struggles for economic and social justice by the working class, serving as secretary of the Jamaica Imperial Association. Leah Reade Rosenberg argues that these personal shifts reflected the changing place of Jamaica in the world system.<sup>17</sup> In her recent study of nationalism and the formation of Caribbean literature, Rosenberg asks, "Why, having achieved such influence in Jamaican literary production, has de Lisser been eclipsed from literary scholarship?"<sup>18</sup> Her answer is persuasive: his historical romances, which cover events spanning the Spanish Conquest of Jamaica in 1492 to the labor riots of 1938, do not meet the aesthetic or ideological standards of later twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship. "Insidiously and unremittingly antilabor and antiblack," these works, of which *Revenge* is one, are "derivative of European popular romances and opposed to the political empowerment of Jamaica's black majority . . . the antithesis of a liberated poetics."<sup>19</sup> Add to this that de Lisser's literary output precedes that

of the great wave of migrant writers from the Caribbean in the 1950s—the reputedly authentic origin of Caribbean literature, as it has become canonized through postcolonial studies<sup>20</sup>—and it is no surprise de Lisser’s fiction has been forgotten.

*Revenge* is worth revisiting, however, not only because it engages a legal dilemma that returns in different ways throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but because it is one of very few representations of the Morant Bay rebellion in fictional prose form. Moreover, it is written by a prolific author known as one of the “‘pioneers’ of ‘authentic Jamaican literature’”<sup>21</sup> whose works were enormously popular in the first part of the twentieth century. *Revenge* thus helped shape how both English and Jamaicans understood an event that was the site of transnational legal and cultural contestations in imperial modernity. Reid underscores this point by delivering not one but two literary counterattacks to challenge de Lisser’s portrayal of this historical event. The rebellion was a turning point in Jamaican history because it initiated a culture war, an “open war for civilization,”<sup>22</sup> a bid to control what constitutes culture, which involved white and educated brown elite policing (literally and figuratively) of Afro-Creole religions, rituals, and languages. The rebellion also caused a dilemma in British law: how to define the concept of necessity so as to judge whether the violence that occurred under emergency and martial law was legitimate. The rebellion and the controversy that followed elucidated that legal definitions of necessity rest upon specific cognitions of time. Through its staging of temporality, *Revenge* attempts to solve the legal problem of defining necessity; however, it also relies upon principles of witnessing shared by cultural systems that law is enlisted, both historically and in the text, to control.

Set in the weeks leading up to the rebellion, *Revenge* emphasizes from its first to its final pages that thwarting the insurgency, and thus avoiding the brutal counterinsurgency, demands a correct cognition of time. The novel’s main characters include the mixed-race Rachael Bogle, the fictional daughter of Paul Bogle; Dick Carlton, a member of the white plantocracy whose sympathy with black estate workers and refusal to engage in cross-racial sexual dalliances sets him apart from that plantocracy; and Joyce Graham, Carlton’s English cousin and fiancée recently arrived in Jamaica. The plot centers on the relationships among these three in the context of growing unrest in the colony. The novel is obsessed with marking time, and it chas-

tises Carlton, its liberal protagonist, for failing to recognize threat in order to deter the rebellion—that is, for failing to see how various events in the present are urgent signs of future catastrophe. de Lisser contrasts the near-sightedness of Carlton with the far-aiming scopic drive of a time-obsessed Eyre: “Fifty miles away the Governor of the colony was pacing to and fro like a caged lion. . . . Now and again he would look out of the window of his house in the direction of St. Thomas, as if he would pierce through the darkness and see what was happening there,” for “one question obsessed his mind. Would the relief he had sent arrive in time? Could it arrive in time?”<sup>23</sup> The novel concludes that liberalist perspectives, or ways of looking, did not try hard enough to penetrate darkness of the present to read the future, and consequently they are responsible for the violence of both the insurgency and counterinsurgency. The passage describing the launching of the counterinsurgency summarizes this point neatly in its formal conduct. By filling sentence after sentence with minute temporal indices, de Lisser performatively scolds his protagonist while instructing readers about the importance of attending to the infinitesimal intervals that compose time:

Over the sea came the deep roar of a cannon. Starting up Dick saw a steamer in the distance heading toward the shore . . . *in an instant* the beach was alive with people all gazing intently at the ship *which momentarily* grew nearer. . . . Then the vessel was seen to come to a stop in the open roadstead *and one, two, three* boats dropped from her side into the water. . . . The crowd around Dick was thinning *rapidly*; Bogle’s garrison were *fleeing as fast* as their limbs would go. Straight towards the beach *flew* the boats, each crowded with black soldiers and with marines. . . . The first boat grounded, the men leaped ashore, and a young lieutenant came *hurrying up* to where the wounded men were grouped. . . . “*Not quite too late*, I hope?” were his first words; then, glancing at the haggard, blood-stained men before him he added sadly, “it looks so.”

(85, my emphasis)

The desire to control events through a minute-by-minute narrative of them can be read as a response to the crisis of the temporality of necessity that was at the center of the arguments of the defenders and accusers of Governor Eyre in their respective efforts to vindicate law.

At stake in defining necessity on the basis of a particular cognition of time was nothing less than protecting English law from charges of illegiti-



mate violence. The conduct of colonial administration, coupled with the proliferation of instances of anticolonial resistance throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, make this protection increasingly difficult to achieve. As we saw in our exploration of West's reports on the treason trials, violence is often viewed as external rather than internal to law, or as an exceptional aspect of it. In the aftermath of the Morant Bay rebellion, Victorian jurists and intellectuals debated whether violence was internal or external to law, whether it was justified under martial law and emergency. The legal scholar Nasser Hussain explains that "emergency is an elastic category, stretching over political disturbances such as riots, the situation of sovereign war, and even constitutional crises within the sphere of the state," and he argues that much political theory and constitutional jurisprudence mistakenly treat it as an external "third term" between sovereignty and law. History shows, however, that emergency is not external or exceptional, but forms "a constitutive relation between modern law and sovereignty."<sup>24</sup> Moreover, it is colonialism that challenges the claims of English jurists that emergency was an exceptional rather than constitutive facet of English law. "The nineteenth-century empire, covering India, and later Africa and the Middle East, consisted of people who were not slaves but, because they seemed utterly incapable of participating in their rule, were not quite free subjects either," Hussain writes. "This empire required a new conception of sovereignty, one that was neither despotic nor democratic. And for such a historically specific reason, it was in this empire that law in general, and the problematic of a rule of law and emergency in particular, assumed a greater ideological weight."<sup>25</sup> During the Governor Eyre controversy, the question of how to defend the violence that occurred under the emergency while portraying martial law as an exception or "third term" was answered inadequately. This is because justifications for Eyre's actions were based on a category impossible to define rigorously: "necessity," which, in legal terms, is a temporal condition. The rebellion and its suppression raised the question: what is the temporality of necessity?

It was the transference of martial law from the metropole to the colonies that made clear that the concept of necessity was an irresolvable epistemological and juridical problem or, rather, a problem that could be solved not with logic and constitutional principles of English common law but only through colonialist ideologies of uneven racial formation. This, Hussain as-

serts, was the lesson of the Governor Eyre controversy. The rebellion demonstrated that in the colonies “the legal definition of necessity would prove more varied and vexing” than in England.<sup>26</sup> To justify the use of martial law, there must be evidence of a pressing danger, an imminent threat to the security of the state. Based on the testimonies gathered by the JRC, Eyre had extended martial law well after that danger had expired. “What keeps the line between very similar acts of violence intact here is a correct cognition of necessity,” but “the rhetorical structure of martial law begins to crumble the moment one asks for some exactness to the description of ‘pressing danger,’” Hussain explains. This is because “the category ‘necessity’ is itself a temporal condition . . . it must be represented as an interruption in the otherwise smooth functioning of lawful politics. Only its minute by minute narrative, its always so closely anticipated ending, can make legitimate the exercise of violence.”<sup>27</sup>

The arguments of Chief Justice Sir Alexander Cockburn and the jurist William Francis Finlason clashed when they confronted the question of necessity. Cockburn maintained that imminent threat collapsed immediately after the troops arrived in Jamaica. Under English common law, imminent violence was the only justification for martial law. Acts committed during the month-long emergency were illegal violence, therefore. Finlason disputes Cockburn’s arguments by citing racial difference as the grounds for another definition of necessity that he asserts must be applied in the colonies. This concept of necessity pivoted on an alternative cognition of time: it replaced imminent threat with deterrence as its guiding principle. As justification for this, Finlason claimed, first, that English common law in the colonies pertained only to white descendents, not those of Africa, so the definition of necessity must be adjusted to suit the situation. Second, the situation during the Morant Bay rebellion was that Jamaica was poised to become another Haiti during the revolution—a genocidal scene. Necessity did not collapse with the arrival of the troops, Finlason maintained, because the blacks greatly outnumbered the whites, because blacks were of a different species from whites, and because, he alleged, they had been planning to kill the entire white population. This definition of necessity based in deterrence demands a dilated temporal view that travels backward to events in the past (in this case, to the Haitian revolution) and then forward to project what will happen in the future. To assess accurately what the correct

course of action is one must look into the temporal and spatial distance, like de Lissers's Eyre, rather than with the nearsighted presentism of Cockburn and Dick Carlton. Violence committed by the counterinsurgents during the entire length of the emergency in Jamaica was legal, and English common law protected from charges of illegitimate violence under this definition of necessity.

Finlason's definition does not rest on stable ground or constitutional principles. It is propped on sociological categories of race and historical precedents. Hussain points out that Finlason's argument proceeds tautologically.

Finlason's criticism of the chief justice's charge ends then with an explanation of dizzying circularity:

"He utterly failed to realize the danger of the rebellion, and therefore he of course failed to recognize the necessity for deterrent measures, of which the necessity could only be recognized by realizing the danger, and without realizing which severities would easily appear to have been cruelties."

Marital law appears here as a deeply cognitive problem. We can now recognize the anxiety over the slippage between the same act of violence as it can appear within the authority of the law and opposed to it, so that an excessive cruelty can easily be mistaken for a warranted severity.<sup>28</sup>

The tautological formulation fails to express the reality of the situation in Morant Bay. While the argument for deterrence dictated that Eyre had to look to past events in Haiti as evidence of what would occur in the future in Jamaica, doing so did not provide an accurate assessment of the situation Eyre faced. The Morant Bay rebellion was not an attempt at secession from the empire, nor was there any plan to eradicate the white population that needed to be deterred. The contested definition of necessity was also central to the debates between two intellectuals involved in the Governor Eyre controversy, Thomas Carlyle and John Stuart Mill.

Given de Lissers's extensive historical research, he was no doubt aware of the jurists' debates about imminent threat versus deterrence, but likely, too, is that these debates were also filtered for him through Mill, Carlyle, and Carlyle's disciple, James Anthony Froude, who was a strong influence on de Lissers's political thought and whom he references directly and indirectly in his works. Examining the Jamaica Committee and the Eyre Defense Com-

mittee's testimonies, along with Froude's discussion of the rebellion in his travel writing, enables us to see how *Revenge* reworks Mill's and Carlyle's arguments under the more recent influence of Froude and in response to contemporaneous cultural and legal practices in Jamaica.

To vindicate English law, Mill argues for imminent threat as the definition of necessity and claims that violence committed during the emergency was illegitimate.<sup>29</sup> In a speech delivered in the House of Commons on July 31, 1866, Mill asserts that "martial law is another word for the law of necessity, and that the justification of acts done under that law consist in their necessity. Well, then, we have the right to dispute the necessity."<sup>30</sup> He attempts to vindicate English law not only by charging Eyre for extending martial law past the point that imminent violence had ended but also by arguing that the treatment of Jamaicans was inhumane and that "feelings of humanity" cannot legitimately be suspended when ordinary law is suspended. Counterinsurgents

are not justified in the use of excessive or cruel means, but are liable civilly or criminally for such excess. They are not justified in inflicting punishment after resistance is suppressed, and after the ordinary courts of justice can be reopened. The principle by which their responsibility is measured is well expressed in the case of *Wright v. Fitzgerald*. Mr. Wright was a French master, of Clonmel, who, after the suppression of the Irish rebellion in 1798, brought an action against Mr. Fitzgerald, the sheriff of Tipperary, for having cruelly flogged him without due inquiry. Martial law was in full force at that time, and an act of indemnity had been passed to excuse all breaches of the law committed in the suppression of the rebellion. In summing up, Justice Chamberlain, with whom Lord Yalverton agreed, said:—"The jury were not to imagine that the legislature, by enabling magistrates to justify under the indemnity bill, had released them from feelings of humanity, or permitted them wantonly to exercise power, even though it were to put down rebellion."<sup>31</sup>

If for Mill the colonial administration's suppression of the rebellion was inhumane, for Carlyle and Eyre that suppression served to protect a higher form of civilization from a lower form: the "white race" from the "black."

Carlyle argued for the definition of necessity as deterrence by claiming that black subjects act under the influence of superstition rather than according to reason. A crucial part of his defense of Eyre was that the governor safeguarded the boundaries between races by protecting white women

from rape by black men, thereby preventing miscegenation. Catherine Hall analyzes Carlyle's defense and demonstrates that statements in Eyre's testimony before the JRC recall those of Carlyle's 1849 notorious essay "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question," published anonymously in *Fraser's* magazine. (J. A. Froude assumed editorship of *Fraser's* for fourteen years, relinquishing it in 1874 at Carlyle's request.) Eyre testified "that the negroes form a lower state of civilization and being under the influence of superstitious feelings could not properly be dealt with in the same manner as might the peasantry of a European country." Their attachment "as a race" to superstition proves that deterrence rather than imminent threat must operate as the guiding principle of necessity outside of Europe: "As a race the negroes are most excitable and impulsive, and any seditious or rebellious action was sure to be taken up by and extend amongst the large majority with whom it came in contact."<sup>32</sup> Carlyle commended Eyre for his deployment of a correct variety of English masculinity in suppressing the rebels, whose sexuality posed as much of a threat as their superstitious natures. Hall explains that Carlyle's defense drew together antiliberal concepts of racialization and gendering while displaying fears of black masculinities and femininities. For Carlyle, "Eyre was not only the hero who had saved Englishmen from a gruesome death; he had also protected Englishwomen, and protecting 'the weaker sex' was, of course, a crucial aspect of independence and manliness."<sup>33</sup> Moreover, she writes, "Englishmen's fears of black male sexuality and the threat it posed to 'their' women were linked with fears about unleashing the powers of black women."<sup>34</sup> Fears about the mixing of races through sex are expressed throughout *Revenge*.

Before returning to the novel, let us consider a final reflection on the rebellion, one whose date is closest to *Revenge's* publication: Froude's 1888 travelogue *The English in the West Indies; or, the Bow of Ulysses*. Although well received in England, this ethnography was pilloried by colonial writers for its polemical meditations on race, colonial rule, and chattel slavery.<sup>35</sup> Froude, who wrote biographies of Carlyle (which eventually gave rise to a Froude-Carlyle controversy), constructs a similar defense of Eyre and argues for deterrence as the basis of necessity, citing black colonial subjects' superstitious natures as justification. Declaring that black Jamaicans belong to "an inferior race," he claims that "they have shown no capacity to rise above the conditions of their ancestors except under European laws, Euro-

pean education, and European authority, to keep them from making war on one another,” and also “their notions of right and wrong are scarcely even elementary; their education, such as it may be, is but skin deep, and the old African superstitions lie undisturbed at the bottom of their souls.”<sup>36</sup>

*Revenge* suggests that de Lisser envisions Froude’s work as a mediator between the immediate postrebellion controversy and his own historical situation of anticolonial activity. It indicates this most clearly by generating narrative energy through multiple employments of an image that occurs in the travelogue’s pages. This image concretizes the juridical arguments for the redefinition of the concept of necessity in an astonishingly literal way—as the eradication of whiteness by blackness. Through this image, Froude makes a connection between the Morant Bay rebellion and his own time, a period of growing anticolonial consciousness, increasing desertion of whatever white land owners remain in the colony, and battles over the place of Afro-Creole culture in Jamaicans’ resistance to Crown colony rule. These three conditions have only intensified by the time de Lisser writes *Revenge*. The temporal perspective of the image Froude draws underwrites the arguments for making deterrence rather than imminent threat the basis of necessity. Froude looks to the future by gazing into the distance of the past, envisioning the Morant Bay rebellion as a reiteration of the Haitian revolution, which is imprinted in his, Finlason’s, and Eyre’s minds as the attempted eradication of whites by black subjects. The removal of whites by blacks from colonial spaces is on the verge of materializing once again, he warns. This time it portends the loss of British economic power in the world. “The only good that came of [the Morant Bay rebellion] was the surrender of the constitution and the return to Crown government, and this our wonderful statesmen are beginning to undo,”<sup>37</sup> he laments, and he continues in an ominous tone that

Lands once under high cultivation are lapsing into jungle. . . . Every year the census renews its warning . . . The white is relatively disappearing, the black is growing; that is the fact with which we have to deal. . . . The West India Islands, once the pride of our empire . . . are passing away out of our hands; the remnants of our own countrymen, weary of an unavailing struggle, are more and more eager to withdraw from the scene, because they find no sympathy and no encouragement from home, and are forbidden to accept help from America when help is offered them, while under our eyes their quondam slaves are mul-

tipling, thriving, occupying, growing strong, and every day more conscious of the changed order of things.<sup>38</sup>

The image of an encroaching blackness that eclipses whiteness structures de Lisser's entire novel. *Revenge* deploys it to make a case for deterrence as the basis of necessity during the rebellion.

The novel reacts to the unsettling of racial divisions and political hierarchies within Jamaica and to Jamaica's changing place in the global economy during the time of the rebellion as well as during the time of *Revenge's* composition. By mounting a defense of Carlyle and Eyre through the use of Froude's imagery, *Revenge* responds to exigencies produced in the immediate aftermath of the rebellion. By framing this imagery within a scenography and iconography associated with Myal, an Afro-Caribbean religion it (mis)identifies as Obeah, the text responds to exigencies contemporaneous with its composition. In the first decades of the twentieth century, Jamaica instituted laws to control various creolized indigenous and diasporic cultural practices, especially Obeah. These laws operated in an effort to keep pace with an intensified anticolonial movement that drew upon such practices and beliefs. Though he invokes Afro-Creole practices and beliefs, de Lisser does not depict those that were actually used in Jamaica during the rebellion. Moreover, he confuses the rituals he depicts with practices in use in Haiti during the revolutionary period. Combining the imagery found in Froude's travelogue with such rituals to tell the story of the rebellion, the novel makes claims for understanding necessity on the basis of deterrence by warning readers about the dangers of mixing of races during both Eyre's time and de Lisser's time.

The novel rehearses the ideologies of racial separatism that it projects onto the insurgents in order to mark their difference from the English and the white plantocracy. Prohibition against miscegenation is the law of the rebel father, not the law of liberal Dick Carlton and Joyce Graham, who treat Rachael Bogle as a token friend of color. "Colour for colour" is both Bogle's war cry and the basis of his domestic rage. After Rachel disobeys Bogle's orders forbidding her to visit Carlton (who confronts her romantic overtures with polite but firm civility, advising her to obey her father), she and her dead mother become victims of that rage. "You forget your colour? Don't you always hear me say 'colour for colour?'" an incredulous Bogle

asks, then accuses, “you are common . . . an’ you get your commonness from you’ brown mother, for you don’t get it from me. You sambo slut! it is a white man you want, eh?” (53). Rachel responds that she wants a white man because a white man is human while the maroon to whom her father wants to marry her in a bid to secure the rebellion’s victory is not. But while *Revenge* attaches the prohibition of racial mixing to a genocidal insurgency led by a savage and superstitious misogynist, it just as stridently ratifies that prohibition in order to make an argument for deterrence as the basis of necessity. The mixing of races is articulated as contamination. Contamination occurs through acts of witnessing.

The episode freighted with the most evidence for implementing Finlason’s theory of necessity in the colonies relates how Carlton’s English fiancée witnesses the conception of the rebellion, presented as a Myal ritual the novel calls “obeah” (41). The text warns that Afro-Creole religious practices create the conditions for moral, political, and economic catastrophe: a nation where whiteness disappears. It issues this warning by showing how easily English womanhood can become compromised by atavistic forces once one leaves the metropole for the colony. In this episode’s attack on liberals’ charges against Eyre and the concept of necessity based in imminent threat, *Revenge* addresses English as well as Caribbean readers. The colonial settlers, most of whom sided with Eyre and against the Jamaica Committee, insisted that those safely ensconced in England could not know the terror of being outnumbered in the colony.

By tightly focalizing on the English woman and charting her descent into a heart of darkness where she watches a ritual with Bogle as its “high priest” (27), the text turns the Morant Bay rebellion into an iteration of the Haitian revolution. It does so while elaborating the sexual conquest of English white femininity by superstitious black masculinity, a trauma Eyre, according to Carlyle, was able to prevent. Joyce leaves the security of the big house and rides into the woods with a black servant guide. The second she leaves the grounds, she becomes vulnerable to the infectious Jamaican landscape: “A wave of excitement flowed through her; the weird, wild beauty of the night had thrown its spell upon her; she was in the throes of its fascination. . . . Then she came to a path which plunged into a wood on her left hand and seemed to lead into its innermost recesses” (38–39). She descends further into “semi-obscurity” until she hears a “cry that came stabbing through the



gloom,” which she recognizes as part of “a revival meeting. Her heart began to beat faster, her pulses quickened” (39). She is driven to descend still farther inward, proceeding onto a trail that only natives, perhaps settlers, but certainly not an English woman, should be able to manage, for “no horse could go that way, but a human being used to such places, could scramble up and down it with no great difficulty” (39). Comingling desire and fear are written onto Joyce’s body as she approaches a place from which to witness the meeting. This comingling produces a characterological break. Joyce transforms from an embodiment of English civility to a voyeur attracted to what is presented as a perverse primal scene. She travels through a narrowing canal that opens onto a wider, hidden enclave from which she watches the conception of a monstrous birth. From her place high above the scene at Stony Gut, where, as her guide relates, “you can see from . . . an them can’t see you” (39–40), she witnesses the insemination of the spirit of rebellion into the people that occurs through the movement of the black man’s wand. Bogle, “standing erect within the circle,” bears “a slender wand, and this he sometimes moved from side to side with a quick nervous jerk” (40), to which the members who circle him respond. They “followed the motion of the rod, rocking their bodies to and fro” and “thundered denunciations at times, shrieked agony, sobbed contrition, and surged upwards in frenzied supplications” (40). Joyce is not immune to the wand’s power.

Afro-Jamaican masculinity’s conquest of English femininity is represented as a trauma that portends a miscegenated future, a nation in which the white disappears under an encroaching black mass. Such is the image that justified for Finlason, Carlyle, and Froude a definition of necessity based in deterrence. According to the young guide who accompanies her, Joyce is protected from the “arousal” Bogle’s rod inspires in him and others.

Charles was trembling with excitement. His superstitious fears and beliefs were fully aroused; he dreaded lest the woman and the man below should smell him out and hurl some deadly curse at him. His mistress, he thought, was safe; she was buckra, white, and above the black man’s evil. . . . From her presence, too, he drew a certain courage. . . . his young mistress could look calmly down upon a scene which even the principal actors regarded with secret awe.

(41)

Charles’s assumptions are false, however. Despite his confidence that her race acts as a shield against contamination, the English woman, too, is in-

seminated by the act of witnessing, and her body becomes part of the rebel body. Joyce's body's reactions to Bogle's moving wand evince her "arousal." The "fascination" and "shudders" that accompany her approach of the primal scene are followed by breathlessness after witnessing it: "gasp[ed] Joyce, 'I have stayed here long enough'" (41). She exits the narrow trail and emerges onto "the open road" (42), but the damage is done: she now resembles the rebels. The act of penetration leaves her cold blooded like the insurgents, with a "pallor" that would have "startled" her if she could see her reflection, "shivering" while "nervous tremors ran through her" (42). Joyce cannot bear witness to this contamination through insemination that will result in a monstrous birth—a mixed-race nation, where the white will continue to disappear as black "superstition" spreads. She tries and fails to tell Dick what has occurred: "I went on to Stony Gut, and I saw—O, it is too dreadful!" She broke off sharply, fighting desperately the hysterical wave that surged through her" (42). Emphasizing that this event should not be passed on, the text orchestrates a thunderclap that prevents its transmission: "He knew that she was saying something, but heard no words" (42). de Lisser locates the rebels' racial and sexual conquest of white femininity at the root of the rebellion and diagnoses these as traumas that only Eyre's counterinsurgency and cognition of time can cure.

*Revenge's* author, like its farsighted Eyre, looks with a dilated perspective into the future and past to grasp the rebellion. de Lisser shapes it anachronistically by invoking the legal management of Obeah that occurs decades after the insurgency and attributes to Afro-Creole religion a role it did not play in Jamaica in 1865 but rather later, earlier, and elsewhere. Between 1907 and 1920, as part of the civilizing mission and culture wars in Jamaica, a series of new laws were passed that regulated Obeah and denied it the legal status of a religion. Defined as superstition, it was now also codified as fraud, which marked a shift from its legal designation as witchcraft during the pre-emancipation era.<sup>39</sup> Obeah had its own literature in the 1900s, and this had to be outlawed because it was accessible to the middle classes of all colors, could be read by them, and thus culturally, and potentially juridically, legitimized.<sup>40</sup> Diana Patton has shown that in Jamaica and throughout the Anglophone Caribbean "Obeah" was produced as a discursive formation through the interactions of transnational, colonial, and regional forces and had "locally differentiated meanings . . . that engage with, but are not determined by, the meanings produced by ruling groups both within and outside

the region.”<sup>41</sup> In historical and critical analyses, Myal and Obeah have been treated as alternately interchangeable and oppositional;<sup>42</sup> as noted, de Lisser refers to a Myal ritual as “obeah” (41). de Lisser’s portrayal of Myal as Obeah is anachronistic because during the period of legal reforms in which de Lisser writes, Afro-Caribbean religions operated in a way that they did *not* during the Morant Bay rebellion, that is, as sites of social and legal contest over cultural and political autonomy.<sup>43</sup> Also, not until after the 1860s does Myal become connected with the rituals *Revenge* describes, possession trances, circles, and dances.<sup>44</sup> Calling Myal an “Africanization of Protestantism,” Dale Bisnauth locates the aims of possession in individual spiritual growth,<sup>45</sup> but other scholars claim that these serve the aims of a community, and one often struggling against an oppressive enemy, white or black.<sup>46</sup> By naming Myal Obeah, de Lisser anachronistically identifies the former with a practice that was being legally regulated in the twentieth century on the basis of its imputed destruction of community, the fraudulent use of “superstition” for individual gains at the cost of others’ losses.

Yet, paradoxically, it is precisely the communitarian character of an Afro-Caribbean religion that de Lisser wants to highlight in order to support his argument for deterrence as the basis of necessity. The articulation of the rebellion’s conception through the ritual is anachronistic because it imposes a discourse of religion’s connection to anticolonial revolt that postdates the insurgency as well as to one that predates it and that occurs outside of Jamaica. The Myal ritual serves in the narrative to connect Morant Bay to Haiti, where Voudou, another religion used to galvanize a community, played an important role in the mounting of the revolution. While it is true that the creolization of the Moravian Baptist religion in Jamaica involved the revivalism that Bisnauth claims is another name for Myalism<sup>47</sup> and that Native Baptist communities were key to the formation of black publics that resisted oppression, which culminated in the rebellion,<sup>48</sup> the insurgency was not a revolution and attempted secession from the empire, as was the case in Saint Domingue. Moreover, although Myal “was a significant spiritual resource for Afro-Jamaicans under stress,” historically, it “did not stage a successful revolution like the Haitian revolt, and its political role in the struggle against slavery and colonialism in Jamaica is not comparable to that of Vodou.”<sup>49</sup>

de Lisser conflates them, but in actuality Myal was often a countermeasure to Obeah, a way of getting to the truth and resetting the moral balance by

reading the natural world. This required that one become infected. Nathaniel Murrell points out the feature with which Myal becomes most associated after the 1860s—"its spirit possession catalepsy," which "is still referred to as 'catching the Myal spirit.'"<sup>50</sup> Catching the Myal spirit enables one to read signs and mediate between known and unknown worlds. Through possession, "Afro-Jamaicans believed Myal brought them revelations of the invisible world: a state of mind that allowed the initiates to see Obeah works and to transmit messages from that other world to their community."<sup>51</sup> Murrell relates that "during the dance ritual, worshipers formed the famous circle to communicate with the divinity, who bestowed on the new shaman the powers to heal and to see unusual things in the sacred and profane worlds."<sup>52</sup>

By invoking Afro-Creole religion while looking through the lenses of Morant Bay's past and future, *Revenge* presents the rebellion as a genocidal secessionist movement. The chapter relating the Myal ritual, entitled "The Sign from Heaven," enacts the disappearance of whiteness under blackness, but it also illustrates that in order to be able to read this disappearance as sign one must become infected. The multiple situations of infection that occur in the chapter's central scene disclose that black femininity is as threatening as black masculinity, if not more so.<sup>53</sup> Here, again, Joyce becomes infected when she witnesses another act of witnessing: a black woman, a "crone" who is the "chief hierophant" (27), reads the night sky during the ritual over which Bogle presides. The Myal woman's testimony to what she witnesses seems illegible at first, for "Joyce heard the sounds that came from the woman; gibberish, it seemed, an incoherent meaningless sputtering from foaming lips" (41). Yet the "gibberish" becomes coherent speech. Through it, the novel relates that nature is a sign system that provides knowledge about future events once one is possessed by the spirit:

still the stream of meaningless sounds poured out of the woman's foaming mouth, and still she whirled round the circle. Then the *peninsular-like cloud* which had been threatening the moon *detached itself from the parent mass* and drifted towards the now, dimmed, half-enshrouded orb. The woman stood stock-still and darted one arm toward it: "A sign!" she screamed, "de answer of de Spirit!" . . .

. . . "the answer is coming!" thundered Paul Bogle. "We will know tonight whether black or white will win!"

Steadily the cloud moved forward, and after it came creeping the dense black mass that now covered half the sky. At this moment the moon struggled

out from beneath the veils of vapour that had dimmed it. Serenely it shone, as though conscious of its own triumph. A groan burst from Paul Bogle and was echoed by hundreds of the expectant crowd.

But still they stared, and inch by inch the darkness drew towards the light. *Joyce, too, infected by the spirit of the people*, watched the scene with intensest interest. At last the cloud touched the edge of the moon, a moment after it had swept over most of it. Darker and darker grew the night, swiftly the light departed. Soon it was all gone. . . .

Now there arose a wild cry of triumph, and high above it rang the voice of Paul Bogle—"A sign, the Spirit give us a sign!"

(41, my emphasis)

In this mise-en-abyme of infection, the hierophant and Bogle catch the Myal spirit, which allows them to read the sky's prophecy that the Morant Bay rebellion will formally repeat the structure of insurgency in Haiti, a colony that attempted to "detach itself" from a "parent mass," or empire. Joyce, "infected by the spirit of the people," can read the sky as Bogle and the hierophant do and then warn Carlton of the necessity of deterring future events. And finally, the novel itself reveals how it is infected by a practice of witnessing it invokes in order to police while simultaneously obscuring this by generating a contradiction.

This scene expresses that nature is and is not readable as sign. This contradiction is the consequence of spatial and temporal telescoping and can be explained by approaching the scene from multiple perspectives. The problem de Lisser confronts in his effort to vindicate law is this: nature must be a sign system, as the insurgents' and Joyce's reading of the sky imply, because then, according to narrative logic, a counterinsurgency based on the necessity of deterrence can be justified. But nature cannot be a sign system because if it is, Myal's interpretive methods do not reflect atavistic superstition but rather constitute a powerful epistemology that allows us to understand politicoeconomic forces of modernity. From the perspective of Jamaica in late October 1865, Bogle's interpretation of movements of darkness and light in the sky is based on superstition because what he names a sign is not in fact a sign—it does not correctly designate who will be victor and who vanquished at Morant Bay. The novel indicates, however, that we must also look from the perspective of those who witnessed the Haitian revolution, and from this angle, it is a sign. It is the sign of *intent* of secession and genocide. In this

way, the scene justifies Eyre's cognition of the temporality of necessity and asserts that those who define necessity as imminent threat do not know how to read nature as signs. After Carlton's fiancée manages to relate "all that she had heard and seen the night before" (42), Carlton's response illustrates that what is legible to Joyce, and to readers, is illegible through the framework that uses imminent threat as the basis for action. "We can only watch them" (42), Carlton says, because there is no evidence of pressing danger. Only by reading signs of intent by referencing the historical memory of Haiti was de Lisser's (and Carlyle's) *Eyre* able to prevent what Bogle interprets, that "black . . . will win." But there is another angle of vision in play here that contradicts these first two statements on the status of the sign. From Froude's perspective in 1888 and de Lisser's perspective in 1919, the sky does display a sign, and not merely of intent but of events that will actually occur in the future, decades after the rebellion takes place. This passage restates Froude's argument and even uses the rhetoric Froude uses to make it. In Froude's formulation, changes in the natural world are anagogical to and reflect population shifts, which are also moral, political, and economic shifts: "lands once under high cultivation are lapsing into jungle. . . . The white is relatively disappearing, the black is growing."<sup>54</sup> The sign Joyce and the insurgents gaze upon is also a warning addressed to readers outside and inside Jamaica. Anticolonial nationalism in the twentieth century is confirming that "black" is triumphing over "white." Because the novel endorses the methods of witnessing and assumptions about the semiotic potential of nature it attributes to a superstitious insurgency to make this point, it reveals that it cannot vindicate law without breaking from its own value system.

The novel articulates that diasporic and indigenous cultural formations mobilize agitation for national economic and political independence in ways that threaten reason, order, and civilization. As a result, the text insists, law must be vindicated from charges of illegitimate violence when it suppresses agitation. The literary and formal strategies *Revenge* uses to make these claims, however, paradoxically endorse the epistemology and interpretive methods of the systems that it claims law must suppress. Like de Lisser's Bogle, de Lisser himself treats nature and landscape as the means by which to assess future events throughout *Revenge*. In doing so he obstructs the novel's attempts to reestablish a boundary that the process of witnessing the rebellion's conception dismantled: that between European civilization,

which Joyce figures, and atavistic superstition, which the insurgents engaged in Afro-Creole ritual embody.

The novel's treatment of nature and landscape illustrate that techniques European literary forms use to interpret social and political conflict share with Afro-Creole religions premises about nature's semiotic potential. Although *Revenge* takes place entirely within Jamaica and therefore seems an example of national literature, the line between national and world literature blurs when we consider that efforts to manage crises of insurgency and counterinsurgency whose effects extend beyond a single nation and historical moment structure the novel. Through these efforts British literary aesthetics are creolized: The text's literary techniques become doubles of and legitimize the hermeneutics of Myal, an Afro-Jamaican cultural system that was employed, the text shows, to produce effects in Jamaica that transform the places of England and the United States in the world system. On the one hand, de Lisser must insist that Myal has no epistemological purchase, which is why he calls it Obeah. To argue otherwise would be to repeal its codification as fraud and treat it as a religion, a system with a truth value that inheres in its ability to mediate between transcendent and finite temporalities and worlds. On the other hand, de Lisser is composing a literary work, and the methods Myal uses to make meaning are not so different from those of the literary genres de Lisser's fiction references. The author represents Jamaican history, as one critic notes, through the "literary models available to him in colonial Jamaica at the end of the last century. These models were British—eighteenth-century Gothic, and the Victorian 'sensation' writing."<sup>55</sup> These models treat nature and landscape as semiotic systems. They often do so in order to tell stories in which femininity is made vulnerable by brutal masculinity and racial otherness. Because *Revenge* employs their aesthetic techniques to argue for the necessity of deterrence while simultaneously revealing that their interpretive principles overlap with those of Myal, he demonstrates how a supposedly atavistic process and a "modern" British literary tradition share techniques for making sense of social, economic, and political phenomena.

Among the many figurations of landscape and nature as signs of blackness encroaching on whiteness, two tropes are particularly important in the novel: hurricanes and fires. Hurricanes and fires are analogous to the night sky whose cloud formations Bogle and the Myal women interpret as signs.

Hurricanes and fires are signs of the future catastrophic storm and holocaust that is the Morant Bay rebellion; however, they are not legible as signs when viewed through the lens of necessity as imminent threat. The novel's formal conduct suggests that de Lisser assumes that readers are conversant with the conventions of Gothic fiction and Victorian sensation writing and therefore know to read landscape and natural events as signs of conflict, strife, or disaster. *Revenge* shows that Dick Carlton does not know how to read this way. The text's handling of fires and hurricanes serve as reading lessons for him and the novel's other liberal characters.

The text relies upon an understanding of nature and landscape as sign systems from the first page in order to make its argument for deterrence and to criticize, through the use of dramatic irony, those who do not know how to read their signs. Chapter 1 opens with a question of how to interpret what is disclosed as a sign: fires on the horizon outside the big house. Three possibilities are offered from three perspectives. The first interpretation is scientific; they are nature's evidence of the drought, a sign of "how severe it has been" (1). The second is that they are signs that the profane world is continuous with, and signs of, the sacred world. Dick Carlton claims the Jamaicans read the fires and the drought as a "sign of God's displeasure, and that they are called upon to purge the wickedness out of the land. Some of those fires are lighted as a warning to the unrepentant" (2). The third possibility is that the fires are not only "warnings" but "signals" sent between black Jamaicans to commit genocide, that "we [the white plantocracy] are the 'wickedness' to be purged out of the land" (2). Carlton's mother offers this last reading. By rejecting it while assuring his fiancée that "the danger is purely imaginary" (2), Carlton strengthens de Lisser's argument for a conceptualization of necessity based on deterrence. Carlton's nearsightedness makes him incapable of protecting white femininity. His mother and fiancée are captured by the rebels, and the only reason they are not raped and killed is that a planter who supports the argument for deterrence prevents this.<sup>56</sup> Linking Carlton's failure to read the signs in the novel's opening episode to his failure to protect white women in distress, *Revenge* uses gothic literary conventions while affirming Myal's premise that nature operates as signs of the supernatural world that also reflect human desires.

Like fire, the hurricane functions as a sign and signal that liberal colonial officials cannot recognize as such. At a dinner party on the eve of Joyce's



return to England, the Custos describes hurricanes to the English woman, who has never seen one. He tells her that by October, hurricanes are generally “all over. There have been hurricanes in October though” (66), he admits. Joyce asks, “Hurricanes are almost as dangerous on land as at sea, aren’t they?” (66). The Custos responds, “Rather! They are terrible. Hundreds of lives are sometimes lost in them; they are what we have most to fear in Jamaica. Take away our hurricanes and our droughts and we should go on our way rejoicing” (66). His response associates hurricanes with fires by mentioning the droughts, which the opening episode’s scientific interpretation mistakenly identifies as the cause of the fires. The novel therefore asks us to read the Custos’s words in the way he does not intend them to be read—through the hermeneutics of the Gothic tradition and Myal. Under-scoring the novel’s prescription to replace a realistic or scientific reading of nature with one that follows the protocols established by Gothic literature and Myal, a passage in another chapter relates that “When the West Indian hurricane is approaching the atmosphere gives warning. . . . So too, before the bursting of the storm of human rage and passion, the wild expression of hate and anger and madness, there are signs and warnings which the clear-sighted may plainly read,” and finishes with a rebuke: “in the month of October, 1865, such signs were not lacking” (43). Neither Carlton nor the Custos are clear sighted enough to read these signs. Both also fail to understand that signals operate as signs of the rebellion. When a planter warns that the conch shell’s signaling of a revival meeting “may herald a hurricane worse than any we have ever known in Jamaica,” the Custos replies, “it may and it may not . . . I prefer to think that it means nothing more than some fellow summoning his friends” (67).

The final vindications of law occur at the novel’s conclusion, where de Lisser reduces the month-long emergency to two weeks, thus falsifying the detail that was at the center of accusations against Eyre, and exonerates law from its most naked instrumentalization of violence: the hanging of a witness following a hasty drumhead court. Like West, who detaches capital punishment from violence in her trial report by making the colonial subject a willing participant in his own death at the hands of the state, de Lisser protects English law from violence by enabling the death penalty to do its work without the colonial subject’s conscious resistance—indeed without her consciousness that it is even taking place. The character hanged is Rachael

Bogle, whom the spurned and vengeful maroon suitor has falsely accused of killing Dick Carlton. She is without an alibi and is starved to the point of madness because she has been hiding from the counterinsurgents searching for her. Consequently, though her testimony to the court accurately describes events that should prove her innocence, it is dismissed as “hysterical raving” (95). de Lisser uses the statements and actions of the British soldiers charged with hanging her to vindicate law. The soldiers’ comments suggest that violence committed by the state during the counterinsurgency is exceptional—not typical in England—but also that colonial situations demand that law be applied in the colonies in ways that it is not in England: “It might be harsh to hang a woman, but women were hanged every year in the colony for murder” (95). de Lisser has Rachael faint from mental and physical exhaustion on the eve of her hanging so that he can both commend the soldiers for their empathy and protect law from charges of violence, punitive actions inflicted against the will of a subject. “She was alive, but unless they restored her to consciousness, she would know nothing more, feel nothing more, on this earth,” the text assures readers, and the officer “was emphatic in his order that the woman should suffer no unnecessary torture” (96) by being brought to consciousness.

Critics have argued that by using the British literary models available to him, de Lisser’s prose suffers; his “style recaptures and amplifies some of the sentimentality, repetition, indulgent explanations, and florid descriptions of British writers who are nowadays considered of less than first rank.”<sup>57</sup> The overwrought descriptions of landscape and nature are evidence of this. But through this “bad” style, *Revenge* illuminates connections between secular European discourses and Afro-Caribbean religious discourses and asserts the epistemological force of both. This style conveys that practices that are legally deemed fraudulent actually produce truth. The novel formally makes an argument its author rejects. It does so because it is contoured by the imperatives of Jamaica’s shifting place in the world system as much as by a historical trauma of its national past. *Revenge* enacts a return of the repressed. It addresses a rebellion that destabilized social, political, and economic structures so as to argue for legal procedures that would prevent such disturbances from happening again. Its formal conduct relates, however, that such disturbances have not only continued to occur but that their effects have been amplified and intensified by the time the novel is composed.

*Revenge* is a world text, but not because it has conquered the global literary market (which it hasn't) or because it critiques models of community based on exclusionary categories such as race and nation (which it doesn't), or, finally, because it is "locally inflected, and translocally mobile"<sup>58</sup> (the fact that, according to WorldCat, the only copy currently available in the world is located in the British library and not available for checkout, suggests in a very literal way that it's not). *Revenge* is a world text because its use of diasporic and creolized cultural and aesthetic practices to bear witness to a historical trauma of imperial modernity demonstrates that contemporaneous pressures of a global economic system structure and destructure it as a literary work. These pressures, that is, both enable the work to come into being and mark the limits of its coherence. de Lisser's text raises a question that Simon Gikandi puts to us in light of Catherine Hall's influential analysis of the postemancipation period in Jamaica, in which apparently oppositional missionary and planter discourses in fact collude in disavowing the agency of black freedmen and women.<sup>59</sup> Gikandi asks, "Where were the free villagers in themselves in this economy of debate? Could they as subalterns speak or were they simultaneously silenced in the discourse of the planters and the missionaries alike? Were the new black subjects masters of their own technologies of self in the postemancipation order or inherently overdetermined?"<sup>60</sup> *Revenge* suggests that planter and missionary alike failed to hear the freed villagers' voices—or rather, read their signs—to catastrophic effect. de Lisser, however, represents insurgents not as rational agents of change but as victims of what he would like to insist is an irrational system that confirms the Afro-Jamaicans' "unconsciousness": The novel dramatizes the origin of the insurgency as the loss of consciousness that occurs when its leader catches the Myal spirit. *Revenge* endeavors to silence subaltern discourse, but it returns as a displaced force that disrupts the coherence of the novel's argument for a particular legal codification of necessity.

de Lisser addresses the rebellion to bulwark dominant forces under attack at least since 1865; Vic Reid addresses the rebellion to support the working classes in struggles toward Jamaican independence. Like *Revenge*, *New Day* and *Sixty-Five* have also fallen out of print, entering neither the canons of World Literature nor the canons of postcolonial literary studies, where focus on works of migrancy and exile still dominate. This seems to confirm that Reid's are decidedly national works. Both take as their subject key mo-

ments of national history and take place within the nation, and *New Day*'s linguistic mode has even been referred to as "nation language": It is the first Anglophone Caribbean novel written entirely in a Creole vernacular.<sup>61</sup> But as in *Revenge*, the techniques *New Day* and *Sixty-Five* use to bear witness to the rebellion challenge critical models that distinguish national from world literature. Reid's works elaborate tensions between national and global forces and show how these tensions spark eruptions of anticolonial revolt throughout Jamaican history. His writings attempt to imagine a way to work through these traumatic eruptions, and they do so by vindicating English law from charges of violence. Thus, neither text entirely breaks with the responses to the rebellion and the counterinsurgency offered by de Lisser or the Victorians before him. *New Day* presents historical events through the perspectives of a middle-class brown family, and the young-adult novella *Sixty-Five* presents them through the perspectives of a poor black family. Whether Jamaicans were "masters of their own technologies of self or inherently overdetermined," as Gikandi put it, is the question each work raises through its vindications of law. Both writings suggest, in different ways, that while brown and black subjects harnessed some of these technologies of self, they are not masters of them but rather "conscripts of modernity." Examining Reid's portrayals of this condition enables us to see how the historical trauma of the Morant Bay rebellion generates literary testimonies that erode distinctions between national and world literatures.

### *Taking Time and Leaping Ahead: New Day as Modern Epic*

Vic Reid described *New Day* as a corrective to the racism of de Lisser's portrayals of Jamaican history, but by arguing for a specific cognition of temporality, it, too, vindicates English law and depicts the insurgency as the violent expression of politically unconscious subjects. Where de Lisser redefines the temporality of necessity to stall anticolonial nationalism, Reid advocates for the necessity of a certain temporality as the condition for achieving an authentic national independence. The refrain that organizes *New Day* is "take time," that is, wait for conditions to be favorable to make claims for political independence. The novel maintains that English legal education teaches how to develop a cognition of time that will enable Jamaica to flourish and

compete in a global economy with England, under whose protection the novel asserts it should remain, though not as a Crown colony but as an entity with “full representative government within the British empire.”<sup>62</sup>

That *New Day* expresses this tutelary cognition of time seems oddly anachronistic, considering that the novel is composed when anticolonial agendas were articulated through a rhetoric of urgency in the Caribbean and abroad. This ideology of temporality is all the more striking because it occurs in what otherwise appears an exemplary work of its moment. Published in 1949, five years after the lifting of Crown colony rule, *New Day* emerges out of 1930s and 1940s cultural nationalism. Literature of this period used the conventions and vernaculars of realism and portrayed local landscape, labor, and social practices of the peasantry and working classes to interrupt colonial imaginaries and forge a national consciousness. *New Day* features all of these elements. It depicts eighty years of postemancipation struggle beginning with the Morant Bay rebellion and concluding with the end of Crown colony rule. On the eve of the new constitution in 1944, the elderly narrator John Campbell spends the night looking backward in time, starting with early October 1865, and takes readers through major events in Jamaican history, which are given narrative shape as a family saga. This form’s genealogical thrust makes it particularly compelling for a writer confronting a newly reconfigured nation because it enables him to imagine that nation as the result of a continuous development. The family saga smoothes over the discontinuities of the Morant Bay rebellion and other violent eruptions, such as the 1938 labor riots. Campbell’s older brother Davie is a conflicted insurgent at Morant Bay who, after the rebellion, fathers a son, James. James becomes a successful capitalist who cares only for business and has no interest in anticolonial politics. He marries a white English woman, and both die soon after from influenza, leaving a young son, Garth, behind. *New Day* replaces *Revenge*’s anxiety over miscegenation with delight: Garth displays the best aspects of his parents’ respective racial and national backgrounds and embodies a synthesis of his father’s business acumen and his grandfather’s anticolonial spirit.

Where the novel breaks from other works of its era is in its usage of a European model, that of *Bildung*, to confront what it criticizes as premature attempts at national independence. The third and final part of the novel relates the effects of Garth Campbell’s education in England on the movement of Jamaica toward independence. Garth’s personal development, or

*Bildung*, models an ideal national *Bildung*, which, as uninterrupted, rational, and nonviolent, does not reflect the actual history of Jamaica. Because English law makes possible Garth's development, it will make possible Jamaica's development toward self-rule, the novel claims. This means that English law will redeem the Morant Bay rebellion.

The novel intimates that the rebellion was a necessary but false start in the movement toward national independence for two related reasons: first, the rebels did not recognize that a nation that sees itself divided from a world system could not succeed, and second, the rebellion was an attempt at achieving national independence that used violence instead of law to try to accomplish its goal. Like *Revenge*, *New Day* misrepresents the rebellion as secession from England led by a figure who appears in Reid's novel not unlike he does in de Lisser's. A bloodthirsty Bogle demands, "Secession! Secession! Total freedom!" (16). When the spirit of rebellion enters Davie Campbell it transforms him into this predator: "Firecoals make his eyes, teeth are wild boar's tearing down Warieka Mount. All of a sudden I see Davie is Deacon Bogle, and frighten comes on me" (32-33). The narrator figures Bogle as a persecutor of Christians, a "herring-Jew merchant" who extracts "the price of blood" (33). Condemning the minister's disregard for all life ("*who it runs over, it runs over!*" [33]), the novel claims that Jamaicans died for his sins, sacrificing themselves to secession: "black was the cloud o' singing that day piling up on Morant courthouse. Did they hope say rain would fall from it? All the same, rain did fall. Rain, like the rain from the side o' Mas'r Gods Son, the Golgotha rain . . . and it drowned some o' me brethren" (112-113). Bogle both demands and preys on sacrifice, for "Deacon is a hunter-dog quartering the hole o' the German boar. Deacon is a cult shepherd in Yallahs Valley waiting for the sacrificial lamb. He will be a quartering *John Crow*, working up his appetite before he swoops for carrion meat" (139). By portraying the rebellion as sacrifice, the novel establishes that it is the task of history to redeem it.

English legal education redeems this sacrifice and provides the lesson the novel imparts: to "take time." Belaboring this point, *New Day* issues the warning in multiple, seemingly unconnected contexts. Not until the final section does it relate the refrain to the prescription of colonial tutelage:

"The scene is changing, Uncle. We are growing up. We are getting out of the chrysalis."

“We? We who?”

“The Colonial Empire. Once it was the British Empire, now it is the British Commonwealth and the Colonial Empire. Soon it will only be the British Commonwealth—each of us with our own pair of wings, but flying together.”

“And how will we get our wings?”

“We will ask for them, but first we must learn how to use them . . .

“We had them once, you know, Uncle.”

I nod me head, “Yes, true that.”

“We lost them. We flapped too heavily, so mother bird clipped them. For our own good, she said. She was probably right. They would have flapped us into trouble.”

(338–339)

The loss of self-representation through Crown colony rule, the result of the rebellion, is deemed necessary because Jamaicans did not know not to leap ahead. The demand for immediate sovereignty (which of course in historical terms was not made during the rebellion or leading up to it) only proved that Jamaicans required more tutoring. A hasty secession from the empire would only have resulted in the incapacity to manage the world system. A nation that cannot suture itself into that system, Garth and the novel assure us, is a nation that is not truly independent, “mature,” and free.

Garth Campbell’s legal education in England enables him to help Jamaica cope with pressure of multinationals like United Fruit and WISCO, effectively deal with the rise of trade unionism, and forecast and exploit the changing role of the sugar industry in the global economy during World War II. Garth understands Jamaica as part of a world that is necessarily one and stitched together into a system of economic dependency: “Mr. Hitler is determined that Germany should expand, and in this close-fitting world, expansion by any one nation means somewhere there will be a tear. Wherever this tear occurs there will be resentment, and there you will have your war and a terrific demand for our sugar” (333). He is able to acquit himself and hundreds of workers in a trial following a trade union meeting that turns violent. He can do this because, our narrator regularly reminds us, he learned to “talk strong but with reason before the King’s bench” (273). “This boy . . . whom many learned men ha’ taught how to speak before the King’s bench” (329) also resolves disputes between capital and labor and secures a thriving economy on the Campbell estate and in the parish, which

becomes a utopic, parallel colony in miniature, a foreign body enveloped in a colony plagued with poverty and violent labor disputes. As Thomas Holt writes, 1938 “was a year as violent and consequential as 1831–32 and 1865,” and in the decade following the strike, “new forces emerged—some beneficial, some sinister—that would reshape the political, economic, and social futures not only of Jamaica but of the entire colonial empire.”<sup>63</sup> By establishing conditions of rational discussion and consensus among the plantocracy, Garth prevents a violent uprising by estate workers, which the novel identifies as potentially another Morant Bay rebellion. Persuading parish planters to join with the Campbells in raising wages and in teaching their workers how to lobby for rights and privileges, he warns, “in some countries unionism was born in blood; in others, wise heads who saw the inevitableness of the birth took steps to prevent violence” (334). The novel draws a connection between political independence and business acumen by stating that both require a correct cognition of time. Garth preaches, “In doing business you know there is one cardinal rule, never act in haste” (329). When Crown colony rule is finally lifted as a consequence of Garth’s mediation between the colony and his legal connections in England, to whom he petitions, John Campbell declares that the sacrifices of the Morant Bay rebellion have been redeemed. His comments assert that Garth’s *Bildung* parallels that of Jamaica. Redemption happens as the result of an organic process of personal and national development, the ripening of a seed: “*Aie*, what a fruit our seed has borne . . . Glad, I am glad that Naomi and me had sent Davie’s offspring to learn of the law in England” (365). Jamaica has finally “reached our age of reason” (271) because now “men can march with the banner o’ the law waving over them ’stead o’ shells talking of blood and fire” (366). The novel equates this age of reason or enlightenment in which law enables Jamaica to manage effectively the demands of the world system with modernity: “Get rid of those horse-and-buggy concepts, Mother England, before the rest of the world speeds out of sight leaving you wallowing in the mire of prejudiced tradition” (367).

In its staging of history as an uninterrupted dialectical progression that redeems an initial sacrifice and that is guided by a future horizon of hope in recent gains toward national independence, *New Day* seems at first glance to typify what David Scott calls “the mythos of Romance” he claims organizes anticolonial revolutionary discourse as well as postcolonial criticism.



Through his reading of *The Black Jacobins*, C. L. R. James's classic study of the revolution in Haiti, Scott argues that this future horizon determines a shaping of the past through epic romance, a genre of the quest that is, in Northrop Frye's words, "nearest of all literary forms to the wish fulfillment dream." Scott explains:

the protagonists (invariably associated with the new, with Light, with order) undertake a perilous journey; there are encounters with antagonists or enemies (invariably associated with the old, with Darkness, with disorder); the inevitable conflict ensues between these irreconcilable principles; there are heightened moments when Darkness seems poised to vanquish Light; and finally the victorious deliverance or overcoming from bondage, from evil, comes: what Frye calls "the point of epiphany."<sup>64</sup>

Published just eleven years after James's text, *New Day* reflects the rhythm and pacing of epic romance as Scott describes it, but its vindication of English law also distinguishes it from *The Black Jacobins*. The novel eschews and even criticizes two defining features of the anticolonial mythos of romance—the employment of a form of vindictionalism and the longing for total revolution. Vindictionalism here is a narrative mode, often a tone of "moral indignation" or outrage devoted to redeeming wrongs under slavery and colonialism, which it characterizes as processes of total dehumanization and victimization.<sup>65</sup> Vindictionalism accompanies the demand for "total revolution," a complete and immediate break from an empire to be orchestrated by an autonomous subject, an epic romantic hero.<sup>66</sup> Later anti-colonial movements and criticism take up this "unequivocal demand for immediate sovereignty."<sup>67</sup> Instead of rehearsing vindictionalism, an outrage over the besmirching of the dignity and humanity of black subjects under colonialism, *New Day* vindicates English law. Instead of presenting as heroic a figure who redeems wrongs suffered under colonialism by initiating total revolution, as James presents Toussaint, *New Day* portrays as a predator the historical figure it misrepresents as an initiator of total revolution whose sacrifices must be redeemed by law. Instead of demanding immediate sovereignty, *New Day* demands that colonial subjects "take time."

Reid's work depicts colonialism not as a totalizing process of victimization but as an epistemic violence that also enabled the emergence of agents who could help bring it to crisis. These "conscripts of modernity" were not

autonomous masters of their destiny. They were subjects who harnessed technologies imposed by colonialism to resist it. Garth Campbell is the conscript the text privileges. Although the novel interrupts the mythos of romance by rejecting the notion of colonialism as totalizing victimization that demands total revolution, it also enacts this mythos by plotting a progress narrative that molds a brown middle-class subject into the novel's, and Jamaican history's, hero. By making Garth the singular hero, Reid ignores how black subjects of lower economic status, including Paul Bogle, were conscripts of modernity whose resistance tactics challenged colonial power and did so *without* calling for total revolution. These men and women redeployed Moravian Baptist missionary discourse to create new counterpublics and bypass the colonial government to appeal to the Queen for economic and political justice. They also formed their own justice systems to confront the widespread injustices produced by the plantocracy.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, *New Day* renders Enlightenment thought—English legal thought—the pathway to organic, national *Bildung* but does not show, as James does in his appended comments on tragedy in *The Black Jacobins*, what Scott calls “the inevitable costs that accompany relentless and unheeding enlightenment thinking.”<sup>69</sup> A brutal counterinsurgency was the result of Enlightenment codifications of race, gender, and sexuality, of the human and the inhuman. Enlightenment thought shaped the arguments of jurists such as Finlason, who asserted the need for the redefinition of English constitutional principles on the basis of colonial exception, proposing that emergency law could not be transferred from domestic to colonial space without the concept of necessity being transformed to reflect racial difference. Carlyle's defense of the counterinsurgency on the grounds that Eyre had safeguarded white femininity was the product of Enlightenment thought. Even among the Jamaica Committee, Enlightenment thought determined the initial response to the insurgency. Mill and Buxton argued the rebellion was a spontaneous riot because they could not imagine that Jamaicans were capable of organizing and planning anything like a widespread, coherent act of anticolonial resistance.<sup>70</sup> By advocating the tutelary cognition of time without showing what Scott calls the “paradoxes and reversals” that interrupt the progress narrative of history, *New Day* seems more like a colonial than an anticolonial or a postcolonial work, if the “post-” refers to a critical mode and not only a historical period.<sup>71</sup>

But although the novel challenges the rhetoric of nationalism shared by so many anticolonial works of its time and after, it also illustrates that it has difficulty rejecting the unequivocal demand for immediate sovereignty without equivocation. In tension with the plotting of the epic as romantic discourse is its formal staging as something like what Franco Moretti calls the modern epic. This form configures a relation between past, present, and future in ways that are sharply distinct from the linear trajectory of romance. As this epic form, the text incessantly presses against the ideology of tutelage; the novel refuses, structurally, to “take time.” In refusing to take time, *New Day* also challenges oppositions between world text and national saga.

Moretti distinguishes the modern epic from what he calls the “premodern” epic as well as from the national saga in a number of ways. First and foremost, the modern epic, unlike the other two, formally testifies to the fact that the world system has taken hold. “The construction of national identity—henceforth required of the novel—is thus replaced, for the epic, by a far larger geographical ambition: a global ambition.”<sup>72</sup> According to the classification Moretti devises, *New Day* is a national work or a “premodern” epic. In the latter, we find “the weight of the past . . . the epic is not just inherited from the past, but also dominated by it . . . imposing on author and readers alike ‘the reverent point of view of a descendant.’”<sup>73</sup> The modern epic finds the present invaded by the past, too, but does not approach that past with reverence or position itself as a descendant. This form is defined by geographical expansion and temporal contraction. By contrast, the national saga is defined by spatial contraction and temporal expansion, a tightening of space and lengthening of history. And in a reversal of the Bakhtinian thesis that the epic is monologic while the novel is polyphonic, Moretti claims that polyphony reigns in the modern epic. In place of an intelligent ordering of many voices, however, is cacophony because “in the expanding universe of modernity, many things are as yet unclear; and it is necessary to learn to live with noise.”<sup>74</sup> The expansion of time rather than space, the monologic narration, the focus on the Campbells’ parish, the retelling of the historical past as family saga, which places hope for the future in the descendents—all of this puts Reid’s text on the other side of the modern epic, suggesting it is a thoroughly national work, not a world text. Critics assert that this is the case, some arguing that the novel supports Fredric Jameson’s controversial claim that third-world texts are national allegories.<sup>75</sup> Yet when Moretti turns

his attention away from the works of Western Europe to analyze a postcolonial novel of the Americas, he offers a reading of epic form that suggests the division between world and national text is not so rigid.

Deploying Moretti's close readings to examine *New Day* means redirecting the work of the advocate of a world literature studies constituted by distanced reading.<sup>76</sup> Those close readings, which explore *One Hundred Years of Solitude's* depiction of colonial space, its staging of time, and its plotting of history, expand the category of modern epic and bring us closer to seeing *New Day* as something other than "premodern" and "national." In Moretti's reading, these three narrative elements of Márquez's text disclose that what seems a national work, a family saga focused on the House of Buendia, is in fact a world text. In family sagas such as Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*, focalization "is like a zoom shot: from the world to the nation-state to the city to the house. Spaces ever more tightly defined, ever more smaller and more homogenous."<sup>77</sup> Márquez's novel, too, is focused on a tighter space than the world and never migrates out of Macondo, "yet Macondo is, as it were, larger than Lübeck: because more open to the world . . . [Márquez's novel is] the story of *Buddenbrooks*—in the context of the world-system."<sup>78</sup> Within Macondo appear people and objects from the farthest-flung parts of the globe, and the narrative tracks the varied effects of the world system in its plotting and in its staging of time. This staging of time, an interplay of prolepses and analepses that has the narrative traveling repeatedly, in each episode, from the future, to the past, and then back to the future is what gives the work its "epic grandeur," Moretti explains, citing Vargas Lhosa, who describes the "basic narrative cell" of the novel:

At the start of an episode, the main fact in the narrative unit is mentioned: it is usually the last, in chronological terms. In other words, the episode begins with a leap towards the future. . . . The narrative then jumps to the remotest past of the fact mentioned, whence it follows a linear chronological account of events, until it reaches the future fact that has been displaced and reported at the start of the episode: in this way the circle is closed, and *the episode ends where it began, just as it had begun where it would end.*<sup>79</sup>

This description of narrative time as a leap toward the future, a jump back to the remotest past, and return to the future fact that has been displaced and reported at the episode's beginning describes almost exactly the struc-

ture of *New Day*. Two important aspects distinguish Reid's text's staging of time from Márquez's text's. In the latter, the circular temporal motion of the novel is often sparked as a consequence of processes that begin outside of the nation and that produce decisive and lasting effects on its plot, transforming it into a "*Buddenbrooks* in the context of the world-system." The world system also produces decisive and lasting effects in *New Day*'s plot, but what sparks the temporal motion of each episode is not portrayed by the plot as economic processes that begin outside of the nation. What organizes the proleptic and analeptic epic structure and creates its temporal motion is something else: the syntactical structure of its vernacular. The novel's temporality rehearses the rhythm of its linguistic code. This code is the crystallization of national as well as transnational forces and histories and also irreducible to them.

While *New Day* advises to "take time" in order to manage best the processes it plots that begin outside the nation, from the beginning, the narrative continuously leaps ahead and disobeys the order that vindicates law's cognition of time as well as the concept of time underwriting the novel form as a nation form. The novel's other refrain is "Is remember I remember," which occurs in each episode. This refrain rehearses in miniature the almost circular temporal motion of the narrative that occurs in each of the novel's episodes. "Is remember" is a comment delivered in each episode by the narrator from a point in the future; its utterance signifies that the narrative has leapt forward, jumped over a time that the text will then proceed to recount in the episode that follows so as to try to catch up with the point from which this account begins. Rather than progress immediately into its account of the past that has been leapt over, however, the text first turns backward as the narrator repeats the phrase, yet with a difference: "I remember." Just as the phrase begins with two words and travels backward, repeating the words with a difference ("Is remember I remember"), so too does the novel as a whole follow this structure. Every episode moves from a future to a past that has been leapt over, and then, instead of bringing us back to that exact moment from which the episode's narration began, it leaps ahead, past events leading up to that moment and lands on a future moment from which the utterance "Is remember, I remember" will be issued. The leap forward at the end of each episode spurs the cycle to begin again in the next episode. The narrative "circle" is never closed, therefore;

there is always a disjuncture, a leap forward, a refusal to “take time” that leaves each episode open.

The novel’s proleptic and recursive structure marks a departure from the novelistic structures that create the effect of an imagined national community. Novels “take time,” we might say, and in doing so, they interpellate their readers and depict their characters in ways that Benedict Anderson argues distinguish it from the epic. The novel does not leap forward and backward through a limited perspective as the epic does, a form that historically precedes the development of nations and nationalisms. Simultaneity, a “meanwhile” that suggests temporal coincidence and an omniscient, “bird’s eye” view are the defining features of the novel form as nation form, Anderson maintains. The novel shows characters that might never interact or even meet progressing through an empty, homogenous time, and thus it simulates the nation as imagination of serialized, anonymous subjects both within the text and “in the minds of the omniscient readers.”<sup>80</sup> By contrast, Reid’s novel does not take time and therefore does not generate this notion of the nation as serialized, anonymous subjects in either characters’ or readers’ minds. Rather than enact an omniscient perspective or the linear progression of homogenous empty time that facilitates national identification and address—a concept of time on which the vindication of law is propped—*New Day* rehearses time as prefiguration and fulfillment whose rhythm is forward, backward, and forward again. Because of its epic form, then, it would seem this text is not even “modern” enough to be considered a “national” work, much less a world text. The novel’s epic form, however, enacts its connection to the nation and to the world beyond it because its temporality obeys the structure and rhythm of its “nation language”—a national language which, it turns out, is not one.

*New Day*’s narrative structure is modeled on the structure of its vernacular, a reworked mesolect of Jamaican Creole and British and American English. Reid provides a glossary of Creole terms and a note on Jamaican vernacular in which he underlines a particular feature of the grammar, the repetitions of words for emphasis and rhythm, and says this is what “give[s] the dialect its uniquely poetic character” (374). This repetition is evident in the refrain that triggers the “circle” that gives the work its “epic grandeur,” “Is remember I remember.” This spacing rhythm of a step forward and backward and then forward again structures the phrasing of memory as well as that of

textual temporality, as the text returns to 1865, then returns to 1944, then returns to 1882, then returns to 1944, and so forth, while never coinciding with its previous moment. Less of a circle, time is more of a spiral, which is itself, as Nico Israel argues, an aesthetic and politico-philosophical feature of global modernity that questions the closures of national discourse.<sup>81</sup> *New Day's* temporal spiral does not imagine the nation in terms of serialized subjects in empty time but does manifest the desire to reappropriate what had been devalued under antinationalist cultural programs—Jamaican Creole. By deploying Jamaican Creole's rhythm as the basis for its temporal structure of leaping ahead and turning backward, Reid's novel undercuts the ideology of tutelage expressed in the economic-political phrasing of "take time" and rejects the colonial models of acculturation that insisted that British English must replace Jamaican English and Creole.<sup>82</sup> This epic temporality also stalls the progress narrative that vindicates law, as it continually transgresses the law of that law.

If it seems that *New Day's* deployment of the linguistic mode simply replaces its romantic hero's global outlook by reasserting a concept of the nation as a *Volk* naturally connected to a language untouched by imperial modernity, this is not the case for a number of reasons. First, as discussed, the narrative time provided by the linguistic mode refuses the logic of seriality and temporal homogeneity associated with a literary imagination of nation form. Second, this "nation language" in fact belongs to no particular nation. Finally, Reid operates as a bricoleur, reappropriating linguistic material of the past in order to *denaturalize* nation, language, and the connection between them and to address audiences both within and outside of the nation. The apparent monologism of *New Day* is internally constituted by a multilingual bricolage. The glossary does seem to suggest that what we are reading is a language at once premodern and confined to Jamaica, though certainly also the result of extranational forces: "the dialectic spoken in Jamaica derives in part from the English of an earlier day and in part from Welsh. It is characterized by repetitions of words and by the use of forms that have gone out of fashion in England and the United States" (374). But the language of *New Day* is neither "premodern" nor a national language. This is not only for the more obvious reasons that, first, there is no Jamaican monolingualism because many dialects, mesolects, acrolects, and basolects are spoken, and, second, as a combination of Creole and Anglo-English, the

novel's form of expression is also the result of a history of migrations and movements of peoples and languages shaped by the forces of imperialism and capitalism as well as resistance to these. Less obviously, this is because Reid employs a "vernacular" that is not spoken by anyone, anywhere. In an interview, Reid asserts that the novel's language was an attempt to counter colonialist depictions of Jamaican history that served antinationalist agendas. His example is de Lisser, "one of the old fashioned brown imperialists who thought people should be kept in their places," whose novels put Jamaicans "in the worst light possible. . . . And so I thought the thing to do would be to write a book in the dialect, in the Jamaican vernacular."<sup>83</sup> Although this statement seems to indicate that the novel, and specifically its language, serves a cultural nationalist program, Reid goes on to explain that the novel's counter to colonialist representations of culture is not guided by an attempt to restore a true national language of the *Volk* nor to address a national audience alone, but a transnational one. Reid does not pretend that an anticolonial transnational address is divorced from economics, the pressures of a transnational literary market, and he represents fiction writing as a form of labor that deserves a livable wage:

The trouble was of course that being slightly commercial in my outlook, and also I think quite sensible, I saw no reason why the writer should really not make a living from his work. And so I decided that if I'm going to use the dialect, it must be used so that it can be read by people all over the world, who can read English. And I went to work to style the language, the English language and the Jamaican vernacular . . . into the sort of language that people could read and understand, always bearing in mind very deliberately, that the rhythms, the beautiful rhythm of all the West Indian English-speaking people would be in the book as far as Jamaican rhythm and nuances were concerned.<sup>84</sup>

Moreover, rather than address English speakers within and outside of Jamaica in a familiar language, he sought to defamiliarize the language for them: "I devised this way of using some of the old Elizabethan styles but bringing in the atmosphere of the Jamaican language all set in a rhythm . . . and they'd understand the language although it was rather exotic to most of them, also to my own people."<sup>85</sup> Reid's description of language as defamiliarizing, invented, and aimed beyond a single nation challenges George Lamming's reading of Reid's (and Sam Selvon's) works' language as pure,



unmediated “peasant tongue . . . no artifice of techniques, no sophisticated gimmicks.”<sup>86</sup> It also troubles Lamming’s position that Reid’s ability to render this “organic music of the earth”<sup>87</sup> is the result of his being more closely tied to the nation because he did not emigrate like so many other Caribbean writers. As Sylvia Wynter points out, Reid’s novel practices a psychic emigration and return, if not a physical one.<sup>88</sup>

Rejecting a natural connection between nation and language through what Reid calls this “devised language,” *New Day* delivers a rejoinder to “take time” by practicing the temporality that underwrites demands for immediate sovereignty while detaching this temporality from ethnicist concepts of the nation as a demos rooted in language and shared tradition. Internally heterogeneous, this mode was a practical strategy that allowed Reid to address both Jamaican people and people who could read English all over the world, but without addressing them in the idioms of the dominant and through the antinationalist cultural systems of de Lisser’s work. *New Day* therefore questions the ideology that vindicates English law and the progressive movement toward Enlightenment and modernity through a temporality modeled on the subnational discourse that is also transnational. This language forces readers to learn to engage with a language unfamiliar or defamiliarized that is *not* of the dominant. As the North American reviewer in the *Sewanee Review* noted in 1950, the novel forced readers “to re-adjust . . . linguistic expectations.”<sup>89</sup>

Another way that *New Day* troubles the relationship between monologism and polyphony, thereby challenging the vindication of British law and disturbing the conception of time as a progressive unfolding, occurs in a crucial scene. This scene elaborates the staging of testimony before the JRC. Rather than defining modernity as what gives rise to many voices, “cacophony,” or noise, as Moretti claims, *New Day* defines modernity as what silences many voices through colonial conquest and consolidation. The novel choreographs a scene of endeavoring to convoke those many voices in order to bear witness to a history of violence that challenges England’s legal response to the rebellion. This depiction refuses the idea that underwrote the concept of necessity—that the rebellion was a traumatic rupture that provoked an exceptional manifestation of British violence. The rebellion is a trauma that silences witnesses, the novel maintains, but also insists that the rebellion is not a rupture and that the violence practiced by the colonial state during the counterinsurgency is not exceptional.

When Davie Campbell bears witness before the commissioners, his testimony is orchestrated not simply as his own voice but as prosopopeia: as spectral witnessing. Davie asks the commissioners, “Do you know how we came these last three years? Or how we come before that?” (207). In other words, he asks them do they know how and when the rebellion originated. Their reaction is “Just what do you mean, Campbell?” (207). His response is presented not as his testimony but as an effort to speak for those who cannot, without guarantee that he can speak for them. “*That now I would speak for the dead ones!*” (207), he responds. The conditional tense is crucial because it expresses the act of speaking for others as a necessary betrayal. It acknowledges that this witness cannot stand in for all those others who were deprived of the capacity to bear witness as a consequence of historical traumas of imperial modernity that precede the rebellion. Through this testimonial act—a speech act presented here as neither verifiable or even rigorously possible—the novel acknowledges the limits of using a single heroic figure as the conscript of modernity and recognizes that a brown middle-class witness cannot speak for all those who have lived and died under slavery and colonialism. This testimony passes through that impasse by translating collective damages into wrongs before the JRC, breaking the protocols of this inquiry, which was based on individual eyewitness accounts of events that transpired during October 1865. “*I would speak for such as do no’ speak any more! I would tell you that for two hundred years before October gone, men were a-march on Morant Bay courthouse. Say it was not from Stony Gut they marched, nor Bath Town, nor Port Morant, nor Cuna Cuna Mountain. Say that they marched from all over the island and ha’ been marching for two hundred years!*” (208, my emphasis).

This insurgent testimony presents history as a steady destruction under British power and situates the Morant Bay rebellion not as the exceptional event that shamed English law and required its vindication but rather as the rule of British law’s “shaming” of labor. “For these two hundred years they saw the shaming of man’s highest calling—the calling o’ labor with the hands” (208), Davie testifies. The rebellion is another effect of the culmination of events that began in Jamaica with chattel slavery and, most recently, with the postemancipation government’s withholding of lands for Jamaicans to work. After emancipation, black and brown Jamaicans obtain their own lands and can leave the white landowner’s estates, but by “that time, then, there is no labor, and there is new laws in the House o’ Assembly which

will prevent people getting good lands to buy, so they will return to buckra estates. There is even talk among the plantermen of bringing indentured labor from India and China” (211). By attempting to bear witness for those who do not share the witness’s privileged economic and racial status, Davie presents the representatives of English law with a portrayal of the Morant Bay rebellion not as an exception, “an interruption in the otherwise smooth functioning of lawful politics,”<sup>90</sup> which forms the basis of the legal concept of necessity, but as business as usual in the longue durée of imperial political economy whose networks are ever expanding and globalizing.

As such, the rebellion exceeds resolution by English law even as it demands a response in the form of an official inquiry. Testimony in the novel therefore exposes the failures of England’s response to the crisis. As the legal scholar Rande W. Kostal notes, “to the modern observer, to many contemporaries, the Government’s obsession with things legal was more than passing strange. After all, in the 1860s Jamaica faced profound economic and social crises. The sugar economy had collapsed, and nothing viable had taken its place. The colony was densely populated but desperately poor. Race relations were hopelessly poisoned,” yet “the leaders of the imperial state in London either did not want—or did not know how—to respond to the Jamaican crisis at the level of political economy. What it thought to do . . . was consult lawyers and mount a series of legal initiatives.”<sup>91</sup> The government attempts to remedy what it mistakes as a rupture through law.

Ultimately, however, *New Day*, too, puts its faith in English law to redeem the rebellion. Although the prosopopeia before the JRC and the temporality and address of the linguistic code intercept the relentless unfolding of the dialectic that vindicates law, the progress narrative triumphs in the end. Davie is reborn and improved in the lawyer Garth, and by the third section of the novel, the British English spoken by this romantic hero is far more dominant than the devised language that organizes the entire first section but that slowly retreats as the novel continues.<sup>92</sup> Reid attributes this disappearance to the fact that the “foreign editors” liked the idea because it would give those outside of Jamaica a chance to “catch their breath.”<sup>93</sup> It is difficult, however, not to read the shift from one linguistic code to another also as another indication of the tension the novel conveys between taking time and leaping ahead. This tension manifests an ambivalence toward its vindications of English law. For these reasons, *New Day* is not a total rupture

from the literary history to which it reacts, and it remains attached to the models from which Reid attempts to break, specifically de Lisser's. Not until a decade after *New Day* is published will Reid move closer to acknowledging in literary form the violence of English law, which again occurs through the interruption of testimony.

*Story of the Eye: Sixty-Five's Pedagogy of Perception*

It is not surprising that Reid would revisit the Morant Bay rebellion in 1960, two years before Jamaica achieves full national independence. During this era, the rebellion became the site of renewed interest in culture and politics, and it was reinvented as the origin of the new nation.<sup>94</sup> Also not surprising is that Reid would revisit the rebellion in the form of a young-adult novella. Reid's commitment to intervening in colonial constructions of Jamaican history extended beyond his novel writing; he also wrote books for schoolchildren, including *The Young Warriors*, which tells the story of the Maroons, and *Peter of Mount Ephraim*, which examines the Sam Sharpe rebellion. Like *New Day*, *Sixty-Five* presents history as a family saga, though here narrative time is linear and spans only a short period before, during, and after the rebellion. Paralleling the middle-class brown family the Campbells are the Murrays, a black family of lesser means whose father and son also clash over the insurgency. Like *New Day*, this novel places hope for the future in the grandson, who, like Garth Campbell, represents a synthesis of the father and grandfather's conflicting perspectives. Twelve-year-old Japheth is not only the narrator but also the novel's main focalizer, and the narrative consistently highlights his and others' acts of looking to carry out its pedagogic mission. That mission is to train its readers to find the correct angle of vision through which to view the past in order to judge the best way to proceed toward the future.

Whereas the conflict that centers *New Day* pivots on a cognition of time—whether to leap forward immediately or wait to confront colonial power—the central conflict of *Sixty-Five* is figured in terms of a cognition of space: whether to advance and attack or “fall back” from colonial power. By advocating the latter and deploying it as a refrain, *Sixty-Five*, like *New Day*, endeavors to vindicate English law. But as is also the case in the earlier

novel, in the later one this vindication is interrupted. Here, the interruption occurs through the novel's elaboration of double vision, a critical strategy about which the work says little but regularly puts on display through its handling of focalization.

This critical strategy discloses an orchestration of British legal violence in imperial history that the novel will not express through the voices of its characters—indeed, that its most privileged character will deny. The disclosure articulates history as structured by paradoxes and reversals and demonstrates that it conscripts subjects into complicity with colonial subjectifications, both their own and those of others. This is history as tragedy rather than epic romance. In tragedy, as Scott asserts, “the relation between past, present, and future is never a Romantic one in which history rides a triumphant and seamlessly progressive rhythm, but a broken series of paradoxes and reversals in which human action is ever open to unaccountable contingencies.”<sup>95</sup>

*Sixty-Five* provides two different testimonies to the Morant Bay rebellion, one through voice and another through vision, reminding us of the distinction between focalization, the narrative act of looking, and the broader term narrative perspective, which can include voice.<sup>96</sup> The story told through voice is complicated through the story told through acts of looking. This story of the eye does not contradict the novel's order to fall back vocalized by the grandfather, “an old servant of the Crown”<sup>97</sup> who served in the West Indian regiment. It does, however, reconfigure the meaning of those words to reject his claim that the counterinsurgency is an act of exceptional violence. “Never have I beheld the Crown dragged through the mud the way Governor Eyre has done. The Queen will be ashamed” (99), Joe Murray complains. The novel's drama of focalization challenges both of Murray's statements.

*Sixty-Five* calls attention to characters' eyes on almost every page, usually multiple times, detailing how characters see, the angles from which they direct their gazes, and assessing whether they possess suitable distance from the objects of their regard. At times the book's illustrations' constructions of focalization depart from the narrative's verbal focalization of the scene represented; at other times they overlap. Readers are sutured to different perspectives by each illustration so they “see” events from different angles, through the eyes of different characters. The novel first introduces a drama

of looking through text and image in an episode that also underlines a distinction between voice and vision. Here, both text and illustration make readers aware of the importance of looking. The narrator relates that “when I entered the hall and blinked the glare from my eyes, what I saw sent me quietly to my stool near the window. . . . I turned my rounded eyes toward [Queenie],” and he asks his sister about the meaning of the conference occurring between their father and grandfather. “Be quiet,” Queenie responds, “you should be seen and not heard” (7). An illustration following this text places Grandpa Joe in the foreground. His most striking feature, his one good eye, squints critically at his rebel son and at the novel’s readers, who are sutured to the latter’s point of view and positioned at a 180-degree angle from the narrator, who watches the drama unfold from the background. Grandpa Murray was “always telling his friends about my ‘sharp black eyes,’” the narrator boasts; “he always said there was nothing I missed” (8).

The novel implies that gaining control over the rebellion requires that one *see* clearly. Before Japheth schools Queenie on recent events leading up to the rebellion, the Queen’s advice and the Underhill meetings, the novel relates twice that he “cleared the shreds of cerosee bush from [his] eyes” (31). Seeing clearly is a problem for the rebels. One insurgent is twice noted to be “near-sighted” (15, 17), and Bogle himself is blindsided by the counterinsurgency. *Sixty-Five’s* Bogle is not a secessionist but a loyal subject of the Queen. Neither a persecutor nor vulture, as in *New Day*, Bogle comes under assault here for his ways of looking, which prevent him from heeding the old soldier Murray’s advice to fall back. When we first encounter the Minister, his eyes are “flashing like swords around him, thrusting into the crowd” (18). When he speaks of preparing to march on the Morant Bay courthouse his eyes are not wide open but “half-closed like Queenie’s, when she daydreamed that she was a great lady in silks and satins” (72). Surprised by the immediate launching of a counterinsurgency, Bogle’s “eyes closed to mere slits” (75) when he hears the news.

What of the single eye of the grandfather who has fought for the empire “all his youthful days” (10)? Using “the one good eye an Indian spearman left him with when he campaigned in Central America” (10), Murray teaches Japheth the best angle from which to view the current conflict, that is, from a distance instead of in its midst. On the day of the rebellion, the two leave the square in front of the Morant Bay courthouse for a place “a bit up the

side of the gorge. We had the gorge below us and we could see everything as if they were on the stage and we were in the gallery” (46). This comment instructs readers that remaining outside the fray, *falling back*, allows a better vantage point from which to perceive the entire situation. Murray scrutinizes the colonial government’s militiamen, “his one eye tearing into [them], seeing all their faults” (48). This scene figuratively criticizes anti-colonial violence as *lexis talionis*, an eye for an eye. Of the crowd, Japheth relates, “There were scores of others perched on the scaffolding, looking down like huge birds. Maybe, I thought, they will take wings and fly down to peck out the small eyes of the lieutenant peering out below the peak of his cap” (50). After the lieutenant prohibits the rebels from crossing into the vestry, Murray remarks, “A good man, that” (51). The power of Murray’s “one sharp eye,” which can access the future by looking toward the past, contrasts with the nearsighted and cloudy vision of the rebels. Because they are unprepared for the force of the counterinsurgency, their response proves disorganized, foolhardy, and futile.

By making a servant of the crown and the critic of the rebellion the voice of reason with the best view of events, and having him condemn the counterinsurgency as exceptional violence that will shame the Queen, *Sixty-Five*, like *New Day* and *Revenge* before it, also appears to vindicate British law. But appearances are deceiving, and things not always clear in this novel. The deployment of two trompe l’oeil challenges the distinction between law and violence that subtends the grandfather’s bafflement at the brutality of the counterinsurgency. Only by learning to recognize a trompe l’oeil for what it is—only by seeing double—can readers view what the novel refuses to state: As long as it has operated in the service of quashing anticolonial resistance, British law has been violent.

Two overdetermined emblems teach that having one’s eyes deceive one can lead to unexpected and violent consequences. The first emblem is the Murrays’ donkey. The opening chapter describes how “one morning the soft brown eyes had fooled us” (4–5) and assures readers “none of us would ever forget that morning” (4–5). The unforgettable event is a show of force and violent disruption that is the result of thinking that things are as they appear. It is a result of being fooled by the eyes—both by one’s own and by those of others who appear nonviolent. The donkey’s “soft brown eyes” indicate that she is securely tied down, intends no resistance, and poses no

threat. “We had put on the harness and hampers and stepped away from her. And before you could yell ‘Look out!’—forward had gone her forefeet, inward had shot her hindlegs, and she had slipped to the ground, trying to kick in the air, while carrots and cassavas and sweet potatoes and tomatoes were smashed and tumbled all over the yard” (4–5). This cautionary tale seems to cast the animal as Morant Bay rebel, an interpretation strengthened when in subsequent chapters she is twice identified with the narrator’s insurgent father. But she is also figured as the ostensible opposite of a rebel: “She was big and strong, with a head on her shoulders that she must have stolen from a Morant Bay lawyer” (3), and in fact, “Grandpa said [she] was smarter than a lawyer” (4). This figure not only fools the narrator but also fools readers if their perspectives separate law from the disruption of law. Law and its violent suspension must be seen as inhabiting a single image. This *trompe l’oeil* intimates the violence structuring law in Jamaica and suggests it is “illegitimate” or at least ungrounded, by connecting it to insurgency and rebellion that challenge official law. The other *trompe l’oeil*, the weapon used in the West Indian regiment, expands this disclosure of violence and ungroundedness to include British law.

Like that of the donkey, the meaning of the grandfather’s gun is overdetermined, but recognizing this figure as a *trompe l’oeil* proves far more difficult. This difficulty suggests that not only the grandfather but also Reid does and does not want to disclose the truth this fetish conceals and reveals: that whenever British law operates in territories of colonial contestation it is caught up in a history that resembles the tragedy, not epic romance, of Enlightenment reason. The gun, like the donkey, serves pedagogical purposes. Murray uses it to educate and discipline the narrator and his sister by calling them to attention and chronicling the past. The musket that accompanied the grandfather on military campaigns is a precious object in the narrative. He keeps it “glistening with care. He called it Beelzebub because, he said, it had done the Devil’s work in its time” (10). Readers might wonder why a critic of anticolonial revolt and a “strong Church of England man” (30) would expend so much energy on such a profane object. It is, however, precisely the paradoxical character of this situation that makes the gun an important teaching tool, one whose effects extend beyond the purposes to which the character, and even perhaps the author, put it. At one point, Murray uses the musket to educate and discipline Bogle and the rebels. Here the



novel resists what it simultaneously avows about the relation between British law, violence, and history.

An episode that rehearses the musket's concealment and revelation shows how it fools the rebels' eyes. "Nobody could know that beneath that blue coat was the musket that had won for England the war in Haiti . . . and had quelled the mutiny at Fort Augusta" (25), the narrator relates. Murray waits for Bogle to approach and then confronts him and his men. The novel makes much of the revelation: "'A great Israelite,' Grandpa said, his voice wrathful. 'A man of peace, a singer of psalms who believes in *this!*' Down he swooped to brush aside the coat and sweep Beelzebub into his hand. There was a long-drawn *aaab* from the men as the afternoon light spoke of beauty in the oiled stock and shining iron of the gun" (27). But exactly what has been revealed? Despite this elaborate spectacle of unveiling, is it at all clear that once the concealed weapon has been made visible, its meaning has also been made known? The use of the pronoun "this!" is a symptom of the novel's difficulty in naming a referent.

The rebels' enthrallment with the shiny surface indicates that the gun is a fetish whose surface masks another meaning. The gun indexes a history that is itself overdetermined. The four military theaters in which the musket has seen action condense complicity and reversals between colonial and anticolonial forces, muddying clear lines between colonial and anticolonial projects. By referencing "the war in Haiti," the War of 1812, the battles over the Mosquito Coast, and the slave mutiny at Fort Augusta as events in which the colonial subject has been conscripted, *Sixty-Five's* articulation of history departs from the model of progressive history articulated in *New Day*. This novel edges closer toward acknowledging the paradoxes and inversions that attend conscription. In each of the first three examples named, the British have aided anticolonial resistance but have done so in support of colonial interests. The British aligned with Toussaint not from a moral commitment to a free Haiti but because of economic interests and battles with the French. The War of 1812 pits former colonizers against former colonized, but the once-colonized are also colonizers. Britain's alliances with Native Americans obstruct U.S. settler colonialism, but again, these alliances were motivated by British interests. In Central America, the British aided the Miskite Indians in resisting other regional forces but did so to safeguard their economic interests in the mahogany trade. The complicity of the subjects of empire

with British imperial violence is crystallized in the events at Fort Augusta, where the slaves who were taken to Jamaica to become part of the West Indian regiment revolted, and the mutiny was put down brutally not only by the British but by other soldiers in the regiment.

Each event named, therefore, bears witness to the doubling of anticolonial and colonial force, reminding us how one slides into the other, how one uses the techniques of the other. To be a conscript of modernity is not only, as *New Day* relates, to use the techniques of colonial education to generate a successful anticolonial resistance. It is also to use these techniques to support the systems of slavery and colonial subjection that constitute imperial modernity. *Sixty-Five* portrays the history of conscription less as romance and more as tragedy, or even trauma. It suggests “the past is a wound, it is one that may not heal; it cannot be evaded or cleanly overcome. It doesn’t go away by an act of heroic agency. . . . History, in short, is not a series of neat resolutions; the future does not grow triumphantly out of the wicked turmoil of the past.”<sup>98</sup>

The novel cannot state this, however; it can only perform it. The historical condition of conscription is a trauma the text (dis)avows through a fetish that disrupts the coherence of the pedagogical scene in which it is called upon to offer up its truth. The trauma of conscription is avowed and disavowed in the pronoun “this!” whose exclamatory force registers at once the desire and failure to say what the text never does utter aloud—that anticolonial and British law are both violent, neither “legitimate” in themselves. Reid’s text thus performs both an acknowledgment, and the difficulty of acknowledging the character of law, which West’s trial report also performed. “This!” is a testimony, a call to investigate what its referent might be. The pronoun is a sign that the novel cannot decide whether to vindicate British law or to accuse it, and this failure to decide destroys the coherence of Murray’s accusation. When Murray insists Bogle believes in “this,” what the gun signifies, the implication is that he believes in using violence toward anticolonial ends. But as the examples above relate, the gun condenses the long history of British violence as well and collusions and slippages between colonizer and colonized. Because it choreographs this scene as the revelation of a trompe l’oeil, the novel implies that Murray brandishes the gun to show Bogle that his eyes deceive him and thus to convince Bogle to fall back. The pedagogical aim of the gun, therefore, is similar to that of the donkey,

that is, to warn of a disruptive violence to come that one cannot see if one fails to recognize the coexistence of violence and law. Therefore, the gun represents not (only) what Bogle believes in but what he *does not believe in*, what he cannot see: that imminent anticolonial violence is inextricable from imminent British state violence. The incoherence of the accusation discloses that Eyre's counterinsurgency is not an example of exceptional violence, as the grandfather claims. The advice to "fall back" is issued not, as is "take time" in *New Day*, as a call to use law rather than rebellion against law to ground resistance. It is issued as a warning that imperial responses to revolt are brutal, and this violence operates in the name of reestablishing British law, which is thus precarious, always on shaky ground.

*New Day* insisted that rebellion could not found an independent Jamaica because only by "marching under the banner of the law" can a nation become free, but *Sixty-Five* is far less clear on this point. The novel's own double vision, its connecting of British law to violence in these two trompe l'oeil, leaves undecided whether law should dominate and control rebellion or rebellion should challenge law. The novel's conclusion has Murray teach his grandson "Discipline—knowing how to obey orders—that is the rule for victory, Japheth . . . you cannot win battles if you have no discipline" (108). What follows is another instance of the paradoxes and reversals that compose the history embedded within and figured by the gun. Murray uses the weapon that served British power to stall it: "Grandpa's hands were busy as he loaded like lightning and the musket spoke again and again" (109). In *New Day*, the conscript harnesses British legal tutelage to redeem the violence of rebellion. In *Sixty-Five*, the conscript marshals British military tutelage to repel what the novel implies is inextricable from British law—violence. The novel's final words are doubled and overdetermined and can be read as a compromise formation that both connects and disconnects this novel from Reid's earlier work. Murray and Japheth head into the mountains to wait out the counterinsurgency; "I jerked the rope which was her bridle and turned her head up the mountain. . . . Theresa went willingly, with the butt of Grandpa's musket persuading her in the rear" (110). Because both emblems are doubled, rebel and law, anticolonial and British force, they are doubles of each other. The novel leaves undecided whether rebellion should master law or law master rebellion. This undecidability indicates that even on the brink of full Jamaican independence, *Sixty-Five* does not, or cannot,

entirely break from the desire to vindicate British law. Unlike *New Day*, however, it acknowledges this inability to do so as part of the trauma of the history of conscription in imperial modernity.

Emergency increasingly became the rule rather than the exception as the empire grew and as it declined. Hussain writes, "In the colonies martial law was frequently resorted to throughout the nineteenth-century: Barbados in 1805 and 1816; Demerera in 1823; Jamaica in 1831–32 and 1865; Canada in 1837–38; Ceylon in 1817 and 1848; Cephalonia in 1848; Cape of Good Hope in 1834 and 1849–51; and the Island of St. Vincent in 1863. All of these instances . . . produced debate, controversy, and an effort at justification."<sup>99</sup> In the twentieth century, in response to imperialism's decline, Emergency is declared in colonies such as India and Kenya. We discussed the situation of the emergency in India in the introduction's analysis of *A Passage to India*. I turn in the next and final chapter to a work that approaches the Emergency in Kenya. It is written soon after Kenyan independence, when the history of conscription, its paradoxes and reversals, have emerged in the form of a system of global capitalism and a neocolonial government that has betrayed the hopes of the nation by repressing traumas that occurred under the emergency. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* makes no attempt to vindicate law. Instead it elaborates a struggle to find a language with which to speak to and of the past that does not repeat the silencing that occurs under first British, and then Kenyan, law. Through this elaboration, the work questions the boundaries between modernist and postcolonial literatures.