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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Competing Postcolonial Temporalities: Sovereignty and
Time in Pakistani Fiction

by

Michael Joseph Sean Duffy

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

COMPETING POSTCOLONIAL TEMPORALITIES: SOVEREIGNTY AND TIME IN
PAKISTANI FICTION

By Michael Duffy

Pakistan gained independence from British Colonial rule in 1947, and this moment was marked by a speech from Mohammed Ali Jinnah that laid the rhetorical foundations for the new state's postcolonial sovereignty. Since Partition, Pakistan and India's irredentist conflicts have placed territorial concerns at the forefront of discussions of postcolonial sovereignty in South Asia. This thesis seeks to correct this by elucidating the significant temporal dimensions of border sovereignty, emergency rule, and nationalist historiography, and how they impact upon the being-in-time of the postcolonial subject. With reference to Derrida's essay 'Declarations of Independence' and his related concept of democracy to-come, this thesis will interrogate representations of sovereignty and time in Pakistani literary fiction. By highlighting the competing temporalities that are registered in these narratives, it will reveal the blind spots in Jinnah's future-oriented promise of secular and democratic sovereignty.

The thesis explores three intertwined concepts of Pakistan's postcolonial 'future' to explore how they relate to the initial promises of the sovereign state: including national futurity, territorial futurity, and democratic futurity. Utilising the theoretical concept of homogeneous, empty time (Benjamin/Pandey/Anderson), this thesis reads a number of literary texts that both expose and challenge the temporal claims of the state. These texts all register the impact of postcolonial sovereignty on the being-in-time of the Pakistani subject. The first chapter addresses three Partition texts to highlight the incommensurability between the inclusive promises of national sovereignty in Pakistan and the gendered violence of its foundations. It will explore how the state's rhetoric after Partition often made appeals to communal history and myth, and how this fact is registered in literary and oral narratives of the disorienting moment of Partition. The second chapter reads two recent novels that represent the techniques of sovereignty that are employed in two disputed border regions in Pakistan: Kashmir and FATA. These readings highlight the

impact of bureaucratic and military techniques of sovereignty on those at the limits of the postcolonial state. The final main body chapter focuses on Pakistan's longest period of martial law rule, reading two novels that register the temporal nature of General Zia-ul-Haq's indefinite suspension of Pakistan's democratic order. This thesis offers a timely intervention into discussions of postcolonial sovereignty in South Asia that registers the heterogeneous temporalities of minority communities and subaltern subjects. Through a focus on time and sovereignty in literary texts, it seeks to interrupt and undermine the homogeneous, empty time of nationalist historiography in Pakistan.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name:	Michael Joseph Sean Duffy
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Title of thesis:	Competing Postcolonial Temporalities: Sovereignty and Time in Pakistani Fiction
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I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

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The financial and moral support that has been offered by my parents during my university career has been generous and liberating. I thank them for this whole-heartedly. Thanks to my mum for the regular phone calls and willingness to let me work to my own time-scale, and my dad for the football-related distractions and the constant belief that I must know what I'm doing!

When I started my study at Southampton I gained a new library-partner, and I am incredibly lucky that she is now my wife. Charlie's name should be on the cover of this thesis because it simply wouldn't exist without her. I owe you all the thanks in the world and hope to be able to repay you for the time and work that has gone into keeping me afloat in these last few years.

Thank you to Phil Watkinson for helping me to finally visualise the end of this process and supplying me with various unsolicited content. To Tim for being a sounding board for this thesis and a dependable friend.

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Amanda and Sean Duffy

A Note on Style

This thesis uses the MHRA style, which means the anglicisation of the names of sacred Islamic texts. Non-English words are italicised, except when referring to languages or concepts that have common usage in English. Diacritics are removed in the few instances that they were required for ease of reading.

INTRODUCTION

Democracy To-Come: The Foundations of Pakistan's Sovereign Future

You know really that not only we ourselves are wondering but, I think, the whole world is wondering at this unprecedented cyclonic revolution which has brought about the plan of creating and establishing two independent sovereign Dominions in this sub-continent. As it is, it has been unprecedented; there is no parallel in the history of the world. This mighty sub-continent with all kinds of inhabitants has been brought under a plan which is titanic, unknown, unparalleled.

— Muhammad Ali Jinnah¹

In his first speech to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah highlighted the uncertainty of the rapidly transforming political and human geography of South Asia. Jinnah's role as the incoming Governor-General, and his popular image as the father of the nation, positions him to declare the firm foundations of the new nation-state. In the above epigraph, however, it is clear that the process of nation-building is anything but predictable. Indeed, in an address that heralds the beginnings of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan, Jinnah cites the historical moment as 'unparalleled', 'unknown', and 'unprecedented'. This founding moment in the national narrative of Pakistan continues the rhetoric with which colonialism was criticised and independence secured. Jinnah stresses the new state's planned secularity, and focuses on the maintenance of law and order during the equally unprecedented communal violence that had already commenced

¹ Muhammad Ali Jinnah's first Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, August, 11th 1947, in G. Allana, *Pakistan Movement: Historic Documents*, 3rd edn (Lahore: Islamic Book Service, 1977), p. 543.

on both sides of the border. The opportune timing of the address – days before the official transfer of sovereignty on 14th August – betrays an anxiety to historicise Pakistan's democratic future, and, I argue, comes to represent Jinnah's future-oriented promise of a popular sovereignty. As the nation-state's first sovereign discusses law, citizenship, and nationhood whilst laying out a framework for postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan, his address also foregrounds the language and rhetoric on which the legal foundations of national sovereignty were constructed. In doing so, the address raises important questions about sovereignty at the historical moment of independence: are its promises of secular freedom commensurate with Pakistan's foundation as an ethno-religious state? And, to what extent could Jinnah's focus on the *future* of Pakistani sovereignty be seen to obscure the historical processes of Partition and decolonisation?

The hasty re-drawing of national boundaries through ethnically diverse regions such as the Punjab and Bengal awakened violent communal tensions that betrayed the promises of secular co-operation uttered at the moment of independence. In this address, Jinnah's calls for communal co-operation, secular citizenship, and the maintenance of law and order are rooted in the immediate historical difficulties of Partition. As such, the spectre of Partition looms over this sovereign promise of a democratic and secular Islamic republic. This violent territorial redistribution entailed a brutal and bloody reorganisation of the national body politic, as extreme cases of violence against human populations – often gendered and sexual – took place on both sides of the border, and entire cities violently expunged their minority communities. In Pakistan and India, independence was inextricably bound up with large-scale population transfer across borders. And yet, the narratives of these populations have, until recently, been silenced in a patriarchal rhetoric of national sovereignty in South Asia that privileges honour, loyalty, and possession.

Jinnah's speech represents a key moment in Pakistan's foundation. Specifically, it addresses the transfer of power from the colonial state to an independent, largely Muslim, masculine elite. It was the Constituent Assembly who were tasked with rendering the state's postcolonial future in the official and international secular language of constitutional law and state formation. This official rhetoric of statehood, however, uttered in the space between an homogeneous group of political actors, could be seen to over-write gendered and ethnic experiences of the moment of national sovereignty and the aftermath of Partition. Furthermore, in Pakistan's postcolonial history, the clean break from colonial rule that is declared in this speech has been repeatedly undermined by the use of techniques of sovereignty that resemble the authoritarian nature of the British Raj. In this thesis, the future-oriented rhetoric of the Pakistani state is framed through the concept of

‘homogeneous, empty time’. As we will see, this idea of the calendrical time of the nation is theorised by Walter Benjamin and Benedict Anderson among others, and describes a certain view of history and progress that orients citizens into the project of nationalism. The gap between the rhetoric of Pakistani sovereignty and the historical experience of its postcolonial subjects has been a central preoccupation for writers, historians, and legal scholars since the 1980s. Through a series of literary readings that engage with these issues, I seek to augment that body of work through a consideration of how various techniques of sovereignty attempt to align subjects with the time of sovereignty, and how this temporal control is registered and resisted in recent Pakistani fiction.

This thesis argues that postcolonial sovereignty, though it is often considered as a spatial phenomenon, has a profound impact on the being-in-time of the Pakistani subject, and that the techniques of sovereignty employed at the limits of the nation often have a temporal underpinning. These techniques can include indefinite periods of martial law, preventive detention, bureaucratic delays at borders, and the imposition of curfews. All of these techniques can shed light on the temporality of Pakistan’s sovereignty: a sovereign order that is shot through with suspension, deferral and delay. This sovereign time is registered through the genres, forms and narrative time of Pakistani literary fiction, and undermines the homogeneous, empty time of the nation to which Jinnah, and subsequent leaders, often make claims. Before embarking on such a project, it is first necessary to situate the topic within the context of Pakistani fiction, previous literary criticism, and works of Pakistani history. After this, I will expand upon the key critical framework of the thesis, offering a working definition of sovereignty and elaborating on the concepts of democracy ‘to-come’ and homogeneous, empty time in a postcolonial context.

Literature Review: Literature, History, and Law in Pakistan

A widespread commercial and critical interest in Pakistani fiction emerged shortly after the World Trade Centre Attacks of 2001 and other high-profile incidents in Europe, including the Madrid bombings of 2004 and the London bombings of July 7th, 2005. The beginning of the US-led ‘War on Terror’ prompted a closer look at both South Asia and Muslims in the diaspora, but also of the literary responses to these attacks. A number of significant responses to the World Trade Centre attacks came from Pakistani authors: Mohsin Hamid’s *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), Nadeem Aslam’s *The Wasted Vigil* (2008), and Kamila Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows* (2009) were amongst them, and appeared

increasingly on both prestigious book prize shortlists and university reading lists. Aamir Mufti articulates this in a discussion of the increased attention recently garnered by the Anglophone Pakistani novel, stating that '[t]he spectre of jihadi Islam provides a certain frisson in the global reception of these works'.² Although these texts have much to tell us about Pakistan, its diaspora, and Islam, to use them as a starting point for reading the nation is inherently Eurocentric, and thus problematic. To address this issue, Claire Chambers not only adds Mohammed Hanif and Daniyal Mueenuddin to create a "big five" of Pakistani authors, but she also highlights a genealogy of Pakistani literary fiction that stretches into the 1970s and 1980s, and back to Muslim writers in pre-Partition India.³

This thesis echoes Chambers' call to look beyond the events of the twenty-first century in a consideration of Pakistani fiction. For example, responses to Partition, such as Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1955), Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* (1988), and Amrita Pritam's *Pinjar* (1950) shed light on the experiences of ethnic minorities and women through the process of decolonisation; and Malik Sajad's *Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir* (2015) and Mirza Waheed's *The Book of Gold Leaves* (2014) and *The Collaborator* (2011) highlight the ongoing struggle for sovereignty in Kashmir.⁴ Furthermore, texts that address the secession of Bangladesh, such as Sorraya Kahn's *Noor* (2003) and Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography* (2002), and novelistic representations of military themes, such as Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008) and Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983), also prompt a focus on Pakistani sovereignty that has seemingly little to do with events in Europe and North America.

This increase in the publication and visibility of Anglophone novels from Pakistan has been supplemented by a number of anthologies of Pakistani writing, including Aamer Hussein's *Kahani: Short Stories by Pakistani Women* (2005) and Muneeza Shamsie's *Dragonfly in the Sun* (1997). These texts followed a number of short story collections from across South Asia that were published in the 1990s including Alok Bhalla's three volume anthology *Stories About the Partition of India* (1994), Mushirul Hasan's two volume *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom* (1995), and Saros Cowasjee and K. S. Duggal's collection *Orphans of the Storm* (1995).⁵ These publications anticipated the fifty-year anniversary of Partition, collecting and translating a number of stories that have impacted

² Aamir Mufti, *Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literatures* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 174.

³ Claire Chambers, 'A Comparative Approach to Pakistani Fiction in English', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 47:2 (2011), 122-134 (p. 123).

⁴ Bapsi Sidhwa's novel was published as *Ice-Candy Man* in the United Kingdom, but later published under the variant title *Cracking India* in the UK and US.

⁵ Alok Bhalla published a fourth volume of his *Stories About the Partition of India* in 2011.

later writing in the region. More recently, *Granta 112: Pakistan* (2010) also did much to highlight diverse and provocative work in Pakistani fiction, poetry and the visual arts. Aamir Mufti notes of the increase in publication of Pakistani writing recently that ‘British and American publishers seem willing for the moment to publish and market aggressively virtually anything written by a talented young Pakistani writing in English’.⁶ While this statement frames the phenomenon as highly current, politically contingent, and temporally limited, this thesis registers the longer history of narrative in South Asia and attempts to move away from a consideration of Pakistani fiction in the context of a global literary marketplace. Instead, it takes the view that although there are undoubtedly increased paths to publication for Pakistani writers at the beginning of the twenty-first century, their work is not a transitory commodity, but the continuation of a rich literary tradition that crosses the contemporary borders of the nation-state.

Until relatively recently the breadth of critical work on this body of fiction had been quite sparse, limited to Tariq Rahman’s *A History of Pakistani Literature in English* (1991), which offers an historical survey of Pakistani writing that also includes pre-Partition fictions by Indian Muslims. Rahman’s approach focuses on the quality of the writing and the influences evident and shared across a large number of writers including Ahmed Ali, Zulfikar Ghose, Bapsi Sidhwa, and others. The work was republished as *A History of Pakistani Literature in English 1947-1988* (2015), perhaps highlighting Rahman’s enduring significance as a literary-historical source for a new generation of literary critics concerned with tracing a history of the recent Pakistani fiction on which they focus. Now, there is a small, but significant critical interest in Anglophone Pakistani literature, with monographs that survey and analyse the field becoming increasingly frequent. Among these are Muneeza Shamsie’s *Hybrid Tapestries* (2017), Cara Cilano’s *Contemporary Pakistani Fiction in English* (2013), and David Waterman’s *Where Worlds Collide* (2015). Shamsie’s recent publication is a significant survey of Pakistani fiction that picks up the baton from Rahman and provides a valuable resource for understanding the literary history of the nation-state up to the modern day. Though this is an important publication, it is Cilano and Waterman’s work on which this thesis builds. Cilano’s monograph charts the progress of Pakistan’s decolonisation through readings of a large number of novels relating to Partition, the Secession of Bangladesh, dictatorship, and terror. Cilano’s method of considering major moments of cultural and territorial upheaval in turn through their representation in literature has informed my approach to the fiction in

⁶ Mufti, *Forget English!*, p. 178.

this thesis, as has her broader consideration of images of the nation in that literature. This thesis will make reference to a handful of the same texts as Cilano, but at greater length and with a closer focus on the temporal experience of techniques of sovereignty in the postcolonial state.

David Waterman's *Where Worlds Collide* has a more contemporary emphasis, focusing as it does on eight Pakistani novels from the twenty-first century. Waterman's work is wide-ranging, it draws heavily on globalisation theory to read Pakistan as a cultural 'contact zone', and reads texts from Pakistan's diaspora to shed light on Muslim experiences of Islamophobia since 2001. By approaching Pakistani fiction through ideas of membership – whether familial, communal, metropolitan, or national – he makes clear the multiplicity of identities in Pakistan, and how those identities are contested. This thesis will have a broader historical scope than Waterman's monograph, however his focus on the heterogeneous identities and kinships in Pakistan helps to inform my reading of the way a homogeneous history of the nation-state is complicated and undermined by representations of sovereign power. The structure of this thesis will allow for detailed readings of the chosen literary texts due to its focus on questions of sovereignty, but it owes much to Rahman, Cilano, and Waterman's work in identifying a working bibliography of literary and critical texts about Pakistan.

Alongside the literary historiography represented in the works noted above, there are also historical works that have provided valuable insight over the course of this project. In the past, Pakistani historians, such as K. K. Aziz in *The Pakistani Historian* (1993), have noted that issues of censorship inhibit the production of independent historical research; however Pakistan's renewed geopolitical significance in the twenty-first century has led to significant efforts to correct this. This being said, even during conditions of censorship and martial law in Pakistan, there have been significant efforts to undertake such critical inquiry outside of the country, as the work of historians such as Ian Talbot and Ayesha Jalal demonstrates. Talbot's regularly updated volume *Pakistan: A Modern History* (2009) was first published in 1998 and has now been succeeded by *Pakistan: A New History* (2012). Both books are significant works of social and political history that bring together newspaper sources, interviews, and memoirs to give a broad historical view of Pakistan since late colonial rule.

In addition to Talbot's thorough and regularly updated narrative history, the US-based Pakistani historian Ayesha Jalal's prolific work on Pakistan includes *The Struggle for Pakistan* (2014), a powerful work that traces the successes and failures of successive governments in fully realising Pakistan's promise of secular and democratic sovereignty

from late colonialism through to the present political situation. This book extends the argument presented in Jalal's earlier monograph *Self and Sovereignty* (2000), which traces ideas of sovereignty in South Asia from the fall of the Mughals and Company Rule through to the process of decolonisation. Jalal's work helps to further nuance the meaning of terms such as 'sovereignty' and 'community' within national, regional, and theological contexts through reference to nationalist movements and political texts, as well as Urdu poetry. Her critical assessment of the position of Jinnah during the fight for postcolonial independence, *The Sole Spokesman* (1985), also questions and complicates Jinnah's claims to represent all Muslims and provincial constituencies during the negotiations for Pakistani independence. Whilst this thesis is not primarily concerned with the history or historiography of Pakistan, both of these historians situate narratives of Partition and decolonisation at the level of region, community, and religion in ways that elucidate the tensions between nationalist rhetoric and lived experiences of state violence. Such historical works inform my readings of literary texts that supplement, question, and occasionally interrupt the lofty, official, teleological narratives of postcolonial sovereignty.

Alongside the work of these major historians, as I have already noted, Pakistan has been the subject of an increasing number of historical analyses over the past two decades. Among these studies are popular historical accounts such as Ahmed Rashid's *Pakistan on the Brink* (2012) and Anatol Lieven's *Pakistan: A Hard Country* (2011), which often frame Pakistan as a dangerous and failing nuclear state, or as a state that lacks infrastructure, irrigation, drinking water, and an enduring democratic form of government. Even as Lieven focuses more closely on issues of kinship, class, and the ecological threats posed within the national boundaries, there is still a sense that such narratives – and their marketability – are situated within the terms of a dominant Western political discourse that frames Pakistan as a 'failed', 'failing' or 'rogue state'. This latter term, which the philosopher Jacques Derrida – among others – has interrogated, refers to states that pose a threat to political stability within the region, and therefore to American foreign or domestic policy. As Derrida explains with reference to Robert Litwak: 'a rogue state is basically whomever the United States says it is.'⁷ Utilising a framework that is drawn from US and European foreign policy is clearly problematic, but this does not discount the importance or value of works that have contributed much to the conversation about the ability of consecutive Pakistani administrations to secure the stable future that was promised by Jinnah at the moment of independence. This thesis certainly draws on the work of all these

⁷ Robert Litwak, cited in Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. by Pascale-Anne Bault and Michael Naas (California: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 96.

historians – particularly that of Jalal and Talbot – along with the annual historical accounts of Pakistan in *Asian Survey* to frame and contextualise the readings that follow. Yet, it is important to emphasise that the thesis is not primarily a work of historical scholarship in the conventional sense. Rather, through close readings of selected literary fictions concerned with Pakistan, it considers how the future-oriented rhetoric of postcolonial sovereignty is represented and contested in the narrative techniques, generic conventions, and imagery of Pakistani literary fiction. Such an approach also entails a consideration of the rhetoric of postcolonial sovereignty as it is framed in political speeches and legal narratives, as we will see.

In addition to these popular and academic histories of the state, the articulation of ‘silenced’ narratives of South Asian history is an ongoing focus in the recent historiography of both Pakistan and its neighbour, India. There are two key works of oral history that attempt to articulate women’s experiences of the horrors of Partition. The first of these was Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin’s *Borders and Boundaries* (1998), and shortly after came Urvashi Butalia’s *The Other Side of Silence* (2000). In these studies, Menon, Bhasin and Butalia emphasise the fact that ‘[t]he abundance of political histories on Partition is almost equalled by the paucity of social histories of it’.⁸ The texts are largely made up of women’s oral testimonies, and contrast lived experiences of Partition violence and repatriation with official records as a means ‘to locate their stories in a political and social context, to juxtapose the official version with the unofficial ones’.⁹ Butalia notes that her text is designed to expose the ‘suppressed’ memories of Partition to approach the ‘underside of history’, and in so doing it contributes to a gendered understanding of the founding events of postcolonial sovereignty.¹⁰ It is this focus on the gendered underside of history that forms the basis of my reading of Partition narratives in the first chapter of this thesis.

The shared experience and legacy of Partition, in both India and Pakistan, make it difficult to talk about Pakistan without also considering the wider context of the Indian subcontinent. In addition to these gendered histories of Partition, the Indian literary critic and theorist Rajeswari Sunder Rajan has approached the subject of the Indian state from the perspective of the female subject in her monograph *The Scandal of the State* (2003). This work is primarily focused on India, however it provides valuable insights into the

⁸ Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India’s Partition* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1998), p. 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰ Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p. 8.

formation of the nation-state in modern South Asia that also have implications for our understanding of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan. Sunder Rajan's book asks whether citizenship and liberation from colonial rule were really experienced in the day-to-day lives of women and minorities in postcolonial India. Facets of Indian law and politics are clearly laid out as general to the emerging postcolonial state elsewhere, particularly in the structure of its power and the slippage between its officially secular and multi-religious population and its 'powerful and politically influential Hindu majority'.¹¹ Suffice it to say, Sunder Rajan's account of women's position in, and in relation to, the law – and different forms of law – also has important implications for understanding the ways in which women negotiate patriarchal notions of sovereignty and law in Pakistan.¹² Indeed, Butalia, Menon and Bhasin, and Sunder Rajan invigorate the historiography of the wider subcontinent through an interrogation of women's silenced experiences of significant events in the historical formation of postcolonial sovereignty. In this thesis, I try to take forward this conceptualisation of the state's complex relationships with populations who are silenced or excluded from the promises of postcolonial sovereignty due to their gender, ethnicity, or religion.

Finally, the legal foundations of national sovereignty means that this thesis also draws upon cognate work on Pakistan's legal history, jurisprudence and constitutional law. Research in legal history and jurisprudence has helped to illuminate the colonial genealogy of Pakistan's legal institutions, as well as the ways in which law has been employed as a technique of colonial and postcolonial sovereignty. In his encyclopaedic *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan* (2007), Hamid Khan offers a forensic account of the ways in which law was employed, abrogated, or held in abeyance by dictators such as Generals Ayub Khan, Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf in the latter half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. In a rather different vein, and essentially for this thesis, Nasser Hussain unpacks what could be called the 'iterative' process of martial law in India and Pakistan. Focusing on the postcolonial inheritance of both legal institutions and legal thought, Hussain traces a cycle of democratic and military regimes responding to challenges to their sovereignty with colonial forms of power including curfews, the elimination of political adversaries, and the declaration of a 'state of necessity'.¹³ Through an analysis of the rhetoric of 'necessity' and emergency law in the

¹¹ Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, *The Scandal of the State: Women, Law, and Citizenship in Postcolonial India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), p. 5.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹³ Nasser Hussain, *The Jurisprudence of Emergency: Colonialism and the Rule of Law* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 7.

international genre of the democratic constitution, Hussain offers a valuable insight into the legacy of British colonial sovereignty—particularly as it relates to formations of state violence. The text provides a valuable analysis of the sovereign decision in the postcolonial state, and tests the limits of European legal concepts such as the emergency and the exception. Hussain’s text undermines the promise of a democratic and benevolent state that was made at the moment of Partition, and brings European legal concepts including Carl Schmitt’s legal exception and Walter Benjamin’s law-making violence adeptly into this postcolonial space.

While these approaches to Pakistani history, law, and postcolonial sovereignty provide an important conceptual frame for this research, they do not address how literary fiction registers the impact of Pakistan’s colonial sovereignty and its postcolonial afterlife in the violent re-ordering of the region’s geographical borders. Literary narratives can offer a valuable articulation of the rhetoric of national sovereignty and the techniques of sovereignty employed in the postcolonial state. By reading the rhetoric, imagery, and generic codes of this body of literary fiction alongside and against historical, legal, and religious sources, this thesis explores how literary narratives concerned with the political space of Pakistan raise profound questions about the meanings of sovereignty in a postcolonial space that has been shaped and defined by particular historical experiences of violence, dispossession, forced migration, and military rule. If the act of Partition can be understood as an act of late colonial sovereignty in which the granting of independence entailed the abandonment of human populations to a lawless space between two formations of sovereignty, this sovereign act was also an act of writing in which the reterritorialisation of colonial India was decided at the stroke of a pen. This thesis will analyse literary responses to this violent reordering, and its legacy in the postcolonial state, alongside the interdisciplinary discourses of postcolonialism and sovereignty that have been alluded to in this literature review. In doing so, it seeks to make an important and distinctive contribution to both fields, and to the growing field of criticism of contemporary Anglophone Pakistani fiction.

Defining Terms: Sovereignty

Before embarking on a close reading of Jinnah’s speech, it is first necessary to lay out the interlinked theoretical underpinnings of this thesis through its definition of ‘sovereignty’, and an explanation of its approach to time, history and the future. Considerations of

modern sovereignty are impossible to disentangle from the language of state, nation, and nation-state, and as such these terms also require clarification. First, the use of the term ‘nation’ in this thesis is aligned with the work of Benedict Anderson, who defines nation as ‘an imagined political community – [that is] imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.’¹⁴ If nationalism is to be understood in relation to communities of people, and if that community is *imagined* and not essential, then a discussion of the nation in Pakistan must consider both those who are, and are not, included in this community, and the ways in which it is constructed rhetorically by leaders and public figures. Equally significant to this study is the term ‘nation-state’, which links the modern political configuration to pre-existing religious, ethnic and communal identities. Anderson frames the nation-state in highly temporal terms writing that ‘[i]f nation-states are widely conceded to be ‘new’ and ‘historical’, the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future.’¹⁵ In a Pakistani context, the nation-state would be the bordered space that is officially designated as the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the ways in which a supposed ‘immemorial past’ has been mobilised to imagine and articulate the permanent future of the Pakistan will be considered in this thesis. Finally, the term ‘state’ in this thesis refers directly to the disciplinary, bureaucratic, military and welfare institutions that are under the control of the Pakistani and Indian governments. In other words, the institutions through which the sovereign impacts upon the lives of the people of Pakistan and its border areas.

With these definitions in mind, the term ‘sovereignty’ is used in this thesis to connote *supreme power or authority within a geographically delimited territory*, and to discuss the relationships between different autonomous spaces. We can think of sovereignty as the ultimate power over the affairs of the state, which can be transferred between governments and seized by despots, but also enacted upon the bodies of subjects. The supremacy of this power must also be understood as ‘freedom’ from the interference of foreign parties; a freedom that is at the heart of Jinnah’s promise at the moment of independence. In this latter context we are prompted to ask whether the transfer of sovereignty from the British Colonial state did in fact represent the permanent, wide-ranging freedoms of religious belief and democratic choice that punctuate Jinnah’s address.

¹⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006 [first Published 1983]), p. 6.

¹⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, pp. 11-12.

Traditional theorisations of sovereignty, such as those articulated in Jean Bodin's *Six Books of the Commonwealth* (1576) and Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), remain the most cited and canonical sources in contemporary social and political thought. For both of these thinkers, their conceptualisations of absolute power were undertaken in historical moments of civil war, in which competing claims to power and authority were being violently played out. By recognising the 'marks' of sovereignty – its indivisibility, its supremacy over all others – legal philosophers were able to strike down competing claims that fell outside the uniform rule of an individual. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes offers clear definitions of many of the key terms of the discourse of sovereignty, such as 'subject', 'sovereign', 'sovereign power' and 'commonwealth', and articulates the particularities of the nation-state in Europe during the seventeenth century. For Hobbes, the subject and sovereign are products of a social contract through which the citizens of a territory give up their own individual wills and ability to govern to a ruler, who then represents their collective will as one. The relinquishing of this power makes one a subject, and the ruler is said to wield 'sovereign power' and be made sovereign. In return for this power, the sovereign is bound to use it to ensure peace and prosperity for the multitude of subjects. As Hobbes explains:

This done, the multitude so united in one person is called a Commonwealth, in Latin *Civitas*. This is the generation of that great *Leviathan*, or rather (to speak more reverently) of that *Mortal God* to which we owe, under the *Immortal God*, our peace and defence. For by this authority, given him by every particular man in the commonwealth, he hath the use of so much power and strength conferred on him that by terror thereof he is enabled to conform the wills of them all to peace at home and mutual aid against their enemies abroad.¹⁶

This passage articulates some of the most important aspects of classical sovereignty, which were not only relevant to the early modern world in which Hobbes was writing, but continue to endure today. As all the subjects of a state divest their power to the 'Mortal God' of the sovereign, a power is accumulated that can wage war against foreign enemies, and also represent such a terror that it can force those subjects to conform to the domestic wills of the sovereign. For Hobbes, the subject's power is constituted in the sovereign

¹⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994 [first published 1651]), p. 109 [*emphasis original*].

through the authority ‘given him by every particular person’, but this is buttressed by the support of an external power—the support of the *Immortal God*. This concept highlights the often-divine aspect of monarchy and sovereignty that has survived these early theorisations.

While it is true that recent work on sovereignty has problematised some of Hobbes’ formulation, it is also the case that some of Hobbes’ image of the divine sovereign are reflected in the theological underpinnings of sovereignty in modern Islamic republics such as Pakistan. This being said, in the last two decades, there has been a renewed interest in sovereignty across multiple disciplines that has increasingly focused on sovereignty as it is enacted upon bodies and populations. In postcolonial contexts, much of this research has been informed and inflected by the thought of the Italian legal philosopher, Giorgio Agamben, and the French historian of ideas, Michel Foucault.¹⁷ One part of this shift involves looking at sovereignty as it is enacted on bodies, by states; Foucault writes that

[...] rather than asking ourselves what the sovereign looks like from on high, we should be trying to discover how multiple bodies, forces, energies, matters, desires, thoughts, and so on are gradually, progressively, actually and materially constituted as subjects, or as the subject.¹⁸

In other words, a full understanding of sovereignty requires a consideration of the ways in which it constitutes certain groups as subjects and excludes others. These modern thinkers’ approaches to sovereignty and governmental power are relevant and compelling in many respects – particularly in their elaboration of *techniques* of sovereignty – but they are not without their limitations and blind spots. By focusing on the biopolitical aspects of sovereignty, particularly the power of the sovereign over the life and death of the population, these approaches have tended to overlook other important aspects of sovereignty: for instance, the theological connotations of the term, its gendered foundations, and the remaining significance of its territoriality. A focus on representations of Pakistan that highlight the impacts of different techniques of sovereignty, and their impact on the bodies and the being-in-time of Pakistani subjects will be central to the representation of sovereignty in this thesis.

¹⁷ Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, eds., *Sovereign Bodies: Citizens, Migrants and States in the Postcolonial World* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006). Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). Marcelo Svirsky and Simone Bignall, eds., *Agamben and Colonialism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France 1975-76*, trans. by David Macey (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 28.

The religious foundations of sovereign power that Bodin and Hobbes recognise are further explored and nuanced in the thought of later German philosophers, including G. W. F. Hegel and Carl Schmitt, in their discussion of the sovereign decision. Hegel defines the state as being constructed of the legislature, the executive and the crown, theorising the sovereignty of the crown as bound to ‘the universal’, or the rule of law. For Hegel, the legislature has ‘the power to determine and establish the universal’; the executive has ‘the power to subsume single cases and the spheres of particularity under the universal’; and the crown—which correlates to our understanding of the sovereign— ‘the power of subjectivity, as the will with the power of ultimate decision’.¹⁹ The subjectivity that Hegel recognises is largely invested in the idea of clemency, and the sovereign’s ability to spare a life. This builds on Bodin’s remarks on sovereignty, which note that it is typical for the sovereign to have the final say on juridical matters, which positions the figure outside of the normal rule of law. This is not to say that Hegel’s idea of sovereignty is exclusively concerned with *the decision*, but his reflections on the sovereign’s power over life, and reach outside of the law could be seen to influence subsequent attempts to link sovereignty to the power to kill, let die, or let live.

The German legal thinker Carl Schmitt develops some of these ideas further at the beginning of the twentieth century. In *Political Theology* (1922), Schmitt recognises the importance of the sovereign decision and the sovereign’s relation to the established rule of law; indeed, such a recognition is clearly articulated in his succinct definition of the sovereign as ‘he who decides on the exception’.²⁰ The investiture of power into one supreme ruler – represented by his or her ability to act outside of the established rule of law, and to decide when it is necessary to use this power – is conceptualised in religious language, as Schmitt state: ‘[t]he exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology.’²¹ The notion of the exception, and other forms of emergency rule, has become a key refrain in discussions of sovereignty in the twentieth and twenty-first century, not least for Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, whose book *State of Exception* (2005) has recently informed a number of works on colonial and postcolonial sovereignty.²²

Schmitt’s theorisation of sovereignty, however, draws an explicit analogy with the religious or divine. Moreover, his assertion that significant concepts of the state in Europe

¹⁹ Georg Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. by H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 [first published 1820]) p. 308.

²⁰ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology, Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005 [first published 1922]), p. 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²² See Marcelo Svirsky and Simone Bignall, eds. *Agamben and Colonialism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

are *all* ‘secularised theological concepts’ has profound implications for understanding the ways in which the discourse of sovereignty is transmitted and translated in the emerging nation-states of postcolonial South Asia.²³ Specifically, it highlights the complexity of claims of secular sovereignty in a majoritarian nation-state that inherited the communal tensions and repressive techniques of the colonial administration. The concept of the sovereign exception informs the understanding of military actions at the border, and the permanent state of martial law in chapters two and three of this thesis, respectively. Thinking of the exception as a potentially indefinite pause in democratic and legal processes – and the sovereign’s ultimate decision on when it should be used and *if* it should be ended – offers a view of Pakistan’s postcolonial sovereignty as having a significant temporal dimension. It also contains a significant internal conflict in which the worldly-historical technique of the exception comes into contact with the timeless time of Schmitt’s intervening ‘God’, as we will see.

This longstanding discussion of sovereignty, taking place largely in Europe and increasingly in Germany during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, profoundly affects the way in which sovereignty was formulated and experienced in South Asia and Pakistan. As the new nation inherited the legal institutions of the British colonial state, it had at its helm an Oxford-trained barrister in Jinnah. Furthermore, at moments of national exigency in the state’s early years the judiciary was quick to cite European legal figures such as Bracton, Mansfield and Dicey as they argued for the state to utilise the doctrine of necessity to resolve constitutional crises.²⁴ Undoubtedly, however, one of the key features of Pakistan’s postcolonial sovereignty is the attempt to reconcile religious ideas of nationhood within the broadly secular terms of constitutional democracy. Tracing sovereignty in the postcolonial state of Pakistan is complicated by the claims of the state’s existence as an Islamic Republic, and a homeland for India’s Muslims. Such claims work to nuance predominant secular understandings of sovereignty and call their universalising nature into question; they also raise an important question about the place of religion in a modern postcolonial state. What does it mean to speak of an Islamic sovereign or an Islamic state, particularly when such a religious concept is built upon the secular ideological foundations left behind by a European tradition of government?

²³ Schmitt, *Political Theology*, p. 36.

²⁴ The first use of the doctrine of necessity to dissolve the Constituent Assembly in 1955, and its roots in European legal philosophy, is exemplified in: ‘Reference by his Excellency Governor-General’, *PLD 1955 FC 435*.

Jinnah's Speech Act: Democracy to-come

I have separated the terms sovereignty and time in this introduction, but at the heart of this thesis is the contention that the two are, in reality, entwined. It is through a reading of Jinnah's speech, and its focus on Pakistan's sovereign future that I will begin to elucidate the competing temporalities of the state's postcolonial sovereignty. Jinnah is a monumental figure in the nationalist narrative of Pakistan, and to focus closely on the words of such a figure may appear to risk an investment in the terms of this dominant narrative. Yet, an analysis of Jinnah's address to the Constituent Assembly can also shed light on the exclusionary rhetoric of his articulation of Pakistan's postcolonial future. This text founds the new nation-state in the rhetorical space between Jinnah and the Constituent Assembly; in so doing, it verbally enacts the transfer of sovereignty from the British colonial state to the Government of Pakistan. In this respect, the address can be read as a declaration, or a sovereign speech act, that begins to define the terms of Pakistan's independence. In a related discussion of the genre of the declaration, Jacques Derrida has suggested that a rhetorical analysis of declarations of independence can shed light on the foundations of sovereignty in the modern nation-state. Writing of the United States Declaration of Independence, Derrida states that 'the founding act of an institution—the act as archive as well as the act as performance—*has to maintain within itself the signature*'.²⁵ The signature incorporates the sovereignty of the people within the declarative act of independence, however, the philosopher also finds the supposed 'signatory' to whom it refers rather elusive. Derrida is drawing attention to the position of the text's signatories in their capacity as 'proxies' for the people of the United States—noting that they are not signing for themselves, but for an *as yet* unconstituted national population.²⁶ These representatives are central to the legitimacy of both the democratic rule of law and any notion of a popular sovereignty. The Constituent Assembly are rhetorically significant in their position as substitute for the people, however their temporal instability could be seen to make them represent a future-oriented *promise* of popular sovereignty, rather than a full and immediate transition.

This temporal bind can be understood with reference to another key issue of democracy assessed in Derrida's later work, that of *la démocratie à venir*, or democracy 'to-come', which provides an interesting lens through which to read Jinnah's speech act.

²⁵ Jacques Derrida, 'Declarations of Independence', *New Political Science: A Journal of Politics & Culture*, 17:1 (1986), p. 8 [*emphasis original*].

²⁶ Derrida, 'Declarations of Independence', p. 9.

Derrida revisits the concept of democracy to-come in *Rogues*, when he states that that which is ‘to-come’ is ‘not something that is certain to happen tomorrow, not the democracy (national or international, state or trans-state) of the *future*, but a democracy that must have the structure of a promise’.²⁷ Democracy to-come is a popular and democratic sovereignty, forever deferred. The temporal instability of Pakistan’s founding moment, structured as a promise to an as yet unconstituted population, could be seen to undermine the claims to inclusivity that the speech appears to offer. In their prime place in the archival text of Pakistan’s self-determination, both the first sovereign and the Constituent Assembly participate in the founding legal contract of the nation-state. Read alongside the historical experiences of decolonisation, however, there is a slippage between the normative concepts of law and justice debated in this rhetorical space and the way the transfer of sovereignty was experienced by Pakistan’s population.

This slippage begs the questions: who does the Constituent Assembly represent? And to what extent is the power of the nation’s diverse population constituted in this founding moment? Hamid Khan hints at this problem when he notes that fifty-nine of the sixty-nine original seats in the Constituent Assembly were held by members of the All India Muslim League, and writes that ‘[i]ts members from East Pakistan were mostly drawn from the middle class while those from West Pakistan included several big landlords. Among its members were the principal associates of Jinnah in the movement for Pakistan’.²⁸ As Jinnah demands that the assembly ‘wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor’, he includes those people in the rhetoric of self-determination, but this group are not reflected in the narrow spectrum of identities within the Constituent Assembly.²⁹ In this way, Jinnah’s speech can be seen to risk the exclusion of certain considerations from the moment of the state’s legal foundation. Furthermore, the representation of women in the group was equally sparse; according to the minutes, only one woman was listed as presenting her credentials as a member of the assembly at its inaugural meeting.³⁰ While the underrepresentation of women and minorities in national politics exists almost everywhere – particularly in the middle of the twentieth century – I mention this to further highlight the exclusionary foundations of Pakistan’s sovereignty, and the implications of these exclusionary

²⁷ Derrida, *Rogues*, pp. 85-6 [*emphasis original*].

²⁸ Hamid Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*, 2nd edn (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 51.

²⁹ Allana, *Pakistan Movement*, p.545.

³⁰ Pakistan, *Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Debates, Official Report*, 1:1 (1947) <<http://digital.soas.ac.uk/LOAC000053/00014>> [accessed 16/07/2019], pp. 3-4.

boundaries for understanding the meanings of terms such as ‘honour’ and ‘justice’ within the speech.

The primary tasks which Jinnah enjoins the Constituent Assembly to undertake in his address are the maintenance of law and order (in accordance with the Government of India Act 1935), and the framing of an enduring constitution for the state. In the address, Jinnah stresses the importance of communal co-operation, the fairness and impartiality required of politicians and officials, and an aspiration for secular nationalism. These key refrains ground a particular notion of law, justice and national sovereignty in the foundational legal moment. The sovereign speech act posits a new legal order, but also founds that order’s legitimacy within a rhetoric of law and justice that seems incommensurate with the Partition violence that was taking place in tandem with Jinnah’s address. Read in the context of the unprecedented violence of Partition, Jinnah’s address raises profound questions about the meaning of postcolonial sovereignty after the act of liberation. In what ways are the foundations of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan haunted by the legacy of a colonial mode of sovereignty that aided, abetted, and exploited communal tensions between communities? And how might the gaps, ellipses, and contradictions in this address help to make sense of the tensions within the postcolonial formation of Pakistan’s sovereignty?

A rhetorical analysis of Jinnah’s public address, that takes into account the distance between his promise of secular freedom and the realities of Partition violence, can help to elucidate the specific dilemmas of Pakistan’s postcolonial sovereignty in the aftermath of South Asia’s Partition. Such an approach also requires a rethinking of the European conceptions of law, justice, and sovereignty that were exported to postcolonial South Asia through the apparatus of colonial government. Gayatri Spivak has suggested that the regulative political concepts of citizenship, constitutionality, democracy, and socialism that defined the political horizon of decolonisation in South Asia were written elsewhere in the social formations of Western Europe.³¹ If the writing of law and political sovereignty in Europe came to define a blueprint for normative conceptions of sovereignty in the colonial world, a consideration of the ways in which sovereignty and the rule of law are destabilised in its founding moments can help to make sense of the contradictions in Jinnah’s speech.

Jinnah's address to the Constituent Assembly highlights the performative foundations of sovereignty and the groundless ground of a normative rule of law. The

³¹ Gayatri Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 48.

public representation of Jinnah enacts his power as a sovereign leader with certain responsibilities, including the outlawing of corruption and partiality in politics, and the installation of a commonly-accepted legal order. Equally significant, however, are his attempts within this speech—and previous addresses that contest the idea of a united India—to shore up his secular vision of an Islamic Republic in the context of an imminent Partition. In an oft-quoted extract from the address, Jinnah states:

You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the State [...] We are starting in the days where there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another.³²

This statement highlights the importance attributed to secularism in the early nationalist rhetoric of Pakistan. Jinnah's repeated use of the pronouns 'we' and 'you' rhetorically produces a body of diverse citizens whose difference is naturalised in law and politics. However, this does not fully account for the continuing process of migration and expulsion in the aftermath of Partition. The mass migration that accompanied Partition is an interesting counterpoint to the rhetoric of Jinnah's address. Muslims who left India to migrate to Pakistan (or *Mohajirs*) often saw themselves as constituting the nation through the act of migration. For example, Urdu novelist Intizar Husain notes that Muslim migration to Pakistan 'became an experience of our whole people—those who came here and those who were already here', a sentiment that highlights how Jinnah's address was only part of the performative foundations of Pakistani sovereignty.³³ Jinnah's speech act addressed a body of citizens that was still in the process of being established, and for the minorities that remained in Pakistan, the freedom to openly display and practice their faith, is again structured as a future-oriented promise. The statement that '[w]e are starting the days' prompts a temporal question of its own. Namely, do the days start on the 11th August 1947, or are those days to be the result at the end of the process of decolonisation? What is

³² Allana, *Pakistan Movement*, p. 546.

³³ Muhammad Umar Memon, 'A Conversation Between Intizar Husain and Muhammad Umar Memon', trans. by Bruce R. Pray, *Journal of South Asian Literature*, 18:2 (1983), 153-186 (p. 166). Intizar Husain goes on to discuss how in postcolonial Pakistan the experience of migration was significant to the formation of a particularly Muslim national identity at the moment of Partition, but that it waned with later political developments. The experience of migration at Partition in 1947 and the Secession of Bangladesh in 1971 is a central preoccupation of Husain's novel, *Basti* (1979).

more, the idea of beginning an epoch is one that implies a certain degree of permanence, situating the speech as a description of Pakistan's enduring sovereign future. The declarative 'we' includes the entire population within the founding moment, once more rhetorically constituting the sovereignty of the people, but showing disregard for the complexities of ethnic or religious identities and the immediate, and enduring, difficulties facing minorities in the new state.

This inclusive rhetoric fails to articulate the realities of Partition violence and the effects of the sudden shift in the nation's body politic, particularly with respect to religion and its importance to citizenship on both sides of the borders. The key refrain that Jinnah introduces here is that of the democratic secular citizen: another concept imported from older European political formations. This inheritance of European ideas of citizenship is exemplified in Jinnah's comparison between Pakistan and Reformation England. The rhetoric of secularism and egalitarianism is an optimistic one, buttressed by a reference to Britain's history of persecution between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The import of the abstract figure of the secular citizen from the European tradition of philosophy acts to shore up the separation of state and religion in Pakistan, but jars with the nation-state's founding as an Islamic Republic. This idea is framed in a way that unreservedly plays down the realities of communal violence in favour of the promise of future religious freedom. To imagine, as Jinnah does, that this historical moment is free from communal discrimination seems at best idealistic, and the focus on the lack of discrimination in the founding moment draws attention to two contesting images of communal relations: the fresh start envisioned in the rhetorical space between Jinnah and the Constituent Assembly, and the escalating conflict along Pakistan and India's borders.

Jinnah goes on to state that:

[I]n [the] course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.³⁴

This promise is in further conflict with the political realities of Partition, the foundation of an Islamic republic, and the wide-ranging effects of religious conservatism that have proved an ongoing feature of Pakistan's postcolonial politics. In a related discussion,

³⁴ Allana, *Pakistan Movement*, p. 546.

Aamir Mufti writes that ‘[t]he abstract, “secular” citizen of postcolonial India has its *Entstehung*, its moment of emergence, in a violent redistribution of religious identities and populations’.³⁵ In recognising the contradictory emergence of the secular citizen in a moment where religious and ethnic identities were being so violently appropriated across South Asia, Mufti tacitly draws attention to the profound and violent effects of the transfer of sovereignty on the rapidly shifting population of the subcontinent. How successful could Jinnah’s rhetorical creation of the Pakistani secular citizen be in the wake of conflicts that were so bound up with a national narrative of communal majoritarianism? Furthermore, in pointing towards only the ‘angularities’ of religious affiliation, Jinnah overlooks the myriad cultural and regional differences that complicated the relationships between the people who occupied what became the national space of Pakistan. Ayesha Jalal writes that ‘[a] shared religious identity was felt at the level of lived culture but rarely at the expense of the emotive affinity with local and regional cultural traditions’.³⁶ The differences in language, regional identity, and cultural tradition that came together at the moment of independence are glossed over by Jinnah as he imagines the prompt formation of a unified national identity.

A document that highlights the contradiction between Pakistan’s foundation as an ethno-nationalist state and Jinnah’s promise of a secular democratic future is the Objectives Resolution, which was passed on the 12th March 1949 by members of the Constituent Assembly. This document – passed only six months after Jinnah’s death – enshrined the minority protections of the founding address in law, but did so in a way that tempered its calls for secular sovereignty. The text opened with the declaration that ‘[s]overeignty over the entire universe belongs to Allah Almighty alone and the authority which He has delegated to the state of Pakistan’, a statement that highlights the centrality of Islam in the nation’s self-representation of postcolonial sovereignty.³⁷ It continues to promise that ‘the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice’ will be protected ‘as enunciated by Islam’, and in so doing twice reduces the state’s obligation to minorities to ‘adequate provisions’.³⁸ In qualifying the language of secularity with references to the majority religion of Islam, this text has important implications for understanding the limits of Jinnah’s vision. Historian Ian Bedford relays and builds upon a contemporary criticism of this document by Chief Justice Muhammad Munir, stating ‘The

³⁵ Aamir Mufti, ‘Auerbach in Istanbul: Edward Said, Secular Criticism, and the Question of Minority Culture’, *Critical Inquiry*, 25:1 (1998), 95-125 (p. 119) [*emphasis original*].

³⁶ Ayesha Jalal, *The Struggle for Pakistan* (London: Belknap Press, 2014), p. 17.

³⁷ Hamid Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*, p. 57.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Objectives Resolution does not authorise a *Sharia* state. It rules nothing in. What it rules out is any form of politics based on the secular-democratic precept that sovereignty is with the people'.³⁹ This reading offers a perception of Jinnah's declaration as being quickly effaced in the drawing of the constitution. After all, these resolutions could be read as the Constituent Assembly's reinterpretation of Jinnah's originary promise at the point in which they were inscribed into Pakistan's first constitution.⁴⁰ Although Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, stated days before the resolution that its democratic elements 'naturally eliminate[d] any danger of the establishment of a theocracy', it was perhaps the establishment of secular democratic sovereignty that was eliminated.⁴¹

Suffice it to say, the rights of minority citizens inside Pakistan and along its borders have become a marker of what was elided in Jinnah's sovereign promise, despite the fact that the address registers the potential disruption of communal tensions. As noted above, postcolonial sovereignty is not merely the circumscription of territory, it also entails the governance of a population and the guarantees of their representation and security by the state. If this sovereignty of the people – the limitations of which Derrida highlights as he delineates it as always 'to-come' – falters in the rhetoric of Jinnah's address, it is further eroded by the Objectives Resolution. As Jinnah enjoins the Constituent Assembly to protect the 'rights, property and religious beliefs of its subjects', he fails to address those who have been dispossessed of all three: those whose rights are no longer protected by a state, those who have been forced to flee their property, and in many cases are forced to convert from their religious beliefs for reasons of assimilation and geographical continuity. Furthermore, Ayesha Jalal has noted that '[t]he territorial contours of the Muslim homeland would leave almost as many Muslim noncitizens inside predominantly Hindu India as there were Muslim citizens within, compounding the problems confronting Pakistan's quest for an identity that was both Islamic and national'.⁴² The problems of citizenship – including how, where and which refugees would be relocated – became some of the key issues facing the new state before and after Jinnah's death. For these reasons, the formation of Pakistan could be understood as an important case study for debates about

³⁹ Ian Bedford, 'A Door Ajar: National Borders and the Character of Islam in Pakistan', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 32:1 (2012), 255-269 (p. 260).

⁴⁰ Though Pakistan has had three constitutions (each of which was abrogated by a military *coup d'état*), the Objectives Resolution was included in some form in all of them, and remains to this day.

⁴¹ Hamid Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*, p. 58. Khan continues to list seventeen proposed amendments to the Objectives Resolution 1949, largely by non-Muslim members of the CA, each of which was voted down (pp. 59-60). These range from the insertion of the word 'democratic' into the phrase 'sovereign independent state of Pakistan', to the removal of references to Allah's sovereignty. These proposals offer an interesting insight into the process by which a theological precedent was set in Pakistan's constitutional history.

⁴² Ayesha Jalal, *The Struggle for Pakistan*, pp. 40-41.

the meaning of national sovereignty, and the already complex relationships between territory, population, religion, and citizenship in the twenty-first century.

As Jinnah heralds two new sovereign dominions, he also announces Pakistan's emergence into the international community of sovereign-states. Yet, in adopting the rhetorical and political form of national sovereignty inherited from British colonial institutions, Jinnah also glosses over the different regional, political, religious, linguistic, and ethnic constituencies that Pakistan represents. In so doing, Jinnah's address raises important questions about the founding aporias of postcolonial sovereignty. What does it mean to speak of a secular and democratic sovereignty when the fault lines of Partition, the historical experience of dispossession and displacement, and the forces of communal violence persistently threaten to undermine the very concepts of secularism, democracy, and 'the people'? How can one speak of postcolonial sovereignty in a meaningful way if the terms in which sovereignty is defined have been framed in advance by the very colonial institutions that a declaration of postcolonial sovereignty is designed to displace? In the following section, I unpack the significant temporal dimensions of national sovereignty to better understand the embattled postcolonial space of Jinnah's Pakistan.

Defining Terms: Homogeneous, Empty Time

A key theoretical concern in this thesis is the concept of 'homogeneous, empty time'. Nick Vaughan-Williams writes of the border that it 'allow[s] for a familiar spatial and temporal compartmentalisation of global politics into two supposedly distinct spheres of activity: history and progress inside, and timeless anarchy outside'.⁴³ For Vaughan-Williams, while the border has a primary function of demarcating the limit of territorial sovereignty, it also comes to represent a temporal divide. Inside of the border, history and progress are measurable (and measured) by clock and calendar; days and hours combine into a permanent future for the citizens of the secular nation. This is the basis of an historiographical timeline that, in a Pakistani context, would begin with the moment of independence on 14th August 1947 – or the Pakistan Declaration in 1933 – and continue into the promised democratic future of Jinnah's performative speech act.⁴⁴ Conversely, the timeless anarchy of the outside is a space that has not been brought into alignment with the

⁴³ Nick Vaughan-Williams, *Border Politics: The Limits of Sovereign Power* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 2.

⁴⁴ This timeline is perhaps best imagined as that of the school history book, in which historical events are plotted as a continuous chain of causes and effects.

nation, becoming the negative on which the progress and history of the new nation defines itself. This thesis represents a prolonged discussion of this calendrical time, and the way it is represented, undermined, and interrogated by literary texts. The concept of homogeneous, empty time is what makes this discussion possible, and as such it requires some definition and history of its own.

The concept was first coined by German-Jewish philosopher Walter Benjamin, to later be extended and reframed by Benedict Anderson, and subsequently contested by postcolonial scholar Partha Chatterjee, among others. The term first appears in Benjamin's 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' (1940) in which he states:

The concept of the progress of the human race in history is not to be separated from the concept of its progression through a homogeneous and empty time. The critique of the concept of this progress must ground the basis of its critique on the concept of progress itself.⁴⁵

For Benjamin, the articulation of a national history presupposes a temporality on which it is to be written. If history and progress are to be measured, then they must be measured in relation to the passage of time; a passage that is both calculable, and in a certain sense incalculable. It is a time that is *empty* of meaning: a blank calendar on which economic successes and national experiences can be written. The foundation of a new nation-state, such as is represented by Jinnah's speech act, is bound to the concept of progress in various fields: communal harmony, democratic rule, the framing of a constitution, and economic prosperity. If Jinnah's democracy to-come is the future-oriented promise of democratic and sovereign freedom for Pakistan's new citizens, it is a promise that orients the nation in the terms of Benjamin's homogeneous, empty time. As such, interrogating competing views of the future of Pakistani sovereignty means heeding Benjamin's call and critiquing 'the concept of progress itself', an act that involves excavating that which is hidden or effaced by the project of postcolonial nationalism.

Benedict Anderson extended and developed Benjamin's conception of homogeneous, empty time in *Imagined Communities* (1983): a text that has shaped and informed theories of nationalism and the nation in fields including history, political science and sociology. Though the text does not speak directly to the particularities of postcolonial nationalism in Pakistan, Anderson is attentive to the temporal dimensions of sovereignty

⁴⁵ Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', *Illuminations*, trans. by Harry Zorn (London: Pimlico, 1999 [first published 1940]) p. 252.

and nation in a variety of colonial and postcolonial, and as such it is valuable for understanding the links between homogeneous, empty time and the foundations of national sovereignty. Anderson states that:

What has come to take the place of the medieval conception of simultaneity-along-time is, to borrow again from Benjamin, an idea of ‘homogeneous, empty time’, in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar.⁴⁶

Anderson charts a movement from pre-modern modes of thinking about time and history, to the modern concept of time and the nation. This quotation addresses a perceived shift from a tripartite concept of time—categorised into a past, a present and a future—into a new sense of being-in-time that relies upon disparate people plotting the events of their lives and communities in relation to measured calendrical time. Through this shift, Anderson signals the way in which events that are measured and narrated in terms of clock time can contribute to a subject’s feeling of community and simultaneity, and finally in their orientation to the project of the nation itself. For Anderson, various forms of printed narrative provided a temporal order through which this sense of being-in-time could be made intelligible; indeed, what he calls the ‘birth of the imagined community of the nation’ is driven by a concern with the development of the printing press in Europe, and its production of the novel and the newspaper.⁴⁷ These two forms of narrative ground the actions of social beings in space and time, and in so doing produce in the reader a feeling of simultaneity and recognition: both within the narrative, but also by the coextensivity of their readership. Consequently, he imagines the relationship between readers of a nationally-bound print culture as being part of the process of national history: ‘[t]he idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid community moving steadily down (or up) history.’⁴⁸

In a postcolonial context, the speed with which national identity is constructed is much quicker than in the Westphalian with which Anderson’s study begins. Anderson recognises the limits of the European model of nationalism in diverse colonial spaces that

⁴⁶ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 24.

⁴⁷ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 24.

⁴⁸ Anderson. *Imagined Communities*, p. 26.

remained after the breakup of the British Empire, writing that the complex interweaving of competing official and popular nationalisms in postcolonial

has been the product of anomalies created by European imperialism: the well-known arbitrariness of frontiers, and bilingual intelligentsias poised precariously over diverse monoglot populations. One can thus think of many of these nations as projects the achievement of which is still in progress.⁴⁹

Here, Anderson gestures towards the future-oriented nature of official nationalisms in postcolonial spaces, and the degree to which heterogeneous cultures and subject-positions in these spaces acted to complicate the process of nation-building. This thesis explores alternative images of Pakistan's past and future to undermine and supplement the homogeneous, empty time of the nation as it was articulated in the foundational promises of independence. Suffice it to say, Anderson's image of the nation as being dependent on a coherent and homogeneous community moving steadily into the future contributes to the understanding of homogeneous, empty time in this thesis. This being said, although Anderson's work recognises the possibility for multiple resistant and overlapping cultures and temporalities in colonial spaces, it does not explore how the temporal ordering of official nationalisms impact upon the being-in-time of colonial and postcolonial subjects.

The process of orientation to postcolonial nationhood – particularly in an ethno-nationalist state such as Pakistan – is conditional on the production of a coherent image of its citizens, and their constitution as a single group who experience time and nationhood in a comparable way. This project involves the sublimation and effacement of other experiences, histories, and identities, particularly those of minorities who are largely excluded from the sovereign promise of a secular Islamic republic. Arguments for a more heterogeneous and contested notion of time and nation have been explored by subalternist postcolonial scholars as a response to the epistemic violence that takes place in the process of ethno-nationalist state formation. Notably, Partha Chatterjee makes explicit the fact that the foundations of dominant conceptualisations of history and progress lie in capitalist modernity. Attributing the time of the nation to capital opens a space for alternatives within the postcolonial nation-state. Chatterjee writes:

⁴⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 114.

Empty homogeneous time is the time of capital. Within its domain, capital allows for no resistance to its free movement. When it encounters an impediment, it thinks it has encountered another time—something out of pre-capital, something that belongs to the pre-modern. Such resistances to capital (or to modernity) are, therefore, understood as coming out of humanity's past, something people should have left behind but somehow have not.⁵⁰

The temporality of the nation was one that was bound to efface and overwrite competing experiences of time, and as such, concepts of time that pre-exist the nation are understood by Chatterjee as resistant to homogeneous, empty time. If Vaughan-Williams' image of the border as separating the progress of the nation from the anarchy of the outside is one that imagines homogeneous, empty time as being in competition with pre-modern temporalities, then Chatterjee sees a revolutionary capacity in the latter. Moreover, in a collection of essays, Ashis Nandy has spoken to the way homogeneous histories and futures can be interrupted by a focus on time and history in postcolonial spaces. Nandy argues that '[i]f there is no 'real' or immutable past, and all constructed pasts and all history are ways of coping with hopes, ambitions, fears and anxieties in the present, so are the visions and fantasies of the future'.⁵¹ Although Nandy's focus is primarily within an Indian context, his image of a fragmented and curated past is used effectively to undermine the veracity of the imagined future of secular democracy, and she concludes this discussion by noting: 'though the future may not always look open, the past rarely looks closed.'⁵² Informed by Nandy and Chatterjee, it could be argued that if the time of capitalist modernity sublimates heterogeneous temporal experiences in the postcolonial nation, it is the work of the postcolonial scholar to shed light on those temporalities and histories that are otherwise silenced by the rhetoric of the nation-state.

This being said, it is not so simple as stating that the temporal actions and rhetoric of the state always conform unproblematically to the project of homogeneous, empty time. This time is undermined not only by the heterogeneous experiences of time among citizens, but also by the actions of the Pakistani state under exceptional circumstances, and at the territorial limits of the nation-state. The aim of this thesis is to explore the competing

⁵⁰ Partha Chatterjee, 'The Nation in Heterogeneous Time', *The Indian Economic & Social History Review*, 38:4 (2001), 399-418 (p. 399).

⁵¹ Ashis Nandy, *Time Warps: The Insistent Politics of Silent and Evasive Pasts* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2002), pp. 2-3.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

temporalities that exist in Pakistan, how they are registered in literary texts, and to ask how the being-in-time of subjects in these spaces are affected by various temporal techniques of sovereignty. This involves an exploration of the ways in which calendrical time is integrated into repressive techniques of sovereignty including the curfew, border bureaucracy, and preventive detention: the impacts of which could benefit from consideration in temporal terms. This thesis explores examples of institutions utilising or imposing a strict calendrical or clock time, and considers competing concepts of time in literary narratives that interrupt or undermine this process, thereby revealing its artificial nature. Further to this, at numerous moments in Pakistan's postcolonial history, the sovereign him or herself has intervened and interrupted the flow of Pakistan's legal and political norms through suspensions to democratic norms and constitutional rights for the sake of national 'emergencies'. The constitutional space for the suspension of the nation's foundational promises has created historical conditions that themselves act to undermine the homogeneous, empty time of the nation. As we will see, the interruptive temporality of the emergency, or exception, has significant implications for a reading of the time of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan.

Following Chatterjee's interest in pre-modern temporalities of resistance, the chapters which form this thesis explore alternative temporalities to those of the state, while highlighting the ways in which homogeneous, empty time can be glimpsed in the rhetoric and actions of political and military leaders in the region. These alternative temporalities include a concept of women's time that was put forward by Kristeva and later developed by E. Ann Kaplan for a postcolonial context, a nomadic relationship to time represented in Jamil Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon* (2011), and the military time of the curfew and drill square that is fictionalised in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008). These competing temporalities shed new light on the temporal violence of postcolonial sovereignty and aid a recognition of their interruptive and revolutionary power.

It is through a return to Benjamin that the radical nature of these alternative temporalities can be understood. Homogeneous, empty time, for Benjamin, is the time of the dominant concept of history, one that effaces the multifaceted and complex tradition of the oppressed that is hidden beneath the surface of history. Benjamin states that '[t]he past carries with it a secret index by which it is referred to redemption. If so, then *there is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one*'.⁵³ This nexus between a forgotten, or sublimated, past and the present moment is significant. As historical events

⁵³ Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', pp. 245-6 [*emphasis my own*].

flash up in the present, they have the power to interrupt the homogeneous, empty time of the nation. He goes on to write that ‘the true image of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image that flashes up at the moment of its recognisability, and is never seen again’.⁵⁴ It is through the concept of the *splitter*, or the fragment, that Benjamin undermines this time; this image of suppressed experiences flashing up to interrupt the dominant historical narratives of the present is central to the reading of competing histories and temporalities in this thesis.⁵⁵ The historian, for Benjamin, ‘establishes a conception of the present as the “time of the now” which is shot through with chips of messianic time’.⁵⁶ If the postcolonial present is ‘shot through’ with redeemable splinters of the time of the oppressed, then it is important to explore the diverse and sometimes discontinuous temporalities that arise in literary representations of the nation, and to ask how they interact with and resist the rhetoric of time, history, and progress employed by successive political leaders.

Although Islamic scripture, unlike Judeo-Christian theology, explicitly discounts the second coming of the prophet, the *splitter* remains a methodological tool in subaltern history. In a related discussion Gyanendra Pandey argues that the fragment ‘is of central importance in challenging the state’s construction of history, in thinking other histories and marking those contested spaces through which particular unities are sought to be constituted and others broken up’.⁵⁷ The promised future of Jinnah’s foundational address is implicated in the project of homogeneous, empty time. The permanence of the nation, its borders, its rule of law, and its democratic sovereignty exist within a dominant state conception of the progress and history of the national project. It is through a consideration of the narratives effaced and overwritten by nationalist mythmaking that the limits of homogeneous, empty time as a tool for understanding Pakistan’s history and future can be glimpsed. What is more, thinking through such limits also provides the impetus for articulating the intersections between postcolonial sovereignty and time.

⁵⁴ Benjamin, ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’, p. 247.

⁵⁵ The translation of *Splitter* differs in various editions of ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’. The term is often translated as ‘fragment’, which has obvious value for a discussion of subaltern histories. This being said, it is literally translated as ‘splinter’ and ‘chip’ in dominant translations. Both of these terms, I think, highlight the *Splitter’s* rough edges, fragmented nature, and the redemptive possibilities allowed by its embedding in the *jetztzeit*, or now-time, of the present.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

⁵⁷ Gyanendra Pandey, ‘In Defense of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today’, *Representations*, 37 (Winter: 1992), 27-55 (p. 50).

Methodology and Scope

This thesis explores the intersection of sovereignty and time in literary representations of Pakistan to highlight the ways in which fiction captures and makes felt the impact that violent exercises of sovereignty have on the being-in-time of the nation-state's postcolonial subjects. By mobilising theories of sovereignty and time from European philosophy, and reading a range of literary texts alongside memoirs, and both historical and legal texts, the thesis also considers how the narrative techniques and generic codes of literary fiction have variously worked to reinforce, defamiliarise, or interrupt the temporal order of postcolonial sovereignty in different ways. Such an approach prompts the following research questions. To what degree is the postcolonial promise of secular democratic sovereignty in Pakistan undermined by its exclusionary foundations and subsequent non-democratic governance? How can fictional representations of various techniques of sovereignty shed new light on the ways in which different theological, secular, military, and democratic conceptions of sovereignty overlap, intersect, and struggle for legitimacy? How might the fictional worlds and competing timelines of recent Anglophone Pakistani fiction enrich our understanding of the sovereign time of the postcolonial nation, as well as the fault lines in Pakistan's territorial, demographic, and geopolitical sovereignty? To address these questions, I focus on the ways in which a selected corpus of postcolonial fiction from Pakistan experiments with ideas of time, population, territory, and the body, and how these formal innovations interrupt or supplement official narratives of postcolonial sovereignty.

By focusing primarily on fiction, I do not mean to suggest that literature is uniquely placed to account for postcolonial sovereignty; on the contrary, by reading literature alongside and against legal, historical, and philosophical texts about sovereignty, this thesis considers how the performance of postcolonial sovereignty is always open to negotiation and contestation at different places and in different times. By combining these insights with the considerations of populations, borders, and gender in a selection of prose texts, the thesis attempts to outline the ways in which certain identities, histories, and experiences are elided in the dominant narratives of postcolonial sovereignty. In tracing the exclusionary foundations of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan as they are articulated in Anglophone fiction, I also begin to trace how the narratives of those who experience sovereign violence can interrupt and contest the sovereign power of the postcolonial state. If such an approach provincialises European conceptions of sovereignty (to adapt a phrase from Dipesh Chakrabarty), it also contributes to the invention of a democratic conception of postcolonial sovereignty to-come.

This thesis will consist of three chapter-length case studies that examine the particularities of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan. Each chapter will approach two or more literary texts that articulate a significant paradox, or moment of crisis, in Pakistan's order of sovereignty, and read them alongside and against non-fictional representations of contemporary historical events. For this reason, the thesis is not an exhaustive study of Pakistani literature, but an analysis of selected and partial representations of Pakistan that can help to illuminate the complexities of sovereignty in postcolonial South Asia. As has already been mentioned in this introduction, the work of Tariq Rahman, Cara Cilano and David Waterman have all contributed significantly to the recognition of texts and authors that have provided rich and thought-provoking narratives of important moments in Pakistan's history. Together, they cover writing by Indian Muslims and Pakistani writers from the 1930s to the present day, and offer a number of close and engaging readings that link these fictional texts to key historical events. For this reason, there is a small, but unavoidable, overlap in the texts that are being studied, though there have been no studies of these texts that take the representation of sovereignty as their primary focus.

The rationale for selecting the corpus of literary fiction included in this thesis is informed by considerations of genre and form, as well as by the more conceptual considerations of sovereignty outlined above. Rather than selecting the texts thematically, research for the thesis has considered how formal and generic techniques specific to literary fiction mediate particular temporal dilemmas of postcolonial sovereignty. This thesis also privileges texts that respond somewhat immediately to the events they represent. For example, *Shame* (1983) and *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* were both written in moments when Pakistan was under conditions of emergency law, and *The Wandering Falcon* is based on anthropological work conducted by the author when the legal concerns therein were having real impacts on border communities.⁵⁸ The choice of texts for consideration in this thesis are not exclusively determined by national affiliation, and as a result it includes writers who self-identify as Pakistani, but also those writing about Pakistan, or those dealing directly with techniques of sovereignty that are pertinent to this study.

In view of the strong presence of women's writing in Pakistani fiction, and the gendered dimensions of sovereignty outlined above, it has been important to consider the ways in which women's historical experiences of postcolonial sovereignty have been

⁵⁸ Though *The Wandering Falcon* was published years after it was first conceived of and written, a contemporary interest in the NWFP and FATA could be seen as a significant factor in its eventual publication.

mediated in fiction. Amrita Pritam and Jamila Hashmi's work are at the heart of the first chapter's exploration of the gendered dimensions of Partition violence, and this violence is also registered in *Train to Pakistan* (1956) and *Shame*. Due to the constraints of the thesis, and a desire to discuss the impact of sovereignty on a range of minority groups, this strong presence has unfortunately not been fully registered in the texts selected here. It has been difficult not to include the significant contribution of female authors to the burgeoning canon of the Pakistani novel, with Sorraya Khan and Kamila Shamsie chief among them.

It is also possible that an exclusive focus on the Anglophone novel might seem to be rather partial and limited; to try to address this problem, the thesis also approaches Urdu and Punjabi short stories in translation. The novelist Aamer Hussein has stated that 'Urdu writers have almost without exception showed great mastery of the shorter forms: the story, the tale and the novella'.⁵⁹ Like poetry, short fiction in local languages forms a significant part of the literary legacy of Partition in South Asia. Translated works by Saadat Hasan Manto and Amrita Pritam have been republished in recent years and can add to our understanding of the generic forms through which memories of Partition were negotiated in its almost immediate aftermath.⁶⁰ There is an ongoing conversation around the politics and theory of translation in postcolonial literary texts. In their introduction to a collection of essays on the subject, Susan Bassnet and Harish Trivedi write that 'translations from the various Indian languages into English, whether done by foreigners or by Indians themselves, have attained a hegemonic ascendancy'.⁶¹ The essays in this collection highlight various ways in which this ascendancy is challenged, and in the process imply that a deal of care must be taken in privileging postcolonial literary texts in translation. It is important to be attentive to the notion that meaning and nuance can be lost through the process of translation, however – as Aamer Hussein notes – a consideration of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistani literature would be made partial by the absence of Pakistani short fiction.⁶² In the same collection, Viswanatha and Simon note that at times 'translations are objects of suspicion. As vehicles of colonial influence, as purveyors of

⁵⁹ Aamer Hussein, *Kahani: Short Stories by Pakistani Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 17.

⁶⁰ The dominance of the short story form is also registered in chapter three through Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon*, a novel that is formed out of connected short stories.

⁶¹ Susan Bassnet and Harish Trivedi, 'Introduction: of Colonies, Cannibals and Vernaculars', in *Post-Colonial Translation: Theory and Practice*, eds. by Susan Bassnet and Harish Trivedi (London: Routledge, 2002), 1-18 (p. 10).

⁶² Rebecca Walkowitz has argued that even the Anglophone novel is not exempt from the process of translation. She notes that texts written in a second language or written in a language other than that commonly spoken within their geographical setting have undergone a process of 'pre-emptive translation'. See Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 20-25.

foreign novelty to the metropolis, they travel the routes opened by conquest'.⁶³ However, the interplay between 'various Indian languages and literary traditions [and] the former colonial power and [...] the Indian diaspora' are central to their study of Indian and Canadian indigenous writing in translation.⁶⁴ For similar reasons, this thesis engages with translated texts and the contexts of late colonialism and early nationalism that produced them.

In the first half of this thesis, I approach short fiction about Partition in translation from Urdu and Punjabi and, at times, make connections to other widely anthologised stories. In the first chapter, I read Pritam's 'The Skeleton' in its only mainstream translation in English: from its original Punjabi, by the novelist Khushwant Singh. I note that text's narration of motherhood, sexual violence, and abduction may be somewhat re-framed in their translation by a canonical male Sikh writer, and also the large presence that Singh receives in this first chapter due to the text's inclusion beside his own novel, *Train to Pakistan*. However, the body of critical work on this text, and its early narration of postcolonial issues of honour and bodily exchange make it an important work for a study of the gendered experience of postcolonial nationalism in the Punjab. Alongside 'The Skeleton', this thesis reads Shahrukh Husain's 2005 translation of 'Exile' by Jamila Hashmi, rather than translations named 'Banished' by Alok Bhalla and Muhammed Umar Memon. 'Exile' was published in Aamer Hussein's collection of translated women's writing from Pakistan with a woman as translator, and its narration of motherhood and abduction made it an important inclusion in this chapter. In the second chapter, the opening reading of 'Toba Tek Singh' utilises the translation of Khalid Hassan, a highly anthologised and highly analysed text that remains the dominant translation.

The decision to focus on fiction published in the English language is due in part to English being my first language. Such an approach may of course fall prey to the postcolonial dynamics of a global literary marketplace that tends to privilege the Anglophone novel and writing in translation. In a critique of this tendency, Aamir Mufti has noted that:

Under the conditions of neoliberal capitalism, whenever English rises to dominance in a particular cultural and social sphere for the first time – the appearance and global success of the Pakistani Anglophone novel in recent

⁶³ Vanamala Viswanatha and Sherry Simon, 'Shifting Grounds of Exchange: B. M. Skritanaiah and Kannada Translation', in *Post-Colonial Translation*, eds. by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (London: Routledge, 2002), 162-181 (p. 162).

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

years, for instance, or that of its Indian predecessor a few decades ago – it seems at once to naturalise itself, erasing the scene of politics and power that marks its emergence.⁶⁵

By linking the success of the Anglophone South Asian novel to the literary marketplace, Mufti implores literary critics to question the privilege given to texts written in the English language and European literary forms. I understand that this not only leaves writers of many South Asian dialects unrepresented, but also centres the focus on writers of a certain economic class and position in the literary world-system – writing out of London and New York as often as Lahore and Karachi. By bearing these limitations in mind, I try to attend to the ways in which certain marginalised voices are registered in these texts.

Chapter Overview

The main body of this thesis is made up of three chapters, each of which focuses upon a different moment in Pakistan's postcolonial history. Each chapter reads literary texts for their representation of subjects coming into contact with the state, or being impacted by sovereign acts such as Partition, border security, and imprisonment. The key theoretical conversations introduced above will be traced through each chapter, with an extended focus on Jacques Derrida's democracy to-come, Walter Benjamin's homogeneous, empty time, and facets of Michel Foucault's biopolitics. The first chapter explores three Partition texts—Jamila Hashmi's 'Exile' (1969), Amrita Pritam's 'The Skeleton' (1950), and Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956). Each of these texts explore the gendered nature of Partition violence, and sheds light on the competing temporalities of sovereignty that emerge at the moment of Partition. The chapter opens with a short reading of Singh's novel, which has, at its centre, a consideration of how the fragmented and monumental violence of Partition interrupts the predictable and regimented temporality of the railway. In the novel, the retributive cycle of honour-based violence interrupts the locomotive's forward momentum, prompting us to ask how women's experiences could be seen to offer competing narratives of Pakistan's history and future. With this temporal frame in place, 'Exile' and 'The Skeleton' will be read alongside an oral narrative of Partition violence to highlight the relationships and cleavages between Jinnah's future-oriented promise of

⁶⁵ Aamir Mufti, *Forget English!*, p. 16.

secular sovereignty and the time of the Hindu epic, in which women's bodies were sublimated into instructional communal narratives of honour and shame. This reading is assisted by building upon a conceptualisation of 'women's time' as it has been theorised by Julia Kristeva, and its development in a postcolonial context by E. Ann Kaplan.

In chapter two, I approach two texts that were published in the same year: Jamil Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon* and Mirza Waheed's *The Collaborator*. Both of these texts focus on the experience of marginal and formerly nomadic communities at the limits of the nation. Ahmad's novel takes the form of a collection of interlinked short stories that are set in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, and Waheed writes of experiences of curfew and military rule at the Line of Control in Kashmir. Both texts focus on Muslim communities who are experiencing the enforcement of territorial borders by military figures, and shed light on the temporal impact of this process. By discussing presentations of bureaucracy, law, and curfew in these texts, I ask how the techniques of sovereignty that are employed by the Pakistani and Indian armed forces at the border both affect the being-in-time of the border subject, and interrupt the territorial futurity that was promised by Jinnah's nationalist rhetoric. Borders are often considered as primarily spatial in nature, but this chapter challenges this by reading these border texts alongside the work of Jacques Derrida, Nick Vaughan-Williams, and David Fieni to outline the way repeated performances of border sovereignty take on a temporal dimension that undermines the state's permanence.

The final chapter takes a close look at Pakistan's longest period of martial law rule, reading two novels that register the temporal nature of General Zia-ul-Haq's indefinite suspension of Pakistan's democratic order. A focus on historical and narrative time enables a detailed assessment of the connection between representations of law, Islam, and sovereignty in Salman Rushdie's *Shame* and Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. These texts explore Zia's eleven-year period of martial law that included the widespread censorship of historical, literary, and journalistic enquiry, and a rapid Islamisation of law that disproportionately affected the lives of women and religious and ethnic minorities. The employment of Islamic rhetoric and law by the Zia regime to shore up its military sovereignty is well-documented, and in this chapter I approach legal and historical texts to examine how these two novels offer an alternative historiography of his martial law regime.

With these three case studies, this thesis offers a timely recalibration of the concept of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan that provokes a discussion of independence as having the future-oriented structure of the promise. In the act of reading literary texts

through their own diverse presentations of time in the postcolonial state, this structure is not only foregrounded, but also contested.

CHAPTER ONE

Sovereign Time and National Futurity in Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*, Jamila Hashmi's 'Exile' and Amrita Pritam's 'The Skeleton'

We introduce clocks, and insist on the importance of time, but Blackey lingers for his quarter or half-hour of dearly loved dawdling, nevertheless. But the railway comes; and with an awful mechanical punctuality—more stern, more silent, more exacting, more unscrupulous than any punctuality which a man can pretend to—the clock strikes, the bell rings, the dead-alive engine whistles-moves—departs; the inexorable metal trio succeed in teaching the lesson which flesh and blood could not impress, and Blackey is never late at a railway station.

—W. D. S. [pseud.]¹

The above epigraph encapsulates the temporality of the colonial project of the railway. In this logic, the locomotive – driving forward through the space of British India as an image of capitalist modernity – also acts as an instructive service to colonised rural subjects, supplanting their previous understanding of time by teaching the workings of the timetable, the clock and the calendar. The precision and measurability of this homogeneous, empty time is crucial to the rhetoric of sovereignty and the modern nation-state. It allows for cycles of democratic elections, the trading of goods and services across vast distances, and in so doing it provides the framework through which the state both imagines and articulates its futurity. The 'impressing' of this time on colonial subjects highlights the fact

¹ W. D. S. [pseud.] 'The Night Mail-Train in India', *Fraser's Magazine*, 1857. Cited in Marian Aguiar, *Tracking Modernity: India's Railway and the Culture of Mobility* (MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), p. 13.

that temporal ordering was always-already a method of control in postcolonial India and Pakistan. I argue that the train orients the people of British India to the clock and calendar of capitalist modernity in Europe, and in the process it overwrites, effaces, and (as above) infantilises other temporalities, or relationships to time. In that sense, the train is not just a symbol of the colonial economy, but also of the forward momentum of the modern nation. This chapter will explore the ways in which the locomotive acts as an orienting measure of time before 1947, and how, with the escalation of Partition violence in and around the train station, the smooth passage of this time is interrupted, revealing this orientation as a colonial practice. By reading the violence of Partition as an interruption to the homogeneous, empty time of the nation, it is possible to recognise and understand the competing temporalities that emerge to challenge the future-oriented promises of postcolonial sovereignty in the Punjab.

This chapter will begin with a reading of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) to show how this early Partition novel represents the temporal ordering of the colonial railway. In the text, the events of Partition act to interrupt the smooth running of the locomotive, impacting the subjectivity of those for whom it is a fixture of everyday life. I argue that these interruptions highlight the absent presence of those victims and targets of Partition violence who flash up to slow the progress of the locomotive, and undermine the homogeneous, empty time it represents. The novel also highlights the gendered nature of retributive violence; through its representation of fraying communal relationships *Train to Pakistan* sheds light on how a transactional exchange of violence characterised Pakistan and India's founding moments. The way in which women's experiences are elided as the nation imagines its postcolonial future will be the subject of the subsequent readings of Jamila Hashmi's short story 'Exile' (1969) and Amrita Pritam's 'The Skeleton' (1950). Through an analysis of 'Exile', I will examine the ways in which communal appeals to the temporality of the Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*, similarly act to efface and overwrite women's subjective experiences of Partition violence and abduction.² I argue that Hashmi's text represents a literary articulation of the unspoken experiences of Partition survivors that both condemns the persistent employment of the Hindu epic in nationalist projects, and offers women's narratives as a way to interrupt the dominant temporal order of the nation's self-representation. Pritam's novella offers further

² Hashmi's Urdu short story, 'Exile', has previously been translated by both Alok Bhalla and Muhammad Umar Memon, the latter under the title 'Banished'. These appeared in Alok Bhalla's *Stories From the Partition of India* (1999) and Memon's edited collection *An Epic Unwritten* (1998). As noted in the introduction, my decision to use Shahrukh Hussain's translation is related both to its female translator and its publication in a collection of women's writing. Secondary literature referring to 'Banished' has been consulted and appears in this chapter.

elaboration of the experience of abduction and gendered communal violence in the years before and after Partition. Its narrator raises existential questions about the future of a nation that had such violent beginnings, but the text also sheds light on the generational temporality of communalism, and refuses to present Partition as either a temporally delimited event or an isolated aberration. Considered together, these two texts illuminate gendered conceptualisations of time and the nation that, whilst imperfect, demand a more nuanced consideration of the future-oriented temporality of sovereignty.

The Time of the Railway in *Train to Pakistan*

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* foregrounds the dislocation and disorientation of Partition. In this novel, the eponymous train comes to represent both the temporality of the colonial order and the immediate postcolonial chaos that took place throughout the summer of 1947. As such, the narrative explores the way processes of colonial sovereignty had an ordering effect on time in this late colonial space, and registers the disruption of this temporal order as sovereign power was transferred. With its temporal precision and its ability to link disparate peoples and places, the train functions as a powerful image in the novel that has the power to orient (and then disorient) rural citizens to the national project. This is especially visible as its timetable is increasingly fragmented by acts of Partition violence in which it is, at times, implicated. Singh's novel has been the subject of significant and ongoing critical attention, as it is a foundational representation of communal violence and migration at Partition. Recently, Rituparna Roy characterises the novel as a 'vignette' of Partition in the opening reading of a monograph on Partition fiction, while Ralph J. Crane has highlighted the text's interest in communalism and masculinity; offering a reading of the text that transcend existing criticism that takes the novel as a work of dispassionate 'historical realism'.³ In this chapter, it is the temporal ordering of the colonial railway that is the primary focus, and Alex Tickell has read the significance of the railway in 'connect[ing]the fragmenting space and time of Mano Majra

³ Rituparna Roy, *South Asian Partition Fiction in English: From Khushwant Singh to Amitav Ghosh* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), p.34. Ralph J. Crane, 'Inscribing a Sikh India: An Alternative Reading of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*', in *Alternative Indias: Writing, Nation and Communalism*, eds. by Peter Morey and Alex Tickell (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 181-196 (p.134). Crane himself notes the key proponents of this latter trend as: M. Tarinayya, 'Two Novels: Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Bhabani Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers!*' *Indian Literature*, 13:1 (1970), 113-121; K. C. Belliappa, 'The Elusive Classic: Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Chaman Nahal's *Azadi*', *The Literary Criterion*, 15:2 (1980), 62-73; C. Paul Verghese, *Problems of the Indian Creative Writer in English* (Bombay: Somaiya, 1971).

with the political rupturing that affects the country on a national level'.⁴ Tickell attempts to foreground the 'salience of space alongside issues of temporality and historical becoming', and this chapter will heed Crane's call for historical specificity, whilst foregrounding temporal issues as a fundamental element of Partition experience. To achieve this, it will begin with a reading of the locomotive.⁵

Marian Aguiar has traced the significance of the locomotive as a symbol of modernity through this period. In terms that reflect the theoretical discussions of this thesis, Aguiar writes:

Colonial rhetoric presented the railway space as a means of amalgamating different religions and castes into a homogeneous nation. The railway's dynamic spatialisation, including its tracks, stations, and interior [*sic*]of the carriage, helped produce India. Railway tracks became the skeleton that mapped territory and supported the corpus of the future nation, creating a dynamic social geography (although this body would be partitioned in 1947).⁶

Understanding the ways in which the railway reconceptualised space and communal relations within the colonial state helps to make sense of how Singh's novel portrays the post-independence fracturing of this unity. Aguiar links this colonial spatialisation to the temporal order that the railway incorporated into Indian social life, whilst being careful to emphasise how this economy privileged the colonial administration and benefited different social classes of the Indian population unevenly. She revisits the temporal ordering referenced by W. D. S. in an academic framework:

Temporal precision promoted by industrial technology became a sign of [colonial India's] modernity. In this regard, the railway emblematised the modern in two ways: First, it spatialised time in the form of a timetable, and second, it ritualised time through scheduled arrivals and departures marked by a signal. The machine even assumed the power of empire through the instrument of temporal precision.⁷

⁴ Alex Tickell, "'How Many Pakistans?'" Questions of Space and Identity in the Writing of Partition', *Ariel*, 32:3 (2001), 155-179 (p. 168).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 157

⁶ Marian Aguiar, *Tracking Modernity: India's Railway and the Culture of Mobility* (Minnesota, MN.: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), p. 7.

⁷ Aguiar, *Tracking Modernity*, p. 12.

The railway enfolds space and time together into one symbol of colonial order and capitalist modernity. This colonial model of spatialisation and territorialisation requires a temporal precision that is associated with the technologies of the clock and calendar, which also mark the homogeneous, empty time of national sovereignty for Benjamin and Anderson. In Singh's novel, at the moment of Partition the precision of the timetable quickly gives way to a fractured, uncertain future that is punctuated by the unpredictable passage of the locomotive. In reading the breakdown of this temporal order, I will argue that the literary chronotope of the locomotive – though often associated with modernity and development – has an inverse effect on the characters of the novel. The train is not merely a representation of homogeneous, empty time, but it also offers an image of that time failing and stuttering when it encounters the bodies of those killed in the violence of decolonisation. As such, it offers a new way to understand how the temporality of the future-oriented promises of postcolonial sovereignty are destabilised in its founding moments.

Train to Pakistan narrates the experience of the fictional railway village of Mano Majra in August and September of 1947. The novel opens with a lengthy description of the railway's significance for the village's economy and sense of community. It sets out a prelapsarian vision of the border town with an ordered and measured passage of time that is marked by the trains. The narrator offers an itinerary for Mano Majra and positions the railway station at its heart: it acts as an alarm clock and as a type of rural factory whistle. The passage stretches over three pages and interweaves all aspects of village life with the passing of the trains:

Before daybreak, the mail train rushes through on its way to Lahore, and as it approaches the bridge the driver invariably blows two long blasts on the whistle. In an instant, all Mano Majra comes awake. [...] The mullah at the mosque knows that it is time for the morning prayer [...] The priest at the Sikh temple lies in bed till the mullah has called. Then he too gets up.⁸

As the midday express goes by, Mano Majra stops to rest [...] When the evening passenger from Lahore comes in, everyone gets to work again. (p. 5)

⁸ Khushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2007 [first published 1956]), p. 4 [all subsequent references will be given parenthetically].

The goods train takes a long time at the station [...] By the time it leaves, the children are asleep. The older people wait for its rumble over the bridge to lull them to slumber [...] It had always been so, until the summer of 1947.

(p. 6)

Across these pages is both a lyrical address to the significance of the trains for the village's industry, and also a chronology of daily existence for Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim villagers that is synchronous with the regular arrival and departure of the locomotive. That this temporal symbol of modernity is so entwined with traditional experiences of agriculture and worship makes Mano Majra itself feel modern and industrial, but it also orients the villagers as colonial subjects. We learn that 'Mano Majra has always been known for its railway station' (p. 3), but it should be noted that the first passenger trains from Lahore did not leave until 1861. This fact points to the community's modernity, and highlights the way its history is always-already a product of colonial technologies and knowledge. This fact could also account for the village's inter-communal unity at the beginning of the novel, highlighting Aguiar's 'amalgamation' of subjects into the colonial nation at sites of the railway. Suffice it to say, the ominous ending to the final quotation above evokes not only a break in the harmonious relationships of the communities in Mano Majra, but a radical re-ordering of subjectivity for those who have been oriented by such technologies of colonial sovereignty. If, in the period before Partition, the regular arrival and departure of trains had brought order to everyday life in the village, in the aftermath it delivers the chaos of communal conflict.

During the events of Partition, the punctual arrival of the trains becomes increasingly erratic. Such delays are one of the first indications of a change in the sovereign order of things. They are a sign that the trains are just as significant a symbol of the immediate postcolonial landscape as they were to the colonial administration. For example, we learn that a few villagers

[...] liked to see the few passengers who might get on or off at Mano Majra, and they also enjoyed endless arguments about how late the train was on a given day and when it had last been on time. Since the Partition of the country there had been an additional interest. Now the trains were often four or five hours late and sometimes as many as twenty. (p. 34)

It is the villagers' consciousness of the shifting temporality of the railway that first registers their emerging consciousness of Partition itself. This being said, the trains are not being delayed by the politics of postcolonialism, but its violent beginnings. The bodies of those who are killed on the trains are the cause of the interruption to the smooth passage of clock-time for the villagers, and the delay of the locomotive thus becomes entwined with the traumatic experience of communal struggle. The delays come to represent the absent presence of the dead on whose bodies nationalist anger is being inscribed. Through this hitherto unseen violence, the loss of the punctual arrivals of the trains could be seen to scramble the experience of time on which the town's community was built.

Those who pay close attention to the railway are suspended in time as sovereignty is transferred; it is implied too that their prolonged waiting and arguments are extended for hours as the clock and timetable that the trains represent start to break down. This suspension takes the form of a deferral when it is linked to the social functions of the railway that are enumerated at the beginning of the novel:

Trains became less punctual than ever before and many more started to run through at night. Some days it seemed as though the alarm clock had been set for the wrong time. On others, it was as if no one had remembered to wind it. (p. 81)

The failure of the trains to adhere to the timetable is made explicit here, and this suspension has just as deep an impact as the text's opening anticipates. Alex Tickell notes that 'the arrhythmia of the Lahore-Delhi railway connects the fragmenting space and time of Mano Majra with the political rupturing that affects the country on a national level', and in this passage this connection is portrayed in terms reminiscent of the idyllic opening of the novel that offer the train as a method of colonial order.⁹ In other words, the connection is not new and sudden, but an already existing part of village life. The following passage repeats all of the novel's opening statements regarding the temporal order of the railway in order to emphasise the wholesale disruption of the events of Partition. The impact of this disruption is clearly related to the breakdown of the timetable, as Singh writes that '[p]eople stayed in bed late without realising that times had changed' and 'children did not know when to be hungry, and clamoured for food all the times', and 'there was no lullaby to lull them to sleep' (p. 81). The fragmentation of daily life reinforces the idea that the

⁹ Tickell, "How Many Pakistans?", p. 168.

railway functions as the novel's marker of homogeneous, empty time. It is clear, however, that in the passage from colonial to postcolonial sovereignty, the order of the timetable has become highly unstable. If the epigraph from *Fraser's Magazine* showed how the time of colonial sovereignty is impressed on the being-in-time of the colonial subject, the disruption of the railway has a similarly profound impact on the villagers.

The disruption to the village that is caused by the breakdown of the train schedule emphasises how the reterritorialisation of the subcontinent has a significant temporal dimension. As the locomotive is repurposed from the transportation of goods and autonomous travellers to the task of protecting and transporting both living and dead refugees, the economy at the heart of the community shifts with it. The arrival of a train with a 'full load of corpses' (p. 124) who had fallen victim to a massacre on the way into India, sets into motion the cause and effect pattern of communal violence in the village.¹⁰ This violence is registered in a heated moment of the text as a group of militant Sikhs visit Mano Majra after the Muslim villagers have been evacuated to justify and incite acts of violence against a coming evacuee train:

For each Hindu or Sikh they kill, kill two Mussulmans. For each woman they abduct or rape, abduct two. For each home they loot, loot two. For each trainload of dead they send over, send two across. [...] That will stop the killing on the other side. It will teach them that we also play this game of killing and looting. (p. 157)

This quotation foregrounds the way individual acts of violence can lead to an escalating retributive exchange of thefts, murders, and abductions; an exchange that had many flashpoints on the previously ordering presence of the railway. The train's implication in the murderous violence between partitioned communities comes to represent the absent presence of its victims, and the gendering of victims in the Sikhs' call to arms highlights the impact of the patriarchal rhetoric of postcolonial sovereignty in the region. The quotation implicitly reinforces the twin concepts of honour and shame, in that the speaker both accepts and implicitly condones the inclusion of sexual violence in the fight for territory and nation. As the threat of violence escalates throughout the text, so too does the

¹⁰ The image of the 'ghost train' is explored by Aguiar in her chapter, 'Partition and the Death Train'. The train's existence as a spectre, its late arrival, and the fact that it literally brings death are worth noting, but beyond the scope of this thesis. That trains and railway stations became spaces at which violence collected is what situates Mano Majra as an appropriate setting for this novel, but it is the technology and its impact upon the temporality of village life that informs this chapter.

language of honour and sexual assault – a lexicon that is ingrained in even the most genial relations between communities earlier in the novel.

‘It is like this, Uncle Imam Baksh. As long as we are here nobody will dare touch you. We die first and then you can look after yourselves.’

‘Yes’, added another warmly, ‘we first, then you. If anyone raises his eyebrows at you we will rape his mother.’

‘Mother, sister and daughter’, added the others.

Imam Baksh wiped a tear from his eyes and blew his nose in the hem of his shirt. (p. 133)

In an impassioned defence of their Muslim neighbours against the looming threat of attack, the Sikh villagers leverage the female family members of the imagined attackers into this economy of communal violence.¹¹ In fact, the threat of sexual violence and the inverse promise of protection present an emotionally resounding bond between the characters, whilst also making explicit the way women’s bodies are framed as signs of honour and shame in this symbolic exchange. In this exchange, women of all identities are stripped of sovereignty over their bodies, and are exposed to the lawless violence that opens up in the fault lines of Partition. The tears and camaraderie displayed here make for a darkly comic dialogue, in which seemingly boyish threats foreshadow a horrifying campaign of sexual assault, abduction, and repatriation.

That women’s bodies become so implicated within the economy of violence on the trains is significant. At this founding moment, the train, as a technological symbol of colonial modernity, is freighted with the burden of a communal identity. The villagers understand and communicate this identity through a gendered exchange of violence that has a significant temporal dimension. The cycles of violence and abduction are imagined as a cause-and-effect chain of events that could map easily onto a chronological timeline; one in which women’s bodies become vessels for the sovereign rhetoric of honour and property. And yet, a more careful consideration of women’s reflections on Partition raises profound questions about the limits of linear models of temporality to account for the historical experiences of South Asian women during, and after, Partition. The remainder of

¹¹ This exchange has also been discussed by Ralph J. Crane who argues that Singh’s representation of Sikhs and Muslims having the ability to protect women, and also to attack them, is a marker of the masculinity of their communities which does not stretch to the Hindus of the novel. Crane’s reading foregrounds elements of masculinity and emasculation to highlight how the text asserts Sikh identity. *See* Ralph J. Crane, ‘Inscribing a Sikh India’, pp. 183-184.

this chapter explores the ways in which the figure of the female abductee complicates this linear historiography, scrambles the conception of Partition as a discrete historical event, and therefore problematises the imagination of Pakistan's founding sovereign moment as a birth. Jamila Hashmi's 'Exile' and Amrita Pritam's 'The Skeleton' both trace a genealogy of abduction into colonial and pre-colonial history, and both question the future of a nation that is built upon the mythologisation and misrepresentation of women's sacrifice.

Women's Time and the Figure of the Abductee

If the locomotive stands as a symbol of colonial modernity and the time-space compression that produces the nation, it is also a vehicle of death and communal violence that foregrounds the gendered foundations of postcolonial sovereignty. The abduction and violation of women's bodies may seem to be antithetical to the temporality of colonial modernity that the train represents. However, the framing of women's bodies as symbols of honour and shame was crucial to the reterritorialisation of modern South Asia during and after Partition. Patriarchal narratives of national sovereignty depended on a supposedly transcendental ideal of masculine honour that was embodied in the gendered figure of the nation. In this gendered rhetoric, the maternal body was excluded from the linear temporality of the patriarchal nation – defined as it was by industry and war from which women were notionally excluded.

Just as this maternal figure functioned as a sacred bearer of patriarchal honour untethered from the secular time of the nation, she also functions as a passive vehicle for a patriarchal future that includes her only through marriage, motherhood, or in extreme moments, sacrifice. As E. Ann Kaplan states:

National imaginaries are coded as implicitly male and implicitly assume patriarchal time—linear, project driven, teleological—a time that presupposes (despite real conditions to the contrary) a steady progression towards a better future, economically, technologically, and socially. This may have to do with the bonding between men in situations of war—the situation in which national identification suddenly surfaces with force.¹²

¹² E. Ann Kaplan, 'Politics, Psyche and Feminine Time: Nancy Meckler's *Sister, My Sister* and Pratibha Parmar's *Memsahib Rita*' in *Feminist Time Against Nation Time: Gender, Politics, and the Nation-State in*

This linear, project-driven time is the homogeneous, empty time of the nation. In Kaplan's reading, the nationalist project was often imagined primarily through the fraternal relationships of the factory and battlefield, and often included women only through the maternal function. In an effort to recalibrate this, her essay moves to also incorporate sisterly, or 'horizontal', relationships in the history of the nation.¹³ As the following readings of Hashmi and Pritam suggest, women participate as passive victims of a war that reveals their exclusion from the project-driven time of the nation, and highlights the heterogeneous temporalities of postcolonial experience that move beyond familial ideas of kinship.

Kaplan continues to explain that this exclusion is visible in the fact that 'women have [...] traditionally been linked to the repetitive, cyclical world of "nature," and to eternal mythical time'; in doing so, she recalls an image of women's time that was first formulated by Julia Kristeva in her 1981 essay 'Women's Time'.¹⁴ As I go on to suggest in my reading of 'The Skeleton', Kristeva's influential account of women's time is particularly significant for exploring issues of pregnancy and motherhood during the Partition of South Asia. If the abduction and violation of women's bodies followed a socio-symbolic logic of exchange, in which acts of retributive sexual violence offered a cyclical temporality of their own, they can also be understood as an attempt to re-assert the sovereignty and honour of the family through acts of violence that take place within a secular time frame.

Violence against women – whose honour became intertwined with narratives of national sovereignty that saw the nation as a protective paternal territory – underlies the history of this period. Urvashi Butalia estimates that there were 75,000 female victims of abduction and rape, and she has assembled testimonies by women who experienced and witnessed such violence both between and within different communities.¹⁵ Although not central to *Train to Pakistan's* narrative, the economy of sexual violence and the abductions that the militia incite offer a portrayal that pre-empts later oral testimonies of Partition. If, as I have argued, the delays to the goods trains in the novel form the absent presence of victims of Partition violence, it is through this narrative delay that we are encouraged to remember the embodied history of the victims of Partition in this foundational moment. To

an Age of Permanent War eds. by Victoria Hesford and Lisa Diedrich (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2008), p.62 [*emphasis original*].

¹³ Kaplan, 'Politics, Psyche and Feminine Time', p. 59.

¹⁴ Kaplan, 'Politics, Psyche and Feminine Time', p. 62.

¹⁵ Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 3.

be clear, this thesis does not dispute the argument that the spatiality of ‘nation formation was written on bodies of women’; rather, it extends this statement to think about the ways Partition was also stamped on women’s experience of time and history.¹⁶ Short fiction and personal testimony offer a way to open up women’s experiences of Partition, and to problematise national self-portrayals that link postcolonial sovereignty with gendered formulations of communal honour. Women’s Partition narratives shed light on the gendered violence that occurred inside communities and families. In doing so, they complicate the foundational promise of the state to protect *all* of its citizens, but they also debunk the idea that such violence was always an external threat to be solved by a majoritarian sovereignty.

This economy of violence, in which abductions, rapes, and murders were exchanged across communities at Partition, offers a way of reading the promise of national sovereignty through the eyes of a group of people whose own sovereignty was, in fact, stolen away at the moment of independence. This violence led to policies from both India and Pakistan for the repatriation of women to their “rightful” nation-states. Mohandas Gandhi, for instance, gave a national address imploring families to allow those women back into their families:

As regards Hindu girls it is still doubtful whether they will be accepted by their families. This is very bad. If a girl has lost her parents or husband it is not her fault. And yet Hindu society does not look upon such a girl with respect any more. The mistake is ours, not the girl’s.¹⁷

These sentiments were visible on both sides of the border as repatriation efforts were officially part of Pakistani and Indian law until 1950.¹⁸ The language here – of belonging, recovery, and acceptance – is not exclusive to Gandhi’s address, but representative of contemporary political and journalistic rhetoric. It is a language that is tied up with patriarchal ideas of women as property, and of women’s honour as always-already being a reflection on their male relatives. Retroactively leveraging the experiences of abductees into the early politics of postcolonial nationalism positions them, at once, as a non-

¹⁶ Rashmi Luthra, ‘Unmasking Nation/Rewriting Home: Gendered Narratives of the Partition and its Aftermath’, *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 5:3 (2012), 333-351 (p. 333).

¹⁷ M. K. Gandhi, ‘Speech at Prayer Meeting, 26th December, 1947’, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* vol. 90 (New Delhi: Government of India, 1984), p. 300.

¹⁸ Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, ‘Recovery, Rupture, Resistance: Indian State and Abduction of Women during Partition’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28:17 (1993), WS2-WS11 (p. WS4).

signifying inscriptional site for the sacrificial logic of Partition, and a disembodied vehicle for the rhetoric of shame that served to justify the national project of recovery.

The remainder of this chapter will address the literary figure of the abducted woman, and how the events of her narrative can flash up to interrupt the future imagined in Pakistan's nationalist historiography. Jamila Hashmi's 'Exile' and Amrita Pritam's 'The Skeleton' narrate the abduction women by men of the 'other' faith community, and their lives in the years after forced marriage. Both of these narratives prompt readers to think about what it means to be abducted, and to reflect upon the particular logic of abduction at the moment of independence. If the rhetoric of Pakistan's postcolonial sovereignty is bound up with a patriarchal logic of honour which seeks to protect wives and daughters, then abduction could be figured as a sign of shame that undermines this patriarchal symbolic economy. As such, narratives of abduction raise profound questions about the legitimacy and the patriarchal foundations of postcolonial sovereignty. How might a consideration of women's writing on Partition help to articulate the exclusionary foundations of Pakistan's independent future, and reveal the sacrificial role that women played in it? By reading selected literary narratives written from the standpoint of women, in conjunction with testimonies of Partition violence, I suggest that women's memories of Partition offer a powerful resource for interrogating the patriarchal foundations of sovereign time in Pakistan.

A number of important and powerful oral histories have been published since the late 1990s that aim to bring women's experiences of Partition to the forefront of its historical narration. There is an overwhelming sense in these works that women's narratives have been silenced through a combination of familial pressure, shame, political rhetoric, and nationalist historiography. As the decades pass, the details of these narratives are increasingly difficult to recover. Among other historians, Urvashi Butalia reads the impact of ideas of honour, shame, and purity on the lives of women from a variety of ethno-religious backgrounds, although mostly Hindu. Butalia states her distrust of dominant narratives of history in her introduction:

If the books I was reading were to be believed, the Partition of India was something that happened in August 1947. A series of events preceded it: these included the growing divide between the Congress and the Muslim League, the debates between Jinnah and Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, and a host of other developments on the 'political' front. And a series of events accompanied and followed it: violence, mass migration, refugeeism,

rehabilitation. *But the history of Partition seemed to lie only in the political developments that had led up to it.* These other aspects—what had happened to the millions of people who had to live through this time, what we might call the ‘human dimensions’ of this history—somehow seemed to have a ‘lesser’ status in it.¹⁹

This criticism of Partition historiography reflects a criticism of India and Pakistan’s ongoing representations of political independence as a moment of liberation and universal democratic representation. In this passage, Butalia critiques dominant historiographical trends that primarily focus on pre-Partition party politics. She also questions the fact that this series of political events – measured and plottable on a chronological timeline – often supersede personal experiences that pre-existed them, accompanied them, and were exacerbated by Partition. What is more, the gendered violence of this historical moment is not coincidental. I argue that these ‘human dimensions’ have the power to undermine the high political rhetoric of postcolonial sovereignty by drawing a lineage between contemporary violence and historical communal and regional tensions. Butalia’s focus on gendered histories of Partition is therefore doubly important, because women’s bodies are always-already incorporated into this pre-national mythic time. And yet, when unspoken experiences of gendered violence are uncovered, they offer a strong critique of this temporal framing of sovereignty. These experiences, mediated by Butalia in the form of numerous testimonies, represent the recognition and narration of the events and aftermath of Partition in which modes of colonial rule and law-making were allowed to continue, and in which citizenship was only gradually and unevenly distributed amongst the populations of both states.

In work that speaks to Butalia’s research, Veena Das attempts to provoke an understanding of the Indian state’s weaving of women into narratives of nationhood. Her work refuses any notion of Partition as a discrete historical event, particularly as the temporality of Partition continues beyond the immediate aftermath of the transfer of sovereignty. Das interrogates how the gendered rhetoric of both states framed women’s bodies as metaphorical bearers of honour to stoke communal and nationalist fervour, thereby causing change to the lives of women that extends into present and future generations of both India and Pakistan. Das writes that Pakistan and India’s

¹⁹ Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, pp. 5-6 [*emphasis my own*].

[...] interest in women [...] was not premised upon their definition as citizens but as sexual and reproductive beings. As far as recovery of women held by the “other” side was concerned, what was at stake was the honour of the nation because women as sexual and reproductive beings were being forcibly held.²⁰

For Das, the way women’s repatriation became a policy of both states in the immediate aftermath of Partition highlights the gendered nature of sovereignty. The recovery of women who, when construed solely as ‘sexual and reproductive beings’, were primarily regarded as the bearers of new citizens of the new nation-state, situated the state itself as a paternal protector of women and communal honour.²¹ If we consider how the gendered abductee is presented as a figure who is also crucial to the reproductive *future* of the nation, we can begin to understand how the symbolic framing of women’s bodies as bearers of the nation has significant temporal implications.

The gendered subject of shame and honour is central to the future-oriented rhetoric of reproduction in the majoritarian state, and yet she is often evoked as a way of preserving a patriarchal order of sovereignty that is imagined as if it were timeless. Butalia cites the words of an unnamed MP in the Indian legislative assembly debates, which helps to clarify this idea:

“Even now,” he said, “the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are revered. For the sake of one woman who was taken away by Ravana the whole nation took up arms and went to war. And here there are thousands and the way they have been treated.... Our sisters from Kashmir were actually sold in the bazars and whatnot [*sic*] was done to them.”²²

This invocation of the Hindu epic of the *Ramayana* represents the way in which the high-political rhetoric of the nation appropriated the bodies of women in the service of a mythical idea of national sovereignty. I argue that statements such as these not only act to

²⁰ Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), p. 40.

²¹ It is true that the political drivers behind the repatriation of abducted or ‘left-behind’ women were most significantly coming from the Indian side of the border, as were the sources and foci of Menon and Bhasin, Butalia, and Das’ texts. This being said, this rhetoric contributed to an equally significant mirror effect from the Pakistani state, and the figure of the female refugee/ abductee is highly visible within the literature of Partition from the Pakistani side of the border.

²² Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 141.

essentialise the communal aspect of Partition violence – as has been criticised by Gyanendra Pandey – but they do so in a particularly gendered manner that had (and continues to have) the power to elide the narratives of womanhood that eventually found voice through the work of Butalia, Ritu and Menon, and others. The reference to the Hindu epic has the effect of situating fictional and historical narratives of abduction, suicide, and rape within a mythic ‘before-time’. In excising this violence from the postcolonial present, such rhetoric has two interlinked functions: first, it thrusts relatively recent events into a primordial pre-national time, thereby absolving the postcolonial state from any responsibility; and second, it marks the victims as sacrificial mothers of the nation and community, assigning them to the narrow role of a reproductive labour force that contributes to the onward progress of the nation in homogeneous, empty time. The following narratives refuse to allow a straight line to be drawn from the sacrificial before-time, to the celebrated nation-time. This refusal is made possible by making explicit the value of memory and testimony, the experience of survival outside of one’s extended patriarchal family, and through a retelling of these narratives as central to the history of the nation.

The figure of Sita in the Hindu epic *The Ramayana* has been an important vehicle in twentieth-century nationalist discourses of the abductee. With its connotations of Hindu innocence and unprovoked Muslim violence, the Sita narrative has been employed politically in nationalist projects in India since Partition. Despite its Hindu origins, however, the story of Sita has been re-framed in fiction from both sides of the border to evoke the human impact of abduction and exile. Even through a short summary, it is easy to see why this narrative was mobilised politically in the 1940s and 1950s to escalate demands for the repatriation of abducted women from both countries. Within the terms of this narrative, the god Rama is banished from his kingdom into a fourteen-year exile with his wife Sita. Sita is captured by the Demon-King Ravana and, over the course of many adventures, is eventually recaptured from his lecherous clutches and returned to the kingdom. After returning from the forest, Sita’s chastity is questioned and she is once again banished. During this period of banishment, she bears Rama two legitimate sons, however she never repairs her reputation and eventually returns to the Earth (her mother). The story elevates and celebrates Sita for her chastity, despite the tragedy of her double exile. The epic has a mythical temporal dimension, and attributes its moral instruction to a gendered figure that has retained its appeal throughout the twentieth century. Rashmi Luthra notes that the text is used:

[...] within political projects as disparate as the recasting of Sita [...] by Gandhi to persuade women to join the struggle for Indian independence against British rule [...] and the use of various aspects of the *Ramayana* by the extreme-Right Hindutva movement to create a Hindu state in India.²³

The enduring reframing of the *Ramayana* within Indian nationalist projects highlights the way myth is appropriated into the foundations of the modern, ethno-nationalist state, which is itself imagined as timeless. This appeal to myth is significant to my argument for two reasons: first, it reveals the gendered nature of nationalist rhetoric at the historical moment of decolonisation and Partition; and second, it appeals to a mythic temporality to reimagine the postcolonial present as a new beginning. Claiming legitimacy through the appropriation of the epics means looking back before the history of the nation-state to impart a ‘timeless’ narrative structure on the problems of the present. It could be said that transposing this sacred narrative of abduction, honour, and shame onto temporal narratives effaces the particularities of individual women’s experiences. Conversely, feminist appropriations have the ability to articulate a significant challenge to this mythic time, and the supposedly timeless foundations of postcolonial sovereignty.

The next section reads the representation of the Sita figure in Pakistani fiction as a way to make sense of the silence that surrounds women’s histories of Partition violence. If Sita of the Hindu epic is a passive sign of the mythical time of sovereignty, the ‘Sita’ referred to in Jamila Hashmi’s ‘Exile’ is an historical agent with subjectivity and a role within the sovereign time of the nation. This rewriting of the Hindu epic draws attention to a significant discrepancy between the sovereign time of the nation and a deconstructive feminist idea of postcolonial women’s time. The remainder of this chapter will explore this discrepancy by tracing the ways in which such a gendered temporality is erased; in so doing, it will try to piece together the fragments of this temporality through a reading of the literary figure of the abductee. The next section approaches narratives of social death and repatriation at the moment of Partition to suggest that the founding rhetoric of the postcolonial nation-state not only failed to ensure citizenship and safety for its women, but it did so in ways that actively stripped them of their relationship to their own historical experience.

²³ Rashmi Luthra, ‘Clearing Sacred Ground: Women-Centred Interpretations of the Hindu Epics’, *Feminist Formations*, 26:2 (2014), 135-161 (p. 136).

Silence in 'Exile' and the Drowning at Thoa Kalsa

In *Train to Pakistan*, the moment of independence dislocates and threatens to exile its fictional characters. As Hannah Arendt once argued, it is a paradox of national sovereignty that it is often defined in and through statelessness.²⁴ Indeed, to conceptualise postcolonial sovereignty in terms of 'exile' would seem to undermine Jinnah's sovereign promise of a secular and inclusive nation-state. It is precisely this paradox that Jamila Hashmi's short story 'Exile' dramatises. By narrativising the experience of exile and the importance of communal honour, the story of Sita speaks to the phenomenon of women's 'social death'. In a related, but separate discussion, Orlando Patterson writes that social death is a kind of living death, or a negation of life, that is key to allowing the 'assumption of sovereign power over another person'.²⁵ For Patterson, this negation of life is epitomised in the institution of slavery; but this account of sovereignty can also be extended to other forms of sovereign power and violence, such as that exemplified in the abduction and exile of Muslim and Hindu women during Partition. In Patterson's book, this social death takes one of two modes: 'in the intrusive mode the slave was conceived of as someone who did not belong because [s]he was an outsider, while in the extrusive mode the slave became an outsider because [s]he did not (or no longer) belonged'.²⁶ The experience of social death under American slavery clearly has its own historical and racial specificity, however Patterson's conceptualisation is similar in certain general respects to the experience of exile at the moment of Partition. For example, the abductees in the following readings incorporate elements of both of Patterson's modes, in that they are 'intrusive' to the communities to which they are taken (in the sense that they are marked as outsiders) and 'extrusive' to their own patriarchal family system. The process of exile is built upon the rhetoric of honour and shame that dominates the gender politics of Partition violence. The protection of familial or communal honour through the exile of women ostensibly represents a protection of that social group's homogeneity, but through this process women are denied the freedoms that nationalist movements had promised. Texts like 'Exile' and 'The Skeleton' ask how such a refusal of citizenship could be commensurate with Jinnah's inclusive secular rhetoric of the nation, and prompt us to think about the way these

²⁴ Arendt's discussion of statelessness and sovereignty only makes a brief reference to the partition of India, but this gnomic statement is valuable for elucidating the exclusionary foundations of the nation.

²⁵ Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 35.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

abductees might help to conceptualise women's experience of independence as one of exile.

In the *Ramayana*, Sita's exile ends with her being absorbed into the womb of her mother, the Earth. The epic form allows Sita, marked by the shame of her original exile, to escape the temporal realm and continue to exist only as a memory, or as an instructional figure. Despite her protestations of honour, her social death and removal from the world are complete and, importantly, *synchronous*. It is in this aspect that these literary abductees differ most markedly from the epic figure to which they are compared, the asynchrony between their social and physical deaths thrusts them into the reproductive futures of Pakistan and India. The 'everyday' experiences of these literary abductees could be taken to represent Butalia's 'human dimensions' of Partition in a way that totalising comparisons to Sita may elide. What is more, their continued survival and engagement in communal life undermines the sacrificial logic of women's identity at this historical moment. As Allison Weir argues:

The equation of identity with a logic of sacrifice leads us to a simplistic, and destructive, equation of capacities for individual autonomy and for collective solidarity with repression, and hence with domination. To get out of this equation, we need to distinguish between repressive, sacrificial forms of identity and other possible forms. This makes it possible to shift from a sacrificial model to a model of self-identity as a capacity for participation in a social world.²⁷

These women differ from Sita because of their capacity to participate in the social world, either within the domestic sphere, their extended family, or within their new communities more broadly. Unlike Sita, these exiles survive their social death, marking it as both a performance and a construction, and shedding light on the way in which this practice undermined the future-oriented promise of postcolonial sovereignty. The difficulty of this survival also comes to show how the secular citizenship of Jinnah's declaration of independence was unevenly distributed.

Furthermore, it should be noted that this asynchrony between social death and actual death incorporates a symbolic economy that is, again, artificial and radically unstable. Jean Baudrillard notes that '[d]eath is ultimately nothing more than the social line

²⁷ Allison Weir, *Sacrificial Logics: Feminist Theory and the Critique of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 8.

of demarcation separating the “dead” from the “living”²⁸. In other words, if death is simply a ‘social line’, then it is constructed, historically contingent, and could possibly be demarcated culturally through non-biological signifiers. This image of death leads us to ask how this demarcation is articulated in literature, and how it can be destabilised by the narration of the ongoing lives of those who are considered ‘dead’. There is also a temporal distinction to this social line that is particularly visible in Baudrillard’s broader discussion of how those whose productive, or reproductive, labour is exploited by the capitalist system exist in a state of ‘deferred death’.²⁹ The social death symbolised by the conditions of wage labour for people working in capitalist societies are even more pronounced for abducted women who are caught up in the rule of property and its patriarchal order. In their survival, the coming narratives of abductees speak out from this place of deferred death: their narratives highlight the process by which they are exiled and by which they negotiate the temporal social demarcation between living (citizen) and dead (exile). To return to the figure of Sita, the deployment of her ancient parable of social death and sacrifice in nationalist rhetoric is certainly registered in literary texts about abduction. In ‘Exile’, a Muslim woman is abducted and married into a Hindu family; and in ‘The Skeleton’ the protagonist experiences social death after her abduction into a Muslim family to settle an historical property dispute. In Hashmi’s story, the allusion to the story of Sita is made explicit, whilst Pritam’s story speaks to Sita’s plight metonymically through an investment in the literary figure of the abductee.

* * *

Jamila Hashmi’s Urdu short story ‘Exile’ has garnered critical attention for its presentation of issues of abduction and motherhood set against the epic narrative of the *Ramayana*. Notably, Bodh Prakash highlights how the story seems to dislocate the narrator from time, writing that the narrator is ‘caught between a happy childhood in the past [...] and a bleak and painful present, with no hope of redemption in the future’, and Jasbir Jain has argued briefly that the protagonist’s forced rooting in India ‘trapped her’ in the image of Sita herself.³⁰ Some critics have stressed this process of forced rooting by reading the territorial dislocation, belonging and homesickness brought on in the novel by the gendered violence

²⁸ Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, trans. by Iain Hamilton Grant (London: Sage, 1993), p. 127.

²⁹ Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, p. 39.

³⁰ Bodh Prakash, *Writing Partition: Aesthetics and Ideology in Hindi and Urdu Literature* (New Delhi: Pearson Longman, 2009), p. 98. Jasbir Jain, ‘Daughters of Mother India in Search of a Nation: Women’s Narratives About the Nation’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41:7 (April/May, 2006), p. 1656.

of Partition.³¹ Marangoly George, in particular, draws on Veena Das to stress the everyday nature of patriarchal control and how it can be read into both seemingly exceptional narratives of abduction, and the exile of the epic.³² What these readings do not account for is how the mobilisation of the Sita narrative by the male characters in the text places the narrator's experiences outside of the time of the nation, sublimating her history, and structuring her position in the nation's reproductive future.

In 'Exile, the unnamed Muslim narrator makes numerous references to her similarities to Sita.³³ The story begins by relating the noise of the *Dusehra* celebration in the town of Sangrao, in which Hindus traditionally burn an effigy of the Demon-King Ravana to celebrate Rama's victory against him and the ill-fated return of Sita. The narrator states that

[T]he flames will rise for a long time and the faces of the people round about will look fearsome in the firelight, as if each one is a disguised Ravana seeking Sita to gloat over her isolation and her second exile.³⁴

The passage introduces the story's preoccupation with the epic figure of Sita, but immediately problematises the political rhetoric of repatriation that underpins her narrative. By imagining the assembled Hindus as celebrating the patriarchal traditions that force a second banishment, rather than Sita's return from exile, the story foreshadows the coming narrative of its own Sita figure's abduction. This literary technique invites readers to consider the ways in which independence – far from leading to the inclusive freedom promised in Jinnah's sovereign speech act – could perhaps be better understood as a form of exile. Furthermore, in calling the Hindus 'disguised Ravanas', Hashmi reverses the ethno-religious specificity of appeals to the *Ramayana* within political rhetoric to offer a broader condemnation of both the displacement that Partition caused, and the way it is narrated by figures of power.

In telling the story of a 'Sita', instead of the heroics of a rescuing Rama, Hashmi re-focalises the epic in a way that articulates the passivity of the abductee-figure as she is

³¹ Suvir Kaul ed., *The partitions of Memory: The Afterlife of the Division of India* (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 2002).

³² Rosemary Marangoly George, '(Extra)Ordinary Violence: National Literatures, Diaspora Aesthetics, and the Politics of Gender in South Asian Partition Fiction', *Signs*, 33:1 (2007), 135-158 (p. 149).

³³ I will refer to Hashmi's narrator as 'Sita figure' throughout.

³⁴ Jamila Hashmi, 'Exile', trans. by Shahrukh Husain, in *Kahani: Short Stories by Pakistani Women*, ed. by Aamer Hussain (London: Saqi, 1999 [first published 1969]), p. 105 [all subsequent references will be given parenthetically].

appropriated in the nationalist rhetoric of repatriation. Like the unnamed MP cited above, 'Exile' makes Sita's narrative contemporaneous with the events of Partition; however, it also situates the experience within the everyday domestic space. In doing so, Hashmi imagines the abductee not as a passive inscriptional space for the narration of communal nationalism, but rather as an historical agent whose lived experience is both individual and historically valuable. At the centre of the story is the relationship between the narrator's experience of exile and that of Sita. However, it becomes clear in the silencing of her own experience, and the repeated celebration of the epic Sita, that one of these stories is to be effaced as the other is passed on to the next generation. The removal of the Sita figure's history is a source of frustration that leads the character to make the Sita comparison throughout the text. She declares explicitly: 'I'm Sita. I'm enduring exile and I'm a prisoner in Sangrao' (p. 107), and subsequently declares that her husband 'Gurpal is telling the boys the tale of Ravana. How can he know that I am Sita, following him, and that he himself is Ravana?' (p. 110). The first of these quotations explicitly refers to the experience of marriage as one of imprisonment: it posits the protagonist's situation as one in which her sovereignty has been assumed by another person and marks her – in the conceptual terms of Patterson's account of social death – as both an 'intrusive' and 'extrusive' non-person. Extrusive, because she is exiled from her own community, and intrusive because she is without social standing in her new family. In the following questioning of Gurpal's telling of the story of Sita to the narrator's own children, we are presented with further evidence of the silence that surrounds her memory of Partition. Gurpal's investment in the epic aligns him with the high political debates around repatriation, highlighting how appeals to mythic temporalities can work to efface the particularities of 'real' abduction narratives closer to home. The narrator's silence sheds light on the patriarchal foundations of nationalist historiography, which are rehearsed and recycled in the repeated telling of the *Ramayana*.

In the dialogue between Gurpal and his wife, the story foregrounds the process by which certain acts of Partition violence are framed as routine, unexceptional, and unworthy of scrutiny. The Sita figure's son notes that children get separated from parents during the fair, and her response is hastily rebuked by Gurpal:

'Children are separated from their mothers even without fairs.' I say, stroking Munni's head without looking at him.

'Will you ever be able to forget that incident? Those times were different, it's changed now.' Gurpal says softly.

How can I convince Gurpal that time is never different and people are condemned to suffer because they can't forget? In my memory that scene is alive – fire on all sides, the country had become independent, it had been divided. [...] The words of brothers and intimates have been cut like the shackles of centuries by independence and Partition and ground to dust under the feet of drifters. (p.114)

This passage is lengthy and rich as the violence of the narrator's abduction is revealed, including Gurpal's murder of her father, along with the fact that she was a 'young girl' at the time (p. 114).³⁵ What is also revealed are the temporal dynamics of gendered violence. The Sita figure's experience of violence exists within a secular postcolonial present, but Gurpal insists that it be forgotten, and thereby suggests that such histories were an aberration or an exception. I would contend that Gurpal's 'different' time is one that situates the protagonist's abduction, and the murder of her family, as happening outside of the time of the nation. These supposedly exceptional acts are part of the mythic foundations of the new national order, but they are unwelcome within the narration of the postcolonial family and community. Ironically, the story of Sita is worthy of being told precisely *because* it comes from a different time; it is framed as an instructive mythic history that predates the secular temporality of modernity, and conveniently subsumes secular experiences into its patriarchal logic. In response, the narrator's statement that familial promises of protection had been 'cut like the shackles of centuries' makes explicit the epistemic violence that this silencing enacts. The narrator's inner response rebukes this rhetorical act on the part of her husband. Her insistence that 'time is never different' resists the attribution of her experience to a pre-national before-time in which violence against women and minorities was a necessary or unavoidable action. It must be noted that this experience is only narrated internally, meaning that it is not redeemed within the world of the short story. Although Prakash writes that her narrative is 'an act of resistance' and that '[t]he silence of women survivors that Butalia bemoans is resoundingly broken by the creative writer-narrator', this is a fictional text that perhaps evokes real-life analogues that will never be articulated in this way.³⁶ The narration of this trauma acts as a literary

³⁵ Hashmi may also be making reference here to Mulk Raj Anand's short story, 'The Lost Child' (1934). Anand's narrative of a child being separated from his parents whilst distracted by the excitement of the fair offers a potentially valuable intertext. As Hashmi's Sita-figure highlights the difference between her own childhood and that represented in the pre-Partition tale, we see another example of an instructional narrative with the power to supersede the narrator's own historical experience.

³⁶ Bodh Prakash, *Writing Partition*, p. 99.

articulation of the silence that remains when powerful male figures are able to dominate and mediate the production of historical narratives and memory, even within the home.

The Sita figure's silenced memory in 'Exile' is representative of a suppressed history that can shed light on the gendered dimensions of sovereignty and time. The abductee's memory survives the moment of Partition, and has the ability to challenge images of Partition as either a discrete historical event, or a future-oriented project. What is more, memory involves a retroactive inscription of meaning onto events: an inscription that is always ongoing and unfinished. This ever-expanding gendered history involves a persistent historicisation of violence that could otherwise be subsumed into mythic status. The silenced Sita figure of 'Exile', for instance, challenges the mythologisation of her own experiences and – in her capacity as mother to a Hindu family – situates that violence alongside her reproductive labour, as both contiguous and causal. Indeed, histories that bridge this rhetorical gap raise profound questions about the timeless foundations of nationalist narratives of postcolonial sovereignty in South Asia.

If the nation's timelessness is achieved through the silencing of women's voices, then the retrieval of such testimonies can help us rethink the histories of sovereignty in Pakistan in a way that make them more democratic, heterogeneous, and inclusive. Butalia notes the problems of locating women's memory in her own research within the family space:

The fact that most of the interviews took place in family situations also meant that women were seldom alone when they spoke to us [...] [I]f their husbands or sons were around, they tended to take over the interview, inadvertently or otherwise, making the women lapse into a sort of silence. This is not uncommon – many oral historians have written about the difficulty of speaking to and with women, of learning to listen differently, often of listening to the hidden nuance, the half-said thing, the silences which are sometimes more eloquent than speech.³⁷

This statement reflects the experiences of Hashmi's Sita figure, for it highlights the difficulty in articulating the gendered dimensions of Partition in the presence of male citizens who may have experienced the events in a very different way. The methodological challenge of uncovering a history of gendered violence in a public discourse that is

³⁷ Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 12.

constrained by tacit codes of honour and shame offers one of the most fascinating moments of Butalia's book, as one violent event is remembered so differently by a mother and her son. In the following section, I will briefly discuss the implications of such events for understanding how lived experiences of Partition violence were also committed to the mythic before-time of the epic. The chapter closes with a reading of Pritam's 'The Skeleton', and considers how this novella opens up a space for reimagining the figure of the abductee that goes beyond the delimited temporal confines of Partition. Through this reading, I suggest that a consideration of women's time in narratives of Partition can help to question and challenge the temporal logic of patriarchal ideas of national sovereignty; a temporal logic that frame women's bodies as passive and symbolic vehicles for the timeless history and future of the postcolonial nation-state.

* * *

The event in Butalia's text that most clearly illustrates the competing histories of women and the state is the mass drowning at the border town of Thoa Kalsa, in which around ninety Sikh women and children of the village 'chose' to commit suicide as a means to avoid abduction, rape or conversion to Islam. The events took place over a few days as Muslim militia surrounded the Rawalpindi village and the inhabitants awaited an evacuation. In this situation, attentive to the increasing occurrence of raids and the potential for abduction, the women of the town made the decision to take their lives by jumping into a well. Witnesses reported how the villagers felt that this collective act of suicide was preferable to the possible shame that their social deaths would incur. The commemoration of this event raises important questions about the limits of women's agency. Butalia notes how the people she had spoken to around Rawalpindi showed a level of respect to the men of Thoa Kalsa for not losing their women to communal violence; she writes that '[c]learly the women's "sacrifice" had elevated their families, and their communities, to a higher plane'.³⁸ The story of this decision in Butalia's book is told both by a survivor and her son, but the first thing to note is the notion of the 'decision' itself.³⁹

Butalia's central line of enquiry concerns the women's agency: '[w]ere [the women of Thoa Kalsa] then consenting victims/agents of the patriarchal consensus I have spoken

³⁸ Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 157.

³⁹ Throughout the discussion of this event in Butalia's book the words 'decision' and 'choice' are put in quotation marks to highlight the way in which they are perhaps only nominally a show of agency, moreover they are marks of coercion and the expected result of a national conversation that held women's honour as a symbol of victory in conflict.

of above? Where in their “decision” did “choice” begin and “coercion” end? What, in other words does their silence hide?”⁴⁰ The decision to commit suicide is conducted within a broader context in which women are the symbols of the nation’s honour, and their social standing is metonymic for the strength of their husbands and fathers. This strength is focalised, in Butalia’s research, through one individual who is therefore elevated to the position of an honourable martyr. Butalia writes that according to witnesses, although men led village discussions before the drowning, a woman named Mata Lajjawanti was among the few women who took part:

As survivors tell it, not only did she take the decision, but she also ‘fearlessly’ led the women to the well, upholding the tradition of the strong, upright, courageous Punjabi woman. If the women were aware of the discussions, perhaps even involved in them, can we then surmise that in taking their own lives they were acting upon a perceived (or rather, misperceived) notion of the good of their community?⁴¹

This quotation questions the role that the women had in deciding their fate. In conferring upon Lajjawanti the traditional image of the Punjabi woman, Butalia subtly implies that her fearlessness may have been a posthumous projection, thereby highlighting the social construction of the notion of communal good. In this way, the passage does much to suggest that choice and coercion are enmeshed in the nationalist narratives of honour and shame. Though Butalia revisits this historical event at the turn of the twenty-first century, Gyanendra Pandey has noted that ‘[t]he structure of this narrative was [...] already in place in the 1950s’ as he offers a genealogy of the event in historical texts that includes a reference in *The Statesman* on the day of independence that stated that the event ‘stirred the imagination of the people of the Punjab’.⁴² The repetition and retelling of a glorified nationalist narrative of the Thoa Kalsa deaths reflects the nature of the Sita narrative in contemporary political discourse. Pandey notes that the event was stirred up to an almost mythic status among Punjabi Sikhs through pamphlets and memorialisation that predate Butalia’s testimonial evidence. The ongoing local appeals to the Thoa Kalsa narrative reflect Gurpal’s repetition of the Sita myth in ‘Exile’, and such retellings make overt the

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 169

⁴¹ Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 168.

⁴² Gyanendra Pandey, *Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 85.

organised and political nature of the event's establishment in the nationalist mythmaking of Partition's historiography.

Keeping the centrality of these events to the local historiography of Partition in mind, I will turn now to the Basant Kaur's narration of the events in Thoa Kalsa, in which she took part. Kaur is described as a Sikh Punjabi woman in her seventies at the time of the interview.⁴³ She recalls two separate moments of violence within the village in March of 1947: the sacrificing of young women by their fathers and uncles and the discussions and enactment of the mass suicide. The narrative is told from a first-person point of view, and explains how Kaur survived because the well was already filled with corpses. By way of explanation she uses a cooking metaphor to make sense of the ordeal:

She too jumped in, but survived because there was not enough water in the well to drown them all. She said: 'It's like when you put rotis into a tandoor and if it is too full, the ones near the top, they don't cook, they have to be taken out. So the well filled up, and we could not drown... Those who died, died, and those who were alive, they pulled out.'⁴⁴

This culinary image situates the events at Thoa Kalsa within the everyday domestic life of the Punjabi woman, and as such Kaur's narrative refuses to imagine the events as *only* an end point. Indeed, her survival and experience of womanhood in the decades after the events tie the violence in Thoa Kalsa to the everyday acts of raising her family, symbolised by the cooking of rotis. There is a parallel to be drawn here between Kaur and Hashmi's Sita figure. For Kaur, the event is not part of a mythic before-time, but rather it is as much a lived experience of the history of the nation as her continued reproductive labour.

If we consider Pandey's account of the glorification of women's sacrifice that has been rehearsed in dominant patriarchal narratives for decades, it is perhaps not surprising that a male witness remembered the event differently. Butalia's next interviewee, Bir Bahadur Singh, is Kaur's son, and he offers a very different memory of the event. In describing the event, Singh references his sister who died at Thoa Kalsa, but not his mother who survived. Butalia writes of the dissonance between Singh and Kaur's memory of the event evocatively:

⁴³ Pandey, *Remembering Partition*, p. 37.

⁴⁴ Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, p. 35.

When Bir Bahadur Singh spoke of a few women who jumped into the well several times and who survived, he made no mention that one of them was actually his mother, Basant Kaur. So that, when she described the incident with herself as the protagonist, we did not, at first, believe her. Later, when it was confirmed that she was indeed the same woman, I could only conclude that Bir Bahadur had not mentioned that she was his mother because in having escaped death, she could not be classed with the women who had, in fact, died. Much easier, then, to speak of the sister who died an ‘honourable’ death, than the mother who survived.⁴⁵

The relationship between Singh and Kaur is jarring; it prompts us to consider how women’s narratives fail to be articulated even within their own families. It also highlights a further parallel to Orlando Patterson’s account of the logic of social death, in which ‘[t]he idea that a person’s honour is more valuable than [her] life, and that to prefer life to honour betrays a degraded mind, comes close to being a genuinely universal belief’.⁴⁶ For Singh, the event exists primarily as an end point, and he fails to imagine the futures that exist for some of these women. This logic of death as honour, and thus survival as potentially shameful, brings to light the sacrificial place of women in the logic of national and communal honour that situates their experiences as exceptional and ahistorical. Moreover, the exclusion of his mother from the event highlights the way in which the position of the mother often sublimates other facets of female subjectivity (such as the threat of abduction, or survival) within the future-oriented political imaginary of the nation, as we will see in the following reading of Pritam. The rhetoric of shame and honour that surround the different narratives of Thoa Kalsa prompts us to ask: how can the nation promise a future for all citizens if thousands of abducted, raped, or socially dead women are imagined away in its moment of foundation? In the patriarchal imaginary of the nation, the sacrificial female subject is more convenient dead, because, like Sita, her exile or death comes to represent the honour and moral strength of the men of her community. Through this process of social exclusion, she is banished to a before-time that informs and legitimises the nationalism of the present, and her subjective experience is effaced from public memory or memorialisation.

⁴⁵ Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence*, p.168.

⁴⁶ Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, p. 78.

Surviving Social Death in Amrita Pritam's 'The Skeleton'

As women's sacrifices become increasingly tied up with the twin concepts of shame and honour, they became a trope for the representation of the trauma of Partition, but also of nationalism itself. This being said, experiences of gendered violence were not unique to the immediate historical period of Partition. Amrita Pritam's novella 'The Skeleton', taken from *Pinjar: The Skeleton and Other Stories* (1950), takes place in the decades before and the months after Partition, and sheds light on the way women's narratives complicate the temporal boundaries of this historical event.⁴⁷ The text was first published in Punjabi in 1950, and was translated by Khushwant Singh for an international audience. Singh's 1987 translation is the only English version of 'The Skeleton', and it was the novelist's own reputation, in part, that brought the novella to a wider audience outside of the Punjab.⁴⁸ Previous critics have noted the text's representations of multiple occurrences of gendered violence,⁴⁹ and discussed the protagonist's abduction, her extrication from social space, and her later refusal of repatriation.⁵⁰ This reading takes these concerns forward with an as yet unexplored focus on how repeated cycles of violence and the phenomenon of social death disrupt the being-in-time of the protagonist and call into question the future-oriented rhetoric of independence. Pooro's abduction and social death occur long before the events of Partition, but her survival, exhibitions of agency, and strong condemnation of Partition violence resist nationalist mythmaking.⁵¹ 'The Skeleton' shows how experiences of abduction related to disputes over property were already prevalent in Punjabi society, before highlighting the ways Partition escalated such experiences to genocidal levels. Like Hashmi's Sita figure, the particularities of Pooro's experience of abduction give the lie to homogenising narratives of the state that would otherwise situate her in the mythic 'before-time' of nationalist becoming. Through this temporal frame, Pritam's abductee-figure becomes a symbol of resistance against the sacrificial imaginary of social death. Indeed,

⁴⁷ Amrita Pritam, 'The Skeleton' in *Pinjar: The Skeleton and Other Stories*, trans. by Khushwant Singh (New Delhi: Jaico Books, 2009) [all subsequent references will be given parenthetically].

⁴⁸ The fact that *Pinjar and Other Stories* was translated by Khushwant Singh increases his presence in this chapter and could have implications for the text's presentation of gender. This being said, the text speaks closely to issues of gender and honour in both Hashmi's story and the oral testimony that informs these literary readings.

⁴⁹ Rosemary Marangoly George, '(Extra)Ordinary Violence'. Bodh Prakash, *Writing Partition*.

⁵⁰ Alex Tickell, 'How Many Pakistans?'. Ranjana Ash, 'The Search for Freedom in Indian Women's Writing', in *Motherlands: Black Women's Writing from Africa, the Caribbean and South Asia*, ed. by Susheila Nasta (London: The Women's Press, 1991), 152-174.

⁵¹ As will become evident, the protagonist has two names over the course of the text. Before her abduction she is called Pooro, and after she is renamed Hamida. I will use both names here when appropriate.

the novella suggests that the abductee does have a future, and that future is one of its central preoccupations.

The text offers an alternate timeline of patriarchal violence that is both informed by the events of Partition, and attentive to a history of honour and shame that predate it. This being said, Sujala Singh has argued that ‘in [Pritam’s] narrative of retrieval of silenced voices and histories of women, the choices that these voices can be given for expression is limited.’⁵² In this chapter, I build upon Singh’s recognition of the patriarchal orders that silence women’s narratives of abduction and Partition violence, by considering the temporal nature of women’s exile and ‘social death’. Pooro is a survivor of abduction and forced marriage, and also an exile from her family and community. While these qualities might encourage us to read her as a passive vehicle for the sacrificial logic of Partition, I argue that Pooro’s narrative resists this figuration by questioning both pre-national and anti-national concepts of honour and shame. Her sacrifice positions her in relation to the economy of the patriarchal extended family, and also expresses her disdain for the elevation of familial codes of honour to the level of nation and state. In other words, Pooro’s singular experience must be considered outside of the frame of the symbolic logic of Partition, lest it be reduced to an inevitable sacrifice akin to the mythic Sita and the “courageous” women of Thoa Kalsa.

In ‘The Skeleton’, sacrificial figurations of women’s bodies are roundly condemned. Pooro’s history is anti-national, combative, and still being written, interrupting in the process the possibility of easy incorporation into homogeneous narratives of sacrifice and shame. One reason why this pre-national figure rebuffs comparison to Sita is because the sacrificial logic that causes her exile is routine, ‘everyday’, and unexceptional. This is recognised by Bede Scott, who, like Singh, is careful to situate the character’s experience of patriarchal violence within social structures that pre-exist the foundation of postcolonial sovereignty:

Pritam is scrupulously attentive to the differences between various patriarchal orders and practices. And she is particularly careful to stress the fact that distinctions between such patriarchies are always a matter of historical contingency – a consequence of their actions at specific times and in specific places. It is impossible, therefore, to dismiss all families or

⁵² Sujala Singh, ‘Nationalism’s Brandings: Women’s Bodies and Narratives of the Partition’, in *Comparing Postcolonial Literatures*, eds. by Ashok Bery and Patricia Murray (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 122-133 (p. 133).

communities or states as inherently repressive structures, just as it makes no sense to argue that they are always emancipatory or progressive.⁵³

Scott argues convincingly that the sacrificial logic of abduction and forced marriage predates the state; however, he makes it clear that the Pakistani and Indian states may have displayed the same misogynistic impulses through their programmes of repatriation. Through Pritam's novella, Scott approaches individual experiences of patriarchal violence as historically and socially contiguous, recognising the heterogeneity of women's narratives of abduction. Although Scott recognises the flawed nature of both states' efforts to help victims after Partition, he sees their capacity for intervention as having an ultimately redemptive and emancipatory potential. In doing so, he downplays the way nationalist rhetoric contributed to the escalation of such violence and later historiographical trends that gloss over this heterogeneity. The concluding reading is the most substantial of this chapter and will attempt to correct this oversight by exploring how Pritam's narrator articulates the gendered violence of Pakistan's foundational moment, and how she speaks out from a position of social death to condemn the future of the nation-state.

In the novella, Pooro, a young Hindu woman, prepares to marry a wealthy landowner. However, in the days before the wedding Pooro is abducted by a Muslim man, Rashida, who imprisons her and brings a *maulvi* to marry them. Pooro resists and escapes, but upon returning to her family she is turned away:

‘Who will marry you now? You have lost your faith and your birthright. If we dare to help you, we will be wiped out without a trace of blood left behind to tell of our fate.’

‘Then destroy me with your own hands.’

‘Daughter, it were better if you had died at birth.’ (p. 16)

Being told that she has lost her birthright – which was earlier in the text referred to as her ‘future’ (p. 14) – leads to the realisation that there is no longer a place for Pooro within the protection of her extended family. The cutting of that historical familial and communal tie is articulated as the theft of her future, and her plea for an honour killing cements both the finality of her social death and the subversive potential of her survival. Orlando Patterson

⁵³ Bede Scott, ‘Partitioning Bodies: Literature, Abduction and the State’, *Interventions*, 11:1 (2009), 35-49 (p. 42).

notes that the slave trade involved an uprooting from one's ancestral homeland and quotes Peter Suzuki's claim that as a consequence of this uprooting, '[slaves] have no past nor future'.⁵⁴ This claim takes on further significance if we substitute the slave for the returning abductee. In begging for death, the young Poro is shown to have internalised a sacrificial logic in which to have lost one's honour is to have no future, and to be denied access to one's family and community is to have no past. This formulation of social death, occurring between daughter and father, foreshadows the proliferation of abductions and sexual violence that accompanied Partition in thousands of families. In addition, it indicates how the sacrificial logic of communal relations could deny the inclusion of women's voices in a communally imagined national future. As the protagonist grows into womanhood, her survival undermines the symbolic nature of her social death, and her real impact upon the reproductive economy of both communities sheds light on the exclusionary patriarchal foundations of postcolonial sovereignty.

After returning to Rashida, Poro is converted to Islam, renamed Hamida, married, and tattooed with her Muslim name. Sujala Singh reads the four rituals that follow Poro's abduction as part of a process of branding that marks her incorporation into the Muslim community, and goes on to state that '[t]hese rites are iterable customs; indeed their social legitimacy stems from this iterability.'⁵⁵ By thinking of these acts as part of a repeated performance of national and communal identity, Singh highlights the way in which belonging in this text is coded by acts of exclusion and incorporation that create a dual identity of Poro/Hamida. Significantly for this chapter, this dual identity is narrated in such a way that it articulates her social death as highly disruptive to the character's subjectivity and being-in-time: '[i]n her dreams, when she met her old friends and played in her parents' home, everyone still called her Poro. At other times she was Hamida. It was a double life: Hamida by day, Poro by night.' (p. 17) The coexistence of Poro and Hamida breaks down over time as her ties to her family become increasingly irreparable. Her social death, or the means by which she is excluded from Hindu life, cannot erase immediately her personal identification with the community of her birth, and this incomplete process of disidentification is mirrored in her leading a double life. Later, when Hamida declares that 'Poro has been dead a long time' (p. 53), it becomes clear that the although her social exclusion has its root in communitarian traditions, it takes the temporal form of what Baudrillard calls a 'deferred death'.⁵⁶ This state of living death has a

⁵⁴ Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*, p. 8.

⁵⁵ Sujala Singh, 'Nationalism's Brandings', p. 129.

⁵⁶ Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, p. 39.

significant temporal dimension as it represents a duality of temporalities for women's experience: Pooro's 'death' is symbolic – it is an example of the finite sacrifice on which the nationalist rhetoric of honour was constructed – but Hamida's continued existence shows how the bodies of women still existed in time and space, as part of the nation's future. This social death exists within the terms of a symbolic exchange that becomes explicit in Rashida's reflections on the reasoning behind her abduction.

The novella has at its core a concern with sovereignty over women, land, and the household, and this is clear from the moment of abduction. When Pooro asks Rashida why he had abducted her, his answer uncovers the economic banality of some communal relations, but also foreshadows the irredentist violence of Partition and postcolonial sovereignty:

Did you know that our families, the Shaikhs and the Sahukars, have been at loggerheads for many generations? Your grandfather had advanced us Rs. 500 on compound interest and taken a mortgage on our house. We could not redeem the mortgage. He attached our house and had the entire Shaikh family ejected. We were rendered homeless. That was not all. His agents used foul language towards our womenfolk, and your uncle kept my father's sister in his house for three nights—with the knowledge of your grandfather. (p. 12)

That such relations of credit and debt extend to acts of sexual violence within the symbolic terms of this transaction may seem shocking if such an economic relationship is understood in the narrow terms of the liberal political economy. However, the return of this violence upon Pooro generations later highlights the way in which the framing of women as bearers of honour remains embroiled with other forms of symbolic exchange in the world of Punjabi society. Abduction and conversion are coded as a fate that is predetermined by other relations between the men of both communities, and in this respect the bodies of women become property to be taken or traded. The historical act becomes the mythic sacrifice upon which Rashida's 'right' to Pooro's body is constructed. For this reason, Rashida's speech also highlights the fact that the cycle of retributive violence has its own internal logic, and requires the patriarchal extended families of both communities to participate. In Rashida's justification, the ejection of the Muslim family, and the taking of a woman from them, represents the breakdown of the Shaikhs' sovereignty over the domestic space of the home. This is a transgression of a certain idea of sovereignty that

encompasses the protection of land, property, and the chastity of a community's women, and its consequences are felt by generations of women. The remainder of the novel further implicates such concepts of sovereignty in a campaign of violence against women that transcends the immediate historical moment of Partition. Furthermore, the specificity of the Sahukars' historical transgression is such that Pooro's experience comes to represent communal and familial relations that are much more complex than could easily be mapped onto the gendered rhetoric of honour and the nation. There is no straight line to be drawn through Sita, Pooro, and the victims of Partition violence that the narrative goes on to represent.

To say that Pooro refuses the sacrificial logic of honour and shame does not diminish her significant personal sacrifices. On the contrary, her renegotiation of social death and the overcoming of violence and shame are the very reason why her survival subverts the temporal logic of a homogeneous, empty time that imagines female sacrifice as foundational and prediscursive. Allison Weir writes that:

The equation of identity with a logic of sacrifice leads us to a simplistic, and destructive, equation of capacities for individual autonomy and for collective solidarity with repression, and hence with domination. To get out of this equation, we need to distinguish between repressive, sacrificial forms of identity and other possible forms. *This makes it possible to shift from a sacrificial model to a model of self-identity as a capacity for participation in a social world.*⁵⁷

Pooro embodies this shift by highlighting the way gendered identity is externally constructed through a sacrificial logic, yet at the same time she personally refuses this identification through a participation in the social worlds of both Muslims *and* Hindus. Although the social death of abduction 'kills' Pooro, Hamida contributes to the reproductive futurity of both communities. After her abduction, Hamida raises a son; adopts the child of a madwoman and raises it alongside her own; retrieves a medicine from her old family's village; returns an abducted refugee to her camp; and helps a Hindu girl called Lajo escape after months of a forced marriage. These actions each represent a willingness – even a duty – to participate in the social world of the Punjab, and they contravene and cross boundaries between Hindu and Muslim communities. Hamida's

⁵⁷ Weir, *Sacrificial Logics*, p. 8 [*emphasis my own*].

interventions within both communities are designed to protect or save women and children and are perhaps only possible *because* of her social death: for she is at once Hindu, Muslim, and neither.

There is certainly a subversive element to Hamida's participation in the reproductive labour of the nation, but it is important to note too that motherhood and pregnancy appear within the text as a strong condemnation of the reduction of female subjectivity to a reproductive function. Ranjana Ash writes that, after her conversion to Islam, Hamida 'is a person whose own suffering has enlarged her self-identity. She can help others irrespective of their ethnic, religious or social position.'⁵⁸ Representations of motherhood and the loss of a 'motherland' are important to Ash's image of Pooro/Hamida as a character whose reproductive labour is an act of resistance. It may be difficult to align this idea of an 'enlarged' identity with the abovementioned 'death' of Pooro, but it can be advanced with a consideration of motherhood in temporal terms. To clarify this point, it is helpful to recall Kristeva's account of women's time and its implications for understanding how women's subjectivity provides a different measure for conceptualising the temporality of sovereignty, as well as the question of who has sovereignty over time. As Kristeva puts it:

As for time, female subjectivity would seem to provide a specific measure that essentially retains *repetition* and *eternity* from among the multiple modalities of time known through the history of civilizations [...] there are cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm which conforms to that of nature and imposes a temporality whose stereotyping may shock.⁵⁹

Kristeva's thesis is one in which a consideration of women's time is related to both the repetitive cycles of women's bodies, and a monumental time, which Kristeva claims 'is thought of as necessarily maternal'.⁶⁰ The cyclical nature of women's bodies, and the generational conversation about motherhood, can help us to think about women's subjectivity and its relationship to the linear, project-driven time of the nation. However, within the context of abduction, rape, and forced marriage in 'The Skeleton', motherhood is often presented as a remnant of the gendered violence of both communities. In this way

⁵⁸ Ash, 'The Search for Freedom in Indian Women's Writing', p. 160.

⁵⁹ Julia Kristeva, 'Women's Time', trans. by Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, *Signs*, 7:1 (1981), p. 16 [*emphasis original*].

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Pritam posits the experience of pregnancy not as a willing participation in the future of the community, but as a further marker of social exile – even before the violent effects of national sovereignty are brought to bear on the bodies of women in the narrative, as we will see.

* * *

Throughout the text, the figure of the abductee is likened to another literary figure: that of the eponymous ‘skeleton’. The figure of the skeleton is important because it continues the early concern with the condition of ‘living death’, and further prompts us to think about the ways in which sexual violence against women can constitute a symbolic death. The character who most embodies this figure is the ‘madwoman’. The madwoman’s presence is the first to lead Hamida to consider the impact of gendered violence outside of her personal experience, and it also speaks to Butalia’s discussions of silence and memory. The woman appears in town one day, naked and unwilling to be clothed, and the women of the village cannot communicate with her. After some time in the village, the madwoman becomes pregnant and the villagers speculate on how exactly this was able to happen:

‘What sort of man could have done this to her?’ the women of Sakkar asked each other. They ground their teeth in anger... ‘He must be savage beast to put a madwoman in this condition.’

‘She is neither young nor attractive; she is just a lump of flesh without a mind to go with it... a living skeleton... a skeleton picked to its bones by kites and vultures’, thought Hamida.

The madwoman’s belly grew bigger day by day. (*Pinjar*, p. 36)

The passage is striking. It parallels Hamida’s self-representation as a skeleton robbed of its identity, and imagines the homeless woman as both emaciated and inhuman. Again, this experience of sexual violence predates Partition, and it also situates Hamida’s experiences of social death, loss of identity, and unwanted pregnancy in a broader context by imagining another woman in a similar, but even more dire, position. The madwoman dies in childbirth and offers us a finite alternative future for the subject of shame. Her exile from the social world is complete with her death, but, unlike Hamida, she was not able to speak out from this living death. Her personal experiences, communal identity, and the reasons

for her social exile are only partially reconstructed, and are communicated on her behalf as rumour.

The partial transmission of the madwoman's story echoes the representation of Hashmi's Sita figure, in that it highlights the way narratives of women's suffering often remain silent and unspoken. It also pre-empts the ruminations on the gendered nature of Partition violence with which the narrative concludes. It is later revealed that the woman was poisoned into madness by her husband's second wife; an act of violence that further contributes to the idea that her mental decline was linked to concepts of ownership and property that predate independence, and not just the exceptional violence of a 'savage beast'. This suggestion in the text that domestic acts of violence – such as poisoning, rape, and abduction – were a routine part of everyday life, highlights the way pre-colonial social formations and patriarchal kinship structures in some way foreshadowed the acceleration and exacerbation of gendered violence at the moment of Partition. In 'The Skeleton', women's subjectivity draws in experiences that stand outside dominant historiographies of postcolonial sovereignty, including social death, pregnancy, and the symbolic exchange of women in disputes over land and property. In the narration of varied bodily experiences, that often have their root in sex and pregnancy, the events of the text could be read as being both non-synchronous and yet coeval with the project of postcolonial sovereignty. If the time of the nation is only to include women through their reproductive labour – as Kaplan notes above – then this text implicates the rhetoric of the nation in historical abuses of women's bodies, and as such shows the limitations of that rhetoric in accounting for women's time.

Referring back to the moment of Pooro/Hamida's own abduction – one that used highly racialised imagery and portrayed Rashida as a hairy beast – Pritam describes a dream she had after the madwoman had given birth and died:

She dreamt of Rashida galloping away with her lying across his saddle; she dreamt of his keeping her in a gardener's out; she dreamt of her turning insane and running about the village lanes with a life quickening in her womb' (p. 38).

Over the course of the narrative, Pooro/Hamida's relationship with her abductor softens as she settles into the role of his wife, eventually reaching the point that she 'fervently longed to make love to him' (pp. 33-4). This being said, the experience of the madwoman imagines an alternative experience had she continued to resist, or had Rashida stopped

providing her with a home and his support. This complicates the apparent agency that Hamida appears to retain throughout her ordeals. More specifically, it makes explicit a culture of coercion and gendered violence that impinges upon the sovereignty of both women, even if the two characters' contrasting outcomes seem to stand in opposition to one another. Pooro and the madwoman simultaneously embody both the sacrificed 'before' of their social death and the lived experience of their survival. They carry their experiences of abduction and social exile, but also continue to participate in the social reproduction of the communities that abducted them, and to which they have now become affiliated.

Though the madwoman dies in labour, Hamida's decision to raise her child represents an horizontal and sisterly bond between the two women that transcends the communal expectations of the village, and offers an alternative to the paternal sovereignty that had contributed to their social deaths.⁶¹ Hamida chooses to raise the madwoman's child as a Muslim with her own son, despite rumours that the woman may have been a Hindu. In response to this adoption, the village's Hindu elders march on Hamida's home and abortively take the infant into their own care. This act can be seen to represent a policing of communal identity that is centred upon the protection of its future members, but it also has a highly detrimental effect on the child's health. Alongside the abductions of Hamida and other women in the text, this aborted attempt to place the child within the 'correct' community exemplifies a traditional and communal sanctioning of motherhood that foreshadows the nationally endorsed efforts of repatriation that happened after Partition. Pritam's drawing together of fictional women's experiences from before and during Partition highlights the way in which violence against women is bound up with patriarchal social tradition and kinship ties. In the process, it casts doubt on the future-oriented rhetoric of postcolonial sovereignty, particularly its implicit incorporation of women only through their reproductive labour.

Pritam's narration of birth and motherhood continues the text's investment in the image of the skeleton. In so doing, it problematises any essentialist notion of women's time that frames the temporality as exclusively gestational and cyclical, as those functions are forcibly imposed by the actions of a patriarchal ideology, and include a kind of death. This is not the first attempt to articulate the complexities of motherhood, women's time, and the transfer of sovereignty in South Asia. In an essay about women's time and the image of Mother India, Betty Joseph describes 'the continuing preoccupation and

⁶¹ I use the term 'horizontal' bond, as opposed to vertical, to mean a bond within the same generation. This term is used by Kaplan, and is valuable in this context because horizontal relationships are easily elided in narratives of motherhood and the nation.

deployment of maternity in a variety of reactionary political contexts in India'.⁶² Noting both the significance of motherhood in the founding myths of India's sovereignty, but also its enduring place in later nationalist rhetoric, Joseph sets women's time against the temporal order of colonial sovereignty by drawing attention to the redemptive power of domestic acts of motherhood, both before and after Partition. She develops this argument with reference to the work of Partha Chatterjee, writing:

The point that Chatterji [*sic*] makes is this: the private sphere with its inner sanctum of selfhood, spirituality, and sexuality became a primary site for nationalist imaginings in late nineteenth-century Bengal precisely because this was the realm of native life seen as outside the influence of the colonial state. This 'inner domain; was 'declared the sovereign territory of the nation'.⁶³

There is certainly value in this distinction. The home, rendered in Joseph's article as a feminine space containing the cyclical temporality of gestation and motherhood, while excluded from colonial forms of sovereignty, was rapidly subsumed into the sovereign future of the Indian state. In the process, this rebellious 'inner sanctum' comes to act as the first territory of the postcolonial nation, and motherhood is reduced to the nationalist project of reproductive labour. This incorporation of women's bodily lives into the project of the state had the effect of erasing women's sexuality and selfhood, a fact that is explored in Pritam's narrative.

In 'The Skeleton', the critique of patriarchal systems that co-opt women into this anti-colonial national future is perhaps more complicated than Joseph's examples suggest. While Joseph highlights narratives of maternity as offering temporalities that could augment or undermine the homogeneous, empty time of postcolonial nationalism, acts of motherhood in 'The Skeleton' and 'Exile' are bound to communal concerns that pre-exist the nation. Even as Joseph brings together Chatterjee and Kristeva, there is a sense that women's maternal experience is always linked to the shift from colonial to postcolonial sovereignty: '[women's time] constitutes an important part of the mix of ideologemes in the Indian nationalist struggle, precisely because of the peculiar role of the private sphere

⁶² Betty Joseph, 'Women's Time, Historical Discourse and a text of Indian Nationalism' in *Feminist Time Against Nation Time: Gender, Politics, and the Nation-State in an Age of Permanent War*, eds. By Victoria Hesford and Lisa Diedrich (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2008), p. 119.

⁶³ Joseph, 'Women's Time', p. 109.

in relation to the colonial state'.⁶⁴ The 'private sphere', as it is presented in these stories, is more complex and problematic than such an account can explain. The articulation of heterogeneous experiences of women that both reinforce and diverge from the high politics of Partition challenges us to think of a women's temporality that both challenges the future-oriented logic of the patriarchal nation, and the reduction of women to narrow familial roles. This task seems particularly urgent when one considers that women's bodies can be violently co-opted into both of these logics against their will.

Marriage, pregnancy, and motherhood are an integral part of the sovereign project; but they also exist outside of it, and Pritam's narrator resents the impact of this interjection into women's lives. 'The Skeleton' refuses to celebrate pregnancy or motherhood. On the contrary, it suggests that women's biological and social reproduction involves the subordination of women's sexuality, identity, and experience to a normative patriarchal position as the bearers of future generations. Perhaps as a result, the narrator repeatedly highlights that these experiences are symbols of decay and a loss of female bodily agency. The honour-based rhetoric of national becoming and the place of Jinnah as the 'father of the nation' are called into question by a representation of the historical institution of marriage as violent and destructive to women's subjectivity. Here, the narrator speaks of Javed's birth:

All said and done, he was his father's son, his father's flesh and blood and shaped like him. He had been planted inside her by force, nourished inside her womb against her will—and was now sucking the milk from her breasts, whether she liked it or not. The thought went round in her head with insidious insistence: This boy... this boy's father... all mankind... all men...men who gnaw a woman's body like a dog gnawing a bone and like a dog eat it up. (p. 24)

Like the image of the madwoman as 'a skeleton picked to its bones', Hamida's rumination on childbirth utilises imagery of predation and the dismembering of women's bodies. The narrative interest in dismemberment not only maps onto the spatial division of the subcontinent, but also has a temporal dimension in its images of gradual decay, or breakdown over time. Reading the female body in this way challenges the forward-looking temporality of nation-building by tying it to the deterioration (or unmaking) of female

⁶⁴ Joseph, 'Women's Time', p. 110.

subjectivity and agency that occurs within this narrative of reproductive labour. These images of deterioration and unmaking extend to the novel's larger critique of marriage and tradition, in which the narrator notes that '[w]hen a girl is given away in marriage, God deprives her of her tongue, so that she may not complain' (p. 31). The repeated citation of dismembered women's bodies through their loss of name, shape, flesh, and voice pre-figures the spatial and temporal fracturing of the subcontinent, but also traces these experiences back to issues of patriarchal control in pre-Partition Punjab.

The passage juxtaposes force and will with organic images of planting, nourishing, and feeding. It shows how the protagonist's agency is removed through the circumstances of her marriage, and complicates idealised stereotypes of motherhood as a form of growth or progress by suggesting instead that it leads to decay and death. In suggesting that all men, even her new-born son, gnaw on women's bodies, Pritam foreshadows the ways in which the struggle for national becoming would also come to be enacted on the bodies of women through their sometimes forced inclusion in the project of reproductive labour. This enforcement is highlighted by the way Hamida frequently refers to her pregnancy in (un)natural terms. The narrative opens with an image of Pooro shelling peas, and finding a 'little slug stuck to her thumb' (p. 1), which leads to a proleptic statement about her future experience of pregnancy. This statement is temporally significant to the narrative as it is repeated shortly after when her pregnancy is being discussed within the chronological order of the novella.⁶⁵

The following passage indicates the relation between the revolting slug that had hidden within the pea-pod and Pooro/Hamida's pregnancy, the circumstances of which have yet to be revealed:

She felt as if her body was a pea-pod inside which she carried a slimy, white caterpillar. Her body was unclean. If only she could take the worm out of her womb and fling it away! Pick it out with her nails as if it were a thorn! Pluck it off as if it were a maggot or a leech...! (p. 1)

The child is imagined as a worm, a thorn, a maggot, and a leech in ways that evoke a parasitic or foreign implant into her body that must be excised. Later, when the narrative reveals the pregnancy, we are told that 'Hamida thought of the slimy slug [...] It was

⁶⁵ The nature of this repetition is highly palpable. The opening lines of the text read: 'The sky was a colourless grey. Pooro sat on her haunches with a sack spread beneath her feet' (p. 1), and the beginning of the later chapter reads: 'The sky was a colourless grey. Hamida sat on her haunches with a piece of sacking between her feet' (p. 18).

nauseating' (p. 18). The repetition of this language of revulsion at the textual moment in which the pregnancy is revealed is particularly important. Through such parasitic images Hamida situates herself not simply as 'mother', but as the vehicle, or host, through which Rashida's future lineage is carried. Conversely, the protagonist's maternity is invoked in a largely positive manner in her adoption of the madwoman's daughter. After taking in the child: 'Hamida's maternal instincts were roused. She wished to mother the unwanted Kammo; to spoil her, to let her be petulant and indulge in tantrums.' (p. 27) Compared to the imagery used for her own son, this passage offers a view of maternity contiguous with the expectations of Rashida. However, the roused instincts are only utilised outside of the logic of reproductive labour: they are reserved for the Hindu Kammo above the Muslim Javed, but they also reflect the care that Hamida administers to the madwoman herself, other abductees, and an escaped refugee during the events of Partition. All maternal and sisterly acts strike out against the patriarchal logic of the historical moment.

These competing images of motherhood resist the notion that women's experiences can be easily mapped onto the homogeneous, empty time of the nation. In the context of Puro/Hamida's narrative, pregnancy, adoption, and maternity raise questions of agency and coercion. Like the Sita figure in 'Exile', there is a sacrificial logic underpinning the nature of reproductive labour that could be read as antithetical to the promises of freedom and sovereignty that accompanied independence. Also, these narratives cannot be fully accounted for within a concept of women's time that privileges women's bodies and the cycle of reproductive labour. In 'The Skeleton', this is represented in the fact that motherhood is only privileged when it is positioned against the communal, and later nationalist, project. However, this is not to discount the significance of the 'cycle' to a reading of women's being-in-time under the conditions of postcolonial sovereignty. To conclude this chapter, I will now discuss the tonal shift that the narration of Partition brings to the novella, with close focus on the acceleration of gendered violence, and the implication of the state in the 'cycle' of women's sexual exploitation. The escalating violence against women and families is first registered through rumour, but increasingly its sheer scale becomes synonymous with the unstable foundations of postcolonial sovereignty. As a result, the rhetorical promises of freedom and a common wealth are explicitly interrogated by a furious narrator.

Conclusion: Violent Foundations of the Postcolonial Future

The myriad experiences of abduction and abandonment in ‘The Skeleton’ serve to illustrate the way a sacrificial logic of women’s identity predates the events of Partition, situating the pervasive logic of honour in rural life in the Punjab. However, they also act as a precursor to an explosion of such experiences after Partition. If these pre-national experiences represent patriarchal tradition and violence within the context of relatively peaceful communities, the climax of the novel situates these same issues at the founding moment of postcolonial sovereignty. This shift implies a greater lack of agency, and exponentially more untold narratives of suffering. The narrator introduces the violence of Partition through rumour and uncertainty as fragments of violent narratives appear and circulate:

Just as a peeled orange falls apart into many segments, the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of the Punjab broke away from each other. As clouds of dust float over the roads, rumours of “incidents” began to float over the country side [*sic*]. It was said that men were being slaughtered in hundreds; rows of houses were being burnt down; neighbours were slitting each other’s throats. No one’s life or property was safe. (p. 56)

The nature of rumour is important here, because it has the authority to set violent events in motion, but has a nonsynchronous temporality that defies the logic of cause and effect. Rumours here circulate by ‘floating’ from place to place in rural Punjab, giving the impression that the narration of these events was repetitive, evolving, and uneven. Spivak notes of rumour that ‘[n]o one is its origin or source. Thus, rumour is not error but primordially (originally) errant, always in circulation with no assignable source’.⁶⁶ The lack of source and origin also strips the shared “incidents” of temporal specificity. Unlike Pooro/Hamida’s abduction – which was a direct retribution for an earlier event, passed down through the Shaikh family – the examples of violence described here are always potentially concurrent, overlapping, or even unrelated.

Due to its nature – spoken by multiple people, in different spaces, at different times, and with different degrees of authority – the rumour defies causal explanation and conventional historiographical analysis. Rumours are themselves fragments of history, but they have the apparent authority to cause a further fragmentation in the communities in which they circulate. The ‘falling apart’ of the communities of the Punjab in this passage

⁶⁶ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘Deconstructing Historiography’, *The Spivak Reader*, eds. By Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 234.

occupies the remainder of the text, and continues the investment in the breaking down of women's bodies throughout the text. Although the passage does not speak explicitly of the gendered dimensions of sovereignty, it highlights the way in which historical experiences of Partition did not follow the linear cause and effect temporality of nationalist historiography. The fragments of rumour – revealed and experienced out of chronological order – evoke the chaos of Partition and our partial understanding of its impact on women's bodies. The declaration that 'no one's [...] property was safe' (p. 56) offers an ominous precursor for the remainder of the text; it shows that sovereignty over one's own household, and the protection previously offered by the family, is no longer to be taken for granted. Despite the obvious tonal shift, and the escalation of violence against women that it brings, there is perhaps an irony to this statement and the definitions of safety and security that it offers. If August 1947 marked the moment at which life and property were no longer safe, there is an unspoken question here regarding the degree to which women's lives and property were 'safe' *before* this historical moment.

In fact, the events of Partition represented in 'The Skeleton' merely exacerbate the existing feeling of insecurity for women and their bodies. Like the property damage of the above passage, women's experiences of shame and violence also circulate in the Punjab through rumour as 'Hamida's ears burned with rage when she heard of the abduction of Hindu girls by Muslims and of Muslim girls by Hindus. Some had been forced into marriage, some murdered, some stripped and paraded naked in the streets' (p. 57). The protagonist's rage builds from these reports, as multiple experiences similar to her own are verbalised and shared across communities. It could be said that rumour brings into public discourse a number of experiences that may otherwise have been kept silent. That this is happening and being discussed on such a scale differs from the representation of abduction and rape as exceptional and monstrous acts earlier in the text. As such gendered violence becomes routine, the narrator highlights the fact that such violence is not the work of a single community or of exceptional beasts. In fact, the symbolic exchange of gendered violence is a central and defining facet of the transfer of sovereignty. In this exchange, sovereignty is written on the bodies of women who become, in turn, the symbolic bearers of a patriarchal script that seeks to define the territorial boundaries of the nation and the future of its citizens.

This violence also has a significant temporal impact within Pritam's narrative. The escalation of violence against women is characterised as a temporal acceleration of issues of honour and shame that had existed long before Partition. It could be said that fragments of Hamida's own past 'flash up' in the founding moments of postcolonial sovereignty as

she recognises the relationship between her experiences and those of this new generation of women who have become the victims of the same transactional logic. The linking of historic patriarchal violence against women to contemporary transgressions – albeit within this new postcolonial context – is a reflection of the value of reclaiming women’s histories of the nation, and it displays the potential such narratives have to undermine dominant nationalist historiographies. It is with a consideration of this representation of gendered Partition violence that this chapter concludes.

At the climax of ‘The Skeleton’, the explosion of violence and the removal of familial security are portrayed through the experiences of female refugees. Hamida learns of the repeated abduction and rape of young women from the refugee camps that had been set up to accommodate those displaced by the events of Partition. At this point, the female refugee – with her lack of protection from the state and family – emerges as the symptomatic figure of Partition, much as the abductee had appeared to do before her. This stateless figure comes to represent the fact that the politics of honour have been elevated from the business of local communities to the level of national politics. Abducted women had been a symbol of the honour of extended families, but now their social exile had become a reflection on the protection, security, and reproductive future of the nation-state. The treatment of the women in refugee camps is the final injustice that Hamida must battle:

She was from a refugee encampment in the neighbouring village and, like the others, was awaiting her turn to be evacuated to India. The camp was guarded by Pakistani soldiers. After sunset bands of goondas stole in, picked out women they liked and took them for the night: they were returned to the encampment in the morning. The girl had been forced to spend the preceding nine nights with different men. She had escaped from the clutches of her ravishers, had lost her way, and when daylight came had hid herself in the sugar-cane field where Hamida had found her. (p. 59)

The complicity of the Pakistani soldiers in the violence problematises the patriarchal protection promised by the state, and reflects an abandonment of women in the aftermath of independence. Also, the passage offers a new temporal frame for the violence against women. In the repeated rape enacted by the *goondas*, the long duration of abduction and conversion that Pooro/Hamida experienced is accelerated in the narrative of the Partition

refugee.⁶⁷ The refugee is subjected to a cycle of abduction, sexual violence, and abandonment that reveals how the apparently exceptional violence experienced by Hamida and the madwoman became typical at the moment of Partition.

The immediacy of this act appears as a condensed version of other women's trials throughout the narrative. What was experienced over years by Hamida and the Madwoman, and over months for another abductee named Lajo, is now being enacted nightly upon the women of the refugee camp. This represents an acceleration of the temporality of gendered and sexual violence within the text and explicitly links it to the founding moment of sovereignty. Though women's refugee and repatriation camps ostensibly sought to protect the reputation and reproductive future of the nation, this is undermined by the lack of protection offered to those at the camps. These women are not being incorporated into the linear time of the nation through the institutions of citizenship, marriage, and reproduction; instead the refugees are being treated as a form of sacrificial property: to be raped, traded, and discarded under the banner of retributive violence. Whilst the violence is not exceptional – we have seen that it is the continuation of a long history of women's experiences as symbolic bearers of patriarchal ideas of honour, shame, and sovereignty – its mass mobilisation and acceleration after Partition is shocking. The rapidity and brutality of the escaped refugee's treatment, and the seeming absence of the logic of property and familial relations, disrupts the ideas of patriarchal ownership and honour with which Jinnah's founding declaration had traded. The promise to protect her honour has already been broken, and her inclusion in the future-oriented promise of democracy and citizenship is made precarious by the resulting loss.

In the experience of the refugee, the spatialisation of postcolonial sovereignty is called into question through its female victims, and shame becomes the primary identifier of their narratives of Partition. In this moment Hamida is stuck in an immediate postcolonial present where the future-oriented concept of national sovereignty is unimaginable:

Hamida heard the tale with anger and shame. Could the earth soaked with human blood produce golden corn? Could maize remain fragrant if its roots

⁶⁷ The trauma of repeated sexual violence against a single subject is also evoked in Manto's '*Khol Do!*', or 'Open It!'. In this Urdu short story, a father retrieves his daughter after her abduction to find that she has been conditioned to automatically undress and part her legs to the verbal command 'open it'. This everyday phrase is discovered accidentally by the woman's doctor, highlighting how repeated acts of sexual violence at Partition can both limit a victim's ability to participate in their community's future social life while reducing her to only a reproductive function.

were fed with stinking corpses? Would women whose sisters had been dishonoured bear sons for the despoilers? (p. 59)

These lines directly follow the above description of the refugee's experiences of rape. The rhetorical questions imagine sovereignty in the classical sense – as rule over a shared commonwealth – but show a failure to understand how this can be mapped onto a divided Punjab. Significantly, Pritam offers this uncertainty through land and crops, but also through the bodies of women. She questions the promises of future freedoms with such gendered violence at its moment of foundation, but as we have seen in this chapter, this violence is often absorbed into the project of national mythmaking. Hamida deploys rhetorical questions numerous times in 'The Skeleton', but at this climactic moment they explicitly interrogate the future-oriented claim of the sovereign promise. All three questions make us think about how sovereignty over territory could be undermined by the history and memory of violence that occurred in it, and how the bounty of such land could represent national shame, rather than honour. The last question in particular – about whether victims of sexual violence would bear the children their aggressors – is evocative of a rhetoric of Partition and nation-building in which purity, reproduction, and sex were entwined with the prosperity and respectability of both new sovereign states.

In 'The Skeleton', sovereignty seems to be a question of membership, as Pooro/Hamida, having lost membership to her community in the years before Partition, questions the possibility of citizenship in a nation-state that was built upon the exclusion and abandonment of women. Sujala Singh highlights the process of this branding, and the obsessive legal bargaining over women's bodies' that accompanied the act of repatriation, but by including a discussion of the temporal dimensions of social death it is possible to question the possibility of citizenship in a nation-state that was built upon the exclusion and abandonment of women.⁶⁸ Following her heroic actions in the text, Hamida is offered the reward of repatriation: one which she refuses. Considered in the terms of Alison Weir's account of sacrifice and social death, Pooro/ Hamida has proved her 'capacity for participation in a social world', a capacity that had previously been refused due to the sacrificial logic of religious honour.⁶⁹ Since the state rhetoric of women's rehabilitation is employed to reverse the impact of abduction during Partition, the postcolonial reality is weighed up against Hamida's pre-Partition experiences. For example, Hamida cannot resist comparing her own experiences of social death to those who experience it at

⁶⁸ Sujala Singh, 'Nationalism's Brandings', p. 123.

⁶⁹ Weir, *Sacrificial Logics*, p. 8.

Partition: '[p]arents had been exhorted to receive back their abducted daughters. A sense of resentment surged in Hamida's mind. When it had happened to her, religion had become an insurmountable obstacle' (p. 67). The image of the extended patriarchal family as a protector of its women is revealed to be flawed throughout the text, and when that protection is offered by the nation-state it comes too late, and – as we have seen in narratives of women who were repatriated – amounts to very little.⁷⁰

As Hamida refuses the resolution of her identity at the hands of the state, her personal narrative cannot be aligned to the project of the nation. Spivak writes that

[...] the figure of the woman, moving from clan to clan and family to family as daughter/sister and wife/ mother, syntaxes patriarchal continuity even as she is herself drained of proper identity. In this particular area, the continuity of community or history, for subaltern and historian alike, is produced on (I intend the copulative metaphor—philosophically and sexually) the dissimulation of her discontinuity, on the repeated emptying of her meaning as instrument.⁷¹

Although the protagonist's abduction and exile reflect the continuity of retributive modes of communal relations in the Punjab, her acts of rescue and repatriation in the text destabilise it. In refusing the re-acceptance of her community Pritam's protagonist has made explicit the socio-symbolic construction of women's death as sacrifice. By not allowing this logic to be redeemed through the belated promise of Indian citizenship, she resists the 'repeated emptying' that Spivak identifies. Pooro/Hamida imagines for the nation an uncertain and difficult future; she interrupts the sovereign time of nationalist rhetoric by refusing to allow the events that she has seen be subsumed into the ongoing symbolic exchange that marks its foundations and its future.

Like the silenced Sita in Hashmi's 'Exile' and the mother erased from her son's memory in Thoa Kalsa, Pritam's narrative points to innumerable experiences of violence. Many of these acts of violence remain unnarrated, unmemorialised, and emptied of specificity by dominant narratives within the early national imaginary. This chapter opened with a consideration of the process of orientation to the homogeneous, empty time of the

⁷⁰ A consideration of the varied narratives of those who were repatriated to either side after partition is beyond the scope of this thesis, however Menon and Bhasin have talked about repatriated women never returning to their families or to the reproductive function of the woman-as-citizen. They discuss the controversial idea that women often 'preferr[ed] the anonymity and relative autonomy of the *ashram* to a now alien family'. See Menon and Bhasin, 'Recovery, Rupture, Resistance'.

⁷¹ Spivak, 'Deconstructing Historiography', p. 241.

nation in *Train to Pakistan*, a text that registers – at first through temporal disruption, and later through verbal threats of violence – the absent presence of women’s bodies in the process of nation-building. In ‘Exile’ and ‘The Skeleton’, women’s experiences of gendered violence are the explicit focus of the narrative. Both texts evoke a sense that this violence is not an exception or aberration in history, but in fact a result of the same patriarchal rhetoric of freedom and sovereignty with which postcolonial sovereignty was secured. These texts, when considered alongside the testimonial evidence collected by oral historians of Partition in South Asia, interrupt and undermine Jinnah’s originary promise of sovereignty and freedom by drawing attention to those who were dispossessed of any freedom in this historical moment. In the process, they reveal the narratives and histories that are effaced by dominant nationalist narratives that include women only through their reproductive labour power.

CHAPTER TWO

Bureaucracy, Borders and Territorial Futurity in Jamil Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon* and Mirza Waheed's *The Collaborator*

Some said there was this man by the name of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, or the Quaid-e-Azam, who had set up a separate country for Muslims, called Pakistan. As to where Pakistan was located, the inmates knew nothing. That was why both the mad and the partially mad were unable to decide whether they were now in India or in Pakistan. If they were in India, where on earth was Pakistan? And if they were in Pakistan, then how come that until only the other day it was India.

—Saadat Hasan Manto, 'Toba Tek Singh'¹

One obvious example of the work that the concept of the border of the state does is to allow for a familiar spatial and temporal compartmentalisation of global politics into two supposedly distinct spheres of activity: history and progress inside, and timeless anarchy outside.

—Nick Vaughan-Williams²

¹ Saadat Hasan Manto, 'Toba Tek Singh', in *Mottled Dawn: Fifty Sketches and Stories of Pakistan*, trans. by Khalid Hasan (London: Penguin, 1997), pp. 2-3 [all subsequent references will be given parenthetically].

² Nick Vaughan-Williams, *Border Politics*, p. 2.

The drawing and enforcement of borders at the moment of Partition was the beginning of an ongoing project to shore up Pakistan's sovereignty and articulate its permanence. Throughout Pakistan's early postcolonial history, borders became rigid signifiers of both national identity and the limits of the state's authority to exercise power. As such, the border, even seventy years on from Partition, continues to represent the state's paternal role over its subjects, the communal foundations of the nation-state, and the futurity of the national project. This being said, Leake and Haines have argued that '[m]erely to accept that borders became more rigid [at independence] ignores the moment in decolonisation when borders were by no means certain and when the size, shape, and nature of the state and its peripheries were far from clear'.³ With this in mind, it is important to recognise the rhetorical distance between sovereign claims to borders as permanent signifiers of power, and the lived experience of those for whom the enforcement of borders meant the beginning of an ongoing negotiation over their own rights and ties to peripheral spaces.

In Jinnah's speech to the Constituent Assembly, the territorial Partition is cited as an 'agreement which is now final and binding on all', and this binding finality articulates the rhetoric of permanence that accompanied Pakistan's new borders.⁴ Like other elements of Jinnah's declaration, the creation of a lasting border takes the form of a promise. In 'Declarations of Independence', Jacques Derrida articulates a temporal problem in the foundation of sovereignty by highlighting the discontinuity between the statement that a nation *will* exist, and the fact that the nation must *already* exist for the declaration to be made. For Derrida, this temporal disconnect is not a conceptual danger to sovereignty; on the contrary, it vital to its logic:

It is not a question here of an obscurity or of a difficulty of interpretation, of a problematic on the way to its (re)solution. It is not a question of a difficult analysis which would fail in the face of the structure of the acts involved and the overdetermined temporality of the events. This obscurity, this undecidability between, let's say, a performative structure and a constative structure, is *required* in order to produce the sought-after effect.⁵

³ Elisabeth Leake and Daniel Haines, 'Lines of (In)convenience: Sovereignty and Border-Making in Postcolonial South Asia, 1947-1965', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 76:4 (2017), 963-985 (p. 967).

⁴ Allana, *Pakistan Movement*, 3rd edn, p. 544.

⁵ Jacques Derrida, 'Declarations of Independence', *New Political Science*, 7:1 (1986) 7-15 (p. 9) [*emphasis original*].

The promise of sovereignty here is a constative statement that announces the existence of the nation, but Derrida highlights the fact that it is also a performance; it also acts as a declaration of independence that produces a citizenry, a territory, and a permanent idea of the nation. This same double structure explains the complicated nature of border sovereignty in postcolonial Pakistan. In the case of Jinnah's promise of territorial futurity—i.e. that those who have settled within Pakistan will retain protection and support from the state indefinitely—this declaration in fact initiates an ongoing negotiation of border sovereignty that is rehearsed and performed through its sometimes brutal, and often inconsistent, enforcement. This idea of Pakistan's borders as appearing at *first* as a constative statement of fact communicated by Cyril Radcliffe and the Border Commissions, and *later* as repeated performances of state power upon the bodies of those at the nation's peripheries informs this chapter. If a territory's demarcation must be repeatedly performed, then how can it act as the permanent signifier of the nation's future? If the drawing and enforcement of borders represents the sovereign promise of territorial futurity, the uncertainty surrounding these borders makes that future appear anything but settled. The later change to the territory of Pakistan represented by the Secession of Bangladesh also problematises the idea of a foundational border. In the face of division, irredentist conflict, and the offer and refusal of citizenship, the border areas of Pakistan are a site at which the territorial futurity of the nation can be complicated and explored.

In addition to the threat that repeated performances of sovereignty pose to the image of borders as a permanent demarcation of national sovereignty, the border also acts as a rhetorical tool for the promotion of a certain idea of national history. My second epigraph highlights the way that, in international relations theory, the border has been conceptualised in relation to the future-oriented project of nationalist historiography. Vaughan-Williams argues that the spatial compartmentalisation that border sovereignty represents is often rhetorically reinforced with images of temporal progress. If the border acts as the line between an anarchic pre-modern past and the empty time of capitalist modernity, democratic representation, and the rule of law, then it is always-already a temporal configuration. In reading texts in which border communities have their own concepts of time interrupted or effaced by that of the state, this second spatio-temporal image is particularly useful. The delayed, repeated, and out-of-time performances of border sovereignty on which this chapter seeks to shed light highlight the fiction of this rhetorical stance. At the same time, the control of time that states display at the border reveals the degree to which this fiction is used by the state to enact and legitimise its power on, and through, the bodies of its most liminal subjects.

Literary texts set in Pakistan's peripheral spaces act to undermine this performance and this concept of territorial futurity, blurring the lines that are being enforced and calling their past and future into question. This chapter will discuss two recent texts set at the limits of the nation: Jamil Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon* (2011) and Mirza Waheed's *The Collaborator* (2011). Both texts follow nomadic Muslim communities who exist at the margins of the Pakistani nation-state. In Ahmad's novel, a nomadic tribe attempts to retain its traditional, migratory way of life against the emergence of a fixed border in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas from the 1950s onwards.⁶ *The Collaborator* is set in the 1990s, and follows a formally nomadic Muslim community that has submitted to the settled life of secular citizenship after Partition, however their position on the Indian side of the Line of Control in Kashmir leads to their encounter with an ongoing campaign of military border sovereignty. This chapter will explore how changes in the administration of border spaces through the transition from colonial rule to postcolonial sovereignty lead not only to a spatial disorientation, but to a fracturing of subjects' sense of being-in-time. In so doing, I will argue that literary representations of this spatio-temporal fracturing can interrupt and call into question the homogeneous, empty time of the nation, and its early promises of a democratic, inclusive, and secular future. To begin this discussion, I would like to offer a brief reading of Saadat Hasan Manto's famous short story 'Toba Tek Singh' (1955). This story highlights the temporal nature of border sovereignty in literary fiction, and represents an early reaction to the constative moment of Pakistani sovereignty. By introducing Manto's representation of the uncertainty surrounding the future of borders and territory, and the temporalities of suspension and delay that accompany the bureaucratic division of institutions, I argue that the 'madness' of the text could be seen as a product of the relationship between sovereignty and time.

Time and Madness in 'Toba Tek Singh'

Rather than representing the fracturing of urban and rural communities – as in the Partition fiction discussed in chapter one – 'Toba Tek Singh' portrays one of the many divisions of

⁶ I use the term tribe at times in this chapter as a designation for the members of the Kharot tribe in Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon*. The term is not unproblematic, being primarily a designation by the colonial and later postcolonial state of the legal customs of the North West region of Pakistan. Where possible I have used the term 'nomad' as preferred to 'tribesman' or 'tribeswoman', although the term is historically specific and is present in both Ahmad's novel and political and legal texts about the people of the region.

institutions and responsibilities that were the task of South Asia's new postcolonial nation-states. The narrative takes place in a psychiatric institution in Lahore shortly after Partition, and centres on a Sikh character called Bishan Singh as he desperately seeks an answer to the question of whether his village, Toba Tek Singh, is in Pakistan or India? Singh asks guards, other characters, and a visiting friend where his lands lie within the new political geography of postcolonial South Asia, but he never receives a satisfactory answer. He eventually collapses on the day of the inmate exchange in the no-man's land between Pakistan and India. He is untethered from his spatial moorings by the reterritorialisation of South Asia, and the uncertainty around where the border lies leads him to simply give up and die. There are two dominant trends in reading this story of madness and Partition: one in which the asylum becomes allegorical for the nation in 1947,⁷ and, more recently, another in which Partition itself causes a national madness against which its inmates appear rational.⁸ The latter trend often has a close focus on the spatial nature of Partition, and the madness is highly linked to borders, and the refusal of the protagonist to cross the border. A particular example of this can be seen in the opening of Alex Tickell's essay 'How Many Pakistans?', in which he 'reasserts the salience of space alongside issues of temporality and historical becoming'.⁹ It is the temporal nature of the border that is at the centre of the reading in this chapter.

In 'Toba Tek Singh', the introduction of national borders primarily brings disorientation and confusion to the lunatic asylum. Due in part to their isolation from the events of Partition, the inmates are unable to locate themselves within the new territorial categories of postcolonial nationalism, making the division itself seem 'mad'. Stephen Alter articulates this process through a reading of the protagonist, Bishan Singh, stating that, in the text:

Madness becomes an entirely relative term which defines the political and social upheaval of Partition, with all its inherent ambiguities. Walls and borders lose their meaning and a character like Bishan Singh embodies the

⁷ Leslie Flemming, 'Riots and Refugees: The Post-Partition Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto', *Journal of South Asian Literature*, 13:1 (1977), 99-109. Mahnaz Ispahani, 'Saadat Hasan Manto', *Grand Street*, 7:4 (1988), 183-193.

⁸ Smita Das, 'Space of the Crazy in Saadat Hasan Manto's "Toba Tek Singh"', *South Asian Review*, 26:2 (2005), 202-216. Sudha Tiwari, 'Memories of Partition: Revisiting Saadat Hasan Manto', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48:25 (2013), 50-58.

⁹ Tickell, "'How Many Pakistans?'" , p. 157.

contradictions and divided loyalties experienced by those people who were uprooted on either side.¹⁰

This link between madness and bordering is an instructive one. If the border offers the permanent spatial limit of the nation, but its meaning and position are the result of ‘madness’, what does this mean for its permanence, its sovereign future, and the futures of those who live there? The spatio-temporal configurations of Pakistan’s new border areas were completely redrawn in the decade after Partition, and the resulting disorientation flashes up as liminal subjects attempt to measure their spatial memories against the promises and administrative realities of postcolonial sovereignty. I argue that the disjunct between spatial history and the national future that occurs at the border makes it a site at which the homogeneous, empty time of the nation is negotiated and contested. Indeed, if the temporality of ‘progress’ inside the border is being experienced as a form of violence for the inhabitants of border regions, then it must be interrogated as a contributing factor to the ‘madness’ of the narrative.

In Manto’s story, the incommensurability between Bishan Singh’s historical land ownership and the territorial future of postcolonial Pakistan and India represents his exclusion from the future-oriented promise of sovereignty. Singh and the lunatics represent a certain idea of the Punjab’s past, while both states imagine the region as a central part of its own future. If the drawing of borders is a performative act of postcolonial sovereignty, in ‘Toba Tek Singh’ it is a performance that happens out of time. The exchange of inmates is immediately represented as both late, and unforeseen. The text opens with a reference to delay: ‘[a] couple of years after the Partition of the country, it occurred to the respective governments of India and Pakistan that inmates of lunatic asylums, like prisoners, should also be exchanged.’ (p. 1) These lines highlight the deferral of the action of the text, and the fact that the exchange is second to another division. That it is the result of an ‘occurrence’ to the government highlights the gradual nature of border-making in the Punjab. The lunatics’ isolation – while rendered in literal terms by the walls of the asylum space – is figured in profoundly temporal terms: their predicament exists as an aftermath of Partition, their future is the subject of political debate and bargaining, and their histories are in the process of being effaced by the redrawing of national boundaries and mythmaking. With this in mind, Manto’s presentation of madness comes to do more than reflect the madness of Partition and its political actors, but in fact it shows the impact of

¹⁰ Stephen Alter, ‘Madness and Partition: the Short Stories of Saadat Hasan Manto’, *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 14 (1994), 91-100 (p. 98).

late performances of border sovereignty on those who occupy peripheral spaces. As we will see, bureaucracy and deferral stretch out the transfer of sovereignty in a way that is maddening in itself. For Alter, the madness of the asylum is a reflection of the communal violence of Partition, but it can also inform us of the disconnect between state institutions that control the meanings and uses of certain spaces over time, and populations for whom these spaces represent an historical rooting in family, territory, and time itself.

If the advent of Pakistan's postcolonial sovereignty is to be considered through the image of madness – as it is in 'Toba Tek Singh' – then I argue that it should be a concept of madness that is itself temporal. From the standpoint of the postcolonial subject, Partition not only represented a crisis in spatial understanding; it was also experienced as a crisis in temporal consciousness. In Manto's short story, the chains of disinformation, the confusion within the asylum, and the inability of the characters to either imagine a future or properly relate to a past evokes a sense of temporal isolation that is directly related to the political process of Partition. In fact, the state's gradual implementation of border sovereignty in the text is a bureaucratic process that consists of the ongoing negotiation of borders and citizenship, and has the power to disrupt the supposed coherence of a subject's identity over time. With the lack of communication between the state and the inmates in the story, the immediate postcolonial present appears disorienting in its incommensurability with the pre-Partition pasts of its characters. This is most evident in the character of Bishan Singh, who is defined by other characters in the text in relation to only two things: his historical territorial ties and his relationship to time. Singh is introduced in exceptional temporal terms as the narrator notes that the '[g]uards said he had not slept a wink in fifteen years' (p. 4). The image of Singh not sleeping in the fifteen years of his incarceration positions him outside of the usual flow of time. This textual fact highlights the character as a potentially non-realist figure within the text, and makes his eventual death at the moment of inmate exchange all the more significant.

If Bishan Singh represents an alternative temporality, it is one that he maintains the ability to control and measure, even in his madness. We are told that '[o]nce a month, he used to have visitors' from his family, but that 'he lived in a kind of limbo, having no idea what day of the week it was, or month, or how many years had passed since his confinement. However, he had developed a sixth sense about the day of the visit' (pp. 5-6). The fact that his years of wakefulness include this timely readiness for family visits implies an internal clock that is not understood by the guards in the asylum. The 'limbo' in which Singh exists foreshadows the space he eventually occupies between India and Pakistan, and the fact that it is temporally coded here is significant. By taking this temporal

limbo as a proof of Singh's madness, the guards offer the homogeneous, empty time of the clock and calendar as the yardstick against which to measure sanity. Singh comes to represent the 'timeless anarchy' that is to be expunged from the state, but his empathetic portrayal in the text highlights how the process of bordering is impacted violently on his sense of being-in-time. After the disruption of Partition, his family visits stop, and we learn more about his sense of measurement: '[t]he visits had also suddenly stopped. He was increasingly restless, but, more than that, curious. The sixth sense, which used to alert him to the day of the visit, had also atrophied.' (p. 6) This particular interruption illustrates the degree to which the reterritorialisation of Partition is implicated in the fracturing of his internal ability to measure time.

Although Singh's madness is defined through his relationship to time, the process of his increasing confusion and discomfort is spatial. Manto's narrative circulates around an image of land 'going off' to Hindustan; such an image suggests that the redistribution of land in South Asia is a complete loss rather than a passing of sovereignty. As the characters themselves await their redistribution along demographic lines, the idea of land itself as a non-human agent with the power to shift and disappear further reinforces their sense of dislocation and statelessness. The problem is articulated in the narrator's account of Singh's failure:

Those who had tried to solve this mystery had become utterly confused when told that Sialkot, which used to be in India, was now in Pakistan. It was anybody's guess what was going to happen to Lahore, which was currently in Pakistan, but could slide into India any moment. It was also possible that the entire subcontinent of India might become Pakistan. And who could say if both India and Pakistan might not entirely vanish from the map of the world one day? (p. 5)

This confusion over Sialkot and Lahore suggests that the question of sovereignty is a spatial problem, but one that is happening at a temporal delay. This lack of resolution is also linked to an uncertain future, which itself threatens the very being-in-time of sovereignty. It is an issue that transposes the ambiguity of the inmates' situation onto national territorial questions; though Partition has been announced, any and all parts of it could be changed, renegotiated, or decided upon later. This reading is perhaps encouraged by the asylum's own late performance of division. The language of 'vanish[ing]' or 'slid[ing]' highlights how this process could be read as an act of erasure, or effacement, of

previous ties to land as the shift into nationhood radically alters subjects' understanding of their own past, and vision of their future. The questioning of Lahore, and its movement from British India to independent Pakistan, brings into question the future of every other city for the narrator at a moment when borders were being enforced as the permanent and binding limits of the nation. This ongoing negotiation begs the question: how can the future of the nation-state be attributed the 'binding finality' that Jinnah declared in 1947? If the promise of postcolonial sovereignty is understood as having a future-oriented structure, then the questioning of the permanence of these cities calls the whole moment of independence into question. With the benefit of hindsight, this uncertainty now seems rather prescient—for the lines drawn by the boundary commission are not permanent markers of a national space even seventy years later.

* * *

It is not uncomplicated to talk about borders as marking the limits of sovereignty, or to maintain them at the centre of a discussion of power in the twentieth and twenty-first century. While 'Toba Tek Singh' sheds light on the confusion that is set in motion by shifts in border sovereignty, rooting identity at the border in this way does not go far enough to help us consider the nuanced and contingent techniques of sovereignty that exist in these spaces into the twenty-first century. Borders have the power to create new temporalities, and to efface old ones. Vaughan-Williams states that 'rather than fixed, static lines on maps, borders are increasingly theorised as portable machines of sovereign power that are inseparable from the bodies they performatively produce and sort into different categories'.¹¹ Vaughan-Williams argues that we must adjust and replace the modern geopolitical imaginary that leaves borders, and the techniques of sovereignty that they utilise, unquestioned. To combat this imaginary he offers the 'generalised biopolitical border' as a means to properly articulate the fact that borders must be understood through multiple techniques of ordering and power that exist at the periphery to shore up power at the centre.¹² Increasingly, biopolitics has been utilised in literary readings of postcolonial spaces to read techniques of sovereignty that include the categorisation of people, and the enactment of state power – directly or indirectly – on the bodies of those people.

'Toba Tek Singh' notes the confusion that occurs when those who have not encountered borders before are suddenly ordered to think on their terms, and considering

¹¹ Vaughan-Williams, *Border Politics*, p. 39.

¹² Vaughan-Williams, *Border Politics*, p. 117.

the border as a biopolitical category prompts us to think more closely about the way it is experienced within the everyday lives of those who live along it. If the border represents the rhetorical line between the homogeneous, empty time of the nation and the timeless exterior, then the forms of temporal ordering – or border time – that are employed there require further analysis. In the remainder of this chapter, I will consider literary representations of two main aspects of border time that are touched upon in Manto's story as it exposes Pakistan's territorial futurity as being constantly negotiated, (re)produced, and performed, rather than fixed and coherent. Those two aspects are the act of border crossing – and the checkpoint at which it happens – and the representation of bureaucracy and documentation. These interlinked concepts of border sovereignty both have a significant temporal dimension, and one that is shot through with ideas of delay, suspension, and domination.

The proximity of these two phenomena means that it would be difficult to approach them in turn, and as such both will come in and out of focus throughout this chapter. As such, I would like to briefly introduce both of these concepts here, before returning to them in two literary readings that incorporate both. The border checkpoint is distinct from the border itself in that it represents a point of crossing within a formation of territorial sovereignty that is usually understood as restricting this very exercise. David Fieni, in an article that often takes the West Bank as its primary example, highlights the temporal significance of the checkpoint in opposition to dominant spatial understandings of the border. He writes that:

Whereas the increasingly global proliferation of checkpoints as means of political control might seem, at first glance, to be primarily a problem of geopolitical space, the mechanisms that operate at checkpoints cannot be understood without a consideration of the ways that these permeable spaces regulate time and interact with a repertoire of temporalities.¹³

Like Vaughan-Williams, Fieni notes that 'at first glance', borders are spatial signifiers, but that at their checkpoints they have the power to intrude upon the everyday lives of border occupants and crossers through temporal modes of regulation. Therefore, we might say that not only does the border represent the line between homogeneous, empty time and timeless anarchy, but it also produces and structures the way in which those who come into

¹³ David Fieni, 'Cinematic Checkpoints and Sovereign Time', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 50:1 (2014), 6-18 (p. 6).

contact with the checkpoint are subjected to the temporal order of sovereignty. In thinking about checkpoints in these two texts, it is not a ‘repertoire of temporalities’ that I consider, but the ordering of the experience of the passing of time. Borders may have appeared ‘in time’, but they often enforce a temporality that is incongruous with that of the people it attempts to order, and one that is made more slippery by the state’s contingent uses of it.

My argument here is twofold: first, the portability of the checkpoint destabilises the solid ground of territorial bordering and reveals it as a performed fiction, and second, temporal techniques of sovereignty at the border undermine the significance given to territorial permanence within the founding rhetoric of Pakistan’s postcolonial sovereignty. This temporal dimension is aptly articulated by Fieni as he points out that ‘[w]hile the homogeneous chronotope of sovereignty seeks to project a securitised space purged of danger where time might remain suspended, the checkpoint is in fact a site where a heterogeneous chronotope cuts into this projected homogeneous image’.¹⁴ Just as the moving territorial borders disorientate the lunatics of ‘Toba Tek Singh’, the regulation of time at the checkpoint has a great impact on how its inhabitants imagine the nation’s territorial future. As we will see, the border checkpoint plays a particularly important role in Ahmad’s *The Wandering Falcon*, as it both situates the text’s nomads outside of the spatio-temporal construction of the nation-state, and inhibits and slows their movement. The second focus of this chapter will be bureaucracy at the border; a technique of power that makes possible certain delays and suspensions that impact the being-in-time of the state’s most liminal citizens. It is an element of colonial and postcolonial governance that perhaps occupies a certain privileged position at the border checkpoint discussed by Fieni, and utilises delays and documentation as a means to enact state power upon peripheral citizens.

As stated in chapter one, the significant events of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan are often imagined as discrete historical moments. However, acts of suspension and delay often stretch out or complicate their position within the chronological timeline of the nation’s homogeneous, empty time. In these texts, this suspension and delay will be articulated through a reading of the document, and the image of division happening ‘out of time’. Such performances of bureaucracy at the margins of the state are central to this chapter’s argument that borders, and their enforcement, have a significant temporal dimension. A popular understanding of bureaucracy is captured pertinently in the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

¹⁴ Fieni, ‘Cinematic Checkpoints and Sovereign Time’, p. 11.

Usually *depreciative*. Behaviour or practice regarded as typical of this system, especially when characterised by such features as an excessive concern with formal processes and a tendency for administrative power to increase and become more centralised, and hence by inefficiency and impersonality; officialism, red tape.¹⁵

For a discussion of bureaucracy in Pakistan, the depreciative references to inefficiency and impersonality in this definition offer an implicit critique of the formal processes of the state. These two lacks are equally significant: first, the inefficiency brings with it an image of temporal delay as concerns for process reduce the immediacy of political action, and of accessibility to state services. Secondly, the impersonality highlights the distance that is opened up between the state and its citizens as they are categorised through bureaucratic processes. Bernstein and Mertz note that '[t]he humanness of the human condition gets lost in the files, the halls, the shufflings of bureaucratic administration' as they argue for the importance of studies of bureaucracy within anthropology.¹⁶ Bureaucracy is a technique of sovereignty that is built upon delay, categorisation, and biopolitical ordering, and as such it has a significant impact on the lived experience of border spaces in contemporary Pakistan.

In 2012, three key monographs were published that held postcolonial bureaucracy as their central focus, in Pakistan, India, and Argentina.¹⁷ Markus-Michael Müller notes in a review of these texts that dominant understandings of postcolonial bureaucracies before now had largely focused on their status as a symptom of 'failed states'; a term and concept that I have intentionally leaned away from in this thesis.¹⁸ This sudden appearance of a body of ethnographic work that closely follows the lived experience of bureaucracy is significant. By looking closely at the narratives of individuals – which are often corroborated by mountains of paperwork – these texts highlight bureaucracy not as a task of the state at which postcolonial states fail, but as a technique of sovereignty that is weaponised against those to whom the state refuses certain liberties. Significantly for this thesis, all three of these texts highlight the experience of waiting and slowly gathering

¹⁵ 'Bureaucracy' *Oxford English Dictionary* <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/24905>> [accessed 16/07/2019].

¹⁶ Anya Bernstein and Elizabeth Mertz, 'Bureaucracy: Ethnography of the State in Everyday Life', *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 34:1 (2011), 6-10 (p. 7).

¹⁷ Matthew S. Hull's *Government of Paper* (2012), Akhil Gupta's *Red Tape* (2012), and Javier Auyero's *Patients of the State* (2012) respectively.

¹⁸ Markus-Michael Müller, 'Postcolonial Bureaucracies: Power and Public Administration in "Most of the World"', *Postcolonial Studies*, 16:2 (2013), 233-242 (p. 233).

documentation when dealing with low-level representatives of the state. This temporal image is useful when considering the discussions of ID cards, travel papers, and other documents at Pakistan's borders.

Matthew S. Hull's *Government of Paper* (2012) is the only one of these three texts to deal directly with the experience of bureaucracy in Pakistan, and envisages the institution as a colonial inheritance. Hull notes that:

The bureaucracy is recognised in both academic and popular discourse as a more or less independent political actor alongside the army, elected governments, and political parties. The contemporary position of the civilian bureaucracy grew out of colonial history and the early decades following Partition in 1947.¹⁹

Through the inheritance of the bureaucratic regimes of colonial rule, Pakistan was set on a path of colonial ordering and orientation that went alongside the administration of their territorial borders. So, through an analysis of building regulations and procedures, Hull recognises the significant powers of the state bureaucracy and the way it has the power to shape cities and lives within the nation: particularly in reference to Islamabad. This text helps us to understand the way in which paper, accumulated over time, is part of a regime that controls the uses and generation of metropolitan space. Documents claim to represent realities, but Hull notes that 'bureaucratic texts are produced, used and experienced through procedures [...], ideologies, cooperation, negotiation, and contestation'.²⁰ This list of procedures imagines bureaucracy as a narrative, and an opening anecdote about an interview with an individual who had built a house reveals this narrative to be shot through with decisionism and delay. The interviewee's experience of building a house involves a lengthy process that takes the form of collecting a full folder of official files, each of which is applied for, and then patiently waited for, and together they bestow the eventual right to occupy the constructed property.²¹ The list of files, and the sometimes nepotistic, sometimes corrupt methods of collating them, represents a lengthy narrative that took many years. Weaved into this narrative are experiences of delay, sudden acceleration, waiting, and negotiation, that I argue are not unique to the experience of building a house.

¹⁹ Matthew S. Hull, *Government of Paper: The Materiality of Bureaucracy in Urban Pakistan* (London: University of California Press, 2012), p. 20.

²⁰ Hull, *Government of Paper*, p. 5.

²¹ Hull, *Government of Paper*, p. 2.

These multi-layered and borderline impenetrable bureaucratic processes order life at the border, and do so by submitting the subject to the timelines of the state.

It is Javier Auyero's *Patients of the State* (2012) that best encapsulates the way states with powerful bureaucracies seem to have an impact on the lived experience of time, creating what he calls a 'tempography of domination'.²² Auyero argues powerfully that waiting and delay are utilised by the Argentinian state to build compliance in its urban poor, and states that '[d]omination [...] is experienced as a waiting time: waiting hopefully and then frustrated for others to make decisions, in effect surrendering to the authority of others'.²³ He later concludes that '[p]oor people's subordination to the state's mandates is created and re-created through innumerable acts of waiting, and the obverse – that domination is generated anew by making others wait – is equally true'.²⁴ For Auyero, sovereign power is a performance that builds domination and compliance through repeated and seemingly arbitrary violence upon subjects' being-in-time. Not only this, Auyero is highly conscious of the literary nature of his work. He focuses upon the document, of which Hull notes the narrative nature, but he imagines the experience of waiting throughout in the terms of Kafka's 'The Trial', and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Two readings that highlight the ways literary fiction has found fertile ground in the absurd nature of waiting – at the hands of the state or otherwise. This chapter will investigate the spatio-temporal nature of bureaucracy at the border, and extend Auyero's illustrative insight into how literary fiction mediates this experience of waiting with close reference to recent contemporary fictions of Pakistan.

In the climactic moments of 'Toba Tek Singh', Bishan Singh's 'impervious[ness] to time' is tested by the uncertainty that accompanies the wait for the inmate exchange, and is quashed at the moment he finds himself at his personal border checkpoint. Having seemingly bypassed the cataclysmic immediacy of Partition, and the overnight emergence of two new nation-states, the forced migration of Singh roots him back into historical time; thereby violently realigning him with the homogeneous, empty time of the nationalist project. As he dies in the 'no-man's land' between the two states it becomes clear that the bureaucracy of sovereignty requires him to be categorised as Indian or Pakistani, and his failure to submit to this is accompanied by his death. In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss these concerns through the delayed enforcement of border sovereignty, the experience of the checkpoint, and the slipperiness of the document in Jamil Ahmad's *The*

²² Javier Auyero, *Patients of the State: The Politics of Waiting in Argentina* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), p. 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

Wandering Falcon. To conclude, I will approach similar concepts of delay in *The Collaborator* to highlight the temporal aspect of the protagonist's role of collecting ID cards in the no-man's land of the Kashmir border, and the impact of military time on border occupants. In both of these readings, I will focus on the actions of border agents to ask: how can a border be timeless if it must be (re)created constantly through the performance of violence and ordering?

Measures of Time Before the Border

In the previous chapter I explored Marian Aguiar's idea that the introduction of the railway to British India represented a new way to structure and measure time for colonial subjects. There is certainly a sense that this new way of measuring time was a convenient by-product of colonial domination, but it was also one that had profound impact on the being-in-time of those who experienced both colonialism and Partition. The train may be absent in the mountainous setting of Jamil Ahmad's *The Wandering Falcon*, but the postcolonial state begins to impact upon subjects' temporality in ways that re-enact that process of orientation.

That mountainous region is Pakistan's border with Afghanistan. The Durand line is the cartographical border between Pakistan and Afghanistan that was decided between Amir Abdur Rahman Khan and British India in 1893. The agreement of the border was a solution to a colonial problem of control, and it set the blueprint for the administration of this region for years to come. In practice, even for the British Colonial government, the border was not as simple as a line on a map. Omrani writes that when the border was negotiated:

[The British] managed to achieve the tripartite border – a vision they had held for a long time. The first part of the border was the buffer state, Afghanistan. The second part was the tribal areas in the hills, which the British did not try to govern, but simply garrisoned. [...] The third part was further back, where the real government of India started.²⁵

²⁵ Bijan Omrani, 'The Durand Line: History and Problems of the Afghan-Pakistan Border', *Asian Affairs*, 40:2 (2009), 177-195 (p. 186).

Omrani paints a picture here of a border that is built up of various indistinct and historically contingent boundary lines, and that leaves a large space ungoverned and in a suspended state of non-control. The result is a space that is described by Ian Bedford in terms that point to its continuing precarity:

The largest and today the most newsworthy of these enclaves are the seven frontier agencies of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) contiguous with Afghanistan, which have a combined population of a little under 3.5 million. Neither the British nor the Amir of Afghanistan ever ruled these lands directly.²⁶

The British decision *not* to govern the region left Pakistan with the task of making a similar decision. This area has been disputed ever since and, in recent history, has been the focal point of British and American actions in the ‘war on terror’. Dominant images of the space focus on its porosity, its links to international Islamist terrorism, and its ‘lawlessness’. Its historical naming has done nothing to alleviate this perception. Until a merger in May 2018 that created the Khyber Pakhtunwa region of Pakistan, it consisted of the ‘Federally Administered Tribal Areas’ and the larger, neighbouring, ‘North-West Frontier Province’, and these colonial monikers have been difficult to shift. The first may appear purely legal and definitive, but in fact underscores a lack of representation in the Constituent Assembly and a ceding of executive power by the state to tribal groups. Both of these names also highlight the ways in which the region has continued to be thought of primarily as the location of a border with a hostile nation.²⁷ It is the FATA region – specifically North and South Waziristan – in which Ahmad’s novel takes place.

The region is a significant space for a study of Pakistan’s postcolonial sovereignty, in part due to its colonial history, and in part because its inconsistent administration undermines the image of a permanent and enduring border emanating from Jinnah’s declaration of independence. The FATA region is also important for a biopolitical understanding of the border. This is because it has a long and deep-rooted population of

²⁶ Bedford, ‘A Door Ajar’, p. 258.

²⁷ Shazia Sadaf argues that this dominant image of the region is part of a broader ‘demonisation’ of the tribal areas; one to which Ahmad’s novel responds. Sadaf frames the novel as a ‘retrospective prologue to post-9/11 novels’, using a typology of contemporary Pakistani fiction developed by Aroosa Kanwal. The reading is engaging in many respects, however, while the text speaks to contemporary geopolitical concerns regarding the region, it is its publication and not its writing that took place after the events of 2001 and the ensuing US-led ‘War on Terror’. Indeed, Sadaf notes that the text was first offered unsuccessfully to publishers in 1973. See Shazia Sadaf, ‘Human Dignity, the “War on Terror” and post-9/11 Pakistani Fiction’, *European Journal of English Studies*, 22:2 (2018), 115-127.

tribal and nomadic groups, and an history of law-making that interfered with and administered those people in often draconian ways. For example, the Frontier Crimes Regulations (1901) (FCR) is a legal document that was created largely to disrupt and make impossible certain modes of living for the nomads that had always occupied this space. The regulation is often referred to as ‘the black law’, and most analyses of the FCR – which were only repealed in 2017 – focus on three of the universal human rights that they refuse: appeal, *wakeel*, and *daleel*: that is the power to appeal convictions (appeal), to seek legal representation (*wakeel*), or to give evidence to a court (*daleel*).²⁸ This legal situation is referenced in Amnesty International’s 2010 report on the region, and recent recriminations have been led by the Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement.²⁹ In addition to these three prominent human rights violations in the FCR, there have been other more targeted attempts to disrupt tribal ways of life. For example:

31. (1) No new hamlet, village-habitation, tower or walled enclosure shall, without the previous sanction in writing of the commissioner, who may either grant or refuse such sanction as he thinks fit, be erected at any place within five miles of the frontier of British India.³⁰

This sanction effectively refuses tribal people the right to reside within five miles of the border, creating a ten-mile swathe of land on which nomadic life was forbidden. Other acts—like the harbouring of a fugitive—became highly punishable, despite the fact that offering sanctuary was a significant tradition of tribal life. These individual and targeted laws were combined with the making of powerful sovereign figures across the region in the form of the ‘Deputy Commissioner’. This figure is introduced at the beginning of the document and endowed with great discretionary power by the end:

4. (3) When exercising any of the powers of a Deputy Commissioner under this Regulation, an Additional District Magistrate shall be deemed, for the purposes of this Regulation to be the Deputy Commissioner.

²⁸ Ismail Khan, ‘Mainstreaming Fata with Interim Governance Law’, *Dawn* (online), 31 May, 2018 <<https://www.dawn.com/news/1411061>> [accessed 16/07/2019]. Javed Hussain, ‘Draconian Frontier Crimes Regulation to be repealed within a week: Safron Minister’, *Dawn* (online), 8 December, 2017 <<https://www.dawn.com/news/1375339>> [accessed 16/07/2019].

²⁹ Amnesty International Report, “*As if Hell Fell on Me*”: *The Human Rights Crisis in North West Pakistan*, (2010) <<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA33/004/2010/en/>> [accessed 01/07/2019].

³⁰ *Frontier Crimes Regulations*, British India, 1901 <<https://www.slideshare.net/fatanews/frontier-crimes-regulation-fcr-1901>> [accessed 16/07/2019].

48. No appeal shall lie from any decision given, decree or sentence passed, order made, or act done, under any of the provisions of this Regulation.

54. (1) No officer shall revise any decision, decree, sentence, or order given, passed or made by himself in the capacity of Deputy Commissioner.³¹

This exceptional sovereignty is significant to an understanding of the region that recognises how tribal communities are not just impacted by broad national actions, but repeated individual decisions by multiple representatives of the state. The inability to appeal any of these decisions, and the inability of even lawmakers to reverse them, creates a heightened level of immediacy in the regulation of tribal people.

Omrani traces the history of the border and the problems of sovereignty that it raises, stating that from its foundation in 1893 to the present '[t]he real problem is that the Line itself generates instability, it is not policeable, and the constitution of the Tribal Areas does not permit economic development to take place'.³² The idea of the space as inherently unstable and ungovernable is a prevalent one, and to some extent explains why consecutive colonial and postcolonial governments ceded power to the tribal chiefs and courts within it. This inherent instability continuously leads to a vacillating form of border security that undermines the state's actions across its other borders. If the border represents a line between sovereign order and timeless anarchy, as Vaughan-Williams argues, the uncertainty and contingency of *this* border blurs that line.

For the tribal people that lived on and across this border, these competing temporalities appear particularly acute. Omrani's argument is that for the Pakistani state, as for the British, the act of border security was not a matter of external security, but of internal security.³³ Control over the Pashtun people meant bringing them in line with promises of progress and sovereignty that were articulated on behalf of the rest of Pakistan by Jinnah, and Pakistan's first constitution. However, aligning this region with the national project was a task that also involved bringing large and diverse people, with historic laws and traditions, into lockstep with the homogeneous, empty time that the border is often imagined to delimit. In reality, up until recent developments and the merger of FATA and NWFP, there has been little consistent policy to bring control and sovereignty to this

³¹ *Frontier Crimes Regulations, 1901*.

³² Omrani, 'The Durand Line', p. 191.

³³ Omrani, 'The Durand Line', p. 180.

region in a clear and unitary manner. Ian Bedford discusses the contingent nature of Pakistan's foreign policy in this region in recent years in the context of other postcolonial borders:

A state may choose on occasion to avert its attention from border control. In circumstances where the communities of belonging far overlap nation-states, sections of the national border may be deployed like a valve system—easing here, tightening there—as was Ugandan practice along its south-west border, from the 1920s until the Rwanda refugee crisis of 1990.³⁴

For Bedford, the nature of border sovereignty is contingent and flexible, despite the concreteness with which states often articulate their territory. He notes that communities and borders are often incommensurable, but in so doing argues that the contingent policing of these borders – though it may appear arbitrary – is a technique of sovereignty and a means of political control. Bedford links this valve-like system of border security with dominant Islamic ideologies and changes in the religious nature of different governments. The reasons for the changes are less important to my reading of *The Wandering Falcon*, but their impact on the everyday lives of the nomads are significant, along with the great discretionary power that they represent. Bedford's image of national instability is particularly apposite here:

The instability will come to the fore whenever the tension recurs between two ways of imagining the Pakistani nation: the nation as container, to which belong all those born and nourished within its set boundaries, and the nation as project, affirming, vindicating, or still seeking its reason for being.³⁵

This language of 'container' and 'project' corresponds in suggestive ways with the Derridean concept of sovereignty and time explored in this thesis. The container is the space of power created by the *constative* act of Partition, and the project is the future-oriented attempt to buttress that sovereignty through its repeated performance. Whether the

³⁴ Bedford, 'A Door Ajar', p. 257.

³⁵ Bedford, 'A Door Ajar', p. 259.

nation is imagined as a container or a project, the Pashtun tribes are a threat to its internal coherence. In a reading of Ahmad's novel, I will argue that the 'project' of Pakistan is at once articulated and undermined by the exclusive actions of those who police the border in the name of national security, particularly as they are directed at the moment of passage from Afghanistan.

Bureaucracy at the Border in *The Wandering Falcon*

Ahmad's text engages with these issues of border sovereignty in the FATA in a series of short stories that follow one nomadic community as they come to terms with the sudden enforcement of the Durand Line as the limit of postcolonial Pakistan. In a key moment of the text the tribe reach a newly instituted border during their seasonal migration. The conflict at the border is immediately preceded by a romanticised image of nomadic life that focuses on the changing of the seasons. The temporality of this tribal way of living is made clear by the narrator in the following passage:

The Kharot tribe numbered about a million men whose entire lives were spent in wandering with the seasons. In autumn, they would gather their flocks of sheep and herds of camels, fold up their woven woollen tents and start moving. They spend the winter in the plains, restlessly moving from place to place as each opportunity to work came to an end. Sometimes they merely let their animals take the decisions for them. When the grazing was exhausted in one area, the animals forced them to move on to another site.³⁶

Each season is assigned a different location, and the need to access that location is clearly related to the needs of their livestock and their abilities to feed themselves. The image of their animals *forcing* them to move on illustrates how the novel's tribal characters imagine this space as borderless, but also how such movement – although seasonal – is highly unpredictable. The nomads no more recognise an official border than their cattle would, and to do so would pose an existential threat. It is important here to note the 'restlessness' and the mobility of the tribal people. The nomadic tradition is at odds with the permanent

³⁶ Jamil Ahmad, *The Wandering Falcon* (London: Penguin, 2011), p. 37 [all subsequent references will be given parenthetically].

residence that is a key facet of contemporary national sovereignty; the ability to settle in one place is linked closely to sovereign promises of protection and territorial futurity.

Though Partition had created a moment of migration and movement that was unprecedented in human history, that movement had been related to the promise of a homeland from both new sovereign states. However, the very concept of a homeland is in conflict with the nomads' traditional relationship to space. This passage continues:

This way of life had endured for centuries, but it would not last forever. It constituted defiance to certain concepts, which the world was beginning to associate with civilisation itself. Concepts such as statehood, citizenship, undivided loyalty to one state; settled life as opposed to nomadic life, and the writ of the state as opposed to tribal discipline. (pp. 37-8)

This moment in the text is one of a number that addresses the apparently inevitable decline of tribal traditions that are seen as incommensurable with national sovereignty, and reflects Ahmad's anthropological background. The text abounds with ageing chiefs who are unable to acclimatise to the expectations of modernity, but this section in particular highlights the separation between two understandings of sovereignty and time. There is a sense of belatedness and delay as techniques of sovereignty begin to impact the nomads around a decade after Partition, especially as these techniques had been brought to bear on the structure of South Asian life for centuries under colonial rule. This being said, the centuries-long traditions of the Kharot tribe are *suddenly* subjected to this new way of living – one that promises progress and permanence, but is in fact posited in the text as an existential threat, happening outside of the timeline of postcolonial nationalist historiography. As such, the nomads themselves are presented as inhabiting a kind of temporal double bind: they have a lengthy history, but are threatened by the concept of permanence. This double bind is hinted at at one point in the narrative, where the narrator describes how the Kharot women 'wanted to have sturdy branches around them on which they could hang their children's cradles. In their minds, home and permanency only meant a stay long enough to wash clothes or to fix the cradles to trees' (p. 50). This is an important image as it positions temporariness at the very heart of tribal identity. The threats that modernity poses to this nomadic identity are profound and all-encompassing, and this omniscient narrator makes the reader aware that the battle is always-already lost.

The enforcement of border sovereignty in the FATA region did not come immediately with Partition, and *The Wandering Falcon* takes place across the 1950s and

60s. Pakistan's belated clampdown on the nomadic people in the text is presented as enlightenment modernity inevitably catching up with them, but perhaps it is not an attempt to subject them to the state, but rather a side effect of the performative nature of Pakistan's administration of its own borders. The chief of the tribe makes clear the fact that a bordered logic of citizenship and nationalism was incompatible with tribal identity. He states:

How is it possible for us to be treated as belonging to Afghanistan? We stay for a few months there and for a few months in Pakistan. The rest of the time we spend moving. We are Pawindahs and belong to all countries, or to none. (p. 53)

Reading against the grain here, I would argue that the state is not excluding the nomads because they belong to Afghanistan: the nomads pose a threat precisely because they belong *nowhere*. If the border is to represent the limits of Pakistan's sovereignty, it must do so in a way that aids the narrative of progress and futurity that is at the heart of the state's early promises. The movements of the nomadic people in the text become an image of Vaughan-Williams' 'timeless anarchy' of the exterior, despite the temporal traditions and routines that have sustained them for centuries. To reinforce the image of a fractured temporality outside of the state, the border is administrated in such a way as to make the perceived difference immutable. In the text, this immutability is fictionalised through a bureaucratic technique, as rumours spread that the Pakistani state will require visas, travel documents, and passports from anybody who tries to cross the hastily erected checkpoints. Understood in relation to Auyero's *Patients of the State*, the request for their papers reflects techniques of sovereignty that create domination through seemingly arbitrary requests for forms, and the waiting that this implies. This waiting is increasingly prevalent at the border, as it sheds light on how the nomads are not just halted by a physical border, but an implied impenetrable bureaucratic system; a system that is held together by an exceptional legal situation that effectively recreates the 'buffer' zone of British Colonialism. The border and the bureaucracy are the building blocks of sovereign time at the checkpoint; this is revealed in a text that at once portrays the issue as a 'natural' battle between ancient tradition and modern sovereignty, while also shedding light on how the actions of the Pakistani state reinforce that temporal disjunct in ways that seem both unnatural and violent.

Through this appeal to the document – to *paper* – we can turn our attention to the particular temporality of the border checkpoint. In the previous chapter I noted the non-linear temporality of the rumour as a means of circulating information of Partition violence, and the levels of confusion and retribution that accompanied it. In *The Wandering Falcon*, news of an increase in border security has a similar form of circulation, but its impact is very different. The rumours are articulated by the tribal chiefs:

There is to be no quarrel either among yourselves, or with other tribes. No disputes with the authorities. I have heard a rumour that the authorities are going to demand travel documents from our people. You will continue moving while I go to the government officials to get a sense of things. (p. 42)

The rumours create a level of anxiety, but the traditions of the group continue to be followed without capitulation to veiled threats or prominent nationalist discourse. The denial of ‘quarrel’ and the willingness to enter into a dialogue with the state highlights the fact that the nomads see themselves as having agency when dealing with their political exclusion. This position of being agents comes with a degree of compliance, which is shown further by the tribes’ acquiescence to the biopolitical ordering of the state in the region:

By the afternoon, the caravan with its escort had reached the next fort, which was also the headquarters of the delousing party working on the caravans using this trail. These groups of paramedics were responsible for ensuring that the nomadic men, women and children were rid of the vermin which were believed to be carriers of typhus fever. (p. 49)

The ongoing relationship between state and tribal subject is portrayed in this exchange as one of mutual respect and support; such a symbolic act of support perhaps encourages the nomads in their continued march towards the border. The administering of delousing and medical aid is a seemingly complementary act of sovereignty that further reinforces the group’s expectation that the rumoured border will not interrupt their cycle of seasonal migration. After all, why would the Pakistani state administer delousing and aid if it had no intention of allowing entry? On the other hand, delousing could also be read as part of a process of othering. A way of marking the bodies of the nomads *as* lice: vermin that pose a

threat to the state, and must be excluded. As the nomads' exclusion becomes definite, this process appears to be a performance of border administration that is out of sync with the actual reality of border sovereignty at this historical (and textual) moment.

When the nomads reach the border checkpoint multiple temporalities are brought into alignment. The checkpoint acts as the expected point of entry through which to continue the seasonal routines of nomadic life, and as the focal point of bureaucratic delay. At the same time, the checkpoint is the site of the discretionary violence of the FCR that lend state actors and military personnel an exceptional and immediate power over life and death, and refuse tribal subjects the right to appeal any wrongdoing.³⁷ Through the 'portable machine' of the border checkpoint the Pakistani state brings both the delay and the immediacy of sovereign time to bear on the nomads at a moment in which they continue to envisage a future to their way of life, as we will see. The first indication of this is the demand for papers by the state. As the rumour becomes reality, the request has the structure of petty bureaucratic delay; the likes of which Javier Auyero attributes the power to create patient and acquiescent citizens. However, as the border guards do the work of street-level bureaucrats – demanding the patience of the nomads by asking for a document that will allow them access to the protection of the state – this delay takes the form of a permanent ban. The permanence of this ban is articulated as the chief is finally stopped at the border:

There was no way for them to obtain travel documents for thousands of tribesmen; they had no birth certificates, no identity papers or health documents. They could not document their animals. The new system would certainly mean the death of a centuries-old way of life. (p. 54)

The order to obtain documentation for what could be up to a million nomads is clearly absurd, and is an act of securitisation that underlines the potential violence (epistemic or bodily) that can be enacted under the mask of bureaucratic order. Significantly, the concept of travel documents – that invoke images of migration and movement through Westphalian

³⁷ The immediacy of military action within five kilometres of the border, as it is set down in the FCR, allows individual military actors the right to use violence and arrest in a way that reflects Benjamin's law-making violence. They are not simply a reaction to individual crimes, but are designed to have a psychic impact on those who witness them as a means to 'send a message' and establish a rule of law. This colonial mode of sovereignty is discussed by Nasser Hussain through a legal reading of the Amritsar Massacre and its genealogy in British common law. The nature of divine violence also evokes the 'miracle' of Schmitt's legal exception that I discuss in the subchapter, 'Defining Terms: Sovereignty'. See Nasser Hussain, *Jurisprudence of Emergency*.

states – threatens the repeated performance of the request. To be denied movement once is to deny each future border-crossing, and the first enactment of this process, though it happens a decade after Partition, effectively marks the subjective beginning of Pakistan's postcolonial border sovereignty for these characters of the novel. If travel documents must be shown on this day, then they become mandatory to continue the nomadic mode of living.

It is important to restate however, that the nomads are not being delayed by a street-level bureaucrat, but a soldier. The amazing capacity for violence that is shown by the border guards in *The Wandering Falcon* stands in for the legal distinction of the District Magistrates that are endowed with immediate power by the FCR. This creates an ultimate sovereign power that is passed between individuals representing the state as necessary, but specifically when dealing with the inhabitants of the FATA. As the nomads are denied entry, the violence with which they are met comes to represent a threat to the founding concept of Pakistan as a homeland to South Asian Muslims. The wife of the tribal chief, Gul Jana, brings about a massacre at the border as she incorrectly expects the sacred foundations of the state to allow protections to a people that shared the state's religious identity:

The women had been listening to this exchange between their men and the soldiers. Gul Jana called out to her husband, 'Dawa Khan, I am going forward. The camels must not die. I am going with a Koran on my head. Nothing can happen to me.' [... T]wo machine guns opened up from either side and mowed down the camels. The firing was indiscriminate. Men, women and children died. Gul Jana's belief that the Koran would prevent tragedy died too. (pp. 59-60)

As the 'Koran' fails to provide the protection of the state, the 'indiscriminate' violence of the border guards highlights the lie that denial of entry was based upon insufficient documentation. The act of violence has an immediacy that cuts through the delays and suspensions of bureaucratic sovereignty, and reflects more closely the late colonial violence enacted in the Punjab through massacres at Amritsar in 1919 and Qissa Khwani Bazaar in 1930.³⁸ The ability for border agents to act with this immediacy, while

³⁸ While the narrative of the Amritsar Massacre is well-known outside of South Asia, the Qissa Khwani Bazaar massacre has a less prominent place in colonial history. The event has significant parallels and took place in Peshawar in 1930, in a geographical location that later became part of Pakistan. The violence of this event is the central focus of Kamila Shamsie's novel, *A God in Every Stone* (2014).

demanding adherence to strict temporal guidelines, is a significant contradiction particular to the border checkpoint; a space shot through with delay and suspension, through which the state can cut at will.

The travel visa is not the only document that appears within the text as an indicator of exclusion and violence. Another site at which the contingent nature of the document encounters the immediacy of the District Magistrate in the text is the law court. The representation of the court is proof that it is not just the border at which violence is enacted on these liminal people, and it imagines the FCR courtroom as a space of domination and law-making violence. The travel document is central to the deferral of citizenship for the nomads, but state control over the meaning and use of the document also appears earlier in the text within the legal process. The first time the Kharot tribe are faced with the state's reliance on the document surrounds questions of overlapping sovereignty in the region. There is an ongoing altercation in the region after an uncooperative chief was removed from the head of his tribe, an act that represents the encroachment of local officials into the leadership of tribal communities. This interference into tribal groups was legislated through the FCR, and was enabled by provisions that allowed the District Magistrates to utilise collective punishments for the crimes of individuals. A courtroom scene shows how the document plays an important role in the state's sovereignty in the region, and how the security and permanence of official paperwork is destabilised at the beginning of the novel: it is always contingent, slippery, and potentially violent.

The document in question is a promise of pardon and dialogue that has been circulated among the tribesmen. It is introduced with some reverence:

Jangu took out a soiled printed paper from within his shirt and carefully opened its folds. 'In this paper is written the invitation and the safe conduct. Copies of it have been sent to many people.' None of them could read or write, but each looked at the paper carefully and with seeming deliberation before passing it on to the next person. (p. 28)

The assembled men cannot read the document, but its status as an official communication of the state supersedes its indecipherable content. The document highlights a relationship between the state and the tribe that is conducted through paper, and reinforces the power dynamic of domination between state and subject. As each of the characters *performs* the act of 'reading' and reverence before deciding to follow its instruction, it is clear that the instruction itself is only known through rumour. By accepting the promise of safe passage

the men agree to engage in dialogue with the Pakistani magistrates in a nearby town, but are then shocked to find that the conversation is to take place within the courtroom. In accordance with the provisions for collective punishment, they are on trial for the murder of Pakistani troops. The image of Pashtun tribesmen in the courtroom brings forth the most maligned articles within the FCR, which deny tribal defendants any due process within the legal system.

Significant to this chapter's reading is the fact that the document plays such a large role in the proceedings. It is through an appeal to the document that they ask for clemency, but they are quickly rebuffed:

Then the charges were read out to them. They had killed two army officers.
 'If proven guilty you could die' [...]

'[W]e came for the talks.' He waved the paper in the direction of the voice that addressed him. 'Read this,' he said.

'I know this paper,' said the other man. 'It is of no value. It carries no signature.' [...] 'I speak as their sardar and I say that a word does not require a signature, nor a mark nor yet an oath. The word was offered and we took it.' (pp. 30-1)

Not only is the document itself stripped of its value once it has served its purpose – a fact that perhaps highlights the temporary and contingent nature of an artefact that is considered permanent and binding by the tribesmen – but it is wrapped up within a tradition of bureaucracy and law that the nomads have no way of understanding. For Derrida, the signature is a key example of the undecidability between constative and performative actions. Speaking of the signatures on the declaration of independence, for example, Derrida writes: '[i]n signing, the people say—and do what they say they do.'³⁹ The declarative nature of the signature here has a temporal logic that is two-fold: the signature lends authority to the document, but it simultaneously lends authority to the signatory who suddenly finds him or herself in the position to declare. For the nomads – who are yet to encounter the bureaucratic logic of national sovereignty at this point – the European and colonial logic of the signature goes unnoticed. The lack of a signature is not registered as a threat by the tribesmen, who see the act of writing and the verbal promise as sufficient to gain the protection that the document assured. The document is so problematic

³⁹ Derrida, 'Declarations of Independence', p.10.

here because while it is sufficiently official to affiliate the group with a crime and to cost them their lives, the District Magistrate has the discretionary power to deem it *unofficial* to the point where its promises are not binding on the state or court. A doubleness is created here in which the document's meaning and value are contingent to the state; therein it is revealed as a repressive tool or technique of sovereignty. The fatal absence of the signature has a grim irony when the exceptional immediacy of FCR creates a legal space in which District Magistrates have violent discretionary powers.

Though the document is stripped of its implied impact on the future by the state's decision to ignore it, Ahmad highlights the permanence of the men's deaths with a particular emphasis:

These men died a final and total death. They will live in no songs; no memorials will be raised to them. It is possible that with time, even their loved ones will lock them up in some closed recess of their minds. The terrible struggle for life makes it impossible for too much time to be wasted over thoughts for the dead.

What died with them was a part of the Baluch people themselves. A little of their spontaneity in offering affection, something of their graciousness and trust. That too was tried, sentenced and died with these seven men. (p. 34)

The cold legal reality of the FATA courtroom removes any sense of martyrdom or continuation from the group of nomads who followed the writ of the state. That they go unmourned, and will be quickly forgotten, is presented as a fact of postcolonial existence for tribal groups who are locked in a constant struggle with a power that has the ability to sentence and kill them with no recourse. This 'final and total death' also evokes an alternative kind of permanence that is the other side of the nationalist promise of territorial futurity: the final and definitive permanence with which those who are unjustly killed are removed from the space in which this violence occurs. This strand of the narrative comes to represent a division between state and subject within the specific legal framework of this border region that gradually increases as the text's stories unfold. The document comes to represent not just a belonging to the state, but a device by which this belonging is denied, revoked or *deferred*. If the passport is the device by which membership and belonging is officially (and permanently) secured, then the slippery nature of official documents in the

eyes of the nomads highlights both how the state controls paper, and how paper enables the practice of absolute power over its territory and population.

Military Border Temporalities in *The Collaborator*

The Kashmir region of the Indian subcontinent both connects and divides India and Pakistan. Ravina Aggarwal has described the Line of Control (LoC) that separates the two governed regions of Kashmir as ‘[d]rawn and redrawn by battles and treaties’, and ‘identifiable by traces of blood’.⁴⁰ This image of the line as both iterative and violent evokes the concept of Kashmiri border sovereignty that is criticised in Mirza Waheed’s *The Collaborator*. Aggarwal highlights the ways in which sovereignty – particularly in the Indian-controlled part of the Kashmir Valley – is repeatedly performed by the state as a means to justify and express its permanent claim to the Kashmiri territory. She writes that ‘[t]he border becomes a space where the state expresses itself through a habitualised performativity and repeatedly asserts physical and symbolic authority over its citizens’.⁴¹ This image of Indian sovereignty in the region being reinforced through violence and torture, but also through annual events such as celebrations of Indian independence, unveils the state’s control over the region as a repeated and ongoing performance. The competing temporalities that are created through these performances further illustrate the temporal dimensions of border sovereignty in South Asia with which this chapter has engaged. On the subject of Indian sovereignty in Kashmir, Arundhati Roy notes how India’s sovereignty over the region was only secured through the repeated use of various techniques of sovereignty:

It had used money (lots of it), violence (lots of it), disinformation, propaganda, torture, elaborate networks of collaborators and informers, terror, imprisonment, blackmail and rigged elections to subdue what democrats would call the will of the people. [...] It made the mistake of believing that domination was victory, that the ‘normalcy’ it had enforced through the barrel of a gun was indeed normal, and that the people’s sullen silence was acquiescence.⁴²

⁴⁰ Ravina Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 1.

⁴¹ Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control*, p. 17.

⁴² Arundhati Roy, ‘Azadi: The Only Thing Kashmiris Want’, in *Kashmir: A Case for Freedom* (Edinburgh: Verso, 2011), 57-71 (p. 58).

This is a powerful assertion that requires some unpacking, particularly for the context of *The Collaborator*. Roy argues that by the Summer of 2008 the Indian state believed that the Kashmiri insurgency had been quelled, but at the moment that this was assumed, and their expensive performance of military sovereignty was paused, a new wave of protest began. In terms that reflect the performative nature of exceptional sovereignty, Arundhati Roy highlights the way the state violence of India's Kashmir occupation instituted a new 'normalcy', but that this new norm was reliant upon a continuing decades long military administration. In other words, the suspension of democratic process and the violence of military responses to Kashmiri protests for independence took the form of a permanent state of exceptional sovereignty. Collaboration, torture, propaganda, and terror are central to the image of this sovereignty in Waheed's representation of this border area. Following Aggarwal's recognition of the 'habitualised' nature of Indian sovereignty in Kashmir, these techniques of sovereignty can be read as performances that – when dropped – allow space for competing claims of sovereignty to surface. Reading these techniques in *The Collaborator* can shed light on the contingent and temporal nature of power at the border of the postcolonial state.

Aggarwal's argument about the performance of India's Independence Day within Jammu and Kashmir is an illustrative one. Focusing closely on state celebrations in the Ladakh region, she notes that Independence Day must 'accommodate competing timelines', as the date of Indian independence does not match the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to the Indian state, and does not represent the 'independence' that many Kashmiri people have sought for the region *from* India.⁴³ As a result, Aggarwal claims that the moment of Partition

[...] lingers on in the present to challenge and refute the mythical chronology of nationalism, belying the notion that territory and nation are coterminous or natural. It calls into question not just the maturation of the postcolonial state but also the legitimacy of the nation's birth.⁴⁴

Though she does not deal with the particular techniques of delay and deferral that I argue are performed in both of these border spaces, Aggarwal does note the highly performative

⁴³ Aggarwal, *Beyond Lines of Control*, p. 23. Jammu and Kashmir was officially acceded to the Indian state on 26th October 1947, four months after partition.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

nature of sovereignty, and the fragmentation of time and historiography in postcolonial Kashmir. As I have argued, repeated performances of border sovereignty by Pakistan and India through various irredentist conflicts makes clear the fact that the territories are not settled and final in the way that originary promises of independence articulate them. Furthermore, the attempt to foreclose alternative temporalities of the region's history and people shows how the postcolonial nation-state is still in a process of ongoing negotiation.

A consideration of sovereignty in *The Collaborator*, which is set in Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir, raises profound questions about the limits of Pakistan's national culture and political geography with which this thesis is also partly concerned. Similarly to the nomads in *The Wandering Falcon*, a mobile and nominally Muslim community are subjected to the violent repercussions of the territorial claims of postcolonial sovereignty propagated by both India and Pakistan. The rhetoric with which such claims are articulated often appeals primarily to the region's beauty. Ananya Kabir has explored an image of the Kashmir Valley and its representation that centres the desire that India and Pakistan display over the territory, writing that:

To re-inscribe desire into the geopolitical claims that (to use phrases in common circulation through India and Pakistan) "Kashmir is an integral part of India" or, in Pakistan's view, that Kashmir is its "jugular vein" and its "unfinished business," is to ask further questions about collective desire.⁴⁵

Kabir's thesis is that the Valley of Kashmir has 'immense symbolic capital' that is inherited from colonial rule, but also nurtured as a means to promote contested claims of collective identity by Pakistan, India and Kashmiri nationalists.⁴⁶ Desire itself is a future-oriented term, evocative of a future that is in the process of being realised or worked towards. However, the common phrases that posit the region as both an 'integral' part of the nation's future and an unfinished part of its colonial past hint at the rhetorical manoeuvres that justify the heavy-handed border sovereignty that has taken place there since Partition. If Kashmir is the jugular vein, then it is cut by the subcontinent's most embattled border fence, and if it is equally integral to India, then the apportioning of half of the landmass to Pakistan is a cause for a territorial emergency. Despite these competing

⁴⁵ Ananya Jahanara Kabir, *Territory of Desire: Representing the Valley of Kashmir* (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 2009), pp. 1-2.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

claims to incorporate Jammu and Kashmir into either nation-state, the region is diverse, both ethnically and politically, leading Kabir to state that '[t]here are at least as many Kashmiri subject-positions as there are political viewpoints on Kashmir'.⁴⁷ Such a statement highlights the heterogeneous nature of a space that defies and resists the homogeneous march of nationalist expansionist policies that have been described by Goldie Osuri as a form of sovereignty akin to imperialism.⁴⁸ This diversity, and a youthful and growing movement for Kashmiri independence, supports the image of the region as being under siege by foreign states.

Thinking about the border directly is important for this reading. Since the Secession of Bangladesh in 1971, the LoC in Kashmir has been the most consistent flashpoint in Indian-Pakistani relations. Unlike the Durand Line, which was officially agreed upon as a border, the LoC is a *de facto* border that began its existence as a cease-fire line between the two nations. It was re-designated as the LoC in 1972 in accordance with the Simla Agreement: a treaty that was drawn up in the aftermath of the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 that led to the secession of Bangladesh. In the twenty-first century, the region is still the focal point of continued animosity; the sovereignty of India and Pakistan are competing in space, and the continued aggression at the border prompts us to question the performative nature of this sovereignty as both states articulate their territorial borders while they are still 'unfinished' and contingent. Kabir highlights the way in which political images of Kashmir differ between Pakistan and India, and in so doing problematises any concrete image of the border. She writes:

The LoC marks the limit of Pakistani incursion into Jammu and Kashmir territory in 1948 or, to put it from another perspective, the extent to which Pakistan had been able to recapture from India that territory which was rightfully its own. It therefore marks, too, the limit of both the nation-states concerned. But these limits themselves remain unclear.⁴⁹

The description is one that illustrates the border as the result of movement, or the limit of expansion for both India and Pakistan. The doubleness of the border, as it comes to represent both states' claims of the other's illegitimacy, makes for an interesting literary

⁴⁷ Kabir, *Territory of Desire*, p. 5.

⁴⁸ Goldie Osuri, 'Imperialism, Colonialism and Sovereignty in the (Post)colony: India and Kashmir, *Third World Quarterly*, 38:11 (2017), 2428-2443 (p. 2428).

⁴⁹ Kabir, *Territory of Desire*, p. 7.

image. Especially as its limits lack clarity due to the everyday violence that border sovereignty in the region entails.

Two previous readings of *The Collaborator* have registered the centrality of the physical LoC in recent representations of Kashmir, but they also, separately, shed light on two of the key temporal considerations of this chapter. First, Peter Morey discusses the presence of delay at the heart of the novel, which he argues ‘is characterised by a politics of procrastination’ as the wait for a resolution to Kashmir’s territorial future is mirrored in the hesitation of Waheed’s narrator.⁵⁰ Second, Stephen Morton assesses the repeated performance of border sovereignty by representatives of the Indian state in the novel, highlighting the significance of border violence as part of a repeated performance of sovereignty in the region.⁵¹ The remainder of this chapter combines an interest in issues of delay at the border, with a focus on temporal techniques of sovereignty employed in Indian-controlled Kashmir. In *The Collaborator*, I argue that the border spectacularises and repeatedly performs the historic relationship between India, Pakistan, and Kashmir in a morbid fashion. While the physical existence of a border fence differs from Ahmad’s novel – where the border is only officially uttered at the checkpoint – the LoC has a similarly contingent and vacillating nature for the characters within Waheed’s narrative. A key similarity, however, is that the border itself is extended *laterally* by the legal realities of its enforcement. Rather than being a discrete line on a map (as the fence would have one imagine), it is stated in the text that there was ‘an embargo within five kilometres of the LoC’ that effectively took the form of a permanent curfew.⁵² This reflects the FCR article that stated no habitation was ‘to be erected at any place within five miles of the frontier’ in that the border itself created a large swathe of land in which normal modes of living were made impossible.⁵³ Furthermore, both texts lean on the nature of the ID card as a means to deny, categorise, or delineate subjects as ‘other’, or as threat. In fact, the central narrative of *The Collaborator* follows the unnamed protagonist collecting ID cards from militants who have been killed along the LoC; this protagonist is enlisted with the bureaucratic task

⁵⁰ Peter Morey, ‘Hamlet in Paradise’, in *Imagining Muslims in South Asia and the Diaspora: Secularism, Religion, Representations*, eds. by Claire Chambers and Caroline Herbert (Oxon: Routledge, 2015), 97-112 (p. 97).

⁵¹ Stephen Morton, ‘Sovereignty and Necropolitics at the Line of Control’, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 50:1 (2014), 19-30.

⁵² Mirza Waheed, *The Collaborator* (London: Penguin, 2011), p. 177 [all subsequent references will be given parenthetically].

⁵³ *Frontier Crimes Regulations, 1901*, 31. (1).

of totalling up the number of ‘insurgents’ that the military had stopped from entering the Indian administered province of Jammu and Kashmir.⁵⁴

The remainder of this chapter suggests that the violence of border sovereignty in Indian-controlled Kashmir has a particular temporal dimension. The novel ruminates on time at the border and is illustratively divided into three sections: ‘Then and Now’, ‘Then’, and ‘Now’. These section breaks foreground the text’s preoccupation with time, and the use of narrative time to foreground the temporal violence of sovereignty; they also foreshadow the juxtaposition between the nostalgic space of desire that Kabir highlights in representations of the Kashmir Valley, and the lived experience of war at the border. This temporal focus will be explored through three main ideas. First, I will argue that the centrality of the ID card within the narrative is a means by which the state’s bureaucratic machinery attempts to erase the subjectivity of its inhabitants. This homogenising act of reducing people to their papers also restricts people’s freedom of movement by producing a delay, and fragments the being-in-time of those who exist within the border space. Second, I will approach the curfew and the ID parade as the intrusion of military time at the border to highlight how sovereignty and time in the Kashmir Valley are inextricably linked. Finally, the chapter will conclude with Waheed’s representation of a speech given at the border by the text’s ‘King of Curfew’ (p. 227). In this performative speech act, images of Kashmir’s history and future are employed by a military figure in front of the assembled characters of the novel; confronting them with the territorial rhetoric of South Asia’s postcolonial sovereignty that had previously caused such disorientation for both Manto’s lunatics and Ahmad’s nomads.

* * *

The document is complicit in the temporal violence at the LoC in Waheed’s novel in two significant ways. First, the ID cards collected by the protagonist in the valley represent the act of identifying bodies as foreign, and therefore as part of the anarchic timeless outside as it is imagined by Vaughan-Williams. Secondly, the Indian military exercises power over when the information is shared and made official: it can delay the publication of documents on a whim in order to shore up its authority. The state only releases the number of deaths when it is politically expedient, or when it can be framed as retaliation. I argue that the novel is shot through with delay at its key points, providing an image of stasis and

⁵⁴ It perhaps goes without saying that terms such as ‘insurgent’ and ‘militant’ are often problematic, and always contingent.

hopelessness that is reminiscent of the way bureaucratic delay is presented in the ethnographic texts discussed earlier in the chapter. Such delay is registered in the protagonist's limited capacity to act. In Waheed's novel, the unnamed protagonist is one of a group of five teenage boys who grew up in the border village of Nowgam, and the only one who had not left the village to join the resistance against the Indian occupation. The character spends the entire text stuttering over whether to join the resistance, and whether to kill Captain Kadian, the Indian officer who has usurped his father's power over his village and enforced his collaboration. The text's focus on delay is perhaps reflective of the nature of border sovereignty in Kashmir: a space in which questions of sovereignty and legitimacy are always to-come, and the territorial claims of both states are oriented towards a desired, but uncertain future.

At the beginning of the novel, Waheed's narrator highlights the geopolitical significance of the border region that he occupies whilst also commenting on its beauty:

These undulating rows of peaks, some shining, some white, some brown, like layers of piled-up fabrics, are to the west and hide in their folds the secret tracks into Azad Kashmir, into Pakistan [...]: *this* is where most of the action takes place.

Valleys are beautiful.⁵⁵

The passage is evocative of a mountainous region that stuns the narrator with both its diversity and scale. The reference to fabric produces an image of femininity (that Nehru imbues in his descriptions of the region's beauty), but also the plurality of Kashmir's people, the ability for state and non-state actors to hide and be hidden, and an image of the space as one of crossing. The italicised pronoun '*this*' is the introduction of the space in which the violence of this crossing is made real to the narrator, and the final statement – given its own paragraph – shows a level of disinterest in Kashmir in particular. 'Valleys are beautiful' may appear to be the only uncontroversial and apolitical statement in this passage. However, as Ananya Kabir reminds us, romantic descriptions of Kashmir's natural landscape are freighted with territorial significance. The very sovereignty of India is at stake in these representations.

The process of crossing the border – either to enter Pakistan permanently or to return and fight against the Indian administration – is one that brings to mind the

⁵⁵ Mirza Waheed, *The Collaborator*, p. 4 [*emphasis original*] [all subsequent references will be given parenthetically].

checkpoint and the passport. Although those who cross the border hidden in the folds of Kashmir's fabric are not queueing at a checkpoint window, their IDs remain crucial to the *post facto* identification of "militants" by a military administration that uses the documents as a means to perform its border sovereignty in the region. I argue that this obsession with ID *after* the fact of entry highlights its significant role in the text's representation of exceptional sovereignty, and that this delay is redoubled by the state's holding of this information until its release is politically expedient. The protagonist's role is to enter the pass – or 'no-man's land' (p. 98) – and take the ID cards and guns from those who have died there.⁵⁶ At first the protagonist cannot understand why ID cards are collected and stored, while the bodies are not disposed of. In response to the question '[s]o we don't want anything to do with the ... bodies ... then?' he is told 'Look, they are just dead meat and that's how I prefer them' (p. 3). The reduction of Kashmiri bodies to ID effaces their subjectivity and political autonomy completely with the fact of their illegal crossing. As a result, the Army Captain is not just complicit in their deaths, but also in their vague and delayed identification as militants.

Furthermore, the process of collecting ID cards is likened to an economic or corporate action within the bureaucratic image of Kadian's office:

Captain Kadian looks like the chief accountant of a prosperous bank. Am I his runner, then? His label boy? *Can you please check the name tags whilst I balance the books?* Corpse-land etiquette! One of these days I must finally ask, insist, that he come down to visit where I work. To come and inspect his crops, his harvest of human remains. I so want him to come and see the putrid trench he's turned my valley into. (p. 13 [*emphasis original*])

The emphasised sentence is the imagined order that the narrator receives from Kadian; it shows the narrator's perception of Kadian and the Indian military state as retaining a corporate remove from the border, while the narrator himself is left to face the violence that has been wrought on his valley. When the grim reality of his own collaboration – and its impact on his vision of his home – is compared to the bureaucratic 'balancing' of power in the region, his complicity is imagined as an act of etiquette. The use of the word 'etiquette', a term that most often indicates class-based codes of politeness and manners,

⁵⁶ While it is perhaps common parlance for the unoccupied space between combatants, the moniker 'no-man's land' is noteworthy in the context of Kashmir. The name references a lack of ownership and a neutrality that contradicts Indian and Pakistani claims to the region whilst erasing sovereign claims that predate partition.

alongside the ‘corpse-land’ image, creates a significant ironic juxtaposition. This image of order and social regulation in a space of indiscriminate sovereign violence comes to reflect Arundhati Roy’s image of Kashmir, in which overlapping and violent techniques of sovereignty and control are perceived to bring about an ordered ‘acquiescence’ in the face of a violent ‘normalcy’. In fact, the narrator’s inner monologue is one that resists an image of Kashmir as willingly acquiescent, and moreover, by referring to the human remains as crops to be harvested, the narrator imagines this violence in the terms of enlightenment sovereignty. Like Pooro in ‘The Skeleton’, the collaborator questions the degree to which the sovereign’s role as protector and distributor of the ‘common wealth’ can be fulfilled if this wealth is not food, but corpses.

Captain Kadian’s appearance as a temporary accountant, brought in from outside to ‘balance the books’, is at odds with an image of Kashmir as an integral and enduring piece of Indian territory. By presenting the captain as dispassionate and business-like in his grim calculation of death, the narrator suggests that sovereign power is similarly dispassionate and distant from the lives and deaths of the population it brutally murders. It becomes clear to the protagonist that the process of collecting ID cards is part of the war of rhetoric and information between the two states. This war of information is significant to a reading of postcolonial sovereignty in the region. Whereas the apparatus of colonial bureaucracy in British India served a biopolitical function – to gather information about the lives of human populations as part of a census in order to more effectively control and subject that population – statistics in Indian-controlled Kashmir are used as a performance indicator for the Indian state’s necropolitical war machine.⁵⁷ In response to an escalation of violence along the border, the Indian government releases a statement to show their success in fighting militancy. Kadian reads the report as though it is an annual financial statement: ‘It says we killed 2,387 intruders from last year until now, compared to 1,227 the year before that. That’s more than a hundred per cent improvement, isn’t it?’ (p.137). In the use of percentages, and the term ‘improvement’, the extract offers a dark satire of how statistics are used to rationalise state killing in the region. The act of bureaucracy represented by the collection and publication of these IDs shows that bureaucracy is not the aim or goal of the state; it is in fact a technique that is used to rationalise military killing on an industrial scale. Although the experience of the ‘putrid trench’ (p. 13) impacted significantly on the protagonist through various other means – he had been face-to-face with dead bodies, as

⁵⁷ For a discussion of colonial uses of intelligence such as the census and map in British India. See Christopher Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

we will see – it is the publication of the late and bureaucratic document of the report that brings his collaboration into focus.

When the protagonist reads this report he realises that his non-violent collaboration in this war was linked to its violence and escalation:

As I read it again, I realise I am looking at something that I have been a part of – can you believe it? – a part, however indirectly, however reluctantly, of an official report, basically, on deaths and murders and killings! (p. 138)

The collection of ID cards had become an act of war as this grisly bureaucratic task acts to establish risk and to justify other heavy-handed forms of border sovereignty. The protagonist's incredulity is significant here, which is visible in his interjections of '[c]an you believe it?' and 'I read it again'. While he is not complicit in the physical act of killing, he is startled by the fact that the results of his unofficial, hidden labour have contributed to this official documentation of the Indian state in Kashmir. Reading against the grain here, we might say that the cataloguing and releasing of the report *is* the violence. By this I mean that the report is the performance of a certain idea of border sovereignty, and complicity with that is complicity with the Indian nationalist project that his friends have been resisting. The cataloguing and creation of numbers at the border becomes a means by which to buttress and justify political rhetoric at the centre.

The delay of information represented by the belated report assists a reading of Kashmir's border sovereignty as reflecting the bureaucratic techniques of sovereignty employed by the Indian state. What is significant about this bureaucratic delay is that it dovetails with the immediacy of sovereign violence under the exceptional legal situation of Kashmir. When questioned on this violence, Kadian is philosophical and quick to justify its necessity. He responds to criticism by deferring responsibility, but also articulating blanket violence as the most efficient mode of border sovereignty:

Look, my orders are to keep infiltration down, what...? To stop these motherfucking bastards from sneaking in, and the best way to do that is kill anything that tries to cross into our territory, right? I don't know what the others do, but under my watch you cannot cross over without facing the fucking mortar rain that my men unleash on my command. (p. 91)

It is at once a rich and a chilling quotation. On one hand, the military chain of command is evoked as a reason for the tough techniques of sovereignty along the LoC, but on the other Kadian's extreme levels of violence are posited as an *interpretation* of that order, reached autonomously from any other border pass. In addition, the tone shifts from deferral of responsibility to pride quite quickly as this declaration of his agency for great violence is punctuated with three references to his personal power. After all it is: 'my watch,' 'my men,' and 'my command.' Kadian recognises the exceptional nature of his actions, and states that 'extraordinary things [are] a requirement of the job. We may not always like what needs to be done, but it's got to be done, right?' (p. 91). However, this perhaps contradicts his previous statement, as the 'we' who does not agree with extraordinary measures, becomes a 'you'. It is the Kashmiri inhabitants of border villages that 'may not like what needs to be done'. In his defence of extraordinary military measures, it becomes clear that Kadian straddles the line between simply following orders, and spectacularising his capacity for sovereign violence.

It is the latter element of Kadian's border actions that dominates the narrator's perceptions of the Kashmir conflict. As both Pakistan and India's capacity for violence is revealed throughout the text, the narrator notes: '[s]ometimes, I think the LoC is like a fireworks exhibition for them, you know, where they compete to decide who has the better display, who shoots the highest, who lights the brightest, who burns the furthest.' (p. 129) This spectacle of firepower is a performative element of border sovereignty in the region that is highlighted by Aggarwal and Kabir. The border is performed through violence, and its maintenance is a temporary product that is contingent upon that violence; in this case that of the 'fireworks' and the checkpoints from which they are set off. The competitive nature of border sovereignty articulated by the narrator here is one that undermines the territorial future of the border by drawing attention to the necessity of its repeated performance. Furthermore, the habitations along the border are erased and effaced by the primary focus being on the competing explosions; if the narrator's view of Kadian is accurate, the villages and their occupants are rendered invisible (and thus, removed) by the spectacle of the border's defence.

This removal is noted in the text through the representation of newspapers and state-run television shows. The late release of the ID information is not the only propagandised interruption to the Kashmiris' being-in-time. Like the territorial confusion of 'Toba Tek Singh', the events along the border and their reporting evoke a similar existential threat of 'land going off' or 'disappearing entirely'. The text has a continuous

feeling of immanence. The narrator notes the expectation of Nowgam's villagers that the fighting of Kashmiri independence would arrive in the village:

The urgency of the radio broadcasts, which others also listened to keenly, like my father, lent a sense of excitement, however second-hand, to the street. Small corner huddles, of elders crouched around a newspaper, was something I was seeing in the street for the first time in my life. It was as if people waited for 'it', not that anyone knew exactly what, to reach the village. (p. 36)

The feeling of waiting and expectancy is noted as an 'excitement' here, but there is also a temporal disconnect between the 'urgency' of the broadcasts and the 'second-hand' nature of the information. The technology of the radio and the newspaper contribute to a feeling of immanence, but what is expected is not fully understood. The feeling comes to fruition at different times throughout the novel as the narrator articulates a feeling of 'being *with* it now' (p. 165), as militants parade through the village, as we will see later. It must be noted that the sense of excitement is somewhat ironic, as the reader is aware of the possible rupture that 'it' will bring. This reality is hinted at early in the text as the narrator gives a lengthy and evocative description of the village of Poshpur; a similar village closer to Srinagar, where protest, and thus violence, was often concentrated. Comparing the fictionalised village of Nowgam to a site named similarly to the site of the Kunan Poshpora incident evokes a threat to the territorial futurity of the space of the narrative.⁵⁸ The narrator evokes the unreliability of media technologies and the impact of state violence as he introduces the event:

I'd read about it three months ago, in a sketchy newspaper report, and had then also listened to the Government's blanket denial that any such incident had ever taken place. A brand new Minister for Kashmir Affairs from Delhi was also quoted as saying that no place by the name of Poshpur ever existed on the map! (p. 26)

⁵⁸ The Kunan Poshpora incident was the reported rape of between 23 and 100 women during a search operation by the Indian military in the villages of Kunan and Poshpora in Jammu and Kashmir in 1991. See Human Rights Watch report 'Rape in Kashmir: A Crime of War', 5:1 (May 1, 1993).

The unreliability of newspaper reportage, coupled with the control of discourse by the state, has a significant impact on the narrator's recognition of border space over time. The ability of the state to deny the existence of Poshpur, despite its prevalence in the memory of the villagers, contributes to a discontinuity in the narrator's experience of territorial signifiers in the region. As a result, the immanence of the violence not only threatens the lives of the villagers, but the future of the village itself. This process of simply erasing a village at the border highlights the unstable foundations of territory as a permanent marker of sovereign power or national allegiance. After a vivid discussion of the lives and experiences of the people of Poshpur, the idea that it could be erased from the map raises the possibility of such an erasure for those in the village of Nowgam. Like the village of Toba Tek Singh, Nowgam's sense of reterritorialisation brings with it a threat of a homeland disappearing, and thus destabilises the sovereign promises of the twin states for the permanent realisation of sovereignty in the region.

Conclusion: Military Time and the 'King of Curfew'

Alongside the delays and deferrals that exist within the border sovereignty of the region, there is a gradual and purposeful intrusion of a military time into the lives of the villagers. This military time is reflective of the homogeneous, empty time of the nation: it is structured by the clock and calendar, but is distinctively militaristic in its measured performance of supervised soldierly duties within a tightly structured day. This structuring of time is registered in the narrative time of the novel and the increase of temporal techniques of sovereignty in Nowgam as it becomes 'current' within the context of territorial sovereignty. What is more, the bureaucratic delay and juridical immediacy at the border highlight the state's power over time in terms that correspond with Fieni's conception of sovereign time. The military's imposition of its regime of sovereign time on the lives of the villagers recalls the routine interruption of village life by the train in *Train to Pakistan*. It forces the villagers to submit to the homogeneous, empty time of the nation, effacing their historical ties to the region and excluding them from the sovereign future of either India or Pakistan as the state co-opts them into a battle for a national future built upon their exclusion. In *The Collaborator*, the acceleration and deceleration of narrative time is intertwined with the escalation and de-escalation of violence at the border. This is registered in the text through an ongoing interest with the curfew as a technique of

sovereignty with a significant impact on border subjects' being-in-time. It is with a reading of the time of border sovereignty in *The Collaborator* that this chapter will conclude.

Disruptions to the order of narrative time in Waheed's novel work to register the impact of territorial sovereignty on the lives of those along the Kashmir border. A sense of immanent violence and daily resistance makes it seem as though time is passing quickly, but the agonising wait for this expected violence is often registered with a tense sluggishness. An example of this acceleration appears in a discussion between the protagonist and his mother when he says 'time just flies. You know something, it'll soon be two years since I last went to college?' (p. 112). Such a statement highlights disruptions to events happening in time, and the binary temporal structure of the text in which a prelapsarian 'then' is rapidly, if unevenly, replaced by a violent 'now'. His mother agrees that indeed, 'time does vanish, son, just slips by. Seems like yesterday' (p. 112). The image of time 'slipping' and 'vanishing' evokes an image of change that does not follow the usual pattern. Even couched in the parental cliché of 'time flying by' as a child grows into adulthood, it is a melancholy exchange on temporal compression, particularly as it is initiated by the child rather than the parent. The protagonist registers the shift from his studying in Srinagar to his grisly collaboration, highlighting the seeming discontinuity between his early experiences of Kashmir and the sudden battlefield that engulfed the region in the early 1990s.

The escalation of violence in the region acts to accelerate narrative time as two nation-states fight for their claims to the future of the territory, situating the protagonist's youth within an irretrievable past. However, his experience of collaboration brings him face-to-face with those for whom violence has stopped time completely. 'Then' ends with the protagonist in conversation with a corpse in the valley. Rouf Qadri is introduced into the novel after his death, as 'he looked alive, almost, when I first saw him' (p. 150), and the narrator imagines at length the history that has been effaced by his murder. In one way, Qadri's death appears to freeze him in time as the finality of his killing is presented in the image of his stopped watch: '[h]e was wearing a watch and the time was quarter past three. It's still quarter past three' (p. 149). This image makes it seem as though those killed in the violence at the border are fixed in time by the very forces that negotiate and fight over the future of the region. Although the watch makes it appear as though no time had passed, the relationship between the protagonist and the corpse continues for a while; his corpse was fresh when they first met, but he is highly decomposed at the moment of their last encounter. The slowness in the village is perhaps what leads the protagonist to give up

some of his own time to spend with Qadri. In this truncated passage he imagines the history that the corpse has taken to the grave:

If I had spent more time with Rouf Qadri, he would have told me how his town was won by militants one day [...] and how for months the Indian Army couldn't even dare to enter the place[...] until the Army moved in a whole battalion and burned down the entire town to wrest back control of it, and how things were never, never the same after that, and how [...] scores of townsfolk died, burned to death inside their shops and offices because the Army wouldn't let the fire brigade into town [...] (p. 151)

Qadri's narrative is reimagined by the narrator – 'he *would* have told me' – but it is rendered with striking detail. The description of military violence in a Muslim town could either be read as offering momentary omniscience to the narrator, or as a representation of one of the many narratives of state violence that circulated at the time, evoked by the narrator to make sense of the dead boy who cannot otherwise speak. The shifts in power within Qadri's village show how changes in sovereignty can interrupt day-to-day life, and how they structure the way in which the history of a space is understood and narrated. For instance, the history of conflict begins in a moment on 'one day', instigates 'months' of rebel rule, and then a perpetual new order is eventually instated by the state's violence: a violence that involved delaying assistance from outside. This story is a microcosm of the whole novel; like Waheed's narrative, it is highly attentive to moments, pronouncements, and decrees, and the way in which they structure history and initiate permanent change.

The time of military sovereignty is most explicitly foregrounded in the novel's representation of the curfew. Against the accelerated time of the opening half of the novel, the 'Now' section registers a significant temporal deceleration in the village as curfews take hold and slow down the pace of day-to-day life. The narrator starts to frequently indicate periods of inactivity and stasis as months roll by without incident. There is a lull in the text that implies a lull in the state's actions in the village, but this is interrupted by the arrival of the curfew. The curfew emerged in Jammu and Kashmir in the 1980s under the chief minister, Ghulam Mohammed Shah, and a significant resurgence of the technique occurred in 2009 and the years before *The Collaborator* was published.⁵⁹ The curfew itself is an example of state control that impacts the subject's ability to move within certain

⁵⁹ Tariq Ali *et al*, 'Timeline' in *A Case for Freedom* (Edinburgh: Verso, 2011), pp. xi-xiv.

spaces, at certain times. In Nowgam, it appears suddenly to interrupt life in the village, with the narrator noting that ‘in the middle of May, something new happened. Just after I’d witnessed the gradual thinning of the pink-furred roof of cherry blossoms over Gul Khan’s expansive orchard, a curfew arrived. *A flag march arrived. Commandos arrived*’ (p.177 [*emphasis original*]). The image of the narrator watching blossoms thin collapses an unspecified amount of time into a single line of text, giving the impression of weeks or months of inactivity, stasis, and boredom. Though the image is superficially beautiful, with ‘pink fur’ and an ‘expansive orchard,’ it nonetheless evokes the colloquialism of ‘watching paint dry’ in the lengthy pause in the occupation of the narrator. The curfew arrives like the military in Rouf Qadri’s town, in that it brings with it a permanent new reality:

Everything changed after that. The curfew made no difference to us initially – in a way, we’d been under curfew for as long as there had been an embargo within five kilometres of the LoC, although it hadn’t affected our everyday life inside the village much. (p. 177)

Living in the embargoed border area had already limited movement and freedom, dictating a subject’s ability to move within predetermined times and spaces, but this becomes increasingly prohibitive at this pivotal moment in the text. This experience leads to significant disorientation when the curfew is officially announced: ‘[i]t was a double curfew for us now. How were they to enforce that? I had no idea. What was the difference? Curfew within a curfew, what did it mean?’ (p. 177) This confusion around the double curfew is significant. It posits the embargo on movement itself as a form of permanent curfew, making it clear that an imposed temporal delay is always-already in place at the border.

The idea that the curfew could have been in existence – but unspoken – since Partition highlights the way in which military intervention into time at the border is performed to the point where it becomes internalised. Journalist Gowhar Geelani recently stated the degree to which the language of cordons and curfews proliferated in Kashmir when he was growing up in the region. After the lifting of a fifty-one-day long curfew in 2016, he noted that:

School-going children of my generation were coerced into learning words and phrases like curfew, crackdown, cordon, custody killing, catch and kill, torture, interrogation, arrest, and detention. When it was time for us to learn

A for apple, B for ball, and C for cricket, we learned A for army, B for bullet and C for curfew. The curfews and killings became part of our 'normalcy'.⁶⁰

The categorisation of killings and curfews as 'normalcy' evokes Arundhati Roy's image of acquiescence as the product of an ongoing performance of border sovereignty. That the maintenance of power in the region requires the repeated performance and normalisation of these methods destabilises any notion of national sovereignty as a permanent reality emanating from a constative act at the moment of Partition. The escalation of violent border sovereignty precipitated by the official start of the curfew highlights the fact that the *normal* position of the border subject is one of exclusion, redoubled by the threat of further action. Time was already structured by the Indian occupation, but the announcement makes it explicit within the world of the novel, and shows that the sovereign promises of freedom uttered by both states at the moment of Partition do not stretch all the way to their peripheries.

The pace of life in the village, already slowed by the exodus of its young men, continues to stagnate under the newly imposed curfew. In addition, under the official curfew the village experiences its worst violence yet. When a young villager is taken by the military it becomes clear to the residents that Nowgam is no longer hidden by its size and its short history, and its unfortunate geopolitical significance is to be enacted upon their bodies. Farooq is taken and eventually returned, tortured and unable to walk. This event is shrouded by rumour and rumination, as the stasis of the curfew leads to little possibility for anything else. Like the march of militants months before, the experience of this violence leads to a feeling of being *with it*: 'having a young man of theirs taken and returned in a compromised state brought some kind of self-recognition as well. *We too are part of it all.*' (p. 187-8 [*emphasis original*]) Shortly after, Farooq disappears again and is returned beheaded. This swell of violence proves that Nowgam is in the crosshairs of the Indian military state, but the text consistently highlights the fact that such acts are occurring up and down the border. There is a sense that being 'part of it all' makes explicit how the temporal frame of the novel is part of a broader spatio-temporal history of sovereignty in Kashmir that both predates the narrative, and will succeed it. As such, within the temporal frame of the novel we see an escalation that may seem exceptional, but is actually routine.

⁶⁰ Gowhar Geelani, 'Living in the Shadow of Curfew in Kashmir,' *BBC News* (5th September, 2016) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-37211760> [accessed 16/07/2019].

Towards the climax of the novel the ID parade is introduced as a new interruption of village life, but is presented as one designed for the villagers' own security:

We were also told, *ordered*, that we had to assemble in the field *at the same time sharp tomorrow* since the Army was still conducting searches in and around the village. They said they wanted to make it *totally safe and secure for us*. What there was to cordon and what to search, I never understood.'
(p. 221 [*emphasis original*])

The concept of a 'sharp' time demanded by the Army is a significant addition to the text's concern with currentness and immediacy. The order by the military to assemble at fixed points in time is a sign that the villagers' presence in the war is being measured in military time, and that their actions are now being ordered by the Army. Like the curfew, the ID parade represents an action by the state that intentionally co-opts subjects into the homogeneous, empty time of the nation. The accompanying promise of security, uttered by the institution that represents the villagers' greatest existential threat, unveils the double meaning of security in the logic of the state. In this passage, security is revealed as a euphemism for discipline and control, but also as a veiled threat to a population that is subjected to a curfew; a threat of violence to a population that is itself perceived as a threat to India's territorial sovereignty. In fact, the ordering of that security around a spatial cordon and the repeated temporal assembly evokes Foucault's idea of security being inseparable from law and discipline. Foucault has argued that these three ideas inform each other and cannot be separated. He writes that:

[W]e need only look at the body of laws and the disciplinary obligations of modern mechanisms of security to see that there is not a succession of law, then discipline, then security, but that security is a way of making the old armatures of law and discipline function in addition to the specific mechanisms of security.⁶¹

If the promise of security always brings with it a calculation of threats to the integrity of the state, and the disciplinary mechanisms with which these threats will be eradicated, then the Army's promise of security in the above passage cannot be read at face value. The

⁶¹ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978*, trans. by Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009), p. 10.

security cordon brings with it a traumatic episode of the novel that makes clear what the real meaning of security is in the region.

It is when leaving the first of these assemblies that the villagers are forced to see the body of Khadim Hussain, the second villager to be arrested and removed by the Army. The revealing of Hussain's body to the villagers is an event that is carefully planned and scheduled within the temporal interruption of the ID parade. Once again, the act of violence over a person known within the village is a signifier of its existence within the current moment of the conflict:

Finally, I reached the spot, stopped for the tiniest of moments, and looked down at the perforated body—*Khadim Hussain's body*—and tried to take it all in, to remember, to give due respect to the moment. Then it was someone else's turn, for the soldiers kept nudging us on. (p. 221)

Appended to the first assembly of the villagers for inspection, this short passage offers a further image of how the military structure time in the village. As the soldiers show each individual the bloody corpse – an act that spectacularises the violence that maintains border sovereignty – they allow only a short moment to each mourner. In doing so, they condense the process of grief into a rigidly allotted temporal frame which is experienced as shocking and perhaps even traumatic. Each villager is prompted to understand what this violence means, but is left only attempting to absorb the information that it signifies. The forced witnessing of a corpse at gunpoint does not merely make mourning impossible; it also traumatises the villagers further by spelling out the real meaning of security. The calculated and regulated experience of this witnessing evokes the disciplinary techniques and law-making violence that Foucault argues are enfolded into the concept of national sovereignty.

* * *

The image with which I would like to conclude this chapter comes from another of these ID parades. The governor of Kashmir arrives in the village with a camera crew to deliver a speech about India's claim to the region and justifications of the state's techniques of sovereignty. In the same field in which they had supposedly grieved for Khadim Hussain, the villagers are lectured by the politician in a way that highlights how territorial

nationalist rhetoric is incommensurable with the experience of border living for the state's most liminal subjects. The Governor enters the field in a helicopter:

The low rotor blades arched on top, slightly bent, like the outsized wings of a giant fly. Someone hissed something in my ear. I looked again. And saw the Governor of Kashmir walking towards us. The King of Curfew himself.'
(p. 227)

His introduction as the King of Curfew imagines this representative of the highest office of their state as defined by the spatio-temporal impact of his techniques of sovereignty. The moniker also imagines the figure as a sovereign *over* time, and particularly the being-in-time of the villagers and narrator.

The presence of the cameras makes the speech appear a self-conscious performance of border sovereignty. What is more, the technological reproduction of the speech implies that it is not targeted at the villagers, and that, in fact, Nowgam has become a political metonym for a discussion of the future of India's territorial sovereignty and the conflict with Pakistan. In a related discussion, David Fieni explores the use of the camera at the border checkpoint, both as a means of security and as a mode of documentary. He highlights the checkpoint as a 'quasi-autonomous apparatus of seeing – that is, a kind of camera,' and in this textual moment, it seems that the presence of the cameras in Nowgam cements the villagers' sense of being 'current'.⁶² What I mean by this is that as the television camera is used to spectacularise and document the Governor's presence in the text's space, it also reveals the techniques of surveillance and spectacle that had already been employed in the region. The key difference being the fact that while the physical camera is coordinated in such a way that it becomes permanent public knowledge, the techniques of surveillance along the border are often secretive, delayed, and made public only when politically expedient, as we have seen. The border is mediated by the act of technological reproduction into a spectacle of sovereignty. The temporality of video recording means that this speech act—that occurs in time, and makes reference to an infinite past—becomes the permanent official record of the military's presence in the village. In so doing, the speech effaces the experiences of the Nowgam residents and cements the village as a territory over which the Indian army maintains a legitimate sovereignty, in which a politician has freely addressed his assembled *Indian* citizens.

⁶² Fieni, 'Cinematic Checkpoints and Sovereign Time', p. 7.

If the recording of the speech could be said to displace the villagers as its primary temporal audience, they are then fully excluded by an accidental slip in the language of its delivery. The disconnect between the villagers and the speaker is redoubled at this point as ‘[t]he Governor was now making his speech in English! Disorientated glances were exchanged, ears were bent over tilting shoulders. It must have been a slip, an administrative tic of his’ (p. 232). The speech is revealed here as a performance of sovereignty in which the state’s relationship to territory is articulated, but the shift into English represents a failure in the execution of this performance. The reference to ‘disorientation’ evokes the temporal confusion of Partition in *Train to Pakistan* and ‘Toba Tek Singh’. The continuity of postcolonial sovereignty in the region is interrupted by the shift in language, and as a result a rhetorical distance is instituted between the high political discourse of the state and the lived experience of the subject. Significantly, the rhetoric that occurs in English is all related to the colonial history of Kashmir and the permanent initiation of sovereignty represented by the constative act of accession in 1947. His language in this section of the speech is particularly focused on the past and future:

Hari Singh’s Instrument of Accession and the articles and clauses of India’s great constitution; it is held together by far more tenacious and lasting forces that neither the convulsions, tribulations and tremors of history, nor the anarchy and cynicism of contemporary politics, can break up! (p. 232)

The image of India (including the entirety of Jammu and Kashmir) being threatened by both Pakistan’s interventions in Kashmir and the region’s own claims to sovereignty, highlights the way its territorial futurity is framed as being dependent on securing unchallenged sovereignty over the region. It is also worth stating the degree to which this announcement centres on *documents* of sovereignty, rather than lived experience. His calls back to the Instrument of Accession and articles of the Constitution perhaps explain the speaker’s transition into the English language in which they were written.⁶³ This being said, the shift in language also serves to highlight the colonial genealogy of postcolonial sovereignty. If English is the language of the constitution and common law in Pakistan and India, it is also the language of martial law; as such this linguistic slip is unveiled not as an accident, but as a marker of the colonial roots of military sovereignty in Kashmir, and

⁶³ Stephen Morton notes how this speech parodies and quotes Nehru’s *Discovery of India*. This may be a means to highlight the degree to which discussions of the territorial future of India and Kashmir still repeat the language of nation-formation that had predated Partition. See Morton, ‘Sovereignty and Necropolitics’, p. 29.

elsewhere on the subcontinent. The speech also posits those documents – in particular the Instrument of Accession – as the constative act that legitimises sovereign power and the use of sovereign violence. Appealing to those documents as permanent and incontrovertible highlights the speaker's understanding of the territorial futurity of Kashmir as settled and stable; it is being attacked by outside forces, but these attacks are 'tremors' and 'convulsions'. This language posits the violent history of the struggle for Kashmiri sovereignty as a series of interruptions, not as a legitimate claim to an alternative sovereign future. This temporal image projected by the state is markedly different from the image presented by victims of violence in the novel who see the state as instigating permanent change, and things never being the same again.

The speech continues in English, and further articulates the permanence that the state imbues in its territorial claims. The Governor states that '*Kashmir*, for innumerable eras, has been an important ingredient of the holy Indian vision – a placid, yet sacrosanct and solid and concrete piece, an intrinsic and indivisible part' (p. 233). The image of Kashmir as 'placid', when articulated to a community who are being subjected to an indefinite and exceptional state of war, is fiercely ironic. It evokes the prelapsarian analepses of the 'Then' section of the novel, while the idea of Kashmir as a 'sacrosanct' territory belies the ongoing interference that the region had experienced from Partition to the present day. By positing the borders here as 'solid and concrete', the Governor imagines a permanent future and affixes that future to the state's territorial sovereignty. The stability of these pronouncements is destabilised by the fact that the region continues to be negotiated through acts of violence, and the permanence that the Governor articulates can only be maintained through consistent and repeated performances of state violence.

Finally, as the speech comes to a close, the narrator looks around the field to take in the response of the assembled audience. He states

I suddenly turned to look at the place where they had been sitting and found the ground dark. Wet dark. Piss smell. I looked around and saw similar wet patches spread evenly across the turf: small maps of urine eating into the ground. (p. 239)

The maps of urine are a fitting image with which to conclude this chapter. They highlight the fact that the group of villagers had been held in space for an extended period of time, and evoke attritional techniques of sovereignty and torture that break down the will and morale of subjects through temporal and spatial control. The fact that the group had

uniformly urinated over the course of the speech highlights a number of things: its length, their lack of agency, and the way in which their being in space and time was dictated by the Indian occupation. The even spacing of ‘small maps’ ‘eating into the ground’ represents the speaker’s sacrosanct and concrete ground being sullied, remapped, and transformed by the unwilling reactions of those experiencing the temporal violence of the regime. The reference to bodily waste recalls transnational excremental tropes of postcolonial fiction (which will be discussed in chapter three), but the maps also offer a pointed critique of Indian sovereignty in Kashmir; a regime that continues to use brutal and violent techniques of sovereignty as a means to shore up its territorial sovereignty. In the turf of the field the territorial lines are temporary – they will dry or soak into the earth – and, as such they reflect the LoC in Kashmir: a *de facto* border contingent on repeated performances of sovereign violence.

Like Manto’s inmates, whose experience and claim to their lands were disoriented by the half-understood nationalist rhetoric of Partition, and Ahmad’s nomads who experienced the vacillating nature of border sovereignty’s performance in the 1950s and 60s, Nowgam’s villagers are left out of the future-oriented rhetoric of Kashmir’s sovereignty. In *The Collaborator*, this future-oriented rhetoric is uttered by a state that spectacularises its borders as a means to maintain an image of territorial integrity in a way that explicitly impacts upon the bodies of those who occupy peripheral spaces. Later, Captain Kadian states to the narrator what his plan had been for the village: ‘we didn’t want a hundred per cent exodus from your village, we wanted it to remain, at least on paper. You see, there’s a ration supply still listed and active in the Food Fucking Corporation of India.’ (p. 294) The existence of the village was only maintained by the occupation for its position at the edges of the nation-state’s territorial sovereignty. The village was valuable *on paper*, but the bodies within it were almost entirely disposable. This highlights the bureaucratic logic of border sovereignty, in which existence on paper supersedes the lived experience of the postcolonial subject.

CHAPTER THREE

Dictatorship, Emergency and Democratic Futurity in Salman Rushdie's *Shame* and Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*

This passed from the father to the son: the belief that the story of the birth of Islam was fascinating because it was an event *inside history*.

—Salman Rushdie¹

Pakistan, which was created in the name of Islam will continue to survive only if it sticks to Islam. That is why I consider the introduction of an Islamic system as an essential prerequisite for the country.

—Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq²

Writing of the controversy that followed the publication of *The Satanic Verses* in 1988, Rushdie admitted a debt to his father. In Rushdie's account, his father was a man who believed that Islam was a worldly-historical invention that must bear the same philosophical, political and literary scrutiny as any other historical construct. In other words, the foundation of Islam was an event that took place *in time*. For Rushdie's father, '[r]evelation was to be understood as an interior, subjective event, not an objective reality, and a revealed text was to be scrutinised like any other text, using all the tools of the critic, literary historical, psychological, linguistic and sociological'.³ What Rushdie implies without explicitly stating in this exhortation to interrogate the truth claims of 'the Koran' and 'Hadith', is that we should also question the political uses to which religion and Islam

¹ Salman Rushdie, *Joseph Anton* (London: Vintage, 2012), p. 24.

² *Dawn*, 6th July, 1977, p.8, cited in Khan, *Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*, p. 323.

³ Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*, p.24.

have been put. Situating such religious claims within historical time can also help to illuminate the grounds of political sovereignty, and the ways in which political leaders press theological texts and precepts into the service of specific (secular) political ends.

Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq's use of Islam to shore up his political authority in Pakistan is a particularly interesting case in point, in part because it can tell us something profound about the relationship between theological rhetoric and the worldly-historical technique of martial law rule. Zia's regime represented the third iteration of military rule since Pakistan's independence, but it was unique in the centrality of its insistent and ongoing claims to theological legitimacy. Zia's initial claim to sovereignty rested on the illegitimacy of the Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto after the disputed election of March 1977. In his role as the Chief of Army Staff, Zia intervened in the political process with a bloodless *coup d'état* named 'Operation Fair Play', which was accompanied by the promise of free and fair elections within ninety days. Over time, however, it became clear that Zia's coup was not merely a temporary transfer of power, but the beginning of an indefinite period of martial law. In spite of his early promises to return Pakistan to a democratic path, Zia persistently deferred this process – utilising theological rhetoric to justify a lengthy suspension of constitutional and democratic law. In the second epigraph above, Zia explicitly states that the future existence of the Pakistani state is entirely dependent on the institution of an Islamic legal system. The future of postcolonial sovereignty that had previously been articulated at, and after, Partition is undermined by this rhetorical move, and Jinnah's originary promise of secular sovereignty is supplanted by another. In contrast to Jinnah, Zia's promise makes repeated claims to its temporary nature, while simultaneously extending itself in perpetuity through religious rhetoric. Just as Rushdie frames the revealed texts of Islam as historical acts that take place in time, Zia's appeal to the timeless time of theological sovereignty is also a worldly-historical act; an act that draws on the secular traditions of martial law rule and the state of exception.

In Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) and Mohammed Hanif's *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008), elements of literary form and genre mediate and subvert the temporality of Zia's military sovereignty, and destabilise the theological ground of his power. *Shame* utilises the generic conventions of magical realism, but also postmodern narrative techniques that disrupt the linear chronology of nationalist historiography. These include the frequent and explicit use of both analepsis and prolepsis, the repetition of key events, and regular interruptions to the narrative by an unreliable narrator who claims the authority of an historian. A reading of Hanif's novel can also shed light on the ways literary form is mobilised to undermine the truth claims of Zia's dictatorship. This is exemplified in the

way the text employs the temporal conventions of the detective novel and the conspiracy theory to both interrupt official narratives of Zia's rule, and register alternative voices that resist that of the state. As was discussed in chapter two, postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan has been maintained, at times, by repeated performances of sovereign power upon the bodies of its subjects. The readings that follow build on this conceptualisation by exploring an historical moment in which the promise of democracy was repeatedly deferred and undermined by a military dictator who made frequent rhetorical claims to the timeless legitimacy of Islam. The Zia regime offers another avenue to explore the permanence and futurity of the modern nation-state, but – in contrast to the rhetoric of Jinnah with which this thesis began – it does so by reciting and rehearsing secularism as an existential threat. In this chapter, concepts of religious time, when coupled with the worldly actions of the state, provide fertile ground for postmodern historiographical metafiction to amplify and narrate the performative nature of sovereignty and its relation to time.⁴

The Sovereign Exception: Martial Law and Time

In the introduction to this thesis, I touched upon the concept of the sovereign exception. In considering the Zia regime, this understanding of sovereignty becomes increasingly important. Carl Schmitt's gnomic statement that the '[s]overeign is he who decides on the exception' remains a foundational concept for contemporary formulations of sovereignty and, perhaps more pertinently here, dictatorship.⁵ The sovereign exception is the suspension of the normal rule of law at moments of national emergency to allow one individual the full executive power of the state. Schmitt's statement makes this action the very marker of sovereign power, and it is worth noting that this formulation also has a significant temporal dimension: under the exception, democratic elections are paused, constitutional rights are held in abeyance, and the duration of this suspension is indefinite, to be ended only by the dictator. This intervention, from above, into the democratic and

⁴ The term 'historiographical metafiction' was coined by Linda Hutcheon who stated that '[h]istoriographical metafiction juxtapose[s] what we think we know of the past (from official archival sources and personal memory) with an alternate representation that foregrounds the postmodern epistemological questioning of the nature of historical knowledge. Which 'facts' make it into history? And *whose* facts?'. I use this generic category for both of the texts studied in this chapter as they both offer alternative histories and utilise the generic codes of postmodern fiction to complicate commonly understood timelines of Pakistani Sovereignty in the 1970s and 80s. See Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 71-72.

⁵ Schmitt, *Political Theology*, p. 5.

secular processes of the state leads Schmitt to argue that ‘[t]he exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology’.⁶ Schmitt’s thesis is centred on the rooting of political formations in correspondent theological concepts, and the exception is a profitable example of this. By intervening in the normal rule of law, the decision on the exception allows the sovereign to mirror the temporality of the Judeo-Christian God, unbound from the homogeneous, empty time of the nation and capitalist modernity. This conceptualisation of the exception as a secularised (Christian) theological concept reveals the European and colonial genealogy of Zia’s techniques of martial law sovereignty.

The state of exception that Schmitt articulates has been addressed in the twenty-first century by a number of scholars across various disciplines. Among these scholars is the Italian legal theorist Giorgio Agamben, who produces a genealogical history of the exception that traces the political technique from Ancient Rome into present day Europe and North America. Agamben writes:

Modern totalitarianism can be defined as the establishment, by means of the state of exception, of a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system.⁷

For Agamben, the state of exception – as a legal technique of sovereignty – is visible in all modern dictatorships. His definition of totalitarianism carries fruitfully into the exceptional sovereignty of the Zia regime, even if the particularities of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan add a theological underpinning that Agamben does not account for. The ‘physical elimination’ that Agamben recognises is visible in Zia’s regime through the execution of Bhutto, but also acts such as the classification of Ahmadiyya as non-Muslims in 1984.⁸ What is more, Zia also embarked upon a quite literal ‘legal civil war’ in the promise to institute a *nizam-e-mustafa* (or Islamic rule of law): a promise that contributed to the timeless theological foundations of his sovereignty.

Although Schmitt and Agamben draw their conceptualisations of the exception from European history, they highlight a political formulation that has at its core issues of suspension, intervention and decisionism. The timelessness that the political concept of the exception bestows upon the sovereign, and the temporal control that is implied by the

⁶ Schmitt, *Political Theology*, p. 36.

⁷ Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p.2.

⁸ *Ordinance XX*, Pakistan, 26 April 1984 <<https://www.persecutionofahmadis.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/April-26-1984-Ordinance-XX.pdf>> [accessed 16/07/2019].

indefinite suspension of democratic norm, both speak to the historical situation of Zia's martial law regime. In a recent article, David Fieni has discussed the particular temporality of exceptional sovereignty at the border checkpoint, stating that the 'temporality of exception scrambles any chronological timeline that might distinguish between a temporary suspension of the law and a permanent one'.⁹ Here, Fieni highlights the legal situation of the exception as always effacing its existence as a temporary deviation from the norm. In a Pakistani context, this effacement is evident in Zia's repeated deferrals of the state's return to the democratic process: as a promise of a ninety day intervention was extended to eleven long years of martial law rule. Also, this idea of the exception as having the potential to undermine the homogeneous, empty time of the nation explicitly references Walter Benjamin's early coining of the term. As such, in focusing on the exceptional sovereignty of the Zia regime this chapter examines an historical period in which homogeneous, empty time is insufficient for fully explaining the relationship between time and the sovereign state.

Fieni wrestles with Benjamin's declaration that the present is 'shot through with chips of messianic time' – that is, fragmentary moments in which the revolutions of the past may be redeemed or revived in the present.¹⁰ Benjamin's term 'chip', translated from the German *splitter*, could also be read as 'splinter' or 'fragment' and invokes an image of the breakage, interruption, and fragmentation of linear historical narratives. Messianic time is a complex and somewhat elusive idea that highlights the temporal nature of Benjamin's 'tradition of the oppressed': an interruptive, non-linear time that stands opposed to the homogeneous, empty time of dominant conceptions of history. For Benjamin, the chronological and teleological understanding of Western historiography does not sufficiently account for the narratives of those who are oppressed by the capitalist logic of the nation-state. In relation to the temporality of the exception, Benjamin notes that '[t]he tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule'.¹¹ This concept of the emergency aids Fieni's distinction of the state of exception as 'scrambling' the temporary nature of exceptional rule, and speaks to the repeated deferrals of Zia's 'temporary' deviation from democracy.¹² Considered in relation to the competing temporalities of a postcolonial space such as Pakistan, Benjamin's account of the discontinuous history of the oppressed offers a powerful and

⁹ David Fieni, 'Cinematic Checkpoints and Sovereign Time', p. 8.

¹⁰ Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', p. 255.

¹¹ Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', p. 248.

¹² Although there is certainly a distinction between 'state of emergency' and 'state of exception' in contemporary discussions of sovereignty and authoritarianism, Benjamin's 'Theses' and Schmitt's *Political Theology* used the same German term: *Ausnahmezustand*.

suggestive conceptual frame for tracking the moments in *Shame* and *Mangoes* where the timeless time of postcolonial sovereignty is fractured. It is through this frame that the absent presence of the oppressed in the dominant script of Zia's militarised Islamic nationalist narrative can be glimpsed.

To account for the discontinuous and fragmented subaltern temporality that is hidden within the layers of Pakistan's sovereign time, it is helpful to consider the implications of Benjamin's image of messianic time. The concept contributes to an understanding of sovereignty and time that draws on a Judeo-Christian philosophical tradition, but also rethinks the teleological understanding of time that underpinned the predominant materialist conception of history among Second International Marxists such as Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg. The concept of messianic time is one that imagines that there is an event 'to-come' – like the return of Christ – that will, at an indefinite point in the future, appear as a way of connecting the present to the distant past.¹³ Judith Butler is among the many contemporary critics who draw from Benjamin's short, but influential, essay on the tradition of the oppressed. Butler's image of the *splitter* is one that flashes up, like a spark, to interrupt the destructive march of historical time: 'Benjamin sought to identify those moments in which the history of the oppressed emerges in a flash, even as a sign of danger, breaking through or interrupting the continuum of history that goes under the name of progress'.¹⁴ Such a reading highlights the value of Benjamin's 'chips' in undermining the linear temporality of the nation, but it also gestures towards the repressive nature of nationalist historiography. The following readings will explore how the periodic emergence of hidden narratives and voices come to represent a significant challenge to Zia's exceptional sovereignty, and also how that sovereignty was *itself* an interruption of the secular time of the nation.

The exception, as it is articulated by Schmitt and others, highlights the ability of the sovereign to intervene in the temporality of democracy from a position outside the normal rule of law. If Zia's martial law regime represented an interruption to the cyclical nature of democratic politics, it also undermined the secular democratic nation-state imagined and promised by Jinnah in 1947. As such, while Benjamin's 'tradition of the oppressed' offers

¹³ It is worth stating here that Islamic scripture, unlike Judeo-Christian theology, explicitly discounts the second coming of the prophet. As such, if the theocratic state of Zia's Pakistan reflects the messianic temporality that Schmitt and Benjamin attribute to the exception, then this is not a tradition that is drawn from Islamic scripture, but from traditions of sovereignty in Europe. As a result, the flashing up of events and narratives to interrupt the timeless time of Zia's sovereignty perhaps complicates the regime's theocratic underpinnings even further than it might in Benjamin's European context. A full consideration of the exception, messianic time, and Islam is beyond the scope of this thesis.

¹⁴ Judith Butler, *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 100.

a useful way to read literary narratives against the time of the state, it also shows us how they can interrupt the timeless time of Zia's claims to theological legitimacy. Through a focus on the subject's being-in-time at the border checkpoint, Fieni urges us to consider narratives of resistance against the state that interrupt and challenge its claims to absolute power over time. Yet this imperative is not explicitly linked to Benjamin's conception of messianic time as *splitter* – an image that might help to further elucidate the fragmentary, anti-representational form that the history of the oppressed might take. In other words, Fieni's reading may help to elucidate the sovereign's power over time, and the ways in which sovereign time is figured in film and literature, but it stops short of examining the radical potential of Benjamin's dialectical image of messianic time for understanding the history and historicity of the oppressed, and its capacity to interrupt the smooth passage of sovereign time. This chapter seeks to redress this by asking how the 'flashing up' of fragmented histories are registered in the temporal play of Hanif and Rushdie's novels. In the following discussion of Zia's rise to power in Pakistan and his repeated deferrals of the democratic process, I will highlight the ways in which the dictator's techniques of sovereignty undermine and disrupt Pakistan's democratic futurity.

The Timeless Foundations of Zia's Sovereignty

By assuming the mantle of a quasi-religious authority, Zia's legal and political manoeuvres repeatedly undermined the purportedly temporary nature of his sovereignty. Zia's coup involved the interruption of the, albeit compromised, democratic norm of Bhutto's sovereignty. The proclamation of martial law on July 5th 1977 declared the 1973 Constitution to be held in abeyance, political assemblies to be dissolved and all ministers of the state to cease to hold office.¹⁵ These actions immediately changed the political landscape in Pakistan, and initiated a period in which Zia ruled Pakistan as Chief Martial Law Administrator, and later President, until his death. Pausing the cyclical pattern of democratic elections, holding the constitution in abeyance, and indefinitely suspending legal and political institutions were sovereign acts that highlight the temporal dimensions of Zia's intervention into Pakistani politics. This interruption to Pakistani history was repeatedly buttressed through recourse to a retrogressive Islamisation of law, a fact that

¹⁵ *Proclamation of Martial Law*, Pakistan, 5th July 1977
 <<http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/orders/mlproclaim.html>> [accessed 16/07/2019].

illustrates the theological grounding of Zia's exception, and the way the worldly-historical technique of martial law aided his claim to the timeless sovereignty of God.

Zia's martial law period was not unprecedented in Pakistan: it had its roots in colonial history, but also post-Partition politics.¹⁶ The process of legal suspension and the deferral of democratic political norms were written into law through each of Pakistan's successive constitutions. This repeated legitimization of discretionary power in the early years of Pakistan's postcolonial sovereignty opened up an extra-judicial space for repressive rule in the nation-state. Nasser Hussain recognises this space as, at least in part, an inheritance from the colonial legal order in British India. He argues that the legal order that ended at independence shaped and determined the new one:

[T]he new state inherits the salient and sometimes problematic features of the Government of India Act of 1935. These salient features include a quasi-federalist system in which power is given to provincial bodies but significant matters of defense and external affairs are kept in the control of the center; perhaps more important, the governor-general retains significant discretionary authority and is able by the [emergency provisions] to promulgate rules and ordinances for matters of state concern.¹⁷

The promulgation of rules and ordinances at moments of apparent state necessity has been a frequent occurrence in Pakistan, despite the passing of this power from the colonial figure of the governor-general to postcolonial presidents and military figures. A key example of this for Hussain is the previously established doctrine of necessity with which President Iskander Mirza dissolved all provincial and central legislatures and imposed Pakistan's first period of postcolonial martial law under the control of the Chief of Army Staff, General Ayub Khan. Under this new order the Constitution of 1956 was retained as a guiding principle for the day-to-day running of the country in accordance with the 'Laws (Continuance of Force) Order 1958'; however, the Constitution was not permitted to call into question any martial law order or military court.¹⁸

¹⁶ In addition to the iterative nature of Martial Law rule and the emergency in Pakistan, the elevated position of the military has been particularly important in shaping the nation-state's political history. This is a key refrain in Ian Talbot's discussion of the privileged economic and rhetorical place of the armed forces in Pakistani society, in which he notes that 'the years 1947-50 saw up to 70 per cent of the national income being allocated to defence'. See Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A New History* (London: Hurst, 2012), p.58.

¹⁷ Nasser Hussain, *The Jurisprudence of Emergency*, p. 138.

¹⁸ *Laws (Continuance of Force) Order*, 10 October, 1958.

Over the course of Ayub's martial law period, a constitution was framed in which a presidential system was instigated in Pakistan for the first time, and the discretionary authority of the governor-general was permanently passed to the president. With effectively full political control afforded by an indefinite suspension of the normal rule of law, Ayub's techniques of sovereignty anticipated those of Zia two decades later. Such techniques included the formation of specially appointed military courts that could not be challenged by the civil legal establishment, an indefinite suspension of political activities, increased military presence in major cities, and a new constitution that emphasised a strong executive expressed through the office of the president.¹⁹ What sets Zia's 'emergency' apart from its precursors is that, in addition to its political and legal grounding, the regime went further to buttress his rule through claims to a religious necessity. This grounding is not only represented by his ability to leverage political unrest to legitimise his exceptional intervention, but also in the fact that it was the open-ended process of Islamising Pakistan's legal order that provided the ongoing mandate for martial law. It was Justice Cheema of the Supreme Court who was tasked with supporting these legal manoeuvres with religious scripture, observing that Zia's coup and constitutional amendments in the late 1970s were not only dignified, but 'obligatory [...] under the dictates of Islam'.²⁰ Wasti goes on to cite a scriptural example of the doctrine of individual necessity from 'the Koran':

He hath forbidden you only carrion, and blood, and swineflesh, and that which hath been immolated to (the name of) any other than Allah. But he who is driven by necessity, neither craving nor transgressing, it is no sin for him. (2:173)

The verse references the doctrine of individual necessity, which permits a Muslim subject to transgress the rules of Islam in cases of personal emergency. By extending this notion from the individual to the sovereign and state, Zia theologially legitimised his rule and instigated the country's most accelerated period of Islamisation to date.

In Zia's first speech to the nation he Zia refers to himself as a 'soldier of Islam'; a moniker that draws on the elevated position of the military in Pakistan's national cultural imaginary, and intertwines the role of the armed forces with the nationalist trope of an Islamic nation. William Richter argued at the time that introducing himself as sovereign in

¹⁹ For further analysis of the legal history of General Ayub Khan's Martial Law period, see Hamid Khan, pp. 159-280.

²⁰ Tahir Wasti, *The Application of Islamic Criminal Law in Pakistan* (Netherlands: Brill, 2009), p. 115.

such terms drew rhetorically from a belief in Muslims' need for a single all-powerful ruler, and that:

Zia himself participated in such speculation, commenting on at least one occasion that a strong presidential form of government would be more in keeping with the 'thinking and psyche of Muslims.' He argued that Muslims 'believed in one God, one Prophet, and one Book, and their mentality is that they should be ruled by one man.'²¹

Putting himself forward as the 'one man' who parallels the 'one God', and 'one prophet', is amongst the clearest indications of Zia's claim to a quasi-theological concept of sovereignty. In fact, from the beginning of his rule, Zia's sovereign speech acts were frequently underpinned with Islamic scripture and, according to Khalid Bin Sayeed, support for the government became increasingly equated with faith:

[Zia] cited the *Qur'an* and a *hadith* in support of the idea that as long as the head of state followed the injunctions of Allah and his Prophet, obedience became mandatory for his subjects. Again, deriving his authority from the *Qur'an*, he pointed out that those who opposed or demonstrated against his government could be accused of waging war against an Islamic government and therefore indulging in anti-Islamic activities.²²

The battle for an ethno-nationalist ideological state was the legal civil war that justified Zia's exceptional sovereignty. Just months after Sayeed's statement, the regime finally organised the long deferred democratic referendum to encourage a mandate to prolong his administration's suspension of the law.

In practice, the question gave barely a vague sense of democratic choice that reinforced the equation of faith and support for the regime even further. The vote – which had widespread coverage and overwhelmingly positive results – was a one-question ballot that asked voters the following question:

²¹ William L. Richter, 'The Political Dynamics of Islamic Resurgence in Pakistan', *Asian Survey*, 19:6 (1979), 547-557 (pp. 555-6).

²² Khalid Bin Sayeed, 'Pakistan in 1983: Internal Stresses More Serious than External Problems', *Asian Survey*, 24:2 (1984), 219-228 (p.220).

Do you endorse the process initiated by General Mohammed Zia ul Haq, the President of Pakistan, to bring in laws in conformity with the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Koran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) and for the preservation of the ideology of Pakistan, and are you in favour of continuation and further consolidation of that process and for the smooth and orderly transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people?²³

The referendum is a document of Zia's refusal to fulfil the original promise of the martial law regime, and it reflects the delays and deferral at the heart of his exceptional sovereignty. The promised ninety days had already been extended to six long years of authoritarian rule, and the referendum had the effect of further deferring that democracy to-come by tying martial law to the timeless imperative to install a *nizam-e-mustafa*. The question announces that Zia-ul-Haq had initiated a 'process', and that Pakistan's ideology can only be 'preserved' by the self-appointed president, echoing the 'soldier of Islam' rhetoric with which he announced the beginning of the martial law regime.²⁴ It is generally accepted that the referendum was merely a political performance to extend Zia's rule for the length of his Islamisation process, with significant discrepancies between official turnout and historical accounts.²⁵

For all of Zia's posturing, the regime still lacked a recognisable structure for the implementation of the *nizam-e-mustafa* on which its ongoing governance was mandated. The most significant changes occurred only when politically expedient. The drawn-out progress of Zia's promised Islamisation further reinforces an image of the referendum as little more than a plot to further extend his exceptional sovereignty. His highly selective overhaul of the legal system was at best inconsistent, and at worst, trickery. For example, while the draconian and notoriously misogynistic *hudud* ordinances of 1979 were among the flagship Islamic policies promulgated by the Zia regime, economic legislation that dealt with *zakat* (a wealth tax) and *ushr* (a tax on agriculture) was promulgated more slowly.²⁶ Other laws were delayed for clearly political reasons and have been indicated as a

²³ Shaikh Aziz, 'A Leaf from History: Zia's Referendum', *Dawn*, 2 August 2015 <<https://www.dawn.com/news/1197376>> [accessed 16/07/19].

²⁴ In addition to linguistic prompts tying an extension of Zia's rule to positive religious promises, the "yes" column was coloured green to further encourage Muslim voters to answer accordingly.

²⁵ The official turnout for the vote was sixty-two per cent with almost ninety-eight per cent support for Zia's continued Islamisation process. See Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A New History*, p.124.

²⁶ W. Gustafson and William Richter, 'Pakistan in 1980: Weathering the Storm', *Asian Survey*, 21:2 (1981), 162-171 (p.167).

significant factor in Zia's maintenance of power, including *qisas*, which relates to capital punishment on charges of murder, and *diyat*, which guides the financial compensation for murder victims' families. Tahir Wasti argues that the laws of *qisas* and *diyat* – whilst important facets of the promised *nizam-e-mustafa* – remained untouched until after the execution of Bhutto largely 'through fear that it might lead to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, his arch political rival, winning a clean acquittal'.²⁷ This is owing to the fact that the charge under which Bhutto was eventually executed was the *authorisation* of the murder of a political opponent, Nawab Muhammad Ahmad Khan Kasuri, in 1974: a crime that was not punishable by death under Islamic law.

These legal and political manoeuvres serve to illustrate how Zia's techniques of sovereignty combined theological rhetoric with temporal acts of suspension and deferral. Fieni's amendment of Benjamin's messianic time posits sovereign time as shot through with the suspension or deferral of democracy, law and human rights. The remainder of this chapter will turn to the literary representations of Zia's regime to ask how sovereign time is registered in two works of historiographical fiction. In previous chapters, I have explored how effaced narratives offer competing temporalities that have the power to undermine the homogeneous, empty time of nationalist historiography. In the following readings I explore how that time is also undermined by the state under the conditions of dictatorship, in which a new normalcy is created that not only oppresses the subject, but also complicates the foundational promises of Pakistan's secular democratic future. The next section discusses the passage of time in Salman Rushdie's *Shame*, paying attention to the novel's ongoing battle between old and new, and the way this is registered in the temporal elements of its magical realism. The chapter will then go on to explore the generic conventions employed in Hanif's novel, in which elements of the conspiracy theory and the detective novel offer multiple ways to end the indefinite intervention of Zia's martial law. Finally, I will return to the concept of military time that I invoked at the end of the previous chapter, and trace it into the exceptional prison space to show how the indefinite nature of military rule impacts the being-in-time of those who oppose it.

'Flashing Up' in *Shame*

²⁷ Wasti, *The Application of Islamic Criminal Law in Pakistan*, p. 101.

With the acclaim garnered by Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981) and the notoriety and publicity that accompanied the publication of *The Satanic Verses* (1988), the author's work has been subject to significant critical attention. Despite being published in between these two works, *Shame* remains a controversial and widely debated text in postcolonial literary criticism. This controversy is particularly focussed on the novel's utilisation of the magical realist mode, which has been accused by a number of critics for being what Graham Huggan calls 'a commodified, increasingly formulaic aesthetic', with Laura Moss noting in 1998 that '[c]ontemporary magic realism may fail as a balance for ominous content' as its popularity drains its potency.²⁸ Conversely, there has been an interest in how that same popularity may signal the power of magical realism to, as Frederick Aldama writes, 'open up and revitalize cultural contact zones' with other 'third' spaces, while Michael Gorra likens Rushdie's 'international style' not only to Gabriel García Márquez and V. S. Naipaul, but also Gunter Grass, Franz Kafka and Italo Calvino.²⁹ Furthermore, the combination of magical realist techniques with a postmodern self-reflexivity, displayed through an intrusive metafictional narrator, has continued to be a key facet of the novel's critical attention as a postmodern work.³⁰ It is perhaps fair to say that there is broad agreement that Rushdie's utilisation of both of these modes of narrative mark him as a 'cosmopolitan' writer, with a hybrid view of Pakistani life and politics.³¹ The question therefore becomes: does this cosmopolitanism undermine Rushdie's authenticity or place him in a privileged position from which to critique, satirise, and represent the violent excesses of postcolonial Pakistan?³² While the temporal nature of

²⁸ Graham Huggan, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (Oxon: Routledge, 2001), p.71. Laura Moss, "'Forget those damn fool realists!'" Salman Rushdie's Self-Parody as the Magic Realist's "Last Sigh"', *Ariel*, 29:4, (1998), 121-139 (p.137). With an in-built critique of the novel's gender politics that will be discussed later in this chapter, Aijaz Ahmad, 'Rushdie's Shame: Postmodernism, Migrancy and Representation of Women', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26:24 (1991), 1461-1471. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992).

²⁹ Frederick Aldama, *Postethnic Narrative Criticism: Magiccorealism in Oscar "Zeta" Acosta, Anna Castillo, Julie Dash, Hanif Kureishi, and Salman Rushdie* (Austin: Texas University Press, 2003), p.102. Michael Gorra, *After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 118.

³⁰ Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989). Hima Raza, 'Unravelling Sharam: Narrativisation as a Political Act in Salman Rushdie's *Shame*', *Wasafiri*, 18:39 (2003), 55-61. Ayelet Ben-Yishai, 'The Dialectic of Shame: Representation in the MetaNarrative of Salman Rushdie's *Shame*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 48 (2002), 194-215.

³¹ Brendon Nicholls, 'Reading 'Pakistan' in Salman Rushdie's *Shame*' in *The Cambridge Companion to Salman Rushdie*, ed. by Abdulrazak Gurnah (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 109-124. M. Keith Booker, 'Beauty and the Beast: Dualism as Despotism in the Fiction of Salman Rushdie', *English Literary History*, 57:4 (Winter, 1990), 977-997. Timothy Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989).

³² This question is approached directly in Jaina C. Sanga, *Salman Rushdie's Postcolonial Metaphors: Migration, Translation, Hybridity, Blasphemy, and Globalization* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001). Andrew Teverson, 'Salman Rushdie and Aijaz Ahmad: Satire, Ideology and *Shame*', *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 39:2 (2004), 45-60.

Shame's magical realist tropes are at the core of this chapter, the following reading does not directly offer an answer to this question. This being said, the large body of criticism noted above does inform this chapter's approach to the use of magical realism, metafictional asides, and the scathing satire of Zia's theological claims to sovereignty in the novel. With reference to Rushdie's caricatures of the religious figure Abul A'la Maududi and the dictator himself, Stephen Morton has noted that the sovereign figures in *Shame* 'act and rule as if they are Gods.'³³ It is with this focus on the relationship between theological rhetoric and its employment alongside secular techniques of sovereignty that this chapter takes forward to shed further light on sovereignty and time in Pakistani fiction.

In *Shame*, Salman Rushdie produces an astute and enduring image of Pakistan as a 'palimpsest'. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term as '[a] parchment or other writing surface on which the original text has been effaced or partially erased, and then overwritten by another; a manuscript in which later writing has been superimposed on earlier (effaced) writing'.³⁴ At first this relates to the name of the state, imposed upon the spatial geography of the map, but it is also a highly temporal image:

So it was that a word born in exile (Pakistan) which then went East, was borne-across or trans-lated, and imposed itself on history; a returning migrant, settling down on partitioned land, forming a palimpsest on the past. A palimpsest obscures what lies beneath. To build Pakistan it was necessary to cover up Indian history, to deny that Indian centuries lay just beneath the surface of Pakistani Standard Time.³⁵

This image of a subterranean history, effaced and hidden by the new name and project of postcolonial sovereignty, imagines history and nation-building as having an inherent violence. However, the palimpsest is also a striking literary image that foregrounds the act of writing with which the postcolonial state was founded, and the acts of rewriting that occurred in successive martial law administrations. Just as the word 'Pakistan' is seen as a migrant – the term being used first in 1933 by a Cambridge-based Punjabi intellectual Choudhary Rahmat Ali – so too is the foreign notion of a clearly delimited majoritarian state, born as it was out of communitarian differences within an already imbalanced

³³ Stephen Morton, *Salman Rushdie: Fictions of Postcolonial Modernity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 60.

³⁴ 'Palimpsest', *Oxford English Dictionary* <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/136319>> [accessed 16/07/2019].

³⁵ Salman Rushdie, *Shame* (London: Vintage, 1995 [first published 1983]), p. 87 [all subsequent references to this text will be made parenthetically].

colonial state.³⁶ The narrator's 'Indian centuries' encompass not only this history of colonial rule, but also the complex and overlapping sovereignties of Mughal rule that both preceded and coincided with the British Raj.

Shame was published during the Zia regime and Rushdie repeatedly references a temporal battle that is occurring between past and present in Pakistan. Continuing the imagery of the palimpsest, the narrator states that '[i]t is possible to see the subsequent history of Pakistan as a duel between two layers of time, the obscured world forcing its way back through what-had-been-imposed'. (p.87) This line evokes the Benjaminian image of the *splitter*, as the narratives effaced by Pakistan's military administration 'flash up' to interrupt the political ambitions of its contemporary leaders, but it could also be read as a reference to a pre-modern Islamic history coming to the fore through Zia's theological rhetoric to interrupt the homogeneous, empty time of a nation that had initially been imagined as both secular and democratic. This battle between old and new is a central occupation of the novel, and is visible in the narrator's own historiographical methodology. Rushdie's narrator claims the authority of an historian, but his narrative is non-linear and filled with interruptions. Indeed, he admits that his knowledge of Pakistan is incomplete and highly mediated:

Although I have known Pakistan for a long time, I have never lived there for longer than six months at a stretch. Once I went for just two weeks. Between these sixmonthses and fortnights there have been gaps of varying duration. I have learned Pakistan in slices [...] I am forced to reflect that world in fragments of broken mirrors. (p. 69)

The image of a Pakistan learned in slices marks both the limits of the narrator's knowledge of the state, and the way in which historical narratives are *always* partial and fragmentary. If the narrator's nine visits means he has witnessed nine separate 'Pakistans', then this proliferation of alternate histories within one relationship with the state presupposes countless others. As such, the narrator's reflection on the 'fragment' registers a wider historiographical recognition of the fragment as a form of historical writing. Gyanendra Pandey states that the fragment 'is of central importance in challenging the state's construction of history, in thinking other histories and marking those contested spaces

³⁶ Choudhary Rahmat Ali, 'Now or Never: Are we to Live or Perish Forever?' <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00islamlinks/txt_rahmatali_1933.html> [accessed 16/07/2019].

through which particular unities are sought to be constituted and others broken up'.³⁷ Rushdie's narrator makes explicit the fact that his understanding of the Zia regime is constructed from these fragments, and this allows him to contest the official narratives of the postcolonial state: narratives that Pandey sees as offering 'but a fragment of history' themselves.³⁸

Though critics of postcolonial literary aesthetics such as Graham Huggan and Aijaz Ahmad have condemned the privileged position of the migrant-author, Rushdie's narrator appears to celebrate his unique position as a migrant story-teller.³⁹ It is significant for this study that he does so in temporal terms, noting that migrants 'have come unstuck from more than land. We have floated upwards from history, from memory, from Time' (p. 87). This narrator's ability to become 'unstuck' from time allows for a mode of telling that has the power to undermine the homogeneous, empty time of the nation. The narrator invokes fragments of history to destabilise the dominant narratives of nationalism under the Zia regime, and also frequently moves through story-time to give glimpses into the histories and futures of the characters. The non-linear temporality of the novel is frequently made explicit by the narrator, who notes, for example, that 'ends must not be permitted to precede beginnings and middles' (p. 22). Shortly after, the narrator apologises again about the fact that 'it seems that the future cannot be restrained, and insists on seeping back into the past' (p. 24). These disruptive prolepses are early indicators of the unstable relationship between story-time and text-time in the novel, and have the effect of undermining the stability of the narrative's temporality by continually registering the fact that it is not bound to the linearity of conventional historiography. In fact, the text has a number of competing temporal frames: it is bookended by the 'peripheral hero', Omar Shakil, who is born in the opening chapter and killed in the last; it references the western news cycle and contemporary stories from the narrator's time in Britain; and it is set against the backdrop of Hyder's ever-extended martial law regime. Rushdie's migrant narrator, 'unstuck from time', moves between these timelines unpredictably and with long leaps. At one point he declares 'enough, ten years have slipped by in my story while I've been seeing ghosts' (p.118) and later, after narrating the death of Iskander Harappa, '[t]ime to turn back the

³⁷ Gyanendra Pandey, 'In Defense of the Fragment', p. 50.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.50.

³⁹ Much of this criticism is related to Rushdie's use of the generic conventions of magical realism and postmodern literary fiction. I do not have space here to rehearse these arguments, but believe them to be a fair criticism of the homogenising impact of the global literary marketplace towards the end of the twentieth century. This being said, for a consideration of time in fiction, magical elements of the narrative are highly valuable in that they often contribute to non-linear temporalities in the novel. For more on the criticism of magical realism, see Graham Huggan *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (Oxon: Routledge, 2001), and Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992).

clock, so that Iskander rises from the grave' (p.196). The narrator frequently links events to the future before they have happened, and vice versa, upsetting the simple linear relationship between cause and effect: these persistent references to the time of the narrative resist the linearity of official histories.

The shifts between temporalities and temporal frames are most apparent across the metafictional asides that occur throughout the novel. At times, they explicitly articulate the aforementioned battle between old and new. For example, in a description of the people of 'Q.' – the text's fictionalised Quetta – the narrator states:

[T]he city's old inhabitants, who had become accustomed to living in a land older than time, and were therefore being slowly eroded by the implacably revenant tides of the past, had been given a bad shock by independence, by being told to think of themselves, as well as the country itself, as new. (p. 81)

In *Shame*, the creation of Pakistan is portrayed as a problematic temporal act. In the battles between the old community and the new nation – between old inhabitants and the migrants of Partition – came a battle of personal and religious identity that *Shame* imagines as taking place between two concepts of time and history. As the narrator notes that 'Q.' inhabitants were being told to think of the nation 'as new', he registers how the future-oriented rhetoric of national sovereignty impacted upon the being-in-time of the equally 'new' Pakistani subjects. In this passage, the narrator reflects the temporal language that Rushdie himself has used in his writing on the literary techniques of the Columbian author Gabriel García Márquez. Rushdie noted that Márquez's magical realism 'deals with what Naipaul has called 'half-made' societies, in which the impossibly old struggles against the appallingly new'.⁴⁰ Although a full articulation of the role of magical realism within the text is beyond the scope of this thesis, Rushdie's binary image of time, and its potential root in the generic conventions of other writers who had experienced dictatorship and violent postcolonial sovereignty, is rich and suggestive. The competing temporalities of *Shame* are perhaps its central consideration, with Hyder's rhetoric of theological purity struggling against the secular techniques of sovereign power that are employed by both the text's dictator and his worldly counterpart.

One way in which the narrator registers this temporal battle is through persistent

⁴⁰ Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Penguin, 1992), pp. 301-2.

appeals to the Islamic Hegiran calendar. The Islamic calendar is utilised both alongside and against the Gregorian calendar, which is the most widely-used civil calendar in the world.⁴¹ The discontinuities between these two measures of time make clear the performative nature of sovereign claims to the timeless time of religious power, not least because such claims are made by both of the political leaders in the text. The combination of two ways of measuring time comes to represent a conflict between Zia's theocratic dictatorship and Jinnah's secular democratic state. This technique creates a disorienting effect that recurs throughout the novel:

All this happened in the fourteenth century. I'm using the Hegiran calendar, naturally: don't imagine that stories of this type always take place long long [sic] ago. Time cannot be homogenised as easily as milk, and in those parts, until quite recently, the thirteen-hundreds were still in full swing. (p. 13)

Time is at play here in terms that are reminiscent of our discussion of homogeneous, empty time. Early in the text, contemporary political and historical references to Tsarist Russia and British officers specifically place the story in the Gregorian twentieth century, and yet the narrator's declaration works to destabilise the reader's sense of temporality. As the narrator puns that 'time cannot be homogenised like milk' Rushdie implies that there cannot be a uniform understanding of time across time-zones and cultures, and that time will certainly not be uniformly and chronologically presented within the novel. If the two temporal frames through which the narrator presents his narrative cannot be 'homogenised', it is their incommensurability that presupposes the conflict between the theocratic rhetoric of Raza Hyder and the democratic promise of Pakistan's nationhood.

In the events of the narrative, this temporal polarity between secular and theological politics is not simply a critique of Zia's claims to sovereignty. Indeed, it is the secular Iskander Harappa – *Shame's* Bhutto caricature – who runs for Prime Minister under the slogan 'a new man for a new century' (p.177), with the new century being the Hegiran fifteenth. Harappa's uncharacteristic appropriation of the Hegiran calendar signals the importance of religious language and concepts in Pakistani sovereignty even before Zia seized power, highlighting the fact that Zia was not the first ruler to seek legitimacy

⁴¹ The Hegiran calendar is an Islamic religious character that is based fully on the phases of the moon. The discrepancy in century with which Rushdie plays in this novel is related to the fact that the Hegiran calendar begins not with the birth of Christ, but with the pilgrimage, or *hijri*, of the Prophet Muhammad to Medina around six centuries later. For reference, the Gregorian calendar is the annual calendar that begins with January, February, March etc.

through religious rhetoric. This being said, although Harappa makes attempts to extricate himself from a standard notion of time, he is largely unsuccessful. The narrator states that ‘[h]is greatness overpowered Time itself. A NEW MAN FOR A NEW CENTURY ... yes, he ushered it in, ahead of Time. But it did the dirty on him. Time’s revenge: it hung him out to dry’. (p.186, [*both emphases original*]) This articulation of Harappa’s political ambitions registers the competing temporalities of capitalist modernity and claims to theological legitimacy. The appeal to the Hegiran calendar is first and foremost a theological one; however, with the promise of a ‘new century’ and an implied better future, the character uses it to situate himself within a secular narrative of capitalist development and progress. This is all despite the inconvenient fact that as the real Bhutto fought the 1977 election, the Hegiran calendar read 1397. In apposition to the claims to a timeless theological temporality presented in Harappa’s slogan, the narrator makes a clear statement about the temporal realities of his (and Bhutto’s) sovereignty: ‘[s]ix years in power, two in jail, an eternity underground’ (p.177). Despite Harappa’s attempts to the contrary, the narrator is able to position the figure in history through this blunt, proleptic assessment of his rule.

The personified time that topples Harappa hints at the revolutionary power of time and history within the narrative. As this secular figure attempts to maintain his power by deploying the theological symbolism of the Hegiran calendar, he reflects Bhutto’s own appeals to Islamic lawmaking as his power began to wane.⁴² The contradictions in Harappa’s rhetoric are those at the heart of the promised ‘secular Islamic republic’, and are portrayed as having a particularly temporal dimension. As power changes hands the narrator repeats Harappa’s claims: ‘[i]n the fifteenth century General Raza Hyder became President of his country, and everything began to change’ (p. 246). Harappa’s appeals to the Hegiran calendar are grasped and continued by Hyder, and the employment of religious rhetoric by the outgoing Prime Minister make him complicit in this process. Both sovereign claims to the novel’s fourteenth and fifteenth-century temporality increasingly allow the country to descend into “a different time” – one where the events of the narrative could be understood as feasible, perhaps even inevitable. By this I mean that the temporal distinction between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries imagines the events of Pakistan’s postcolonial present in a constant negotiation with the timeless theological principles to which Zia appealed in the televised speech in which he imagined secularity to be a threat to the nation’s future.

⁴² See Ian Talbot, *Pakistan: A Modern History* (London: Hurst, 2009), p. 240.

* * *

In addition to Harappa and Hyder – for whom the battle between old and new is one of securing or maintaining indefinite power – the characters of Sufiya Zinobia and Maulana Dawood are also implicated in the text’s temporal struggle. Sufiya is Hyder’s daughter, who is presented as having a learning disability that dramatically slows her mental ageing, and Dawood is his Islamic adviser who grows impossibly old and continues ageing after his own death.⁴³ The magical presentation of ageing is a postcolonial literary trope that occurs in much of Rushdie’s fiction. This could involve ageing too quickly or too slowly, with or against the growth of a nation, or at a different rate to other characters or to one’s own corporeal body. In a discussion of ageing in the bildungsroman genre Heike Hartung notes that ‘[a]n extended metaphor for a distinctive departure from the temporal order of the discourse is given in the accelerated ageing processes of Salman Rushdie’s narrators in his historical novels’.⁴⁴ Hartung does not make mention of *Shame*, but ties Saleem Sinai’s development in *Midnight’s Children* (1981) to that of the new Indian State, and reads the figure of Moraes in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* (1995) in a way that has significant implications for our reading of Sufiya:

In spite of his accelerated ageing, Moraes feels left behind by a history in whose violent developments he is implicated. Because of the double speed at which he is growing older, he is temporally out of place as an old-timer immersed in the losses of the past.⁴⁵

Moraes is an anachronism in the popular sense of the word; he is imagined as old-fashioned or a man out of time, and this position is further compounded by the rapidity of his growth. If crippling old age functions as a way to mark those who are left behind by the newness of the nation-state, the doubling of Moraes’ temporal bind – both ageing faster than the state, and being left behind by its historical march – could be read as a

⁴³ Interestingly, Zia-ul-Haq is known to have had a daughter with learning difficulties, and this fact appears in a number of newspaper articles about the dictator. However, it may be disingenuous to say that Rushdie’s representation of Sufiya was a direct reference to this fact, particularly as accelerated and decelerated ageing both appear in this novel independent of the character.

⁴⁴ Heike Hartung, *Ageing, Gender, and Illness in Anglophone Literature: Narrating Age in the Bildungsroman* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 6.

⁴⁵ Hartung, *Ageing, Gender, and Illness*, p. 8.

counterpoint to Sufiya Zinobia's decelerated ageing, and Maulana Dawood's impossible old age.

Sufiya is the novel's embodiment of its central concept of shame, and her violent outburst at the climax of the novel is the focal point of the narrator's insistence that shame and shamelessness are 'the roots of violence' (p. 116). It is therefore significant that her illness is portrayed in terms of ageing and the slow passage of time. Rushdie's narrator asserts that Sufiya's unconventional ageing is caused by a potion from a religious doctor to extend her life in a bout of sickness. However, he notes that 'the unfortunate side-effect of a potion so filled with elements of longevity was to retard the progress of time inside the body' (p. 100). As the character's life is unnaturally extended by the mystic medicine, the growth of her mind and intellect is decelerated to a slower pace of progress than the rest of her body. The stunted image of a too-young mind in an ageing body conjures the sacred battle over time in the novel, but I argue that it also reflects the acts of deferral that are employed by Zia through the worldly-historical sovereign technique of the exception. The deferral of Sufiya's death, by ancient means, could be read as an allegory for the 'survival' of the nation promised by Zia in my second epigraph: a turn to pre-modern modes of healing act to sustain the girl's life, but at a significant cost to her being-in-time.

Sufiya's role as an allegorical symbol of the nation has been discussed before, and is not without criticism. Aijaz Ahmad highlights the potential issue with pathologising a character who at times represents the repressive violence of Zia's regime, and at others the historical development of the nation itself. Partially this problematic relates to the gendered violence of the state during the Zia regime. Ahmad writes:

[T]he problem with this metaphor of mental illness is that the pressures and processes of gendering—which are social and historical, in character, and impose upon a great many women the possibility of deformation and incapacity, but are open to resistance and reversal by women's own actions—are given to us in the form of a *physiological* insufficiency on *her* part.⁴⁶

Ahmad foregrounds the way a focus on mental illness could cast the character as a victim of fate or circumstance, rather than the ongoing and systemic violence against women that was exacerbated under Zia's regime. As I noted in relation to Hamida's late monologue at

⁴⁶ Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 145-6 [*emphasis original*].

the climax of 'The Skeleton' in chapter two, Pakistan's founding moment and imagined future as a secular state was built upon the bodies of women who experienced gendered violence. Rather than obscuring this fact, however, I argue that Sufiya's narrative is genealogically linked to the women of those Partition narratives, perhaps even evoking Benjamin's image of a 'secret agreement between past generations and the present one'.⁴⁷ Sufiya experiences the violence of the Zia regime first-hand through the repressive actions of her father, but also, in her position as a receptacle for the 'unfelt shame of the world' (p. 122), she comes to represent experiences from other women and from other times. As such, when she eventually unleashes this shame back into the world it comes to represent the resurfacing of an obscured and hidden history of gendered violence in Pakistan, and brings an end to the ever-extended martial law regime of her father.

In the logic of the text, the image of unfelt shame, and shamelessness, is one that contains within it the deferrals of Zia's exceptional sovereignty. The narrator opines in a metanarrative aside:

Let me voice my suspicion: the brain-fever that made Sufiya Zinobia preternaturally receptive to all sorts of things that float around in the ether enabled her to absorb, like a sponge, a host of unfelt feelings. Where do you imagine they go? –I mean emotions that should have been felt, but were not [...]? (p. 122)

The inability of individuals in the world to feel shame could represent a deferral of responsibility for their own actions. The narrator continues: '[i]magine shame as a liquid [...] stored in a vending machine. Push the right button and a cup plops down under a pissing stream of fluid.' (p. 122) The problem for the narrator is that some people are pushing 'the button', but refusing to drink the contents of the cup, causing them to spill out into the world. This passage continues at length, but its key image is of the abstract concept of shame having concrete impacts on the world as responsibility for the shameful actions of the novel's competing political leaders is passed on to Sufiya. Zia's martial law regime – and as a result Raza Hyder's – could be said to take a similar form. If 'shamelessness' is the deferral of responsibility for individual actions, then Zia's suspension of the democratic process and the rule of law could be read as the perpetual deferral of his own responsibility for intervening in the political process and ordering the

⁴⁷ Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', pp. 245-246.

death of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The accumulation of shameful actions increases over the course of Hyder's regime, and Sufiya gains increasing attention and prominence within the novel as the body on which this shame is inscribed. As a result, the narrator eventually declares: 'This is a novel about Sufiya Zinobia' (p. 59). So, while Ahmad critiques the narrative use of mental illness as potentially foreclosing the possibility of redemption for the novel's subjugated women, a more detailed consideration of the temporal logic of her condition shows that Sufiya is more than a passive allegorical vehicle for the nation. In fact, the extension of her life by pre-modern medicine, and the fact that she becomes a repository for the deferred responsibility of the narrative's elite male figures, situates her as a counter-allegorical figure. What is more, in such a reading her redemption at the end of the novel serves as an interruption to the temporal order of Zia's sovereignty.

When the accumulated shame eventually reaches boiling point, Sufiya ends the regime by 'goblinish, faery means' (p. 257), a reference to the ongoing debate in the novel about the validity of magical realist techniques. The discussion of the vending machine foreshadows Sufiya's explosive violence as not being a simple response to her *own* experiences of repression, but as the result of a connection to other women's experiences from around the world and throughout time. It is this violence that I argue imbues her with a redemptive power in the novel. Her flashes of violence interrupt the suspended time of exceptional sovereignty, and Rushdie's narrator explicates the genus of these moments in implied real events. For example, in another of the narrator's many meta-fictional asides, the text draws together three narratives of shame and honour from Britain to give Sufiya's rage and power an international context. The narrator refers to these apparently real figures as 'ghosts' (p. 115), and each of their stories serves to provide Sufiya's character with traits that are significant to *Shame's* narrative. The stories are portrayed as hidden narratives that gain exposure, albeit anonymously, only through their immortalisation in the actions of Sufiya.

Among these three narratives is that of Anahita Muhammad, the fictionalised victim of an honour killing by her father. Rushdie writes that 'she had brought such dishonour upon her family that only her blood could wash away the stain' (p.115). Anahita's violent death in London is spatially removed from Pakistan, but is rooted in the same logic of honour and shame that marked the moment of Partition and was reignited by Zia's repressive uses of Islamic law. Through the promulgation of laws that were particularly harsh on women, particularly in cases of honour killing and sexual assault, the Zia regime dragged these narratives of shame and honour back to the forefront of political

discussion.⁴⁸ The inclusion of this historical event represents a suppressed narrative fragment redeemed in the service of a literary struggle. However, the narrator sees the honour killing as tragic, but also tragically understandable:

I, too, found myself understanding the killer. The news did not seem alien to me. We who have grown up on a diet of honour and shame can still grasp what must seem unthinkable to peoples living in the aftermath of the death of God. (p. 115)

It may not be that Rushdie's narrator *sympathises* with the murderer, but that he recognises the cultural pressures that result in such violence, and the communal conspiracy to suppress this narrative and avoid criminal proceedings or justice. The secrecy and unity that Rushdie imagines within the East London Muslim community in the wake of the murder highlights the degree to which women's narratives can be effaced even in their immediate aftermath. The narrator transposes this narrative to Pakistan in *Shame*, saying 'that to write about her, about shame, I would have to go back East, to let the idea breathe its favourite air' (p.116). In allowing Anahita's story to 'flash up' in the character of Sufiya, Rushdie registers not just how codes of honour and shame were seeing a resurgence under the Islamising rule of General Zia, but also how in literary fiction such histories of the oppressed can interrupt, complicate or overturn certain patriarchal ideas of sovereignty, honour, and power.

In contrast to Sufiya's slow ageing, which acts as a kind of pause, the character of Maulana Dawood is temporally defined by the constant march of his age, even after his death. The figure of the Maulana becomes the driving force behind Hyder's 'honourable' pursuit of legal Islamisation, but he consistently carries with him an analeptic image of shame and *dishonour*. In the opening chapter of the novel, the character leads a group of Omar Shakil's villagers in a vigil to mark him with shame and place a 'necklace of shoes' around his neck. However, the Maulana inadvertently becomes the target of the necklace and its corresponding symbolism:

[T]he Maulana straightened up to howl at God, interposing scrawny gizzard between insulting footwear and its target, and there, next thing anyone

⁴⁸ The laws in question are the much maligned *Hudud Ordinances*. See *The Offence of Zina (Enforcement of Hudood) Ordinance*, Pakistan, 9th February 1979 <www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/zia_po_1979> [accessed 16/07/2019].

knew, was the fateful necklace, hanging around the divine's accidental neck. Omar Khayyam began to giggle [...] And urchins giggled with him; even the widow Balloch had to fight back the laughter. (p. 43)

This image of Dawood, as both religious zealot and object of ridicule, recurs throughout the novel as the figure becomes increasingly significant to the theological rhetoric of the fictional dictator. The inadvertent marking of Hyder's religious adviser with shame sets him up as contradictory figure, and within the world of the novel this image of shaming never dissipates. The symbolic significance of the necklace of shoes is frequently referenced even as Dawood gains great political influence, both before and after his death. With the text's use of satirical renderings of Bhutto and Zia, it is not a stretch to consider Dawood as a literary configuration of the historical ideologue Abul A'la Maududi. Maududi was the head of the Pakistan National Alliance, who had lent their support to the ethno-nationalist Islamic rhetoric upon which the Zia regime was founded, and was also a proponent of Koranic exegeses that proffered a concept of sovereignty as the timeless domain of Allah. Maududi's view of national sovereignty is one in which leaders are temporary representatives of the state with the sole duty of bringing the law of the nation in line with 'the Koran' and 'Hadith'.⁴⁹

Maududi can be credited with a long and continuing impact on Pakistan's lawmaking. Not only had his party been instrumental in the legitimisation of Zia's 1977 coup, but his theological writings on the foundation of Islamic states are reflected in the rhetoric with which Zia maintained his sovereignty. In *Shame*, this lasting legacy is registered by magical means as the voice of Dawood literally retains a place in Hyder's ear long after his death. Throughout the novel Dawood ages terribly, 'becom[ing] impossibly old and decrepit' (p. 159), he is referred to as an 'antique divine' (p. 198), and when seen in dreams and heard in Hyder's mind it is clear that he 'had apparently gone on ageing after death and was more decrepit looking than ever' (p. 232). Dawood's impossible longevity marks him as existing at an angle to homogeneous, empty time, much like Sufiya Zinobia. He has lived on for generations after he should have died, and has carried his antiquated and often unorthodox beliefs into the twentieth century; it is these beliefs that contribute to the experiences of Sufiya and the 'ghosts' she represents.

If Dawood comes from a different time, it is the pre-modern history from which Maududi's philosophy draws its ideas of sovereign power. It is after Dawood's death that

⁴⁹ See Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi, *The Islamic and Constitution*, trans. by Khurshid Ahmad (Lahore: Islamic, n.d. [originally published])

his ageing becomes most interesting for a reading of the embattled concepts of postcolonial sovereignty that characterise Zia's rule: the appeal to the timeless time of theological sovereignty and the secular concepts of the constitutional exception. After Dawood dies and Iskander Harappa has been executed, both voices occupy Hyder's head, representing different philosophies of national sovereignty. The image of Hyder being simultaneously lobbied with the words of Machiavelli's *The Prince* in one ear from Harappa and the 'impossibly old' Muslim cleric in the other is significant for understanding the novel's fictional representation of sovereignty in postcolonial Pakistan. As Harappa's ranting about statehood and autocratic violence is ignored by Hyder – perhaps because it resembles too closely his own sovereign acts – he is driven towards Maulana Dawood, whose 'ectoplasmic' (p. 246) presence intimates a ghostliness, and the unwanted residue or spiritual revival of something long dead. The intrusion of the worldly-historical secular traditions of sovereignty (represented by Machiavelli) and elements of the *nizam-e-mustafa* (supplied by Dawood) into the present of Hyder's rule makes explicit the competing temporalities of the real Zia's sovereignty. Harappa and Dawood's conceptions of the requirements of the sovereign come from very different historical moments, and their combination complicates Hyder's rule: '[h]is head was bursting with voices. Isky Dawood Isky Dawood. Hard to think straight.' (p. 244) The alternating voices could be seen to represent the two competing rhetorical threads of Zia's martial law regime. In Hyder's head, claims to theological legitimacy are intertwined with worldly-historical techniques of sovereignty that repeatedly defer the nation's return to democratic rule. As such, when Hyder, like Harappa before him, makes claims to a theological notion of time, he fails to balance the temporal disjunct represented by the conflicting voices in his head.

Rushdie's narrator notes how the internal battle in the dictator's mind eventually means subordinating the secular politics of the nation-state to the theological rhetoric that justified his rule. Indeed, *Shame's* narrator increasingly conflates Hyder with God in the later moments of the novel, highlighting the increasing impact of religion on his politics and governance. He writes:

[T]he legal system was dismantled, because the lawyers had demonstrated the fundamentally profane nature of their profession by objecting to diverse activities of the state; it was replaced by religious courts presided over by divines whom Raza appointed on the sentimental grounds that their beards reminded him of his deceased adviser. God was in charge, and just in case anybody doubted it He gave little demonstrations of His power: he made

various anti-faith elements vanish like slum children. Yes, the bastards were just rubbed out by the Almighty, they vanished, poof, like so. (p. 248)

The idea that ‘God was in charge’, acting through Hyder, reflects the way political obedience under Zia was increasingly being equated to matters of faith. The erasure of ‘anti-faith elements’ and the appointments of legislators and judges who were chosen based on physical manifestations of their faith rather than their legal credentials represents a criticism of the dictator’s claims to theological sovereignty. The capitalisation of ‘He’ and ‘His’ reinforces the explicit comparison between sovereign and God, which speaks to Bin Sayeed’s observation in 1984 that criticism of Zia had come to be considered an ‘anti-Islamic activit[y]’.⁵⁰ In a parody of this concept of theological sovereignty, Rushdie’s narrator begins to use God as a metonym for the state, noting that ‘two years after the death of Iskander Harappa the women of the country began marching against God’ (p. 249). By framing marches against the draconian Hudud Ordinances as ‘against God’, Rushdie’s narrator registers historical opposition to Islamic law-making, and the attribution of Hyder’s political actions directly to God mimics the rhetoric of the real-life dictator. By relating Dawood as the inspiration for Hyder’s exceptional techniques of sovereignty, Rushdie highlights and parodies the way in which Zia presented himself as the sacred alternative to Bhutto’s Pakistan People’s Party, but in fact maintained his power through the employment of worldly-historical techniques of sovereignty.

The battle between secular and theological conceptions of sovereignty within the fictional dictator’s head reflects the battle between old and new around which Rushdie organises his representation of Pakistan. Addressing these two characters, who represent the novel’s occupation with ageing, offers a way of understanding the democratic interruptions of the novel as reflective of the temporality of Benjamin’s history of the oppressed. Dawood’s ageing – pushing endlessly into the future – poses a threat to the onward march of homogeneous, empty time as it brings with it pre-modern concepts of sovereignty and law that undermine the secular foundations of that temporality; even if it does bear a resemblance to the permanence of Jinnah’s promise. Read in this way, Dawood’s relationship with the text’s fictional dictator registers the degree to which the Zia regime utilised theological rhetoric as the legitimising force of its continued exceptional sovereignty. Through the Maulana, Hyder looks into the ancient past for a way to secure the future of his own image of Pakistan as a theocratic state, but does so at the

⁵⁰ Bin Sayeed, ‘Pakistan in 1983’, p. 220.

cost of the secular democratic promises of independence. Against the temporality of the state, Sufiya's revolutionary violence – and that of the myriad women who contribute to her composite character – represents its own interruptive power akin to the *splitter* in Benjamin's theory. Sufiya's experience, and those of previous generations and other nations, surface to bring an end to a political regime that otherwise imagined itself as permanent. These figures from across history exist at an angle to chronological time and the time of the sovereign, coming together at the climax of the novel to interrupt the continuation of Zia's rule. I argue that this revolutionary temporality also sheds light on Hyder (and Zia's) own exceptional challenge to the passage of homogeneous, empty time. Such a narrative technique also unveils the eventual return of democracy as a future-oriented promise that requires magical intervention to come to fruition.

Video Recording and Military time in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*

Like Rushdie's *Shame*, Hanif's novel makes use of the conventions of satire and historiographic metafiction to narrate the sovereignty of the Zia regime. Hanif employs satire and hyperbole to comment on the abuses of one military regime while living under another: that of Pervez Musharraf. In this section, I will explore how the novel's engagement with video recording and conspiracy theories interrupts and mirrors the future-oriented rhetoric of Zia's sovereignty while simultaneously allowing space for alternate versions of this history to emerge. I argue that the narrative of Under Officer Shigri registers the temporal experience of 'military time' that I discussed in chapter three: the rigid clock time that orders military life and discipline. Informed by a discussion of this time in relation to the military protagonist, the chapter concludes with a consideration of exceptional incarceration in both texts as an example of 'wasted time', in which Zia's techniques of sovereignty have an acute impact on the being-in-time of his subjects.

In a recent profile in *The New Yorker*, Dexter Filkins writes that, as a journalist, Hanif 'became consumed with figuring out who had killed Zia. He made phone calls and researched the lives of those around Zia, trying to assess potential culprits', and '[i]f he couldn't solve the mystery, he could address it in a novel, he decided: "What if, fictionally, I raise my hand and say, 'Look, I did it?'"⁵¹ This provocative idea is significant for

⁵¹ Dexter Filkins, 'Dangerous Fictions', *The New Yorker*, (May, 2016) <<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/05/09/a-pakistani-novelist-tests-the-limits>> [accessed 16/07/2019].

understanding the use and function of satire in Hanif's novel. The form of the satirical novel allows Hanif to re-imagine the death of the dictator and present a diverse group of political actors in 1988 who are angry and tired of military rule. Hanif contradicts this image of himself as a detective in an earlier interview with Mushtaq ur Rasool Bilal, when he notes that '[t]he central incident that the plane crashed is the only truth in it. Everything else is made up. How would you research something when five inquiry commissions haven't been able to find anything?'⁵² The fictional elements of the novel are therefore put forward as the only way of making sense of the death of Zia, in the absence of an official verdict. To achieve this sense, the novel contains various interconnected narrative strands that are focalised through figures whose voices may otherwise be foreclosed by the workings of authoritarianism; such a strategy can be seen to open up a metaphorical space for dissenting voices. This significant moment in Pakistan's sovereign history is offered through the viewpoints of various figures, and each are afforded a degree of political agency by the novel's presentation of their anecdotal and conspiratorial narratives as fact. Through these varied narratives, Hanif belatedly attempts to answer a question posed by the narrator of *Shame*: 'How does a dictator fall?' (*Shame*, p. 257)

The prologue of *Mangoes* introduces a narrative temporality that is ostensibly teleological. The first pages of the text offer a short proleptic episode that portrays the moments before Zia's death; make explicit its political repercussions; and highlight the conspiracy theories that were born out of the mysterious aviation crash that brought his martial law regime to a sudden end in 1988. The prolepsis is framed through the novel's protagonist, Ali Shigri, who recalls his own place in television footage of Zia's last moments on solid ground:

You might have seen me on TV after the crash. The clip is short and everything in it is sun-bleached and slightly faded. It was pulled after the first two bulletins because it seemed to be having an adverse impact on the morale of the country's armed forces. [...] For a brief moment you can see General Zia's face in the clip, the last recorded memory of a much photographed man. The middle parting in his hair glints under the sun, his unnaturally white teeth flash, his moustache does its customary little dance for the camera [...]⁵³

⁵² Mushtaq ur Rasool Bilal, "'I Don't Think I am Addressing the Empire": An Interview with Mohammed Hanif', *Postcolonial Text*, 8:3-4 (2013), 1-11 (p. 5).

⁵³ Mohammed Hanif, *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (London: Vintage, 2008), p. 1 [All subsequent references to these texts will be made parenthetically].

Narrated in the past tense, this passage is an early indicator of the novel's fatal end, in which multiple conspiracy theories and assassination plots coalesce in the eventual death of the dictator. The excerpt is fascinated with history: the significance of its recording, its censorship, and its potential permanence. To invoke video evidence at the opening of this fictional narrative about a true historical event can be further understood through what literary critic Mark Currie has called 'anticipation of retrospect'.⁵⁴ Writing of the video recording, Currie highlights its temporal significance:

Video recording and photography, like the preterite tense, structure the present as the object of a future memory. The act of recording installs in the present an anticipated future from which the present will be re-experienced as representation of the past, or an infinite sequence of future presents from which the moment can be recollected.⁵⁵

For Currie, video images instantly take on historical importance as they are determined to become an historical archive in the future. When employed by the sovereign, these technologies could be seen as a way to remove the state's rule from time and build a narrative of permanence. As such, the literary evocation of video footage could be seen as an important temporal moment, especially when structured as a prolepsis such as in *Mangoes*. From this early moment the narrator announces his control of the narrative of Zia's death. He notes the historical significance of the video recording as the 'last recorded memory' of the dictator, and makes explicit the usual care that is taken in the photographing of the dictator and his 'unnatural' features by invoking the performative image of the dancing moustache. In the act of relating the recording, Hanif's narrative wrestles control of the object of future memory from the state broadcasting agency. Not only does Shigri note that the video was censored after being aired on television two times – potentially making his account of the events a politically subversive act – but the literary medium allows remarks on events that happen outside the lens of the video camera, and therefore out of shot. Undermining the state's control over recorded moments of history, particularly those that coincide with the rise and fall of a military sovereign, is a temporal act that interrupts the timeless authority of the video recording.

⁵⁴ Mark Currie, *About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 40.

⁵⁵ Currie, *About Time*, p. 41.

Later in the opening passage, this act of censorship and narrative control is further reinforced as the narrator plunges the prologue further into the future: '[t]here will be no autopsies, the leads will run dry, investigations will be blocked, there will be cover-ups to cover cover-ups.' (*Shame*, p. 3) The shift into the future tense allows Shigri to convey the central temporal irony of his narrative: that he was punished for the assassination of General Zia before it had been committed. This discussion sets the narrative on its course, and the movement back to the 'present' of the story-time is registered through the narrator's official declaration in the form of a military report:

I, Junior Under Officer Ali Shigri, son of the late Colonel Quli Shigri, do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that, at the reveille on the morning of 31 May 1988, I was the duty officer. I arrived at 0630 hours sharp to inspect Fury Squadron. (p. 5)

In contrast to the previous passages, the end of Hanif's opening prolepsis is marked by the regulated homogeneous, empty time of military authority. The appeal to military legitimacy is invoked to account for the significant prediscursive fact of Shigri's deceased father, but the events transcribed in the statement are another early example of the way in which his narrative is structured as 'an object of future memory'.⁵⁶ The military document may seem to have the authority of a primary source, and yet the narrative framing of this document also encourages readers to question the authority of its voice. By placing this document in the context of various conspiracy theories about Zia's demise, Hanif draws attention to a slippage in the authority of the military state over the multiple historical forces that lead to the event of the dictator's death.

Scrutiny of video recordings is a trope of the conspiracy theory, and this opening passage begins an ongoing generic investment in this phenomenon. The focus on the death of the dictator as the key frame for the narrative plots – and the novel's varied attempts to explain it – has led to a discussion of the conspiracy theory in the novel that could shed further light on the ways Hanif poses a challenge to Zia's postcolonial sovereignty. Cilano notes that the death of Zia, more than any other event in Pakistan's postcolonial history, has been the site for conspiratorial thinking and interpretation. In the context of the Pakistani novel, Cilano goes on to read the conspiracy theory genre as significant to ideas of national identity, writing: '[t]hrough a surfeit of conspiracy theories, the satire illustrates

⁵⁶ Currie, *About Time*, p. 41.

the distance between the state and the characters' abilities to establish meaningful, collective identities'.⁵⁷ For Cilano, the embedding of conspiracy theories within the literary narrative highlights how the novel's characters interpret the state, state events, and nationalist rhetoric. She focuses on the text's most marginalised figures—the possibly homosexual Shigri and Obaid, a blind sexual assault victim, an imprisoned socialist activist—and their acts of resistance and agency despite the repressive actions of the state. In the fictional world of the novel, various individuals and groups struggle to assert their will over political events in Pakistan. The outcome of these attempts is at best ambiguous, but the focus on the conspiracy theory as a potential site for satire and revolution prompts us to look for alternatives to official narratives of sovereignty.

Cilano's reading is compelling in many respects, but it does not register how the conspiracy theories in Hanif's novel offer a history of the Zia regime in which marginalised subjects 'flash up' to topple the dictator who repressed them. Conspiracy theories also have a distinct temporal structure that is mirrored in the structure of the novel, and speaks to Hanif's initial instincts to play detective in the mysterious case of Zia's death. Ian Talbot has written that conspiracy theories 'are a marked feature of Pakistani public life. According to some commentators, they reflect a widespread national malaise which, by denying the root causes of Pakistan's problems, prevents any attempts to address them'.⁵⁸ In *Mangoes*, however, the employment of such theories in fact offer an entry-point into multiple possible attempts to address the issue of Zia's extra-judicial sovereign regime. If conspiracy theories offer an alternative way of conceptualising the incomprehensible workings of global power, then their inclusion within literary narrative could be seen to register this complexity. Furthermore, in conspiracy theory criticism, the conspiracy theory becomes an alternative, teleological method of narrative that could be seen to take root when the truth itself is unfathomable, or when thick layers of mediation obscure the truth enough to lead individuals or groups to fill the conceptual void. Peter Knight explains this idea in relation to the assassination of Kennedy; he writes that:

Conspiracy theorists have argued that, because the official version of events is at best negligent and at worst part of a conspiracy cover-up, and because academic historians have tended not to research the assassination, it is up to

⁵⁷ Cara Cilano, *Contemporary Pakistani Fiction in English: Idea, Nation, State* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 118.

⁵⁸ Talbot, *Pakistan: A New History*, p. 31.

ordinary citizens to investigate and report what really happened.⁵⁹

Knight's formulation of conspiracy thinking, in which 'it is up to ordinary citizens', is registered in Hanif's novel as multiple conspiracy theories are presented in the absence of a 'trust-worthy' official reality. In *Mangoes*, Hanif's narrator gathers information from everywhere but the state as he creates a teleological narrative that ties diverse happenings together to reinterpret Zia's power and death.

The novel opens with Zia's death, and continues to parse over a number of possible narrative threads – conspiracy theories – that could have caused it: including a coup by members of the military-led Inter-Services Intelligence agency; a curse from an imprisoned woman; revenge by Shigri for his murdered father; and a bomb hidden in the eponymous case of mangoes. For this reason, I argue that Hanif's narrative in part takes a temporal form that could be likened to that of detective fiction. Tzvetan Todorov writes of the 'pure' detective narrative that it often contains two 'stories' with opposite temporal trajectories:

The first story, that of the crime, ends before the second begins. But what happens in the second? Not much. The characters of this second story, the story of the investigation, do not act, they learn. Nothing can happen to them.⁶⁰

Todorov's idea is that the temporality of these two stories move in opposite directions: the first story is told backwards as we work back from the character's death, piecing together evidence to learn what caused the novel's opening, and the second takes place in the traditional story-time that follows the lived experiences of the characters in a forward direction. This double temporality is evident in *Mangoes* as Shigri's narrative drives forward towards a promised climax – Zia's death and Shigri's release – while the narrative pieces together myriad actions that possibly led to the event. Through the multiplicity of alternate narratives of Zia's death, *Mangoes* is not so much a whodunit as an *everyone-did-it*. The impacts of these conspirators on the final events are all equally ambiguous, but, at the same time, this diverse group of people who have suffered various injustices under Zia's long martial law regime all find redemption in the explosive finale.

The double-time of the novel is significant because it registers histories that were repressed or foreclosed by the Zia regime, and gives them equivalence with each other as

⁵⁹ Peter Knight, *The Kennedy Assassination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.4.

⁶⁰ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Poetics of Prose*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 44.

possible interruptions to the timeless time of his exceptional sovereignty. As we will see, the text registers the high level of press censorship under martial law, and as such these repressed histories are integral for undermining the monologic of Zia's dictatorship. The proliferation of conspiracy theories, and the potentially democratic nature of satire, can be seen to challenge the secular means by which the Zia regime foreclosed debate and enquiry into historical and political narratives. In this novel, threats to the legitimacy of Zia's rule are hidden, and the dictator utilises a television appearance to justify his rule and the existence of a national emergency – a secular mode by which the real Zia legitimised his persistent deferral of democratic rule. The artifice of these television recordings satirises the performative nature of sovereignty in this historical moment, and posit the breaking down of Zia's voice in relation to the growing cacophony of his critics.

In the novel, Zia is portrayed as being imprisoned in Army House, the Chief of Army Staff residence in Islamabad. This reclusion is the result of a paranoia and an increasing awareness of his regime's unpopularity: 'With General Zia's decision to confine himself to the Army House after the imposition of Code Red, his Information Minister was suddenly left with nothing to issue as the headline for the evening television news.' (p. 52) This passage highlights the importance of the television broadcast for the performance and maintenance of Zia's exceptional sovereignty, and also makes explicit the state's curation of the press. To combat the absence of new footage of the dictator fulfilling public duties, the Information Minister attempts to orchestrate a highly-rehearsed video bulletin of the dictator to cement his rule at a moment of apparent national crisis. The reasons for the imposition of code red are unclear, but the speech that is being dissected reads like a call for a strengthening of martial law and heightened security. This description of the rehearsal highlights the attempted performance of sovereignty:

This was the point where he was supposed to push aside the stack of papers in front of him with his left hand, remove his reading glasses with his right hand, look straight into the camera [...] But his right and left hands didn't seem to be talking to each other. All morning long he had either removed his glasses while still reading or pushed the written speech aside and stared silently into the camera with his glasses still on. (p. 52)

As Hanif's dictator questions the words and actions that he must record for the national address, the artificial and performative foundations of his ongoing sovereignty are revealed. The failure to complete basic stage directions, and the number of failed takes,

gives focus to the body of the dictator and the carefully choreographed nature of his public image. The desired address dramatises both the dictator's sincerity and the threats facing the nation, and as such Zia's failure to perform in this instance comes to mark his waning power.

The passage reflects Derrida's discussion of the artificial nature of the video recording and highlights the effect of the video camera on the speaker. He states that:

The more [the speaker] ask themselves questions about this situation, as I am doing here, the more they exhibit reticence, scruples, a shrinking or retreat [...] the more they are removed from this experience [...] the less they are able to forget the artifice of the scenario.⁶¹

Derrida's reflections here seem particularly apt for understanding the implications of Hanif's representation of the recorded television broadcast as a technology of sovereignty. Zia's failure to 'dictate' here is significant, and Robert Spencer has noted how the dictator is both somebody who verbally 'issues commands', but also dictates 'laws, narratives, instructions, and so on'.⁶² To be unable to 'dictate' the narrative of his rule undermines his role as dictator. If Derrida struggles to perform authentically in the presence of the video camera it is inconvenient, but the consequences of such a failure are much more serious for a dictator, for it signals a rhetorical failure to perform the very authority of the sovereign. What is more, the debates over the script and the farcical nature of the unsuccessful takes open a space behind the camera that destabilises the heavily mediated, authoritative nature of the television broadcast. Like Hyder's appeals to theological legitimacy in *Shame*, the regime's use of television broadcasts and censorship in *Mangoes* could be seen as an attempt to disembody Zia and efface his being-in-time. As such, Hanif's generic investment in television bulletins and conspiracy theories – two modes of narrative that are participated in and engaged with by ordinary people – comes to represent an attempt to situate the dictator in time, and refuse the false narratives of emergency that turn his temporary deviation from the rule of law into a permanent political reality.

The repeated iterations of martial law and emergency rule that have occurred in Pakistan since independence are a common factor in the lived experience of the current generation of Pakistani writers. This generation – many of whom had grown up during the

⁶¹ Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television*, trans. by Jennifer Bajorek (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), pp. 70-71.

⁶² Robert Spencer, 'Ngugi wa Thiong'o and the African dictator novel', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 47:2 (2012), 145-158 (p. 151).

Zia years, and all having witnessed General Musharraf's coup in 1999 and declaration of a state of emergency in 2007 – are acutely aware of the military's significant foothold of power in the state, and the way the armed forces are bound up with a certain idea of the nation. Hanif's military protagonist is set in opposition to the novel's rendering of General Zia, and interacts almost exclusively with Army officers for the duration of the text. Significantly, if Zia's television performances and theological rhetoric attempt to efface his being-in-time, Shigri's internalisation of a kind of military time shows the extent to which the worldly-historical techniques of Zia's sovereignty impacted upon the being-in-time of his subjects. Having introduced the idea of military time in the previous chapter, I seek now to further that discussion in relation to a character that encompasses two of the key figures of Foucault's conceptualisation of sovereign power in *Discipline and Punish*: the soldier, and the detainee. If the villagers of Nowgam in *The Collaborator* were undergoing a kind of temporal orientation with the introduction of the curfew, Under Officer Shigri is fully interpolated into the time of the military, and thus – by extension – Zia's repressive state machinery. In fact, it is partly his military discipline that makes his planned violence so revolutionary.

Shigri's internalisation of military time is introduced through his experience and proficiency in a form of military drill: the ceremonial displays of timed marching which are common to military parade squares across much of the world. Foucault traces the genealogy of drill, and notes how the linking of bodily movements to the empty time of the clock can be understood as a further development of the timetable, which he describes as having been created in monastic communities before eventually spreading to national institutions. He writes that '[i]ts three great methods – establish rhythms, impose particular occupations, regulate the cycles of repetition – were soon to be found in schools, workshops and hospitals'.⁶³ These rhythms and cycles of repetition regulated factory labour, instilled discipline in children, and partitioned time in work-days, school classes, and hospitals in ways that remain recognisable today. As time is portioned into lessons, projects and appointments, Foucault writes, 'an attempt is also made to assure the quality of the time used [...] It is a question of constituting a totally useful time'.⁶⁴ The Partition of time by the state is made most palpable perhaps in the temporal discipline and regulation of the soldier. This is particularly visible in the case of military drill, in which the soldier is trained to perform a series of bodily movements within a predefined temporal schema.

⁶³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995 [first published 1977]), p. 149.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

Foucault recites at length a French military ordinance of 1766 that defines the different forms of step allowed within the confines of military exercise and drill through which a ‘sort of anatomo-chronological schema of behaviour is defined’.⁶⁵ The traditional image of collective and precise stepping, the raising and lowering of weapons, turning, halting, and directing eyes towards superiors has remained central to the image of military sovereignty into the twenty-first century. British Army drill displays are broadcast live on television, and large military parades from countries such as North Korea have become a newsreel signifier of military rule in insecure times. Furthermore, one dominant image of Indian-Pakistani relations in the twenty-first century remains the Wagah border ceremony, in which soldiers from both sides of the border perform an elaborate and synchronised daily drill parade in which both flags are lowered and the border checkpoint is closed at the end of each day. This parade, performed in front of terraced seating and crowds of spectators, highlights the significant presence of military drill in Pakistan’s national consciousness and the performative nature of border sovereignty.

Shigri’s drill has an even greater temporal significance: it is to be carried out entirely in silence, as opposed to traditional drill exercises that are performed in response to verbal commands. The protagonist’s proficiency leads to his appearance in front of Zia at the climax of the novel, and thus his opportunity to carry out his own assassination plot. Shigri’s descriptions of the drill are dry and clinical, but at moments the character revels in the impressive danger of the otherwise ceremonial process:

Every step I take is a command for both files to throw their rifle to the guy standing opposite them. It’s like walking through a calibrated assault of flying swords. Throw. Catch. You miss a beat and your bayonet can lodge itself in your partner’s eye. (*Mangoes*, p. 49)

The lack of vocal commands and the precision of the movements further intensifies Foucault’s anatomo-chronological schema of military behaviour. The carefully choreographed movements – measured in ‘beats’ and ‘nanoseconds’ (p. 49) – represent the impact of military training on the being-in-time of the participants. Of military manoeuvres, Foucault writes:

⁶⁵ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 151-2.

The act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined; to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed. *Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power.*⁶⁶

For all movements of the body within the context of drill to be assigned a duration, the soldier must incorporate a homogeneous and rigidly structured time. In this *a priori* temporal structure, movement and time are folded together: every movement has a temporal stricture and every second has an accompanying movement. In his description of the progress of the squad, Shigri highlights the degree to which military time must be internalised, and takes pride in the impact of his own supervision:

We have done this for one hundred and ten days, seven days a week. The ones with malfunctioning internal clocks, those in the habit of glancing sideways to get their cues, those counting silently to coordinate their manoeuvres and those twiddling their toes in their shoes to keep their blood circulation going have all been eliminated. (p. 48)

The list of transgressions that reveal the faulty internalisation of the Foucauldian schema are enforced in accordance with Shigri's preternatural ability to recognise and punish acts such as silent counting and toe twiddling. The 'elimination' of those who fail to internalise the time of the military drill bears a suggestive relation to the particularly temporal dimension of military rule in Pakistan. In the logic of the drill, Shigri's temporal perfection comes to represent the apex of the military's precision and its ability to dictate the being-in-time of its soldiers. This military precision, however, stands at odds with the indefinite temporal nature of the sovereign exception, and the theological underpinnings of Zia's martial law regime.

With Shigri's expression of military control over the internal clocks of his soldiers, the army camp in *Mangoes* reflects the broader impacts of military time on the being-in-time of Pakistan's postcolonial subjects. Foucault notes that the end goal of the state's temporal regulation of time – as it is represented by drill – is that it move from the parade ground to 'the entire technology of human activity'.⁶⁷ As such, the militarisation of political and personal life under Zia's martial law regime also comes to represent a threat

⁶⁶ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 152 [*emphasis my own*].

⁶⁷ Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 154.

to the subject's being-in-time. This means that in Hanif's text, both the internalisation and the breakdown of the temporal schema could be seen as resistant to the militarisation of the entire nation. Indeed, if Shigri's drill class can be read as a microcosm for military sovereignty at large, the climax of the practice could be seen to highlight the cracks that appear in this spectacle of state power in the final years of Zia's life:

As I approach the last pair, I give a sideways glance to the guy on my right, just a deflection of my eyeballs. His hand trembles as he receives the rifle that has just switched past my nose. His right hand is a nanosecond late in his throw, the rifle makes a half-circle in the air and its butt comes at my temple.

Perfect.

Blackout.

If the bastard had delayed it another beat, it would have been the bayonet instead of the butt. (p. 49)

This 'bastard' represents an element of the drill squad that should have been eliminated over the course of Shigri's period of supervision and surveillance. That he surfaces – and so close to the group's scheduled performance for the dictator – to interrupt the collective passage of its highly regulated time marks the limits of Shigri's power over time. Furthermore, it highlights the limited possibility of a disciplinary ideality that entails such a rigorous internalisation of an externally superimposed temporality. The minute specificity of the delay, and Shigri's calculation of further risk, identify him as an officer who is perfectly in tune with the homogeneous, empty time of military life. It is for this reason, perhaps, that the indefinite incarceration of Shigri has such a profoundly traumatic impact, as we will see.

That Shigri, like the 'bastard' in his drill squad, resurfaces after a period of potential elimination – his imprisonment – to make his own contribution to the text's myriad assassination attempts serves as a final example of the oppressed 'flashing up' to disrupt the temporal continuum presented by the Zia regime's indefinite rule. Butler's reading of the *splitter*, as the 'moments in which the history of the oppressed emerges in a flash, even as a sign of danger, breaking through or interrupting the continuum of history that goes under the name of progress' seems particularly apposite here.⁶⁸ It applies as much

⁶⁸ Butler, *Parting Ways*, p. 100.

to these dangerous narrative moments of accidental or transgressive violence as to the disruptive outbursts of the oppressed women in Rushdie's *Shame*. By forging literary space for fragments of histories of the oppressed, these novels complicate the progress of time in the nationalist historiography of Pakistan. Sufiya Zinobia, Iskander Harappa and Ali Shigri all emerge as dangerous existential threats to the figures of General Zia that appear in these novels; and, as a result, destabilise the claims to the timeless theological sovereignty that rhetorically justified the real Zia's exceptional governance.

Conclusion: 'Wasted Time' in the Prison Cell

Presentations of the military and Zia's exceptional postcolonial sovereignty come together in the figure of the detainee and the space of the prison cell. I have already discussed martial law as an indefinite legal construct that is built around suspension, and noted how Zia's use of this worldly-historical technique of sovereignty repeatedly deferred Pakistan's democracy to-come. In the prison cell, under indefinite detention, this temporal experience of deferral is seen to impact upon the being-in-time of those at the very limits of Zia's society. Incarceration in both texts appears as a type of 'wasted time', as the indefinite nature of detention reflects the suspended temporality of the sovereign exception. The image of time as 'wasted' is not accidental, for both of these texts share the postcolonial literary trope of the excremental, which I will touch upon alongside parallels with the 'stinking death cell' of Bhutto's memoir, *If I am Assassinated*.⁶⁹ To draw the insights of this chapter to a close, I consider how both texts represent the detainee under Zia's martial law regime as being held in this suspended temporality. I will argue that the figure of the detainee in literature is a temporally significant one, and that its representation in *Shame* and *Mangoes* functions as a way to embody the temporality of sovereign power.

Just as the sovereign exception is typified by extra-judicial decisions and indefinite deferral, so too is extra-judicial incarceration. Detention represents the most concrete temporal exception in the novels, as characters' legal rights are suspended indefinitely at the will of the dictator and other military actors. Incarceration of political opponents was a tried and tested means to shore up sovereignty in Pakistan during the 1970s and 80s, with rigorous imprisonment being an unofficial punishment for overstepping the bounds of censorship, or simply being an opposition politician. Even before Zia's coup, Zulfikar Ali

⁶⁹ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *If I Am Assassinated*, <<https://bhutto.org/Acrobat/If-I-am-assassinated-by-Shaheed-Bhutto.pdf>> [accessed 16/07/2019], p. 215.

Bhutto helped to lay the legal framework for extensive preventive detention. Hamid Khan writes that ‘frequent jurisdictional questions’ were prompted by the Prime Minister’s utilisation of emergency proclamations to circumvent ‘frequent habeas corpus petitions, challenges to preventive detention and censorship, resistance to the continued use of Ayub Khan’s war-era laws, and accusation of official mistreatment and torture in prisons’.⁷⁰ Laws protecting *detenus* (political prisoners detained without trial) had been consistently relaxed as Bhutto’s government became increasingly intolerant and repressive towards its political opponents, and in 1975 the constitution was amended ‘to curtail the rights of a *detenu* detailed under a law for preventive detention, extending the powers of the detaining authority’.⁷¹ After Zia’s coup these laws were extended further and executed by the military. Indeed, by 1979 ‘more than one hundred military courts and tribunals were set up in all the four provinces of the country. There were also large-scale arrests and detentions of political workers and journalists under martial law regulation’.⁷² Suffice it to say, detention was a key facet of Zia’s theocratic regime, but like martial law it was one that was rooted in the secular history of Pakistani and colonial politics.

To a certain degree, preventive detention could be seen as a way of foreclosing the revolutionary potential of those who are repressed by the nation-state. In the dominant narrative of the timeless time of sovereignty, the bodies of the detained are abstracted and evacuated from its frame of representation as they are evacuated from society. Yet, in Rushdie and Hanif’s texts, the bodies of the detained return to interrupt the smooth passage of sovereign time. These figures serve to mark the timeless time of sovereignty with the wasted time and the bodily lives of those detained, but also to highlight the way in which sovereign power is founded upon the repression of alternative voices. The characters of Shigri and Harappa are the main focus of this conclusion, but detention is a persistent theme in both novels. In *Mangoes*, the imprisonment of Blind Zainab – a blind woman who was convicted under the draconic Hudud Ordinance after reporting her own rape – and a union member who is killed in front of Shigri in the Lahore Fort contribute to a persistent narrative investment in detention. This investment is also present in Rushdie’s novel: the Harappa family find themselves under a lengthy house arrest during his incarceration, the women of the Hyder family are sequestered in a mansion in Karachi as they wait to be married, and Omar Shakil’s three mothers go to great lengths never to leave the home of his birth. Like the soldier, the detainee is a significant figure for Foucault. In

⁷⁰ Khan, *The Constitutional and Political History of Pakistan*, p.416.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p.400. The word *detenu* is used in the official legal parlance of Pakistan. It derives from the French *détenu* and has its first usage in English in British India in the nineteenth century.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p.485.

Discipline and Punish, the subject of the Panopticon becomes representative of society at large as disciplinary techniques of surveillance and self-regulation in the prison came to form the blueprint for the exercise of sovereign power elsewhere in the nation-state.

Foucault later described his interest in the prison space as a means ‘to understand power by looking at its extremities, at where its exercise became less and less juridical’.⁷³ The idea that power becomes less juridical in the prison could be seen to present the prison cell as a concealed space in which sovereign power is enacted on bodies without the administration or intervention of legal institutions. In these two novels, the investment in incarceration is marked with excremental imagery that offers an image of sovereign power which not only impacts on the bodies of the detained, but also has an acute impact on their being-in-time.

The prison cells in the texts are legally significant in that they physically represent one of the challenges at the heart of the exception. They are an institution of the rule of law, being used to execute the sovereign’s will during its suspension. They are also a symbol of the state’s willingness to act beyond the law in that they are a site of torture and preventive detention: a site for techniques of sovereignty that rely upon the suspension of constitutional rights. Through the literary representation of this prison space, Hanif and Rushdie shed further light on the significance of extra-judicial detention for our understanding of postcolonial sovereignty. They achieve this in different ways, but both utilise the trope of the excremental to highlight the corruption of the juridical system and the impact of sovereign power on the body of the detainee. In *Shame*, the actual prison space is only represented in a short passage, but the imagery used is very similar to Hanif’s preoccupation with images of bodily waste. The chronotope of the prison is presented in both texts with a complex series of tropes, and varied images of bodily waste are utilised to highlight the bloated power of the sovereign under conditions of martial law. Such a trope can also be found in other postcolonial fictions concerned with the excesses of authoritarian state power in Africa where the critic Joshua Esty has identified ‘a striking conjunction of scatology and political satire’.⁷⁴ Esty’s observation lends a possible frame of reference to these representations of the exceptional space of the military prison. African writers, such as Wole Soyinka and Ayi Kwei Armah present excrement as an ever-present part of the decolonised experience through often parodic narratives of waste that highlight and invert the realities of repressive regimes, where power operates within a controlled, clean environment whilst the poor or subjugated are mired *in* or represented *as* waste.

⁷³ Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p.28.

⁷⁴ Joshua Esty, ‘Excremental Postcolonialism’, *Contemporary Literature*, 40:1 (1999), 22-59 (p.22).

Esty's analysis of waste in African fiction draws on the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas, who outlined the importance of dirt in religious and cultural systems as a signifier of disorder and disorganisation. Douglas writes of dirt as 'matter out of place', and suggests that this notion 'implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. [...] Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements'.⁷⁵ The binary opposition between waste and purity, and the existence of waste as the by-product or residue of order and classification, takes on a strong political connotation in postcolonial and authoritarian contexts. In *Shame*, *Mangoes*, and the final memoir of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the excremental is extremely prevalent within representations of the prison cell. However, in Rushdie and Hanif's novels, waste is imbued with a slightly different symbolic function: the marking of the prison space with imagery of bodily waste could be seen to highlight the detainees' contravention of the regime's idea of Pakistani society and their subsequent expulsion. It also has a significant temporal dimension in these texts, as a focus on bodily functions evokes the repetitive cycles of the body, and thus excrement becomes a way to measure the passage of this 'wasted' time. It is with a reading of excrement in the prison space that this chapter concludes.

* * *

As Hanif's protagonist arrives at the location of his detention there is a momentary image of the prison that parodies the outwardly expressed grandeur and legitimacy of the regime. When Shigri arrives at the opulent Lahore Fort, he describes it in grand, historic terms as he narrates his entrance to the compound:

The gate, probably built to accommodate an elephant procession, opens slowly and reveals an abandoned city dreamed up by a doomed king. Parts of the Fort are dimly lit, revealing bits of its stone walls so wide that horses can gallop on them, gardens so vast and green that they disappear and appear again after you have driven for a while. (pp. 75-76)

The opulence of the space – which gained its UNESCO heritage status during Zia's rule – is foregrounded, as the palatial surroundings jar with the reality of the prison cell hidden

⁷⁵ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.36.

beneath. In presenting the pre-colonial space of the Mughal fort as having been appropriated as a site of postcolonial sovereign violence, *Mangoes* highlights the way in which previous histories of Pakistan are overwritten by the Zia regime. As such, there is a tonal shift as Shigri becomes aware that the space is actually a prison and torture chamber, and his language shifts to the excremental as if to signify the unsavoury and hidden nature of the regime's violence. For example, the chamber in which Shigri is detained for his first night of incarceration is a toilet rather than a prison cell:

So bright is the light, so overpowering the stench, that I cannot see anything for the first few moments. It is a loo, that much is clear. There is a hole in the ground so full of indistinguishable faeces that bubbles are forming on its surface. The floor is covered with a thick slimy layer of some garish liquid.

(p. 77)

The sensory assaults of the prison cell are clear, with references to the lighting and odour of the cell being central to the description. Shigri describes the cell as 'a shithole for civilians' (p. 78); such a phrase is telling, for as the mess seeps into his uniform overnight, Shigri cannot reconcile the excremental nature of the space with the regime's sanitised outward performance of military power: a performance that had previously been exemplified in the opulent grandeur of the Lahore Fort.

Shigri's experience of imprisonment is mostly identified by his proximity to bodily waste in the darkness of the cell. There is a correlation between this presentation and that of Rushdie's narrator, who also utilises the sights and smells of waste to imagine Iskander Harappa's incarceration in *Shame*. The prison cell – especially in the case of indefinite detention – is a space in which the subject's political and legal life are suspended, however the excremental imagery reinforces the fact that the bodily cycle of biological life continues. The following passage attributes to the excremental space a temporal dimension that further marks the cell as a chronotope of the exception:

Through the door of the iron bars comes the stink of the latrine. In the winter he shivers but the low temperature takes the edge off that brown and foetid smell. In the hot season they switch off the ceiling fan and the odour bubbles and swells, stuffing its putrid fingers up his nose, making his eyes bulge. (*Shame*, p. 229)

The conditions of the cell are described largely in terms of its proximity to a toilet, and as a result the excremental nature of Harappa's incarceration becomes his measure of the onward progress of calendar time. The seasonal changes to the conditions of the cell indicate a lengthy prison term, and the waste is part of how that time is measured. This shows how Harappa's being-in-time is impacted by the experience of the prison cell. Not only does it impact him physically, but it also provides the means by which he understands the passage of time in a period of incarceration that mirrors the indefinite nature of Zia's martial law regime. It is as though the experience of smelling waste, and being mired in excrement, is the best way through which to understand and articulate this period of repressive postcolonial violence.

For these characters, imprisonment comes to represent their violent expulsion from Pakistani society, and their abstraction into an excremental space is a literary image that highlights their position as 'waste' – as having been thrown away. There is also a sense that this time is 'wasted'. These two figures have the potential to flash up and challenge the dictator – Shigri through his assassination plot and Harappa through his political clout – but they are forced into this holding space for an indefinite amount of time, and their revolutionary potential is suspended. This being said, the excremental imagery of the prison cell is not exclusively the domain of the literary. In his final memoir – a lengthy response to the state's case against him – Zulfikar Ali Bhutto writes of his incarceration:

Since 18th March 1978, I have spent twenty two to twenty three hours out of the twenty-four in a congested and suffocating death cell. I have been hemmed in by its sordidness and stink throughout the heat and the rain of the long hot summer. The light is poor. My eye sight has worsened. My health has been shattered.⁷⁶

It is not beyond the realm of possibility that this passage regarding Bhutto's 'stinking death cell' could be something of a source text for Rushdie and Hanif's representations of incarceration.⁷⁷ The imagery is striking, fittingly perhaps for the purpose of Bhutto's text. The idea of being 'hemmed in' conjures a further image of enclosure within the prison space, and the sense of smell contributes to this 'sordidness', condemning both the squalor of the space and the dishonourable act of incarcerating him there. What is more, there is a sense that excrement and waste have their own temporality: they link the act of

⁷⁶ Bhutto, *If I Am Assassinated*, p. 99.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

imprisonment with the temporal cycles of the body and with bodily life. By suggesting that confined exposure to the relentless cycles of the body's expulsion of waste matter is interminable, these narratives emphasise how detention in an excremental space is also a profoundly disorienting temporal experience.

In the representation of the prison space in these novels, the excremental provides a trope with which to mark both the status of the detainee under a totalitarian regime and the injustice of his or her treatment. In addition to this, the sense that detention in this excremental space has an indefinite temporality; that the temporal cycles of bodily waste are repeated with interminable regularity; and that seasonal changes are marked through their effect on waste, foregrounds the way in which the excremental is a significant part of the chronotope of the prison and the sovereign exception. In this chapter, I have noted the way the character of Iskander Harappa, like Maulana Dawood, is presented as an anachronistic figure that interrupts the martial temporality of Pakistan by making appeals to another time (the imminent turn of the century). From the perspective of the postcolonial sovereign, his incarceration and execution signal his expulsion from society and political life; and yet, the magical nature of his posthumous ravings suggests that he – like Sufiya Zinobia – can 'flash up' and interrupt the time of Zia's sovereignty. In *Mangoes*, Shigri also returns from the prison space to challenge the dictator's sovereignty, and I suggest that the character's military background and strict internalisation of military time adds further significance to both his experience of indefinite detention and his return in the final act to attempt to kill the dictator.

Reading literary representations of the Zia regime sheds light on how the homogeneous, empty time of the nation can be interrupted by exceptional techniques of sovereignty. If previous chapters highlighted how the state orients its subjects to the time of postcolonial sovereignty, these readings of *Shame* and *Mangoes* show how this orientation can be destabilised by the very actions of the state under martial law rule. Though many of the worldly-historical sovereign techniques of exceptional governance incorporate temporal means of control – the prison, the curfew and the regulation and militarisation of civilian life – the theological nature of Zia's intervention undermines the promised permanence of Pakistan's secular democratic sovereignty. The interruptions to democratic processes overseen by Yahya Khan, Ayub Khan, Zia and Pervez Musharraf each offer a clear contravention of Jinnah's future-oriented rhetoric, and of the concept of democracy 'to-come'. What is more, in offering his own promise of democracy, and then deferring his time frame in perpetuity, the case of Zia highlights the degree to which the

time of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan can be undermined by the sovereign him or herself.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary Tensions and Pakistan's Literary Futures

More than seventy years on from Jinnah's inaugural speech to the Constituent Assembly, Pakistan is still negotiating a number of the same concerns of that address. As this thesis has shown, the tensions at the heart of Jinnah's declaration of independence can be traced through significant developments in national politics that betray an anxiety about territorial sovereignty – evidenced in the fractious relationship with India – and an internal conflict over the centrality of Islam to Pakistan's culture, law, and self-representation. It is perhaps no accident that literary fiction is particularly well placed to interrogate these tensions, since fiction makes use of rhetorical resources that the state and its actors attempt to efface.¹ By exploring alternative narratives of the nation and its history these texts also highlight the process of this effacement, and question the truth claims of successive political leaders. Debates concerning the religious identity of the Pakistani state and the integrity of its territorial borders continue to hold a significant place in its political discourse. For example, the landmark release of Asia Bibi, who spent eight years on death row before being acquitted of blasphemy charges, and the renewal of border violence in Kashmir in February 2019, offer a recent frame for understanding continuing debates related to the precarious rhetorical foundations of Pakistan's sovereignty. Bringing these events together with the literary readings of this thesis sheds light on the continued use of the future-oriented rhetoric of postcolonial sovereignty, and the ways in which competing images of Pakistan's future can be interrogated, undermined, or satirised in literary fiction.

In early 2019, two months of military conflict erupted in the Kashmir region following a suicide attack on a convoy of buses that killed forty Indian paramilitary personnel. This conflict rapidly escalated into retaliatory airstrikes from both sides: India responded to the bombing with a strike on Azad Kashmir, and Pakistan responded in kind on targets in Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir.² A televised address by Prime Minister Imran Khan offers a recognition of the way this territorial conflict is itself perceived as a

¹ As Ernesto Laclau points out in *The Rhetorical Foundations of Society* (2014).

² There is a short summary of these events in a contemporary profile in the *New York Times*. See Vindu Goel, 'India-Pakistan Crisis: Why They Keep Fighting Over Kashmir', *New York Times*, March 8th, 2019 <<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/world/asia/india-pakistan-crisis.html>> [accessed 16/07/2019].

threat to the future-oriented promises of postcolonial sovereignty: ‘With the weapons you have and the weapons we have, can we afford miscalculation? [...] Shouldn’t we think that, if this escalates, what will it lead to?’.³ In this speech, Khan – who took office in 2018 with the support of the Pakistani military – articulates the threat that two nuclear states pose to each other. In the process, he perhaps provides a modern reflection of the ‘unparalleled’, ‘unknown’, and ‘unprecedented’ future articulated in Jinnah’s originary promise. In the fiction explored in this thesis, there is a persistent interrogation of Jinnah’s promised democracy to-come that draws attention to the way Pakistan’s postcolonial sovereignty has repeatedly been maintained through the use of repressive techniques of sovereignty and acts of military violence. As we have seen, literary representations of those at the margins of Pakistani society – abductees, detainees, and those who occupy border spaces – foreground the rhetorical and temporal foundations of sovereignty in ways that dominant historical narratives fail to register. As Imran Khan leverages contemporary conflict in Kashmir as an existential threat to the future of Pakistan, he resituates the nation’s territorial integrity as the primary concern of postcolonial sovereignty. In the process, he elides the narratives of those who have experienced the disorienting and violent events of Partition, bordering, and martial law rule.

Recap, Tracing Threads

Using a methodology derived from Derrida’s ‘Declarations of Independence’ and the concept of democracy to-come, this thesis has placed Jinnah’s *de facto* declaration of independence alongside the narratives of those excluded from its future-oriented promises. With these exclusions in mind, it has been possible to think through the issues of imprisonment, gendered violence, and border sovereignty that still hold political significance in Pakistan. In this thesis, I have attempted to articulate how literary fiction represents a rich resource for interrogating the nature of postcolonial sovereignty in the state. Each chapter has explored a different moment in Pakistan’s history in which various techniques of sovereignty have impacted upon the bodies and minds of those who are both included and excluded from the nation’s early promises of citizenship and representation.

³ Michael Safi, Mehreen Zahra-Malik and Azhar Farooq, ‘Pakistan Says it has Shot Down Indian Jets After Kashmir Cross-Border Attack’, *Guardian*, 27th February, 2019
 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/27/pakistan-india-jets-shot-down-airstrikes-kashmir>>
 [accessed 16/07/2019].

The patriarchal voice of Jinnah rings through the readings of Partition narratives in the first chapter, but it is the power of the fathers and husbands in the text – over women’s future membership to their community and nation – that reveals the blind spots and exclusive foundations in Jinnah’s promise of secular sovereignty for all. At a moment when the Pakistani state was imagining its future within the homogeneous, empty time of capitalist modernity, other modes of experiencing time were effaced, only to flash up later in these narratives of Partition. In *Train to Pakistan*, we encountered a traditional rural time that was interrupted by the colonial intrusion of the locomotive: a symbol of homogeneous, empty time that becomes unstuck as Partition violence escalates. Through a reading of ‘The Skeleton’ it was possible to interrogate a complex concept of ‘women’s time’ that incorporated experiences of maternity and the cycles of women’s bodily lives, while also revealing the co-option of women’s reproductive labour into the project of the nation. Across ‘The Skeleton’ and ‘Exile’, victims of abduction reveal and question the sacrificial ‘mythic’ time that underpins the future-oriented temporality of postcolonial nationhood. These readings shed new light on how rhetorical appeals to a mythical before-time can efface and silence the experiences of women for whom national sovereignty was accompanied by great personal sacrifice.

In the second chapter, we saw how these competing temporalities could be traced into modern conflicts that continue to have a bearing on Pakistan’s territorial sovereignty. In *The Wandering Falcon* and *The Collaborator*, it is possible to see efforts by the state to envision the nation within the temporal logic of capitalist modernity. If the locomotive creates and orders subjects in *Train to Pakistan*, then in *The Wandering Falcon* the sovereign techniques of bureaucracy offer their own ordering process at the limits of the nation. While requests for papers and visas superficially represent a possible alignment to the project of the nation and the resulting constitution of people as subjects, this is not the case in Ahmad’s novel. For the nomads in the Afghan-Pakistan border region, these requests are impossible to fulfil, revealing them as exclusive techniques of border sovereignty that threaten the traditional modes of living that tribal people had maintained at the border for centuries. Through the discussion of bureaucracy in repressive states, it became clear that for border people, bureaucratic demands can take the form of a permanent ban; this is felt acutely in Ahmad’s text, as the role of street-level bureaucrat is taken on by the soldier. In Waheed’s novel, the transfer from bureaucrat to soldier has lost all ambiguity. The text follows a settled Muslim tribe around the turn of the twenty-first century, and presents the realities of settled life at the border that could be read as a grim sequel to *The Wandering Falcon*. The narrative of life under direct military rule in Indian-

controlled Kashmir shows that settling down does little to alleviate the discretionary power of soldiers who maintain a seemingly permanent state of exceptional rule. In *The Collaborator*, the military occupation of Kashmir brings its own temporality: a highly regulated time that is incompatible with the traditions of Kashmir's Muslim population. The curfew, the cordon, and the ID parade slow life down at the border, and align everything to the whim of military figures. The structure of the military occupation places military officers in positions of sovereign power, with incredible discretionary power that cuts through the co-opts the clock and calendar of secular democracy and law with immediacy and decisionism. Both of these novels challenge the permanence of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan by shedding new light on the repeated performances necessary to maintain territorial sovereignty at the limits of the nation.

Finally, chapter three shifted the focus from examples of military sovereignty at the limits of the nation to the all-encompassing martial law regime of Zia-ul-Haq. The readings of *Shame* and *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* continued to highlight the performative foundations of postcolonial sovereignty, and revealed an ironic shift in the future-oriented promise of democracy: the promise was now uttered by a dictator, and persistently deferred through legal manoeuvring and political rhetoric. Zia's deferral of democracy and the rule of law brought the exceptional border sovereignty explored in chapter two into everyday political life. Through the repeated extension of his rule under the worldly-historical technique of martial law, and his persistent claims to theological legitimacy, Zia himself undermined the homogeneous, empty time through which Benjamin, Anderson and Chatterjee frame the rhetorical devices of nationalist historiography. In *Shame*, the representation of magical ageing offers a way of understanding how Zia's theological rhetoric interrupted and destabilised Jinnah's secular image of Pakistan's future. Through the generic conventions of magical realism and repeated references to the repressive techniques of the Zia regime, Rushdie brings together a variety of competing narratives to imagine a death for the dictator and the end of Pakistan's deviation from secular democratic rule. In Hanif's novel, which is set against a backdrop of military prisons and barracks, a highly structured military time becomes visible; impacting upon the bodies of soldiers and civilians alike show how military sovereignty orders the temporal life of all who live under it. In both novels, the temporal techniques of Zia's sovereignty are exemplified in the presentation of indefinite and preventive detention. This ostensibly temporary suspension of the human rights of political opponents mirrors the similarly indefinite deviation of martial law sovereignty in Pakistan. Furthermore, we saw how the militarisation and Islamisation of daily life under the Zia

regime and its frequent uses of extra-judicial detention introduced a timeless time that impacted the being-in-time of Pakistani subjects and suspended the processes of legal institutions. These two interruptions share a colonial genealogy, much like the stoking of communal tensions that accompanied Partition in chapter one and the bureaucratic techniques of sovereignty and border control that occupied Jamil Ahmad and Mirza Waheed in chapter two.

Taken together, these chapters offer a methodology for the study of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan and other postcolonial nation-states. However, the competing temporalities tracked through this thesis are not to be thought of simply as additional, or parallel, to homogeneous, empty time. When discussing multiple temporalities in postcolonial India, Partha Chatterjee tells us that:

[T]o call this a co-presence of several times – the time of the modern and the times of the pre-modern – is only to endorse the utopianism of Western modernity. Much recent ethnographic work has established that these ‘other’ times are not mere survivals of a pre-modern past: they are new products of the encounter with modernity itself. One must therefore call it the heterogeneous time of modernity.⁴

By bringing to light the ways in which sovereign states deploy their control over history and time, it is possible to uncover the way they mark these competing temporalities as ‘other’. In the texts discussed here, the erasure and replacement of competing temporalities is resisted through the representation of different marginalised groups as they come into contact with the time of the state. In doing so, they reflect the heterogeneous time of postcolonial modernity, and show how sovereignty has its own relationship to time. Derrida’s discussion of declarations of independence, and his exploration of how national sovereignty involves both constative and performative acts of governmentality, reveal that the homogeneous, empty time of the nation is itself highly unstable. When Benjamin conceptualised homogeneous, empty time in 1940, it was an image akin to a locomotive, hurtling forward and leaving sparks and flashes behind it that were abstracted from the linear narrative of capitalist modernity. The redemption of these competing, effaced narratives is built into Benjamin’s concept of homogeneous, empty time, and therefore the

⁴ Chatterjee, ‘The Nation in Heterogeneous Time’, p. 928.

heterogeneous time of Chatterjee's essay seems particularly cogent to the philosophical apparatus of this thesis.

Final Thoughts

In light of Chatterjee's call for a 'heterogeneous time of modernity' in the postcolonial nation, this thesis has not attempted to privilege any one concept of time; nor has it simply attempted to undermine the time of sovereignty and the nation. In fact, consistent reflections on various 'interruptions' to homogeneous, empty time, and existential questions about the different 'futures' imagined by Jinnah and others, have been explored to highlight the way different temporalities compete for dominance in a space that is at once secular and Islamic; national and provincial; rural and modern; governed and simply administered. Through an engagement with the work of Derrida and Benjamin I have considered the idea that postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan has a significant temporal dimension, and that the very concept of national sovereignty – as articulated by Benedict Anderson – requires standardisation of time, and the promise of a certain permanent future to take the nation out of a timeless, anarchistic past. In reality, however, British Colonial rule did not represent the anarchy of the outside. It consisted of a prolonged attempt at temporal organisation, and achieved this through a variety of worldly-historical techniques of sovereignty that were later employed by the postcolonial state – from bureaucracy, control over the printing press, the railway, martial law, the curfew, and pre-emptive detention.

The temporal instability of Derrida's 'Declarations of Independence' is a constructive way of articulating the flaws in Jinnah's originary address. The speech act was a promise of secular democracy to-come; while it endures as a revered symbol of Pakistan's foundation, its promises were quickly hampered by the Objectives Resolution and iterations of Islamic law-making. The rhetorical battle between Jinnah's promise of secularity and Zia's theocratic regime clearly illustrates the temporal struggle inherent in modern Pakistani politics. Jinnah's statement that 'in [the] course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual' is one that displays the future-oriented rhetoric of Pakistan's founding moments, offering a permanent future in which the state was dedicated to the progress of capitalist modernity while religious ideas were personal

and private matters.⁵ It has been central to this thesis that Jinnah's speech act represented the articulation of Pakistan's democracy to-come: a statement that independence was the beginning of a process to realise the people's freedom, and a promise that such a freedom would be universal and permanent. Zia's 1984 referendum offered its own future-oriented framing of what the Pakistani nation would be: the ballot paper asked, of Zia's Islamisation of law, 'are you in favour of continuation and further consolidation of that process and for the smooth and orderly transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people?'.⁶ The final clause of this convoluted and guiding question contains an explicit promise of sovereignty, but it also promises a state that is fully aligned with the timeless laws of Islam, and the timeless sovereignty of Allah. This example of two competing temporalities being uttered by the state are key to understanding the tensions of postcolonial sovereignty in Pakistan, and they also shed light on the way different ideas of the nation and its future coexist and struggle for legitimacy.

This thesis has paid close attention to literary representations of moments in which the subjects of Pakistan have come into contact with the state. In each of its case studies, the relationship between subject and state was revealed to be mediated by the state's employment of techniques of sovereignty that had temporal dimensions. There is much more to be said on each of these techniques and their impacts on life in the nation-state. In particular, Javier Auyero's analysis of bureaucracy in contemporary Argentina offers a way of reading moments in which waiting and delay become techniques of sovereignty that create docile bodies in spaces where subjects encounter the inner workings of the state. This thesis focused closely on experiences of delay and deferral in Pakistan, and more research is required into the part that bureaucracy plays in this process. As we have seen, the concept of enforced or coerced waiting as a means of control is visible in a number of techniques of sovereignty in Pakistan: in the temporality of military rule, the curfew, and the anatomico-chronological schema of the drill square. As a primarily sociological project, Auyero's study stops short of addressing the relationship between the temporality of the state and contemporary Argentinian culture. He evokes European literary texts to highlight the nature of bureaucracy and its relation to narrative time, but it has been valuable in this thesis to address these techniques of sovereignty alongside literature focused on the postcolonial subjects who experience them. This thesis has involved the extrapolation – from narratives of oppression and repression – of common narrative techniques that

⁵ Allana, *Pakistan Movement*, 3rd edn, p. 546.

⁶ Shaikh Aziz, 'A Leaf from History: Zia's Referendum'.

undermine the time of the nation and the promise of democracy to-come that itself enforces a kind of wait.

The literary readings in this thesis have important implications for understanding the rhetoric of temporality in Pakistan's postcolonial sovereignty. The secular and democratic future promised by Jinnah at the moment of independence is one that is couched in the homogeneous, empty time of capitalist modernity, and this time has been both utilised and undermined by successive political leaders. Each of the texts explored here reveal how different representatives of the state wield the power to defer and undermine the democratic process. Representations of bureaucratic delays at the border, late or unfulfilled promises of citizenship, and the repeated extension of martial law regulations all offer ways of understanding how the path to a democratic and secular future in Pakistan is shot through with delay, deferral, and suspension. Pakistan's literary fiction, in its ability to play with narrative time and offer alternative timelines for the state's past and future, makes explicit the flaws in the linear logic of homogeneous, empty time and offers a way of better understanding the temporal nature of sovereignty.

* * *

In the recent case of Asia Bibi, the limits of Pakistan's rhetoric of postcolonial sovereignty come into view. The case prompts questions about the degree to which the foundational promises of Jinnah have been fulfilled in law. Bibi's eventual acquittal was accompanied by an impassioned verdict by Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khan Khosa that was widely praised by secularists in Pakistan, and by human rights institutions around the world.⁷ Indeed, the ruling caused journalist Kunwar Khuldune Shahid to state:

Bibi's acquittal generates hope that non-Muslim minorities will one day have the same rights as their Muslim compatriots – whether to drink water, to worship as they please or to speak their minds. Today, we can more easily imagine a tolerant and progressive Pakistan of the future.⁸

⁷ Interestingly, Khosa is known as a particularly literary judge. The Bibi verdict included references to Shakespeare, ruminations on the irony of etymology of Asia Bibi's name in Arabic, and various other literary allusions. This verdict was an act of interpretation that highlighted the value of a secular rule of law, in which the same rigour and burden of proof is applied to judgment of religious 'crimes' as is applied to physical crimes.

⁸ Kunwar Khuldune Shahid, 'The Release of Asia Bibi is a Small Step Towards a More Open Pakistan', *Guardian*, 1st November, 2018 <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/01/release-asia-bibi-pakistan-blasphemy-laws>> [accessed 16/07/2019].

Shahid's optimism in the wake of Khosa's verdict offers a contemporary frame for the secular promises of Pakistan's founding moments. The fact that blasphemy remains punishable by death is an indication of the way institutions of law have failed, up to now, to legislate the secularity that was promised in 1947. The significance of this case is double-edged for the consideration of sovereignty that has been explored in this thesis: the verdict is a public example of legal process moving in a secular direction that could have significant implications for the religious components of Pakistan's legal system, and yet the groundswell of anti-secular activism that accompanied the ruling highlights the rhetorical distance between state and subject. As Shahid heralds the fresh possibility of a secular future in Pakistan, it becomes clear that the early promises of Jinnah's speech act are yet to be fulfilled. If Imran Khan's highly delayed performance of clemency opens a space for Shahid's alternative image of Pakistan's future, then there is a sense that successive governments have continued to defer responsibility for the nation-state's founding promises.

The Asia Bibi case and the recent conflict in Kashmir highlight the continuing necessity for a focus on postcolonial sovereignty in the region, and the realities of life and politics within ethno-nationalist states. I offer these two contemporary events in Pakistani politics not to be pessimistic about Pakistan's future, or otherwise; but to highlight the fact that the concerns of this thesis still exist and inform cultural and political discourse in the country. In addition to these recent events, the ongoing attempt to legally pursue Pervez Musharraf is a development that displays how the Pakistani state are trying to officially and retroactively delegitimise the most recent example of military emergency rule. This development is one that assumes, again, the permanence of democratic sovereignty in Pakistan; it is a promise of permanence that only time will confirm or deny. By interrogating the nature of this promise, and the ways in which it has been undermined at different moments in Pakistani history, this thesis offers a way of reading contemporary debates – such as Asia Bibi's imprisonment and the Kashmir conflict – within the broader political context of postcolonial sovereignty.

Though this thesis has by no means been exhaustive in its approach to Pakistani fiction or history, it draws a closer focus on the particular place of literary fiction to complicate and interrogate the truth claims of political leaders in Pakistan's postcolonial history. By bringing together various competing temporalities it has been shown how the genres and modes of literary fiction have the ability to undermine narratives of the nation in homogeneous, empty time by bringing to the forefront the experiences of those whose

stories have been effaced in the ongoing creation and promotion of dominant nationalist historiographies. The permanence of Pakistan as a secular and democratic nation relies upon a future-oriented promise that can only be understood through a consideration of the temporalities and narratives that it seeks to erase. Otherwise, to repeat the question of Bishan Singh in Manto's famous story: '[W]ho could say if both India and Pakistan might not entirely vanish from the map of the world one day.'⁹

⁹ Manto, 'Toba Tek Singh', p. 5.

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