Citizenship in Time

Temporality and Time-Reckoning in Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*

Mitchell Gauvin

Jamaica Kincaid in *A Small Place* recounts "sitting across from an Englishman" who, as a result of the collapse of the British empire, looked "so sad, sitting on the rubbish heap of history" (30–31). In likening the historical contribution of the English to the accumulation of trash, Kincaid portrays the past as an accretion of stuff or a reservoir of pollution, rather than something that is simply elapsed and unrecoverable. The metaphorical rubbish of history that the English have discarded onto their former colonies is literalized by Kincaid in her attention to the actual waste-disposal problems that Antigua faces from crumbling public infrastructure—a consequence of both domestic corruption and a globalized economy that has privatized the country's resources in the aftermath of colonial rule. The Englishman's view of history, which conveniently overlooks the garbage they have produced, contrasts with the local Antiguan whose sense of the past, present, and future are compounded, revealing in stark relief the accretion of waste over time. As opposed to the "present day of timetables and fashion" which has "rendered the past anachronistic" (Fritzsche 2), Kincaid's depiction recognizes the debris that constitutes history's often amorphous and unignorable presence, to the extent that distinguishing where the present starts and where the trash heap of history begins becomes exceedingly difficult, if not impossible. Indeed, such an exact sequestering of time seems hubristic when analogized to the accumulation of rubbish—an image that connotes environmental disaster. Unlike the Romantic reverence of the castle or church ruins that constitute British national pride, the Englishman when confronted with the "rubbish heap of history" cannot recognize the continuity between their rubbish and the old buildings that evoke sentiments of belonging or sublime. Kincaid hints at something of a contradiction in the Englishman's historiography, which involves a discrepancy in notions of ruination: reverential towards church ruins and relics, they simultaneously ignore the trash they have similarly produced and which they have accumulated in places that were as much a part of the British empire as Scotland or Wales.

Kincaid's metaphor of history as a rubbish heap offers a departure point for interrogating the interaction between literature, time, and citizenship. Time in this context means durational time, such as that "embodied in the various rituals, routines, calendars, discourses and devices which provide a sense of regularity and rhythm and which orientate human collectives towards an accepted source of temporal authority, whether they be the celestial motions of the stars or the mechanical ticking of clocks" (Nanni 6). In using a spatial reference (a heap) as a point for distinguishing the past, Kincaid does what perhaps anyone would in attempting to comprehend the nebulous metaphysics of time: grounds it in something concrete and recognizable. But this maneuver potentially obscures what is distinct about time that cannot be captured by analogy, especially in the context of time's political value. Yet Kincaid's *A Small Place* also engages with forms of time-reckoning that underwrite localities disrupted or destabilized by forces not adequately addressed by simplistic categories of "foreign" or "outside" in a strictly geographical sense. The spatiotemporal is an unnecessary compounding of two distinct realms that must be wrenched apart to see how both may connote in markedly different ways. I concentrate on the moments throughout *A Small Place* where Kincaid deepens her representation of Antigua through reference to local senses of time and temporal rituals and their discrepancy with global time embodied by the white tourist. While certainly the cartographic dimensions of Antigua as the titular small place directs our reading of the work, I focus more exclusively on Kincaid's representation of time as a corrective to the abundance of analysis that have focused on her exploration of globalization and colonial inscriptions in the Caribbean in mostly geographical terms. In particular, I focus on how a portrait of Antiguan citizenship constituted by local temporal practices emerges alongside a global imposition of time that binds locals in an antagonistic relationship between forms of time-reckoning. In sum, *A Small Place* offers an avenue for interrogating citizenship as a form of temporal valuation.

The historical growth in time-consciousness and the technological capacity to measure time has been reflected in literature for centuries. As Adam Barrows notes, the "history of modernity is in part a history of the global management of spatial and temporal relations" (5), and Giordano Nanni calls the clock the "internationally spoken language of hours, minutes and seconds" which "has become so familiar that an alternative consciousness of time seems scarcely conceivable" (1). In pursuit of understanding time's cultural centrality, literary scholars of the contemporary period have concentrated on both the portrayal of mechanisms for time-telling (timepieces such as the clock or the wristwatch) and the rhetoric of temporality (analogies, allusions, descriptions of time) in literary works. Marcus Tomalin, for example, has explored how the depiction of watches in the long-eighteenth century text "never acquired a stable set of symbolical connotations" (303). The ornate pocket watch "provided excellent opportunities for ostentatious ceremonies involving the melodra-

matic extraction of the watch from the fob pocket" (Tomalin 306), serving as a signal of wealth that was intimately tied to the public ritual of telling time. Yet alongside this exotic display were watches specifically crafted for the puritanical, who would have detested the flaunting of "superficially ornate adornments" (306). This disjuncture in the connotation of watches was in turn reflected in the literary works of the period. With Kincaid, we have a more stable set of connotations with which to unravel the representation of time, specifically in the context of the disjuncture she depicts between the incursion of a global standard for time and the local sense of time of Antiguans.

Of course, we must not forget that literature itself is a spatiotemporal practice, though the inertness of the page may exaggerate the thingness of literature to the detriment of its temporal dimensions. My focus on *A Small Place* reflects the capacity of literary works to capture what Barrows calls the "rhythmic density of space in its complexity" in contrast to the "powerfully simple cartographic construct" of coordinated standard time that manages our spatial and temporal relations (11). Literature can capture "the vast and the microscopic, the slow and the fast, the planetary and the local, the continuing, repetitive rhythms of the planetary and the fugitive temporal rhythms of random experiences" (11). As Barrows elaboration makes clear, time is more than just empirical measurement practice or intimate social ritual, it possesses political value that is inseparable from imaginings and enactments of citizenship.

Linda Bosniak notes how "some version of *citizenship* is now vital to the intellectual projects of scholars across the disciplines" (1), including literary studies, where the enduring legacy of citizenship on imaginings of personhood have infiltrated how characters and communities are configured in literary representation. In focusing on the specifically temporal dimension of citizenship in literature, I do not propose a new form of political belonging called "temporal citizenship"—such a phrase is redundant. Every practice of citizenship requires time, and political subjects have encountered "myriad ways in which their time is structured, valued, and appropriated" (Cohen 1). Time's political value is reflected in numerous political procedures, such as age restrictions on voting, the duration of prison sentences, the conditions of naturalization, the designated length of stay for work visas, the office terms for politicians and so on.[1] However, if time occupies such an essential role in the functioning of the state or the practice of citizenship, then a trusting relationship be-

1 For more on how some of these procedures interact with and complicate citizenship as a concept and status, see: Anah-Jayne Samuelson's "'We had to control the narrative': The Innovations and Limitations of Youth Citizenship"; Kaitlyn Quinn and Erika Canossini's "'Clean Body, Clean Mind, Clean Job': The Role of Penal Voluntary Sector Organizations in Constructing 'Good' Carceral Citizens"; and Nasra Smith's "'Present Absentees, Weak-Kneed Nobodies': Exile, Airport, and Non-Citizenship in Abdourahman Waberi's *Transit*," in this volume.

tween state and citizen becomes dependent on the state's capacity to justly regulate and keep time. As Elizabeth Cohen notes, the "clocks of an affluent and poor person will operate identically but the way in which either person must 'spend' their time is a product of social class and circumstances that are not themselves often figured into temporal rules" (15). A carceral system that, for example, "misappropriates the time of entire classes of people delegitimizes a democratic state" (5). The mismanagement of time or the failure of equitable time-provisioning can sow mistrust and skepticism among a citizenry. The assumption that time, specifically durational time, is a great equalizer—insofar as we all hold equal quantities of time, unlike money—misses how time is valued, compensated, and delineated as a political good. On the other end of things, temporal deviancy among groups or individual persons may factor into either their exclusion from a community of citizens or coerced assimilation into a dominate temporal culture. Even though experiences of time can vary considerably, the danger that temporal variability among persons can pose to "institutional authority and moral law" may motivate this variability being "projected onto exilic figures who are forced to bear the burden of temporal instability through physical segregation and mortification" (Barrows 13). Durational time's seeming neutrality makes it an idyllic standard by which to legitimate authority over people's lives, and those who misalign with prevailing methods of time management may be deemed a threat to national cohesion or community safety. Time is "crucial to the formation and maintenance of communal and national identities," most evidently seen in how particular "historical narratives of origins and futures" configure nationhood (McCrossen 221), but also evinced in the expectations surrounding who constitutes a citizen and how those citizens should spend their time (i.e.: singing a national anthem, pilgriming to sites of national significance, adhering to moments of silence, etc.). Additionally, anxiety over time discipline has arguably solidified in the hyper-capitalist world of hourly wage work and ever shorter durations in delivery-based consumerism (see, for example, the notion of time theft,[2] something I was accused of while working a former customer service job), which have in turn robbed people of the time to participate in basic political activities, such as voting.[3]

2 Henle, Reeve, and Pitts (2010) define time theft as the "time that employees waste or spend not working during their scheduled work hours," which they suggest constitutes unethical behaviour because "they are intentionally stealing time rightfully belonging to their company" (53). This definition is explicit in framing time itself as something owned by ("belonging to") an employer, a pernicious aspect of contemporary ideologies of work that harkens to time-discipline standards inured by industrialization.

3 In addition to the economic toil, certain countries like the United States have also used state power to intentionally shorten the amount of time some persons have to vote, compounding the problem further. For example, in the aftermath of President Joe Biden's election victory in 2020, Republicans in multiple states proposed stricter voting laws aimed at disenfranchising Black voters (though they defend the laws as a matter of "election integrity"). These

Citizenship as a normative assessment is a type of temporal valuation, not exclusively a marker of geographic belonging, and this condition endures despite the multiple ways citizenship's definition has been negotiated over the last two decades by scholars who can no longer ignore the presence of citizenship in their own disciplines or who find citizenship a resourceful critical well. As such, I seek to emphasize significations already latent within citizenship's function and experience. Subverting traditional views of citizenship as an emancipatory status, I offer a new intervention that reads citizenship as a neo-imperialist and neo-capitalist cudgel by focusing on Kincaid's depiction of time in Antigua, where the combination of domestic politics and a voracious global market are compounded to configure an Antiguan citizenship constituted by exploitative labour practices and public corruption (embodied in the unrepaired library, for example). Far from this being a bespoke condition of Antigua, Kincaid offers a mirror to citizenship regimes in ostensibly liberal democracies where similarly exploitive and corruptive practices rob persons of the political value of their time.

My methodology for this approach derives from the so-called "spatial turn." The spatial turn in literary, cultural, and postcolonial studies has resulted in a resourceful critical debate regarding the extensive meshwork shared between literature and spatiality. Multiple scholars have shown that landscapes and architectures are readable cultural mediums not only represented in literature but also constituted *by* literature.[4] The production of space involves the texts, images, and motions that imbue these geographies with significance or remind us of the "rhythmic density" of time and space against the backdrop of global systems of management. Architecture, for example, embodies narrative content through the way structures occupy and organize time and space, such that a "discernable shift in the form and structure of language are reflected in both literary and architectural production" (Charley 3). As such, changes in the representation of political and racial belonging effect the production of spaces for preferred identities to occupy. Lucienne Loh, for example,

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new laws would "limit mail, early in-person and Election Day voting with such constraints as stricter ID requirements, limited hours or narrower eligibility to vote absentee" (Gardner, Rabinowitz, and Stevens). For more on how the relationship between voting and citizenship is conceptualized and complicated, see Julia Velten and Nina Heydt's chapters ("Paragon of Aging, Paragon of Voting: Centenarians and the Imaginary of a Model Citizen" and "Between Imprisonment and Citizenship: Jessica Kent's Navigation of Carceral Citizenship") in this volume.

4 Important texts for the inauguration of a spatial turn include Raymond Williams *The Country and the City* (1973) and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) as well as *Culture and Imperialism* (1991); other selected texts include the essay anthology *Landscape and Power* (1994), edited by W. J. T. Mitchell, and David Harvey's *Spaces of Hope* (2000); more contemporary analysis can be found in *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies* (2011), edited by Robert Tally Jr., and Lucienne Loh's *The Postcolonial Country in Contemporary Literature* (2013).

has shown how Britain in the 1980s, in response to defensive attitudes regarding the collapse of empire, instrumentalized their heritage industry to revive English nationalism by framing the rural countryside as a racially coded space, naturalizing "Englishness around the discourse of whiteness" (10). George Lipsitz has similarly noted that the "lived experience of race has a spatial dimension, and the lived experience of space has a racial dimension" exemplified by the segregationist housing policies and lending discriminations in the United States (12). The result has been a "national spatial imaginary" bifurcated by race (Lipsitz 10).

The spatial turn, however, has tended to emphasize discourses of landscape and place while overlooking the role of time in the exercise of state power or the experience of temporality in underwriting forms of political belonging. Edward Said, for example, in *Culture and Imperialism* argues that:

> To think about distant places, to colonize them, to populate or depopulate them: all of this occurs on, about, or because of land. The actual geographical possession of land is what empire in the final analysis is all about. […] Imperialism and the culture associated with it affirm both the primacy of geography and an ideology about control of territory. (78)

Time measurement and regulation are implicit parts of both imperial conquest of physical land and coerced assimilation of populations into particular labour regimes, such as factory or (in the case of Antigua) plantation work, particularly in the nineteenth century when advancements in the technology for timekeeping coincided with the peak of industrialization. But an analysis of time as a "tool and a channel for the incorporation of human subjects within the colonisers' master narrative" is missing from Said's examination of geography and its projections (Nanni 4).

This essay aspires to be a corrective to this imbalance by focusing on a work of contemporary non-fiction where time configures the relationship between locality and globality in politically significant ways, and in doing so seeks to think through time as a variable that has and will continue to inflect citizenship. While often imagined as geographic markers, I will instead emphasize locality and globality as temporal distinctions, most evidently seen in the international measurement of standard time versus the local particularity of time. Temporal variability emerges not simply from personal experience but also in popular historiography, often seen in neo-imperial assessments of countries as "behind the times," which mark these locations as strange, asynchronous regions. We must also recognize scholarship's complicity in these neo-imperialist imaginings of non-European persons as deficient in timekeeping or time-discipline. Johannes Fabian, for example, has detailed how the origins of anthropology as a discipline are couched in depictions of non-European societies as asynchronous or allochronic with European societies. The "al-

lochronic relegation of the Other," as Matti Bunzl in the preface to Fabian's *Time and the Other* puts it (xxv), underwrote European claims to modernity alongside portrayals of Indigenous societies as pre-modern. Popular imaginings of history continue to evince notions of linear progress that find resonances with early anthropological and ethnographic depictions of non-Europeans, most evidently seen in the distinction of first, second, and third worlds. The perniciousness of these categories derives precisely from Western claims that supposedly second or third worlds are asynchronous with the first, insofar as the former have not achieved a level of development already reached by the latter—in the context of anthropological study, Fabian terms this phenomenon a "denial of coevalness." Scholars from other disciplines, and this includes literary studies, are certainly not immune from treating their subjects in similarly asynchronous or allochronic ways.

1.

L. P. Hartley's 1953 novel *The Go-Between* opens with an aphoristic observation about time: "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there" (9). Hartley, in likening time to a foreign country, has perhaps committed an error in analogizing the past to a cartographic projection. "Time cannot be mapped," Barrows remarks in reference to Henri Bergson, who suggests, far less pointedly, a problem with the way we represent "time by space and a succession by a simultaneity" (180). This problem of projecting time into space, according to Bergson, involves confusing the "value of a description" for a symbol and to ascribe "inertness" to something that is fundamentally "a *progress*" (181). Of course, as Barrows goes onto mention, the ostensible disjuncture between space and time has not stopped writers like Marcel Proust from interrogating the relationship between them, and certainly our ways of speaking, thinking, and writing about space and time involves some conceptual interchange. In some respects, time is just too expansive and tenuous a concept to convey in any way *other* than by concretizing it through cartographic projection or metaphors of spatiality, and certainly an analysis of imperialism will involve examining the spatialization of time for the purposes of domination. However, the risk of overcorrection where time and space are compounded threatens to erase, as Barrows explains, "the kinds of political and cultural connotations that adhere differently to time than to space, as well as potentially ignoring the ways in which time and space have been uncomfortably wed in particular ways in the histories of scientific development, economic imperialism, and globalization" (3).

Analysis is thus required to address the implications of discrepancies between time and space, such as those present in Kincaid's work. The phrase "Antigua is a small place" can easily be read cartographically (56). After all, Antigua on a map certainly seems small relative to the ocean that surrounds it, or the countries in its

geographical proximity. Yet Kincaid also configures the notion of smallness around conditions of temporality. "In a small place," Kincaid writes, "people cultivate small events" which are "isolated, blown up, turned over and over, and then absorbed into the everyday"; for "the people in a small place, every event is a domestic event; the people in a small place cannot see themselves in a larger picture, they cannot see that they might be part of a chain of something, anything" (53). The eventfulness of experience for people from a small place is fed through the prism of locality, which dislodges self-perception from grander mechanisms of history or globalization and transforms future events into burdensome enterprises which are eventually dissolved into the quotidian, and then "the process begins again" (53). The local or domestic is not precisely equivalent to a small geographic place, as intuitive as that conflation might be. Popular configurations of the local and global will read the country village or parish town as paradigmatically local, while the large metropolitan centre is aligned with or analogical to the global, fostering a rather clear visual separation between these two realms. Such a distinction will not quite work for reading Kincaid. The localness of the small place is not exclusively embedded in the relationship between the metropolitan centre and village that defines the relationship between the urban and rural or between Great Britain and her colonies, because an operative condition of locality cannot be geographically mapped. It is partially embedded in the amorphous relationship people of a small place have with time. In *A Small Place*, the depiction of Antigua as exposed to the hegemonic forces of globalization appears alongside a description of local Antiguans who have not entirely assimilated to a global culture of time rooted in punctuality, productivity, and a selective historical amnesia. Even though Kincaid appears to critique Antiguans for their sense of time, this critique simultaneously outlines a form of collective resistance to an imposed temporality.

Kincaid's emphasis on the temporal invites us to rethink the content of our distinctions between locality and globality that occupies global literary studies, and to identify where such a distinction borrows from imperial imaginings of the planet as sequestered into mappable time zones. This rethinking is critical if we are going to overcome insufficient readings of *A Small Place* that have dismissed the text as a "sniveling attack on the sins of the nasty—and long departed—colonial power," as one early reviewer put it (Maja-Pearce 40). These sorts of critiques read Kincaid narrowly as a disgruntled victim of history and geography, and whose resulting narrator is thus always to be positioned as the periphery biting back against the centre. These reviewers have scrutinized *A Small Place* with a restricted, geographical and historical vision of colonial margins, and that Antigua's or Kincaid's peripheral location accounts for the work's tone and target. Maria Boletsi, for example, reads the work as part of an "ongoing process […] to create one's own place in the world not *despite*, but *through* and with *boundaries*" (232), in turn suggesting that the narrator is "too angry to celebrate mobility and the alleged liberating potential of the dissolution of

boundaries within our cosmopolitan world" (234). Such an assessment emphasizes the presence of the geographically or historically peripheral, and frames Kincaid as stuck in a discourse of postcolonialism that she cannot acknowledge the liberating effects of globalization. Morten Hansen, in response to these critiques, suggests that the cold critical response to *A Small Place* "should alert us to the fact that Kincaid's text was not simply an angry screed from the global periphery towards the center," arguing instead that the text's "multidirectionality allows us to glimpse the contours of a unified global space as they are refracted through a small place like Antigua" (32), emphasizing how multiple corruptive and exploitative currents have passed through the country in a way that captures the totalizing influence of the global economy.

Other relatively positive critiques of Kincaid have similarly stressed the spatial or geographical as the prism through which to assess her work. Suzanne Gauch, for example, suggests that Kincaid "reveals Antigua as a *place*—no matter how small—in its own right," reframing the country from one "perceived as an extension of English and American space into a place that is occupied, lived, and dwelt in" (910). Part of this approach may derive from postcolonialism itself which, as Jenny Sharpe elaborates, sometimes seeks to "reconstitute the margins in the metropolitan center" so as to invert them and in turn displace the "center/periphery binarism belonging to colonial systems of meaning" (185). Under such a reading, Antigua is not necessarily portrayed as peripheral—not least because Kincaid has made the country the centre of her text—because globalization has reframed the sort of imperial nucleuses that defined empire. Countries are instead refractions and flows of capital, although the routes for commerce may still follow those inured under colonial or imperial rule. Kincaid acknowledges this relationship between colonialism and globalization in *A Small Place* with the presence of Japanese automobiles, Syrian and Lebanese financing and land ownership, American hospitals, and British tourists—phenomena that are dependent on, firstly, integrated networks of exchange developed during the transatlantic slave trade and, secondly, a vision of the global world where there are no edges, just areas served or underserved by capital.

By engaging the temporal in the text, we may avoid overemphasizing the notion of spatial peripheries or centres, along with the neo-imperial imaginings of global space that are so easily smuggled into discussions of geographic margins. Part of this is a necessary corrective. As Paul Giles explains, the very idea of exile has shifted from an "epic narrative of the journey involving a difficult quest for knowledge and liberation, [towards] more recent configurations under the rubric of globalization" (365), which involves "narratives of traversal, a two-way process involving reciprocal interactions between different territories" and which in turn puts "the near and the remote into closer proximity" (365, 368). The advent of the Internet has allowed inhabitants to occupy one country while connected to another in a meaningful enough way that "they might in many cases be said to live concurrently in two places at once" (368). While geographically we cannot read this suggestion too literally, temporally

we can meaningfully address how persons in a fiber-optically connected world can spend their time either digitally traversing between two places or occupying both in a mix of physical and digital ways—not enough to upend established citizenship regimes, but enough that we require frameworks for comprehending new forms of hybridity. As Giles continues, postcolonial "conditions in the twenty-first century" have complicated "the spatial and temporal mapping which formerly preserved colonial and postcolonial zones as discretely bounded geographic zones and academic territories" (368).

There is an additional reason for addressing *A Small Place* on a temporal plain that concerns the second-person point of view that defines Kincaid's narrative technique. The accusatory tonality of the narrator's address to the reader has quite universally been assessed as a "short and angry account" (Boletsi 231). While anger or rage are palpable features of the narrator's tenor, Kincaid is also fashioning an audience with recurrent references to "you," which is not exclusively a geographical positioning but a compounding of the temporal proximity between the narrator and reader, and between the past and present. As opposed to the anthropologist's "denial of coevalness" as elaborated by Fabian, Kincaid positions the narrator and reader in a synchronous relationship. The narrator accomplishes this by interpolating the reader as an English tourist in the midst of their vacation in Antigua, detailing their quotidian tasks, such as taking a taxi or using the washroom, and putting these tasks in the context of corruption, wealth inequality, and the transatlantic slave trade:

> You must not wonder what happened when you brushed your teeth. Oh, it might all end up in the water you are thinking of taking a swim in; the contents of your lavatory might, just might, graze gently against your ankle as you wade carefree in the water, for you see, in Antigua there is no proper sewage-disposal system. But the Caribbean Sea is very big and the Atlantic Ocean even bigger; it would amaze even you to know the number of black slaves this ocean has swallowed up. (13–14)

The seamless transition between contemporary tourist activity and the historical grand systems of racial exploitation collapses the temporal distance between these events, implying a continuity between the naïve English tourist and the purveyors of the transatlantic slave trade. The totalizing structure of the global economy in which both tourist and Antiguan participate (as well as its continuity with historical world systems like slavery) are obfuscated by colonial histographies that fracture the past into convenient, enclosed epochs discontinuous with the lives and actions of the contemporary. Kincaid's interpolation restores continuity, which in turn dissolves the crude linearity of Western history and situates the narrator and reader in an expanded temporal relationship that is synchronous with the global economy that underwrites the situation in Antigua and from which the text of *A Small Place* emerges.

2.

Bergson's suggestion that time cannot be mapped could perhaps be dismissed as unnecessarily restrictive when it comes to our everyday uses of the term, when the physics of time's function arguably do not matter. In the context of Kincaid, though, Bergson's critique of conflating time and space is also an invitation to work in the opposite direction of Hartley's grounding of the past in the cartographic imaginary towards an understanding of foreignness and belonging embedded in the chronometric—an approach that acknowledges the points where time and space cannot be compounded but must be analyzed as separate phenomenon with separate implications for the twenty-first-century citizen. While traditional political boundaries like nations or cities continue to bear heavily on how we think of community and affiliation, we have also been drawn into temporal neighbourhoods that impress on daily life just as strongly as state borders, such as time zones. The lines that distinguish time zones are imaginary and imperfect, along with the international date line or Greenwich Mean Time that cleave the planet into temporal halves.[5] The notion of a uniform fissure between today and yesterday is itself an enduring fiction upon which global networks of finance, labour, and travel depend, along with the seven-day week, "a ritual which silently affirms and reactualises the underlying master narrative of Judeo-Christian mythology […] whilst synchronising the rhythms of capital and labour (Nanni 6).[6] Prior to the late-nineteenth-century, however, time was a local issue like many other forms of measurement practice, such as for distance or weight. Time was a regional particularity invested in local ritual and not necessarily a value of chief concern for the state or nation. It is no coincidence that more modern versions of citizenship bounded to a national context were developed and hardened with the advent of technologies that could track and manage time to previously impossible levels of exactness. The accuracy of clocks and their symbolic expression of scientific rationality made them instruments for the exercise of state power, "for punctuality effectively embodies the site of authority that ensures a collective sense of social regularity and wellbeing" (Nanni 6). "Anthropologists, political theorists, and historians," Alexis McCrossen notes, "have made it clear that assertions of state-centered power often take the form of time-reckoning technologies" and that clocks in particular, such as those elevated in towers high over public spaces, were "instruments through which the state laid claims to ownership of time" (221).

5 Dan Thu Nguyen refers to GMT as a "mathematical fiction which signals the collapse of the human experience of space and time into a mathematical formula of space-time" (33).

6 Nanni explains how the ordering of days into groups of seven, "a ritual that was unique to Europeans in the colonies," constitutes one of the key temporal practices preached by Christian missionaries in their traversal of the British Empire (7).

As such, the capacity and authority to track time has likewise involved exercises of institutional power over time's provisioning in a national context.

On a more global scale, marks of imperialism are evident in the imposition of a world standard for time that configured global space into time zones, which had its meridian conveniently intersecting a European metropolitan centre and which positioned its anti-meridian in the Pacific Ocean—indeed Nanni labels the introduction of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) "temporal imperialism" and "one of the most significant manifestations of Europe's universalising will" (2). Though local struggles also defined shifts in cultures of time, the official deployment of GMT in 1884 at the height of the colonial era is not mere coincidence. Regions already represented as geographically distant could be exoticized as temporally distant, and local rhythmic practices were replaced with standardized time-discipline that aligned with increased emphasis on the Christian calendar and labour productivity. Time zones were an essential imaginative framework for imperial cultures to justify their dominance over other regions. Sandford Fleming, for example, proponent of standard time, saw time regulation as a means of transcending race and "petty regionalisms" (Barrows 34), which resulted in Indigenous forms of timekeeping being erased by imperial projects for global time.

Fleming's attack on "regionalisms" was an unapologetic admonishment of locality as an obstacle to industrial and imperial projects. His work as a Canadian railroader who "took to massive projects with an eye scaled to empire" clearly suggests his promotion of a global unification of time went hand-in-hand with the physical conquest of land embodied in the large national projects he promoted (Galison 116), such as a Canadian transcontinental railroad.[7] Though his engineering work was centred on Canada, his concerns were sensitive to the interests of a British nation in search of new methods for controlling the extent of its empire. As Nanni elaborates, "there is little doubt that the globally interconnected society to which colonialism gave rise by the end of the nineteenth century necessitated a common discourse of time – a temporal *lingua franca*" (1). More intuitive methods of determining time invested in the visual recognition of the sun's position were replaced with convoluted methods of measurement that made time—seemingly one of the most intimately known variables—a specialized knowledge practice regulated by the educated and political elite. The positioning of standard time as a "cosmopolitan 'placeless' toll of scientific rationality" cast the local practices of time measurement and management as outmoded, unreliable, and barbarous (Barrows 35). While attentiveness to time was practiced in different ways, "it was partly by *imagining* itself as a time-conscious civilization in opposition to a time-less Other, that Western Europe staked its claim

7 Fleming is present in the famous photograph "The Last Spike," which captures the symbolic completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway linking the east and west coast of the country—by extension an important event in the history of Canada as a single, unified nation.

to universal definition of time, regularity, order" (Nanni 3). Over time, the "temporal measures devised by human beings above and beyond 'natural' cycles'" have been taken as "not only our natural experience of time, but more the ethical measure of our very existence" (Nguyen 29).

Despite Fleming's envisioning of standard time as exceeding local disputes—and instead of outright eliminating what he saw as relics of local placeness—the imposition of global time also contributed to resistances to globalization that have sought to re-emphasize the particularities of regional existence against the overbearing presence of a planetary or cosmic time. Kincaid in *A Small Place* depicts local Antiguans whose time-consciousness displaces the imposition of global time and a Westernized historical practice. In the opening section where the reader is positioned as a white English tourist, the narrator ostensibly paraphrases from an unnamed economic history book (conveyed into the country by the tourist) that says Western wealth derived from the "invention of the wristwatch […] for there was nothing noble-minded men could not do when they discovered they could slap time on their wrists just like that" (10). The presence of physical timepieces in the personal possession of Europeans underwrote their self-perception as purveyors of a universal standard for time and productivity. In referencing the English specifically, Kincaid acknowledges the fervent capitalist mindset of the English gentlemen seeking to convert whatever they can into a commodity, which in this case involves turning time into money. The presence of timepieces returns later in the work: "The Swiss are famous for their banking system and for making superior timepieces. Switzerland is a neutral country, money is a neutral commodity, and time is neutral too, being neither here nor there, one thing or another" (60). Here again the salient connection is not so much time and space, but time and money, which Kincaid's stereotyping of the Swiss as neutral are imminently skilled at acquiring. The ephemerality of time, however, (it is "neither here nor there") contrasts with European obsessions with courting and counting it.

European timepieces and their representation of scientific objectivity and wealth through the exploitation of other people's time is also contrasted with the "strange, unusual perception of time" among the Antiguans (9), or so the English tourist must be thinking. How else will they explain the sign on the library building destroyed by The Earthquake that announces pending repairs—a sign that has been there since 1974? The Earthquake stands as both a tectonic event and a temporal fissure from which the "old" library emerges. The library itself is a concrete artifact of English occupation, "one of those splendid old buildings from colonial times" (9). Much like the English tourists themselves, their enduring presence in Antigua marks out legacies of previous epochs that are still felt as present or overlapping, or which emerge in how Antiguans spend their time catering to white wealthy travellers. In turn, a distinction between past and present is largely evacuated of significance and cast as ineffectual temporal markers that cannot account for the

endurance of exploitative practices like slavery or colonialism, or capture their presence in contemporary globalization. Hansen notes, for example, the impact of the International Monetary Fund, an arguably neo-imperialist organization insofar as "[l]ike England centuries earlier, the agencies in charge of managing the global flows of capital attempt to remake the small places of the world in their own image, from the kinds of trees planted in botanical gardens to the arrangement of the local economies" (39). The subsequent regulations imposed by organizations like the IMF extends to the standardization of time and coerces Antigua to assimilate to global standards for borrowing and spending, and which also leads to the physical reconstruction of the island to appeal to monied tourists.

As Kincaid writes, however, the imposition of a global standard for time has not been as successful in displacing Antiguans from cultivating their own sense of temporality. In a "world that is twelve miles long and nine miles wide (the size of Antigua) twelve years and twelve minutes and twelve days are all the same" (9). Durations are compounded; linearity between past, present, and future are dislodged. Indeed, because "people in a small place cannot give an exact account, a complete account, of themselves" they also cannot give the "hour in the day" or "the day of the year some ships set sail" (53). There is little interest in punctuality, because such an interest would

> demand the invention of a silence, inside of which these things could be done. It would demand a reconsideration, an adjustment, in the way they understand the existence of Time. To the people in a small place, the division of Time into the past, the Present, and the Future does not exist. An event that occurred one hundred years ago might be as vivid to them as if it were happening at this very moment. (53–54)

On the one hand, the proximity between the past, present, and future can collapse entirely and make an event that is technically beyond direct memory endure as an unrivalled intimacy. On the other hand, Kincaid describes how Antiguans have failed to internalize the rhythm of an imposed temporal arrangement and are in turn incapable of fulfilling the level of punctuality that underwrites the global economy. However, rather than this being a harsh critique of Antiguan's sense of time, Hansen suggests that Kincaid in this passage outlines how an "exact account" is not just difficult, "it would be impossible" (41). On display in Kincaid's distinguishing of the local Antiguan perception of time is the recognition of how claims to universality and objectivity in time-reckoning—embodied in Greenwich Mean Time and Western horology—are hubristic. Such precision is aspirational, and to think otherwise is to merely pretend to an authority and exactitude over temporality that is not actually possible in practice. Kincaid thus implies a disjuncture between the experience of time, which is often amorphous and disjointed, and the numerically precise

representation of time in Swiss watchmaking or in the wristwatch worn by the Englishman, which, no matter how innovative, cannot achieve the promise of perfect time-reckoning.

Moreover, Kincaid's critique of Antiguan time practices must be read in light of her description of the white tourist, whose journey to the country is predicted on a boring, miserable existence inured by an inescapable ideology of work that prioritizes punctuality and productivity:

> From day to day as you walk down a busy street in the large and modern and prosperous city in which you live, dismayed, puzzled (a cliché, but only a cliché can explain you) at how alone you feel in this crowd, how awful it is go unnoticed, how awful it is to go unloved… (15)

This experience leads you, the tourist, to spend time and money vacationing in a country with unrivalled beauty but which is populated by people who hate you:

> Still, you feel a little foolish. Still, you feel a little out of place. But the banality of your own life is very real to you; it drove you to this extreme, spending your days and your nights in the company of people who despise you, people you do not like really, people you would not want to have as your actual neighbour. (17–18)

The culture of time that the British have imposed upon the world is implicated in the "ugly, empty thing" that the white tourist becomes in travelling to Antigua. The harsh levels of time-discipline that underwrite global finance rob life of meaning and lead the tourist to travel elsewhere in order to forget their troubles, something "every native" would similarly like to do, namely to rest, to take a tour, to go anywhere (18). The relationship between the native Antiguan and tourist is thus configured by a global time culture that undervalues the time of the Antiguan and locks them in cycles of low wage work while coercing white tourists into peddling their time for money, which they then can spend on Caribbean vacations as a means of forgetting their miserable existences back home.

As such, Kincaid is not merely offering a reductive portrayal of the English but offering an incisive depiction of global capitalism since the advent of industrialization and its dependence on time measurement and regulation. As Dan Thu Nguyen explains:

> the successful mobilization of labour within the factor system was achieved by a simultaneous imposition on and acceptance by workers of a new understanding of the nature of work as time and money, within the context of a temporal regime based on the universalization and standardization of metric time. (34)

The interests of factory owners paired well with a burgeoning international community looking to impose a globally recognized yardstick for counting time, which helped to redefine the notion of work itself. Workers were expected to surrender their own organic or intimate rhythm in favour of the imposed cadence and regularity of the workspace:

> The factory clock of modern industrial capitalism, owned and controlled by private interests, rested on and brought forth a radically new understanding of the nature of the working day as well as that of the day itself. This is to say that the working day (=*labourtime*) now belongs to the capitalist as fully and undeniably as do the warehouses and machines (=*labourspace*). (35)

The transformation of time itself into a countable variable with an equivalent monetary value arrested the capacity of workers to function as custodians of their own time in exchange for wages. Time when conflated with currency "is not passed but spent" (Thompson 61).

3.

Critics who dismiss colonialism as a "long departed" past risk misunderstanding Kincaid when she writes that the "Antigua that I knew, the Antigua in which I grew up, is not the Antigua you, a tourist, would see now" (24). While that Antigua "no longer exists" because of the "passing of time, and partly because the bad-minded people who used to rule over it, the English, no longer do so" (24), legacies of exploitation fostered under the old Antigua have relocated under the guise of the contemporary citizenship regime, in which the shine of liberal democracy obscures governmental mismanagement and clandestine networks of financing. We can respond to critics with Kincaid's own words: such temporal distinctions of past, present, and future upon which the critic depends—and which conveniently protect descendants of colonizers by implying an expiry date on legacies of colonization—are redundant and narrow methods of regulating and managing time. Locally derived forms of time-reckoning capture the presence of past events without succumbing to Westernized configurations of history or the sense of durational time that runs networks of travel, finance, and labour. Giles suggests that it is "the memory of this circumscribed colonial condition" in Antigua that lends Kincaid's work "its peculiar iconoclastic resonance" (371)—which includes a temporal iconoclasm, I might add. We receive in turn a configuration of Antiguan citizenship grounded in temporal practices distinguishable from other citizenship regimes evinced by the white tourist, which, crucially, Kincaid does not appraise as a superior form of time-reckoning. Instead, Kincaid notes how this opposition between practices of time-reckoning re-

verberates into the configuration of and the movement across space. Early on in *A Small Place* the reader is conveyed into Antigua via the narrator's explicit puppeteering:

> You disembark from your plane. You go through customs. Since you are a tourist, a North American or European—to be frank, white—and not an Antiguan black returning to Antigua from Europe or North America with cardboard boxes of much needed cheap clothes and food for relatives, you move through customs swiftly, you move through customs with ease. Your bags are not searched. (4–5)

While white tourists have their passage into Antigua eased, Black Antiguan citizens have their return slowed—in other words, the tourist's time is expressly valued more than the citizen's.

For the white portion of Kincaid's audience, this circumstance will seem contradictory. Citizenship is ostensibly supposed to guarantee free (or at minimum smoothed) entry and exit from the home country. But that view belies the way citizenship functions as, firstly, documentary surveillance and, secondly, as an instrument for regulating the provisioning of time—a function disproportionality imposed upon racialized and Indigenous persons. This regulation and provisioning displays inheritances from colonial rule when time was a tool for "conscripting human subjects within the matrix of the capitalist economy" through a process of "cultural curfews" and "collective reorientation in the understanding of what constituted the permissible time for each and every activity, even including movement across the land" (Nanni 4). Citizenship regimes in Europe and North America continue to maintain this prerogative of undervaluing the time of racialized persons by slowing their movement across physical space, and not just at airports or ports of entry but in public places generally. The white tourist's eased movement into Antigua directly confronts the undervalued time of the Antiguan citizen when the tourist takes a taxi driven by a local. Time and money come to define the experience: confusion over which currency the driver is to be paid in transforms into a concern over his "reckless" driving as he attempts to hurriedly deliver the tourist to their hotel and presumably acquire another fare (5).

What we receive in this intimate encounter are the fruits of an unjust system of time management that overvalues the political and economic time of the white tourist relative to the Antiguan. Far from being an emancipatory condition, citizenship does not protect the local Antiguan from exploitive practices inured by the global economy but functions as a tool for regulating and managing their time.

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