

# Temporal Dissonance in Historical Fiction: Writing Against Linear Time in Postcolonial Narratives

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## Abstract

Postcolonial historical fiction de-stabilizes the conventional notion of time as linear and sequentially unfolding continuum. This essay examines the means through which postcolonial writers deploy temporal dissonance—narrative fragmentation, cyclical temporality, and mythic or ancestral time—to subvert colonial historiography and its telos-oriented perception of modernity. Through reading of selected texts by authors such as Salman Rushdie, Toni Morrison, and Gabriel García Márquez, the study explores the functioning of disrupted chronologies as political and aesthetic practices. Temporal dissonance in this practice is a method for reimagining history from the margins—disrupting the colonial archive and reinscribing indigenous, spiritual, and communal temporalities that imperial modernity repressed. Through close reading of narrative technique, the paper argues that postcolonial historical fiction re-configures time as a background neutral to a location of contested meaning in which past and present may co-exist in dialogue rather than hierarchy. Through so doing, it suggests a plural temporality which is truer to the fractured, layered experience of postcolonial histories and identities.

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## 1. Introduction

### A. Background: Dominance Of Linear Time in Western Historiography and Literature.

Western literary cultures and historiography that developed around it have traditionally been structured around a vision of time as sequential, teleological, and progressive. From Enlightenment historicist chronology and nineteenth-century professionalization of historians to realist fiction's chronologies, temporal ordering has been an epistemic practice: events are graphed on one axis from past to present to determinate future, and causal explanations—of decline, development, revolution, or progress—organize meaning. Institutions like the museum, the archive, and the national chronicle flesh out this model by treating shards of the past as data points to be drawn together into a narrative line. Literary genres iterate and normalize these assumptions in Bildungsroman, family sagas, and nationalist historical romances that project individual and group coming-of-age onto an approved timeline. Under such mental ecology, "time" is no longer a mental backdrop; it becomes the terrain on and from which value (modern/primitive, civilized/backward, developed/underdeveloped) is assigned and histories are legitimized or delegitimized.

### B. Problem: How Linear Narrative Perpetuates Colonial Thought by Prioritizing Progress, Modernity, And Western Temporality.

The linear-temporal model is political, rather than descriptively neutral. By conceptualizing history as linear evolution toward modernity, colonial and imperial rhetorics can then position European experience as universal telos and place colonized populations as lagging, stagnant, or stunted upon the same axis. This temporal othering is the ground for most empire justificatory rhetorics—civilizing missions, developmentalist policy, and improvement pedagogies all assume a common timeline upon which some societies get left behind. The archive and the institutional labour it perform are complicit in this erasure through prioritizing textual, documentary forms that accommodate teleological narratives at the expense of oral traditions, ritual time, cyclical calendars of agrarian cycles,

and other forms of temporal knowledge. This results in our double dispossession: from land and resources, and from temporal self-determination. When histories are telescoped into prefaces alone to a colonizer's own contemporary moment, local life's plural temporalities—assemblages of memory, myth, and ritual—become illegible or pathological. Linear narratives, in this manner, serve as mechanisms of epistemic control that naturalize differential relations of power and render colonial temporality as universal history.

### ***C. Postcolonial Historical Fiction Uses Temporal Dissonance as Narrative Strategy and Decolonial Intervention, Remapping the Field of History, Memory, And Identity.***

This essay contends that, as a reaction to the temporal violence of colonial historiography, postcolonial historical fiction consciously reverses linearity and performs what I term "temporal dissonance": the intentional co-embodiment, collision, or looping of multiple temporalities into one narrative horizon. With methods like anachronism, broken chronology, mythic or cyclical temporality, ghostly haunting, and the prioritizing of oral reminiscence over archive facticity, authors disrupt the teleological rationality that sustains colonial legitimacy. These formal decisions are not so much visual experiments; they perform a politics of time that resurrect silenced histories, revalued indigenous and subaltern temporalities, and produces narrative space where past and present intersect instead of in a master-servant relationship. Methodologically, the book will provide close readings of model texts in an attempt to demonstrate how temporal dissonance does critical work—complicating collective identity, speaking about trauma, and imagining other futures—replotting historical knowledge as multiple, disputable, and ethically entangled rather than singular and necessary.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### ***A. Time And Narrative: Ricoeur, Bakhtin, And Genette***

Philosophy and narratology come together in the thought of Paul Ricoeur, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Gérard Genette, providing complementary critical tools for thinking through the manner in which narrative structures human experience of time — tools that prove invaluable when working with postcolonial fiction. Ricoeur remakes narrative as the mediating practice of converting bare continuity of events into sense-making temporal forms: his threefold mimesis schema of prefiguration, employment or configuration, and refiguration reminds us that plots don't just record time but help create temporal meaning and identity. Employment in Ricoeur's theory is not only creative but also normative: it unifies scattered events into a narrative sequence that retrospectively assigns meaning and moral judgment, and through it forms collective memory and the narrative identity of nations and peoples. Bakhtin expands on this by asserting that time in the novel is never abstract or homogeneous but always accompanied by space in specific chronotypes — shared time-space combinations like the road, market, or family that delimit how events and social relationships are arranged.

The chronotype places in relief the historically distinct rhythms and horizons of possibility belonging to any specific narrative mode and allows for the observation of how colonial and precolonial temporalities may coexist in collision or conjunction within a single fictional universe. Gérard Genette, last but not least, provides an accurate technical terminology (order, duration, frequency, voice, and mood) in order to examine the formal procedures by which narratives reconstruct story-time: analepses and prolepses, summary and scene, repeated events — they are all instruments by which writers can contract, delay, or repeat time. Together, Ricoeur's philosophical foregrounding of employment and identity, Bakhtin's chronotropic historicity, and Genette's formal taxonomy allow a multi-layered reading: we can show how a postcolonial novel's plot (Ricoeur) creates a specific time-space vision (Bakhtin) through specific narratological gestures (Genette), and thereby reproduce or subvert hegemonic teleology's of history.

### ***B. Postcolonial Theory and Temporality: Bhabha, Chakrabarty, And Ngugi Wa Thiong'o***

Postcolonial theory rediscovers temporality as a site of struggle upon which colonial power inscribes itself, and theorists like Homi Bhabha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o offer theoretical means of reading off such struggle. Interventions by Bhabha draw attention to colonial modernity's ambivalences: by ideas of mimicry, hybridity, and so-called "time-lag," he uncovers how colonial relations create subjects and histories which must be ahead of metropolitan accounts of development. This lag — the temporal dislocation between epochs of so-called civilized advancement and the lived reality of colonized populations — undercuts any simplistic teleology and produces a "third space" in which strict temporal hierarchies are negotiated and subverted. Dipesh Chakrabarty expounds on this argument at a historiographical level by contending that Europe's universal claims and systems of

periodization regarding modernity need to be "provincialized" so that plural, vernacular temporalities can be recognized. Chakrabarty demonstrates how terms of historiography — like capitalism, revolution, or modernization — do not lie readily across the quotidian historicity of the colonized, in which a number of rhythms (ritual calendars, agrarian cycles, oral memory) sometimes coexist with the clock-time of colonial rule and capitalist transformation. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, writing from the site of language and cultural practice, contends that colonial domination subverted native forms of historicity by valorising writing and metropolitan languages; his call to reassert native languages and modes of oral narration is a call as well to reassert other temporal regimes. Together, these theorists move us away from time as an independent measure and toward time as a technology of domination and resistance; what they provide is a way of viewing how temporal structures of fiction are not simply aesthetic choices but political and ethical incursions into the historiographical order.

### ***C. The Theory of Temporal Dissonance: Definition and Positioning Within Postcolonial Literary Study***

"Temporal dissonance" is the name given to that productive tension which arises when a text intentionally places in collision or co-presence various modes of temporality — teleological historical time, cyclical ritual time, ancestral or mythic time, archival bureaucratic time, and spectral time of trauma — in a form that resists easy chronological synthesis. Unlike simple anachronism or fitful flashback, temporal dissonance is a sustained aesthetic stance: it stages the absence of temporal synch as a kind of critique, refusing to incorporate marginal or repressed temporalities into a master progressive narrative. As a theoretical figure for postcolonial literary analysis, temporal dissonance serves several purposes. Officially, it designates the set of narratological techniques (repeated analepses, overlapping focalization, break in narrative tempo, chronotropic displacement) authors employ to disrupt chronology; theoretically, it anchors those techniques to political labour of decolonization by demonstrating how temporal dispersion discloses the violence of historicist teleology's and opens up space for vernacular or subaltern memory. Methodologically, it resists hybrid methodology: close narratological description (in order to map order, length, and frequency), chronotropic reading (to locate time-space logics), and postcolonial historiographical critique (to read those formal gestures as questions to imperial time). Practically, temporal dissonance enables us to read how novels interpolate the past into the present and the present into the past — how ghost stories, myths, and oral histories insinuate themselves into official chronologies — thus forcing history not to be a linear sequence of authorized facts but a conflictual repository of lived lives and morally charged memory.

## **3. Colonial Constructions of Time**

### ***A. How Colonial Discourse Put Time in Order as Linear, Progressive, and Eurocentric***

Colonialism was not merely a subjugation of space and bodies but also a revolutionary reorganization of time. European imperialism imposed an epistemological order that intersected with time as linear, measurable, and one-way—a sequence of stages humankind was to make its way through. This historical background, filled with Enlightenment philosophy and positivist history, presumed all societies had developed in a similar way and that Europe was the pinnacle. With this *weltanschauung*, history started being understood as a progress towards civilization, progress, and reason. Colonized societies themselves operated outside this temporal frame; they were presumed to be in a pre-modern, primitive phase of human history, waiting for colonial intervention to bring them into the modern present. This Eurocentric temporality was not just descriptive—it was disciplinary and prescriptive. By constructing one, universal timeline, the colonial powers could then rank and compare societies based on how close they were to approximating "modernity." Non-Western societies with cyclical, ritual, or mythic constructions of time were tagged as stagnant or lagging behind. Time itself was made into a marker of civilization. The diffusion of the Gregorian calendar, factory time, and bureaucratic scheduling machines realigned colonized subjects' everyday rhythms according to economic and administrative needs of empire. Autochthonous temporalities—festival time, agricultural time, and oral genealogy—became residual as expressions of pre-historical consciousness. The result was a violent ontology: the colonizer's lived temporality was replaced by the colonial clock, erasing the heterogeneity of temporalities that previously had governed their collective selves.

### ***B. The Discourse of Modernity and Civilization as Temporal Domination***

Colonialism was made possible by a persuasive discourse of temporal domination underpinning the progressivist narrative. The "mission *Civilis trice*" was legitimized as a moral duty to initiate individuals supposedly still in the past into the future, to hurry them along the line of events towards the modern world. European modernity

wasn't one among multiple possibilities within history here—it was man's destiny. This chronology and ethical hierarchy were employed to validate the dominance of one culture over another in the name of goodness. Colonization was thereby posed as a gift of time: it would insert the colonized into history, liberate them from a stage of supposed timelessness.

But this narrative also necessitated a slavery of time. Colonized societies were told that their future was Europe's past, and their present could only be a replica of Europe's future. Violence of empire thus lay not in economic exploitation or political domination but in the appropriation of history. The colonized were denied writing their own temporizations or imagining other futures. The sequence of the contemporary world was a policy of exclusion, dividing humankind into being "in time" with modernity and being "out of time," suspended in anticipation of admission. Through such an ideological device, colonization justified itself: the existence of the colonizer proved that the colonized were not yet modern. Modernity, as universal progress, concealed its own particularism—it was a specifically European moment imposed upon a plural world. This control of time extended deep into the social existence of colonized communities. The timing of industrial labour, the regulation of schooling, and the timing of religious conversion were all means of control of time. The goal of the empire was to discipline the bodies and minds of colonized peoples to the rhythm of capitalism and administration. It did this to the detriment of the polyphonic understanding of time that once structured indigenous existence—where past, present, and future coexisted dynamically through ritual, story, and communal memory. Modernist rhetoric then functioned both as ideology and rhythm—a cadence of power that reshaped humanity into the terms of empire.

### ***C. The Role of History Writing and Archives in Enforcing Temporal Hierarchy***

While colonial discourse ideologically produced time, history and archival practice institutionally reinforced that time hierarchy. The archive was the mechanism through which the empire enumerated, inscribed, and authorized its own past. Documents, maps, treaties, and missionary reports were not innocent repositories of fact; they were tools of power that authorized what counted as historical evidence. By foregrounding the word over the spoken word, the colonial archive broke from entire epistemologies of time based in song, story, performance, and ritual. The consequence was monstrous asymmetry: Europe became the author of history, and the colonized were objects of that history—human beings who might be explained, categorized, and analysed but not as speaking agents speaking for themselves. History writing operated in parallel. Colonial historians mapped events into linear chronologies toward the coming of European "civilization." Pre-colonial history was generally depicted as a time of myth or chaos—a dearth of time—while colonial contact was the imposition of chronology and order. These chronologies would often naturalize the presence of the empire as an historical necessity. Through textbooks, missionary reports, and government documents, children in the colonies were taught to view their own ancestors as a prehistory to be redeemed by colonial pedagogy. The archive, that is, did not simply preserve the past—it created it. Through circumscribing what may be written down and what may not, it created an official cartography of time: written history at the apex, oral and collective memory in subaltern position.

But within this control machinery, there had been silences and cracks. The silences in the colonial record—the unspoken voices, the contradictions in the records—came later to provide fertile ground for postcolonial historians and writers to work on. Those silences are not emptiness's but marks of survival and resistance. Most postcolonial novels of recent years turn back to these archives not in an attempt to recapture some lost authenticity but in an effort to make legible how history itself had been fashioned as an imperial one. By displacing what the archive has repressed—women's speech, subaltern past, indigenous cosmologies—such fiction dismantles the imperial now of colonial time and recovers history as living, plural continuum rather than closed, linear sequence. Colonial understandings of time, thus, were the unwritten underpinning of empire. Ideology, discourse, and the archive practice all served to make the colonizer not merely conquer space but occupy the ground of temporality. To escape that legacy, then, postcolonial writers and intellectuals need to do more than construct a counter-narrative—to re-make time itself, to make explicit the repressed temporalities which colonial modernity sought to erase.

## **4. Narrative Strategies of Temporal Disruption in Postcolonial Fiction**

### ***A. Disjointed Chronology***

Of all the methods by which postcolonial authors undermine colonial myth-production of linear time, perhaps the most dramatic is by actually disjointing chronology. In these books, the action rarely moves along one continuous

trajectory of time; rather, it is disjointed into segments which bend, entwine, or deny one another. This disruption is not merely an exercise in style—far from it, it is a political statement that mirrors fragmented histories of colonized worlds. When Salman Rushdie constructs *Midnight's Children* around a narrator whose memory constantly slides, rethinks, and reorganizes, what one gets is more than narrative one-upmanship. It is a dramatization of the destruction by colonial modernity of coherent national and individual selves, so that time came to seem discontinuous and open to revision. In the same way, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* interlards the awful history of slavery with the haunted present of its survivors, producing a rhythm in which memory and history intersect and wind through each other instead of succeeding each other. This fractured narrative recovers the splintered past of those whose histories were forcibly unravelled, compelling readers to live in a temporality antithetical to closure. The fractured form is also an allegory for postcolonial identity as such—a self-constructed out of shards of suppressed memory and displacement. Therefore, fragmentation is both narrative strategy and decolonial practice: it resists the linearity of movement and demand that memory reclaim what history attempted to erase.

### ***B. Mythic and Cyclical Time***

Another essential temporal resistance strategy is the recuperation of mythic and cyclical time. The majority of postcolonial authors evoke indigenous cosmologies and ancestral traditions in describing a form of time that does not pass or recycle but revolves in circles, controlled by repetition, ritual, and rebirth. In Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the past of Macondo continuously recurs—generations come and go in cycles that annihilate the differentiation between past and future. The spiral temporality of the novel subverts Western modernity's fixations on progress with the proposition that history is spiral instead of line, and destiny and remembrance are intersecting constantly. African and Indigenous literatures also attempt to inscribe mythic temporality into their works by bringing ancestral presence into contemporary life. Myth in these works does not remain in some antiquity in the past; it continues to speak to what is alive now. Such temporal imagination effaces the colonial divide between myth (as untruth) and history (as truth), reclaiming myth as a site of cultural continuity and truth. In sacred and cyclical time, postcolonial fiction restores the rhythm of life which empire attempted to suppress—an assurance that the past is not losing but continually renewing itself. Mythic temporality is therefore an act of survival storytelling, maintaining a world picture in which human life is still intertwined with nature, with ancestors, and with the public memory.

### ***C. Temporal Collisions: The Coexistence of Past and Present***

Dissonance in the temporal mode of postcolonial writing generally occurs as collision—the coexistence of alternate times within one moment of the story. Rather than being tidily stratified, temporal strata merge into each other: the present encroaches upon the past, and the past is reinterpreted by the present. This simultaneity petrifies the lived experience of postcolonial societies, in which precolonial custom, colonial legacy, and post-independence present meet in conflict. In Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, for instance, the novel's construction juxtaposes Igbo temporality—derived from ritual, season, and lineage—against the linear path of colonial expansion. The result is one of material temporal clash: a world in which cyclical communal time is brutalized upon by the clock of empire. Similarly, in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, narrative displacement and fluctuates between fragmented memories of the Caribbean and the metropole colonial, revealing how trauma destabilizes time and makes it recursive. Such crashes defy the colonial teleology of historical substitution—where one erasure substitutes another—and instead show history more like a palimpsest, all the past still inscribing its traces under each subsequent writing. The shifts of the temporalities approximate the hybrid state of postcolonial being, an in-between state between worlds, where time is not linear or unitary but layered, haunted, and open.

### ***D. The Politics of Memory***

At the centre of all these reversals of narrative is the politics of memory—the contest over what is recalled, how it is narrated, and whose version of time becomes authoritative. In colonial history, memory had been constructed as untrustworthy, sentimental, and secondary to written record. Postcolonial fiction reverses this hierarchy, putting collective and individual memory at the centre of reconstructions of the past. Memory in *Beloved* is not just remembering but a haunting: the past intrudes into the present and demands to be heard, so the present must reconcile itself to the unthinkable of evil in slavery. Just so, Rushdie's tortured narrator in *Midnight's Children* demands that "memory's truth" does not have to always equate to "history's truth," but it is no less a truth and no less significant. These stories demonstrate that memory is not a line but a loop, a twist, and a circle back, similarly to

trauma. By positioning memory ahead of archival truth, postcolonial authors equal the playing field of history-making—they introduce subaltern histories, family narratives, and oral culture to the grounds of the historical record. Remembering is a means of resistance, reclaiming control over time itself. Memory, here, is not nostalgia but an act of revolution: it lengthens the gap between past and present to form a living continuity in which history is not fixed but reenacted relentlessly from below.

## **5. Temporal Dissonance as Decolonial Practice**

### ***A. Reclaiming Silenced Histories in Nonlinear Narration***

The postcolonial novel is a counter-archive—a dialogue within which subaltern voices and suppressed temporalities are reclaimed to history and to historical awareness. Nonlinear narration is one method of reclaiming those silenced histories that were excluded from the official record. History, in the colonial world, was inscribed in one, linear story of movement toward European modernity. Non-linear narrative trials generated by the disruption of chronological continuity; it returns to the text the gaps, the repetition, the silences which characterise the day-to-day life of colonized people. By unsealing time, postcolonial fiction makes room for silenced voices and occluded memory to come back, not in nostalgic retrospect, but as active presence.

A fine example of this is in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, wherein the disorganization of narrative time follows the psychological reality of trauma. The past does not stay in the past—it comes back, presses on again, and reshapes the present. And in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*, the collective memory of combating colonialism is broken up and dispersed among various narrators. This plurality of times rewrites the past not as singular history but as shared conversation. In such non-linear narrative, postcolonial text negates colonial appropriation of history, asserting instead that time is 'rememorizes' and that memory is decolonization practice.

### ***B. The Ethical Dimension of Temporal Dissonance: Figuring Trauma and Continuity***

Temporal dissonance is not just an aesthetic failure; it has strong ethical consequences. Colonization produced not only material and cultural violence but temporal trauma—disruption of continuity across generations, languages, and habits. To mark this ethically, writers will eschew linear closure and offer multiplicity instead. In novels such as *Beloved* or Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh*, temporality is multiple so there can be co-presence of conflicting experiences—suffering and survival, loss and rebirth. By stacking time, these pieces resist the erasure of pain that is intrinsic to the making of history as progress.

This ethical demand for multiplicity also redraws the role of the reader. Rather than being passively shown a seamless timeline, the reader is being invited to co-construct the broken-up narrative, displaced and affective at once. It is a process that mimics the decolonial struggle itself: to listen and make room for competing voices, listen to the dissonant, and believe that there is no singular truth of history. Temporal multiplicity thus becomes a storytelling politics—one that validates the humanity of that empire rendered "out of time" and redeems them with new presence within the literary and historical imagination.

### ***C. Time as a Site of Epistemic Dissensus: Problematic Modernity's Monolithic Narrative***

Dissonant time is, by definition, an epistemic act of subversion—it resists the monopoly of modernity's one narrative and colonial arrogance to universal time. Colonial discourse centred Europe and modernity at the centre and time at the periphery, and postcolonial literature bursts the bubble of this epistemological monopsony because it shows that time itself can become plural, relational, and embodied. The struggle over time, then, is the struggle over knowledge—over who gets to determine reality, whose remembering matters, and whose histories matter.

Postcolonial authors demonstrate how "progress" and "modernization" were ideological fictions designed to legitimize domination. In shattering time, they provide alternative models of knowledge: native cosmologies' cyclical time, oral traditions' time of ancestors, contemporaneity of myth and history. These alternative temporalities are not retroactive traces of the past or functioning epistemic regimes ordering collective life but functioning epistemic regimes which order collective life. Temporal dissonance is thus a decolonial consciousness—it creates a space where there is coincidence of diverse knowledges, rhythms, and memories that are not in terms of hierarchies. In claiming time, the postcolonial writer gains the ability to image a world other than the colonial structuration of things.

**Table 1: Colonial vs. Postcolonial Conceptions of Time**

| Aspect                     | Colonial Temporality                                     | Postcolonial Temporality   |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Structure                  | Linear, sequential, and progressive.                     | Nonlinear, fragmented, and cyclical.                               |
| Purpose                    | To justify colonial modernity as universal progress.     | To deconstruct historical hierarchy and recover suppressed voices. |
| Representation of the Past | The past is a primitive stage to be overcome.            | The past is a living presence, intertwined with the present.       |
| Historical Authority       | Centred on the colonial archive and official history.    | Decentred; based on memory, myth, and oral testimony.              |
| Cultural Value             | Emphasizes modernization and rationality.                | Emphasizes continuity, spirituality, and multiplicity.             |
| Ethical Implication        | Silences alternative histories and justifies domination. | Restores dignity to marginalized experiences and temporalities.    |

## 6. Case Studies

### A. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children: Fragmentation and national history*

In *Midnight's Children* Rushdie devises a form of narrative that replicates the violent discontinuities and uneasy syntheses of postcolonial nationhood: the novel's temporal fragmentation—its leaps, digressions, and circular remembrance—capsules how individual life and national history are bound up and not successive. Saleem Sinai's voice is at once intimate and hyperbolic, a storyteller whose very identity is coterminous with the moment of India's independence; his birth "at midnight" is more than symbolic coincidence, it is a structural device that fuses biography and historiography. Yet this fusion is deliberately unstable. Saleem's memories cannot be believed since they are subject to lapses, enlargements, and lacunae that oblige readers to read a chain of sediments instead of a straight line. Use of analepsis, interpolated family tradition, and playfulness of narrative on Rushdie's part denies myth-construction's neat teleology to the linear nation and instead offers history as a palimpsest of conflicting voices, silences, and performative memory. The novel thus resists nationalist master-narratives of coherence and development: in breaking up national time into interlocking individual narratives, Rushdie reveals the mythic labor behind official history and insistently foregrounds the postcolonial fact as hybrid, multilingual, and often disjointed. Thus, the novel's form is its argument—the nonsequential interiority of Saleem's presentation demonstrates how nationhood is experienced inequitably across class, region, and religion, and defies any singular teleology that would bind plurality into a unit curve of progress.

### B. Toni Morrison's *Beloved: Haunting as Temporal Simultaneity of Past Trauma*

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* realizes trauma as a spatial simultaneity, in which past violences will not remain in the margins of the present but instead return as corporeal disturbance; the novel's temporal logic therefore makes haunting unmetaphorical and rather a structural mode of comprehending history. Sethe's encounter with the ghost—to then manifest as flesh-and-blood *Beloved*—erases spatial distance in a manner that makes slavery's violences always-tactile, forming perception, speech, and social relation. Morrison fractures narrative into collage of scenes, interior monologues, and elliptical revelations to capture the manner in which trauma devastates consciousness: memory bursts in spasms and begins, collapses affective time, and re-enacts in circles what authorized histories desire to enclose in the past. The shared amnesia and selective remembrance of the community also show how the private suffering is concealed by the public histories; the novel thus demands silence of the archive over slavery not being evidence of lack of history but displacement into body, family ritual, and folklore. Morrison's ethical project is to make that displaced history intelligible and audible: through the process of bringing past and present into alignment within the same moment of relating, *Beloved* disciplines the ethical requirement of witnessing and reparative spectatorship. The text thus re-locates temporality into testimonial space—where the past is not made subservient to the present but simply repeats it—and shows that any viable historiography of slavery will need to be attentive to the temporal persistence of trauma in bodies, words, and social relations.

### ***C. Gabriel García Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude: Cyclicity as Anti-Colonial Temporality***

García Márquez, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, constructs Macondo as a universe governed by cycles resistant to the colonial imperative to linearity. The Buendía return names, cursed repetition, and repeating town histories give a sense of circular time in which things are not progressing towards some teleological purpose but repeat, differentiated only by the accumulation of memory and legend. This temporal return is political work: it topples the history of progress and modernization that justified neocolonial and colonial intervention by depicting how such "advance" produces forgetting, amnesia, and violent repetition—most spectacularly in the banana-company scandal, where capitalist "modernization" kills and erases history in its wake. García Márquez's erasure of the marvellous and the ordinary also revalued indigenous and African temporalities—those societies in which myth, prophecy, and the presence of the ancestors are constitutive of social life—and refuses the splitting of myth and history on which colonial historiography relies. The chronotropic recurrence of the novel is therefore a denunciation of imperial temporal hegemony in describing how modernity's transnational histories are enriched, challenged, and ultimately overcome by local memory and cyclical oblivion. Finally, the cyclical temporality of Macondo betrays both collective memory's potency and fragility: repetition over time promises some cultural continuity but engulfs societies in constant loops of untested terrors with no end, and thus naive comprehension of cyclical time as redemptive is impossible.

## **7. Conclusion**

### ***A. Synthesis of Findings: Temporal Dissonance as Both Literary Innovation and Decolonial Critique***

Across case studies presented here, temporal dissonance is a pervasive formal strategy with explicit political implication: fragmentation, hauntology of simultaneity, and repetitive cycles not only add up literary artifice but offer an extended critique of colonial temporality that collapsed multiple histories into a line of progress. Rushdie's torn-apart national history reveals how narrative disjuncture can strip away the manufactured coherence of nationalist telos; Morrison's ghostly temporality unearths the ethical emptiness of histories that suppress pain into silence; García Márquez's cyclical retrieves modes of time colonial modernity had attempted to erase and makes it difficult to recover easily. Taken together, these novels show us how narrative time is a war zone, where identity, power, and memory are fought over and recharted. The stylistic thickness of temporal strategies is thus a decolonial resource: by challenging the imperial calendar, postcolonial writers re/chart how communities imagine and remember themselves, making time an active channel for ethical accountability instead of hollow measure.

### ***B. Implications for reconsidering historiography in postcolonial studies***

If fiction is the boundary of linear historiography, then rethinking history-writing in postcolonial studies has to involve more than supplementing overlooked facts into conventional chronologies; it requires an epistemological rethinking of what constitutes historical evidence and how orders of the temporal are epistemically constructed. Historiography has to learn from narrative traditions that value oral testimony, performative memory, and embodied archives, aware that official documents are incomplete and unmartial. Scholars need to disrupt archival periodization's of dispossession that foreclose cyclical and affective modalities of historicity and forge approaches that mobilize silences, aporias, and testimonial temporality. It is also an ethical endeavour: historians need to be sensitive to how their periodization work to intensify dispossession, and they need to collaborate with communities to develop histories that celebrate multiplicity, discontinuity, and survivance. In brief, the decolonial turn in literary temporality pushes historiography to be reflexive, pluralistic, and responsive to the lived temporalities that make up human existence beyond the archival page.

### ***C. Future Directions: Towards Plural Temporalities in World Literature***

Going forward, scholarly work would be most useful as comparative work along temporal dissonance across geographies and genres—studying how African, Asian, Indigenous, and diasporic literature variously deploy non-linear time in subverting domination. Interdisciplinary cooperation, integrating literary analysis, oral history, anthropology, and digital humanities, can develop methods to map multiple temporalities and make audible those silenced registers of official history. Within the classroom, the curriculum might integrate works that put alternative temporalities centre stage in an attempt to make students sensitive to the political nature of time. Furthermore, contemporary global problems—transnational memory politics, climate emergency, and migration—need temporal vocabularies that can accommodate hugely intertwined pasts, presents, and futures; dissonance as a theoretical

notion in terms of time is a powerful analytical tool for those ends. Eventually, an expanded literary and historiographical imagination responsive to more than one temporality will not only enrich academic understanding but also move toward more inclusive kinds of cultural memory and political citizenship—enabling previously muted communities to claim time in their own right and not as supplements to a single imperial temporality.

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