

Temporal Spaces in García Márquez's, Salih's, and Rushdie's Novels

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Abstract: In her article "Temporal Spaces in García Márquez's, Salih's, and Rushdie's Novels" Adrienne D. Vivian discusses the significance of time in Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. While culturally distinct to one another, in each novel temporal space is narrated as a means to express and explore postcolonial identity. Vivian examines the connections between time and memory, history, and nation in each of the novels and the ways postcolonial authors use time as a device to mark the crossroads of precolonial past and colonization. The three novelists' treatments of temporal spaces resist Western culture while they reveal disruption and fragmentation.

Adrienne D. VIVIAN

Temporal Spaces in García Márquez's, Salih's, and Rushdie's Novels

When first looking at the novels *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez, *Season of Migration to the North* by Tayeb Salih, and *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, the relevance of time as a theme becomes apparent immediately. Each of the texts contains a reference to time in the title, as well as in the first sentence, and time becomes an important factor throughout. Why is time such a significant device for three such geographically and culturally distinct authors and in what ways do temporal spaces present themselves in postcolonial texts? Through an examination of the treatment of time in each of three novels, in the study at hand I discuss the link between time and post-colonial texts.

In "Narrative Time," Paul Ricoeur considers the relationship between narrativity and temporality and questions the assumption that "narrative takes place within an uncriticized temporal framework, within a time that corresponds to the ordinary representation of time as a linear succession of instants" (170; see also Dowling; Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*). Through his examination of time, narrative, plot—defined as "the intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in any story" (171)—and history, Ricoeur observes that "both the theory of history and the theory of fictional narratives seem to take it for granted that whenever there is time, it is always a time laid out chronologically, a linear time, defined by a succession of instants" (171). Ricoeur reasons that the linear model for time is because "the first measurements of ... time ... are borrowed from the natural environment – first of all from the play of light and of the seasons" (173). This connection to natural time can be noted in the three titles that will be examined: years, season, and midnight. Measuring time by nature becomes what Ricoeur refers to as "public time" in that it is a shared domain, both by characters within a narrative as well as between narrative and audience (176). However, in what ways might this natural and public time be subverted? Ricoeur writes that "as long as the hour and the clock are still perceived as derivations of the day that links concern with the light of the world, saying "now" retains its existential significance; but when the machines used to measure time are cut off from this primary reference to natural measures, saying 'now' is turned into a form of the abstract representation of time" (174). Ways that Ricoeur implies might interrupt narrative linear time are through dechronologization ("a reduction of the chronological to the logical") (184) and "narrative repetition" (183), in effect learning to read time backwards so that "the plot does not merely establish human action 'in' time, it also establishes it in memory" (183). In his analysis of fairy tales and quests, Ricoeur writes that "they bring the hero or heroine *back* into a primordial space and time that is more akin to the realm of dreams than the sphere of action. Thanks to this preliminary disorientation, the linear chain of time is broken and the tale assumes an oniric dimension that is more or less preserved alongside the heroic dimension of the quest" (185). The connection is then made between a rupture in linear time and a dream state or the fantastic.

In *Mimesis, Genres, and Post-Colonial Discourse* Jean-Pierre Durix discusses the relationship between the fantastic and realism in the European literary tradition in order to understand the development of magic realism in Latin American literature. This relationship is also relevant to understanding postcolonial literature in a broader sense, outside of the confines of magic realism. Durix explains that towards the end of the Enlightenment when "positivism prevailed" "a new type of literature emerged, which challenged 'reasonable' representations" (79). The fantastic becomes a means through which the individual can "mar[k] a break with the common order of things, an emergence of the inadmissible into the unalterable everyday legality" (79). Durix notes the relevance within the European context of the relationship shared between writer and reader and states that "there is a common ground of culture, or at least a majority of shared values, between reader and writer or between the reader and the character who thematizes his/her place in the text" (80). Durix cites Tzvetan Todorov's *Introduction à la littérature fantastique* when he compares the "function of the fantastic to the breaking of personal taboos" (80; on the fantastic in literature see, e.g., López-Varela Azcárate <<http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol10/iss4/>>). Through this interpretation we can summarize that the fantastic consists of the individual rebelling through the means of "forbidden themes" against the shared and accepted reality of the community.

The relationship between the fantastic and reality becomes of particular interest when considering post colonial authors and texts. Durix writes that "primarily images of reality have been offered by the colonizer and it is against these images that the new intellectuals are rebelling" (80). The rebellion becomes not that of an individual against his or her own society, but that of a community resistant to an image of reality that has been superimposed upon its own: "Where, in European literature, the fantastic serves to protest against the tyranny of 'fact,' in post-colonial literature it frequently serves to incorporate the old values and beliefs into the modern man's perception" (Durix 81). The insertion of non-European structures and beliefs into the text then serves as a form of resistance to the "tyranny of logos" presented by the colonizer (Durix 81).

What then can be the result of this resistance to the reality imposed by Western culture? It seems apparent that a return to a precolonial past is not the aim of postcolonial writers, at least not the three to be considered in this paper, and it is debatable if this would even be possible for authors who have been so strongly affected by colonization. Even the most oblique look at the form of the texts, the novel, would exclude any interpretation that a complete separation from the colonizing influence is desired. But the relevance of the inclusion of a pre-colonial identity into the text cannot be underestimated. What is truly of interest then is the intersection where a pre-colonial past meets colonization. Magic Realism is only one of the possible results that can occur. The very questioning of which reality is real serves to decenter not just the individual (be it author, character, or reader), but within the context of postcolonial texts an entire community. The fragmentation of an individual identity is multiplied exponentially.

One of the ways that this collective fragmentation manifests itself is through a writer's treatment of time. In his discussion about realism in literature and cinema Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek posits that it is referential perspectives of time "where the reader's or viewer's (the audience in general) perception of realism happens ... a narrative may be understood as a construct with mechanisms moved by a referential framework" (99-100; Tötösy de Zepetnek uses Benjamin Hrushovski's categories of referential grounding which include historical time and place, as well as more minute references including the weather, season, or time of day). Following this I posit that a disruption of an anticipated referential framework, for instance the chronological passing of time, can serve to destabilize the audience's sense of what is real. Time can be perceived differently by different cultures. A reinsertion on different levels of a pre-colonial conceptualization of time within the context of a text that is seemingly Western in other ways can serve to create this intersection that causes the reader to at least acknowledge the "differentness" of the text – the creation of something that is straddling cultures. Time can also be expressed through "making and breaking" (Tobin 170), community memory (history), and individual (childhood) memory, as well as through the use of language that continually draws readers' attention to time as an important device within the text.

Now I turn to discussing which temporal spaces are constructed in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Season of Migration to the North*, and *Midnight's Children* and how treatment of time can have a broader, post-colonial importance in addition to being culturally specific. "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice" (García Márquez 11). From the first sentence of the novel, the reader is guided to consider time. The reader is placed somewhere between past and future, yet not quite in the present, which becomes even more complex with the introduction of memory. As the reader progresses through the text, it becomes obvious that the assumed end of both Colonel Buendía facing the firing squad and the novel is neither. By placing the reader immediately in the position of a simultaneous past, present, and future, García Márquez is constructing a non-linear temporal space: "for the Latin American consciousness, history is not lineal ... because Latin America has preserved within its social structures whole epochs which in the Western world passed by in successive order, Latin American man knows only the reality of simultaneity, never the reality of succession and continuity" (Mejía Duque qtd. in Tobin 169).

This view of a non-linear time in the text is also supported by Kathleen McNerney's interpretation of time in the novel: "Throughout the novel the narration is in a closed time, with a beginning and an end; and all of whose 'times,' present, past and future, can be recounted at any time by the narrator, who is equidistant from them all" (20). McNerney continues that "García Márquez's manipulation of time and creation of a closed, all-encompassing system within the book forces the reader to doubt the

usual linear conception and measurement of time, and in fact calls into question the very time of the book itself" (20). There are many examples of the ways in which this closed, simultaneous construction of time manifests itself within the text. The absence of death in much of the text creates an environment in which time seems to stand still as multiple generations exist simultaneously without the linear progression of generation succeeding generation. When death finally does occur, the illusion of continuity is maintained through the naming of each successive generation with the same names. It would seem as though characters continually repeat themselves, forming a continuum that does appear to construct of time what Patricia Dreschel Tobin refers to as a "Moebius strip" (176).

Tobin notes that the presentation of "progress" in the text also refuses to develop in a linear fashion (169). The relevance of this is emphasized in the first sentence with the "discovery" of ice. The gypsies periodically come to Macondo bringing the mundane with the fantastic, all of which are greeted with astonishment by the town's inhabitants. José Arcadio (the first) sets to work feverishly with each "new" invention brought by Melquíades, but no sense of progress is ever achieved. He discovers what has been known for centuries (the earth is round), he attempts to use a magnifying glass as a weapon (solar weapons of mass destruction?), and when a magnet proves useless in his search for gold he resorts to alchemy, only to reduce his wife's inheritance to "burnt hog cracklings" (García Márquez 13). Invention and discovery in the Buendía household, and in Macondo in general, are in a closed space, without evidence of linear progression. This is further expressed when the train brings yet more inventions to town (García Márquez 211). The introduction of light bulbs and movie theatres to Macondo represents the very same simultaneity of time referred to previously. Suddenly Macondo's present consists of an overlapping of the past, present, and the future with confusion, misunderstanding, and suspicion as the result.

Another example of a time continuum lacking any linear sense of progression in the text is the war experience of Colonel Buendía. Having caught the "liberal fever" (101) Buendía learns that war has broken out from Ursula, and the past overlaps the present as the reader discovers that indeed war had broken out three months earlier and the country was already under martial law (102). Buendía becomes a decorated war hero in spite of never winning any of the thirty-two uprisings he organized (104). The often mentioned firing squad incidents occur, but never with the anticipated result and even the reason for his going to war becomes muted through the oxymoronic inertia of non-progressive activity. The pervasive, mirror like effect of the text even becomes obvious to the characters. José Arcadio Segundo murmurs, "Time passes," to his great-grandmother who replies, "That's how it goes ... but not so much ... When she said it she realized that she was giving the same reply that Colonel Aureliano Buendía had given in his death cell, and once again she shuddered with the evidence that time was not passing, as she had just admitted, but that it was turning in a circle" (310). In her extreme old age, Ursula's presence has overlapped a continuum of "presents" that have caused her to acknowledge what the reader has already realized, and apparently Buendía before that: the temporal spaces within Macondo and the text are continually overlapping, never achieving any sort of linear progression.

Tobin writes that "also suggestive of the improvidence of their aspiration and accomplishment is the Buendía habit of making and breaking, of building only to take apart" (170). In a broader sense this Penelope like activity is indicative of lack of linear progress. Activity repeats upon itself in a circular fashion with the beginning of the action being transposed with the middle and an end that continually signals an unraveling that begins anew. Amaranta weaves her shroud by day, only to unravel it by evening (García Márquez 242) as Buendía "kept making two fishes a day and when he finished twenty-five he would melt them down and start all over again" (248). Even the actions of making and breaking become repeated as a motif through the generations of the family as Fernanda wonders whether or not Aureliano Segundo "might be falling into the vice of building so that he could take apart like Buendía and his little gold fishes, Amaranta and her shroud and her buttons, José Arcadio and the parchments, and Ursula and her memories" (291-92) as he sets to repairing the house in order to "not be conquered by idleness" (291). The actions themselves are what motivate the characters and not the anticipation of progression to results.

Another aspect of temporal space is memory. Memory connotes past experience in both an individual and communal sense. One way that the idea of memory is explored in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is through its very absence when early on in the text Macondo is plagued by the insomnia

disease. When Rebecca arrives at the Buendía household her illness is first recognized by Visitación, the Amerindian woman. García Márquez writes: "Terrified, exhausted by her fate, Visitación recognized in those eyes the symptoms of the sickness whose threat had obliged her and her brother to exile themselves forever from an age-old kingdom where they had been prince and princess. It was the insomnia plague" (49-50). The arrival of this plague is so terrifying that "Cataure, the Indian, was gone from the house by morning. His sister stayed because her fatalistic heart told her that the lethal sickness would follow her, no matter what, to the farthest corner of the earth" (50). This scourge with which the Indians are so very familiar serves to effectively erase time, and by extension existence itself. Visitación explains that "The most fearsome part of the sickness of insomnia was not the impossibility of sleeping, for the body did not feel any fatigue at all, but its inexorable evolution toward a more critical manifestation: a loss of memory. She meant that when the sick person became used to his state of vigil, the recollection of his childhood began to be erased from his memory, then the name and notion of things, and finally the identity of people and even the awareness of his own being, until he sank into a kind of idiocy that had no past" (50). This loss of past is emphasized during the explanation of the disease through the experience of Visitación herself. When José Arcadio laughs at the Indian woman's warning of what was to come and considers it so much superstition, Visitación's own loss of past is highlighted. She has gone from princess within her own culture to a marginalized existence in her exile in Macondo. The repetition and overlapping of time that is to occur throughout the novel is hinted at in Visitación's resignation that this plague will follow her to the ends of the earth. She has seen this plague and all of its effects, and now resigns herself to its return. Layers upon layers of a past conquered and erased are represented by Visitación's and Cataure's shadowed existence within the Buendía household and Rebeca's own mysterious past with her bag of bones and Indian language.

Just as individual memory can be erased, cultural memory or history can be rewritten. Time becomes elastic as the past is reworked. The arrival of the banana company to Macondo brings with it the colonizer's version of events that become superimposed over the colonized. The reader witnesses the "tyranny of logos" presented by the colonizer to meet the escalating confrontations brought by the banana company's workers. When Mr. Brown is finally made to sign the petitions containing the workers' complaints, the banana company's lawyers claim that he has "nothing to do with the company and in order that no one doubt their arguments they had him jailed as an imposter" (279). When the same Mr. Brown is again later pursued by the workers the attorneys transform him into "Dagoberto Fonseca," a native of Macondo. The lawyers also produce "proof" that Mr. Brown is deceased. When this fails to deter the workers, the banana company uses the courts to prove that the workers themselves never existed, rendering all of their claims and complaints invalid.

When the workers strike to resist this "legal" effacement of their existence, the tyranny of logos becomes even more sinister. Martial law is declared to intervene in the strike, with the military working on behalf of the banana company. When the workers begin to sabotage the plantation they are corralled together and in a passage interrupted by the memories of an old man recounting the events of that day as a child in the crowd, they are murdered by machine gun fire. The workers become physically effaced, not just through their deaths but also in the total erasure led by the banana company and the military. Arcadio had born witness to the massacre through his presence in both the crowd being shot and the train full of the dead being taken away. When he escapes the train and returns to Macondo he learns that everyone is sticking to the official story—there are no dead and nothing has happened. By proclamation and the words of the newly reappeared Mr. Brown, the workers have returned home satisfied, and the banana company was suspending operations. Even as the last of the union workers that had led the strike were rounded up and "disappeared" the official line was "You must have been dreaming ... Nothing has happened in Macondo, nothing has ever happened, and nothing ever will happen. This is a happy town" (287). More than three thousand workers and their families were slaughtered, but the perpetrator is able to alter the account of events, in effect history, by silencing through a variety of means the memory of anyone who would argue to the contrary. The sole person that retained any overt memories of the events, Arcadio, is left isolated and eventually invisible.

"It was, gentlemen, after a long absence—seven years to be exact, during which time I was studying in Europe—that I returned to my people" (Salih 1). As with the previous novel, time is introduced

as an element to the text immediately in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. Another aspect of the text that can be found in this first sentence is the distinction between East and West as is demonstrated in the contrast created between an absence in Europe and a return "to my people." One of the ways that we can examine the temporal spaces that are constructed in the text is through the presentation of polarities and the ways they affect perceptions of time. M.M. Badawī writes that "The recurrent themes which I have in mind often take the form of pairs of opposites or polarities: for instance town and country, tradition and modernity, East and West, or Arab and European, freedom and authority, society and the alienated individual ... They are a feature of *modern* Arabic literature" (4; emphasis in the original). A cursory examination of Salih's text certainly exposes many of these polarities (i.e., town/country, Sudan/England, etc.), but what do they have to do with time? To understand the way time functions within the text it is useful to examine the polarity created between Mustafa Sa'eed, a child of colonization, and the narrator, a child of independence. By examining the parallel tracks of the lives of these two men, I trace time through memory and history to discover where their paths diverge.

Sa'eed's childhood is told orally to the narrator. He recounts his tale in a linear fashion and somewhat coldly. He is fatherless, without relatives, and with a mother who almost seems a stranger. Sa'eed describes his childhood by saying, "I used to have—you may be surprised—a warm feeling of being free, that there was not a human being, by father or mother, to tie me down as a tent peg to a particular spot, a particular domain" (Salih 19). He has no attachments to previous generations, or seemingly to much of anything, which will later prove to be in sharp contrast to the attachments formed by the narrator. His very lack of attachment would appear to be indicative of his already colonized status, yet he describes his childhood as a period during which he makes his first decision of his "own free will" (21). Sa'eed's adolescence is spent in Cairo. This period seems to serve as a gateway to the West with his introduction to the Robinsons. Time is still passing in a linear fashion and yet the flashbacks begin with his insertion into the story of meeting Mrs. Robinson "and on the day they sentenced me at the Old Bailey to seven years imprisonment, I found no bosom except hers on which to rest my head" (25). His academic achievement appears quite stellar and yet this can also be viewed as his downfall. Ghislaine Alleaume writes that for Tayyib Salih "Cairo represent a rupture, and a European education is no more than a means for the occupier to provide himself with obedient servants" (10; unless indicated otherwise, all translations are mine). Following this argument, Sa'eed's education is not truly a product of his "own free will," but is only a means by which the colonizer gains control of the colonized.

This period in Cairo serves as an intermediary between East and West and yet Sa'eed's introduction to each is through the Robinsons. Through school and Mrs. Robinson Sa'eed learns about the West: "From her I learnt to love Bach's music, Keats's poetry, and from her I heard for the first time of Mark Twain" (28). But it is also through Western translation that Sa'eed learns of the East: "Mr. Robinson knew Arabic well and was interested in Islamic thought and architecture, and it was with them that I visited Cairo's mosques, its museums and antiquities" (25). Alleaume writes of the role of the Orientalist in Sa'eed's discovery of Europe: "It is an Orientalist, or rather a couple of Orientalists, that the child will have as first listener and first guide in this discovery... The Orientalist remains a privileged intermediary and an initiator to the West ... On the other hand, in Tayyib Salih's text the character finds a new dimension: it is also with the Robinsons that Sa'id learns about the medieval quarter of Cairo in walks punctuated by the readings of Abu'l-Ala. And here is how Tayyib Salih portrays, in Mrs. Robinson's words, the work of the Orientalist: 'I shall write of the splendid services [my husband] rendered to Arabic culture, such as his discovery of so many rare manuscripts, the commentaries he wrote on them, and the way he supervised the printing of them'" (Salih 148). That is where we find one aspect of the Orientalist's role, whose absence we had noted in 'Alamad-din. The character's perception changed and the Orientalist's scientific work had ceased to be an apprenticeship" (10). Alleaume calls attention to a striking role for the Orientalist not only in the evolution of representations of Orientalists in Arabic literature as her article is concerned with, but within the context of Salih's novel. Mrs. Robinson considers her husband to not only have discovered, but also supervised the manipulations of many rare Arabic texts. The Orientalist is not a simple apprentice, as Alleaume has observed, but is in control of the texts. This emphasizes the influence exercised by the Robinsons over adolescent Sa'eed not just in the realm of the West, but also in that of the East.

As Sa'eed's journey to England approaches, the representation of time in the text begins to shift and change. Although Sa'eed describes England as "an ordered world" (27), his own thoughts become more fragmented and disordered as his story approaches England. He describes the journey as a "feeling of being nowhere, alone, before and behind me either eternity or nothingness" (27). His linear account is ending and he floats in a state of timelessness that appears to encompass the past, present, and future. He describes the England that he encounters and the path on a return trip far in the future, and reflects on his life in Cairo. His thoughts echo this jumbled time sequence but overriding everything is the foreshadowing of his encounter with "the world of Jean Morris" (29). Flash forward ten years and Sa'eed is now twenty-five years old and living in London. His time frame has arrived closer to "the world of Jean Morris" as he describes his early encounters with her, and the other women he meets. His narration of his adult life flips back and forth through his encounters with women and his trial. Both accounts are leading simultaneously, both forwards and backwards respectively through time towards their point of convergence: "the world of Jean Morris." As this convergence nears, Sa'eed's narration ends and the text returns to the "present" of the narrator. But the narrator's present includes that of Sa'eed, who we soon learn has died. Sa'eed's existence continues only in hearsay from others, until the narrator continues Sa'eed's story through memory and letters.

As the narrator becomes more and more drawn into Sa'eed's life and memory, he also becomes drawn into the seemingly closed and fragmented time and space of Sa'eed's existence. The narrator relates that as he stood outside the iron door to Sa'eed's private door, "Outside, my world was a wide one; now it had contracted, had withdrawn upon itself, until I myself had become the world, no world existing outside of me. Where, then, were the roots that struck down into times past? Where the memories of death and life?" (134). The very timelessness that had been Sa'eed's life has infected the narrator. It is at this point that the narrator leads the reader through to the point of convergence that has been anticipated throughout the text: the intersection of Jean Morris and Sa'eed. The narrator returns to the past to remember Sa'eed's voice as he told of his escalating encounters with Morris. Three years of pursuit. After their marriage, two months of sexual denial, eleven days between a heated argument and public lovemaking in the park. Murderous war punctuated by rare moments of ecstasy, yet Sa'eed claims that, "For me this moment of ecstasy is worth the whole of life" (160). Finally a "dark evening in February ... The sun had not shone for twenty-two days" (162) and time is in essence preparing to be frozen forever: "An ill-omened moment of time" (163) has arrived and Sa'eed plunges the knife into Jean Morris. He describes this moment as though "the universe, with its past, present and future, was gathered together into a single point before and after which nothing existed" (165).

The narrator's life is juxtaposed against that of Sa'eed. Early on in the text the narrator expresses his sense of belonging to something greater, very much in contrast to Sa'eed's description of isolation and alienation. The narrator states, "I hear a bird sing or a dog bark or the sound of an axe on wood—and I feel a sense of stability, I feel that I am important, that I am continuous and integral. No, I am not a stone thrown into the water but seed sown in a field" (5). In sharp opposition to Sa'eed's memory of being both physically and emotionally orphaned, an identity that ultimately leaves him in a fragmented and frozen temporal space, the narrator has a strong concept of time as a generational continuum to which he very much belongs. His stay in England is scarcely mentioned, and appears to represent only a period of absence as though he stepped out of time temporarily. Readers know that he was absent seven years, the same period of time that Sa'eed is sentenced to prison. However, unlike Sa'eed who remains perpetually in a state of static time, the narrator is able to rejoin the continuum after his protracted absence.

It is the intersection of the narrator with Sa'eed that threatens to undermine his integration back into his familiar temporal space. When the text reveals that the universe has stopped for Sa'eed at the moment of his murder of Jean Morris, the reader is then immediately led to the narrator's moment of crisis as he steps into the water, as if still in pursuit of Sa'eed. He lingers trapped between life and death, north and south before making a conscious decision to live. He seemingly embraces (whether successfully or not, the reader is not told) the choice of existence. This existence would seem best explained through the narrator's description of his grandfather: "When I embrace him I breathe in his unique smell which is a combination of the smell of the large mausoleum in the cemetery and the smell of an infant child. And that thin tranquil voice sets up bridge between me and the anxious mo-

ment that has not yet been formed, and between the moments the events of which have been assimilated and have passed on, have become bricks in an edifice with perspectives and dimensions. By the standards of the European industrial world we are poor peasants, but when I embrace my grandfather I experience a sense of richness as though I am a note in the heartbeats of the very universe" (73).

Unlike the temporal space of Sa'eed that remains frozen with nothing existing before or after, much like the photographs that capture a single moment in time that decorate his anglophile library, the space that the narrator chooses is multidimensional. The past exists, and creates a support for the present and intimates a future. Sa'eed represents a colonized existence that has been robbed of both a past and future, while the narrator lends hope for an independent future: "I was born in the city of Bombay...once upon a time. No, that won't do, there's no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar's Nursing Home on August 15th 1947. And the time? The time matters, too. Well then: at night. No, it's important to be more ... On the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact. Clock-hands joined palms in respectful greeting as I came. Oh, spell it out, spell it out: at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence, I tumble forth into the world" (Rushdie 3). And so begins the introduction to Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, which emphasizes the relevance of time, and not just as a concept, but as a precise measurement. The actual time matters, as time intermingles with history. It is not just any midnight, but the midnight that heralds India's independence, and forever links our narrator and main character to the history of India itself.

In an attempt to better understand Indian perceptions of time I first look to George Cardona's article "A Path Still Taken: Some Early Indian Arguments Concerning Time." Cardona considers time as it is represented within different Indian grammatical and linguistic structures and the treatment of time in its various categories was quite revealing and explores the very nature of operating with time "as a separate ontological category" (445) and the different varieties of time, which are then exposed. Through the discussion it is determined that time is "most intimately related to actions" (446) and it is "an all-encompassing eternal substance that serves as a measure of things involved in actions" (446). Time is considered to be a single entity and yet is simultaneously plural and multifold when the various actions that are its components are considered (446-47). While the text does emphasize the importance of midnight 15 August 1947, it would be misleading to think of that date and time as solely a single moment. Just as the narrator hesitates in his announcement of the date that causes him to be "mysteriously handcuffed to history, [his] destinies indissolubly chained to those of [his] country" (Rushdie 3), the pronouncement of this precise point in time actually is the culmination of all of the moments of lived memory that have existed prior and simultaneously to it. Temporal space assumes a breadth and scope that is infinite and serves as a preservation of everything at once, a pickling and preserving of all that ever has occurred, is occurring, and within the context of the novel, potentially will occur.

Past and present are intermingled in one person — Saleem Sinai, the narrator. His memory consists not just of his own personal experience, but that of his family, which is eventually revealed to not be his actual biological family, which then exponentially widens the scope of shared history and memory. Because the narrator is speaking from a vantage in the future for most of the text, he foreshadows many of the events that will be occurring, hence overlapping the past and present with a sense of future. As the progression of the memory graduates to that of Saleem himself (preceded by a countdown as the country awaits independence) the narration becomes peppered with dates. Saleem's growth and age mirror that of the nation and child memory equals national memory. The birth of the child and the nation are not the arrival of blank slates. The gestational child has been filled with an inheritance of memories, just as the newly formed independent India encompasses all of the history that preceded its birth.

Time in the text can be urgent and explosive as well as depleted and exhausted. The clock tower where Saleem finds refuge to exercise his newly found telepathic skills gives voice to his feelings of excitement and power at his gifts: "'Look at me!' I exulted silently. 'I can go any place I want!' In that tower which had once been filled choc-à-bloc with the explosive devices of Joseph D'Costa's hatred, this phrase (accompanied by appropriate ticktock sound effects) plopped fully-formed into my thoughts: 'I am the bomb in Bombay ... watch me explode!'" (207). The clock tower serves to again emphasize the relevance of time as a concept within the text as a narrator that we can assume is in the present relates a memory from the past that eerily foreshadows a possible outcome in the future

(the very explosion or cracking to pieces of himself). The tower has also been referred to on a previous page as "an old clock tower, which nobody bothered to lock," "the solitude of rusting time," and "the tower of crippled hours" (205). This tower becomes the location where the narrator took his "first tentative steps towards that involvement with mighty events and public lives from which [he] would never again be free" (205). It is in this place of time that time becomes an obviously all encompassing entity, one that includes past, present, and future as well as individual memory and history.

The narrator claims that "to understand just one life, you have to swallow the world" (126). At the end of the text it would appear that the narrator has both swallowed and been swallowed by the world. He is bursting with the very multitudes of persons, memories, histories, and lives that he contains. It is a simultaneous privilege and curse to be "sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes" (552), forever participating in an infinite and all-encompassing temporal space and reality. Todd Giles writes that "Saleem's narrative, like his chutney, is made up of seemingly disparate ingredients that refuse to remain static. In other words, both events and ingredients change over time in such a way that the individuality of the component parts meld into a complex mixture in which the origin of single flavors are no longer distinguishable from the whole" (185). The metaphor of pickling creates a means by which Rushdie can explore personal and national identity through history and memory.

In conclusion, in spite of being culturally distinct to one another, each of the three authors has elected to use time as a device to express an aspect of post-colonial existence. Time in García Márquez's text is a circular space that suffers memory loss and erasure of history in the face of colonization. For Salih, colonial influence entraps and paralyzes its victim, effectively shutting down the generational continuum that had been established. Rushdie expresses time as an all encompassing, multi-dimensional space that fuses both personal and national memory and swells to its almost unbearable bursting point. All of these texts share a common need to reexamine a colonial past and to reassert a culturally specific treatment of time into the post-colonial discussion.

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