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"Is He Not a Maker of Parables?": Restorative Poetics and Magical Realism in Ezekiel 40–48

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ABSTRACT

The thesis demonstrates that Ezek 40–48 functions as a unified narrative of restoration and that it is profitable to understand its fantastic realism and postcolonial rhetoric as early precursors to the modern magical realism genre. The tools of narrative criticism are utilized to exegete the literary features of Ezek 40–48 and uncover its poetic elements and rhetorical thrust. After this analysis, Ezek 40–48 is viewed as a precursor to modern magical realist texts in a comparative study with Gabriel García Márquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children*, paying special attention to the thematic emphases on how truth is created through power, history is depicted as a downward spiral, and security is achieved through detailed realism.

“Is He Not a Maker of Parables?”:

Restorative Poetics and Magical Realism in Ezekiel 40–48

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For my wife, Megan. You make every task lighter and every day brighter. This accomplishment is as much yours as it is mine.

מצא אשה מצא טוב ויפק רצון מיהוה

“He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.”

Proverbs 18:22

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLGY: ANALYZING EZEKIEL 40–48 THROUGH NARRATIVE CRITICISM AND MAGICAL REALIST COMPARISONS

Introduction

The book of Ezekiel has had no shortage of interpretive attention through the millennia since its publication. And with good reason: its arresting depictions of deportation and visceral images of defilement give a voice to a people in crisis, and its soaring portrayals of the restoration of Israel and the mercy of YHWH offer the sixth-century BCE Jewish exilic community in Babylon hope for the future.

Like most prophets, Ezekiel has often been studied through a historical-critical or diachronic lens as interpreters seek to reconstruct the prophet, audience, or redactional layers behind the words of the text. Ezekiel's strange behavior and stoic attitude make him an interesting figure for such psychological studies, and the textual complexity of Ezekiel does reward such studies. However, the poetics of the book of Ezekiel are often ignored in these analyses.

Understanding the final form of the text of Ezekiel requires attention to its artistic design; and since much of the book is written in prose, it follows that Ezekiel possesses the hallmarks of Hebrew narrative. Such literary study usually entails an attention to plot structure, characterization, intertextuality, and metaphor.[1] Working from this premise, the

1. L. Wray Beal, "Literary Approaches" in *The IVP Bible Dictionary Series: Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, edited by Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 506.

tools of narrative criticism will be utilized to analyze the literary features in Ezek 40–48 to discover the narrative elements within what has sometimes been regarded as a disjointed series of polemical ritual texts.

In addition to this standard literary critical analysis, Ezek 40–48 will be analyzed with reference to the literary genre of magical realism (also referred to as "magic realism"). Specifically, Gabriel García Márquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children* will serve as exemplars of the genre. The thesis will demonstrate that Ezek 40–48 functions as a unified narrative of restoration and that it is profitable to understand its fantastic realism and postcolonial rhetoric as early precursors to the modern magical realism genre.

Translations

Before moving into issues of authorship and composition in Ezek 40–48, a preliminary note on translation is needed. Difficult textual issues and *hapax legomena*, especially those surrounding the architectural language in Ezek 40–42, have vexed interpreters as far back as the famous eleventh-century Jewish exegete Rashi. The book of Ezekiel is notorious for these compositional and/or transmissional issues in its Hebrew text, and Ezek 40–48 represents one of the most difficult sections of the book.

The goal of this thesis is not to resolve the textual problems in order to create a critical translation, as has already been done in Walther Zimmerli's seminal commentary in the Hermeneia series. As such, the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT) is used as it is without attempting to make text-critical changes based on consulting the versions of the Greek texts of the Septuagint (LXX). To be clear: the MT is not necessarily a more original text than any of the versions, but this study chooses to deal with the Hebrew of

Ezek 40–48 at a narrative level from one source as the most coherent text that it can be. In cases where an English translation proves useful to prove a point in comparison with the MT, the NASB and NRSV have been consulted as formal equivalence translations often used in scholarly discourse.

As for the other works analyzed in this study, the standard translation of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* from Spanish to English by Gregory Rabassa is used as it was published in the HarperCollins First Perennial Classics Edition. And while Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* was originally published in English, it should be noted that the present study chooses to use the Random House 25th Anniversary Edition of that novel as this includes the few passages originally censored by Prime Minister Indira Ghandi.

The Authorship and Composition of Ezekiel

Beginning in the nineteenth century, the source-critical study of Ezekiel reached the height of its cutting frenzy with G. Hölscher famously attributing only portions of the poetic sections to the book's eponymous historical prophet (170 out of 1273 verses).[2] Contemporary critics credit Ezekiel with much more of the book. Walther Zimmerli has popularized a current trend in compositional thought that attributes the bulk of the literary work to Ezekiel with a later school of disciples providing some relatively minor editorial additions.[3] The beginning of the book suggests such a phenomenon, as Ezek 1:1 begins narrating Ezekiel's first vision with the first-person **אנכי** ("I"). Ezekiel 1:2–3 then

2. G. Hölscher, *Hesekiel Der Dieter und das Buch*, BZAW 39 (Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1924); cited in L. Boadt, "Textural Problems in Ezekiel and Poetic Analysis of Paired Words," *JBL* 97 (1978): 489.

3. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 3.

interrupts the vision to reference יחזקאל ("Ezekiel") in the third person and provides some biographical context before stepping back into Ezekiel's first-person account of his vision in Ezek 1:4 with וארא ("and I looked").

Zimmerli also sees evidence of this editorial phenomenon in the choice of a thematic rather than a strictly chronological structure for a number of oracles in Ezekiel. He lists Ezek 29:17–21 as one such example of this kind of redactional work.[4] Zimmerli also states that it is largely impossible to find foundational oral material underneath the book's literary style since a "definite plan" is evidenced by literary features in the book. Even with some minor additions, "Ezekiel's own hand has given his message its characteristic stamp."[5] Scholars such as Zimmerli thus attribute the bulk of the work to the prophet Ezekiel and postulate a school of disciples that provided relatively minor additions and editing to the text.

Standing somewhat aloof from the current consensus that builds on Zimmerli's work, Moshe Greenberg argues that the "art and intelligent design" and "coherent world of vision" of the book of Ezekiel indicates that the sixth-century prophet is virtually the sole mind behind its current literary form.[6] Greenberg therefore advocates for a holistic approach to interpreting Ezekiel with attention to issues of structural and thematic unity. This approach is especially useful for narrative criticism. In any case, a spectrum exists in current scholarship between Zimmerli's minor redaction view and Greenberg's holistic

4. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 10.

5. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 25.

6. Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 22A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 26–27.

approach.[7] With regard to date: since Ezekiel's last oracle is typically dated to 570 BCE, the final version of the book must be after that and before the post-exilic period since Ezekiel "makes no explicit reference to post-exilic conditions."[8] Indeed, Ezek 40–48 hardly makes sense as a vision of the new temple that YHWH will build for Israel if it was written after the construction of Zerubbabel's relatively shabby temple in 515 BCE (cf. Hag 2:1–3). While Ezekiel's vision certainly became eschatologically deferred after Zerubbabel's temple was built, there is no hint in Ezek 40–48 that the text is originally written after the fact. The final vision clearly does not function as a polemic against any temple other than the corrupt pre-exilic one that the כבוד, a technical priestly term for the presence and glory of YHWH, abandons in Ezekiel's previous vision (cf. Ezek 8–11; 44:6–10).

This thesis will follow a literary methodology that views Ezek 40–48 as a unified artistic whole with motifs and themes that have been skillfully integrated throughout the rest of the book. It is thus closest to Greenberg's holistic approach. While it is not necessary for the purpose of the thesis to demonstrate that the entire book of Ezekiel functions as a unified aesthetic work, several of the arguments below on the aesthetic unity of Ezek 40–48 could apply to the whole book as well.

The various architectural and legislative portions of Ezek 40–48 are often taken apart and analyzed by critics wishing to analyze the sources or speculate on the motivations of the prophet or his exilic disciples. Though such analysis is certainly useful

7. Andrew Mein, "Ezekiel: Structure, Themes, and Contested Issues" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Prophets*, ed. Carolyn J. Sharp (New York: Oxford University Press: 2016), 193.

8. Mein, "Ezekiel: Structure, Themes, and Contested Issues," 193.

on some historical level, an excessive concern with source-criticism can preclude a serious study of the artistic and rhetorical dimensions of the text as it was designed to function for its implied audience. Instead of taking the pieces of the quilt of Ezek 40–48 apart, a narrative critical study focuses on the way that these pieces have been integrated into an aesthetic whole that provides warmth and security to its implied exilic audience. These poetic dimensions of the text will be explored in greater detail during the narrative-critical analysis in Chapter 2, but a few notes on artistic unity are necessary here to provide some groundwork.

Ezekiel 4048 contains texts regulating the temple cultus, the priesthood, and the monarchy. It also encapsulates these legislative portions within lengthy descriptions of the architecture of the new temple and the tribal allotments of the land. These disparate elements are woven into an artistic whole as they are incorporated into a single visionary journey in a recognized prophetic genre.

Ezekiel 40:1 begins with several formulae indicating that it is beginning a new coherent section of the book. It begins with a time formula, בעשרים וחמש שנה לגלותנו (lit. "in the twenty and five year of our exile"). This formula is so similar to the specific date formulas found in Ezek 1:1; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1; 26:1; 29:1, 17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1, 17 and 33:21 that it clearly has an editorial function designed to introduce a single new account. In addition to this time formula, Ezek 40 begins with the book's typical prophetic oracle formulae: היתה עלי יד־יהוה ("the hand of YHWH was on me"; cf. Ezek 1:3; 3:14, 3:22; 8:1; 33:22) and במראות אלהים ("in visions of God"; cf. Ezek 1:1; 8:3). Ezekiel 40 thus begins with clear literary signals that it introduces a single visionary

account within the genre of a prophetic oracle. While it may be argued that Ezek 40:1–2 provides only a literary introduction to Ezekiel's tour of the temple, the account is specifically mentioned as a מראה even after the initial tour of the temple (Ezek 43:3).

In addition to these initial formulas that put all of Ezek 40–48 under one literary heading, all the legislation and spatial descriptions come as narrated actions and words of YHWH and the intermediary who function as characters *within* Ezekiel's vision. Thus, the architectural descriptions in the beginning and the narration of the river at the end of the vision are what the man מראה אותך ("makes seen to you") in Ezek 40:4. After the כבוד of YHWH comes to claim the temple and the land, the spatial descriptions and legislation in the middle of the vision and the final tribal allotments at the end come as מדבר אלי מהבית ("[what] the one dwelling in the house/temple is speaking to me") in Ezek 43:6.

Incidentally, the return of the כבוד of YHWH stands as an integral part of the narrative "backbone" of the work, indicating that Ezek 40–48 functions as a planned climactic conclusion rather than a haphazard appendix to the book as a whole.[9] The return of the כבוד as a thematic recapitulation of Ezekiel's visions of the divine presence in Ezek 1 and 8–11 and as the climax of the plotline of Ezek 40–48 will be explored in Chapter 2. In any case, some basic groundwork has been laid for the basic assumption of Chapter 2 that Ezek 40–48 as a unified narrative with a coherent rhetorical purpose.

9. H. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses'?" *JSOT* 61 (1994): 98.

Justification for Utilizing Narrative Criticism in the Prophets

Defining *Narrative Criticism*

After establishing the artistic integrity of the book, the argument will be made for the use of narrative criticism in the prophets. Stephen Moore provides a succinct survey of the history of biblical narrative analysis as a field. Moore defines biblical narrative analysis as "analysis that is attuned to plot, characterization, and other constitutive features of narrative—in a word (or two), *narrative criticism*."[10] Scholars such as Robert Alter, Meir Sternberg, and Michael Fishbane are well known for drawing narrative criticism into the wider scope of biblical studies. Their works including *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (Alter), *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Sternberg), and *Text and Texture* (Fishbane) combined with new emphases in the 1970s in journals such as *Semeia* and *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* to push literary criticism into mainstream scholarship. Brevard Childs also deserves some attention here as his canonical criticism is useful for a holistic understanding of Ezekiel with a focus as to its shaping of and by the exilic community.

Moore persuasively argues that narrative criticism finds its roots in two literary critical movements: the Russian Formalism and American New Criticism of the 1940s and the brand of French Structuralism that gained influence in America in the 1980s.[11] Moore persuasively makes the connection between the "close reading" of New Criticism and the rise of books such as Robert Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative* that emphasize

10. Stephen D. Moore, "Biblical Narrative Analysis from the New Criticism to the New Narratology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Danna Nolan Fewell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 27.

11. Moore, "Biblical Narrative Analysis," 28.

attention to the formal features of biblical narrative. Biblical criticism often lags behind the trends of the disciplines that it incorporates, so it is no surprise that the Russian formalism that gained prominence in the New Critical movement of the 1940-60s blossomed in the emergence of a later narrative criticism focused on "intrinsic meaning indissociable from the formal features of the work."[12] For the purpose of this thesis, new criticism's emphasis on aesthetic unity producing thematic unity and artistic ambiguity will be utilized in the "close reading" of Ezek 40–48 without fully adopting the new critical aversion to historical context and authorial intention.

As for the influence of structuralists such as Gerard Genette, A.J. Greimas, and Tzevetan Todorov (whose *Introduction to Poetics* was published the same year as Alter's seminal work),[13] a deep dive into each of their methods is somewhat beyond the scope of the present study. However, Greimas's influence on Richard Hays will be shortly discussed as Hays's work stands as a helpful analogy for narrative criticism in the prophets below. Regardless, this thesis maintains that the study of literature can be an end in itself without the higher goal of mapping the structural linguistics of narrative communication.

Narrative Criticism in the Torah

The use of narrative criticism and a focus on the final form of the texts in the Torah represents a current trend in scholarship. By nature concerned with textual coherence, conservative evangelical scholars such as John Sailhamer have proposed various literary studies in the Torah emphasizing its structural unity. Sailhamer argues

12. Moore, "Biblical Narrative Analysis," 28.

13. Moore, "Biblical Narrative Analysis," 28.

that the blocks of priestly legislation in Exod 35–Lev 17 and Lev 18–26 intentionally follow the episodes of the golden calf (Exod 32) and the goats (Lev 17) as paradigmatic narratives to set up a need for legislation on idolatry. Various legal materials are thus artistically incorporated into a coherent narrative structure in the Torah's "representation of reality."[14]

But the wider field of critical scholarship is following this trend as well, after its own fashion. While Liane Feldman does not eschew the findings of source criticism, she argues that previous scholarship has largely jettisoned the laws and sacrificial instructions of the Torah in its quest for texts of literary value.[15] She argues in her extensive monograph that the Priestly Narrative, which is about half ritual material and half narrative, incorporates its materials together into one literary narrative. In this view, the legal texts "are not simply repurposed older materials; they are essential components of the story and its various elements" and to separate these texts of different genres "is to destroy the internal structure and logic of the story."[16] She focuses on the inauguration of the tabernacle to demonstrate this phenomenon, arguing that Exod 40–Num 8 intentionally slows time in a singular setting and incorporates its ritual instructions into a coherent narrative plotline.[17]

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14. John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins, 1995), 8.

15. Liane M. Feldman, *The Story of Sacrifice: Ritual and Narrative in the Priestly Source*, FAT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 1.

16. Feldman, *The Story of Sacrifice*, 5.

17. Feldman, *The Story of Sacrifice*, 6.

Current examples of final form readings that emphasize the literary design of disparate genres in the Torah multiply.[18] In a study with similar premises to Feldman's, Christoph Nihan argues on the basis of a recontextualization of a tithe law in Num 18 from the Holiness Code in Lev 27 that the final editor(s) of the book of Numbers created a literary product where "different legal and narrative traditions were brought together into a single, comprehensive document."[19] If this thesis were a study utilizing narrative criticism in the Torah, its justification could safely rest in the mainstream of contemporary scholarship. But is anyone doing narrative criticism in prophetic texts?

Narrative Criticism in the Prophets?

Narrative criticism has not yet caught on in the prophets; these texts represent something of a new frontier for literary critics. After all, the *Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative* has only one article on narrative in the Latter Prophets, stating plainly that "few scholars writing on biblical narrative have dealt in depth with stories in the prophetic books Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve" (yet)![20]

In her brief survey of narratives in the Latter Prophets, Tull notes that nearly the entire book of Ezekiel is told in the first person and "divine speeches predominate, with very few dramas, or even dramatized dialogues. Interactions with other humans are

18. Jean Louis Ska, *"Our Fathers Have Told Us": Introduction to the Analysis of Hebrew Narratives* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000), 1–3.

19. Christoph Nihan, "The Priestly Laws of Numbers, the Holiness Legislation, and the Pentateuch," in *Torah and the Book of Numbers*. Eds. Christian Frevel, et. al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 134.

20. Patricia K. Tull, "Narrative Among the Latter Prophets," in *The Oxford Handbook of Biblical Narrative*, ed. Dana Nolan Fewell (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 216.

minimal and lead to divine speeches."[21] Tull implies that Ezekiel has very little narrative material since the book does not use the standard third-person narrator for Hebrew narrative and any narrative elements serve as simple frames for instructional speeches. While Ezekiel does not have the same kind of narrative elements as its contemporary, the book of Jeremiah (including dramatic first-person dialogues in Jer 1–20, first-person fulfillment reports in Jer 13, 18, 24, 25, and third-person narratives beginning in Jer 19), Ezekiel still exhibits narrative sophistication in its literary substructure. This feature comes out especially in Ezekiel's narrated visionary texts, of which Ezek 40–48 stands as the climactic exemplar.

In his survey of the historical development of literary approaches to biblical texts, Beal also notes that in recent decades narrative criticism has begun to spread from Torah studies to find similar complex plotlines in prophetic works, such as the Book of the Twelve.[22] In the past, the Book of the Twelve has been viewed as a collection only held together by the similar genres and compositional lengths of its individual works. Paul House, however, argues for a narrative plot across the collection. House defines "plot" as "a selected sequence of logically caused events that present a conflict and its resolution by utilizing certain established literary devices" and argues persuasively that the books join together "to announce sin, punishment, and restoration" in a "well-defined" plotline so that the books can all be read as one unified narrative of Israel's relationship with YHWH.[23]

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21. Tull, "Narrative Among the Latter Prophets," 218.

22. Beal, "Literary Approaches," 509.

23. Paul R. House, *The Unity of the Twelve*, JSOTSup 97 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 116.

With current scholarship tentatively beginning to bring narrative criticism into the Prophets, one wonders why Ezekiel has not been seen as a prime candidate for this kind of analysis. After all, the overwhelming majority of the book is written in prose. And unlike preexilic prophecy, which seems to be originally oral, the book of Ezekiel is "fundamentally literary" in its compositional character.[24] This is why even the form-critical methodology of Zimmerli's monumental commentary traces the book's composition purely from a written standpoint in his analysis of the fifty speech units within the text.[25]

Although the book of Ezekiel has not yet been thoroughly analyzed through the lens of narrative criticism, Richard Hays's work on narrative substructure in the epistles of Paul can prove a helpful analogy for the present study. In a monograph on Galatians, Hays concentrates on the "narrative elements that undergird Paul's thought,"[26] observing how "a story about Jesus Christ is presupposed by Paul's argument in Galatians, and his theological reflection attempts to articulate the meaning of that story."[27] While the different points on the Πίστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in Gal 3:1–4:11 can be difficult to follow as logical discourse, Hays argues that Paul's thought here "is grounded in a narrative logic, i.e., in patterns of order that are proper to story rather than to discursive reasoning."[28]

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24. Stephen L. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 22B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 3.

25. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1*, 42.

26. Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, 2nd ed, Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), xxiii.

27. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, xxiv.

28. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 194.

Hays makes sense of some of the disjunction between Gal 3:13–14 and Gal 4:3–6 and other passages by positing a narrative backbone underneath this material. He follows a structural model including an initial sequence, a topical sequence (featuring a contract, disjunction/conjunction, performance, and attribution), and a final sequence.[29] He combines this model with Greimas's actantial model influential in structural criticism and exemplified in narratives on the quest for the Holy Grail featuring a *Sender*, a *Subject*, an *Object*, a *Receiver*, and an *Opponent*.[30] He argues that this underlying narrative substructure to the letter provides a "principle of coherence" that makes some of Paul's statements compatible that otherwise may be seen as contradictory.[31]

Although Ezek 40–48 lives in an entirely different literary world than Paul's Greco-Roman epistles, the idea of a narrative substructure providing logic to disparate materials is useful for this thesis. In Chapter 2, the various spatial descriptions and laws of Ezek 40–48 will be analyzed as integral parts of a coherent narrative that rests on the premise of YHWH returning to the land and restoring YHWH's dominion over Israel. In any case, sufficient evidence has been provided to argue that narrative criticism in the Torah and some prophetic texts is recognized as useful by wider scholarship. This trend deserves to be carried forward into the book of Ezekiel.

29. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 90.

30. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 90.

31. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, 111.

Justification for a Comparative Study of Ezekiel 40–48 with Magical Realist Texts

Definition of *Magical Realism*

The History of Magical Realism

Before justifying the use of magical realist texts as points of comparison with the text of Ezekiel, a history and definition of the term "magical realism" are both in order. First used by the art critic Franz Roh in 1925 to describe German post-expressionist painting, the term "magical realism" later gained prominence among Latin American fiction writers and literary critics.[32] While the German artistic term described paintings that made ordinary things mysterious, where "objects are depicted with photographic naturalism but. . . strange juxtapositions convey a feeling of unreality,"[33] its later use in Latin America focused on literature that makes mysterious things ordinary.

Critics since the 1970s have acknowledged Alejo Carpentier as the link between the early twentieth-century artistic phenomenon associated with Europe in the 1920s and the literature of Latin America in the 1950s.[34] Carpentier coined the term "the marvelous real" (*lo real maravilloso*) in the preface to his first novel, *The Kingdom of this World* (*El reino de este mundo*).[35] He argues that "the marvelous real" is a quality inherent in Latin American history and is different than European Surrealism (a movement in which

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32. Erik Camayd-Freixas, "Magical Realism," in *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Latin American and Caribbean Literature, 1900—2003*, ed. Daniel Balderston and Mike Gonzalez (London: Routledge, 2004), 329.

33. Ian Chivers, Harold Osborne, and Dennis Farr, eds., "Magic Realism (Magical Realism)," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 305.

34. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 75.

35. Alejo Carpentier, "On the Marvelous Real in America (1949)," in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 84.

Carpentier participated in Europe in the 1930s) since it is not a means of exploring higher reality through illogical absurdity but "an amplification of perceived reality really required by and inherent in Latin American nature and culture."[36]

Carpentier's classic example of the fantastic as inherent in Latin American history comes from his stay in Haiti, where he learned about the execution of the eighteenth-century slave revolt leader Mackandal, who was believed to have lycanthropic powers. Contrary to the colonists' expectations, the execution only fueled Haitian rebellion as "thousands of men, anxious for freedom . . . produced a miracle" as they saw his spirit transforming into an animal as he burned at the stake.[37] Following this insight, Carpentier's historical fiction became the classic example of how magical realism involves placing European and native (here, African-Caribbean) perceptions of events alongside each other, creating a "situation of cultural duality" in which European/Enlightenment realism is juxtaposed with native/magical worldviews to portray history from multiple perspectives in tension.[38] Carpentier's novel (and subsequent examples of the genre)[39] presented myth and magic "as normal everyday realities" while those aspects of Western rationality associated with modernity are "naively regarded with suspicion and disbelief."[40]

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36. Carpentier, "On the Marvelous Real in America (1949), 75.

37. Carpentier, "On the Marvelous Real in America," 86–87.

38. William Roe, "Magical Realism" in *Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature*, ed. Verity Smith (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), 506.

39. In addition to Alejo Carpentier's *El Reino de Este Mundo* (*The Kingdom of This World*) published in 1949, early works include Miguel Angel Asturias's 1949 *Hombres de Maiz* (*Men of Maize*) in 1949 and Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Paramo* in 1955. See Camayd-Freixas, "Magical Realism," 330.

40. Camayd-Freixas, "Magical Realism," 330.

After Carpentier, magical realism entered a second stage of international recognition and self-conscious artistry. If Carpentier's novel provided an original definition in Latin American Literature for Magic Realism, Gabriel García Márquez gave it international recognition, and Angel Flores tweaked its definition. In his article in 1955, Angel Flores moved away from Carpentier's definition of magic realism as a quality necessary to a true description of Latin American reality to define the term as "an amalgamation of realism and fantasy," citing Kafka's *Metamorphosis* as the stylistic precursor and the publication of the works of the Argentinian philosopher and author Jorges Luis Borges in 1935 as the true starting point for the genre.[41]

Following Flores's insights and the popularizing of García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, magical realism is known as an "artful distortion of reality," moving away from Carpentier to argue that their events should not be taken at face value but instead function as "an allegorical interpretation of Latin American history and culture."[42] Thus in works after *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, such as Isabel Allende's *La casa de los espiritus* (*The House of the Spirits*) in 1982 and Laura Esquivel's *Comoagua para chocolate* (*Like Water for Chocolate*) in 1989, magical realist novels are self-aware of their artificiality but nevertheless seek to provide penetrating explorations of literary truth by juxtaposing magical elements with an assumed (and largely European) reality. The creative force of these texts comes as readers are unable to rely on Western Enlightenment ideas to interpret magical realist narration, so they are forced to

41. Angel Flores, "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction (1955)" in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 112-113.

42. Camayd-Freixas, "Magical Realism," 330.

acknowledge the validity of popular indigenous beliefs and read from a native perspective.

The final shift in magical realism came as it shifted from largely being used solely to describe Latin American literature in the 1960s–1990s. Today, the label has broadened to describe texts originating in German, Canadian, and Indian contexts that elevate magical attitudes through rational reporting, and magical realist literature has thus become a wide-ranging corpus including works such as Günter Grass's *The Tin Drum* (1959), Jack Hodgins's *The Invention of the World* (1977), and, significantly for the present study, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981).[43] In the current stage of international production within the genre, Anne Hegerfeldt helpfully defines magical realism according to its literary characteristics.

Hegerfeldt's Five Pillars of Magical Realism

To ameliorate confusion at the expansive nature of the magical realist genre today, Anne Hegerfeldt's five pillars will be used to define the attributes of magical realist texts for this study. Her categories help differentiate magical realism from other genres that combine fantastic and realistic elements such as surrealism, science fiction, or some forms of fantasy while constructively limiting the corpus of magical realist texts to a sizeable but manageable canon. These pillars, or "prototypical attributes," include the fusion of realistic and fantastic elements, matter-of-fact narration, the literalization of

43. Anne C. Hegerfeldt, *Lies That Tell the Truth: Magic Realism Seen Through Contemporary Fiction from Britain* (Costerus, Amsterdam: Brill, 2005), 41.

metaphor and related strategies, the portrayal of reality as fantastic, and a concern with the production of knowledge.[44]

The fusion of realistic and fantastic elements is so central to the genre that it is embedded into the name of "magical realism." Whereas high fantasy works such as J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* or those of more contemporary authors such as Brandon Sanderson typically exist in a closed world with an intricate magic system and unique timeline, magical realism works bring the fantastic into everyday reality.

In Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, the ghost of Joseph D'Costa invades Methwold's Estate in twentieth-century Bombay, Saleem's telepathic children's conferences span the geopolitical gambit of the newly independent India, and visions of a ghost army occur at empty border guard stations between India and Pakistan. While García Márquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is set in the fictional Macondo, the inhabitants find themselves embroiled in dateable events in Colombian history. The book begins in the aftermath of Colombian independence in the early nineteenth century, and afterwards the characters grapple with civil wars, neo-colonization, and the effects of industrialization in episodes that parallel and intersect actual historical events through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Through this technique, the fusion and clash between empirical history and the fantastic creates the sparks of magical realism that offer a kind of colonial resistance to the imperial production of knowledge.

But even classic fantasy works can invade historical reality, as any reader familiar with J.K. Rowling's Platform 9 and Three Quarters or C.S. Lewis's famous Wardrobe will no doubt be aware. What makes fantastic elements in magic realist texts different

44. Hegerfeldt, *Lies that Tell the Truth*, 46.

than their high fantasy counterparts comes from an author's careful attention to matter-of-fact narration. It seems more than mere coincidence that García Márquez, the Spanish novelist who put magical realism on the map, began and ended his literary career as a journalist. The nonchalant narration in magic realist works requires what Anne Hegerfeldt calls "magic realist focalizers": characters who perceive the supernatural events as normal and hardly comment upon them.[45] These characters typically operate from different assumptions than contemporary (and often Western) readers, so that audiences' expectations get subverted by magical realist texts' "bidimensionality" as journalistic narration takes readers into a realist mode that then conflicts with the non-realistic events that are narrated.[46] The nonchalant acceptance of the narrator and characters who perceive fantastic elements then forces audiences to alter their own assumptions and open their own minds to a new perspective on reality, a perspective that often embodies the values of the colonized.

In addition to its realistic presentation of fantastic events, the magical realism genre literalizes metaphors and other figurative strategies in realist literature. Sayings that function as simple rhetoric become actualized as characters really "burn with love," "become what they eat," and get "swept under the rug." Hegerfeldt writes that the technique of literalization "suggests that metaphors can be as important and true as empirical descriptions of reality."[47] Using this technique, the myriad of ghosts in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are interpreted as different embodiments of memories or the

45. Hegerfeldt, *Lies that Tell the Truth*, 54.

46. Hegerfeldt, *Lies that Tell the Truth*, 54.

47. Hegerfeldt, *Lies that Tell the Truth*, 56.

personification of the family conscience. The narrator of *Midnight's Children* offers one explanation of the 1,001 children born on the night of India's independence as "the last throw of everything antiquated" that represents the potential of a free future for "our myth-ridden nation."[48] But he nevertheless insists that they are "flesh-and-blood characters."[49]

The literalization of metaphor becomes an interesting point of comparison with the book of Ezekiel. The text of Ezekiel occasionally sketches earlier pre-exilic prophetic metaphors in excruciating literal detail to portray Ezekiel as the prophet *par excellence*. For example, Ezek 1 makes use of motifs from Isa 6 to describe the כבוד of YHWH at the boundary of heaven and earth. Also, Ezekiel's infamously graphic visions of the זנה ("whore") Jerusalem and Samaria in Ezek 16 and 23 develop the earlier prophet Hosea's analogy of Israel as an adulterous wife to YHWH in Hos 1–3.[50] While the author of these texts in Ezekiel does not intend the images of Jerusalem and Samaria as unfaithful women to be interpreted literally, the artistic decision to develop earlier prophetic metaphors in otherwise unnecessary detail is similar to the magical realist impulse to realize figurative language for rhetorical effect.

Although magical realism is most famous for making the fantastic realistic, its converse tendency to make reality fantastic also provides avenues for subversive artistry.

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48. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (New York: Random House, 2006), 230.

49. Hegerfeldt, *Lies that Tell the Truth*, 50.

50. Corrine L. Patton, "Priest, Prophet, and Exile: Ezekiel as a Literary Construct," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality*, ed. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 75.

The portrayal of normal events as marvelous delegitimizes the epistemology of Western colonists and alienates the view that progress makes violence necessary and acceptable. Lori Chamberlain connects this quality in North American magical realism to "the increasingly fantastical quality of life in late capitalism—where people walk on the moon, go to drive-in churches, and have pet rocks."[51] Examples proliferate of this kind of making the real fantastic in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in which flying carpets or levitation through chocolate are widely accepted in Macondo but magnets, ice, the phonograph, moving pictures, and the locomotive are regarded with suspicion.[52]

But the full force of making reality fantastic comes as magical realism forces readers to grapple with the truth that the post-colonial and post-Holocaust world is more inconceivably cruel and frighteningly unpredictable than anyone can reasonably believe. In the fantastic world of textbooks and current history, "anything that can be imagined may potentially come true, because what is true already has surpassed the unthinkable," so that instead of denying the reality of incredible human violence and systematic oppression, "the fantastic tone [of magical realism texts] conveys a heightened sense of despair over the fact that, tragically, they are only all too possible."[53]

Perhaps the most overtly postmodern aspect of magical realism is the genre's preoccupation with the production and validation of knowledge. Magical realism exposes the ways that modern epistemology rests on "objective" assumptions validated by power

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51. Lori Chamberlain, "Magicking the Real: Paradoxes of Postmodern Writing," in *Postmodern Fiction: A Bio-Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Larry McCaffery, Movements in the Arts 2 (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 9.

52. Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 1–2, 239, 242.

53. Hegerfeldt, *Lies that Tell the Truth*, 61.

structures by tracing the ways that knowledge is produced, particularly in colonial societies. This emphasis explains why works such as *One Hundred Years of Solitude* or *Midnight's Children* trace the post-colonial histories of their respective nations through a fantastic lens; these "rewritings of official versions of history" playfully use the technique of magical realism to tell the story of independence from an oppressed perspective and thereby "reveal the extent to which history never consists of purely factual and impartial accounts but serves the interests of those who write it."[54]

History is after all written by the (in the cases of these two novels, European) winners, and magical realism's use of myths, legends, and oral folklore offers a native resistance to historical definition from the outside as it puts marginal viewpoints into the epistemic center. Magical realist texts thereby imply that other forms of knowledge can sometimes prove more useful than empirical science in understanding the nature of reality.

In its own way, the book of Ezekiel offers just such an alternative viewpoint. The book functions as an act of colonial resistance as Ezekiel makes the case that YHWH has not been defeated by Marduk or the other gods of Babylon but instead planned the exile of Israel and will create a new future for his people. Ezekiel thus offers an alternative version of history on the basis of the covenantal viewpoint of Israel's interaction with God throughout the nation's history. While Ezekiel does not combat post-Enlightenment epistemology as neocolonial magical realist texts do, the book still confronts the truth that the Babylonians in power of its own time have written as history. In Chapter 3, Ezekiel will be examined in light of Assyrian and Babylonian propaganda to demonstrate its

54. Hegerfeldt, *Lies that Tell the Truth*, 63.

features of epistemic resistance similar to the two other novels of colonial resistance that represent the focus of this study.

Magical Realism, Ezekiel 40–48, and Postcolonial Criticism

Defining Postcolonial Criticism

Important thinkers in the field of postcolonial criticism include Frantz Fanon (esteemed for his 1961 book, *The Wretched of the Earth*), Edward Said (noted for his 1978 work, *Orientalism*), and more recently, contemporary figures such as Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha.[55] In her authoritative article in *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Postcolonial Writing*, Jenni Ramone writes that postcolonial studies "remains an adaptable and robust critique of global inequalities, resulting from the rampant colonialism of the nineteenth and early-to-mid twentieth centuries, or from more recent neocolonial systems."[56] The term "neocolonial" is used in postcolonial studies to refer to populations that technically have political independence in theory but in practice are severely dependent economically or otherwise on a dominating power.

While any text can be analyzed through a postcolonial lens as critics seek to examine its function in establishing or resisting cultural dominance, those texts written by native populations during or closely following periods of colonial oppression provide especially fruitful topics of study. This study is not going to touch traditional debates in postcolonial studies such as the Marxist versus post-structuralist split within the field;[57]

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55. Jenni Ramone, *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Postcolonial Writing: New Contexts, New Narratives, New Debates* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 1.

56. Ramone, *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Postcolonial Writing*, 2.

57. Ramone, *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Postcolonial Writing*, 6.

rather, this study simply rests on the presupposition that Ezek 40–48 has thematic characteristics in common with other texts written in colonial contexts with similar rhetorical aims. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Midnight's Children* function as acts of colonial resistance through their use of the magical realist genre, so examining Ezek 40–48 as an act of colonial resistance can serve to illuminate its literary elements as a precursor to this genre.

Ezekiel 40–48 as an Act of Colonial Resistance

Joseph Blenkinsopp observes in his commentary on Ezekiel that the "regularity and homogeneity" of the measurements of the temple "are part of a symbolic structure of meaning which transcends without entirely leaving behind the physical and historical reality of city and temple."[58] The painstaking attention to detail in Ezek 40–48 gives the passage literary realism, but its symbolic images and mythological motifs put the realization of the vision outside of a historical setting. Due to these features, Ezek 40–48 is often interpreted as an eschatological vision designed to predict and describe YHWH's ideal reign over Israel realized at the end of history. Stephen L. Cook, however, sees Ezek 40–48 as standing in an entirely different genre, one that is helpful for understanding the text as a subversive narrative: Utopian literature.[59]

Cook introduces his discussion of the genre of Ezek 40–48 by asking two deceptively simple questions: Can the vision of Ezek 40–48 actually be carried out by Israel within history, and if not, does it depict a perfect future at the end of history? Surprisingly, he answers "no" to both questions.

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58. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, IBC (Louisville: Westminster John-Knox Press, 1990), 199.

59. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 5.

Cook argues that, like Sir Thomas More's sixteenth-century "Utopia" (etymologically a "not-place" and a "good-place") designed to critique his contemporary England, Ezek 40–48 functions as a "teaching picture" where readers encounter a world with no real time or place that expresses the holiness and purity that God's people are to embody.[60] Similar to More's work, Ezekiel's vision is then meant as a "social critique, which must grapple persuasively with the continuing struggles and tragedies of real life."[61] While remaining partly within historical reality, the vision functions as a challenge to the present status-quo.

Cook argues on the basis of form-critical evidence—such as the lack of specific prophetic word formulas, the lack of oracles announcing God's intervention in history, and the lack of Zimmerli's *Erkenntnisaussage* refrain—that the vision should not be interpreted as eschatological prophecy.[62] Some of these points could be argued from textual evidence—for example, the formula נאם אדני יהוה ("thus the Lord YHWH has said") comes in Ezek 43:19 and other places, although it introduces legislation rather than historical predictions within the vision.

Nevertheless, Cook's points are helpful for recognizing the ahistorical but imperfect reality depicted in Ezek 40–48. Cherubim are still needed to terrify intruders (Ezek 41:17–20), atonement is still required (Ezek 45:17, 20), monarchic abuses must still be protected against, and Israel's prophesied transformed heart must not be presupposed since purification and reparation offerings are still necessary (Ezek 40:39;

60. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 5.

61. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 6.

62. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 5.

42:13).[63] Again, Cook's argument here is not unassailable—purification offerings are required after normal events as beautiful as childbirth, and it seems unlikely that a priest's picture of a perfect future would not include ritual sacrifices. However, he helpfully draws attention to these realistic elements of the text that exist alongside its fantastic elements and ideal structures.

So, what was the book's implied exilic audience to do with Ezek 40–48? It cannot function as an architectural blueprint since it lists no building materials and Ezek 40–42 is largely a two-dimensional sketch without height descriptions. In any case, YHWH is the builder of the temple, not the people—an important rhetorical feature that will be explored with regard to the connection between narration and legislation in Chapter 2. The vision of the temple is detailed but evasive—it is so real that readers can touch it but so ephemeral that they cannot build it. These detailed descriptions combine with fantastic elements such as divinely chiseled stonework, a stone platform that caps the pre-created chaos, and a stream that spawns miraculous trees (Ezek 43:17; 47:1, 6). Yet despite these elements, Ezek 40–48 does not depict a God-given eschatological world beyond the possibility of evil.

If this account is not strictly predicting the God-given future perfect end of history or providing a model for Israel to create within history, what is it doing? Although this study will not use Cook's designation of Ezek 40–48 as a utopia text, one answer is that Ezek 40–48 is meant to function as a social critique that promises a new identity that YHWH will give to Israel. In her monograph on the rhetoric of Ezek 40–48, Stevenson makes the following salient point: "Those who argue that the Book of Ezekiel had no

63. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 5.

effect in postexilic Israel, because the future temple did not get built according to this 'plan,' have missed the fact that postexilic Israel was a society organized around a temple without a human king. . . [this is] the radical change in social structure imagined by this vision."[64]

The tightly constructed symbolic world of Ezek 40–48 offers a new identity and a present challenge to its implied exilic audience. As such, it functions as colonial resistance literature since it redefines Israel's cultural identity apart from the Babylonians. The nature and implications of this challenge will be explored in Chapters 2 and 3.

However, while studying Ezek 40–48 as a precursor to magical realist texts requires attention to ways that the text redefines the present Israel in an act of social resistance, its function as a beacon of eschatological hope should not be overlooked. The symbolic nature of the vision has allowed the fulfillment of Ezek 40–48 to be deferred after the construction of Zerubbabel's temple as far as John of Patmos' recapitulation of the vision in the first century CE. Although some aspects of the text may indicate that a perfect future is not in view, this is because Ezekiel depicts YHWH's restoration of Israel in familiar categories without jettisoning the experienced world of his exilic audience.

The text thus exists in rhetorical tension as it depicts a beautiful new reality and identity for Israel that only YHWH can create but also challenges Israel to take an active role in participating in that new future through its legislative social and moral

64. Kalinda Rose Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation: The Territorial Rhetoric of Ezekiel 40–48*, Dissertation Series / Society of Biblical Literature: No. 154 (Scholars Press, 1996), 153.

implications. Ezekiel 40–48 thus possesses the literary hallmarks of magical realism in its fantastic/realistic elements and its existence as an act of colonial resistance.

Thematic Overlap Between Ezekiel 40–48 and Magical Realist Texts

The earlier observation that magical realism subverts Western epistemic methods represents one of the most interesting ways that the magic realism genre functions as a postcolonial polemic. Indeed, magical realism likely originally flourished in South America rather than North America or Europe because the latter two post-Enlightenment cultures often pose few limits to reason and place strict boundaries between the material/real and the supernatural/unreal. Magic realism seeks to dismantle these boundaries as the genre demonstrates that all of human experience cannot be understood through rational study and empirical evidence alone.

One literary example of this phenomenon in a Western context comes in a character from C.S. Lewis's *Perelandra*. Upon seeing an alien creature somewhere between an immaterial angel and a powerful animal, he remarks on the usefulness and artificiality of these epistemic boundaries: "The distinction between natural and supernatural, in fact, broke down; and when it had done so, one realized how great a comfort it had been—how it had eased the burden of intolerable strangeness which this universe imposes on us by dividing it into two halves and encouraging the mind never to think of both in the same context."[65]

The traditional barrier between rational and fantastic events that Lewis's character mentions is broken down in the works of García Márquez and Rushdie through their juxtaposition of supernatural elements and the small details of material life, causing

65. C. S. Lewis, *Perelandra: A Novel* (New York: Scribner Classics, 1996), 147.

readers to perceive the limits of scientific explanations and explore the real strangeness of human existence. This reevaluation often elevates the perspectives of the colonized. While the magical realist elements of Ezekiel serve to combat an alternative Babylonian cosmology rather than Western naturalism, the postcolonial parallels are instructive.

These parallels will be used as a bridge to connect Ezekiel with two contemporary novels, as they are all set in periods of colonial and neocolonial oppression and their literary rhetoric resists those (Babylonian, Spanish/American, and British) powers that seek to define their identity and destiny. In Chapter 3, three specific points of thematic overlap will serve as points of comparison between *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Midnight's Children*, and Ezek 40–48. These are (1) Truth is created through power; (2) History is a downward spiral; and (3) Security is achieved through detailed realism.

Preliminary Conclusions

This thesis rests on the view that Ezek 40–48 stands as a unified narrative text following the final vision of the prophet. This vision has been variously interpreted as a detailed blueprint to be built, a symbolic social critique, and a prophetic prediction of an eschatological future. Viewing Ezek 40–48 as a precursor to the magical realist genre allows interpreters to see its social function as an act of colonial resistance without negating its hopeful reliance on YHWH to fulfill this vision in a beautiful future reality for Israel.

In Chapter 2, a narrative analysis of Ezek 40–48 will be provided in the areas of structure, setting, plot, and characterization. Then, to explore how texts with supernature and realist elements resist colonial regimes, Chapter 3 will provide a comparative analysis of Ezekiel's final vision, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and *Midnight's*

Children in the thematic areas of truth as created through power, history as a downward spiral, and security being achieved through detailed realism. Finally, a conclusion will be offered that recapitulates and synthesizes the points made above.

CHAPTER II

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF EZEKIEL 40–48

Introduction

Now that the premise of utilizing narrative analysis in the Hebrew prophetic texts has been explicated, the present study turns to analyze Ezek 40–48 through a narrative lens. It should be clear by now that Ezek 40–48 largely functions as an aesthetically unified work, and as such the various architectural and legislative texts contained within the final temple vision make artistic sense as a literary whole. With this in mind, the elements of structure, setting, plot, and characterization in Ezek 40–48 will be analyzed before turning in the next chapter to compare Ezek 40–48 with contemporary magical realist texts to provide insight into its aims and artistry.

The study on structure includes three sections surveying basic outlines of Ezek 40–48 within Ezekiel and the structure of Ezek 40–48 before providing an excursus on similarities between Ezek 40–48 and the Torah. The analysis of setting includes two sections on time and place, and the place section pays special attention to Kalinda Rose Stevenson's monograph on the territorial rhetoric of Ezek 40–48 After this, the various architectural and legal sections of Ezek 40–48 will be examined as one coherent plotline with an introduction and rising action, a climax, and a falling action and resolution. Before offering some concluding remarks, a character study will focus on the character of

Ezekiel within the book's final vision as a priest and a prophet and as a literary type of Moses.

Structure

Ezekiel 40–48 within Ezekiel

Andrew Mein aptly summarizes the book of Ezekiel's message: the prophet in the text "reminds his hearers of YHWH's continuing power, explains the disaster as the result of Judah's sin, and . . . imagines the shape of a new future."[1] This content can be loosely structured under the headings of judgment on Jerusalem (1–24), oracles concerning the nations (25–32), and the restoration of Israel (33–48).[2] This loose thematic structure stands in creative tension with a series of fourteen chronological date formulae beginning with the exile of Jehoiachin in 597 BCE and setting Ezekiel's prophetic ministry between the dates of 593 BCE and 573 BCE.[3] Zimmerli notes a few chronological deviations in the date formula in Ezek 26:1, Ezek 29:17, and Ezek 32:1,[4] but he would broadly agree with Greenberg's point that although these few exceptions indicate an editorial focus on thematic continuity, the greater weight given to chronology suggests that "the editor did not hold the view that Ezekiel prophesied in periods of exclusive themes."[5]

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1. Andrew Mein, "Ezekiel: Structure, Themes, and Contested Issues" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Prophets*, ed. Carolyn J. Sharp (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 190. See also Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1—20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 22A (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 6.

2. Mein, "Ezekiel," 191.

3. Mein, "Ezekiel," 191.

4. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 2.

5. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 5.

Nevertheless, as the book stands, Ezekiel's oracles generally move from the condemnation of Israel to the restoration of Israel. Ezekiel 40–48 plays a key role as the climax of this larger movement, describing the transformation and sanctification of the land of Israel in painstaking detail as Ezekiel describes YHWH returning to a new temple and giving instructions for the exilic returnees' holy and new life in the land.

Although previous scholarship has often seen Ezek 40–48 as a somewhat haphazard appendix to the book, recent literary studies such as those of McKeating demonstrate that the book's ending stands as an integral link in the narrative "backbone" of the work that follows the כבוד, a technical priestly term for the presence and glory of YHWH.[6] This thematic spine begins in Ezek 1 with Ezekiel's vision of YHWH's כבוד by the River Chebar, continues in Ezek 8–11 as Ezekiel sees YHWH's כבוד leave the holy city in his "flying visit" to Jerusalem, and climaxes with Ezekiel's vision of the return of YHWH's כבוד to the land of Israel in his vision of the new temple in Ezek 40–48.[7] The following literary analysis assumes the conclusion of McKeating and others that the thematic emphases of Ezek 40–48 indicate that it has an integral connection with the final form of the book of Ezekiel, and it will be argued later that the return of the glory of YHWH in in Ezek 43:1–5 functions as the climax of the passage.

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6. H. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses'?" *JSOT* 61 (1994); 98. This specialized vocabulary term appears also in Exod 24:16; 40:34–35; Lev 9:6, 23; Num 14:10, 21; 16:19; 17:7; and 20:6. See Weinfeld's article in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (22–38) which discusses both the concrete meaning of the term as a fiery radiance and the abstract meaning of the term as YHWH's personified honor, dignity, majesty, and goodness in priestly thought.

7. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses'?" 98.

Outline of Ezekiel 40–48

Although Stephen Cook prefers to analyze Ezek 38–39 together with Ezek 40–48 due to his conviction concerning their shared authorship, he recognizes that differences in literary genre separate the two sections. (In his parlance, Ezek 38–39 is "proto-apocalyptic" and Ezek 40–48 is "utopian literature.")[8] While Cook's analysis helpfully stresses the thematic and authorial overlap between the Gog and Magog passages and the vision of the new temple, a clear break between the two sections is to be preferred for analytical purposes. It can certainly be argued that the two sections are connected, as a utopian vision for Israel's future restoration (Ezek 40–48) is certainly not possible without the elimination of Israel's oppressors (Ezek 38–39). However, from a narrative perspective Ezek 40–48 must be viewed as its own unit since (1) Ezek 40–48 is written as a narrative vision whereas Ezek 38–39 reads as a string of prophetic messages; (2) as a vision, Ezek 40–48 employs the simple past narrative tense whereas Ezek 38–39 utilizes the future tense; and (3) Ezek 40–48 is predominated by first-person narrative description whereas Ezek 38–39 narrates its narrative descriptions largely from YHWH's perspective.

As the last of the date markers, Ezek 40:1 can safely be viewed as the beginning of a new literary unit. And while outlines of Ezek 40–48 can tend to emphasize the generic disunity of the various architectural and legal passages, the specific literary focus of this chapter requires a unified view of the entire passage—therefore compositional debates were sidestepped in the previous section and only briefly covered in Chapter 1.

8. Stephen L. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 22B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 4.

Since the entire passage—its building details, cultic regulations, royal prescriptions, and even land allocation—is couched within a prophetic vision (Ezek 40:2), Ezek 40–48 will be analyzed as a unified narrative with legal elements similar to those narratives found in the Torah.

Prominent text critics argue for a general three-part structure to Ezekiel's vision of the restored temple in Ezek 40–48. Walther Zimmerli divides the passage into The New Temple (40:1–42:20), The Entry of Yahweh into his Sanctuary and the New Ordinances for the Prince, the Priests, and the People (43:1–46:24), and The Land Around the New Sanctuary (47:1–48:35).[9] Leslie Allen keeps the same divisions with The New Temple (40:1–42:20), The New Temple in Action (43:1–46:24), and Temple and Land (47:1–48:35).[10]

Literary approaches emphasize four to five sections based on thematic emphases. Daniel Block observes four sections as Ezekiel envisions the new temple (40:1–43:11), the new Torah (43:12–46:24), the new land (47:1–48:29), and the new city (48:30–35).[11] Block's approach will be disregarded as he follows essentially the same structure as Allen and Zimmerli but makes the final few verses their own section. McKeating argues for five stages in the "narrative core" of the vision: (1) The prophet sees and describes the restored temple in Ezek 40:5–42:20 before seeing the divine glory return in Ezek 43:1–5; (2) regulations are given concerning cultic worship in Ezek 45:13–46:15; (3) the

9. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2016), vi-vii.

10. Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, WBC 28 (Dallas: Word, 1990), viii.

11. Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48*. NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 494.

priesthood is regulated in Ezek 44:15–31; (4) land is allocated in Ezek 47:13–48:29; and (5) regulations for the "prince" are given in Ezek 45:7–17 and Ezek 46:16–18.[12] McKeating's approach suits his purpose of emphasizing the structural overlap between Ezekiel 40–48 and Exod 23–25, but it is somewhat unwieldy for our purposes. In order to emphasize the coherent plotline of Ezek 40–48, its structure will be analyzed with reference to the classical Aristotelian plot model. In the plot section below, it will be argued that Ezekiel 40-48 follows a three-part structure that includes an introduction/rising action, climax, and falling action/conclusion.

As for artistic attention to structure, Henry Parunak argues for a loose chiasm in Ezek 40:1–42:16 in his doctoral dissertation on the structure of Ezekiel.[13] His model of an ABCB'A' ring structure operates on the level of setting, as the seer observes the temple from different points within the precincts.[14] Allen concurs with Parunak's evidence but expands the final section of the chiasm so that the parallelism becomes (A) Ezek 40:1–5, (B) 40:6–37, (C) 40:47–41:4, (B') 41:5–15a, (A') 42:15–20 as the account leads its reader into and out of the inner court of the temple.[15] On this scheme, the center of the chiasm literarily emphasizes the priority of the inner sanctum where YHWH's glory is about to take up residence. Regardless of the minor boundary discrepancy, Allen's and Parunak's points on the chiasm are well taken as they serve to highlight some coherence in the often difficult architectural mélange of this first section of Ezekiel.

12. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses?'" 98.

13. Henry van Dyke Parunak, "Structural Studies in Ezekiel," *HTR* 92 (1979): 510.

14. Parunak, "Structural Studies in Ezekiel," 510.

15. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 227.

While the brevity of this section may leave the false impression of a simple narrative flow and easily apprehensible artistic design in Ezek 40–48, the text itself contains some literary bumps and asides within its basic three-part structure. Zimmerli argues that some difficult passages represent later editorial editions from Ezekiel's priestly followers: these include Ezek 40:38–46, which provides descriptive additions, Ezek 41:15b–26, which uses different terminology,[16] Ezek 43:13–27, which duplicates the altar and its consecration,[17] and Ezek 45:1–8 and Ezek 46:16–18, which act as supplements or appendices to their main descriptive sections.[18] Issues of the history of composition are largely beyond the scope of this study and have been discussed in the previous chapter. Studies such as McKeating's, Allen's, and Parunak's, however, indicate that the final author(s) of Ezek 40–48 not only integrated the final vision into the artistic vision of the whole book, but that Ezekiel 40–48 artistically exhibits a coherent narrative structure that centers around the description of the new temple (40:1–42:20), the return of the כבוד and temple regulations (43:1–46:24), and the land around the temple (47:1–48:25).

Ezekiel 40–48 and the Torah

Some of the structural difficulties of Ezek 40–48 can be resolved by viewing the text as standing within the same genre as the finalized Torah: legislation within a theological narrative framework. Zimmerli concurs that the legal regulations of Ezek 40–48 match the style of the Torah, although he takes issue with their past description as

16. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 363.

17. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 422.

18. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 495, 498.

simple "draft constitution"[19] since Ezekiel's final vision functions more as a "proclamation of a new reality miraculously brought about by Yahweh" than a literal legal imposition (see especially Ezek 47:1–12).[20]

Ezekiel 40–48, like the Torah, is thus primarily narrative, incorporating its laws into a story framework as the vision of the new temple and restored Jerusalem fulfills the promises in Ezek 37:26–28. Here, YHWH promises, את־מקדשי בתוכם לעולם נתתי ("I will place my holy place in their midst forever"; cf. the description of the temple and entrance of the כבוד in Ezek 40:5–43:5), he will make ברית שלום ("covenant of peace" with Israel; cf. the legislation in Ezek 43:13–46:15), he will be מקדש ("the one who sanctifies Israel"; cf. the purifying water flowing out of the temple in Ezek 47:12–12), and he will ונתתים והרביתי אותם ("set down and multiply them"; cf. the allotment of the land in Ezek 47:13–48:29). Ezekiel 40–48 primarily describes the fulfillment of these promises through narrative means, and its legislation is included inside this framework in a similar manner to the finalized Torah.

But the evidence for commonality between Ezek 40–48 and the Torah goes beyond mere generic parallels. Some textual evidence that earlier portions of the book of Ezekiel cite scriptural materials combines with a smaller corpus of clear citations within the final vision to demonstrate that Ezek 40–48 potentially used the same sources (certainly P and possibly D) on which the final redactor(s) of the Torah drew. Cook

19. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 327.

20. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 327.

argues that Ezek 44:11 is "practically lifted" from Num 16:9, and Ezek 44:17–31 follows the Levites' rebellion with priestly regulations in the same way that the priestly laws in Num 18 follow Korah's revolt in Num 16–17.[21] The specialized term מקדש is also used for the divine abode in Ezek 44:7–9, 15–16 and Num 18:1–3, indicating that a "narrower, restricted meaning" is in play;[22] this is supported by the fact that the Levites and common people are welcome in the outer court but not in the מקדש.

According to Cook, Ezekiel and the highly literate scribe(s) who assisted him drew on written prophetic literature and priestly materials to create "sophisticated intertextual echoes of preceding scriptural material."[23] Clear evidence exists that passages in Ezekiel outside of the final temple vision reinterpret earlier texts. Ezekiel 38–39 describes God's destruction of a northern foe in terms from Isa 14. Evidence for this phenomenon comes especially from Isa 14:25. Here God's destruction of a northern foe על־ארצי"upon my land" finds a textual echo in Ezek 38:16, and another specific textual echo comes in Ezek 39:4 with the northern enemy falling על־הרי ישראל ("upon the mountains of Israel"). Ezekiel 44 also "displays a direct intertextual dialog with Isaiah 56" on including outsiders inside the priestly numbers of Israel.[24] This is supported by Ezek 44:7 and 44:9 picking up the specific term בני־נכר ("sons of the foreign one")

21. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 215.

22. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 216.

23. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 3.

24. Cook, *Ezekiel 38–48*, 218.

from Third Isaiah; while outsiders are otherwise always designated as זר ("immigrant") in Ezekiel (cf. 7:21; 11:9; 16:32; 28:7; 28:10; 30:12; 31:12), he uses Isaiah's term when he interacts with that text. It is thus demonstrable that the text of Ezekiel drew on prophetic textual sources available to privileged scribes and the priestly elite during the exile, but the parallels in Ezek 40–48 go further than this.

In fact, the intertextual parallels in Ezek 40–48 indicate that the author(s) of Ezekiel used very similar sources to those that ended up in the final version of the Torah. R. Kohn's exhaustive study on the prophet's use of language in his visions, symbolic actions, and legislation demonstrates that Ezek 40–48 draws on Priestly and Deuteronomic materials (hereafter P and D, respectively) that were also used in the production of the Torah.[25] His evidence moves from general observations on conceptual similarities to textual clues in the wording of specific passages. While it may be easy to assume that Ezekiel's final form served as a paradigm for the Priestly Code written at a later date, Kohn actually demonstrates that the opposite is true: Ezekiel utilizes images within the Priestly Code throughout his book and twists them in provocative ways.[26] These direct literary allusions include the cry of Israelite slaves in P becoming the cry of Pharaoh under the Babylonians (Ezek 30:24), Pharaoh's hardened heart in P becoming Israel's hardened heart (Ezek 3:7), and the Israelites' forty-year wandering in P becoming the Egyptians' forty-year wandering (Ezek 29:12–13).[27]

25. R. Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah*, *JSOT*Sup 358 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 107.

26. Kohn, "A New Heart and a New Soul," 111.

27. Kohn, "A New Heart and a New Soul," 112.

Some textual evidence also supports the case that Ezekiel uses P and D rather than the other way around. Ezekiel apparently accepts the Deuteronomistic worldview as he structures his theodicy around blaming the exile on Israel's idolatry and profanities rather than YHWH's powerlessness, although this is a widespread prophetic theme. Ezekiel follows the Deuteronomistic concern for a central sanctuary as well. While the priestly dimensions of the book of Ezekiel can be explained by Ezekiel's priestly background, the specifically prophetic assessments rooted in the Deuteronomistic covenantal worldview cannot.[28] McKeating agrees with the assessment that Ezek 40–48 uses the foundational Torah texts, although parallels between the two texts are mostly of "broad content, not of detail" since the final redactors of the Torah eventually shaped these sources differently.[29]

He argues that the northern boundary in Num 34:1–12 (cf. Josh 15:2–4) and the lists in Ezek 47:13–48:29 have sufficient similarities to demonstrate their textual interdependence, and it is probably no coincidence that both Ezek 44 and Exod 28–29 follow divine theophanies communicated to a messenger on a mountaintop and devote approximately half of their space to the regulation of priestly garments.[30] He also notes that the Deuteronomist in Deut 17:14–20 and Ezekiel in Ezek 45:8–9 also both restrict the power of the monarchy.[31] While McKeating's reference to broad literary parallels between the three key visionary experiences of Ezekiel and Moses's encounter with

28. Kohn, "A New Heart and a New Soul," 112.

29. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses?'" 109.

30. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses?" 101.

31. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses?" 102.

YHWH is interesting and potentially points to Ezekiel as the fulfillment of Moses's prophecy in Deut 18, only McKeating's reference to the land boundaries makes a compelling case for textual interdependence since these rest on specific lexical evidence rather than broader parallels of content.[32] In any case, Ezekiel's use of P and D does not need to be irrefutably established for the purpose of this thesis. Merely accepting Ezekiel's probable use of these documents and the interdependence of these texts in any direction will allow us to continue noting the clear compositional similarities between Ezekiel and the structure of the Torah.

But if Ezekiel 40–48 uses primary Torah texts, why does it contain laws that contradict those of P and D? In Ezekiel, the Levites are given a tribal territory, the new temple has no ark, and the description of sacrifices is different than P and D.[33] These questions will be explored further during the extended discussion on the genre of Ezekiel 40–48 at the beginning of the next chapter. For now, the above evidence is enough to conclude that Ezekiel 40–48 follows a similar structural strategy to the redactor of the Torah and uses the similar source materials—thus, Ezekiel's final vision makes coherent sense as ideal legislation within a unified theological narrative framework. This conclusion will also feature prominently in the discussion of the literary character of

32. Instead of listing the exact textual parallels, McKeating refers readers to Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 527-529. Here Zimmerli explores the textual parallels in the "consciously affirmed ideal conceptions of the extent of the land promised to Israel" in the פאת צפונה "northern side" in Ezek 47 and the גבול צפון "northern boundary" in Num 34. He argues that the northern boundary is extremely similar in both texts and finds a historical basis in the extent of the land during the Davidic period. In Zimmerli's line of reasoning, both texts point to a northern boundary in the vicinity of Riblah, as evidenced by his translation of the key phrase לבוא חמת "the gateway to Hamat" (cf. Gen 15:18; Exod 23:21; Num 13:21). Ezekiel also seems to have this conception of the northern boundary in Ezek 6:14.

33. Kohn, "A New Heart and a New Soul," 112.

Ezekiel as a type of Moses in the section on character elements within Ezekiel 40—48 below.

Setting

Time

Ezekiel's vision begins, בעשרים וחמש שנה לגלותנו (lit. "in the twenty and five year of our exile") in 40:1. This chronological timestamp is more than a historical marker, it provides the initial artistic setting for the vision of restoration. And assuming that Ezekiel uses the Babylonian priestly calendar (as he does in Ezek 45:18–25), the "tenth of the month" at the beginning of the year would be the day of preparation for Israel's Passover.[34] The chronological setting of Ezekiel's climactic vision is thus imbued with thematic overtones; Ezekiel envisions a new temple and a restored Jerusalem as a means of freedom that typologically echoes the liberating story of the first Passover and the exodus of Moses. Joseph Blenkinsopp combines this detail with the interpretive possibility of the twenty-fifth year as a halfway point to the Year of Jubilee, indicating that "for the discerning reader or hearer the vision is a proleptic experience of freedom from bondage after exodus from exile."[35] The setting in Ezekiel will continue to be tied to liberation as it moves through descriptions of the restored temple and Israel.

The exilic prophet Jeremiah also uses temporal signals to envision YHWH's restoration after the exile with his statement that Israel must serve the king of Babylon כמלאות שבעים שנה ("as long as seventy years are completed" in Jer 25:11–

34. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, IBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990), 200.

35. Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel*, 200.

12; cf. its recontextualization in Dan 9:2). But Jeremiah associates the completion of the seventy years with the beginning of Babylon's downfall, as is evidenced by his focus on YHWH's decision that after those seventy years, אפקד על־מלך־בבל ("I will visit punishment upon the king of Babylon"). The verb פקד in Jer 25:12 indicates that the prophet uses a symbolic temporal signal to stress YHWH's punishment of Israel's oppressors; this is the other side of the coin to Ezekiel's different focus on the jubilant restoration of Israel to the land with his initial time marker.

It is also notable that no phrase in the introduction to this account indicates that Ezekiel has been transported to a future time. Although YHWH brings Ezekiel into the ארץ ישראל in Ezek 40:2, no parallel temporal statement is given to match this change in spatial location. While the restoration is implied to occur in the future, its literary setting occurs within Ezekiel's present day in exile.

This is a normal rhetorical move for visionary material that often leaves its chronological fulfillment ambiguous, but the implications of this narrative strategy in Ezekiel 40–48 are far-reaching. The restored land of holiness and peace with God's presence and political justice at its heart is depicted immediately alongside Israel in exile. This artistic choice to use the same time marker to juxtapose Israel's restored land with its current predicament is further highlighted by the fact that, unlike in previous visionary accounts in the book, Ezekiel's vision of the temple restoration does not end with a note about the end of the vision. The spirit of YHWH does not נשאת the prophet back to the

exilic community in Babylon at the end (cf. Ezek 3:15; 11:24).[36] Ezekiel's visionary account thus rushes the future into the present, creating a soaring sense of hope through the collapse of the time boundary as the prophet is left in the future with Israel's promises.

Place

Ezekiel's visionary account not only molds two implied time periods together; it plays with its implied audience's sense of place setting as well. The hand of YHWH immediately brings Ezekiel to a mountain in Israel (Ezek 40:2), and the entire account is based in Jerusalem, sparing not even a passing reference to the communities in exile until they are assumed to have entered the land (Ezek 45:1). Passages such as the visionary account in Ezek 40–48 formerly made critics assume that the book had its literary provenance in Jerusalem; after all, Ezekiel is obsessed with the city.

And yet the dynamic sense of home in Ezekiel is more complicated than this. Moshe Greenberg uses evidence such as the identification of God's people with the exiles rather than those who remained in Jerusalem in Ezek 3:11 and the denunciation of the exiles by the Jerusalemites in Ezek 11:15 to argue that "Ezekiel's audience has been alienated from the land of Israel by the Jerusalemites."[37] Ezekiel thus inhabits two worlds as the exiles' identity is defined in contradistinction to the people in Jerusalem (who are later killed or deported) while appropriating the covenant identity associated with the city. The book threads the needle between viewing the exiles as the legitimate people of God where YHWH dwells (Ezek 11:16) and Jerusalem as the only legitimate place from

36. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 327.

37. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 16.

which YHWH rules the world. Ezekiel 40–48 resolves this tension as it portrays the landscape of Jerusalem changing to accommodate the ultimate return of YHWH and his new holy people.

That return is portrayed in highly symbolic directional categories. In the beginning of the vision, Jerusalem lies to Ezekiel's south, indicating that the Spirit brought him from the same direction the exiles left (Ezek 40:2). The measurements of Ezekiel's vision begin with the eastern side (Ezek 40:6), and YHWH's presence enters from the east (Ezek 43:2), a direction significant in priestly thought as the gate of the temple faces east (Ezek 11:1). This literary detail also recalls Ezekiel's earlier vision of the present temple in Jerusalem as a place of corrupt worship and systemic oppression (Ezek 8–11). יָם ("west") is often paired with קָדִים ("east") in descriptions of the ritual spaces in Ezek 40–48 (cf. 45:7; 47:18; 48:1; 48:8; 48:10; 48:16). These merisms thus order all of space through their reference to opposite points on the compass, even creating a fractal effect with the priestly kitchens (Ezek 46:21—22).

Also noteworthy is the fact that the Hebrew word יָם translated "west" in the beginning of the account, is translated "sea" during Ezekiel's final climactic vision of a stream of water bubbling up from the temple and vivifying the world (Ezek 47:8). This amounts to an interesting wordplay as the water goes down through the "eastern region" to enter "the sea" (or "west").

With its implied exilic context for a people with a bifurcated sense of place, it should come as no surprise that Ezekiel's vision describes the setting of the temple and the new land in rich detail. This emphasis on the importance of sacred space through measurements of the new temple's east gate (40:5–16), outer court (40:17–19), north gate

(40:20–23), south gate (40:24–27), inner court (40:28–43), priestly chambers (40:44–49), inner rooms (41–42), and altar (43:13–27) may seem repetitive to contemporary artistic sensibilities, but it is through this repetition that Ezekiel creates the sacred realism for his vision of a purified future utopia created by YHWH and centered on Jerusalem. Although Ezek 40–42's rare architectural terms and some textual difficulties preclude an exact visualization of this temple, Leslie Allen's diagram of the outer gatehouse and plan of Ezekiel's temple is here provided as a helpful aid to this section of the setting:

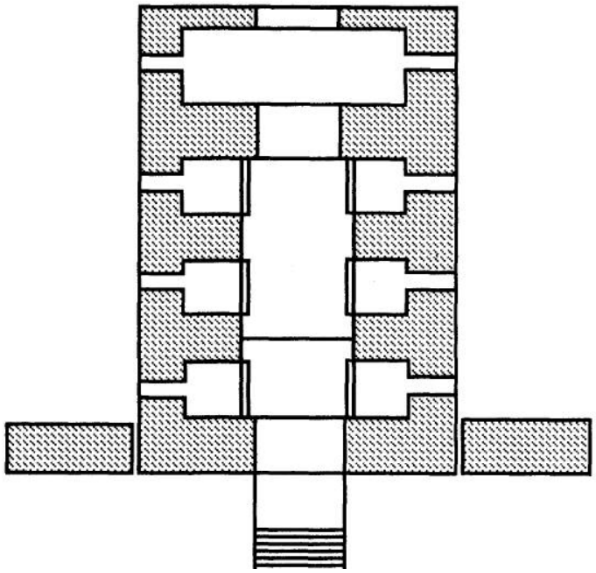

Fig 1: The Outer Gatehouse.[38]

38. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 231.

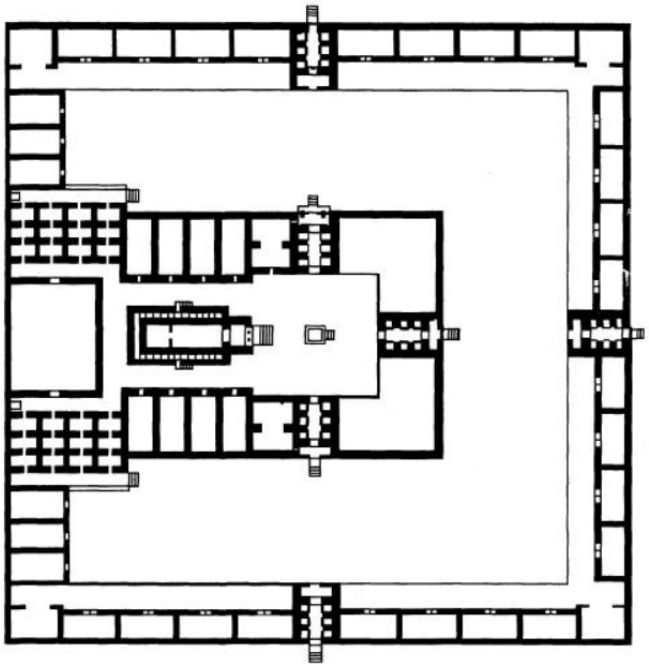

Fig 2: The Temple Plan.[39]

After these detailed descriptions and later instructions from YHWH, the setting shifts from the temple to the entire land of Israel as Ezekiel follows YHWH's messenger alongside the purifying waters that issue forth from underneath the temple and run into the Dead Sea to the east. As Ezekiel follows the waters, the changing landscape reflects the renewal of Israel and the effects of YHWH's restored presence to the temple. This picture of the restoration after exile "encompasses not only the temple itself and its ritual practices but also an idyllic picture of the flourishing and healing of the land."[40] When the exiles return, they will inhabit a land with a contagious, restorative sanctification so

39. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, 231.

40. H.F. Marlow, "Land," in *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012), 492.

that even the produce of the trees will provide international healing (Ezek 47:7–12). This reimagined setting features a new landscape and ecology around the city.

Interestingly, this narrative assumes a new topography for Jerusalem as the river only gradually increases in depth while Ezekiel walks from the temple toward the east. The steep valleys and topographical irregularities of the ascent to Jerusalem must be filled in for the prophet and messenger to continue walking on a gentle slope. This imagery is similar to the beginning of the great poetry of Deutero-Isaiah—an exiled prophetic contemporary of Ezekiel whose writing also promises exilic Israel a future restoration.[41] In Ezek 40–48, either the land has been graded as a pyramid with the temple mount as its peak, or the land has become terraced with different levels of flat layers in a generally pyramidal shape.

The latter option is to be preferred as it has numerous parallels in ancient Near Eastern temple architecture, most notably that of the famous Etemenanki temple of Marduk in Babylon.[42] Approximately ninety meters tall, this stair-tower temple functioned in Babylonian religious conception as the place where heaven and earth met.[43] Ziggurats such as these are much smaller than the land of Ezekiel's vision, and that size comparison is instructive. Arguably, Ezekiel's vision portrays the entire land of Israel as

[41]In a rhetorical move not unlike that of Ezek 40–48, Isa 40:3–5 calls for valleys to be raised and mountains to be made low in order to pave a straight highway for the כבוד of YHWH to come and be revealed in Jerusalem. However, this clear path comes in the מדבר "wilderness" outside Jerusalem; Ezekiel specifically envisions the actual geography of the city changing to reflect the new situation that will arise when YHWH comes back to rule Jerusalem.

42. Frank Anthony Spina, "Babel (Place)," *ABD 1:* 562.

43. Jeffrey S. Rogers, "Babel, Tower of," *EDB* 138.

a terraced ziggurat with the temple of YHWH at its top, thus illustrating that the whole land now belongs to YHWH as in some sense the outer court of God's temple.

This artistic decision to render the landscape around Jerusalem in a surreal sense may come from a desire to symbolize the newfound peace that the people of Israel will experience with God dwelling in their midst. The foothills of Jerusalem made the city a difficult fortress to invade even for centuries before it became the capitol of Judah; perhaps the slope of the river and its implied topography indicate that Jerusalem will not need to fear such attacks in the future.

It should be clear from the evidence surveyed thus far that the classification and transformation of the setting of Jerusalem is intricately tied to the plot and meaning of Ezek 40–48. Kalinda Rose Stevenson argues that Ezekiel 40–48 fits within an ancient Near Eastern literary genre classified as "territorial rhetoric."[44] Works within this genre center features including "classification of area, communication of boundaries, and enforcement of access" to construct communal identity through the description and regulation of space.[45] Ezekiel 40–48 certainly fits in this category of writings as it alternates between descriptions of the new spaces and regulations for parties than can or cannot access them. Stevenson argues that while the word "territory" is often associated with the unthinking instinctual behavior of animals, the concept of "territoriality" is a social creation that requires choice as it forms communal identity.[46]

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44. Kalinda Rose Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation: The Territorial Rhetoric of Ezekiel 40–48*, SBLDS 154 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 11.

45. Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 11.

46. Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 11.

Her central thesis—that Ezekiel 40–48 is a critique of the monarchic social structure of pre-exilic Israel in the form of a territorial claim by YHWH as the only king of Israel—is borne out by several points of textual evidence. Firstly, kings are widely associated with temple building in the ancient Near East, and the Deuteronomic History in the Hebrew Bible follows this cultural trend as it portrays King Solomon's role in building the temple in 1 Kings 6. The fact that Ezekiel's temple is built by YHWH, then, diminishes the role of the post-exilic ruler, who is given the ambiguous title of a נשיא rather than the clearly royal title of a מלך (compare Ezek 37:24 with Ezek 45:7).

Secondly, access to the three main spaces in Ezek 40–48 (the בית ["house/temple"], the קדש מן־הארץ ["holy portion"], and the ארץ ישראל ["land of Israel"] is restricted as the messenger functions as a gatekeeper for the temple, specific legislation is given for who can access the area around the temple, and even the rest of the land of Israel is specifically divided into equal tribal territories. The main rhetorical focus of the text is thus primarily focused on the demarcation of boundaries and their inhabitants rather than with a simple description of Israel's future restoration.

While these points in Stevenson's thesis on the rhetoric of Ezekiel 40–48 are helpful, her use of the model of the Babylonian New Year ritual to read Ezek 40–48 as YHWH's renewal of kingship and territorial claim of Israel may not be completely supported by the text. YHWH's territorial claim is certainly borne out by the concern for measurements, the rules for access, and the concept of holiness,[47] but Ezekiel may have

47. Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, i.

made the time marker in Ezek 40:1 more explicitly associated with the Passover if he wanted to make the connection with Marduk's role in the Babylonian New Year ritual clearer.

Stevenson's emphasis on Ezekiel 40–48 as primarily creating social boundaries through territories claimed by YHWH is particularly important for understanding Ezekiel 40—48 as narrative. This view helps readers understand how its depictions of a setting create claims on the kind of people that Israel must become when YHWH restores their community. The new setting of Jerusalem compels the exilic community to choose to imagine itself with a new identity now. Stevenson also utilizes the work of Allen Pred to discuss the connection between "local transformation of place, practices located in place, and power relations."[48] Stevenson demonstrates that Ezekiel is more interested in "defining areas" and "communicating boundaries" than simply visualizing buildings and structures,[49] and this is perhaps one reason why Ezekiel's vision of the temple is largely flat: rather than trying to construct a three-dimensional blueprint, the prophet's details are meant emphasize the demarcation of land territories.

Ezekiel's vision transforms the temple landscape and regulates the territories and practices of priests and royalty in Israel through the power of divine prerogative, casting a vision where all of life centers around the holiness, harmony, and justice of YHWH as facilitated through the priests. It is significant from the perspective of power and space that the first thing Ezekiel sees in his vision is the wall around the temple (Ezek 40:5).

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48. Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 12.

49. Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 161.

From the beginning of the vision, the impression is created that separation of spaces by divinely ordained authorities is a necessary corollary to the peace and harmony of the land.

Fundamental to the concept of setting in Ezek 40–48 is the portrayal of the space of Israel in three concentric circles. These circles maintain the integrity of YHWH's space and point to YHWH's presence in the middle of the nation as the source of its life and protection. The innermost circle is described first and contains the בית ("house/temple"), this temple complex resides within the קדש מן־הארץ ("holy portion") and this exists inside the ארץ ישראל ("land of Israel").[50]

This three-part structure moving from the most holy to most common elements has rich intertextual connections throughout the Hebrew Bible. In the second narrative of creation, YWHH Elohim situates the humans he forms near the tree of life, in the middle of a garden, in the middle of the land (Gen 2:8–9). These three spaces possibly provide the first clue that Eden is literarily portrayed as a temple. Some linguistic evidence for this phenomenon will be presented before exploring the ramifications of a three-tiered temple structure for the setting of Ezekiel.

Lifsa Schachter catalogs the various ways that temple imagery features in the Eden narrative's visual setting. Eden's rivers place it on a mountain top similar to other ancient Near Eastern shrines, and it has a single entrance facing מקדם ("east"; cf. Exod 27:16; Num 3:38; Ezek 40:6) guarded by הכרבים ("cherubim"; cf. Exod 25:18; 1 Kgs

50. Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 12.

6:23; Ezek 10:1).[51] Cherubim only appear in the Eden narratives, descriptions of the tabernacle and the temple, and Ezekiel's vision of the divine presence which moves out of and into the temple. The element of fire is also associated with YHWH's presence in both Eden (Gen 3:24) and the tabernacle sanctuary (Exod 27:20–21).

Parallels multiply from the other direction as well, as the tabernacle and temple are both described with garden imagery. Several Psalms associate the divine dwelling with cultivated plant life (Pss 52:10; 84:2–3; 92:13–14), the golden lampstand inside the tabernacle and temple is described with flower petals and almond blossoms (Exod 25:31–40), and the two pomegranate pillars with lily designs that flank the temple in 1 Kgs 7:13–22 also bring to mind the trees of life and the knowledge of good and bad.[52]

Furthermore, humans exercise a priestly role as their activity in the garden is described with the verbal roots עבד "work" and שמר "keep," the same verbal roots used to describe the activity of the priests in their service of the tabernacle in passages such as Num 3:7—8 and Lev 8:35, respectively. These two verbs are also used in non-priestly contexts, and as such, this textual echo hardly proves the point on its own. However, in light of various other textual connections, the idea that the editor(s) of the Eden narratives chose these verbs with temple actions in mind seems quite possible.

In addition to all of the parallels above, Gen 2 designs sacred space in the same three-tiered way that it is set up in the tabernacle and temple: the ארץ ("land") parallels

51. Lifsa Block Schachter, "The Garden of Eden as God's First Sanctuary," *JBQ* 41, 2 (April 2013): 74.

[52]Schachter, "The Garden of Eden as God's First Sanctuary," 75.

the courtyard in Gen 2:5, the גן בעדן ("garden in Eden") within the land parallels the Holy Place in Gen 2:8, and the עץ החיים ("tree of life") in the בתוך הגן ("middle of the garden") in Gen 2:9 represents the Holy of Holies as the inner sanctum of divine life where YHWH walks.

These intertextual parallels shed light Ezekiel's use of the three-part structure. Drawing the parallel with these observations above, Ezek 40–48 moves inward to outward to depict the בית as the Holy of Holies, the קדש מן־הארץ around the temple as the Holy Place, and the rest of the land of Israel as the temple courtyard. The implications of these echoes of setting are enormous. Ezekiel 40–48 thus portrays the entire land of Israel as connected with the temple and in some sense holy.

This is probably the conceptual background behind Ezekiel's image of the river coming out from the temple and turning the salt of the Dead Sea into freshwater (Ezek 47:8). It is clear from the text that the salt water of this region is associated with death, not because it was called the "Dead Sea" (an anachronism for this time period), but because כל־נפש חיה אשר־ישרץ ("every living being that swarms") can only live after the fresh river comes (Ezek 47:9).

Interestingly, this language echoes the Priestly account of creation where God declares: ישרצו המים שרץ נפש חיה ("let the waters swarm [with] swarms of living being[s]" in Gen 1:20. In the new purified land of Israel, the dead saltwater becomes freshwater that brings life in a new act of divine creation to restore the land. The setting of Ezek 40–48 contains multiple holy spaces designed to portray the divine source of new life for a restored Israel of the future viewed in the present.

Plot

While the detailed realism of Ezek 40–48 lends itself to the study of setting, approaching this ritualistic text from the perspective of plot may seem unproductive. After all, Ezekiel begins with measurements of a temple building, moves to sacrificial and cultic regulations, then details rules on the behavior of temple functionaries, gives more instructions on the proper division of the land, and even sprinkles the responsibilities of the political ruler into the mix.[53] Can a series of ritual texts really possess a coherent narrative plot?

In fact, Ezekiel's encasing of temple regulations and laws regulating political powers inside of sacred narrative is reminiscent of the narrative form of the Torah. And although they may debate its shape and thematic emphases, few scholars today would argue that the Torah has no overarching plot. As mentioned in Chapter 1, narrative analyses in the Torah from scholars such as John Sailhamer have demonstrated that legal materials have been artistically incorporated into narrative in the Torah's "representation of reality."[54] Sailhamer argues that narrative texts such as Exod 32 (the golden calf episode) and Lev 17 (the goat episode) represent paradigmatic examples of priestly and common idolatry and thus set up the legislative sections that follow in Exod 35–Lev 16 and Lev 18–26 on the regulation of the priests and the laity respectively, so that the disparate legal materials are woven into a narrative plot.[55]

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53. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses'?" 97.

54. John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 8.

55. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*, 345.

In a much more technical study, Christoph Nihan tackles the issue of the relation between the priestly laws in Numbers, the holiness legislation of Leviticus (Lev 17–26), and the redacted composition of the Torah. He argues that a tithe law in Num 18 represents a recontextualization of a law written in the Holiness Code in Lev 27,[56] thus demonstrating that after the closure of the book of Leviticus, the final editor(s) of the book of Numbers used a different narrative strategy to incorporate the laws of the Holiness Code so that "different legal and narrative traditions were brought together into a single, comprehensive document."[57]

Also mentioned in Chapter 1, Liane Feldman argues in her extensive monograph that the Priestly Narrative, which is about half ritual material and half narrative, incorporates its materials together into one literary narrative. In this view, the legal texts "are not simply repurposed older materials; they are essential components of the story and its various elements" and to separate these texts of different genres "is to destroy the internal structure and logic of the story."[58] Her study on the inauguration of the tabernacle demonstrates how Exod 40–Num 8 intentionally slows time in a singular setting and incorporates its ritual instructions into a coherent narrative plotline.[59]

With so much work done with regard to plotline in books with narrative and legislative elements, it is surprising that more work has not been done to identify how the

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56. Christoph Nihan, "The Priestly Laws of Numbers, the Holiness Legislation, and the Pentateuch," in *Torah and the Book of Numbers*, ed. Christian Frevel, et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 128.

57. Nihan, "The Priestly Laws of Numbers, the Holiness Legislation, and the Pentateuch," 134.

58. Liane M. Feldman, *The Story of Sacrifice: Ritual and Narrative in the Priestly Source*, FAT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 5.

59. Feldman, *The Story of Sacrifice*, 6.

significant portion of prose sections in the larger prophetic works (especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel) contributes to a kind of narrative plot in service to the books' artistic wholes.

In her work on literary criticism and the Hebrew Bible, Yaireh Amit notes that in some cases the traditional Aristotelian pediment plot structure with its emphasis on the climax or change can be an illuminative tool for narratives such as the Tower of Babel and Victory of Ehud son of Gera in Genesis and Judges.[60] She also advocates an approach that plots narrative events according to their scenic character; this approach notes when the author slows down narrative time to construct full scenes using dialogue and description and juxtaposes these units with structural sections that involve only narration or summary, using Judg 16:1–3 and Gen 23 as case studies of short and long elaborated scenes.[61]

Climax

Although scholars such as Zimmerli emphasize the "static situation" in much of the material of Ezek 40–48,[62] the vision includes an important change that provides the active dynamic for its more static descriptions, observations, and prescriptions. Using the pediment method of plot analysis, Ezek 43:1–5, where Ezekiel observes the glory of YHWH entering the temple, must represent the climax of the account. The messenger's measurements and descriptions of the outer court and inner chambers of the temple have no element of change since the structure is already standing at the beginning of the vision

60. Yaireh Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001), 48.

61. Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives*, 51.

62. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2*, 327.

(Ezek 40:5–42:20). After God's glory fills the temple, the account shifts to include various regulations on the temple personnel and political rulers and further descriptions of the land outside of the temple proper. These regulations fill out the vision of legal justice, cultic purity, and tribal equality that will result from YHWH's return from the land and thus represent a falling action contingent on the climax of Ezekiel's vision.

While a case could be made that Ezekiel's journey to follow the water pouring out of the temple represents a quest that must reach a climax in Ezek 47:1–12, no significant change in the landscape or Ezekiel's situation occurs during this journey. The division of the land for the twelve tribes also represents a high point in the account (Ezek 48:1–29), but this section finds its narrative fulfillment in the more climactic naming of the city in the final section (Ezek 48:30–35). This passage, however, represents an epic conclusion to the vision as the entire land of Israel is now envisioned in its glorious restoration with holy reference to YHWH's presence, and, while it completes the goal of the account, it cannot be viewed as the climax since the results of the naming cannot be explored through a falling action or conclusion afterward. With Ezek 43:1–5 as the climax, the passages before this (Ezek 40:1–42:20) can be seen as an introduction and rising action and the passages afterward (Ezek 43:6–48:35) can be analyzed as a falling action and conclusion.

Introduction and Rising Action

Ezekiel 40:1–3 provides typical introductory information including a depiction of setting and main characters in a state of initial stasis. While much of the literary significance of these verses for setting has already been explored above, the note that it is the fourteenth year after the destruction of the city foreshadows the need for restoration in

the plot events to follow. In addition to this, YHWH is introduced as the one who brings Ezekiel in a vision to Jerusalem before YHWH's assistant, the "man" (Ezekiel 40:3), is described in an intermediary role suggesting that he will fulfill the type of the apocalyptic guide in the account to follow. The interplay and roles of YHWH and the intermediary will be discussed in the character section below.

The rising action begins in Ezek 40:4 as the prophet is given the purpose for the vision and a charge that he must fulfill. This charge is put in the form of a literary quest as Ezekiel is called to become a narrator who observes the content of the vision for the benefit of his people. Kalinda Stevenson writes about Ezekiel's commission within his final vision that "in both cases [40:4 and 43:10–11] the role of the Narrator is to *see*, and to *describe* what he sees on the tour to the House of Israel. In both cases, the emphasis is on what is seen rather than what is heard."[63] Although Ezekiel is told to "look closely" and "listen attentively," the messenger's emphasis on Ezekiel being "brought here in order that I might show it to you" (Ezek 40:4) indicates that the visual descriptions comprise the main content of the message. Unlike Habakkuk, for example, Ezekiel is not instructed to "write the vision" (Hab 2:2); instead, the text's emphasis on Ezekiel seeing the reality and telling it to Israel indicates that the vision's plotline will not consist of a description of future events but of a painting of a future reality.

This purpose statement is critical for understanding the plotline of Ezek 40–48. Structurally, it sits between the introductory exposition and the description of the temple that makes up the bulk of the rising action between Ezek 40:5 and Ezek 42:20. It is important to note that the messenger does not instruct Ezekiel to build the temple that he

63. Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 14.

is about to see since YHWH has already built this timeless and therefore eternal structure, and the entire account of the vision contains no instructions for Israel or the prophet to construct the buildings that he is about to describe.[64] The plotline of Ezek 40–48 cannot consist in the building of Jerusalem and the temple because these new realities are already built before the action of the vision commences.

Instead, the action of the plot consists in Ezekiel (and by extension, Israel) "seeing" the temple/land (Ezek 40:4), "measuring" the temple/land (Ezek 43:10), and "declaring" what he sees to the house of Israel so that they too can "measure" it (Ezek 43:10). The action of the plot consists in measuring and description for the purpose of bringing shame to Israel so that they will "observe its whole design and its statutes" (Ezek 43:11). While Ezekiel and Israel are not called to build the temple, they are called to participate in the new reality that it signifies.

The measurements of the temple imply a new design for holy living, and the interspersed laws make this standard explicit. After all, the new temple demands a new standard of priest who will teach the people the difference between the קדש ("holy") and the חל ("profane"), the טמא ("unclean") and the טהור ("clean"). This chiasm concerns not only cultic boundaries and ritual purity, but also ethical concerns and communal justice since Ezekiel does not separate between ritual and moral holiness. The new temple also demands a new kind of monarch who is subjected to the commands of YHWH and rules without absolute power or oppressive authority. YHWH claims the new נשיאי ("*my* princes"), and he declares that they must share the nation's land, refrain from

64. Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 17.

violence, and practice justice in Ezek 45:8–10. These commands echo the cultic responsibilities of the נשיא to stay and eat within the boundaries that YHWH assigns him in the new temple (Ezek 44:3).

But what exactly is meant by the intermediary telling Ezekiel to see, measure, and declare the vision of the new temple and Jerusalem? Ezekiel's seeing is portrayed through the primarily optical nature of the vision, and his declaring is implied by his first-person narration of the account. The meaning of the command to measure, however, is more ambiguous. The plot consists of Ezekiel seeing measurements that a messenger makes of a building that has already been constructed. In the same way that Ezekiel is not building the new temple, he is not literally measuring it either. Since measurement is closely tied to the action throughout the plot and thematic purpose of Ezek 40–48, this term requires a more detailed analysis.

Stevenson explores the meaning of measurement by noting the thematic significance of three nouns related to the verbal root תכן in Ezekiel 40–48. In the Niphal, the verb has to do with what "is adjusted to the standard" or "just";[65] in the Piel, תכן denotes measurement or apportioning.[66] However, two of these nouns in Ezek 45:11 deal not with measurement per se but with the relationship between units of measurement. Drawing on this linguistic data, Stevenson argues that the measurements that Ezekiel sees and relates are provided so that Israel can make note of its proportions rather than its

65. David J.A. Clines, "תכן," in *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* edited by David J.A. Clines. Vol. 8 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2011), 633.

66. David J.A. Clines, "תכן," in *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* edited by David J.A. Clines. Vol. 8 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2011), 633.

arrangements.[67] Thus the plot action of Ezek 40–48 is not primarily about the "construction of structures," but rather the "separation of spaces" that are defined by those structures.[68] Ezekiel's vision is not primarily a blueprint for construction, then, but a definition of a new social identity for the people of Israel centered around sacred space and sacred living.

Ezekiel's visions of the messenger measuring the temple's east gate (40:5—16), outer court (40:17–19), north gate (40:20–23), south gate (40:24–27), inner court (40:28–43), priestly chambers (40:44–49), and inner rooms (41–42) can all be seen together as part of a rising action that defines a new central holy space for the nation of Israel and ties Israel's national identity to the presence of YHWH once again. The purpose statements thus connect to the climax as the defining measurements of the visions pave the way for the defining entrance of YHWH into the temple.

Falling Action and Conclusion

Ezekiel 43:6–48:35 functions as the falling action and conclusion of Ezekiel's vision of restoration since the legislation and action therein follows as a result of the change of YHWH entering the temple and reigning over the land. If Ezekiel's vision of the measurements of the temple in Ezek 40:5–42:10 reinstates and redefines Israel's sacred life in preparation for the climax of the entry of the glory of YHWH into the temple once again, Ezek 43:6–48:35 portrays the implications of the return of YHWH's glory for new ritual and ethical life in the restored land.

67. Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 18.

68. Stevenson, *Vision of Transformation*, 19.

This section includes instructions from God that parallel the earlier instructions from the messenger, a description of the altar with laws for its use, a description of the closed gate that commemorates YHWH's entrance, regulations for the new temple on Levites, Zadokites, and foreigners, a description of the holy district, laws on justice in the land, laws on offerings, festivals and temple procedures, a description of water flowing from the temple, a description of new boundaries for the tribes in the land, and a new name given to Jerusalem.

The directions coming from God rather than the messenger indicate a shift since the climax in Ezekiel's (and Israel's) relationship with YHWH, and the guidelines of this new relationship are spelled out in the regulations for purity in the temple and justice in the land. The results of this new relationship are similarly expressed in Ezekiel's description of the water coming from the temple and vivifying the new land where all of Israel is centered around God's presence in the temple.

The plot events of Ezek 40–48, with their measurements of the temple, regulations for life, and allotment of land, give Israel a new identity through Ezekiel's observation, measurement, and declaration of the vision. While repetitive recordings of land demarcations may seem somewhat a colorless conclusion to modern readers, Robert Alter argues that from the perspective of the book's exilic audience "these dry listings were inspiring because they constituted a geometrical representation of a vision of national restoration."[69] This vision of symmetrical borders for each of the tribes

69. Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2019), 2:1194.

represents equality, and the excessive concern with temple boundaries represents holy cosmic order.

It is no wonder, then, that the plot resolves with an appellative declaration: "the name of the city from that day shall be יהוה שמה ("The LORD is there") in Ezek 48:35. This final statement of the book of Ezekiel is more than a neat pun on the name ירושלם ("Jerusalem"); it indicates the culmination of a plot where Ezekiel's visionary quest has redefined Jerusalem and the land of Israel at each stage in its development.

Characterization

Just as the dialogue-heavy descriptions and legal materials of Ezek 40–48 take on new meaning when seen from the perspective of an underlying plot, the interpretation of Ezekiel's final vision also profits from attention to its literary shaping of characters. The character of Ezekiel will be surveyed using Adele Berlin's methodology for distinguishing between various kinds of static and dynamic agents, types, and full-fledged characters along with Yaireh Amit's method of emphasizing the distinction between direct and indirect characterization. The character of Ezekiel can be studied within his roles as both a prophet and a priest and as a type of Moses. While the land also functions as a dynamic character throughout the book of Ezekiel, most elements of this phenomenon in Ezekiel 40–48 have already been explored throughout the setting section.

The present study would also profit from a character study on YHWH and his interplay with the intermediary in Ezek 40–48. However, a character study of YHWH without extensive references to the other כבוד ("glory") of YHWH passages and רוח ("spirit") of YHWH passages in Ezekiel misses out on too many intertextual echoes to be

especially profitable on its own. Since this study is focused on the final temple vision, such an analysis is outside of the current purview. However, a character study of Ezekiel will suffice to demonstrate the narrative artistry of Ezek 40–48 and to provide a foundation for comparing this passage with other magical realist texts.

Berlin moves from the typical literary focus on flat or round characters to a three-part distinction between agents, types, and full-fledged characters.[70] "Agents" serve as mere subordinates to the plot; they have a purely functional role in the story. "Types" fit the usual bill designated to flat characters; they are designed to have only a single trait or quality. "Full-fledged" characters are complex, round individuals; they have multiple traits and motivations. Characters on this spectrum can also be evaluated in terms of their actions. Although exceptions abound, fully-fledged characters are more likely to exhibit more active decision-making than more passive agents on the other end of the spectrum. Berlin also notes that the same character can switch between these three categories in different stories, providing Bathsheba in the Davidic Saga as a prominent example of a character that moves from a passive object of desire (agent) in 2 Sam 11–12 to an assertive schemer with multiple motivations (fully-fledged) in 1 Kgs 1–2.[71] Awareness of this phenomenon will provide helpful insights as to how the characterization of Ezekiel in Ezek 40—48 stands in continuity or contrast with his portrayal throughout the book.

Berlin's four aspects of characterization will also be utilized to describe the character of Ezekiel in the final temple vision. Berlin's four aspects of characterization

70. Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 23.

71. Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 27.

include description (profession, distinctive features, epithets), inner life (thoughts, emotions), speech/actions (content, phrasing, formulaic responses), and contrast (with other characters, earlier actions of the same character, and expected norms).[72] While some of these literary tools play more of a prominent role in Ezekiel's final vision than others, all four areas will prove useful for briefly noting the characterization of Ezekiel throughout the entire work.

Yaireh Amit also demonstrates the fruit of careful attention to the artistic choice between "direct" and "indirect" characterization. For the purposes of this analysis, direct characterization is defined as explicit description provided by the narrator or characters, and indirect characterization comes from analyzing a character's dialogue and actions.[73]

Literary students of the book of Ezekiel have to distinguish between Ezekiel as an author and Ezekiel as a character within a narrative that he helped to shape, although considerable overlap between these two figures exists.[74] For this reason, the character survey of Ezekiel will focus on the portrayal of the prophet within his book rather than on reconstructions of the historical figure behind the work. This distinction is similar to that made in other texts such as that made between Dante the poet and Dante the pilgrim in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. While Dante the poet can come off as a stern and certain judge due to his decisions regarding individuals in hell, Dante the pilgrim is a curious and frightened individual who changes as a result of a dynamic journey through the cosmos.

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72. Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 36-41.

73. Amit, *Reading Biblical Narratives*, 74.

74. Corrine L. Patton, "Priest, Prophet, and Exile: Ezekiel as a Literary Construct," in *Ezekiel's Hierarchical World: Wrestling with a Tiered Reality*, ed. Stephen L. Cook and Corrine L. Patton (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature 2004), 73.

Similarly, motivations and characteristics that may be ascribed to Ezekiel the author (as, for example, those surrounding the elevation of Zadokites over Levites in Ezek 40–48) may not apply to Ezekiel as a character within the vision.

Ezekiel as Priest and Prophet

Within the narrative of the book, Ezekiel the character functions as both a priest and a prophet. Ezekiel's first action is prophetic: he sees מראות אלהים ("visions of God") and in the typical prophetic formula, היה דבר־יהוה אל־יחזקאל ("the word of YHWH happened") to him in Ezek 1:1, 3. Ezekiel's first description, however, is priestly: "the כהן Ezekiel son of Buzi" (Ezek 1:3). The character of Ezekiel is introduced as a liminal figure—a socially elite priest who has been deprived of his role during the exile, and an inspired prophet who is described with the humbling epithet בן־ אדם ("son of man") rather than more conventional and honorable title איש האלהים ("man of God"; see, for example, Jer 35:4).

As a priest, Ezekiel is a "boundary setter,"[75] and he functions most explicitly in this role throughout Ezek 40–48. The character Ezekiel within the vision may seem fairly passive—he obediently follows orders from the Intermediary and YHWH, and he has no direct dialogue with the other characters. However, Ezekiel the narrator performs an active role through his first-person narration. This passivity/activity makes Ezekiel a character type of the ideal priest—one who obediently stands before the כבוד of YHWH,

75. Richard Nelson, *Raising Up a Faithful Priest: Community and Priesthood in Biblical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 37.

represents the people before YHWH's presence (Ezek 43:4), and then actively reports and shapes YHWH's commands for the people. As the first-person priestly narrator, Ezekiel the priest follows YHWH's command to make Israel ויכלמו מעונותיהם ("ashamed of their crooked behavior") in Ezek 43:10. Also, as the narrator, Ezekiel presents the spatially and morally straight world of the new temple and land, and this perfect vision contrasts with Israel's current subjugated situation and past unrighteous way of life.

That Ezekiel is an ideal priest without flaws also fits with his portrayal earlier in the book as one whose purity is emphasized (cf. Ezek 4:14); after all, the prophet never undergoes a purification ritual in the book even though he encounters the very presence of YHWH multiple times.[76] Patton argues persuasively that the portrayal of Ezekiel as an ideal priest in Ezek 40–48 fits with the book's elevation of the role of the priesthood, and his character type thus contributes to the book's polemics against the corrupt priestly elite of Israel's pre-exilic past.[77]

Ezekiel's characterization in Ezek 40–48 presents him as another character type, however: that of the ideal prophet. While scholars such as Patton note the emphasis on priestly activity in Ezekiel 40–48 (the vision, after all, centers around the new temple and new legislation and has no explicit mention of prophets in the future Israel),[78] the literary

76. Patton, "Priest, Prophet, and Exile," 81.

77. Patton, "Priest, Prophet, and Exile," 74.

78. Patton, "Priest, Prophet, Exile," 83.

genre of Ezek 40–48 cannot be overlooked: all this cultic and legal material comes in the context of a vision—a *prophetic* form.[79]

Patton identifies the (occasionally blurry) distinction between priestly and prophetic activity: prophetic mediation is tied to a particular historical situation and "consists in the mediation of some type of divine communication," while priests "mediate a god's presence, acting as a buffer zone between God and the people."[80] While the book of Ezekiel often blurs these categories as, for example, the instruction of elders in Ezek 8:1; 14:1; and 20:1 can fit into either role and Ezekiel's melding of ritual and ethical purity blends both conceptual worlds together. As a prophetic communicator in Ezek 40–48, however, Ezekiel הגד ("declares/describes") and הגד ("makes known") the plan for the renewed temple together with new laws for Israel's holy life to convict the people to change their ways (Ezek 40:4; 43:10, 11). He is primarily characterized as a communicator—which is ironic considering that he is entirely silent during this vision, simply being a passive observer of the divine plan and laws.

This portrayal fits with earlier literary allusions to prophetic materials that cast Ezekiel as the "quintessential prophet."[81] Ezekiel's vision of the כבוד of YHWH in Ezek 1 makes use of motifs from Isa 6, an earlier prophetic text describing the boundary between heaven and earth—but this time Ezekiel stands before YHWH without an immediate need to cleanse himself of his sin, unlike the prophet Isaiah. As mentioned in

79. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses?'" 98.

80. Patton, "Priest, Prophet, Exile," 78.

81. Patton, "Priest, Prophet, Exile," 76.

Chapter 1, Ezekiel's infamously graphic visions of Jerusalem the זנה ("whore") in Ezek 16 and of adulterous Samaria and Jerusalem in Ezek 23 develop the prophet Hosea's earlier analogy of Israel as an adulterous wife to YHWH (Hos 1–3).[82] Further possible allusions abound, but it is already clear that as Ezekiel the character sees visions that develop earlier pictures in Israel's pre-exilic prophets, he is shown to be a prophet *par excellence* granted to Israel during the nation's darkest time in exile. As a type character that is both an ideal priest and an ideal prophet, Ezekiel most closely resembles only one other figure in Israel's history.

Ezekiel and Moses

Jon Levenson first popularized the idea that the text may offer the character of Ezekiel as a candidate for the promise in Deut 18:15 of a future prophet to fulfill Moses's archetypal role on the basis of textual parallels.[83] McKeating wrote an entire article expanding Levenson's hypothesis and argues not only for textual allusions to the life of Moses in Ezek 40–48 but macro-structural allusions throughout the book. In the Torah, Moses encounters God three times: first at Horeb to receive his call, second at Sinai after he has led the tribes out of Egypt, and third on Nebo when Moses sees the promised land and God speaks to him for the final time. These three main visionary experiences of God parallel Ezek 1, 8–11, and 40–48 where Ezekiel experiences his call, sees the כבוד of

82. Patton, "Priest, Prophet, Exile," 75.

83. Jon D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40—48* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976), 38-39.

God leave the temple, and sees the כבוד of God enter the temple in a vision of the new promised land.[84]

Beyond these structural parallels throughout the book, Ezekiel is characterized as a new Moses especially in his vision of the final temple. Just as in Exod 24—29, Ezekiel sees God's presence, is told to build (or at least describe) a sanctuary, is given regulations for temple worship, and is given instructions for the operation of the priesthood at the sanctuary.[85] After these chronological parallels, Ezekiel is given instruction on the apportionment of the land, and according to McKeating, even though Ezekiel's idealized equal tribal boundaries are different than those of Moses, "there are sufficient similarities, especially in relation to the northern boundary, to persuade commentators that the two are interdependent."[86] Finally, Ezekiel's instructions to the royal leader in Ezek 45:7–17 and Ezek 46:16–18 are highly reminiscent of Moses's royal limitations in Deut 17:14–20.[87]

Specific textual and structural parallels aside, Ezek 40–48 clearly characterizes Ezekiel as a lawgiver and leader on par with Moses. The final temple vision is the only collection of laws in the entire Hebrew Bible not given by Moses.[88] Patton also observes that Ezekiel not only gives laws like Moses, but he acts as a leader by offering plans for

84. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses?'" 99.

85. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses?" 101.

86. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses?" 101.

87. McKeating, "Ezekiel the 'Prophet Like Moses?" 102.

88. Kohn, "A New Heart and a New Soul," 109.

the temple as well[89]—a Davidic prerogative in Israel and royal right in the rest of the ancient Near East.

Like Moses, Ezekiel receives massive bodies of instruction. Unlike Moses, Ezekiel does not actually give these laws to the people of Israel within the narrative itself. The reader is thus put in the position of Ezekiel's audience and faced with a decision: will you accept this new covenant and do better than Moses's generation as you move forward into a new promised land, or will you rebel as Israel did in the wilderness? And in some sense, Ezekiel's final temple vision ends with the prophet in a similar situation to Moses: he sees the new promised land but does not get to settle there (cf. Ezek 40:2; Deut 32:49–52).[90] The character of Ezekiel in Ezek 40–48 also represents the exiles in this sense. He is silent in a manner reminiscent of his response to past trauma (cf. Ezek 24:27), and he represents the hope of the exiles for a future restoration of the community by God that they will be unlikely to experience for themselves.

Although Ezekiel is portrayed in his final vision of the new temple as a type rather than a fully-fledged character, the interplay between the types of the ideal priest and prophet makes his characterization more than meets the eye. He is somewhat rounded as his first-person narration provides readers more of his interior perspective than is usual with Hebrew narrative characters. The use of הִנֵּה in Ezek 43:2, for example, acts as a narrative camera shot of the divine כָּבוֹד as seen through Ezekiel's eyes. However, Ezekiel is given few distinctive features, other than his usual humble title בֶּן־אָדָם ("son

89. Patton, "Priest, Prophet, Exile," 80.

90. Kohn, "A New Heart and a New Soul," 109.

of man,") and very little dialogue.[91] Interestingly, Ezekiel's ambiguous title serves to complicate his character as he does not quite fit into the priestly or prophetic types. The clear parallels to Moses in Ezek 40–48 make Ezekiel a liminal figure who stands at the edge of a new future for Israel, one in which Israel has more need for priests than prophets in a historically static utopia, and one in which national life will center around a new temple with YHWH's presence enriching every aspect of post-exilic life.

Conclusion

Ezekiel stands as a unified literary product that shaped the identity of the Judean exiles to which it is addressed. The artistic use of setting collapses future and present time to present a new sacred reality for a restored Israel with a detailed description of sanctified space. Ezekiel 40–48 is more than a list of descriptions, however; it is written as a coherent pediment plot with an introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and conclusion designed around the actions of seeing, measuring, and declaring with the purpose of defining a new holy and just identity for a restored Israel under the direct rule of YHWH once again.

Further literary study of Ezek 40–48 could use research in the genre of magic realism to illuminate Ezekiel's extremely detailed descriptions of the temple and the land of Israel in his final vision. A detailed study of Ezekiel as a representative through whom Israel can process its trauma and restoration could also be done, along with an exploration of the interplay between the characters of the Intermediary and YHWH. However, enough work has been done to demonstrate that Ezek 40–48 stands as a work

91. Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 36–41.

of unified narrative with a complex movement of setting and plot that allowed Israel to envision a new future in the midst of exile.

CHAPTER III

MAGICAL REALISM AND EZEKIEL 40–48 AS COLONIAL RESISTANCE LITERATURE

Introduction

After setting forth a methodology for utilizing narrative criticism in the prophetic literature in Chapter 1 and demonstrating that Ezekiel 40–48 functions as an aesthetically unified narrative within the larger edited work of the book in Chapter 2, the climax of the present study now approaches. In Chapter 1, several literary encyclopedias and historical articles from literary critics throughout the twentieth century were consulted to provide a brief history and definition of magical realism. Also in that chapter, the interaction between magical realism and postcolonial criticism was discussed as a potential bridge between Ezek 40–48 and magical realist works.

This chapter will build on that work and Anne Hegerfeldt's five pillars of magical realism to find how both Ezek 40–48 and twentieth-century magical realist texts operate as rhetorical acts of colonial resistance. This chapter therefore provides a close analysis of thematic overlap between two twentieth-century magical realist novels (Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*) and Ezek 40–48, focusing on how these three texts resist colonial dominance.

Specific points of comparison between these three works include the following magical realist themes: (1) Truth is created through power; (2) History spirals downward; and (3) Security is achieved through detailed realism. Within the category of history as a

downward spiral, the deterministic nature of family histories, the functions of ghosts, the use of the grotesque, and the nature of prophecy will receive special emphasis as points of comparison and contrast among *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Midnight's Children*, and Ezek 40–48 since each of these texts responds to colonial trauma.

Background to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Midnight's Children*

One Hundred Years of Solitude

Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* frequents discussions of magical realism, and the novel truly deserves its title of the "*fons et origo*" ["source and origin"] of magic realism for the present generation."[1] García Márquez, affectionately referred to by his fellow Colombians as "Gabo," spent his first twenty-eight years of life in Colombia before moving into a self-imposed exile in Mexico.[2] In an interview, he stated that he felt all his writing goes back to the experiences of living with his grandparents, whose storytelling involved a deadpan delivery of both the real and the fantastic.[3] García Márquez worked as a journalist before he was an internationally acclaimed author, winning both accolades and animosity for his work (especially one particular publication on smuggling that upset the Colombian government and forced him

1. Patricia Merivale, "Saleem Fathered by Oskar: *Midnight's Children*, Magic Realism, and *The Tin Drum*" in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, ed. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 329.

2. Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: HarperCollins, 1998) 2.

3. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 3.

to flee to Italy).[4] García Márquez always regarded journalism as his "true profession"[5]—an opinion that explains his magical realist writing style.

Published in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1967, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* represents García Márquez's attempt to capture the culture and history of the nation of Colombia from its emergence in 1812 into national independence from the Spanish after the War of Independence, through eight civil wars and the land controversies between the Conservative and Liberal parties, into the Conservative Republic, and out of the aftermath of the War of a Thousand Days that ended in 1902. At first present only through vague references, these momentous historical events slowly creep into life in the idyllic and magical town of Macondo, which eventually becomes crushed under the weight of idealistic violence and economic modernization. The novel received numerous awards and sold millions of copies before catapulting García Márquez to the Nobel Prize for literature in 1982.[6]

One Hundred Years of Solitude follows the exploits and tragedies of the Buendía family in the fictional city of Macondo, an isolated city that begins as a paradise before it endures the hardships of government intrusion, civil war, neocolonial expansion from the United States, droughts, floods, and, ultimately, its prophesied apocalyptic destruction. The fall of the Buendía family into violence, disunity, incest, and death parallels the destruction of their hometown, which is itself an analogy for the trials Colombia faced as it emerged into independence. Throughout this plotline, García Márquez draws on the

4. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 5.

5. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 4.

6. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 8.

oral traditions and folk superstitions of the Caribbean coast of Colombia as the events of the novel challenge the basis and morality of Western modernity through their "validation of magical attitudes" and attention to the cyclical oppression that Colombia faced in a neocolonial world.[7]

Midnight's Children

Although *Midnight's Children* was published in London in 1981, Salman Rushdie writes that his novel was deeply influenced by his childhood in Bombay.[8] Rushdie used the advance from his first novel to travel throughout India in 1975, "and on that journey of fifteen-hour bus rides and humble hostelries *Midnight's Children* was born."[9] Rushdie wrote the novel while working at the Ogilvy & Mather advertising agency in London, and it went on to receive international acclaim as it won the Booker Prize in 1981, the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1981, and the Best of Bookers Prize as the book later celebrated its 25th anniversary. Rushdie was later knighted for services to literature in 2007.[10]

As noted in Roe's article earlier, *Midnight's Children* is widely recognized as a prime example of contemporary magical realist and postcolonial literature. Rushdie has written extensively on his inspiration from the oral narrative traditions of India as well as "those great Indian novelists Jane Austen and Charles Dickens."[11] (Austen's sharp and

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7. William Roe, "Magical Realism," in *Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature*, ed. Verity Smith (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), 506.

8. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (New York: Random House, 2006), ix.

9. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, ix.

10. "About the Author," in Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 534.

11. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, xi.

caged women mirror personalities in India, and Dickens's larger-than-life characters and exaggerated elements become intensifications of the real world.) The novel follows the life of the fictional Saleem Sinai, who is born on August 15, 1947, at the precise moment of India's independence under Prime Minister Nehru. Saleem's telepathic powers connect him to 1,000 other "Midnight's Children" with unique powers and stories that parallel the historical events in India in symbolic and literal ways.

Always endangered and tragically fated yet bursting with expressive potential, Saleem and the Midnight's Children bring the spirit of Indian expression into conflict with national modernization as they live through the Partition of Pakistan, the Indo-Pakistani War, and the Declaration of Emergency under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the 1970s. Rushdie is very clear that Saleem's story is literally bound to the history of the new nation of India, and the novel tells the story of both "twins."[12] Because of its heavy emphasis on history, Rushdie notes that *Midnight's Children* was primarily received in India as a realistic history book, while readers in the West tended to read it as a simple fantasy.[13]

Through its amalgamation of realistic narration, a historical setting, and magical plot events, *Midnight's Children* attempts to give voice to the six million tongues of Indian multiplicity—as such, it functions as an act of resistance to the widespread violence, mass incarceration, and suppression of reporting under colonial and neo-colonial regimes that sought to force uniformity on the nation. The book's resistance to

12. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, x.

13. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, xviii-xiv.

power is most evident in the fact that before her assassination, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sought to censure the work in 1984, three years after it was published.[14]

To sum up the salient points of background comparison, both of these novels are set on the cusp of national independence. Similarly, the book of Ezekiel was largely written and edited during the exilic period, and the vision of the new temple in Ezek 40–48 functions as a text of resistance featuring the Judean exiles' new independence from Babylon. García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* also provide a narrative analogy to the vicissitudes of Colombian and Indian history through their respective stories. Ezekiel chronicles the trauma and violence from outside of and within Israel and the character of Ezekiel within the text also functions as a national representative who undergoes trauma.[15]

While Ezekiel sees his work as a theological and historical enterprise rather than an act of playful fiction, the prophetic book does resist a colonial power by interpreting history through the (largely) monotheistic and covenantal worldview of the colonized and exilic nation of Israel. Although Ezekiel is not resisting neocolonial modernization or Western Enlightenment epistemology, the colonial superpower of Israel's day also used power to legitimate its propaganda in the form of the superiority of Babylon and its gods.

Interestingly, all three of these authors have also suffered periods of forced exile from their homeland: Gabriel García Márquez was forced to flee to Italy after his inflammatory journalism upset the Colombian authorities in 1954, Salman Rushdie was

14. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, xiv.

15. David McLain Carr, *Holy Resilience: The Bible's Traumatic Origins* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 78.

forced into hiding for years after Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran issued a fatwa against him in 1989 for his production of *The Satanic Verses*, and the prophet Ezekiel famously went into exile as a priest among Jerusalem's elite after the city was captured by the Babylonians in 597 BCE, eventually prophesying about the coming destruction of his homeland while in the exilic Jewish community of Tel Aviv by the River Chebar.

The affinities of these texts in both their authors' backgrounds and colonial content justify an analysis of thematic overlap between them. While the argument is not being made that Ezekiel's vision of the new temple is the first example of magical realism, the detailed narration and supernaturally subversive rhetoric of the text offer a new identity for a nation on the cusp of independence. It is thus profitable to study it as a precursor to the modern magic realism genre. To this end, points of comparison will be analyzed in the themes of (1) Truth is created through power; (2) History spirals downward; and (3) Security is achieved through detailed realism. While *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Midnight's Children* often leave issues in these four thematic areas unresolved and hopeless, Ezek 40–48 solves these common colonial problems through its reliance on YHWH to bring national healing and historic restoration.

Thematic Overlap in Ezekiel 40–48 and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*/*Midnight's Children*

Truth Is Created through Power

In One Hundred Years of Solitude

As the fictional town of Macondo experiences the difficulties that come with integration into the newly formed government of Colombia, the exigencies of politics motivate multiple characters to manipulate the inhabitants' perception of reality for the

sake of power. A staunch advocate for the Conservative political party, the new town mayor, Gerineldo Márquez, seizes the chance to tamper with Macondo's ballot voting. This action goads his son-in-law, Colonel Aureliano Buendía, to eventually go to war for the Liberal party since, "if I have to be something I'll be a Liberal. . . because the Conservatives are tricky."[16] After years of fighting, a group of lawyers asks Colonel Buendía to garner support with the Liberal landowners and Catholic masses by giving up the values that the Liberal army ostensibly stands for: the revision of property titles, the fight against clerical influence, and equal rights for illegitimate children.

Buendía, in an epiphany of self-awareness that later parties in power in Macondo will never reach, responds happily: "That means. . . that all we're fighting for is power."[17] The plotline raises the stakes in the political game of manipulating the truth as Buendía's honesty reveals that he is guilty of the same kind of manipulation as the Conservative ballot-swappers but at a much larger level. In this rare moment, Buendía reveals that no matter what the Liberal army may tell the public, he eventually only continued to lead them for the sake of pride and personal aggrandizement.

As *One Hundred Years of Solitude* builds to its climax, a neocolonial entity with the greatest power of all, and consequently the greatest ability to manipulate the truth, invades Macondo: Mr. Brown's American banana company. A strike ferments due to terrible medical services (workers receive placebo pills), unsanitary living quarters (workers use group latrines), and unfair wages (workers are paid in company-printed script). During this strike, the same "decrepit lawyers dressed in black" who shifted the

16. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 106.

17. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 182.

truth of the Liberal cause with Colonel Aureliano Buendía "now were controlled by the banana company and dismissed those demands with decisions that seemed like acts of magic."[18] These plot events are a textbook example of magical realism's portrayal of reality as fantastic because the powerful lawyers not only dismiss the demands but, over a series of intensifying protests and court cases, eventually produce Mr. Brown's death certificate and argue that the banana company never had any residential workers.[19] These actions are labelled as "magical" in the novel because despite what the striking workers or even large swaths of the public may believe, the neocolonial party with wealth and power gets to determine what Macondo's lived reality actually is.

The climax of the novel comes as José Arcadio Segundo Buendía, now a foreman in the banana company, joins a strike in a town square outside of Macondo and witnesses soldiers and officials from the banana company mow down thousands of striking workers with machine guns. José Arcadio wakes up on a train full of dead bodies heading for the coast like so many rotting bananas, and when he escapes back to Macondo no one believes his version of events. Even his twin brother, Aureliano Segundo, does not believe "the massacre or the nightmare trip of the train. . . [He] had read an extraordinary proclamation to the nation which said that the workers had left the station and returned home in peaceful groups."[20]

While the widespread acceptance of the profitable lie through continued repetition and new communication technology is portrayed as fantastic in the novel, Mr. Brown's

18. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 323.

19. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 324.

20. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 332.

final fantastic action in the conflict is portrayed as realistic. The banana company owner proclaims that he will sign the strike agreement when the rain stops, and this statement ushers in a flood of biblical proportions that lasts four years, eleven months, and two days.[21] The neocolonial executive's ability to manipulate the truth thus finds its magical realist counterpart in the power to dictate the weather.

While Ezek 40–48 uses prophecy as a means to counteract colonial propaganda with a hopeful vision of national restoration, the institution of prophecy in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* serves instead to underscore the powerlessness and tragedy of the Buendía family. In the first example of prophecy, Melquíades (the gypsy friend who first connects the Buendía family to the realm of magic) interprets the writings of Nostradamus to forecast that Macondo will be a "luminous city with great glass houses" without any trace of the Buendías.[22] Although José Arcadio Buendía disagrees and sees a vision instead of Macondo as a town of ice where the Buendía family continues to rule and thrive, both visions indicate the fragility and magic of the town. Furthermore, their disagreement indicates that prophecy is untrustworthy.

Throughout the plot action, Colonel Aureliano Buendía's premonitions are largely "useless" since he typically identifies them "only after they had been fulfilled," or they otherwise only function as "ordinary bits of superstition."[23] In fact, the only reliable prophecy turns out to be the apocalyptic writings of Melquíades, which are written in his mother tongue (Sanskrit) and hidden in the private cipher of Emperor Augustus and a

21. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 332.

22. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 58.

23. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 138.

Lacedemonian military code.[24] The inability of the Buendías to read the prophecy until Macondo's apocalypse actually occurs, along with the incredibly detailed description of their entire family history, makes prophecy a tool to expose the irrevocability of the Buendía's (and by extension, Macondo's) tragic fate. The differences between the rhetorical effect of prophecy in Ezek 40–48 with regard to Babylonian propaganda will be explored below.

However, one salient point of comparison with prophecy in Ezekiel comes from a non-prophetic passage of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. When Fernanda Buendía has her daughter Meme's illicit lover killed and sends her to a monastery to cover up the truth, Meme chooses to never speak again in an act that Fernanda interprets either as a "determination of her will" or as an emotional scar "because of the impact of the tragedy."[25] Part of Ezekiel's initial sign-act following his prophetic commission includes the injunction from YHWH in Ezek 3:26 that the prophet must shut himself up in his house and YHWH will לושׁונך אדביק אל־חכך ("make your tongue cling to your mouth") in order to refute the people's obstinance with silence. And after Ezekiel's wife dies, he is told not to mourn or weep but to אתלם ("mute") until he hears about the fall of Jerusalem. Meme's silence is thus reminiscent of Ezekiel's prophetic silences as the only response to a world in which the truth is both unable to be uttered and unable to be heard.

24. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 446.

25. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 316.

In Midnight's Children

Saleem Sinai's narration alerts readers to the fluid state of truth in the newborn country of India early in the novel. Religious tensions force Saleem's father Ahmed to deal with the Hindu mafia since in 1947, "the police. . . were not to be relied upon by Muslims."[26] As the history of India and plotline of Saleem's life move forward, the suppression of alternate versions of reality by those in power becomes more prevalent and more destructive.

Midnight's Children narrates this change by portraying India as at its cultural core a nation of multiplicity. There are 1,001 children born near midnight on the day of India's independence, a "number of night, or magic, of alternative realities—a number beloved of poets and detested by politicians, for whom all alternative versions of the world are threats."[27] These children who represent the magical and multivocal soul of their nation are described as "Tongues of Babel" and the "essence of multiplicity."[28] In many ways, *Midnight's Children* is about the colonial and neocolonial need to monopolize the truth by constructing a monolithic culture with a single view of reality. If reality is, as Saleem believes, a question of perspective,[29] then the political need to force a single set of values on India represents not only an act of intellectual violence but an assault on the very reality in which minority groups live.

Just such an assault on reality is portrayed throughout the novel as India's suppression of the fantastic within its borders. As authorities change the clocks after the

26. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 78.

27. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 248.

28. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 272.

29. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 189.

partition with Pakistan, Saleem sees the fantastic proportions of this mundane action portending future shifts: "If they can change the time just like that, what's real any more? I ask you? What's true? . . . What's real and what's true aren't necessarily the same."[30] The suppression of voices becomes palpable as Saleem witnesses the language protests during his childhood in Bombay prior to the Partition; according to a growing number of people, the best version of India is a univocal one where different voices are separated or silenced. These grassroots riots foreshadow the more violent enforcement of a universal culture through Indira Ghandi's climactic actions during the Emergency.

The suppression of alternate realities is connected to the idea of "progress" in the novel. The concept is first introduced as Saleem narrates in fairytale fashion the "prince" Nawab intentionally cutting down pedestrians as he drives Saleem's celebrity sister through the crowd. The prince's commentary echoes earlier British authorities who subdued mobs through violence: "No trouble; the car is respected now. Progress has occurred."[31] But progress does not only occur through the violent enforcement of laws. Instead, it largely comes as an enforcement of cultural values, either through incentivization or disinformation.

Saleem reluctantly embraces the Communist magicians of the slums because he was "raised in India's other true faith, which we may term Businessism."[32] Saleem's father Ahmed, the practitioner of "businessism," embraces get-rich-quick schemes that combine with his alcoholism to make him a model example of the new Indian that the

30. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 87.

31. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 367.

32. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 457.

neocolonial powers want to create. These powers are symbolized when Saleem's childhood friend group is invaded by the American Evie Burns, who uses her bicycle skills and sharpshooting to control the Indian social circle until Saleem's sister attacks her. Lying in the dirt, "her tooth-braces broken. . ., her spirit and her dominion over us [were] broken for once and all."[33]

But neocolonial shaping of reality comes not primarily through force in *Midnight's Children* but through the control and production of information. Saleem narrates the historical events surrounding the abandonment of Pakistani border posts and their subsequent Indian occupation in a way that implicates his uncle, General Zulfikar, of bribery and smuggling. Saleem narrates with utter sincerity that the soldiers abandoned their posts due to the approach of a ghost army and other supernatural elements in the swamp; then he writes that "hidden behind newspaper reports. . . the truth about General Zulfikar became a ghostly, uncertain thing; the paying-off of border guards became. . . Innocent Soldiers Massacred by Indian Fauj."[34]

The intentional use of the adjective "ghostly" adds to the claim that the Pakistani government's total alteration of reality proved to be the real supernatural feat. In such a country "where the truth is what it is instructed to be, reality quite literally ceases to exist," and Saleem contrasts his Indian childhood where he was "beset by an infinity of alternative realities" with his adolescence in Pakistan, where he was "amid an equally infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies."[35]

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33. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 258.

34. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 385.

35. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 373.

The manipulation of reality through power reaches its climax as Saleem and the Midnight's Children are arrested and brought to the capitol at Indira Ghandi's request. India's policemen begin arresting opposition leaders including schoolteachers, lawyers, and poets as bulldozers and vans from the Sanjay Youth Central Committee tear down the slum community of magicians in which Saleem and Pavarti the witch are living. As Saleem reflects on this newest assault of progress, he wonders if Indira's desire to appropriate the mystical connection to the nation that is his birthright is represented in her slogan, "India is Indira and Indira is India."[36] Later in prison, the "Widow's Hand" in charge of sterilizing the Midnight's Children explains to Saleem that Indira must fill the devotional void as "Indians are only capable of worshipping one God," and Saleem realizes that "those who would be gods fear no one so much as other potential deities."[37]

The truth about the Midnight's Children is suppressed as they are physically and magically sterilized, leaving only the State to fill the role of a divinity that provides knowledge and protection. These efforts facilitate the mission to make the real India "into a mythical land" to produce through a collective effort "a mass fantasy shared in varying degrees by Bengali and Punjabi, Madrasi and Jat" that "would periodically need the sanctification and renewal which can only be provided by rituals of blood."[38]

In a similar manner to *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the use of prophecy in *Midnight's Children* only serves to underscore the tragic and unavoidable fate of the main protagonists. Saleem's mother, Amina Sinai, receives a detailed but ambiguous

36. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 483.

37. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 504.

38. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 124–125.

prophecy from a wise man in the slums before her son's birth. Lines such as "he will have sons without having sons" and "he will die. . . before he is dead" refer to Saleem's adoption of the child of his enemy (Shiva) and Saleem's eventual forced sterilization and loss of magic.[39] Like the Buendía family, the climax of the plot embroils Saleem in events largely outside of his own control. Prophecy is thus used as a means to demonstrate the unavoidable and tragic nature of the fate those without power. The section below will explore the radically different use of prophecy in Ezek 40–48, another text written in the context of colonial resistance.

In Ezekiel 40–48

In a world where royal imperial power dominated the production of knowledge, Ezek 40–48 stands as an example of prophetic resistance of the Jewish minority group to their Babylonian overlords. King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon was perhaps the greatest military leader of Neo-Babylonian history, reigning over much of the ancient Near East for forty-three years (605–562 BCE).

However, compared with the wealth of information from the former Neo-Assyrian administration, few specific propaganda materials from Babylon in this time period survive. These Neo-Assyrian royal archives begin in the ninth century BCE with the reigns of Shalmaneser III, and Adad-Nirari III, continue into the eighth century under Tiglath-pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, Sennacherib, and finish in the seventh century with Esarhaddon and perhaps even Assurb-anipal before the fall of Assyria at the end of the seventh century BCE.[40] Peter Machinist explains the evidence for the

39. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 96.

40. Peter Machinist, "Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah." *JAOS* 103.4 (1983): 720–721.

propaganda texts of this time period influencing the author of First Isaiah, a prophet of Israel who wrote after the Assyrian Crisis in the decades leading up to the Babylonian Exile. As the Babylonians adopted many Assyrian tactics after conquering and expanding the Neo-Assyrian empire, these statements in Assyrian propaganda can be instructive for comparison with the kind of propaganda that the prophet Ezekiel and other Israelite exiles may have faced during the Neo-Babylonian regime.

The prophet Isaiah gives a picture of Assyria as "an overwhelming military machine, destroying all resistance in its path. . . and rearranging by this devastation and deportation the political physiognomy of the entire region."[41] Isaiah 5:26–30 assumes that the Assyrian army is invincible, and texts such as these reflect the same image of Assyria' military engine as Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions.

One salient example not included in Machinist's article comes from an open letter written to the god Asshur concerning Sargon II's eighth campaign in 714 BCE. He writes that his army set out "to muzzle the mouth of the vainglorious (and) to bind the legs of the wicked" with "the mighty support of Assur, Shamash, Nabu, and Marduk" and "the yoke of Nergal and Adad, whose standards precede me."[42] The Assyrian army is bolstered by the armies and gods of other nations, and it crosses terrifying rivers and unscalable mountains "unafraid" with "weaponry superior to that of all the rulers of the world" granted by the gods Asshur and Marduk to "overthrow the land of Urartu, to restore their (legitimate) boundaries."[43]

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41. Machinist, "Assyria and Its Image in the First Isaiah," 722.

42. F. M. Fales, "The Letter to the God Assur Recounting Sargon's Eighth Campaign," in *The Context of Scripture*, ed. K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (Boston: Brill, 2017), 4:199.

43. Fales, "The Letter to the God Assur," 200–201.

Neo-Assyrian kings, eager to maximize their resources by terrifying cities into surrendering without an extended siege, engaged in psychological warfare by describing their own impossible strength and the tortures that they would exact on disobedient subjects. This campaign of manipulated information represents a shaping of reality through power. Note the final words in the text above: the Assyrians claim the right to decide the legitimate boundaries of nations, a right bestowed upon their superior race by the gods themselves.

But some may argue that Machinist's study on images of Assyrian domination in Isaiah and the texts above prove irrelevant for Ezekiel's experience of and resistance to Babylonian propaganda. The question must therefore be answered: Does any evidence exist that the biblical writers were subjected to Babylonian propaganda with a similar dehumanizing intent as their Assyrian predecessors?

Ronnie Goldstein persuasively argues that the Hebrew word אַרְחָה, which occurs in 2 Kgs 25:30/Jer 52:34, Jer 40:1–6, and Prov 15:17, has an etymological history that indicates an Akkadian origin. He concludes that it is thus likely that texts such as 2 Kgs 25:27–30 "must be based at some level on a Neo-Babylonian source."[44] Although אַרְחָה is usually translated as a general "allowance"[45] or "ration of food,"[46] the term finds a technical parallel in Neo-Babylonian texts. Goldstein justifies this connection by noting

44. Ronnie Goldstein, "NB Administrative Terminology and Its Influence in Biblical Literature: Hebrew אַרְחָה" in *Literature as Politics, Politics as Literature: Essays on the Ancient Near East in Honor of Peter Machinist*, ed. David S. Vanderhooft and Abraham Winitzer (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 139.

45. BDB, "אַרְחָה" 73b.

46. David J.A. Clines, "אַרְחָה," in *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* edited by David J.A. Clines. Vol. 1 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 377.

that the word's etymology must take into account that it lacks clear parallels in other Semitic languages, it disappears in later Hebrew texts, and two out of the three texts in which אַרְחָה surfaces in the Hebrew Bible are associated with the Neo-Babylonian period.[47]

Using administrative documents from the royal archives at Nineveh, Goldstein shows that the word is likely a loan from the Akkadian *rēḫtu*, or ("remainder"). While the term initially designates leftover cultic offerings, it later referred to a special gift given by the king, whose privilege it was to eat cultic leftovers.[48] The scribes who wrote the passages on Jeremiah and Jehoiachin receiving an allowance from the king thus appropriated this technical term into Hebrew as אַרְחָה. The borrowing of the word demonstrates Babylonian influence on biblical scribes as the word did not survive in Hebrew past the fall of the Babylonian empire.[49] The use of this loan word represents one instance where the Babylonian intellectual elite clearly influenced the production of knowledge in Israelite culture.

But the Hebrew prophets were not only influenced by royal vocabulary; the text of Jeremiah clearly interacts with Babylonian imperial practices. In his extensive monograph, Vanderhooft argues that Jeremiah's depiction of debates within Judah regarding political alliances and religious practice "are often phrased with the awareness

47. Goldstein, "NB Administrative Terminology and Its Influence in Biblical Literature," 138–139.

48. Goldstein, "NB Administrative Terminology and Its Influence in Biblical Literature," 140.

49. Goldstein, "NB Administrative Terminology and Its Influence in Biblical Literature," 146.

of Babylonian imperial policies and procedures firmly in view."[50] Jeremiah 39:3 demonstrates a clear awareness of the Babylonian procedure of setting up a legal forum in order to coordinate the plundering of Jerusalem and the deportation of its people (cf. Jer 1:15, where Jeremiah's warning probably echoes Babylonian warnings of intimidation). This forum is remarkably similar to Sennacharib's act described in the Lachish relief.[51] Other textual parallels exist, most notably in Jeremiah's foe from the north texts, other descriptions of Nebuchadnezzar and his administration, and the anti-Babylon oracles of Jer 50—51.[52] However, this study cannot dwell on Jeremiah; enough evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the exilic Hebrew prophets were also influenced by Babylonian propaganda.

In a few places, the text of Ezekiel interacts with Babylonian imperial ideas and administration during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. While specific references to Babylonian propaganda remain less clear than in Ezekiel's contemporary Jeremiah, these textual parallels indicate at least that Ezekiel's intellectual world was influenced by Babylon.

Ezekiel 17 narrates a complex allegory wherein a הנשר הגדול ("great eagle") plucks a shoot from the crown of a cedar in Lebanon, transplants this shoot to his merchant city, and then plants a new seed which grows into a vine that instead provides food for another great eagle. The first eagle then tears out the roots of the unfaithful vine.

50. David Vanderhooft, "*The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets*," HSM 59, (Atlanta: Brill, 1999), 135.

51. Vanderhooft, "The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets," 139.

52. Vanderhooft, "The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets," 139.

Ezekiel explains this allegory as a description of the western Babylonian imperial administration involving a covenant between Nebuchadnezzar and Zedekiah of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar is described as ויכרת אתו ברית ויבא אתו באלה ("he [the king of Babylon] made a covenant with him [Zedekiah] and imposed a curse-oath on him") in Ezek 17:13. In this context, the terms ברית and אלה refer "to a binding treaty between political entities, and it appears that the king of Babylon initiates the treaty."[53]

This allegory reflects imperial procedures and propaganda—imperial Mesopotamian kings are often described as cutting down exotic cedars and transplanting them to their royal gardens. In the Wadi Brisa rock relief, Nebuchadnezzar is depicted felling a cedar in Lebanon. Ezekiel 17 thus alludes to imperial propaganda featuring the transplanting of flora as imperial trophies and the imperial practice of initiating treaties with client kings.[54]

Ezekiel 21:26—28 also alludes to Babylonian imperial practices, this time with regard to preparing for military operations. The Hebrew text uses three terms to describe the means that the Babylonian king uses to divine his chances for success; the final term ראה בכבד ("look at the liver") has no other parallel in the Hebrew Bible. However, extispicy was the most revered practice of divination in Mesopotamia in the second and first millennia BCE. But Ezekiel does not simply reflect awareness of this Babylonian

53. Vanderhooft, "The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets," 165.

54. Vanderhooft, "The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets," 167.

royal custom. The text argues that YHWH can use even profane Babylonian divination to use Judah's conquerors as an agent of YHWH's purposes.[55]

While the reality that Ezekiel prophesied in Babylonian exile is hardly debated, the propaganda materials of the Neo-Assyrian empires and the later intellectual dominance of Neo-Babylonian scribes demonstrate that Ezekiel responds to a colonial context similar to that of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Midnight's Children*. As a prophet for Israel, Ezekiel presents a new vision of reality in Ezek 40–48 that enshrines Israel's perspective on truth for generations to come. Far from remaining silent in the face of devastating trauma, Ezekiel resists the propaganda of his day to argue that YHWH still reigns supreme. Outside of their constructed vision of reality, the Babylonian powers are much more fragile than they seem.

History Spirals Downward

In One Hundred Years of Solitude

Throughout the plot, the town of Macondo experiences several stages of transformation as a paradise, a warzone, an independent autocratic city-state, and a dependent (neo)colony before its cataclysmic destruction at the end of the novel. Fresh from independence with Spain, Macondo awaits in the city of Columbia as an undiscovered paradise with river stones "like prehistoric eggs" whose "world was so recent that many things lacked names."[56] These clear Edenic echoes blossom into magical realism as José Arcadio Buendía plants almond trees and discovers a way to

55. Vanderhooft, "The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylon in the Latter Prophets," 169.

56. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 1.

make them live forever.[57] After the civil wars from within the country and severe economic and environmental exploitation from the outside, however, this "enchanted region explored by José Arcadio Buendía . . ., where later on the banana plantations flourished, was a bog of rotting roots."[58]

When Macondo is finally dissolved in a "biblical hurricane," Aureliano, the second to last of the Buendía line, sees in Melquíades' old prophecies about the family a "speaking mirror."[59] The parchment in Aureliano's hands thus receives the same description of the town: a "city of mirrors."[60] The downward spiral of Macondo and the fated destruction of the Buendía family thus function as twin reflections of the doomed history of an independent Columbia.

One Hundred Years of Solitude emphasizes the theme of history as a downward spiral through its typological and verbal repetition of actions, characters, and sayings within the declining Buendía family. Examples of actions include Colonel Aureliano repeating José Arcadio's journey over the mountains without success during the second civil war,[61] Úrsula's observance to José Arcadio that their empty house and scattered children set them back to how they were in the beginning,[62] and the fact that José Arcadio Segundo's hiding from the police is so similar to Colonel Aureliano's former

57. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 43.

58. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 356.

59. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 447.

60. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 448.

61. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 26.

62. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 116.

disappearance that Úrsula comments, "It's as if the world were repeating itself."[63] The theme is satirized when Úrsula continues life as usual after going blind, since "every member of the family, without realizing, repeated the same path every day, the same actions, and almost repeated the same words at the same hour."[64] The repetition of the Buendías does not represent a source of comfort, however, but underscores an unavoidable spiral into violence and destruction connected to the events in neocolonial Macondo.

In addition to plot actions, the repetition of character types within each generation of the family highlights the Buendía's inability to change themselves or their situation. Each of the six generations include repeating character names. Most notably, Úrsula names Arcadio's daughter Remedios after his aunt,[65] and her twin great-grandsons are named José Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano Segundo.[66] Reflecting on her life, Úrsula realizes that all the Aurelianos were "withdrawn, but with lucid minds" while the José Arcadios were "impulsive and enterprising, but. . . marked with a tragic sign."[67] The many family members with similar names that come back as ghosts also carry "the burden of tradition and collective memory,"[68] embodying a magical realist technique that

63. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 320.

64. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 265.

65. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 131.

66. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 143.

67. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 497.

68. Lois Parkinson Zamora, "Magical Romance/Magical Realism: Ghosts in U.S. and Latin American Fiction," in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, ed Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 497.

presents a collective self and a view of history that is not strictly linear as they float in and out of time.[69]

When Úrsula repeats back to her great-grandson the exact same words on the nature of time that one of her sons spoke to her decades earlier she "shuddered with the evidence that time was not passing, as she had just admitted, but that it was turning in a circle."[70] The theme of history as in some sense an unavoidable cycle of violence and oppression concludes the novel, as Columbia will never find peace "because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth."[71]

One interesting feature that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* shares with the book of Ezekiel in its portrayal of history is its use of grotesque and distinct images to capture the violence of widescale historical events. Rebecca's anxiety is described in detail as she eats the plaster on the walls and the "primary minerals" of the earth in their backyard;[72] and, after she (probably) murders her husband José Arcadio, his blood "came out under the door, crossed the living room, went out into the street, . . . went through the pantry and came out into the kitchen, where Úrsula was getting ready to crack thirty-six eggs to make bread."[73]

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69. Zamora, "Ghosts in U.S. and Latin American Fiction," 498.

70. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 361.

71. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 448.

72. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 69.

73. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 144–145.

But these events seem mild compared to the later random execution of Colonel Magnifico Visbal and his grandson "with a woman dragging the head by its long hair, and the bloody sack with the pieces of the child."[74] And after a series of incestual encounters, the novel ends with the final grotesque picture of the last baby of the line being born with the foretold cursed pig's tail and being eaten by ants alone in a basket.[75] These shocking scenes are described with extreme detail to encapsulate the violent history of an entire nation in a series of atomic images.

In Midnight's Children

As a contemporary novel in the magical realist genre, *Midnight's Children* plays on images and themes begun in García Márquez's novel. Merivale writes that *Midnight's Children* translates "rhetorical and metaphorical strategies, from western fictions, . . . [including] Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, . . . into the Indian terms of Rushdie's own narrative."[76] Within its own storyline, *Midnight's Children* also narrates the history of India as a pessimistic cycle of oppression and dependence.

Saleem Sinai, born at the moment of India's independence, finds himself "mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country."[77] His life is tied to Indian history in complex ways, as he literally influences events, such as the language riots in Bombay or a coup in Pakistan, and metaphorically represents India's tumultuous growth toward independent maturity and inability to fully

74. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 257.

75. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 446.

76. Merivale, "Saleem Fathered by Oskar," 329.

77. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 3.

embrace or escape from the multitudinous traditions of its past. His family also experiences a series of exiles as his agnostic grandfather is driven from Kashmir, his Muslim father is driven by religious persecution to Bombay, and Saleem experiences two exiles from his family as he fails to meet their expectations in the latest of history's "series of shoves."[78]

The colonial motif throughout Saleem's childhood also represents an interesting development of the theme of history repeating itself. After William Methwold, a man of importance in the former English regime, sells his land to Saleem's family and other wealthy Indians, Saleem notes that "Methwold's Estate is changing them. . . and Methwold, supervising their transformation is mumbling under his breath. 'Sabkuch ticktock hai, . . . All is well.'"[79] As the inhabitants learn to work ceiling fans, host cocktail hours, and pinch their secretaries, Ahmed Sinai literally begins to turn white and "although he pretended to be worried by his transformation into a white man, . . . he was secretly rather pleased."[80] In *Midnight's Children*, the cycle of oppression in India continues as new corrupt Indian political leaders and unscrupulous businessmen take on the roles of their former British counterparts.

This theme further develops as Saleem dwells on the Hindu concept of Kali-Yuga in his characteristically perceptive and cynical tone. In this worldview, the universe moves in cycles and history is currently in the Kali-Yuga, or Age of Darkness, the fourth phase of the Maha-Yuga where humanity experiences "the worst of everything; the age

78. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 99.

79. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 109.

80. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 204.

when property gives a man rank, when wealth is equated with virtue, when passion becomes the sole bond between men and women, when falsehood brings success."[81]

Born within such a cyclical age of corruption, it is no wonder that the time-traveling Benarsi accurately predicts that the Midnight's Children will fail to find meaning in their magical lives. Tensions within the group escalate "as the prejudices and world-views of adults began to take over their minds" and separate them by race, class, and religion.[82] Their own inner turmoil combines with oppression from the outside in the form of Indira Ghandi's arrests and forced sterilizations that make them both magically and sexually impotent. Like Macondo, the history of the Midnight's Children in India ends with Saleem bursting into six million pieces of dust as he reflects that "it is the privilege and the curse of the midnight's children to be both masters and victims of their times, . . . to be unable to live or die in peace."[83]

As in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, grotesque images abound in *Midnight's Children*. Saleem even reflects, "perhaps, if one wishes to remain an individual in the midst of the teeming multitudes, one must make oneself grotesque."[84] This quote indicates that grotesque imagery is used for similar reasons to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and the book of Ezekiel: to capture the violence and corruption of an entire generation or a large-scale war in a single moment. In *Midnight's Children*, these images include a vulture dropping a "barely-chewed Parsee hand" on Ahmed Sinai after the

81. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 223.

82. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 292.

83. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 533.

84. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 121.

Ravana gang burns his factory to the ground,[85] the painstakingly described "snot rockets" and "mucus" that Saleem holds back when he accidentally sees the "black mango" of his mother Amina's naked backside and tries not to sneeze,[86] and the family dog dying as she chases the car, "spouting blood from her mouth and her behind, under the gaze of a hungry cow."[87]

In perhaps the book's most nauseating sequence of scenes, grotesque images capture the violence of the Indo-Pakistani conflict as Saleem pauses after the fighting to see ants crawling over a living "small pyramid" of his childhood friends.[88] Disgusting detail reaches its crescendo as Saleem, drafted into the Pakistani cause, carries the twitching upper torso of his friend Shaheed up to die at the top of the mosque. Although named "Shaheed," a "martyr," the meaninglessness of his death echoes in reader's ears as Saleem accidentally flips a switch and Shaheed cries out through the loudspeaker of the minaret, finding humiliation instead of God.[89]

These images are not gratuitous tokens of violence designed to entertain or titillate the novel's audience; instead, they function as microcosms of an entire ravaged country. If readers wonder why the book of Ezekiel has such vivid and grotesque imagery, they need look no further than the trauma out of which these images arise and

85. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 100.

86. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 184.

87. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 234.

88. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 429.

89. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 434.

for which Ezekiel provides a different kind of meaning other than the relentless downward spiral of history.

In Ezekiel 40–48

While the book of Ezekiel shares some characteristics with the above magical realist works in this area, the final vision of the new temple in Ezek 40–48 is ultimately designed to defeat the picture of history as a downward cycle. Both novels end with their main characters getting crushed, either by an apocalyptic wind or a flood of people. The destruction of the protagonists mirrors the hopeless character of their nations which are condemned to further cycles of solitude, violence, and oppression, partly due to oppression from the outside and partly due to the repeating mistakes of the people.

In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, García Márquez writes that "the immeasurable violence and pain of our history are the result of age-old iniquities and untold bitterness,"[90] and yet the people of Latin America choose to respond with life. García Márquez, for his part, chooses to believe with an inexplicable and indefatigable existentialism that "it is not yet too late to engage in the creation of the opposite utopia. . . where love will prove true and happiness be possible, and where the races condemned to one hundred years of solitude will have, at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth."[91] Despite the hopeful ending of García Márquez's speech, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* stresses that nothing short of a radical change in Latin American society will lead to its ultimate flourishing and freedom.

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90. Gabriel García Márquez, "Nobel Lecture," NobelPrize.org, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1982/marquez/lecture/.

91. Gabriel García Márquez, "Nobel Lecture," NobelPrize.org, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1982/marquez/lecture/

Ezekiel 40–48, however, ends with just such a radical change. This vision builds on YHWH's promise in Ezek 36 that the nation of Israel will be restored from its past of self-inflicted tragedy and outside oppression not due to their own worthiness but simply וקדשתי את־שמי הגדול המחלל בגוים to ("consecrate my great name that has been defiled among the nations"). This undeserved restoration involves YHWH cleansing Israel (וזרקתי עליכם מים טהורים) from their commitment to false gods and destructive aspirations and YHWH's giving them a לב בשר ("heart of flesh") to replace their לב האבן ("heart of stone"). Interestingly, the verb used for YHWH's heart surgery in this passage is והסרתי, a Hiphil perfect first common singular from the root סור, translated literally as ("cause to turn back"). In the same way that Israel turned away from YWHH and toward a self-destructive path of inner political corruption that ended in outer systemic oppression from the Babylonians, YHWH will now turn back the heart of the people toward national repentance and healing.

This is also why Ezekiel's Gog prophesies of Ezek 38–39 preface the final vision of the restored land of Israel. Although its current placement makes the Gog invasion a somewhat awkward interpolation between the promises of restoration and a new sanctuary in Ezek 34–37 and the final vision of Ezek 40–48, this proto-apocalyptic battle description gives the external condition for Israel's peace: the defeat of the nation's oppressors and ancient enemies. Only then can Israel truly forget their past מעל ("treachery") against YHWH, and only then can they בשבתם על־אדמתם ("rest on their land") without fear in Ezek 39:26.

Due to YHWH's faithfulness and mercy, Ezek 40–48 spirals history back upward again after the disintegration of Israelite society caused by the exile. First, the vision restores the temple, the center of Israelite cultic life and communal identity from a priestly perspective. Interestingly, the vision of the new temple should ויכלמו ("let them be ashamed"), initially functioning as a source of shame for the people in Ezek 43:10. This same verb is used with reference to the new heart that YHWH will give Israel when he restores their inner being and relationship with God in Ezek 36:32 as והכלמו ("let them be humiliated"). By lamenting their role in the past downward spiral of their history, Israel cleanses itself of guilt through confession and repentance. And by arguing that their future restoration is an undeserved gift from YHWH, Ezek 40–48 also implicitly states that their future can never be taken away based on their false conduct again.

Ezekiel 40–48 also gives Israel a new kind of ruler to portray a positive vision of the future. This ambiguously titled נשיא ("ruler") has limitations on his ability to take influence from the priests (Ezek 44:3) and on his ability to take property and oppress the people with violence (Ezek 45:8–9; 46:18). A new Israel demands a new kind of leader, one who is held accountable to the justice of YHWH and separated from the power of the priesthood.

In addition to a new ruler, Ezek 40–48 gives Israel a new Torah. As stated earlier, YHWH will not erase their past but will rather make them ashamed of it and will give them a new future centered on living in harmony with the holiness and life of God directly in their midst (Ezek 43:9–10). After the entrance of the כבוד of YHWH into the

temple, this vision becomes practical in the various ethical instructions that are reminiscent of sections of the Torah. These ethical regulations on the exercise of royal power and the administration of the priests are centered around the holiness of God and the newfound holiness of the people as the commitment to reform comes from the response to YHWH's free gift of a new temple and a new land.

Finally, Ezekiel gives Israel a restored identity based on tribal equality through the land passages near the conclusion of the vision. Ezekiel's lengthy listings of temple spaces and tribal allotments "constituted a geometrical representation of a vision of national restoration," that was an "eschatological reimagining of the land."[92] Why should a description of land listings function as the conclusion of the narrative? Precisely because Ezek 40–48's implied exilic audience has had their land taken from them, and their social identity is tied with that land. One clue to the function of these listings is literary repetition: the word אחד ("one") is repeated twenty-five times in Ezek 48 alone.

Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulon, and Gad: every tribe outside of the priestly Levites is listed as being given "one" equal portion, and in this way all of the tribes can become "one" again. This is evidenced as the narrative dwells on the gates of Jerusalem, the capitol formerly possessed solely by Judah, where ושערי העיר על־שמות שבטי ישראל ("the names of the tribes of Israel [were] upon the gates of the city"). The fracturing of the exile is restored as even tribes lost to Assyria now find a home in a single city where YHWH dwells with justice and mercy.

92. Alter, *The Hebrew Bible*, 2:1194.

In the new reality of Ezek 40—48, God restores all of the institutions destroyed during the exile that should have sent Israel plummeting into social disintegration. Previously, Ezekiel has spoken of a new heart to restore Israel's systemic corruption and a final battle to provide peace from their enemies. Now he gives a hopeful and detailed account of YHWH giving Israel a new temple, a new ruler, a new Torah, and a new land. This narrative gives the tools for restoration in Ezekiel, providing hope for the exiles and a way out of the downward spiral of history.

Security Is Achieved through Detailed Realism

Written during the terrifying years of Stalin's Yezhov Terror (1936–1938), Anna Akhmatova prefaces her haunting poem, which was carried only in the memories of a close circle of censored friends for decades before its publication in 1963, with the following words:

> In the fearful years of the Yezhov terror I spent seventeen months in prison queues in Leningrad. One day somebody 'identified' me. Beside me, in the queue, there was a woman with blue lips. She had, of course, never heard of me; but she suddenly came out of that trance so common to us all and whispered in my ear (everybody spoke in whispers there): 'Can you describe this?' And I said: 'Yes, I can.' And then something like the shadow of a smile crossed what had once been her face. I April 1957, Leningrad.[93]

Akhmatova's choice to preface "Requiem" with the withered smile of her fellow sufferer in Russia enshrines in poetry a uniquely human phenomenon: the ability to generate hope through words. The woman in the prison line no doubt knows that even the words of a famous poet such as Akhmatova cannot erase or even provide answers for the

93. Anna Akhmatova, *Requiem and Poem Without a Hero*, trans. D.M. Thomas (Athens: Swallow Press, 1976), 23.

unmitigated horror that her community faced, yet she finds some measure of security in the fact that someone like Akhmatova can describe her pain.

Magical realist texts are no stranger to this phenomenon, and by their narration they provide a measure of hope to communities caught in cycles of oppression. One way that each of the three texts relevant to this study do this is through their painstaking attention to detail. Not only does excessive detail create realism in magical realist texts, but it provides some measure of control to the implied authors and audiences of these works. The following comparison highlights the ways that *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Midnight's Children*, and Ezek 40–48 offer a measure of security through their focus on detailed narration.

In One Hundred Years of Solitude

Playing off the novel's title, García Márquez repeats the words "solitude," "alone," and the concept of "one hundred" to capture the fate of the Buendía family and the town of Macondo as mirrors of the nation of Columbia. As the matriarch of the family, Úrsula lives through the century that the book describes, and she is described similarly to José Arcadio,[94] Colonel Aureliano,[95] Aureliano Segundo,[96] and Arcadio Segundo,[97] all of whom live a "solitary" existence "alone."[98] The detailed repetition of

94. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 116.

95. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 136.

96. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 181.

97. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 336.

98. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 362.

these words in various descriptions of different characters captures the lonely suffering of the nation.

Interestingly, the novel deals explicitly with the power of language to give a measure of control in chaotic times. When the memory sickness comes on Macondo and the inhabitants of the town begin to forget who they are (a problem perhaps emblematic of any culture experiencing colonization), Colonel Aureliano and José Arcadio begin to make signs for the various items and animals in the town.[99] The mad trend continues as José Arcadio attempts to build a spinning dictionary with 14,000 entries, and the inhabitants even put up two signs outside the village: one stating its name, Macondo, and a larger one on the main street that reads, "God exists."[100] The inhabitants of Macondo are ultimately unsuccessful in holding onto their identity and beliefs, however, as their fading memories eventually erase all meaning, leaving them as listless zombies who must be rescued by the magical traveler Melquíades. Seen in comparison with this episode, Ezek 40–48 functions as a truly potent version of José Arcadio's signs and dictionary: it provides meaning and identity through its various labels in the new cultural reality that YHWH will create for Israel.

One of the most chilling scenes in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* depicts José Arcadio Segundo's descent into madness after living through the banana plantation massacre. After he escapes the train of dead bodies and makes it to Macondo, he initially tells his great-grandmother, "There must have been three thousand of them."[101] Later in

99. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 51.

100. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 52.

101. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 331.

the novel, after he hides in a room filled with seventy-two chamber pots, the first thing he says to his family in months is: "There were more than three thousand of them."[102] It is as if José Arcadio is so fixated on controlling the tragedy that he cannot bear to leave out any who were lost. In his final line in the book, he ends his conversation with Úrsula by refusing to ever leave that room and shouting at her a single number: "Three thousand four hundred eight."[103] While his progression from a general to a specific number does not allow José Arcadio to heal from his grief, it captures his need to share the truth and scope of the tragedy with anyone who is willing to listen and gives him some control over the memory of his companions.

José Arcadio Segundo's concern with specificity is also reflected in the novel's narration, with similar effects. The apocalyptic flood that issues after Mr. Brown promises to give into the workers' demands when the rain stops lasts for "four years, eleven months, and two days,"[104] and the subsequent drought begins "on Friday at two in the afternoon."[105] Úrsula's lost fortune consists of "seven thousand two hundred fourteen coins buried in three canvas sacks. . . within a circle with a radius of three hundred eighty-eight feet with Úrsula's bed at the center."[106] All of these details not only add realism to the narration and characters of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, but they reflect

102. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 337.

103. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 362.

104. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 349.

105. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 355.

106. García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 354.

the desire to control in microcosm the tragic spiral of Macondo (and Columbia's) out-of-control spiral of history.

In Midnight's Children

The protagonist and narrator of *Midnight's Children*, Saleem Sinai, utilizes numerical and chronological precision not simply to add realism to his narrative, but also to exercise a form of control over the magnitude of the violence depicted therein. Saleem's grandfather, Aadam Aziz, rushes to provide medical services to Ghandi's protesters in the heart of Amritsar. On April 13, Brigadier R. E. Dyer—the British Martial Commander—commands his fifty troops to open fire on this peaceful crowd. Saleem observes the aftermath of this "jolly good thing" through his grandfather's eyes: "fifty men" have fired "a total of one thousand six hundred and fifty rounds" into the unarmed crowd, and of these, "one thousand five hundred and sixteen have found their mark, killing or wounding some person."[107] Saleem captures the chaos and delineates it for the next generation of his readers. While this realism magnifies the horror that he narrates, the details also in some sense mitigate the damage through linguistic control.

Further examples of impossibly detailed numerical descriptions of violence multiply throughout the work, including the assassination of Mian "the Hummingbird" Abdullah, leader of the Free Islam Convocation whose hum calls the dogs of the city to his futile defense. Agra has "eight thousand four hundred and twenty pie-dogs," and approximately "two thousand" did not hear the call, leaving "six thousand four hundred and twenty of the curs," to run to the University.[108]

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107. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 34.

108. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 48.

Passages such as these are matched by those with extreme chronological precision. The telegram from Defense Minister Krishna as the Chinese army approaches the Himalayan frontier arrived "once upon a time. No, that won't do. . . September 9th, 1962. And the time? The time matters, too. . . in the afternoon. . . at the stroke of three o' clock."[109] One wants to ask Saleem, why is "once upon a time" not good enough in a work of fiction? The answer cannot only be that the work attempts to be realistic, although specific time markers do connect Saleem's story to the broader history of India. There is a sense in which specificity makes the narrative one of personal resistance: no one else can tell the story in this way, especially not those winners who create history. No one else can state what the victims of oppression felt and exactly when and where they felt it other than those people themselves. In this sense, specificity lays a claim to the right to tell the authoritative version of the story.

The final example of *Midnight's Children* finding security in detailed realism comes at the novel's climax and connects most clearly to Ezek 40–48. On the night of India's independence, 1,001 Midnight's Children are born (a symbolic number associated with "night," "magic," and "alternative realities"),[110] but only 420 of them survive to be neutered and spayed like animals at the novel's climax—a number associated with frauds and "a mere 0.00007 per cent of the six-hundred-million strong population of India."[111] Rushdie asks: how can you tell a meaningful and enduring story that captures the fate of

109. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 337.

110. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 248.

111. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 504.

six million people? The answer is by creating a symbolic paradigm through numerical detail. This feature of magical realist texts sheds new light on the rhetoric of Ezek 40–48.

In Ezekiel 40–48

Without attempting the risky business of full historical psychoanalysis, it seems fair to claim that Ezekiel and his exilic audience found the power and control in words that they lacked as a political entity. Their monarchy was defunct, their temple was in pieces, and they had witnessed their sister-nation to the north vanish into the abyss of the Assyrian empire in the eighth-century BCE, never to return as a distinct people group.

The sixth-century BCE Jewish exiles needed some patch of firm ground in their shattered world to help them keep their identity amidst the collapse of their culture, and the words of Ezekiel provided some of this control. The attention to detail in Ezekiel's vision in 40–48 comes to life when it is seen in the light of magical realist texts that use detail to offer security, both to their implied authors and audiences. Bennett Simon wrote an article on Ezekiel's temple vision using research from his clinical work involving people whose dreams and actions involve precise geometric details. He states the following:

> My supposition is that the geometric vision is defensive, adaptive, and, potentially, creative—a way of struggling with problems of evil, contamination, and imperfection, including imperfection in the relationship between God and human worshippers. We yearn for some geometric and arithmetic precision because our desires and passions are terribly imprecise, indeed at times verging on the chaotic and the unbounded. The beauty and elegance of mathematics inspire awe in us, contrasting with the persistence of a certain ugliness and lack of grace in our innermost world, let alone in the external social and political world. Geometry cleanses, orders, and puts strict, defined boundaries in place. The geometric dream attempts to resolve intractable human aggression, including the lust for power.[112]

112. Bennett Simon, "Ezekiel's Geometric Vision of the Restored Temple: From the Rod of His Wrath to the Reed of His Measuring," *HTR* 102 (2009): 414.

Ezekiel combats the chaos of traumatic memory with a vision of a precisely perfect future. In the nine chapters of Ezekiel's final temple vision, the noun אמה ("cubit/forearm-length") appears eighty-eight times. Often in conjunction with this noun, the verb מדד ("to measure") appears thirty-six times, and its corresponding adjective מדה ("measuring/measurement") is repeated twenty-five times in its attributive and substantive usages. Ezekiel 40–48 is clearly preoccupied with the delineation of space, and the cadences of the description of the new temple and the equal tribal spaces creates a narrative rhythm. Seen through the lens of magical realist texts, these numerical details of measurement in Ezekiel 40–48 not only add realism to the vision; they also provide a sense of security for their colonialized audience. As the reality of the rebuilding of the temple becomes "palpable" for Ezekiel by tracing all these details,[113] he is creating a tightly constructed literary world that offers security in its details to those without any measure of control.

In addition to Ezekiel's numerical repetition, two culturally key repeated terms provide hope for the destiny of Israel as a people group. The noun עם ("people") occurs fifteen times, and it occurs four times with the first common singular personal pronominal suffix as "*my* people." YHWH's repeated dialogue in Ezek 40–48 affirms Israel's future as a distinct people group with a unique history and a divinely given identity. The repeated use of the term תרומה ("allotment/contribution") used nineteen

113. Alter, *The Hebrew Bible*, 2:1181.

times also emphasizes that Israel's God is in control of Israel's future as YHWH will restore each tribe to their ancestral home so that their identity will not be lost forever. In the hopeful future world of Ezek 40–48 and the present world of its implied audience, YHWH—not Babylon—is in control of Israel's destiny. Ezekiel portrays this control literarily through its use of numerical detail and repeated terms.

Conclusion

By now, it should be clear that Ezek 40–48 shares major points of thematic overlap with *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Midnight's Children*. As works written from the perspective of colonized people groups, these texts resist the dominant narratives of their Babylonian, Spanish/American, and British overlords. The ideas that truth is created through power, history exists as a downward spiral, and security comes through detailed realism represent important points of contact between these two magical realist novels and Ezek 40–48. This is not to say that Ezek 40–48 stands as an ancient magical realist text to which these novels owe their artistic influence, but it instead points to Ezek 40–48 as a precursor that deals with many of the same issues of magical realist texts in a similar style.

But if Ezek 40–48 is not a magical realist text, why has the present study spent so much time in this comparative analysis? The comparative features have illuminated various features in the text of Ezek 40–48 as it rhetorically resists the Babylonian status quo. Even more than this, the dissimilarities between the prophet's final vision and contemporary magical realist novels have proved especially instructive. In a world where truth is created through power, Ezekiel utilized prophecy not as a twisted tool of fate but as a presently subversive expression of Israel's national truth backed by the ultimate

power of YHWH. Whereas *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Midnight's Children* portray the history of their respective nations as a never-ending downward spiral, Ezek 40–48 relies on YHWH's transformation of the people and restoration of their social structures to forecast a future that is better than the present. The text offers this reality as a present hope with a deferred fulfillment, calling its readers to live with strength as a unified community in the light of these promises.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Recapitulation

This thesis has demonstrated that Ezek 40–48 functions as a unified narrative of restoration and that it is profitable to understand its fantastic realism and postcolonial rhetoric as early precursors to the modern magical realism genre. Chapter 1 served as an introduction and justification for the methodology of the present study. Rather than a source-critical analysis, a narrative-critical lens was chosen with its focus on the final form of the text. As such, issues of compositional history were briefly explored but largely jettisoned. A brief history and definition of narrative criticism were explored, and the use of narrative-critical analyses in the Torah from scholars such as Liane Feldman, John Sailhamer, and Christoph Nihan provided a precedent for similar studies in the prophets. Richard Hays's work on narrative substructure in Paul's letters also provided an analogy for finding narrative coherence in other texts with legal and discourse elements such as Ezek 40–48. In preparation for the detailed narrative analysis in Chapter 2, some evidence was provided for viewing Ezek 40–48 as a single narrative including the use of date formula, its narrative visionary frame, and its consistent use of the first-person viewpoint.

After justifying a narrative critical study of Ezek 40–48, the history and definition of magical realism were explored with special reference to postcolonial studies and Anne Hegerfeldt's five pillars of magical realism. Chapter 1 concluded by arguing that viewing

Ezek 40–48 as a precursor to the magical realist genre allows the present study to see its social function as an act of colonial resistance without negating its hopeful reliance on YHWH to fulfill this vision in a beautiful future reality for Israel.

In Chapter 2, the tools of narrative criticism were utilized to exegete the literary features of Ezek 40–48 and uncover its poetic elements and rhetorical thrust. This chapter demonstrated that Ezekiel stands as a unified literary product that shaped the identity of the Judean exiles to which it was addressed. In this analysis, the literary elements of structure, setting, plot, and characterization were explored to see how the various cultic, legal, and prophetic texts of Ezek 40–48 are woven into a single narrative.

This second chapter argued that Ezek 40–48 weaves its legal and narrative source materials together using similar sources and strategy as the Torah. The final vision's artistic use of setting collapses future and present time to present a new sacred reality for a restored Israel with a detailed description of sanctified space. Ezek 40–48 is more than a list of descriptions, however. It is written as a coherent pediment plot with an introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and conclusion designed around the actions of seeing, measuring, and declaring with the purpose of defining a new holy and just identity for a restored Israel under the direct rule of YHWH once again. Furthermore, the prophet Ezekiel is intentionally characterized as both a priestly prophet and a type of Moses.

Further literary study of Ezek 40–48 could use research in the genre of magic realism to illuminate Ezekiel's extremely detailed descriptions of the temple and the land of Israel in his final vision. A detailed study of Ezekiel as a representative through whom Israel can process its trauma and restoration could also be done, along with an

exploration of the interplay between the characters of the Intermediary and YHWH. However, enough work in Chapter 2 was done to demonstrate that Ezek 40–48 stands as a work of unified narrative with a complex movement of setting and plot that allowed Israel to envision a new future in the midst of their exile.

In Chapter 3, Ezek 40–48 was viewed as a precursor to modern magical realist texts in a comparative study with Gabriel García Márquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Salman Rushdie's novel *Midnight's Children*. Three areas of thematic contact included: (1) Truth is created through power; (2) History is a downward spiral; and (3) Security is achieved through detailed realism.

As works written from the perspective of colonized people groups, these texts resist the dominant narratives of their Babylonian, Spanish/American, and British overlords. This analysis of thematic points of contact was not done to say that Ezekiel 40—48 stands as an ancient magical realist text to which these novels owe their artistic influence; instead, it points to Ezek 40–48 as a precursor that deals with many of the same issues of magical realist texts in a similar style. These comparative features illuminated various elements in the text of Ezek 40–48 as it rhetorically resists its own Babylonian status quo. Even more than this, the dissimilarities between the prophet's final vision and contemporary magical realist novels proved especially instructive as, for example, Ezek 40–48 portrays history as an upward spiral and utilizes prophecy as a means of subversive truth.

Synthesis

So, why is it worth the time to demonstrate that Ezek 40–48 functions as a unified narrative of restoration? Why has the present study compared the fantastic realism and

postcolonial rhetoric of Ezek 40–48 with contemporary texts in the modern magical realism genre?

First, this study offers an example of narrative analysis in the Hebrew Prophets. Studies such as Sailhamer's, Nihan's, and Feldman's demonstrate a growing appreciation for the aesthetic coherence of narratives in the Torah. These analyses exemplify a current postcritical trend as contemporary scholarship eschews the extremely detailed and sometimes speculative source-critical studies of the past to focus on the final form of the text in interpretation. In the same way that scholarship is beginning to appreciate the narrative coherence of the Torah, more work deserves to be done on the literary elements of the prophetic books. Books such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel have an abundance of prose narrative texts, and this study contributes to a better understanding of how the artistic design of other Hebrew narratives finds expression in the poetics of Ezek 40–48.

Second, this study explores the ways that Ezek 40–48 functions as an act of colonial resistance through its thematic similarities with magical realist texts. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Midnight's Children* each highlight the ways that truth in colonial contexts is created through power, and they masterfully use detailed narration for rhetorical effect. These texts' emphasis on manufactured vs. subversive truth sheds light on the prophet Ezekiel's resistance to the Babylonian propaganda of his own day and demonstrates the power of Ezek 40–48 to cast a vision of a new communal identity for Israel. In addition to this, these texts' artful use of detailed narration elucidated how Ezekiel's litany of specific architectural and land measurements creates a sense of security and realism.

Finally, this study offers some insight into the hope that Ezekiel's final temple vision provided its implied exilic audience. As mentioned earlier, the dissimilarities between Ezek 40–48 and these magical realist novels are just as interesting as their points of agreement. In a world where truth is created through power, Ezekiel utilizes prophecy not as a twisted tool of fate but as a presently subversive expression of Israel's national truth backed by the ultimate power of YHWH. Whereas *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Midnight's Children* portray the history of their respective nations as a never-ending downward spiral, Ezek 40–48 relies on YHWH's transformation of the people and restoration of their social structures to forecast a future that is better than the present. The text offers this reality as a present hope with a deferred fulfillment, calling its readers to live with strength as a unified community in the light of these promises.

With their holy temple destroyed, their foreordained monarchy defunct, and their promised land razed, the people of Judah should have been lost to history in a strange and hostile land after the various Babylonian occupations and deportation programs. This, however, was not the case. In their darkest moments, the people of Israel turned to the texts of the prophets and scribes to shape their identity and give them hope. And in dark times today, people from a wide range of situations still find hope in these texts even though Ezekiel's temple was never built. Through the power and mercy of YHWH, Ezekiel's final vision realistically offers the exilic community something fantastic—a new identity in a new world. Or in the words of García Márquez, Ezek 40–48 holds out to the oppressed the possibility of a "second chance on earth."[1]

1. Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 448.

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