

Building upon recent studies and my own postdoctoral research, I propose in this paper a new perspective on the present-tense fiction. I argue that its historical rise throughout the 20th century and its recent popularity are due to a narrative asset of the present tense: its ability to convey non-normative temporalities. The present-tense use creates a temporal relation between the narrative act and the narrated events that is inexplicable in terms of linear and teleological concepts of time. Instead, a present-tense narrative can convey 'fuzzy', circular, suspended, and other non-normative temporalities, which often manifest a break with the past as the main source of meaning production and a profound uncertainty of the future. This is why the present-tense narration often lends a voice to marginalized subjects such as trauma-ridden people, queer, disabled, and Other narrators; it features in several postcolonial novels and has been especially prominent in feminist fiction. Surveying several noteworthy examples of present-tense fiction from Christopher Isherwood's *A Single Man* (1964) to JM Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), and complementing them with examples of German and French present-tense narratives, I demonstrate that the present-tense fiction is not a 21st century trend but a phenomenon with deep roots in the 20th century literatures of and about minorities.